

HOPKINS HOUSE

A Learning Center for Children, Youth, and Families

Celebrating 76 Years

James and Juliette McNeil Preschool Academy

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Dear Parents and Family Members:

I want to take a moment of time to personally thank you for completing the “Preschool Parent Satisfaction Survey” last month. Through this annual survey, we gain much insight about our work and areas we might need to improve. We thoroughly examined the survey results and thoughtfully read every comment.

We were excited and pleased to learn that the overwhelming majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the care their children receive and learning opportunities provided at the James L. & Juliette McNeil Preschool Academy, as well as satisfaction with the performance of our staff. This is wonderful news.

Following are specific areas around which you provided feedback, current activities related to the topic and actions we plan to take:

Curriculum Articulation and Developmental Appropriateness

Several families expressed concern regarding our implementation of the curriculum and how the children are taught. This upcoming year our goal is to be more transparent in how our curriculum is implemented and how we teach our young scholars.

The program at the James & Juliette McNeil Preschool Academy uses a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, which means meeting children where they are, as individuals and as a group, and helping children reach challenging and achievable goals that contribute to their ongoing development and learning.

We use a variety of learning formats to implement our curriculum. The four major kinds of learning formats are large groups, small groups, play/learning centers and everyday routines. Each of these formats has its own characteristics, functions and values. The teachers use these learning formats to introduce language and literacy concepts. They work with children on listening, speaking and understanding. The teachers engage in conversations with both individual children and small groups. Concepts such as letter recognition, letter sounds, comprehension, alliteration, rhymes and songs are also taught through these learning formats. Math concepts are taught during block play; play with manipulatives, movement activities and in small and large group time.

Our teachers will continue to offer opportunities to educate parents on our curriculum and provide various opportunities for them to participate in classroom activities that will be outlined in our curriculum. Information packets explaining our curriculum will be made available to parents upon request.

Effective Communication between Parent and Teacher

Effective communication between leadership, parents and teachers are essential in ensuring that we are providing the best possible environment for the children and families that we serve. The basis for positive parent-teacher relationships is frequent and open communication. We are encouraged by your feedback, and will make note of all the suggestions that you have offered, working to implement them into our Academy.

Both teachers and parents share the responsibility for creating such a foundation.

Our teachers come to any parent-teacher relationship with their own passions and anxiety. They want every child to succeed, balance all the diverse strengths and needs of the children in their class, meet all the parental expectations and deal with all of their concerns. Our staff wants the classroom to be a place of learning and community.

In order to make sure that these partnerships work, our staff have asked that parents be active participants in their child's education. Parent involvement enhances academic performance, and the more intensely the parent is involved, the more their children will experience academic success.

At Hopkins House James & Juliette McNeil Preschool Academy, we establish communication in two main forms:

- The first is one-way communication through our newsletters, emails and lesson plans. The staff works very hard in documenting what the children are participating in daily, and the skills that they are learning through the "***What happened today***" form that is posted on bulletin boards and doors of the classroom. Parents are encouraged to read these daily, ask questions, and ask their child about the day as well. ***Parent are also encouraged to read all school and classroom information, whether it be the Parent's Handbook, newsletters, memos, or an email that is sent. A well informed parent is an engaged parent.***
- Our second form of communication is two-way communication, in which teachers and parents can dialogue together. ***Parent-teacher conferences are offered twice a year***, and we encourage parents to take advantage of these conferences at that time and any other time that parents may have concerns. It is important that parents ask questions of teachers and assistant teachers, and if ***there are concerns to address it with them at opportunistic times such as calling them during naptime or by sending an email.*** Classroom aides or instructional assistants may not be the best individuals to address your child's developmental concerns. As you can imagine, drop-off and pick-up are very busy times for the staff, and while every parent would like to know how their child did that day, a specific developmental conversation is not always achievable during this time. That being said, staff is always willing

to provide parents with daily feedback through other mediums and at less hectic times.

These changes, based on your feedback in the 2016 Preschool Parent Satisfaction Survey, are part of our commitment to continuous improvement. We are grateful for the many kind words you shared about the McNeil Preschool Academy and staff, and for choosing our Academy as your child's preschool. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gret", is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Greta M. Duncan, M.Ed.
Principal