



2024-2025

## Preschool Handbook for Families

442 N. West Avenue  
Elmhurst, Illinois 60126  
630-833-9500  
[mqhpreschool@maryqueen.org](mailto:mqhpreschool@maryqueen.org)

442 North West Avenue • Elmhurst, IL 60126-2128 • TEL (630) 833-9500 • [www.mqhpreschool.org](http://www.mqhpreschool.org)

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*"Free to play, explore, and imagine"*



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Mary Queen of Heaven's Preschool. The beginning of a new school year is always exciting, as children and educators alike wonder at the mystery of what the new year will bring. There will certainly be many things that will be learned, but each year also brings new adventures, new friends, and some fun as well.

It is our goal as a parish and as a school to help your child grow and learn as they journey through this year. I know that you place a great deal of trust in us when you drop your children off at our door. I assure you that we will do everything that we can to provide your child with a safe environment that will help them to grow into their years of being students as well as young Christians. We look forward to working with you, who are the first educators of your children, as they take their first steps out of the family and into the community.

With the help of Mary, our Mother and Queen, may God bless all of us, especially our children, with his protection and guidance in this new school year.

Mary, Queen of Heaven, pray for us!

In Jesus, the teacher,  
Fr. Sunny

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# ***WELCOME***

TO

## Mary Queen of Heaven Preschool

### A Catholic School of the Diocese of Joliet

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Mary Queen of Heaven Preschool, in partnership with parents and with the loving support of our parish community, offers a Christ-centered early learning environment.

#### **OUR PROGRAM**

Since no two children learn in the same way, we offer multiple pathways for social, academic, and spiritual development. We provide an educational experience that honors differences and focuses on strengths and goodness. Children are encouraged to make choices, develop their talents, and understand the role God plays in the world around them. We strive to educate the “whole” child. Children will be free to play, explore, and imagine during a child-oriented day. Our faith-centered, child-focused, family sensitive preschool seeks to develop a loving relationship with God as a basis for living out the Gospel values of love, justice, peace, and service.

Mary Queen of Heaven Preschool is designed to meet the special needs of the young child. These programs are informally structured with different activities being offered simultaneously. Prayer is integrated throughout our daily activities, i.e. opening and closing prayers for the school day, prayer before eating, opportunities to “talk and listen” with God in our Prayer Center, and visits to our church. Materials and toys for creative expression and role-playing are available. Manipulative and cognitive games also enhance the children’s development. There are opportunities for vigorous activity in the outdoor and indoor play space. A nutritious well-balanced snack is had every day. Stories, music, and conversations with teachers and classmates are all part of the child’s experience.

Our goal is to provide your child with experiences that will foster a delight and desire for learning. The first few weeks of school may be a little tiring as your child adjusts to new routines, new friends, and a different environment. Please feel free to talk to your child’s teacher about any concerns or worries you may have regarding this new experience. The staff will be pleased to assist you in any way.

We wish you and your child a wonderful year and look forward to a positive home-school relationship.

## Section 1.

### ABSENTEEISM

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or other reasons, please phone or email the school office before 9:00a.m. (630)-833-9500 or [mqhpreschool@maryqueen.org](mailto:mqhpreschool@maryqueen.org) to report the absence. If there is no answer when you phone, please leave a message on the voice mail, stating your child's name (first and last name), your relationship to the child, and the reason for the absence. If you need to get ahold of someone immediately, select option 3. This will transfer your call directly to the director. Use this option if you are going to pick up early, if you are going to be late, or if there is an emergency.

### ARRIVAL

For the safety and wellbeing of the children, students are expected to be on time for school. School begins at 8:15; the doors will be open at 8:15 by a staff member. Preschool children and their family member or guardian enter at the glass doors across from the playground in the back of the school; please escort your child into the building. The children will have a routine to follow before entering the classroom. We encourage independence, therefore please allow your child to follow the routine that the teachers have set for them on their own. Please make every effort to have your child use the bathroom and wash their hands and face before coming to school.

The classroom teacher will take attendance. If there are any changes to the pickup or drop off schedule, please indicate that information to your child's teacher or email the school. Please establish a loving and quick routine of saying good-bye to your child. This healthy routine helps your child with separating from you.

If you arrive while school is in session you can call or ring the doorbell. It is located to the left side of the glass doors. Please ring the bell, wait for acknowledgment, state your name and the reason for entrance. Try to stand in front of the monitor/camera so you can be seen. A staff member will communicate with you through the video monitor.

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### DEPARTURE

At 11:45, Preschool children will be ready for dismissal. The door will be opened by a staff member at 11:45. It will take a few weeks before we remember all of your faces. We will question you often as we get to know you so that we are sure the kids are going with the correct adult. We will only release your child to people you have authorized in writing. If the pick-up person is not listed on your child's emergency form, please fill out an "Authorization for alternative pick up". These forms will be located by the door.

Please notify the school, in advance, if you need to pick your child up before dismissal time. We will help your child get ready for departure.

### BRINGING THINGS FROM HOME

Your child may want to bring a book or a favorite toy to school. It is a comfort to have something that is familiar in a new situation. Please let your child know that these items, while they can be brought to school, will remain in their backpack and will not come into the classroom.

**Show and Tell-** The 3's, and 4's, will have an opportunity to bring something from home for "show and tell". This is the perfect day to bring a special toy, book, or other favorite item from home; the teachers will supply a show and tell schedule. The item needs to fit in the backpack, it may not be a weapon of any kind, and should be chosen by the child.

## LUNCH

The children in the afternoon preschool will bring their lunch to school. The students will eat together in our lunchroom. The children will bring their own lunches to school. Lunches will be stored in baskets in the kitchen. An icepack or thermos should be used to keep food at their appropriate temperature. We will not refrigerate or heat up any lunches. We will help the children with their lunches, but they should be mostly self-sufficient. Have your child practice opening the lunchbox and all of the containers within the lunchbox. The lunchroom, because it is a small space, needs to be nut free also. Lunchtime is another opportunity to encourage communication between children, self-help skills, and good manners.

## SNACKS

We are a **nut-free environment**. This means that we do not allow any foods or snacks that contain peanuts or other nuts in whole or part to be served to the kids. We will accommodate other food allergies also if you have indicated them on your child's registration. Children are encouraged to try all snacks that are served.

**Morning Snack** A monthly snack calendar will be posted indicating what the snacks will be. These snack items are part of our curriculum while also being healthy and fun.

**Afternoon Snack**- If your child is staying for the afternoon preschool, they are to bring their own snack. You can include this in their lunch box which will be brought back out at snack time. Water will be served with snack also.

**Birthday Snack**- Your child will have a special treat for their birthday. They will be asked what they want such as favorite cookie, rice Krispie treat, brownie, etc. and it will be brought in with the regular snack time. They will also be sung to, get a crown to wear, and get their picture taken.

## CALENDAR AND HOLIDAYS

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Please refer to the school calendar regarding all school events, legal holidays, school holidays, institute days, and all other events. A current calendar will be posted on the bulletin board by our entry doors. A copy will be sent to you prior to the start of school. Our staff will have 4 or 5 institute days throughout the school year when school will not be in session. Our school year will begin at the end of August and ends before Memorial Day. We will have three days for Thanksgiving holiday, two weeks off for Christmas break, and one week off for Spring break.

## SCHOOL CANCELLATION

Should weather cause the cancellation of classes, the information will be broadcast on WGN and WBBM radio, local television stations and at [www.EmergencyClosings.com](http://www.EmergencyClosings.com). We typically follow the District 205 and Immaculate Conception decision in regard to closing school due to inclement weather but not always. Please check before assuming we are open or closed. I will also use our school social platform (Group Me) and email by 5:30am to give you as much notice as possible. If Dist. 205 has a late arrival due to inclement weather, we may not have school that day. (This does not include late starts) It is best to check under our school's name for up to date closing information.

## Section 2.

## CHILD PROTECTION

The school staff is legally mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate agency. If you feel that there is a situation that needs attention, please contact the preschool director, the priest, or the appropriate authorities right away. You are required to read the "Standards of Behavior" and the "Policy

Regarding Sexual Abuse” set forth by the Diocese of Joliet. Your signature is required to indicate that you have read and agree to the standards and policies that we follow. This “Acknowledgment form” lasts until the information is updated by the Diocese of Joliet. A digital copy of these readings is available on the school website and on the Vitus website. The “Acknowledgment Form” signature page is included in the registration packet and must accompany your child’s registration.

## **CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS**

Parents and other relatives are encouraged to volunteer for special events. Parents of preschoolers are welcome to come help in the classroom on specific days; it is a wonderful opportunity to see what he/she is learning and be a part of the learning environment. The teaching staff will inform the volunteers of their specific needs and classroom volunteer procedures.

It is required that all volunteers be at least 18 years of age and fulfill all of the requirements set forth by the Diocese of Joliet to keep our kids safe. All requirements, documents and training can be found by starting at- <http://www.virtus.org>

There are many opportunities to volunteer throughout the school year. Sign up for these events will be available on the first day of school. Requirements will need to be met before the event that you have signed up for.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information about your family and your children is confidential. The information we collect will only be shared with the Pastor, Director, and teaching staff. This information is only used to design classroom curriculum that helps your child develop to his/her fullest potential.

We respect each family’s privacy and will not give any information to anyone unless you have given us written permission to do so or it is lawfully requested.

Productive talk is needed to navigate through challenges.

Children should always be encouraged to speak up especially if something is upsetting them.

Parents should come to me right away with concerns about school related issues so that I can help work through them.

Teachers will talk with me about situations that need to be addressed.

Teachers will talk with parents about situations that need to be addressed with their children.

## **BEHAVIOR PROGRAM**

We encourage positive behavior. We believe that this is an ongoing process to help children develop self-control, competence, and appropriate behavior. Children need to assume responsibility for their actions and develop an awareness of the rights of others. Our goal is to give the children a safe and happy environment to learn.

Simple, clear rules shall be used with children, for example: “We walk in the hallway” or “You need to keep your hands and your body to yourself.”

We use a traffic light system to give the children a visual of behavioral expectations. We all have the opportunity to make green or red choices. The children will be given visual examples of green and red choices to help them understand the concept as well as a continued dialogue about it. Teachers who have an ongoing relationship with the child will be responsible for implementing our behavioral policy and will use the following approaches when red choices are made: 1) redirection to another activity, 2) praising positive behavior, 3) anticipating and intervening before disruptive behavior occurs, 4) taking a break from the activity where the red choice was made, 5) where age appropriate, helping children resolve their conflicts.

In accordance with state law, no child shall be subjected, under any circumstances, to corporal punishment,

inflicted in any manner upon the body, or to verbal abuse. Meals or any part of meals may not be withheld as punishment, nor will any child be punished for toilet accidents.

## HEALTH GUIDELINES

- Parents are asked to keep the child home if he/she has a fever, persistent productive or wet cough, unexplained skin rash, eye infection, diarrhea, or if he/she has vomited during the night or in the morning before leaving for school.
- A child who has been ill should return to school only when he/she is well:
  - fever free for at least 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing medications).
  - free from persistent/ uncontrollable cough
  - free of: diarrhea; excessive yellow runny nose; active skin or eye infection.
- An extra day at home can keep your child from getting sick again and/or from infecting other children.
- Please notify the school immediately if the child has a communicable disease so that other families can be informed of possible symptoms. Call (630) 833-9500 and leave a message or e-mail a note. [mqhpreschool@maryqueen.org](mailto:mqhpreschool@maryqueen.org)
- Children will be observed daily at school. Should there be symptoms of illness, the child will be isolated from the group, the parent will be notified, and arrangements will be made to have the child returned home as soon as possible.
- In case of emergencies, the school must be able to contact parents during the school hours. Therefore, it is important that parents give the school accurate, up to date cell, and work phone numbers and notify the school if any contact information changes.
- We teach the children to cough and sneeze in the inner part of the elbow. We instruct them on how to use tissue and use sanitizer. We instruct the children in the most effective germ reducing way to wash their hands.

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**COVID** guidelines – we will follow the Diocese direction. As new guidelines are implemented, you will be updated also.

## ACCIDENTS and EMERGENCIES

The staff has been trained in emergency first aid and CPR. In case of an accident or incident, we are able to cleanse the wound if needed and administer ice packs and Band-Aids. We will notify you by telephone if an accident warrants notification. If your child gets sick at school, we will make sure he/she is comfortable and attended to. You will be notified immediately to make arrangements to pick up your sick child as soon as possible.

Drills and Safety procedures-

- Severe Weather- We will participate in the severe weather drill that occurs at 10am on the first Tue. of every month.
- Fire Drills- We will have 4 fire drills during the school year as well as a safety review from a fire firefighter.
- Intruder Drills- The staff will review these procedures at staff meetings.



# PERMANENT RECORDS

Health and academic records are kept on file in the school office for each child who attends the school. These records are confidential and are only released when lawfully requested.

## REGISTRATION

Registration takes place in the school office. Parents or guardians must submit the following documents to be kept on file: birth certificate, required health records, baptismal certificate (if applicable), student information sheets, emergency information, consent form, and other forms that help us know your child.

## REQUIRED MEDICAL REPORTS

A complete physical examination by a physician is required for all children entering our program. It should be reported on the official forms provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health and your Doctor's office. It needs to be completed and dated no earlier than six months prior to enrollment. The physical report must include all required up to date immunizations. There is a parent section that must be filled out and signed at the top of page 2. A health form is available on our website or your Dr. can supply one.

If your child requires medication during the school day, an additional form is needed. This form can be filled out at the time of registration or as needed.

### Section 3.

## CURRICULUM

Mary Queen of Heaven provides an outstanding preschool program that focuses on the development of the whole child: social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual. Instruction will provide activities to stimulate, challenge, and meet the abilities and interests of the children. Each child will have the opportunity to enjoy success by actively participating in hands-on activities and communicating in all forms.

Our curriculum is child centered, open-ended, and play based. It integrates a variety of approaches which are designed to help each child develop positive self-esteem, to establish a foundation of learning, and to develop independence and confidence. We utilize a array of resources to develop our unique curriculum, instruction, and assessment while incorporating the State Learning Standards. We understand that children learn in different ways and paces, so we begin by looking at how the child is absorbing information. Then we work from there to offer different pathways for students to learn.

## LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

An integrated approach will provide centers where children actively engage in learning while they play. These different areas will strive to foster learning experiences that expand the children's knowledge of the world, their imaginations, and themselves. The teachers will serve as the facilitators of this learning, setting up centers in varied curriculum areas. These centers will be designed around themes providing a variety of learning opportunities.

Your child will develop important skills that support kindergarten readiness at all age levels, as well as later academic success through the quality play activities offered here.

As you visit your child's classroom, look to see if you can find these important learning centers:

**Art Center:** Children will explore color, shape, and texture utilizing a variety of mediums. Art projects encourage the freedom to express the beauty in their world and help to develop the child's sense of self-confidence.

**Block Area:** Children will develop the ability to create designs, understand spatial relationships, and foster their imaginations while learning how to share and respect the work of each other.

**Family Living Center/Housekeeping/Dramatic Play:**

Role-playing is an important skill that allows children to act out the events in their lives while teaching them to listen to each other, observe behaviors, resolve conflicts, and promotes their language development.

**Large Motor Skills:** Children will participate in activities that will help strengthen their large muscles, balance, and coordination. These activities can take place in our classroom, on the playground, and in our large indoor space.

**Library and Writing Center:** Children are exposed to books and print. Children will use language, share thoughts, sequence events, use visual discrimination, learn to appreciate books and begin to value reading and writing as communication tools.

**Manipulative Center:** Children will use a variety of manipulative toys such as LEGO and DUPLO sets, sorting and building objects, pegboards, puzzles and play-dough, to develop imagination and fine motor coordination. Children will also discover relationships based on color, size and shape while refining their ability to make choices.

**Math and Science Center:** Children will develop an understanding of number concepts through the use of math manipulatives. Their sense of wonder and natural curiosity about the world around them is the focus for the science area.

**Multi Sensory Tub:** Children will develop fine motor skills and an awareness of spatial relationships within a multi-sensory environment as they learn to share materials and relax tensions.

**Music and Movement:** Children will participate in movement activities which will aid in developing language, imagination, listening skills, and sound discrimination. Exposure to a variety of rhythms and beats broadens your child's awareness and appreciation of music.

**Prayer Center:** Children have the opportunity to experience private time “talking and listening with God”. Children will be able to explore God’s gifts of ourselves, creation, family, and our Church community. Prayer experiences foster and nurture the young child in prayer.

**Rug Time:** Rug time allows children to be part of a larger community. They talk about their plans for the day and participate in large group activities. Children will share information and take turns while developing language and listening skills. This time is for stories and singing also.

Additional activities of our daily routines may include:

**Arrival/Table Top Activities:** Children engage independently on activities and projects set out by the teacher. These are things that relate to the topic or theme of the day, they may include: puzzles, manipulatives, or art materials which emphasize fine motor skills.

**Clean Up:** Children will learn when it is time to stop an activity, put away toys and materials where they belong, learn to cooperate with others, and make smooth transitions.

**Snack:** Snack time encourages communication between children, a foundation in good nutrition, self-help skills, and good manners. Each mealtime begins with a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving.

**Story Times:** Teachers and Aides read to children in large and small groups, enhancing listening skills, memory, and stimulating thought provoking questions. There is also time for silent reading throughout our day.

**Movement/Music:** Large motor skills are enhanced through obstacle courses, physical games, and large motor activities. (Outdoor time weather permitting) Music is enjoyed every day in the classroom through singing, finger plays, rhymes, and movement through music.

**Arrival and Dismissal:** Children are encouraged to take care of their belongings independently. We like to have the children put their folders and their lunches in their back packs by themselves as well as put on and zip their coats.

## **DRESS FOR PLAY**

Clothes should be roomy enough for play with simple fastenings that the child can manage by him or herself. Jewelry is unsafe as it can get caught on objects and may harm your child. Shorts need to be worn under skirts. Long hair should be kept tied back. During wet, cold weather, children should wear boots, mittens, hats, and warm outer clothing because we will play outdoors as often as possible. Boots should be large enough for the child to put on independently. If shoe-boots are worn, another pair of shoes for use in the classroom need to be provided. For the hot and sunny days, sunglasses and brimmed hats are encouraged. We can go out when the 'feels like' temperature is between 30-90 degrees Fahrenheit.

You will provide a complete change of clothing that will be kept at school for use in case of an emergency. Items to be included are underwear, socks, shirt, and pants. All items should be marked with your child's name. These items need to be updated as the season changes and as your child grows.

## **MENTORS**

The mentor program is designed to assist new families so they experience a smooth transition into our program. A new incoming family or a family that is returning after a few years away, will be assigned a mentor. The mentor will contact mentees before school begins and a few times throughout the school year. Mentors can also be contacted with specific questions or concerns throughout the school year.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held in November and May of each school year. You will have the opportunity to schedule a conference with your child's teacher to discuss their progress. Parents or teachers may request a conference at any time throughout the school year.

## **PARENT/TEACHER PARTNERSHIP**

We believe a good parent/teacher partnership is necessary for children to have success in school. Throughout the year we will communicate through newsletters, notes, phone calls, bulletins, emails, and conferences. The teachers will have a bulletin posted on our entry doors indicating the weekly activities. Please make a daily habit of checking your child's folder with them for notes, projects, and other papers.

## **SCHOOL BOARD**

In accordance with the Joliet Diocesan Board of Education, the school board assists in providing and implementing policy and long-range planning direction for the school through a consultative manner. It is made up of 7 voting members, the pastor and the program director. Members can include parishioners, current and former parents, and teaching staff. Meetings are open to all families and are noted in the school calendar. The current school board members are listed on the front page of the Preschool web page. At the end/beginning of each school year there is an opportunity for new members to join the school board. Members need to objective with the best interest of the families and school in mind; they are liaisons between the school and the parents. They are supportive of the Director and the Priest knowing that they ultimately make the decisions with the advice and council of the board for the best interest of all our school families.

The school board meetings are listed on your school calendar; you are invited and welcome to attend the meetings. If you have an agenda item you would like to add, please contact the current school board president.

## **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Tuition assistance is available for anyone with financial needs. To request assistance or request additional information, please contact the school director.

- Qualifying forms must be submitted along with supporting documents.
- Financial need is assessed by the tuition assistance committee.
- A proportionate amount of tuition will be determined with an agreement that the remaining amount will be paid by the scholarship recipients.
- The scholarships are funded by the multiple Eat and Earns we schedule throughout the school year.

## **SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

We will have a variety of service opportunities throughout the school year. Service is a great way to build good citizens. We involve the children in our collection process as much as possible so they can see and learn how to help others in communities near and far. We collect lots of items from pop tabs to underwear to toys. For example, we collect aluminum pull tabs for Ronald McDonald House, plastic bag tags for wheel chair purchase, underwear for Catholic Charities, toys for Marillac House and many more. There is no specific number of items or dollar amount that you are obligated to donate; you do what is right for your family.

### **Section 4. What is different in the 2's program:**

Arrival and Departure procedures are the same. The times are different. The 2's will be here for 2 hours. Arrival is at 8:15 am Departure is at 10:15 am

Snack The procedures are the same for snack however the snacks that are provided will be toddler friendly. Cheerios, Teddy grahams, and Goldfish, are good choices for little hands and mouths. The children will use spillproof straw cups throughout the school year. The cups will get thoroughly washed and dried completely after each use.

Diaper changing- Your child needs to come to school in a clean dry diaper. A changing station is in the classroom, but your child will only be changed if necessary. A note will be in your child's folder if a diaper change was done. Let us know if you would like to come in to change your child's diaper. You will supply diapers and wipes for your child.

Potty Training- Please let us know when you plan to start this process, we will assist your child.

### **Section 5**

#### **What to do before you leave home-**

- Eat a good breakfast (snack is not until about 9:30)
- Use the bathroom
- Wash hands and face
- Hair should be tied back or out of their face
- Shorts need to be worn under dresses/skirts.
- Closed toed shoes are the best option for play.

#### **Dismissal and Pick-Up**

- 3's and 4's Classes will begin dismissal at 11:45-
- Adults will come to the school door forming a line next to the building so that the kids can be called one by one.
- Staff will ask who you are picking up if they do not know you.
- Students will come to the door with all items they are taking home.

### **What to do when you get home-**

- We suggest your child wash hands and face thoroughly
- Utilize the teacher posted activities and the items in their backpack for conversation starters about how their day was.
- Enjoy

### **Snack Time**

- One staff member will prepare snack for the classrooms.
  - Snack preparer will wear gloves at all times
  - Hair tied back
  - Sanitize before and after snack prep.
- Water will be pre-poured into small plastic cups.
- Each class will have their own tray for serving.
- Students will have snack at their table in their assigned seat.

### **Outside and Inside Play Stations**

(some are constant while others will rotate throughout the school year.

#### Outdoor Stations

1. Building blocks
2. Music
3. Swings
4. Bikes
5. Climber
6. Outdoor classroom
7. Basketball
8. Open grass spaces
9. Hula hoops
10. Bubble waving (no blowing)
11. Noodle Tag
12. Chalk book nook
13. Rakes
14. Shovels trucks and diggers

#### Inside Stations examples:

1. Building blocks
2. Book nook
3. Obstacle course
4. Parachute
5. Rings and scarves
6. Holla hoops
7. Scooters
8. Ring toss
9. Yoga
10. Basketball
11. Soccer
12. Bowling
13. Balance beam
14. Variety of balls



Mary Queen of Heaven  
PRESCHOOL  
**SIGNATURES**

Required Signature Page

Thank you for reading our handbook. Please sign and date the signature form and return with your registration packet.

I have read the Mary Queen of Heaven parent handbook.  
I understand and agree to all the information in the handbook.  
I understand that there may be additions and changes throughout the school year. I agree to confirm receipt of and read any updates that I receive.

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Student's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's names: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_