



THE
SPOTTED
ZEBRA
Learning Center

K PROGRAM HANDBOOK

KINDERGARTEN-KINDERGARTEN READINESS

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Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Spotted Zebra Learning Center K Program. The K Program is a Kindergarten Readiness/Kindergarten Program. Depending on where your child is relative to age and maturity, this program might be the right fit for you!

The K Program provides the foundation for all later learning experiences your child will receive in school. Our program is designed to assure that your child enjoys a successful start to his or her school career. We have high expectations for all of our students. Many wonderful experiences are planned so your child's ability to learn is truly challenged. You are welcomed and encouraged to share in your child's experiences. These experiences and activities are planned around the curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, writing, health education, and social awareness. Your child will continue developing positive self-concepts and will begin learning to accept responsibility and to follow directions. Working and sharing with others as well as developing good habits in personal hygiene also are taught. Our staff are looking forward to working with you and your child to make the transition from home to school a successful and happy one.

Sincerely,

Sheri Canfield
Executive Director

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THE K PROGRAM

We, at the Spotted Zebra Learning Center, believe an effective Kindergarten/ Kindergarten Readiness program is broad enough in scope to accommodate the varying ranges in rate, timing and learning development that exist in young children. These needs center upon the whole child—mentally, physically, emotionally and socially! The program we have for your child is planned by a teacher who knows about the ways young children learn best. These are natural ways for children to use their capacities, to grow and to learn many skills. The K Program captures this natural process through planned opportunities in the following developmental areas:

Language and Literacy Development

Language development involves speaking, listening, writing and reading. Young children are excellent language learners. They have learned to communicate comfortably with others and are already very aware of written language.

During the, students need to experience the enjoyment of reading while they learn the foundational strategies and skills that will enable them to read independently. Students learn these enabling skills of phonemic awareness, letter names, sound-letter correspondences, decoding skills, high frequency vocabulary, and comprehension skills as they listen and respond to a variety of texts. They enjoy listening to stories, relating characters and events to their own life experiences, dramatizing stories, and responding to stories through art and writing activities. They can extend their oral language skills when given opportunities to express themselves, and they can learn how language is recorded to convey experiences and ideas as they observe their experiences and ideas being written. K students will engage in word play, listen and respond to children's literature, and build reading and writing concepts, skills, and strategies. In our K Program, children have the opportunity to:

- listen to and join in the reading of stories, songs, poems
- respond to stories through discussion, drama, art, music and movement
- develop and use lists, signs, messages
- work on projects collaboratively with other children
- dictate stories
- explore sounds, letters, words, etc.
- experiment with writing by drawing, copying, manipulating magnetic letters
- browse through self-selected books, magazines, newspapers

In addition, children will be introduced to the Spanish language through thematic instruction and the use of music, puppets, stories and games.

Mathematical and Scientific Development

The five-year old child acquires an understanding of mathematics and science through repeated experiences using concrete, manipulative material. Scientific and mathematical development occurs when children have opportunities to:

- sort and classify
- count
- match
- measure
- solve problems of interest to the child
- recognize numerals
- become aware of time intervals and spatial relationships
- develop number concepts
- explore, question, observe, predict, discuss the world around them (living things, color, shape, size, texture, etc.)

Physical Development

The physical development and well-being of each child is very important to his or her overall growth and development. The teacher recognizes that the young child is still developing his or her physical stature as well as attitudes toward good health. The program allows opportunities for each child to:

- develop muscular control and coordination
- develop a sense of rhythm
- find acceptable outlets for tensions and emotions
- learn to care for his body and value physical health
- learn and practice rules of safety
- find enjoyment in participating in physical activities

Social and Emotional Development

Learning is an extricable part of the concept of self. No learning occurs that does not involve feelings, and what is learned affects a child's concept of self. It is the role of the

teacher to provide a climate in which democratic living is practiced, and one that is happy, realistic, interesting and friendly where each child can:

- learn from the group
- share and take turns
- practice politeness and thoughtfulness
- respect the rights and property of others
- feel a sense of belonging
- accept guidance and authority
- experience joy and satisfaction from self-expression and success
- obtain a sense of affection, approval, independence and self-respect

Creative Expression

The child needs many ways to express personal thoughts and feelings. As verbal expression develops so must expression through art, music, dance/movement, creative dramatics and literature. The children will have opportunities to:

- explore body movement through music
- use their voices in singing
- learn about various instruments
- create musical scores
- explore different art media—paint, clay, crayons, etc.
- express themselves creatively
- learn about famous artists
- understand the world around them through creative dramatics; role play, puppets and pantomime

PROGRAM OPERATIONS

School Hours

The K Program will operate between 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. If your child requires wrap around it is available.

Absences

Please remember to call the Spotted Zebra Learning Center when your child is going to be absent or late for school. Your cooperation in helping us account for every child's safety is appreciated. If your child is going to be absent for several days, let us know in advance so that you need not call everyday.

Address and Telephone Number Changes

Please notify the Spotted Zebra Learning Center if your address, telephone number, or emergency contact numbers have changed. It is very important that our information be kept up to date, especially in the event of an emergency.

Building Access

We welcome all visitors to our school. Visitors to the Spotted Zebra Learning Center are reminded that, for security purposes, all doors to the Center are locked. All visitors must sign in at the front desk.

Arrival/Departure

The K Program is a time to foster independence. Staff will await the arrival of children, by bus and parent drop off at the front door entrance beginning at 8:45 AM. Children are to independently walk to their classroom, put away their belongings, unpack their book bags and prepare themselves for the day.

Likewise, at the end of the day, children will be escorted by staff to the front door to either their bus or their families.

Book Bag/Back Pack

Daily, notes, papers, and projects will be sent home. To protect them from loss or damage, please see that your child has a bag or back pack. This bag should be brought to school everyday and it is **very important that you check it everyday**. Please mark the bag or pack with your child's name.

Snack

A nutritional mid-morning snack will be provided. All snacks have been approved by a nutritionist. An alternative snack can only be provided when a child has dietary restrictions.

Lunch

Lunch is to be provided by the families. Families are requested to bring in a healthy balanced meal with a drink, such as juice, milk or water. No soda please.

Quiet Time

All children will be required to have daily quiet time for a period of 30 minutes. Children will have the opportunity to read or do quiet activities.

Homework

Homework is an important extension of schoolwork and allows students time to practice skills learned during the school day. Parents are encouraged to provide a setting for homework which allows the child to concentrate on the assignment. Best results are obtained when homework is done at a consistent time and place. Parents can expect homework to be assigned according to the following guidelines:

Students in the K Program will be given homework to reinforce academic skills. The average time to complete the assignment will be 10-20 minutes.

Birthdays

If you would like to send a treat for the class to celebrate your child's birthday, please send a note a few days in advance. This will aid in planning our schedule.

Delays and Cancellations Due to Weather

Sometimes severe winter storm warnings are issued making travel extremely hazardous. To ensure the safety of staff and children, the management reserves the right to delay the school's opening time, close the school early, or close the school for the entire day. Spotted Zebra will list a closing or delay on all television and radio stations. You can also access school closings online at <http://capitalregion.ynn.com/>. Additionally, the main message on the school's office phone will be changed by 6:30 AM to provide confirmation of a school closing or delay information.

Please know that typically, we will follow the North Colonie School District's lead for a closing or delay as this will mean that the weather has been deemed treacherous and unsafe for travel.

Early Dismissal for Appointments

Should it be necessary to pick up your child prior to the end of the school day, please send a note to school giving the time, reason, and person who will be picking up your child. *Without written permission from the legal guardian, no student will be released to anyone other than the legal guardian(s).*

Early Dismissal for Illness or Injury

Should your child become ill or injured at school, the Center will use the Emergency Information provided at registration to contact you or your designee. Please notify the school immediately if there is a change in the information on your Emergency Form.

Please maintain up to date work numbers!

Early Dismissal Days – Scheduled

All scheduled early dismissal days are indicated on the school calendar. In addition, you will receive notice of upcoming early dismissal days from your child's teacher.

Progress Reporting

To keep you informed of your child's progress in school, Progress Reports will be sent home in November and May. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress in school, please call the teacher.

Field trips

Exploration is just what a young mind needs therefore throughout the school year children will take field trips. Parents will be informed well in advance of a trip. If you would like to help on field trips, please let your child's teacher know.

Show and Tell days

On Show & Tell days, items for Show & Tell will be kept in the students backpack until the time to be shown and then returned to the backpack for the rest of the day. Please talk with your child about his/her Show & Tell so that he/she will be prepared to share the information with the class. This is a time for your child to be the expert!

Holiday Programs and Parties

We will have holiday parties and other programs throughout the year. Please observe your daily notes and bulletin boards for information regarding these special events. We encourage children and families to share their family and cultural traditions.

UNDERSTANDING AND GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

Our teachers guide the class interactions so that each child learns the value of cooperation and gains skill in solving conflicts in a positive manner. We use our best professional judgment when implementing supervision and control. We stress positive reinforcement and redirection. All children are expected to follow classroom rules and procedures, and we will help them learn to do so in a positive, fair, and equitable manner. Good discipline allows us to teach, and students to learn. This is the right of every student.

OUR CLASS RULES:

1. Respect others and their property
2. Listen carefully and follow directions
3. Raise your hand to be recognized before speaking
4. Do your best
5. Be honest
6. Practice safety at all times

Negative and/or disruptive behavior that persists will be discussed with the family and a joint plan of action will be taken.

Discontinued Enrollment Procedures

A written notice to the director is required 30 days prior to withdrawing your child.

The Spotted Zebra Learning Center reserves the right to discontinue the enrollment of any child if:

1. A parent fails to cooperate reasonably with the Spotted Zebra Learning Center in the provision of educational services to their child; or
2. The child is dangerous to him/herself or others, is destructive of school property, or is so disruptive that the education of other students is significantly impaired. As described above every effort will be made to successfully meet the needs of each child within our classroom, however, if serious concerns persist, the staff of Spotted Zebra Learning Center will confer with the parents/caregivers, and refer them to resources that can assist them in seeking a more appropriate setting.

HEALTH POLICY (Updated)

We want to keep all our children healthy, and need your cooperation to maintain a high health standard. Please call if your child will be absent.

Parents are to keep their child home when the child:

1. Requires more care than the staff can provide, or an illness that compromises the health and safety of others.
2. Has persistent diarrhea or liquid stool (two or more bouts in the past 24 hours). The child must be free from diarrhea for 48 hours before returning to the Spotted Zebra,

3. Has had a fever of 99 degrees or more within the past 24 hours or a rash. To return to Spotted Zebra, child must be fever free without the use of medication for a MINIMUM OF 48 HOURS.
4. Has vomiting accompanied by other signs of illness or dehydration or vomiting two or more times in the past 24 hours. The child must be free from vomiting for 48 hours before returning to the Spotted Zebra.
5. Has undiagnosed rashes.

Children will also be excluded from the Spotted Zebra Learning Center until a medical evaluation allows for the inclusion of the following:

1. lethargy
2. uncontrolled coughing
3. persistent abdominal pain
4. discolored urine
5. refusal to eat or drink
6. irritability
7. persistent crying
8. difficulty breathing
9. wheezing
10. green nasal discharge for more than 10 days
11. eye discharge or extreme redness

If a child is prescribed an antibiotic for a contagious disease or infection, including but not limited to, conjunctivitis or strep throat, the child must remain out of Preschool for 48 hours after the first dose of medication.

Should your child have an illness diagnosed by the doctor as a contagious disease, you must notify the Director immediately, so that other parents can be informed that their children may have been exposed to a contagious disease. Some of these include conjunctivitis, chicken pox, bronchitis, fifth disease, Coxsackie virus, lice, scabies, measles, mumps and impetigo. We are required to report any communicable diseases to the Albany County Health Department. It is a state regulation that a physician's release is required for re-admittance to the preschool following a contagious illness. If your child is too ill to play outside, please keep him/her at home. Small children do not understand why they cannot play outside when everyone else can.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately and will be expected to pick up your child as soon as possible. In the event a parent cannot be reached, the person listed on the child's emergency form will be notified and asked to come for your child. An ill child may not remain at the Center for any reason. In case of severe illness or injury, the Center staff will call for an ambulance to take the child to the nearest facility, which offers emergency treatment, or to the facility requested by the parents, on behalf of the parents. Parents are to inform the Center in writing when there are changes in address, telephone numbers, or name of persons designated to pick up a child.

COVID-19 PROTOCOL

If an employee or child is diagnosed with COVID-19 they may not return to Spotted Zebra until all three of the following criteria are met: at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); the individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

If an employee or child has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to Spotted Zebra before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.

If either the child or staff member have come in close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 they may not return to Spotted Zebra until the end of the 14-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure.

If a parent believes that they or the child has had close contact to someone with COVID-19 but are not currently sick, the same protocol as above (14-day self-quarantine) applies.

Medications: It is a state regulation that to administer any type of medication to a child, we must have a *Written Medical Consent Form* signed by the child's physician and parents.

Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with your child's name, date, directions and the physician's name. We will administer the medication only as stated on the label directions. We will not administer expired medications.

Non-prescription medications are to be labeled with your child's name and date it was given to us. It must be in the original container and administered according to label directions. If label directions indicate "CONSULT PHYSICIAN", we must have directions in writing by a health professional.

Medications requiring refrigeration are to be given to your child's teacher to be refrigerated. NO MEDICATION OF ANY TYPE IS TO BE IN A CHILD'S CUBBY OR BAG. This includes cough drops, etc.

Mandated Reporter: As a childcare provider, the Spotted Zebra Learning Center is a mandated reporter of child abuse and maltreatment. Mandated reporters are those individuals who must report, or cause a report to be made, whenever they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them, in their professional or official capacity, is abused or maltreated. The Spotted Zebra Learning follows the procedures and guidelines set forth by the NYS Department of Children and Family Services and Child Protective Services.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

WE ENCOURAGE AND WELCOME PARENT VISITS! We believe parents are the child's first and most important teachers. That is why we embrace family involvement as being a basic component of our program. Research has proved that the greatest benefits are derived when parents and teachers work as partners to guide children in their growth, development and education.

The following are goals that guide our parent involvement program:

- ✓ To help parents understand developmentally appropriate practices.
- ✓ To provide parents with information related to how children grow and learn.
- ✓ To provide support through resources, materials, referrals, and parent conferences.
- ✓ To inform parents about community activities beneficial to families and children.
- ✓ To aid parents in recognizing and coping with stresses related to parenting.
- ✓ To provide ideas and materials for learning at home.
- ✓ To provide family fun in a group setting.
- ✓ To help parents understand the importance of regular consistent school attendance for their child's future success.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

- Classroom Parent
- Field trips
- Sharing of hobbies or talents
- Sharing of holidays from your culture
- Donating "useful articles" from home
- Parent education workshops
- Family fun events
- Parent volunteering

Parent/Teacher Communication

Communication between home and school is essential. Parents should feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with the program staff. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year with additional conferences being scheduled, as needed.

Each child will also be given a "Communication Folder" which can go home at the end of each day. The folder will be used for the parents and teachers to exchange information. Please make sure you check the folder and return it to school every day!

RECEIPT OF K PROGRAM HANDBOOK

I have received and reviewed the K Program Handbook for the Spotted Zebra Learning Center. This signed statement affirms that I understand all of the policies and procedures stated within the handbook and agree to abide by them.

Please Print Name

Signature and Date

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