

Somerset Early Childhood Center Parent Handbook



2018-2019

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Philosophy

At Somerset we believe that within all children lies the potential for great learning and a desire to explore and understand the world around them. It is our responsibility to nurture and unfold each child's uniqueness in a trusting and challenging learning environment where the children construct knowledge and feel supported in developing their own ideas.

Vision

Somerset Early Childhood Center strives to provide innovative, continually evolving early childhood programs, designed to create a lifelong positive impact on children's ability to seek knowledge and maximize their creative, social, emotional and cognitive potential.

Mission

To create the learning environment where your child's potential can be fully developed to facilitate:

- A love for learning
- The development of behavioral and cognitive habits that support effective learning
- A strong foundation for future academic achievement

PROGRAM INFORMATION

At Somerset teachers build the experiences (learning activities) they plan for the children and interact spontaneously with our children's "wonderful ideas", and they are guided by a set of foundational objectives. Our teachers design daily learning activity plans with both the learning opportunities arising from our children's observed interactions with materials and processes, and our foundational objectives in mind. This stable foundation and flexible implementation ensures that the children's learning is developmentally appropriate and personally meaningful. While Somerset's foundational objectives remain consistent over the years, the learning activities that different groups of children experience change based on the current needs and interests of our enrolled children.

Curriculum Goals and Objectives

Somerset ECC uses The Creative Curriculum for Preschool which is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. It is designed to help educators at all levels of experience plan and implement a developmentally appropriate and age appropriate, content-rich curriculum with diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

Teaching Strategies GOLD – Objectives for Development & Learning

Social-Emotional

- 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors**
 - a. Manages feelings
 - b. Follows limits and expectations
 - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
- 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships**
 - a. Forms relationships with adults
 - b. Responds to emotional cues
 - c. Interacts with peers
 - d. Makes friends
- 3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations**
 - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
 - b. Solves social problems

Physical

- 4. Demonstrates traveling skills**
- 5. Demonstrates balancing skills**
- 6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills**
- 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination**
 - a. Uses fingers and hands
 - b. Uses writing and drawing tools

Language

- 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language**
 - a. Comprehends language
 - b. Follows directions
- 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs**
 - a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
 - b. Speaks clearly
 - c. Uses conventional grammar
 - d. Tells about another time and place
- 10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills**
 - a. Engages in conversations
 - b. Uses social rules of language

Cognitive

- 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning**
 - a. Attends and engages
 - b. Persists
 - c. Solves problems
 - d. Shows curiosity and motivation
 - e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
- 12. Remembers and connects experiences**
 - a. Recognizes and recalls

- b. Makes connections
- 13. Uses classification skills**
- 14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present**
 - a. Thinks symbolically
 - b. Engages in socio-dramatic play

Literacy

- 15. Demonstrates phonological awareness, phonics skills, and word recognition**
 - a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
 - b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
 - c. Notices and discriminates discrete units of sound
 - d. Applies phonics concepts and knowledge of word structure to decode text
- 16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet**
 - a. Identifies and names letters
 - b. Identifies letter-sound correspondences
- 17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses**
 - a. Uses and appreciates books and other texts
 - b. Uses print concepts
- 18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts**
 - a. Interacts during reading experiences, book conversations, and text reflections
 - b. Uses emergent reading skills
 - c. Retells stories and recounts details from informational texts
 - d. Uses context clues to read and comprehend texts
 - e. Reads fluently
- 19. Demonstrates writing skills**
 - a. Writes name
 - b. Writes to convey ideas and information
 - c. Writes using conventions

Mathematics

- 20. Uses number concepts and operations**
 - a. Counts
 - b. Quantifies
 - c. Connects numerals with their quantities
 - d. Understand and uses place value and base ten
 - e. Applies properties of mathematical operations and relationships
 - f. Applies number combinations and mental number strategies in mathematical operations
- 21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes**
 - a. Understands spatial relationships
 - b. Understands shapes
- 22. Compares and measures**
 - a. Measures objects

- b. Measures times and money
- c. Represents and analyzes data

23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

Science and Technology

- 24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
- 25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
- 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
- 27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
- 28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies

- 29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
- 30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
- 31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
- 32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts

- 33. Explores the visual arts
- 34. Explores musical concepts and expression
- 35. Explores dance and movement concepts
- 36. Explores drama through actions and language

English Language Acquisition

- 37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
- 38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

Extended Curriculum Goals

In addition to the Creative Curriculum and the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality for 3 – 5 year olds, Somerset ECC also actively includes planning and offering experiences, which facilitate the development of Executive Function Skills and Habits of Mind.

Executive Function Skills

From 'Building the Brain's "Air Traffic Control" System: How early experiences shape the development of Executive Function', Center on the Developing Child – Harvard University.

As adults, our capacities to multitask, to display self-control, to follow multiple-step directions even when interrupted, and to stay focused on what we are doing despite ever-present distractions are what undergird the deliberate, intentional, goal-directed behavior that is required for daily life and success at work. And while there are cognitive limits to anyone's ability to multi-task effectively, we need and rely on these basic skills in all areas of our lives. Without them, we could not solve complicated problems and make decisions, persist at tedious but important tasks, make plans and adjust them when necessary, recognize and correct mistakes, control our impulsive behavior, or set goals and monitor our progress toward meeting them. Children need to develop these

skills too, in order to meet the many challenges they will face on the road to becoming productive, contributing members of their communities. The critical period for the development of Executive Function Skills is from 3-5 years of age. This is the time period when it is particularly important for children to have experiences which provide practice with activities that support the development of these skills.

Working Memory is the capacity to hold and manipulate information in our heads over short periods.

Inhibitory Control is the skill we use to master and filter our thoughts and impulses so we can resist temptations, distractions, and habits and to pause and think before we act.

Cognitive or Mental Flexibility is the capacity to mentally switch gears and adjust to changed demands, priorities or perspectives.

Habits of Mind

From *Describing 16 Habits of Mind* by Arthur L. Costa, E.D.D. and Bena Kallick, Ph.D.

A “Habit of Mind” means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems the answers to which are not immediately known. As with the Executive Function Skills, these dispositions come to be, by having age level appropriate experiences in an environment, which supports and guides their development gradually over time, even in young children. Habits of Mind include:

Persisting	Managing Impulsivity
Thinking Flexibly	Listening to Others with Understanding and Empathy
Thinking about Our Thinking	Striving for Accuracy and Precision
Questioning and Posing Problems	Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations
Gathering Data through all the Senses	Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision
Creating, Imagining and Innovating	Responding with Wonderment and Awe
Taking Responsible Risks	Finding Humor
Thinking Interdependently	Learning Continuously

Somerset's program strives to support children's growth in each of the above areas by:

- Providing a caring, professional teaching staff that respects, encourages, supports and guides children's explorations.
- Providing a rich, safe, and planned physical, social and learning environment. Our learning interest areas and experiences encourage higher levels of school readiness in pre-math, pre-reading, science and social studies.
- Providing flexible, challenging and varied learning centers and experiences.
- Providing an optimum mix of new and familiar experiences, equipment, and materials.
- Providing support and guidance when children momentarily lose control of materials, equipment, or emotions.

- Providing open communication and collaboration with children's parents to help the children grow and develop optimally.
- Providing an inclusive experience during the holidays, avoiding the use of religious symbols, and keeping activities with multi-cultural and multi-ethnic awareness.

Confidentiality Policy

All the child related information provided to Somerset School regarding developmental assessment, special needs, health issues (allergies, etc.), family background and the developmental information gathered by teachers is treated as confidential material. It is kept in locked files. It is only released to professionals who are authorized by parents in a written agreement. When you sign to document you have read this Parent Handbook you are giving permission to our teaching staff and administrators to access and use the information you have provided for the purpose of enhancing your child's experience at our school.

This information is only used by staff to identify children's developmental needs and interest, to modify appropriate curriculum, adapt teaching practices, assess developmental growth, and plan program improvement. The program administrators (Administrator and Consultant) and teaching staff work together as a collaborative team to use the assessment to adapt the curriculum as well as specific teaching approaches and strategies to meet the individual child's developmental needs. The child folders are only accessible to the teaching staff, Administrator, Consultant and the Administrative Assistant for the purposes described above. All the observation and data collected by the Teachers or provided by parents is confidential and is being kept in a locked cabinet in the classrooms at the end of the day.

Discipline Policy and Procedures

Somerset considers discipline as an educational experience for the child. Young children are just learning how to get along in the group. In our programs we help children learn acceptable ways to achieve this goal. We believe that each child needs to develop the skills to manage their own behavior and become self-disciplined. The staff provides children consistency, choices with safe boundaries, skills and language to express needs and emotions in acceptable behavior in a very safe, loving and positive environment. Our staff will use positive methods of discipline to encourage self-control, self-direction, and cooperation. They will use redirection, logical consequences and talking with the child to help achieve the acceptable behavior. Somerset prohibits any kind of punitive, corporal physical, and psychological punishment administered to any child.

- Teachers will formulate consequences that are immediate, consistent, and logical.
- Teachers will warn children of consequences that will result if they break a rule.

- Teachers will follow through on stated consequences if children continue to break a rule.
- Teachers will model a rational, calm approach to problem situations.
- Teachers will purposely ignore some problem situations (so as not to reinforce certain behaviors).
- Teachers will use gentle restraint to avoid some potential problems in the classroom.
- Teachers will use proximity control to redirect potential problem behaviors.
- Teachers will use painless removal from the situation as a last resort.

Separation Anxiety Policy

Our teachers understand that each child handles separation anxiety differently. Our goal is to teach children how to deal with it in a very loving and secure environment. Each child is encouraged to visit the program with their parents prior to the start of school. Parents are encouraged not to leave without saying good-bye to their child. When separation is difficult, staff's help is provided to make the process easier. They have a great deal of experience in this area. Parents are encouraged to feel free to call the classroom to check on their child after a difficult separation.

Diversity Policy

Diversity includes varying family practices and the differences in home languages. Our goal is to expand the child's behavioral and language options in encountering everyday situations while respecting the value of their language and family culture. We should educate ourselves about children's home language and family traditions, learn and incorporate this knowledge into our classroom learning environment and curriculum planning to support children's self-worth and self-esteem.

Cultural Competency Plan

Introduction: Cultural Competency is a cornerstone of Somerset's program. From its founding to today, Somerset has enjoyed an extremely diverse enrollment. We feel cultural competency is a strength of our program recognized by our community through word of mouth among families. Presently, with an enrollment of approximately 130 children we have children from 24 different countries.

Somerset Early Childhood Center staff demonstrate their respect and sensitivity to each family's cultural and diverse needs from the family's very first visit when parents observe children of all backgrounds interacting happily with each other and their teachers, and with materials that reflect a wide range of cultures. The staff at Somerset ECC understands that culture influences every aspect of a child's development and is reflected in childrearing beliefs and practices. We recognize that all children are cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to the language and culture of their home and must be supported in the cultural values and norms of their home as they learn to make their way into the broader community.

Goal: To provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment where children have rich opportunities to enhance their language, investigative, and behavioral development, collaboratively, with other children from all over the world. Somerset staff members will value and continuously learn about children's home language and family traditions. They will incorporate this knowledge into the classroom learning environment and curriculum planning to support children's self-worth and self-esteem.

All staff at Somerset ECC will refrain from making assumptions of others based on culture, beliefs and/or religious background.

Special Education at Somerset

Children with special needs are offered an opportunity to participate in our preschool, pre-kindergarten or enrichment programs that meet the appropriate developmental levels with their peers. Staff provides these children with individualized instructions, as well as exposure to a well-rounded, child-centered curriculum. The teachers facilitate learning, adapt materials and strategies, and initiate/reinforce-desired responses. The term "special needs" covers a wide range of issues including disabilities, emotional vulnerabilities, developmental delays, and physical or motor limitations. It also includes children who require additional stimulation and challenge.

Somerset E.C.C. collaborates with Rochester Community Schools and other Oakland County Schools Early Childhood intervention services for children with special needs who require additional diagnosis, therapy and/or other help. Early intervention professionals will share ideas about services and people who can help the child and guide work with families. This service is funded by the State to support children and their families. Somerset also assists families in finding other available resources and professional help when it is needed.

Special Needs Plan

Introduction: At Somerset ECC, we recognize that each child is unique and has special needs. However, some children have a wider range of special needs than others. The fundamental design of our program lends itself well to addressing the needs of each child regardless of the special nature of their individuality. Though chronological age and physical development are considerations, our primary focus in placement decisions within our school, is each child's development in the areas of cognitive, social, and emotional development. Because our classrooms serve three main (typical) developmental levels across the chronological ages of 2.5-6 years, we have the flexibility we need to successfully integrate most children.

Somerset Early Childhood Center staff members are highly educated, experienced early childhood education specialists, most of whom have been with us for many years. They are dedicated to supporting each child's success, and challenging children to explore, create, and learn increasingly complex concepts and skills in a no-fail learning environment.

Goal: To provide a developmentally appropriate, individualized learning environment where all children have rich opportunities to enhance their language, investigative, and behavioral development, collaboratively, with other children from all over the world.

Note: At Somerset, learning to speak English is a very common, every day experience, that we support in each of our classrooms. It is considered an every day activity, not special need.

All staff at Somerset ECC will refrain from making assumptions of the limits of any child's abilities, rather they will scaffold each child's abilities in all areas to support each child's continuous growth.

Assessment Process

Your child's teachers, on a daily basis, observe and assess your child's developmental needs throughout the day in groups and individually to create an individualized curriculum plan. Child assessment is the process of observing, recording, and documenting what children do and how they do it as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect teaching approaches as well as curriculum development and implementation. Child assessment involves the multiple steps and methods of collecting information on children's abilities and skills and then compiling that information so results can be incorporated into planning that meets the needs of not only individual children but the whole group. Assessment results are compiled to learn about each child and the context of his or her learning; to learn what is necessary to further each child's growth and learning and then make plans; and to implement plans and then evaluate to see if the plans resulted in positive gains for each child. All child assessment information is confidential and accessible only to the child's teachers, the school administrators and administrative assistant. Our teachers use an on-line developmental assessment and documentation service offered by Creative Curriculum "Teaching Strategies Gold" to help them document and interpret their observations. All of our teachers have 12 hours of training for using this service to enable them to assess each child's developmental needs.

Assessment Helps Us To:

- Monitor children's development and learning
- Guide planning and decision making
- Identify children who might benefit from special services
- Report to and communicate with others
- Know what areas of the program need improvement
- Assure that we maintain confidentiality of individual child information (child information is kept confidential and is not released without written permission from the child's parents)

Tools for Assessment - include:

- Observation
- Checklists
- Rating scales

- Timelines
- Anecdotal records
- Child Portfolio
- Work Samples
- Analysis of Classroom Photos
- Teachers use “end of the day” meetings to interpret and assess children’s developmental progress and growth
- Parent Input-We depend on parents to let us know if they are observing changes in their child’s behavior at home or if anything significant has changed in the home environment that might affect the child’s behavior at school. Such changes could be as minor as a grandparent visiting or as major as a death in the family.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents are invited twice a year (Fall and Spring) to review their child’s learning with a classroom teacher. A written progress report provides families with an overview of their child’s progress. Parents are provided with the opportunity to sign-up in a notebook to schedule a convenient time. Somerset is closed for children on conference days.

When English is the Second Language:

We understand the importance of parents’ need to remain completely informed about their child’s developmental progress. We work with parents to communicate in their preferred language by encouraging them to bring a translator to meetings concerning their child or we assist them in finding a translator. When necessary we can arrange to have child progress reports translated into their preferred language.

Parent/Teacher Consultation:

Parents are encouraged to request a special conference with their child’s teachers whenever they have a need. Additional parent/teacher meetings can be held at the request of parents or teachers at any time and also for reasons such as:

- * A change is being requested regarding the child’s teacher or physical environment
- * Teachers have concerns about a child’s cognitive, social/emotional or physical development
- * The placement of a child in a program needs to be reassessed.

Informal daily conversations:

Parents have an opportunity to have informal conversations with our staff at arrival and departure times for a quick update on their child’s day at school.

Referral for Special Services:

Based on our observations, when we feel a child would benefit from special services, our teachers communicate their observations to the child’s parents and help the parents address their child’s special needs by collaborating with them to locate and contact local special service providers for additional diagnosis and possible intervention. If intervention is indicated, our teachers collaborate with the special service providers.

Requests for Staff's Assessment:

Other schools, agencies, doctors, etc. may request information regarding your child's educational performance and ability while at Somerset. Such information will be released ONLY with written parental approval. A copy of this information will be provided to parents upon request.

Annual Program Assessment:

Somerset Early Childhood Center is committed to continuously making improvements. Annually the staff, administrators and families routinely participate in completing surveys that provide us the feedback about our programs, procedures and policies. The annual findings are gathered to evaluate the progress towards the goals and objectives Somerset has for our children and families. The annual evaluation findings from the "Family Survey" is shared with families by publishing them in our "Somerset Notes" and the results are used as a basis for continuing successful activities and for making improvements in the areas identified. The staff and parents (members of our Parent Perspective Committee) participate in offering their feedback to assist administrators in making appropriate decisions to improve the program. This information is also used in the planning of all our staff development related in-services. The families are informed about the improved changes through "Somerset Notes".

TEACHING STAFF

Our staff consists of educators trained in early childhood education, with extensive experience working with young children. The teachers are warm, interested, and committed to the children as individuals. They help children learn by respecting each child's ability to learn in his/her own way. The teachers emphasize the total development of each child while maintaining high standards for health, safety, and nutrition.

Our qualified and knowledgeable staff carefully plans a curriculum, which challenges each child's ability to make new observations and develop new skills. Learning experiences are planned to be flexible and individualized. In order to plan effectively, the staff must know the skills and interests of each child. In order to facilitate each child's optimum growth pattern, teachers must know what will challenge that child.

This kind of knowledge comes only through careful and perceptive observation and interaction with each child. Our staff spends time, not only planning the environment for learning, but also mediating with children individually to enhance learning opportunities. Teachers document their observations online on Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. The observational information is used to assess each child's individual goals and plan curriculum. This information is shared with parents at conferences and enables us to plan most appropriately for each individual.

Each classroom is staffed by fully qualified teachers. All of our teachers have four-year college degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field and maintain a current membership in the National Association For the Education of Young Children.

Somerset E.C.C. provides continuous staff training by providing ongoing in-service training in various formats throughout the year.

All of our staff have First Aid and CPR training for children through the American Red Cross and maintain their certification with regular training. All of our staff also has passed a Criminal Background Check through the Michigan State Police and Central Registry Clearance through the state of Michigan.

PROGRAMS

Our School offers two programs.

Preschool

A program for developmentally ready 2 1/2 - 4 yr. olds. It's not necessary that a child is potty trained, but they must be 2 1/2 yrs. old. Teacher/child ratio is 1-8.

Pre Kindergarten

A program for 4 and 5 year old children. Must be potty trained to handle all the toileting needs independently. Teacher/child ratio is 1-10.

Both programs are offered from Monday - Friday.

9:00 - 12:00 Morning Session

1:00 - 4:00 Afternoon Session

9:00 - 4:00 Full Day Session

Admission Policy

Children 2 1/2 to 5 years are eligible to enroll without regard to sex, race, religion, or national origin. Exclusion could occur if a Somerset staff or parents feel that the child would be unable to benefit from the program due to health, physical or emotional non-adjustment issues.

REGISTRATION

General Registration Information

- We strongly encourage parents to call and set up a day to visit the desired program with their child to observe the program. These visits are limited to one hour.
- When parents visit the program, they are advised to inform the staff if their child has any special needs.

- Our staff guides parents in selecting the program and schedule that meets their child's developmental needs.
- Children must be 2 years and 6 months of age to enter Preschool and 4 years of age by December 1st to enter Pre-Kindergarten. However we base our final admission decision on developmental readiness on an individual basis.
- Parents are required to complete the Online Registration Form and submit it with a **NON-REFUNDABLE \$100.00** registration fee per family. A registration fee will be refunded only if WE cannot place the child in the requested schedule. Because our registration process is online, the registration fee must be mailed or dropped off at the school. (Somerset ECC, 1385 S Adams Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48309) **Your registration will be processed after the registration fee has been delivered.**

Instructions for Parents

To ensure you get your choice of schedule, register as early as possible.

We place your child in sessions on a first come, first served basis. Once a class is filled, a waiting list is started, also on a first come, first served basis. You may register for the coming school year at any time. Whether you are a returning family or a new family, your registration will be processed as soon as your registration fee is received, however **schedules for families new to Somerset will not be confirmed until after February 28th**. This policy gives our returning families a protected period of time to register for their preferred schedule. However, after February 28th, returning and new families are all confirmed in the order the registrations and registration fees arrive. We will confirm your schedule and monthly tuition installment by mail or in your child's cubby or folder. Please retain your confirmation letter for future reference, as we do not mail monthly statements.

Tuition installments are based on the number of days you select 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week. The total amount of tuition is divided into equal monthly installments over the 10 months of a full school year, or (for those registering after school has started in September) the number of months the child will be attending, each installment due the 1st of each month. The 1st month's non-refundable tuition payment is your final confirmation of your schedule for September. The last month's tuition pays for the child's last month in attendance, which for a full school year would be June. If a child must withdraw before the end of the school year, 30 days written notice is required for the last month's tuition to apply as payment for the last month of the child's attendance. The last month's tuition is non-refundable regardless of if you withdraw or drop sessions before or during the school year.

Registration for Returning Families (new families - see below)

Go to the Registration page of our Somerset Early Childhood Center website (<http://www.somersetrochester.org/registration/>) Click on the Online Registration link to access our online records system where you will log in to your existing

family account. (If you can't remember your username, contact Somerset ECC via email to have your username sent to you). Here you will have the opportunity to enter your child's preferred and alternate schedule for next year. Please complete and submit the Registration Form, and mail a **NON-REFUNDABLE** \$100 registration fee to Somerset ECC, 1385 S. Adams Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48309. A registration fee will be refunded only if **WE** cannot place your child in your first choice schedule. After your registration fee is received, the Registration Form will be processed, and you will be notified by email and regular mail when your child's schedule has been confirmed. Accompanying that confirmation will be instructions for the submission of the rest of the information required to complete your child's enrollment. **If you are applying for more than one child**, click the link below again and enter the same username and password to sign in. Click the Start New button to open another blank form for each additional child. **All returning families must re-register for the coming school year for their child to be placed in a program.**

New Family Registration:

Go to the Registration page of our Somerset Early Childhood Center website (<http://www.somersetrochester.org/registration/>) Click on the Online Registration link to access our online records system where you will create a family account. Please use your child's first and last names with no spaces for your username. You may use any password you wish. New (not presently or previously enrolled) families may register at any time during the current school year; children will be placed in requested sessions on a space available basis. Registrations for the coming school year will not be confirmed for new families until after February 28th, and will be processed in the order we have received both the online registration and the \$100 **NON-REFUNDABLE** registration fee. (Note: the registration fee will be returned if we cannot confirm your first choice schedule and you do not want to enroll for your child's alternative schedule.)

Before registering, we strongly encourage parents to call and set up a day, any time during the current year, to visit the desired program with your child to observe the program. Children must be 2 years and 6 months to enter preschool and 4 years of age to enter Pre-Kindergarten, however you may register them anytime during the current school year and begin class when they turn the required age during the school year. Our staff will guide you in selecting the program and schedule which best meets your child's developmental needs.

Enrollment Requirements in Addition to Registration Process

Prior to the first day of attendance, parents will enter the additional information required for our online system to complete the forms listed below. These forms are required by law, thus it is essential that you provide all of the information requested. Instructions will be provided in the letter you receive which confirms your child's schedule.

1. Child Information Card: Without this form completed a child cannot be permitted to start the program.
2. Parent Consent Contracts
3. Volunteer Statement Form
4. Child Care Organizations Act, Form MCL 722.113.g
5. State Licensing Amendment

In addition:

An Immunization Record must be completed by a physician and returned to Somerset by the child's first day of school

And

A Health Appraisal Form, also completed by a physician, must be on file at Somerset within 30 days of the child's first day at school.

Two payment installments are due as indicated in the confirmation letter. If both payment installments are not received by September 1st, your child's confirmed sessions may be released to another child.

Available Options

An occasional lunch for children 3 years or older costs \$6.00 per time, and must be arranged with the teacher 24 hours in advance since space is limited.

Extra sessions are scheduled on a space available basis. Please contact the teacher 24 hours in advance to schedule extra sessions. Extra sessions are billed as "extra fees".

Latchkey Hours:

Before and after school care can be arranged for 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. time periods respectively. Please contact our Administrative Assistant for more information about this option. Session fees will be \$8.00/day for either the morning or afternoon latchkey hours, or \$12.00/day for both early and late sessions.

Tuition/Tuition Book

Our tuition calculations are complex precisely because we want to keep your monthly tuition payments consistent each month, though your child's scheduled school days vary each month. Our tuition is calculated by adding up all of the days the child is registered to attend school from September to June, including the six additional "no school for children" (but staff is working) days if they fall within the child's schedule. (2 days for Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences, 2 days for Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences and 2 days for staff training and development) Families **do not pay** for other days the school

is closed related to holidays or midwinter and spring breaks. We do not refund or make up days that Somerset is closed due to weather or building malfunctions.

A tuition installment is based on the number of days you select: 2, 3, 4 or 5 days per week. The total amount of tuition is divided into 10 equal monthly installments, one due the 1st of each month. For the month of June, only the number of days your child is actually scheduled to attend school is included in the 10-month total number of sessions. This means that part of the last months tuition you pay, actually covers more than just the scheduled days in June.

Two installment payments are due before your child begins school in September. The yearly tuition may be paid in full (see the Administrator before paying so the full year payment discount can be calculated). The first installment payment (First Months tuition) is due within 30 days of receipt of your schedule confirmation and will hold your schedule for the upcoming school year. If we do not receive this 1st installment by the first Friday in June, your scheduled sessions will be released. The second installment payment (last month tuition) is due by August 1. Your child will not be able to start school if the Last Months payment (due by August 1) has not been paid. If you register after August 1st, the first and last month's tuition is due by the first day school is open in September.

All tuition installments are due on the FIRST SCHOOL DAY OF THE MONTH. Payments can be made by check, money order (made out to SOMERSET SCHOOL), or in cash. Monthly statements are not sent home. The tuition is the same for all ten installments, unless a change has been made to your schedule. Carefully plan your child's schedule preference prior to the beginning of school. It is difficult to make changes after the year's program has been established. When schedule changes are made more than twice after school begins in September, a \$25 fee will be assessed for each change thereafter. Any days dropped from your original schedule will not be refunded from the June and August prepayment (First and Last school months). There is no additional charge to add days to your child's program.

There is a tuition "black safe box" located on the Administrative Assistant's desk in the hall to collect the monthly checks. The only statement you might receive will be for any extra fees incurred the previous month. Returned checks must be repaid in cash, certified check, or money order if this occurs more than once. If a check is returned, there will be a \$5.00 bank fee added to your account.

A record of payments is kept on a page (listed alphabetically by last name) in a loose-leaf notebook. The Administrative Assistant posts your payments in the tuition book monthly. Extra fees are also recorded on the tuition page. Debits or credits can be added to or subtracted from the regular installment. Each program has its own tuition book, and the Director can show you where it is kept. If you have children in two of our programs, your tuition page is kept in the tuition book of the oldest child. In June, please review the tuition page to be sure all accounts are paid in full before school ends.

Withdrawal Procedure

While we hope you and your child will remain with Somerset the entire school year, we understand that situations come up which require withdrawal from our program. **Written notice of withdrawal must be given 30 days before leaving, stating the last day your child will attend.** Any unused tuition will be applied to the remaining days. If your last month's tuition is in excess of the scheduled days falling within the 30 days withdrawal notice, the difference will be refunded. If 30 days notice is not given, the last month's tuition (June) is forfeited. If a child is unable to adjust after a reasonable time, the parents will be asked to confer with the teachers. An option of the school or the parents will be withdrawal of the child. A tuition refund would be based on the days scheduled or attended. **Note: If a parent decides to withdraw or drop sessions for the coming fall after June 1st, the first and last installments will not be refunded for the sessions dropped.**

Late Tuition

Monthly tuition payments are **due the first** week of each month. A \$15.00 late payment fee will be assessed if the installment is not paid by the 15th of the month. If an installment is still not paid by the 30th or 31st of the month, then that child cannot return to school until another \$15.00 late fee is paid; in this case, parents must pay 2 month's tuition in advance before their child can return to school.

Absences

The make-up of sick, vacation, or other missed days is unfortunately not possible. When your child is scheduled, staff is hired for those times. Therefore the school expenses are incurred whether your child is in attendance or not. In order to hold your scheduled time, the monthly payment must be made.

Early Arrival or Late Departure Fees

Teachers arrive at school before 9:00 a.m., and remain after 4:00 p.m., to set up and take down the program. They cannot be with children and do this work at the same time. Therefore, very severe fines are charged to discourage early drop off or late pickup. A minimal "warning" fee is charged in the amount of \$3.00 the first time this occurs. Thereafter, \$10.00 will be added every 10 minutes. When an unavoidable emergency has arisen, please call the school advising the teachers of the problem. We can then allay your child's fears, and arrange to have a staff person stay with your child. Even if you call, you will still be charged the stated late fee. In case of a true EMERGENCY the late fee may be adjusted at the discretion of the school. Our Latchkey Hours program does not affect the Early Arrival or Late Departure Fee Assessment, as arrangements for the Latchkey Hours program must be made a month in advance. **Please remember pick up times are 12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m.! We ask you to please be respectful of our teachers' time and responsibilities.**

Extra Fees

Extra fees are charged when your child stays for an extra session or lunch. The fees are recorded in the Tuition Book the last week of the month. Fee Statements are distributed by the program director, or left near the sign-in sheet for the parents to pickup. Extra fees are added to the next month's tuition payment. **In June**, extra fees are paid at the time care is provided.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Weather Related School Closing

A school calendar listing the scheduled holidays and other closings during the year is distributed before school starts. Please keep it close at hand. In the event of severe weather conditions (snow storms, tornadoes, icy roads), if **Rochester Community Schools** announce they are closing due to weather conditions, Somerset will close. During the day after class has begun, if the weather changes, please call the school to see if children need to be picked up. Tune to WXYT (1270 AM), WJR (760 AM) or call the school. Also, check the Rochester Public School website, if you are in doubt about school closings (<http://rochester.k12.mi.us>). If school is closed due to a building problem, you will be informed by e-mail, phone call or text message. We regret that we **cannot make-up, or refund** these day(s).

Procedures for Arrival and Departure of Children

Teachers at Somerset ECC greet each child personally at the beginning of every day. Teachers are trained to take a moment to welcome each child and take note/observe each child's state of health. They not signs of sickness, bumps or bruises, tiredness, and general wellbeing. Any concerns that the teachers see upon the child's arrival to the classroom are immediately discussed with the parents before they leave. Teachers continuously observe all children throughout the day and any concerns are discussed with the co-teacher and documented. All concerns are always shared with parents.

Our policy for the arrival and departure of children is to require parents/caregivers to drop off and pick up children in our classrooms. This requirement enables Somerset teachers and administrators to develop positive relationships with parents and caregivers in a natural manner over time, which encourages continuous sharing of information about the child. The teachers open the classroom door at 9:00 a.m./1:00 p.m. Children who arrive early should remain outside the classroom under adult supervision. An adult over the age of 18 years must always accompany children into the classroom. Be certain a staff member knows that your child has arrived and that your child knows when you leave. The accompanying adult is required to write to sign their name, and time in/out on the sign in sheet. A note or message for the staff, phone number (not listed on the emergency card) where the staff can reach you, can be noted in the comment column. The sign-in sheet is a legal document. Please do not allow your child to write or draw on this sheet.

An adult must come inside the building to get the child at the end of the session. Inform a staff member that your child is leaving and sign him/her out. Any changes in transportation should be given to the teacher in writing. Only persons authorized by the parents in writing or listed on the emergency card will be allowed to remove a child from school. We do require that a photo I.D. or drivers license be shown by any person we do not know when picking up a child.

Children Using Wheelchairs or Parents with Baby Strollers.

Please use the south entrance door of the building so that you do not have to negotiate the stairs, or use the elevator located on the north side.

Field Trips

Only children in the Pre-kindergarten and Enrichment Programs take offsite field trips. State laws require that each child up to 4 years of age and weighing up to 40 lbs., be secured in a booster car seat. We do not provide transportation. Parents or providers are responsible for field trip transportation.

Schedule Changes

Carefully plan your child's schedule preference prior to the beginning of school. It is difficult to make changes after the year's program has been established. If changes are necessary, please discuss the change with the teachers and administrative assistant. When schedule changes are made more than twice after school begins in September, a \$25.00 fee will be assessed for each change thereafter. Any days dropped from the original schedule, will not be refunded from the First and Last month prepayment. There is no additional charge **to** add days to your child's program.

Mid-Year Program Changes

If a change of programs is requested by a parent or recommended by a staff member, the teachers of the current program must confer with the Administrator. The child's developmental needs are observed and assessed. The intended program teachers are contacted about availability, and also observe the child. The parent and child visit the intended program. A collective decision is made based on what is best for the child.

Transition Process For Children Moving Into Pre-Kindergarten

To maintain the continuity between programs and to promote smooth, comfortable and easy transition for children, the following steps are taken:

- Parents are encouraged to visit the intended program with their child.
- Children are taken to the class they plan to enter by their current teachers so that they will develop a sense of belonging.
- Preschool teachers provide their input to the pre-kindergarten teachers to facilitate a smooth transition between programs.

School Directories and Posting Notes

Somerset does not permit the use of Parent Directories or children's cubbies to post or contact individual Somerset parents for any political, business, social or other activities not directly related to Somerset, without written approval from the Administrator or the Consultants.

Communication Between Home and School

Two way communication is very important to Somerset E.C.C. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

We communicate with families through:

- **Parent Handbook** - The Parent Handbook must be downloaded from our website: www.somersetrochester.org, and clicking on Registration. **I understand I am required to read the Parent Handbook and accept responsibility for its contents.** Each family is required to sign a contract, part of which indicates understanding of the Somerset policies and procedures as stated in the Parent Handbook. Please keep it handy for your reference.
- **Somerset News** - Will be emailed to each family before the start of each month. It contains general information about the school. Please keep it accessible for reference about special dates and information. A hard copy can be obtained from our Administrative Assistant if you would like.
- **Classroom News** - the teachers will email "Peek of the Week" to each family at the beginning of each week. It informs parents about the curriculum and learning activities covered in each program.
- **Parent Conference twice per year** - includes written progress report (No school for children on Parent Conference days.)
- **Parent Bulletin Board** - Information about special events, programs or messages from the staff will be posted on the bulletin board near the entrance of each program and on the bulletin board in hall across from administrative assistant's desk. Please check this regularly to keep informed.
- **Community Event Board** - Notices about local events for family participation
- **Parent to Parent Board** - Where parents can share information related to children
- **Special postings, notices, and letters** - Classroom and program news is placed in each child's cubby/folder.
- **A child's day in school slide show** - A slide show is displayed on a computer in front of each classroom.
- **Samples of children's work** - Children's work is displayed both in classrooms and out in the hallway.
- **Email** – Share pictures of experience of the child through photos via email.
- **Visiting classrooms** - Parents and other family members are welcome to visit the classroom. We do recommend that these visits be short, unless discussed with the director. We want to keep the children's routine as uninterrupted possible. Any un-enrolled sibling is to remain under the supervision of the parent during visits.

- **Somerset website** - www.somersetrochester.org
- **Somerset website** – www.preschoolrochesterhillsmichigan.com
- **Check us out on Facebook!**

These communications should answer many of your questions and keep you informed of coming events and classroom “happenings”. If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to talk with your child’s classroom teachers directly.

How to communicate with Somerset Staff:

You can contact the Administrator or the Administrative Assistant at any time. We would emphasize that all our staff welcome your calls and visits. Our staff wants to establish and maintain a more collaborative relationship with children’s families. During school hours, the teachers do not have quality time to talk to parents but they will welcome it if you can leave a note or email them regarding any questions, concerns or comments which you might have about your child’s school experience. We also want to encourage parents to please email your classroom email address bits of information that will help teachers be aware of experiences your child is having that enrich his or her knowledge and skills, or daily occurrences that might affect your child’s day, such as not sleeping well the night before or a grandparents visit from out of town, etc. Emailing this information with your child’s name mentioned anywhere in the message will directly be filtered into an email file folder for your child thus maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

Phone Messages: Our Administrative Assistant is available to answer phone calls from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day. After 3:00 pm, teachers, who will be drawn away from their work with the children, must answer phone calls. We respectfully request that calls to the school be made before 3:00 p.m., except of course, in an emergency. You are also welcome to leave a message after 3:00 p.m. on our answering machine. We appreciate your cooperation.

E-mail Messages: (first name of staff member)[@somersetrochester.org](mailto:(first name of staff member)@somersetrochester.org)

Parent Conflict Resolution Committee - This committee forms at the beginning of each school year, consisting of parents, teachers and an administrator, to resolve differences and/or difficulties that may occur between a parent and Somerset Early Childhood Center, which can not be resolved through our regular channel described below under Grievance Policy. Parents, who are interested in this committee and would like to learn more about it, should get in touch with the Administrator.

Grievance Policy

In case of disagreement between parents and a representative of Somerset Early Childhood Center, parents should first attempt to resolve the issue with the staff member involved in the disagreement. If the disagreement is not resolved, the parent should contact the following Somerset Staff members in the order listed: Classroom teacher, Administrator, Consultant.

Share Child's Home Life

We encourage parents to share with their classroom teachers any information related to their child's home life, culture, language, family structure, traditions and events of celebration. This information will allow us to better meet the needs of your child and be respectful of his/her background. Please complete the *Child's Family Background* form.

Parent Participation

To maximize the quality of your child's experience at Somerset, teachers work in partnership with families in establishing and maintaining regular and ongoing communication. To help the children feel a connection between home and school, parent involvement is encouraged but not required. Parent involvement can take many forms, from serving on a committee to demonstrating a favorite hobby in the classroom, telling a story, involving children in preparing favorite foods from different cultures, etc.

Family Involvement Is Encouraged By –

Parent Orientation

A meeting is held before the start of each school year in the evening for parents to meet the teachers and learn about the program. We encourage all parents to attend. (Adults only, please).

Parent Participation Book:

Parents are welcomed to sign up to participate in classrooms to read, write journals, or share a favorite activity with the children (kept near the daily sign-in sheet) While we welcome volunteers, to protect our children and their privacy; all volunteers are supervised by staff and are required to sign a form indicating that they have never been accused of child abuse or neglect. Our substitute teachers are never left alone with children, nor are they permitted to take children to the bathroom. Volunteers who participate in the classroom are required not to share their observations about other children to abide by our confidential policy.

Parent Volunteer Interest Survey

is conducted each year in the fall. Parents can sign up for committees that include:

- "Conflict Resolution Committee"
- Parent Perspective Committee - Each Fall, a committee consisting of parents, teaching staff from each program, Administrator, and consultant is formed to advise on issues and policies, and organizing special events and community outreach programs.

- “Box Top” Fund Raising Coordinators
- “Health Consultant”

Parent and Family Interaction Opportunities

- Family Night - An evening in October each year for children to come to school with parents, grandparents, etc. to enjoy school activities together, and to meet the families of classmates.
- Orientation Hour for Parent and Child - Each child will attend the first day of school accompanied by one parent (adult) for one hour and fifteen minutes. This shortened session will provide the children an opportunity to extensively explore their new classroom with the security of their parents. Both children and parents will build the confidence that comes with this new experience together. The Orientation Hour also provides parents with the opportunity to get to know the families of children in their child’s classroom.
- Whole Class Get Together - Mostly organized by parent volunteers to provide an opportunity for parents to meet each other at school, during the school day (“Jump in to Play” and “Lunch with Program”).
- “Parent Perspective Committee” - To celebrate special events such as Charity and Family Outreach projects, Somerset Sing-Along, Pre kindergarten Graduation Ceremony, Playground Up-keep Day.
- Classroom Special Events - Focus book, holiday celebrations and songfest.
- School Picnic - All families get together for a picnic in a park on the last day of school.

What Families Can Expect From Us

We believe that families play the primary role in a child’s socialization and education. The function of our school is to support families in this endeavor.

Therefore, families can expect that:

- We do everything in our power to maintain the health, safety and well-being of your child(ren) in our care.
- To protect your children, we release them only to you and other persons you have authorized.
- Any information you share with teachers and staff members is kept in strict confidence.
- To maintain sensitivity to individual children, we do not discuss children with staff members or parents in the children’s presence.
- All children and families are treated with respect regardless of ethnic background, lifestyle, disabling condition, gender, family structure or religion.
- We strive to enhance the overall development of each child in the program.
- We engage in a variety of activities to gauge children’s progress through the program to develop personal goals for each child.
- We communicate with you about your child(ren)’s development and progress in the program.

- We provide opportunities for you to increase your understanding of child development in general and your own child's development in particular.
- We willingly assist you in locating appropriate child and family resources available in the community.
- We consistently strive to enact programs based on sound child development principles and relevant research.
- We strive to provide a positive learning environment for all children enrolled in the program regardless of ability, special needs or learning style.

What You Can Do to Enhance Your Child's Early Childhood Education

We ask that you:

- Practice self-help skills at home such as putting on and removing coats, hats & boots, hand washing, feeding self, helping pick up toys and putting away in their places, etc. Developing these skills enhances self-esteem and independence, which is a good foundation for academic learning.
- Send your child to school healthy, well fed, rested and dressed appropriately so he/she can be involved in and benefit from the program activities.
- Bring children to each session on time and pick them up as soon as the session is over.
- Deliver children directly to the classroom or a staff member rather than letting children enter the building alone or remain on the playground unattended.
- Notify the program by phone and in writing of any changes in the person who will pick up your child at the end of the day, phone and address or health related information changes.
- Communicate with teachers about events at home that may influence your child's behavior at school, such as any substantial changes in the child's routine or an impending move, separation, divorce, hospitalization or visitor.
- Share your concerns about your child or any aspect of the program with the classroom teachers or Administrator.
- Treat all personnel (Administrator, teachers, office and building staff members and students) with consideration and understanding.
- Offer suggestions and ideas for program improvement either informally or through the various evaluation procedures provided.
- Share your concerns, comments with us right away without any hesitation. It will help us in meeting your needs and improving the situation.

HEALTH CARE PROCEDURES

Illness Policy-Non-Contagious Child Illness

Parents often ask about how to decide when to keep their child home because of illness. We expect parents to keep their child home if the child is not well enough to

participate fully in the program's regular daily routine, which includes going outside, weather permitting. We do not have sufficient staff to enable a child to stay inside with a staff member while the rest of the children are outside.

Children should NOT come to school if they have any of the following symptoms:

Symptoms

- Fever

- Diarrhea, persistent abdominal-pain, vomiting/nausea

- Discharge of the eyes or ears

- Heavy nasal discharges
- Persistent cough
- Unidentified rash, skin eruption

- Head Lice

Keep Child Home Until:

- Fever registers below 100 degrees for 24 hrs

- No further problem exists and child is eating normally and has no upset stomach for 18 hours

- Eyes and ears have returned to normal and a physician has examined and recommends return to school

- Thick yellow or green discharge clears up
- Coughing has subsided

- A physician has determined cause and recommends return to school

- Child has been treated and is free from lice including nits

If you must bring a sick sibling, please have the sick child wait in the hallway as you drop off your Somerset child, rather than bringing the sick child into the classroom with the other children. The staff can help your Somerset child was their hands.

Please call the school and leave a message if your child will be absent and explain the reason so we can alert other parents in the case of a communicable disease.

Children must be free of symptoms and/or fever without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. A child may return to school after being on antibiotics for 24 hours. Staff will discuss with parents/guardians any reasonable restriction of children's activities due to illness/injury. Tuition fees are not adjusted for normal illnesses. If a child is seriously ill for a long period of time, it might be possible to receive some fee adjustment. The Administrator, who will decide on the adjustment, would review the circumstance of the illness.

Illness Policy-Contagious Child Illness

If your child has been diagnosed as having a contagious illness or condition, such as measles, chicken pox, pinkeye, head lice, etc. please notify Somerset immediately. **Children with contagious diseases or conditions cannot return to school until a doctor has verified that the child is no longer contagious.** When Somerset receives information that any of our children has contracted a contagious illness or condition we will post signs in prominent locations to inform our school community of the illness or condition and symptoms to look for. Prompt action in dealing with contagious illnesses or conditions is extremely important in limiting the spreading of these illnesses. A staff member or volunteer worker will be excluded from working with children due to the

communicable illness while at school and administrative assistant or Administrator will be filling in till we find a sub.

Head lice

In the special case of head lice, a child who exhibits symptoms of head lice or nits may not return to school until:

- The child has received the appropriate treatment (prescribed shampoo)
- There are no lice or nits on the child's head or hair
- The child has been seen by a public health department professional or physician and a letter from that health care professional stating that the child is free of head lice and ready to return to school has been returned to Somerset.

Medication

Our general policy with respect to administering medications is that we do not administer over-the-counter medications and will only administer prescribed medication when the parent makes a special request in writing by filling out the appropriate form, and when the medication is in its original container showing that it is prescribed for that particular child. The parent's written request must include specific instructions for the administration of the medication. A regular Somerset Teacher or the Administrator will only administer medications. At no time will a substitute teacher administer a medication. We require that Epipen expiration date is checked by parents and a new one is replaced as needed. All medications are kept in a locked container or in refrigerator when required.

If a child becomes sick at school Somerset follows these practices:

If an illness prevents the child, while at school, from participating in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, then the staff will immediately notify the parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized by the parent/guardian, and request that the child be picked up from school. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the person(s) designated on the *Child Information Record*, completed at the time of enrollment, will be contacted. The child will be moved to a quiet area of the classroom where she or he can rest while waiting to be picked up. If a child's condition is suspected to be contagious and requires exclusion as identified by public health authorities, then the child is made comfortable in Somerset's office area where she or he is supervised by a familiar caregiver until a parent or other designated individual arrives, and where she or he will not expose new individuals.

Hospital Preference

Even when a parent has selected another hospital on their emergency card, Somerset will comply with EMS Professionals in deciding which hospital will provide the child with the best medical care in an emergency.

Report Accidents and Incidents

The person who witnesses the accident will fill out an Accident/Injury form. The explanation of what happened will be as accurate as possible and will include what

procedure was followed to help the injured child. Staff members will fill in for each other when an accident occurs.

The Non-Injury report is filled out when we believe a record should be kept about a behavior, an interaction between children, a physical abnormality, etc. This record is to help recall the details of the incident. The original form of the injury/non-injury report will be filed in the child's folder. The original report must be filed in the child's folder and a copy is given to the child's parent with the name(s) of any other child(ren) involved in the incident blacked out. If the injury requires a doctor visit or hospitalization a form from FIA (kept in the filing cabinet in the office) needs to be completed and given to the Administrative Assistant for reporting to FIA.

Injuries

If your child is injured at school, the staff member present at the time of the injury will comfort the child and take care of minor cuts and bruises by applying an ice pack and a band aid. The parent will be notified immediately in case of an injury, which needs their attention, or in the event of a head injury. The staff member as required by the Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services will complete an accident report. The child's parent will sign the accident report when they pick up their child. The original copy of the report will remain in Somerset's files. Each classroom has a first aid kit and all Somerset teachers and staffs are CPR and First Aid trained and certified by the American Red Cross.

Allergies

Among the forms you fill out to enroll your child at Somerset, there are areas which request that you list any allergies that your child may have. It is extremely important that you carefully fill out this information to provide us with essential information about your child's allergies. This information is compiled, posted in all classrooms, and distributed among our staff so that all will be aware of these allergies and conditions that may be unsafe for some children. Please provide us with all of the information we need to keep your child safe at Somerset. If your child has a severe allergy, we require a form completed by your child's physician that provides us with specific instructions on what to do if your child comes in contact with the allergen.

Immunization Policy

Michigan law requires children to be up-to-date with required immunizations on or before the first day of initial attendance at Somerset Early Childhood Center. A child who fails to meet this requirement will not be admitted. The following circumstances allow a required vaccine to be waived or delayed:

1. A valid medical contraindication exists, preventing the child from receiving the vaccine at this time. A medical waiver should be completed and signed by the child's physician and should state the contraindication, vaccine involved, and time period during which the child is prevented from receiving the vaccine.

2. The parents/caregivers have valid religious or philosophical beliefs which prevent receipt of a vaccination. A child who is not fully vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases could be a risk to others and for contracting the disease.

Any parent/guardian wanting to waive vaccine(s) for nonmedical reasons must receive vaccine education from their local health department. This rule applies to all children entering Somerset Early Childhood Center.

Parents choosing to waive vaccinations are required to contact the health department to receive immunization counseling. The 30-minute education session will include information on the risks of not receiving vaccines and the benefits of vaccination to the individual and the community. This will allow parents to make an educated, informed choice for their child.

If the parent/guardian still wants to waive one or more vaccines the health department staff will provide a certified waiver. The parents will be required to provide the certified waiver to Somerset Early Childhood. A child who has been exempted from a vaccination is considered susceptible to the disease or diseases for which the vaccination offers protection. Unvaccinated children will be subject to exclusion from Somerset if an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease to which he/she is susceptible. The waiver will be good through the current school year only. See Addendum A.

Oakland County Health Department 1-800-848-5533.

Medical and Emergency Forms

The State of Michigan requires the school to have a Health Appraisal Form and Emergency Card on file for each child. The green Health Form, which is required to attend school in the State of Michigan, is valid only for one year from the date **the doctor has signed it**. To avoid submitting another new form *during* the school year, we recommend that you schedule your child's physical accordingly. Your child cannot enter Somerset without a completed Emergency Card. **Please keep this information up to date with changes in phone numbers, addresses, emergency parents by informing your child's classroom teacher.**

Healthy Snack Policy

Somerset School provides nutritious morning and afternoon snacks such as fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese, bread, crackers and water. Children will sometimes be involved in cooking activities to make their own snacks. At Somerset, we are very concerned about providing your children with nutritious snacks. Healthy snacks have always been a priority to us. We adhere to the guidelines set by the USDA and the standards required by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as we prepare and serve snacks to children. Children depend on adults to make healthy choices and to teach them to make healthy choices for themselves.

Food Brought From Home for the Class to Share:

We understand that one of the pleasures of having preschool children is preparing food with them and bringing special treats to share at school, especially on special days like birthdays and holidays. Cupcakes, cakes and other fun foods do represent a sense of joy and celebration but children never actually eat these snacks at school and if we allow these special snacks it becomes difficult for us to stick to our commitment of “nutritious snacks”. Please help us teach children the value of proper nutrition by bringing snacks that are whole grain, low sugar and in small child sized portions.

For special occasions, parents can prepare (bake/cook) a snack at home and bring it for the class to share as long as our strict guidelines are followed as described below.

- Whole grains (white whole grain flour is now available)
- Low fat
- Low sugar
- No peanuts or ground nuts
- Whole fruit or vegetables (not cut up), or fruit or vegetables that are packaged commercially in a sealed container
- 100% juice, preferably Apple, or low fat milk

Our accrediting agency requires that we provide documentation that we have and carry out a healthy snack policy. Therefore, in order for us to serve a snack you bring to school, the snack must comply with our guidelines and must be accompanied by a form which contains a full ingredient list (or recipe) and a statement signed by the parent that the snack contains **no peanuts or ground nuts** and that the snack was prepared with utensils that have not been used to process peanuts or ground nuts. If we do not have this signed form, we will not be able to serve the snack. The forms will be kept in the snack sign-up notebook and will also be available from staff.

We hope that we have found a happy medium that will help keep our children safe and healthy and still provide for pleasure of special foods for special occasions. A suggested snack guideline is available in the snack book that is kept near the sign-in sheet.

Lunch 12:00-12:30 pm

Children who are scheduled to be at school for lunch should bring a LABELED (First and Last Names) lunch box or bag and a labeled thermos containing juice or milk (No Pop Please). We have found that children eat better when provided with nutritious foods they enjoy. Ideas for lunches include: sandwich, yogurt, fruit, raw vegetables, cheese, crackers, etc. Please keep sweet foods to a minimum. **DO NOT SEND** candy, gum, or peanuts since these foods can be dangerous to young children. **Please be aware that we cannot refrigerate or heat food.** Parents not wishing to schedule regular lunches can occasionally bring lunches for their child if space is available, and if the parent has prearranged a time with the program director 24 hours in advance. These sessions are billed as extra fees. Children who stay for lunch need to be picked up promptly at 12:30 p.m.

Full day children: Children are required to brush their teeth after they eat a meal. Please send a toothbrush in a labeled, zip lock bag in the lunch box of children staying at school all day. The toothpaste is not required.

Birthday or Class Party Snack

Parents are welcome to send a healthy birthday snack for the class to celebrate their birthday (helium balloons are prohibited by church). Please notify the teachers in advance if you wish to send a birthday snack by signing in the snack book that is kept near the sign-in sheet. **Party invitations should be mailed out, not distributed at school. Feelings are easily hurt concerning invitations to parties.**

Naps/Rest

If your child is enrolled in a full day program, there will be a nap/rest/quiet time incorporated after lunch for 30 minutes. Parents are requested to send a blanket with the child's name labeled each day for the child who attends the full day program. The blanket should be brought home at least every week for laundering.

Items from Home

Somerset School provides a wide range of toys and materials for the children. PLEASE DO NOT SEND TOYS or other possessions from home unless it is something which helps ease your child's transition from home to school during his/her first days. If an item is brought to school, we cannot be responsible for it. Please label anything you bring to school. Please do not let your child bring candy or gum to school. We discourage the use of pacifiers and Sippy cups to eliminate the spread of germs. Pacifiers also inhibit in children the ability to express their needs by using words.

Clothing

Dress children in washable, comfortable play clothing for school. Choose clothing that is easy for your child to snap and button. Children should be dressed for outdoor play EACH DAY in keeping with the weather. No scarfs are allowed as they are choking hazards. Send your child in sneakers and socks everyday. **No open toed shoes, clogs, crocs, or sandals.** Sneakers allow your child to participate fully in all large motor outdoor activities.

Sanitation and Maintenance of Equipment

Toys and Equipment: Teachers are responsible for regularly washing and sanitizing classroom toys and equipment. Staff monitors the condition and safety of indoor and outdoor play and operating equipment on an ongoing basis. Teachers are provided a day in August and on MLK day (8 hrs) to clean and sanitize all classroom equipment. All hazardous materials are stored out of the classrooms, out of the reach of children and away from food. Exceptions (such as diluted bleach solution) that are stored in the classroom are placed in areas not accessible to children.

Anago of Metro Detroit has been hired by Somerset to clean our school. Anago is a reputable, quality-cleaning service that is trained to clean schools and uses only Procter and Gamble's environmental friendly and child safe Green label cleaning products. These products are used to clean, sanitize and disinfect all the areas children work, play and learn.

Cleaning and Sanitizing:

The following steps will be followed:

- ❖ The surface will be washed with soap/detergent and water.
- ❖ It will next be rinsed with clean water.
- ❖ The surface will be wiped or sprayed with a sanitizing solution. Toys and small items may be submerged in the solutions.
- ❖ The area or items should be allowed to air dry. If they must be wiped, allow three minutes before wiping, so that the sanitizing agent has time to work.

Sanitizing Solution:

- ❖ Water and non-scented chlorine bleach solution with a concentration of one-tablespoon bleach to one gallon of water, or one teaspoon of bleach to 32 oz. or water.
- ❖ Commercial sanitizers specified on the label to be safe for food contact surfaces and not hazardous to children; used according to manufacturer's mixing and usage directions.

Controlling Infections:

- ❖ See universal precautions above.
- ❖ Toys that are mouthed or otherwise exposed to bodily fluids will be removed, washed, rinsed and sanitized.
- ❖ Bedding will be stored so that it does not come into contact with other children's bedding. Cots and mats will be washed, rinsed, and sanitized daily if soiled or contaminated with bodily fluids, or used by different children; weekly if used by one child.
- ❖ Children who have any type of communicable disease/condition will be removed from care and may only return to care with a doctor's note.
- ❖ Children who become ill will be moved away from the other children until picked up.
- ❖ Parents will be informed of any communicable diseases in the facility.

Handling Bodily Fluids:

The center will use precautions when handling bodily fluids as instructed in the blood borne pathogen training. Steps include:

- ❖ Staff will put on gloves
- ❖ Staff will clean up bodily fluid with a disposable paper towel.
- ❖ The area will be washed with soap and water, rinsed and sanitized.
- ❖ The child's hands will be washed.
- ❖ Staff will remove gloves and wash hands.

Other Safety and Sanitation Procedures

Staff use latex gloves and follow standard precautions when handling food, diapering, helping children blow nose, and handling bleeding episodes of any kind.

Healthy Hands-Healthy Kids

It has been suggested by the Oakland County Health Department that both staff and children wash their hands as they enter the classrooms. We ask parents to assist their children in washing their hands with soap and water at school as they enter their classrooms to start their day. This practice helps in reducing the risk of spreading contagious diseases significantly, and thus protects both the children and the staff from being exposed to such illnesses. We ask that a healthy sibling who accompanies at arrival or departure time must also wash hands properly before touching any class materials.

Hand washing

The following procedures will be used for hand washing:

- ❖ Have a single service towel available
- ❖ Turn water on to a comfortable temperature between 60 degrees F and 120 degrees F.
- ❖ Moisten hands with water and apply soap.
- ❖ Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least ten seconds.
- ❖ Rub areas between finger, around nail beds, under fingernails and jewelry, and back of hands.
- ❖ Rinse hands under running water until free of soap and dirt. Leave water running while drying hands.
- ❖ Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper or single use cloth. Turn off tap with disposable paper or single service towel.
- ❖ Staff will wash and sanitize their hands before and after preparing snack, before and after administering medication, after handling garbage, after diapering or helping a child in the restroom, and after cleaning.

The following are not approved substitutes for soap and running water:

- ❖ Hand sanitizers
- ❖ Water basins
- ❖ Pre-moistened cleansing wipes

Diapering and Using Toilet

Children in preschool are checked for re-diapering on a regular basis. If a child requires a change, a full time staff will change the diaper in the adjacent bathroom with the door open. Preschool children are encouraged to be independent, but if they need assistance a teacher will help. **When sending supplies, please provide labeled wipes, diapers or Velcro pull-ups only.** Personal toilets and

toilet adaptors are not permitted at school. Hand washing with soap is a must after using the bathroom. Children in pre-kindergarten and enrichment must ask a teacher for permission before they are allowed to leave the classroom to use the bathroom. They are responsible for their own toileting. Children who ask for assistance are given toilet tissue and are instructed as to how to wipe themselves. A teacher remains outside the bathroom door and talks the child through the procedure. The child is then instructed to wash their hands with soap. Children entering pre-k are required to be toilet trained, because the facility is not conducive to allow a staff to change diapers.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Safety and Health Information Sources

Oakland County Health Department, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac, MI 48341 (248) 858-1280, www.oakgov.com
Crittenton Hospital, 1101 W. University, Rochester, MI 48307 (248) 652-5000, www.crittenton.com
www.webmd.com

Parking Lot

Maintain respect for the handicapped parking areas, and the "do not park" fire lane signs by parking only in designated spaces. There is no designated parking or standing space in front of the school entrance doors or in front of the garbage disposal containers. **Please do not leave your vehicle unattended in the Loading Zone at any time and do not leave your vehicle idling in the parking lot unattended unless your vehicle needs to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.** School families are restricted from using the parking areas at the far south end of the property, and the driveway between the two buildings. No parking on isle ends where "kid alert" barriers are located. Unattended cars should not be left running. **Siblings should not be left alone in cars** in the parking lot without adult supervision. **It will be obligatory on our part to notify the police if we witness any of the above. Supervise children as you walk in the parking lot and hold your child's hand whenever possible. Use of a cell phone in the parking lot is not advisable as it detracts from paying full attention in a potentially hazardous area.**

DO NOT LEAVE ANY VALUABLES (purse, cell phone, laptop etc.) IN THE PARKED CAR.

In inclement weather be careful of ice and water. The parking lot is cleared on a regular basis if it snows, but be aware of slippery patches that may remain. **Drive slowly at all times - little children are hard to see.** Please do not leave trash (fast food containers / used diapers etc.) anywhere in the parking lot.

Cell Phone Policy

We ask parents and other caregivers to please switch off their cell phones when they are in school during the arrival and departure time. Your total attention and interest in your child's school routine at arrival and departure time is required to make your child feel valued and respected. We understand your need to stay connected with your business and social commitments, but it is more important to your child to have your attention and feel that they are your first priority (which we know they are). You are also being their role model in developing their own habits. The arrival and departure times also provide both parents and teachers opportunity to make personal connections with each other and exchange child related important information whenever it is needed. Our parking lot also requires parent's uninterrupted attention to be able to teach safety rules & supervise children in walking. Please help us make Somerset premises a "Switch off your cell phone zone".

Safe Kids

We at Somerset School value our "open door" policy where a parent can stop in at school any time and visit their child's classroom. The current national call for taking extra safety measures has forced us to reevaluate new ways to provide our children a more safe and secure school. We lock our back entrance door with the exception of arrival and departure times. Both front and back entrances to the building will be locked; we leave them open at arrival and departure times only. We do realize this procedure might cause some inconveniences and hardships to our parents and staff; our intentions are to create a safer environment for our children.

We suggest that parents, who need to pick up early, arrive late, or need access in the building, call their child's classroom phone numbers. You can prearrange entrance or call from the parking lot for one of the staff to let you in. As you know our staff's time already has many, many demands and they cannot stay out of the classroom for any extended time. Your understanding and consideration will help in implementing this safety rule.

PRESCHOOL (248) 375-2140
PREK (248) 375-9255 (please program these #'s in your cell phones)
Administrator (248) 375-9071

Please call another line if you receive voice mail, as the teachers & students may be out of the classroom.

Firearm Policy

Somerset ECC prohibits firearms on the premises.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services mandates that, "Under state law, childcare providers and teachers are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. If adults observe symptoms or conditions that cause suspicion of child abuse or

neglect, the adult must immediately contact Protective Services. The Administrator must be told right away and a written report of the suspicion must be filed with Protective Services within 72 hours.”

Staff Suspected of Child Abuse/Neglect

If a staff member is suspected or accused of child abuse or neglect by any individual, including a staff member or parent, the administrator/director will immediately initiate a preliminary investigation of the incident. If the preliminary internal investigation carried out by the administrator suggests that it is possible that an event involving abuse or neglect may have occurred, the matter will be immediately reported to Child Protective Services (CPS). The staff member will be asked to leave the premises immediately.

Criminal Background Check

All of our teachers and administrative staff have First Aid and CPR training for children through the American Red Cross and maintain their certification with regular training. All of our staff also has passed a Criminal Background Check through the Michigan State Police and ICHAT (Internet Criminal History Access Tool). Volunteers in our classrooms, including parents, sign a form that states that they have not been accused or convicted of any child abuse related issues.

Custody Disputes

The following guidelines will be used when child custody conflicts occur in Somerset families.

- We always maintain our role as the child’s advocate.
- Until limited access by the noncustodial parent has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking the child up from our care. It is not within our legal right to withhold a child from a parent unless there has been court action that limits one parent’s right to the child.
- We request a copy of the judge’s order that limits parental access of the noncustodial parent.
- We will not answer any questions about a custody situation on the phone. No matter how the caller identifies him/herself, we ask him/her to make an appointment with us, or come with sufficient identification, or send his/her written questions on official stationery.
- If we are approached by the Friend of the Court to fill out a form to be used in the investigation, the teacher will fill out only those lines with which he/she is comfortable.
- We discuss this family issue only when children are not present. We provide a safe and wholesome experience for all children.

Playground Guidelines

Outdoor Play Policy: Children of all ages have daily opportunities for outdoor play (when weather, air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk).

To protect against cold, heat, sun injury and insect-borne disease, the program requests that parents see that:

- Children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.
- Children have sun protective clothing, including hats or caps, and if parents would like staff to apply sun screen or sun block lotions (SPF 15 or higher), that they provide the lotions and written and signed instructions to the school for the application of the lotions.
- Staff may apply insect repellent (containing DEET) no more than once a day and only when provided by the parent with written parental permission and directions.

We consider our playground to be an outdoor classroom. We go everyday for outdoor activities unless the wind chill is below 15 degrees and the wind speed is excessive. Somerset liability insurance covers only the children who are enrolled. Parents and other siblings are required to wait outside the fence at pick up time.

In the winter, bring snow pants, boots, mittens and a hat. Our winter hat policy states that we cannot provide hats for children who don't bring one from home, due to health and safety reasons. Parents will be called and asked to come back to school with a head cover. A solution might be to tuck an extra hat into the backpack. **Label all outdoor clothing with your child's first and last name.** Please provide a change of clothing in a tote bag to be used in an emergency.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION, FIRE, TORNADO & LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

The staff and children, as part of our Emergency Preparedness Plan, practice fire, tornado, evacuation, and lockdown drills throughout the school year. It is important for the staff and children to practice these drills on a regular basis so we so we are trained and prepared in case of an emergency.

*In case of a real emergency, parents are responsible for themselves and siblings not enrolled at Somerset, and **must** participate in our emergency procedures for their safety. All emergency procedures are posted by the doors of each classroom for your reference.*

Fire and Tornado Drills

The teachers prepare the children in advance for emergency drills. Adults can come to pick up children during a "Watch", but are advised to stay off the roads, or stay in our building when a "Warning" has been issued, as children will not be released during a "Warning".

Fire - In the event of a fire, Somerset will follow the Evacuation Emergency Procedures and meet at the north end of our parking lot. In the event that the weather is severe, we will evacuate to Brookfield Academy and parents will be immediately notified by phone/email as to where their children can be picked up.

Tornado – Parents may pick up their children from Somerset during a **Tornado Watch**, but are advised to stay off the roads. Somerset is not allowed to release

children to parents when a **Tornado Warning** has been issued because they will be safer in the protected area within the Somerset building when a tornado has actually been sighted locally.

Lockdown

Lockdown procedures are carried out when there is a threat to children's safety. Parents will be able to pick their children up from Somerset when the lockdown has been lifted and the all clear is given by the police.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The staff and children, as a part of our preparedness for emergencies practice fire drills each month and tornado drills twice. Children learn and practice how to evacuate the building and other related safety practices. In the event any such emergency requires children to stay outside the building for a prolonged period of time, we have made arrangements with Brookfield Academy in Rochester to use their building. We will be able to keep the children safe until the recommended arrangements by police and fire officials can be put into action. Parents will be immediately notified by phone and e-mails as to where their children can be picked up.

School Closing Due to Building Malfunction

In the event that Somerset must close due to a building malfunction, you will be notified as soon as possible via e-mail, text message or phone.

Smoking Policy

Under the MCIA Act #116, smoking is prohibited on the property of all childcare centers. Centers can designate a private room visually and physically separate from the common areas where smoking could be allowed. The Michigan Department of Public Health will issue citations to agencies and individuals who do not comply with this law.

Pest Control Policy

The University Presbyterian Church applies pest control applications only during summer when school is closed from July to August when children are not in school. The only exception to this policy will be to provide an emergency application to control any pest that poses an immediate threat to human health or safety (i.e. stinging insects). All children and staff will be evacuated prior to emergency application of a pesticide. Parents will be notified the product name of the pesticide, the intended date and time of application and the location where the pesticide will be applied through an email before a pesticide is being applied.

We attempt to PREVENT infestation by:

- Taking out trash daily or more as needed
- Cleaning trash cans regularly
- Keeping trash cans or dumpsters covered and away from the building

- Keeping grounds clear of food and rubbish
- Storing food in sealed plastic or metal containers
- Cleaning and sanitizing all dishes, utensils, and surfaces used for eating or food preparation after meals and at the end of the day
- Preventing pest entry into facility by sealing cracks and holes, using and repairing window screens and door sweeps
- Moisture control by maintaining plumbing and water drainage systems
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Animal and Pet Policy

Pets or visiting animals must have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Program staff will make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal.

Required Immunizations for Michigan Childcare/Preschool Attendance

Healthcare providers in Michigan should follow the 2012 Recommended Immunization Schedule
 For more information, see www.michigan.gov/immunize

Age Vaccine**	Childcare/Preschool Entry Requirements						
	Birth through 1 month	2 months through 3 months	4 months through 5 months	6 months through 15 months	16 months through 18 months	19 months through 4 years	5 years
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis	None	1 dose DTaP	2 doses DTaP	3 doses DTaP	3 doses DTaP	4 doses DTaP	
Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV7 and/or PCV13)	None	1 dose	2 doses	3 doses	4 doses OR age appropriate complete series	1 dose on or after 24 mo OR age appropriate complete series	None
<i>H. influenzae</i> type b	None	1 dose	2 doses		1 dose on or after 15 months of age OR age appropriate complete series		None
Polio	None	1 dose	2 doses		2 doses	3 doses	
Measles,* Mumps,* Rubella*	None	None	None	None	1 dose on or after 12 months of age		
Hepatitis B*	None†	1 dose	2 doses		2 doses	3 doses	
Varicella* (Chickenpox)	None	None	None	None	1 dose on or after 12 months of age OR current lab immunity OR reliable history of disease		

* Current laboratory evidence is acceptable instead of immunization with that antigen.

† Hepatitis B may be administered as early as birth.

This table represents the minimum required immunizations for child care centers.

** All doses of vaccines must be given with appropriate spacing between doses and at appropriate ages to be considered valid.

