

Westside Story Time Nursery Parent Orientation Guide

Welcome to Westside's wonderful class for our 2 and 3 year olds! We are delighted to have your child join us.

Checking In

The Story Time Classroom is on the lower level (social hall) in the northwest corner of the building. Our classroom volunteers welcome children into the classroom beginning at 10:20 AM. Children may also stay with parents in the service in the sanctuary through the Story for All Ages. Following the story, children are sung out through the arch and go downstairs to join classmates. Parents are asked to sign their child/ren in on our green sign in sheet. Please leave a number where you can be reached during the service and set your phone to 'vibrate'. Additionally, let us know if your child is toilet training or has any special needs that we should be aware of.

Class Structure

Our two and three year-olds enjoy a combination of free play and age appropriate structure on Sunday mornings. The class is led by a team of dedicated volunteers. There will always be a leader and a second set of helping hands. You are welcome to stay with your child/ren until they are ready to be without you in the classroom. You can expect that they will have a chance to participate in lighting a chalice (made of felt), hear stories and sing songs. They will be offered a light snack of fruit and crackers and water. Please let us know of any food sensitivities at check in.

Pick Up

In general, our Sunday services end at about 11:45. Story Time Class ends at 11:50. Please do not come to pick your child up before that time as it creates an expectation in all the children that their parents should be there as well. We encourage you to take advantage of a few free moments to enjoy coffee and conversation in the Social Hall. At 11:50 the DRE or ADRE will ring a chime and announce that children's classes have ended. Please proceed to the Story Time Classroom and sign your child out.

Behavior Guidelines

The Story Time class is a vibrant and fun place for our 2 and 3-year-olds. We are fully aware that part of learning to be a good citizen of a group and part of exploring how bodies move sometimes includes some aggressive behavior. Some children are likely to exhibit aggressive behaviors on occasion despite excellent parenting. The adults who volunteer in the class are charged with responding kindly and consistently.

We need to assure that:

- 1) All our children are kept safe
- 2) Any child who exhibits aggressive behavior will hear that while that behavior is unacceptable, we absolutely still care deeply for them.

Procedure

If a child exhibits aggressive behavior toward another child or an adult the child will be immediately physically removed from the classroom by one of the class volunteers and taken to the hallway.

The language and physicality used in removing the child will not be punitive rather matter of fact, for example: "Pinching hurts! Pinching is not ok. You can say, I'm using that toy." The adult who signed the child in (or another adult who has been designated by the child's adult) will be called to come and take the child away from class for the rest of the day. The next Sunday the child comes to class; they will be warmly welcomed back and folded right in to our community.

Motivation

Swift, consistent and clear response to aggressive behavior is likely to offer the most effective boundary setting for 2 and 3 year-olds.

If a parent knows of specific triggers for a child (everyone wants the purple hippo and it causes Janie to bash Johnnie over the head to get it) we'll do everything we can to remove that trigger. If an adult knows it's a bad day it might be a good day to stay and help the child have a good day.

Details

Aggressive behavior is: hitting, biting, shoving (to knock down, not to get past), head butting, pinching, kicking, choking and similar behavior.

It is preferred that parent/caregivers leave a good cell phone number that they'll be able to notice vibrating in the service or elsewhere in the building. If they have no cell phone, we'll bring the child to the parent. If the parent will be in the building any place other than the Sanctuary, that should be noted on the sign-in sheet. We are here to support each other in loving community; we will work together with parents to get jobs covered if the need to take a child out of RE interferes with a parent's ability to complete volunteer responsibilities.

If a child is crying and upset and unable to be consoled, this is another time that a parent should be called.

Questions/Concerns?

We are deeply committed to the goal that each child has a good experience in our Religious Exploration Program. If you have questions or concerns you may speak to the teacher in the Story Time classroom or contact our DRE, Kari Kopnick at 206-200-1638 or westseattledre@gmail.com or our ADRE, Shannon Day at 206-554-1573 or wsuuadre@earthlink.net.