



Thomas Sumter Academy Enrichment Program Handbook 2025-2026

PK3 and PK4

Phone-803-499-1264

Website; <https://thomassumter.org>

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Head of School: Ben Herod

History

The Thomas Sumter Academy Enrichment Program is an ever-growing learning center with students who are enrolled in Thomas Sumter Academy. We strive to accommodate all families with the quality care they deserve. Thomas Sumter Academy is a private school located in Rembert, South Carolina. It was founded in 1964 and has remained an institution with high academic standards focusing on Christian values.

Mission Statement

At the Thomas Sumter Academy Enrichment Program, we believe in the value and uniqueness of each child and family we serve. Our center experience is designed to promote each child's own individual social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, which fosters a child's natural instinct to explore, discover, create, and become a lifelong learner.

Philosophy

We believe that in the right environment a child's natural curiosity and creativity leads to endless opportunities to grow in knowledge and develop a love of learning. We provide that environment at Thomas Sumter Academy by making it a safe and nurturing place where your child will be encouraged to build, splash, dash, pretend and create their way to exciting discoveries about the world around them. We allow children to join the Thomas Sumter Family as a PK3 student and to stay with us throughout their preschool years.

Each day with us will be a chance for your child to grow socially, cognitively, emotionally, and physically. As early as infancy, your child will be provided with learning opportunities adapted to fit his or her age, developmental stage, and learning style. Full-day, year-round care and all-day preschool in one location makes it possible for you to provide your child with the care and education that will help them become happy, healthy lifelong learners.

Hours of Operation

The Thomas Sumter Academy Enrichment Program is open five days a week from 7:15 AM-5:30 PM

The Enrichment Program is closed when the Main Campus is closed. Please refer to the yearly calendar.

Programs

There are four programs offered at the Thomas Sumter Enrichment Facility. They are:

Room	Age	Ratio	Schedule
PK3	3-year-old students that have a birthday on or after September 1.	1:12	7:40 AM-11:00 AM
PK4	4-year-old students that have a birthday on or after September 1	1:17	7:40 AM-2:15 PM
Aftercare for PK3	3-year-old students that have a birthday on or after September 1	1:12	11:00 AM-5:30 PM
Aftercare for PK4	4-year-old students that have a birthday on or after September 1	1:17	2:15 PM-5:30 PM

Licensing Notebook

The Thomas Sumter Enrichment Program is a private program licensed to serve 54 children by the South Carolina Department of Social Services. A copy of the licensing rules is available for review in the office and on the web: scchildcare.org

Weather Related Closings

The Thomas Sumter Academy Enrichment Program will remain open during most severe weather. The Head of School and the Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. In the event that the Center closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation via text with a Parent Alert.

Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.

Enrollment Records

Each fall, the Center will complete an audit of enrollment records. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year, including the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form.

Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as physicals and immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's physical and most recent immunization record. You may bring these items in yourself.

In addition, any time a family's information changes such as address, place of employment or health insurance provider, a new Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form must be completed.

Enrollment Procedures:

Item Checklist Needed Before Care Begins
Signed contract
Signed Handbook Agreement
Child Information Form
Health Forms
Immunization Record

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a top priority for Thomas Sumter Academy's Enrichment Program. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families. Seesaw is an app used to communicate between parents and staff.

Tuition

Financial Agreements

Upon enrollment and any changes to tuition, families are provided a Financial Contract. This contract should be carefully reviewed and checked for errors. The contract states the days and hours your child may be at the Center as well as the amount due. All money will be handled by

the Business Office. All bills will be sent through FACTS. If you have questions regarding your bill, please contact Mrs. Angelia Scott in the Business Office (803)-499-3378 or email her angelia.scott@thomassumter.org.

Payment Schedule

Tuition is paid using FACTS.

Late Pick-Up Fee

The Center closes at 5:30 PM each day. Parents will be charged a late pick-up fee if a child is present after their contracted pick-up time (this will pay for the teachers' time when they have to stay past their scheduled-out time). Teachers will record late fees for processing. If there is a late pick-up fee, parents will receive a written notice from the Director stating the amount of the late pick-up fee. The fee will be due the following week.

5:30 PM -5:40 PM-Late charge will be \$20.00

5:41 PM-6:00 PM-Late charge will be \$50.00

After 6:01 PM-Late charge will be \$100.00

If parents do not arrive to pick up their child from the program by 5:30 PM, staff members will first try to contact the parents using all phone numbers provided on the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form. If parents are unable to be reached, staff members will try to contact all emergency contact persons. If staff members are unable to contact emergency contact persons, the Director will be notified, and they will then notify the Department of Human Services and/or the Police Department.

Curriculum

Daily Schedule and Activities

Each program has a Daily Schedule and curriculum tailored to each age group.

Free Choice

"Free-play" (also called child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) activities are incorporated into the children's schedules. During free-play, teachers actively participate with the children by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc. Free play is another opportunity for a child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule. Staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition,

a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who to interact with.

Children will go outside year-round, including winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will the children remain indoors.

It is important for parents to send their children in appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.). Please clearly label all articles of clothing with your child's name. The Center has a few extra hats and mittens, but not enough for every child. If a child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, we will contact parents to provide the appropriate attire. Please ask your child's teacher if you have any questions about weather-appropriate clothing.

Nap/Rest time

The South Carolina Department of Human Services requires that all children must be provided a regularly scheduled nap or resting time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children should be provided alternative quiet activities if unable to rest.

Children are required to bring a rolled mat with the blanket and pillow attached for rest time. The children are also required to bring an extra-large Ziplock storage bag to place their mat in for transport and storage. Children are encouraged to bring a familiar item from home to use during nap/rest time, such as a small blanket or stuffed animal. These items will be stored in your child's backpack or mat bag; there is limited space for storage of such items. Please take this into consideration when deciding which items to bring. All items should be clearly labeled with your child's name, as all class laundry is sent home bi-weekly to be washed.

Multimedia

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select movie, television, and computer game titles based upon weekly themes. Children are not required to view part or all of a video or television show, or to play computer games. All multimedia must have a rating of "PG" or "E" and must possess an educational theme.

Weapons/Violent Play

There is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play at the Center. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapon or

violent play. If a child brings a weapon into the building, the weapon should be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

Pets & Visiting Animals

Staff may introduce a class pet to the classroom. Please make sure you share any pet allergies with your student's teachers. Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. No animal may be brought into the Center without first notifying and receiving permission from the Director. Once approved by the Director, pets and visiting animals must have documentation from a licensed veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animal(s) is fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

Assessments

The Center uses various tools to assess students' levels when entering the program and then every nine weeks. Parents are encouraged to work with their child's teacher to assess and meet their child's needs.

Parent-Teacher Conferences/ Assessment Portfolios

Parent-teacher conferences will typically be held twice per year. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development both in the center setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, your child's development and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

Field Trips

The Enrichment Program offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center. Field trips where students will be transported will require a "Field Trip Permission Form." Parents will be notified at least three weeks in advance of all field trips requiring a "Field Trip Permission Form." If you do not wish for your child to attend a particular field trip, please find alternative childcare arrangements for that day, as we will not have staff available to stay behind with children not participating in the field trip.

As a participant in our childcare program, your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips on campus.

Rules Related to Transportation

The Enrichment Program uses buses for away field trips. Head counts shall be taken before leaving the center, after entering the vehicle, during a field trip, after taking children to the restroom, after returning to the vehicle, and upon returning to the center. When children leave the vehicle, the vehicle shall be inspected to ensure no children are left in the vehicle.

Meals and Snacks

All children will need to bring their own meals, snacks, and drinks daily. One afternoon snack will be provided after 2:15 by the Center.

Food From Home

Children are welcome to bring in treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies and dietary restrictions in our classrooms, we recommend supplying store-bought snacks still in the original packaging. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing any homemade snacks. A list of healthy snack options approved by the USDA and the South Carolina Department of Education is available from the Director.

Food Allergies/ Action Plans

If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form. This form will be posted in your child's room, as well as in food preparation areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well, stating the reason for the request.

What to Provide

Clothing and Items from Home

Extra clothes, water bottle, sunscreen, small blanket for rest, weather appropriate clothes.

Play Clothes

Please send your child to the Center in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Play is usually active and often messy; comfortable, washable clothes are important if your child is to participate fully in the program. Outdoor play is scheduled every day as an essential part of our planned curriculum.

Children should be dressed appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities. All children occasionally get their clothes wet and have toileting accidents. Whenever this occurs, it is best to change the child into an extra set of clothing provided by the family. Your child's teacher will

request that you bring a complete change of clothing, including underwear, to be kept in your child's book bag at all times and replenished as needed. Please be sure to clearly label all items of clothing. Let the teacher know whenever your child's clothing or other items cannot be located.

Items from Home

The Center allows one stuffed animal or comfort item to be brought to school for nap/rest time. We ask that all items brought to the Center from home be placed in your child's book bag. Please clearly label all belongings brought from home. It is recommended that items of value, such as iPods or handheld gaming systems be left at home, due to the risk of damage or theft. The Center is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival 7:40-8:00

Parents have the choice to pull up to the front door and allow a staff member to open the door and escort the child into the building, or parents can park in the grassy area beside the center and walk their child to the front door. We ask that parents do not enter the facility at this time. If parents need to speak with the child's teacher in-person, we ask that it's between 7:30 and 7:40 or after 2:15 for the PK3 and PK4 students.

Early drop-off is available for an extra fee of \$5.00 a day starting at 7:15 AM each morning. Please ring the doorbell if you arrive early.

Try these tips for a successful drop-off:

- Establish a regular, predictable routine. What often makes separating stressful for children is the uncertainty. If your child can predict what will happen, the separation won't be as difficult.
- Be reliable. Return when promised. Children who are picked up later than expected may have more difficulties separating. Phrase time in terms your child will understand. For example, you will be back after snack time or before nap time.

Departure

The Center closes at 5:30 PM each weekday. If you are picking up at 11:00 or 2:15, please follow the same procedure as drop-off. You can drive up to the front door and your child will be loaded into your vehicle for you, or you are welcome to park in the grassy area beside the building, walk over, and your child will be released at that time. If you are picking up after 2:15, we ask that you park and ring the doorbell for assistance. If you will be late picking up your child, please provide us with as much notice as possible. Please note that there is a late fee for arriving after 5:30 PM. If someone we are not familiar with is to pick up your child, it is essential that you inform your child's teacher in advance of the pick-up. This person must be listed as an authorized person on the Emergency Contact and Parent Consent form. Remind the authorized person that they may be asked for identification such as a driver's license to ensure your child's

safety. Even if the individual has picked up before, he or she may still need identification if the teacher in charge has never met him or her.

If you need to speak with your child's teacher in person, please wait until all students have been dismissed safely.

Once you have reunited with your child and are departing, the center is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.

If parents do not arrive to pick up their child from the program, staff members will first try to contact the parents using all phone numbers provided on the Emergency Contact. If parents are unable to be reached, staff members will try to contact all emergency contact persons. If staff members are unable to contact emergency contact persons, the Director will be notified, and she will then notify the Department of Human Services and/or the Police Department.

Attendance

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child as well as the classroom as a whole. If your child will be absent, please notify your child's teacher.

If your child will be absent for an extended period of time (more than 5 days), the center should be notified in writing of the date the absence begins and the expected date your child will return.

Health and Safety Policies

Illness

Our first priority at the Thomas Sumter Academy Enrichment Program is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 101 (under the arm) or greater, until 24 hours symptom-free without fever-reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- Diarrhea (not associated with diet changes or medications) (Two instances) until diarrhea stops for 24 hours or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed health care professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools

- Vomiting (One instance) the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 12 hours or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend childcare
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Hand Foot and Mouth sores have dried and crusted and no fever
- Pertussis, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- Mumps, until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- Hepatitis A virus, until 1 week after onset of illness
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling

A child who becomes ill while at the Center will be isolated in the Director's office in order to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease. An ill child will be isolated to wait for his/her parent to arrive. For this reason, we ask families to make every effort to pick up a sick child as soon as possible.

The Enrichment Program reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious.

*Parents will be notified by Seesaw and/or telephone. Please contact your child's teacher via phone or Seesaw whenever your child is ill.

Notice of Exposure & Reporting Disease

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, families will receive notification of the illness via Seesaw. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the Director immediately.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the Center will notify the health department.

Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in childcares such as the flu, diarrhea, and pink eye. Parents are encouraged to assist their child in the hand washing process upon arrival.

Other times your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- Upon arriving at the center or when changing classrooms
- After each diaper change or using the toilet
- Before and after mealtimes
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood vomit)
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage

Warm, running water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under any jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands and turn off the faucet. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

Medications

Prescription and over-the-counter medications must be given to a staff member in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. The staff will not administer any medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form. Forms can be obtained from your child's teacher or from the Director.

Medications are stored in a locked box (refrigerated medications) or in a high cabinet (non-refrigerated medications) while in use at the Center. The Medication Authorization Form must remain with the medication at all times. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at the Center.

Medications are administered only by the Director or other designated staff members. When a medication is given, the teacher will document the type of medication administered, the dosage, and the time it was given.

Physicals and Immunizations

Each child must have a current physical and immunization record on file at the Center to attend. The physical on file must be updated at least annually; immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received.

Documentation of Accidents/Incidents

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at the Center using an Accident/ Incident Report and Incident report. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

Documents of Health Incidents

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, a message will be sent in Seesaw. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the center via a sign posted on the main entrance to the center explaining the illness. In addition, parents with children in the classroom of the infected child will receive a Seesaw message regarding the illness.

Documents of Allergies

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of a child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

Documents of Special Health Care Needs

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the Director will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick-up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the School Nurse until a parent arrives.

- If the child requires immediate medical attention: The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The Director will contact the parent(s).

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporters

As childcare professionals who interact with children on a daily basis, each staff member of The Enrichment Program is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the South Carolina Department of Human Services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

Tobacco Use

Cigarettes/ Vapes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas.

Access Policy

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with childcare shall not have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. Unrestricted access means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for childcare.

Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any childcare responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Director unless he/she delegates it to another staff member due to a conflict of interest with the person. The building is locked at all times and only staff may open doors for visitors. If staff doesn't know the visitor, they shall ask for ID or get the Director. Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is.

If a staff member is unsure about the reason, the Director is to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the "Dangerous Adult" procedure. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian) who is required to register with the South Carolina sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the childcare center.
- Shall not be on the property of the childcare center without written permission from the Director except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child to and from the center. The Director is not obligated to provide permission and must consult with their licensing agent first.

Affidavit Policy

At times families may be dealing with difficult situations at home. When legal matters are present in the home, families may need to collect affidavits for their legal team. Due to the nature of the relationship between caregiver and child, families may choose to ask a staff member to provide such a statement. Our program's priority is providing the best possible care when children are away from home and our focus will remain on the child, making sure all their needs are met during what could be a difficult time at home. The staff members will not provide written statements or affidavits of a professional nature to families.

Guidance Strategies

Reasons for Misbehavior

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct, and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility, and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, are likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation, and a good understanding of the child. The staff will use only positive guidance techniques.

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions: "Am I..."

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open-ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

Understanding Misbehavior

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems.

Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave:

- Test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or are held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

Preventing Misbehavior

Intervention strategies include but are not limited to the following:

1. One-on-one relationships building activities such as the I Love You Rituals
2. Utilize mental health, social workers, and psychologists in service of the child and family. Refer to special needs' programs if available.
3. Class-made books individualized for the student. Individual picture cards to support behavioral expectations.
4. Ways for the student to be of service to the school, others or his or her community.
5. Noticing and describing the child's body, face and actions, labeling of feelings, and acknowledging or true intent.
6. I Am: Feeling Chart, I Choose: Self-Control Board, and intense work with the Feeling Buddies.
7. Assessing, teaching, or scaffolding missing executive skills.

Biting Program

Before age three, biting is somewhat common. When a child repeatedly bites:

1. Identify stressors—not enough structure, too much structure, not enough rest, eating, bowel habits, connection, attunement, etc.
2. Start a stress reduction program at home and school.
 - More touching (skin to skin), massage games (I'm saying goodnight to your legs, arms, hands, fingers, head, etc.)
 - I Love You Rituals with attuned interactions
 - Chest and lap time
 - More schedules and routines

Severe Biting or Hitting Policy

The following process will be followed if a child's behavior continuously takes away from the care or safety of others.

- Meeting with parent, teacher, administration to discuss a plan of action to increase positive behavior at school and home. If necessary, an evaluation will be recommended for the child and the parent will be supplied contact information for the evaluation. If an evaluation is recommended, the parent will have a week to make the appropriate connection and two weeks for the evaluation to take place/be scheduled. All documentation must be provided to the office. Failure to respond in a timely manner may result in the child's expulsion from the program.
- Logs must be kept seeking out triggers and patterns for repeated undesired behavior. Upon written request, these logs will be made available to the parents and/or evaluator.
- If aggressive behavior/ biting occurs two times in the same day the child must be picked up from the center immediately. The child will be removed from the classroom while waiting to be picked up. If the behavior occurs a third time in the same week, the child must be picked up immediately and take the following day off.

Home and School Partnership

Seesaw

Seesaw is an app to help parents stay connected with their child and teacher during school hours. This is where you can communicate directly with your child's teachers throughout the day.

Talk to your child's teacher at Orientation to get set up.

New Family Orientation

Each family is strongly encouraged to schedule a time with the teacher to complete a "Orientation." This orientation is a great time for parents to drop off supply list items, as well as an opportunity to participate in a portion of classroom activities with their child, familiarizing themselves with their child's routines at the Center. Important policies and procedures are also reviewed with the staff at this time, as well as the paperwork required for enrollment completed. Typically, "Orientation" is scheduled a day prior to the start date.

Daily Communication

The Center uses Seesaw to communicate, share photos, notes and incidents.

Newsletters

A weekly newsletter will be posted on Seesaw by your child's teacher. The Director will send a monthly newsletter using Seesaw to keep you updated on School Events. Newsletters will provide you with general information and announcements about the center, detailed weekly themes, and announcements.

Cultural Competence

The Enrichment Program is committed to respecting each child's and family's culture and diverse needs. We recognize that culture influences every aspect of a child's development and is reflected in childrearing beliefs and practices. We believe it is important to support and

preserve the child's home language usage, faith and beliefs, and cultural traditions. We recognize that children can and will acquire the use of English even when their home language is used and respected.

The Center carries out this philosophy of cultural competence in the following ways:

- Families are treated with respect and sensitivity from our first meeting.
- We attempt to learn accurate information about each family, their culture, faith and beliefs, and cultural traditions (we encourage each family, if they feel comfortable, to share this information with us at the time of enrollment). This information is part of the child's daily plan as it relates to meals and snacks, holiday recognition, etc.
- Families are encouraged to be actively involved in what their child is doing in our program through family "homework", dress up days, holiday parties, and volunteer opportunities such as chaperoning field trips.
- Families are asked to inform us of the best way for them to receive communication (i.e. verbal, written, text, email, etc.)

Parent Participation

Parent participation is strongly encouraged in our program. Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child's experience:

- Field trip transportation and supervision
- Leading or assisting special projects
- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Being present for class parties and events
- Volunteering in your child's classroom

Program Evaluations

The Center asks parents to complete a program evaluation annually. The information gathered from these anonymous surveys is used by the staff to develop goals for our center and to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent's point of view is different from a teacher's point of view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to the success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

Questions/Concerns

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher most directly involved.

If the concern is not resolved, the Director can be reached via Seesaw, by phone 803-983-7808, or by email (gigi.houser@thomassumter.org).

The Director is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

Emergency Procedures

Fire, Tornado, Bomb, or other Emergency Situations

Fire regulations are posted near the exits in each classroom. Fire drills are conducted every month and tornado drills are conducted every three months; all classrooms are required to participate. In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and go to each class' designated spot. Once all children are accounted for all classes will meet at the back of the Lower School Playground.

In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be called or messaged on Seesaw as soon as safely possible following an emergency situation. For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency situation.

Blizzard/ Severe Winter Weather

The Center will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. The school will send a Parent Alert via text and teachers will post on Seesaw to inform parents of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive.

Missing or Abducted Child

In the event of a missing child, the Center will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Security Officer to help with the search.

- If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director will notify the Police Department and the child's parents.
- In the event of an abducted child, the Director must immediately contact the Head of School, Police Department, and the child's parents.

Power Failure

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

- If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close, and parents contacted.
Staff members are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.
- Activities will resume as possible until parents arrive.

A handbook agreement must be signed and initialed before your child starts their first day.