



Stafford Municipal School District

2019-2020

S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy

(Spartan Pre-schoolers Are Ready To Achieve Academy)

Parent Handbook



Providing Child Care Services for District Employees in an Inclusion Setting



S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy

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S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy

2019-2020

Sparta Academy is a collaborative pre-school/inclusion program for children of Stafford MSD staff and children in PPCD (Pre-school Program for Children with Disabilities). The purpose of the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy is to provide an on-site pre-school for children ages 3 to 5 of Stafford MSD staff members, while providing pre-school students with disabilities an instructional setting to interact with typically developing peers.

S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Philosophy

Children learn through developmentally appropriate activities and play. Providing a literacy-rich environment and positive interactions with peers and adults facilitate language enrichment, social skills, emotional intelligence, self-help, as well as pre-reading and cognitive skills.

Program Information

- The SPARTA Academy consists of a maximum of 8 staff member's children who would be in the pre-school setting with children who have been identified through the Pre-school Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) as eligible for special education services.
- The Program is staffed by a PPCD teacher, an Educational Assistant, and a SPARTA Academy Educational Assistant. The program is available at the Stafford Elementary campus.
- A minimum of four children of staff members must be enrolled in the pre-school program in order to establish a S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy. If four children are not enrolled at the time of planning for classes in the spring, the Business Manager for the district will calculate whether the program costs can be met to offer the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy.
- After the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy application period has ended, and principal has completed the selection process, any applications of children who did not receive a S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy slot will be put on a waiting list.
- Upon enrollment, parents will complete the registration process at their S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy campus. If the registration process is not completed 2 weeks prior to the first staff contractual day, the position will be given to another child.

Goals of the Program

- To recruit and maintain skilled staff by providing them with a high-quality, enriching pre-school environment for their young children.
- To provide an inclusive instructional environment for children with disabilities.
- To build a strong school community by supporting early cooperative interactions among children with and without disabilities and their families.



Orientation

Prior to the child's enrollment or re-enrollment, the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Program Agreement will be signed by the campus principal and the parent(s) at an Orientation Meeting, to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Enrollment Requirements

- The child must be 3 or 4 years of age in order to enroll.
- The child must be 3 by September 1st of the current school year.
- The Principal will take into consideration age, gender balance and number of children in both PPCD and pre-school when enrolling new children.
- The Child must not display any consistent negative behaviors that would interfere with the classroom rules and procedures or excessive self-help needs and must be able to function in the program with the 1-6 pre-school teacher-child ratio.
- Parent/guardian must be a regular employee of Stafford MSD.
- Child must not be receiving or qualify for any special education services, including speech.
- Child must be fully potty trained. We have a "No Pull-Up" policy.

Tuition

- Tuition is charged to the parent of the children enrolled in the SPARTA Academy program. This covers the cost of hiring a SPARTA Academy Educational Assistant, provision of snacks, general supplies, hiring of a substitute when needed for professional development days, and field trip cost.
- Tuition for the 2019-2020 school year will be \$4000 paid in 20 equal payroll deductions of \$200, beginning September 10, 2019 and ending June 25, 2020. The Payroll Deduction Authorization form should be completed and given to the Principal along with the Program Agreement.
- In the event that the parent is not receiving a paycheck for the month, they should make a check payable to Stafford MSD and give it to the Elementary School office secretary. A late fee of \$10.00 is due if collected after the 1st of the month.
- There is a \$35 fee for returned check with insufficient funds.
- Students starting the program late (anytime in the 1st or 2nd semester) are still required to pay the full cost of the program, \$4,000. Tuition will only be prorated to half the cost per semester, if child starts in January.

Income Tax Credit

- The S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy program does not qualify as a pretax deduction (cafeteria plan) because it is not a registered day care. However, a portion of the cost of S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy tuition may be claimed as a tax credit for income tax purposes. Specifically, it may be claimed as a "Credit for Child and Dependent Care Expenses" on the income tax return. To claim the credit, parents complete an IRS form 2441 if they itemize and file their income tax return on form 1040A. Pay stubs serve as tuition receipts for tax filing purposes.



Class Hours

- The S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy is open only during regular school year 187 teacher contractual work days which may include teacher workday and required staff development days. Substitute(s) will be hired on required professional development days to supervise the staff children so that the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy teacher and/or staff can attend trainings.
- Children may be brought to school no earlier than 7:00 a.m. and must be picked up by a designated adult no later than **4:30 p.m.**
- A late penalty of \$1.00 for every minute after 4:30 p.m. will be charged and is due the same day to the principal. Parents will receive one warning letter. Consistent failure to pick up on time will result in referral to the Stafford Elementary School S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Committee and possible dismissal from the program by the district's S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Board.
- The S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy's established hours will be strictly followed. District employees who are unable to follow the established schedule because of work responsibilities should seek another pre-school with the necessary hours and flexibility.
- The S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy's established hours are consistent with the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy campus. Hours may be changed by the individual campus during the year or for a given day only by the principal of the Elementary campus.
- Parents will sign their children in and out with proper ID.

Siblings

- Only children enrolled in the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Program are allowed in the classroom. Siblings may not come into the classroom without a parent at any time, including before and after school, and on professional development and teacher workdays.

Withdrawing from the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy

- Once a contract has been signed by both parties, parents are not allowed to withdraw their child from the program. Under certain circumstances, parents will be allowed to withdraw their child from the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy with permission from the campus Principal. Notice must be submitted to the principal 14 days prior to the date of withdrawal. **Tuition will not be prorated** for the month if a student is enrolled for any day during the month. **A full month's tuition is charged.**

Parent Visits to the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Classroom

- Parents are asked to honor the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy classroom routines and to visit the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy classroom respectfully and not excessively. The Principal reserves the right to limit visits if visits become too frequent, or result in the parent requesting class coverage for her own classroom in order to make visits to S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy.

Classroom Materials

- General materials for classroom use are covered by tuition costs. Parents will be asked to provide children with items for individual use such as a backpack, an extra set of clothing, a rest mat and blanket, notebook, folder, tissues, and other school supplies deemed appropriate.



Lunch/Snacks

- Nutritious snacks are provided daily and are covered under tuition costs.
- For children on special diets, parents are asked to provide a daily snack.
- Staff children are not enrolled in public school and are not counted in the school's numbers, even though their parents do complete a registration packet. Since the SPARTA Academy students are not considered enrolled in public school, they are not eligible for free or reduced lunches, but they can purchase cafeteria lunches at **FULL ADULT PRICE**.
- Parents are responsible for providing a lunch and breakfast daily for their child. On professional development days, teacher workdays, and on days the school cafeteria is NOT in operation, parents are asked to send a lunch and breakfast for their child.

Enrollment Process

Steps of the Application/Selection/Enrollment/Registration Process are:

- S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Application Period is established for the school year by July of the current year.
- SMSD staff parents interested in S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy must first read the SPARTA handbook to see if your child qualifies to be in the program.
- Complete *S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Application* and submit to the attendance clerk at the Elementary campus.
- Parents will attend a S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Orientation meeting with the teacher to learn details about the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy program and to decide if the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Program meets their family needs by August of the current school year.
- At the close of the Application period, the Principal of the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy campus applies the selection criteria to the applicants and offers staff children positions.
- Parents complete the *S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Program Agreement and the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Payroll Deduction Authorization* and submit to the Principal.
- Parents go to their S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy campus and complete the items required on the *S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy Registration Checklist* given by the attendance clerk.

Children enrolled in the program when they are three years old are NOT automatically eligible to return for the following year. Their parents again complete the entire enrollment process, including all paperwork and the Orientation meeting.

Progress Reports for Parents

Staff children receive progress reports at the end of each semester (December/May). This is a modified Pre-K progress report, which is a checklist containing skills appropriate for three and four-year old's. The report addresses the areas of social, physical and intellectual development. The PPCD/S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy teacher completes a report for each staff child, with collaboration from the S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy team.

Uniform

The S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy students are required to wear uniform. The uniform is red, navy blue or white collared shirts and khaki or navy bottoms.



Transportation

Transportation to and from school will **NOT** be provided for S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy students by SMSD. Parents are responsible for transporting students to and from school.

Field Trips

Field trips will be taken with PPCD class using the SMSD Transportation system. The SPARTA Academy will be responsible for designating funds for any field trips and the transportation chargeback expenses will be based upon SMSD guidelines. The following guidelines must be adhered to:

- No siblings (children that are not part of the class) allowed on field trips.
- All parents must provide written permission for children to attend the specific field trip.
- Parents will follow SMSD field trip guidelines.



S.P.A.R.T.A. Academy

Supply List

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- Backpack (large enough for folder to fit without bending) .
- Extra set of school uniform (in case student soils his or her clothing).
- Rest mat & blanket (no pillows or stuff animals).
- **Plastic** folder with two pockets and brads in the middle.
- Supply list will be provided by Teacher on the first day of school.