



# Parent Handbook

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# Mission Statement

Sprout's objective is to provide a safe environment for gifted children to socialize, explore, and express their individual creativity.

Sprout is an after-school program for gifted children ages 6-12, located in Lincoln Park. Our mission is to aid gifted children in discovering themselves and becoming comfortable with their talents. We hope to enrich the lives of Chicago's gifted youth through socialization with like-minded children, discussions with experts in a variety of fields, and freedom to explore their interests in a risk-free environment.

# Daily Activities

## School year programs (Spring and Fall)

The center is open from 2 to 6, Monday to Thursday during the school year. Parents may choose between attending Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday. There is also a one-day per week option at reduced cost for children who have other commitments.

Children are encouraged to come to the center from school, arriving before 4 p.m. Upon arrival, they will receive a snack and have time to do as they choose: homework, reading, playing games, socializing, or just unwinding. From four to five every afternoon, there will be an enrichment hour. During this time, the center will facilitate group discussions on giftedness, bring in experts or role models, or have an enrichment activity. Activities include problem solving, inventing, critical thinking, teamwork, and creative/imaginative work. After the enrichment hour, children may work on homework or study with assistance from qualified teachers, work on individual projects, etc.

Your child receives up to eight hours a week at the center, two qualified teachers on the premises at all times, daily snacks, guest speakers, enrichment activities, and all materials. Parents of gifted children may also take advantage of the center's books and resources for parenting gifted children, as well as monthly meetings with other parents for advice and support.

## Summer program

The summer program will meet after school has let out. Each week will be a distinct session, and will run each day Monday - Friday. A morning program is available from 9 am - noon. Based on interest, an extended day option from 12 - 2 may be available.

# Fees and Payment Plans

## Spring and Fall 2007

In order to promote continuity, the fall program will run two days a week in five-week sessions. Cost for each session is \$650.

Various discounts are available:

1. Referral - For each referred child accepted to the program a \$100 discount will be credited to the referrer after the referred child has completed one session. The referrer must have a child continuously enrolled in the program from the time the new child starts until they have completed their first session. In order to be considered a referral, a child may not have participated in the program before, nor can they have any siblings who have participated in the program. Children must complete one session in the program before they are eligible to refer others.
2. Sibling - For families with more than one child enrolled in the program, tuition for the second child will be discounted 10%. Tuition for any additional children from the same family will be discounted 15%.
3. Advance discounts - ten weeks paid in advance will receive a \$50 discount, for a total of \$1250. Fifteen weeks paid in advance will receive a \$100 discount, for a total of \$1850.
4. Late arrival discount - children arriving at Sprout after 3:30 will receive a 20% discount, reducing the price to \$250 for one day a week and \$500 for 2 days a week.
5. **Children attending only one day per week will be charged \$325 per session, a 50% discount.**

Payment is due in full prior to the session. If payment is not made on time, a late fee of \$25 will be assessed. If payment is not made before the start of the following session, the child will not be allowed to attend that session without special arrangements.

A late fee will also be assessed if the child is not picked up by 6 p.m. For every five minutes after 6 as measured by the center's clock, \$5 will be assessed. Exceptions will be made only with prior approval of the director.

# Admission, Enrollment, and Discharge Policies

In order to apply to Sprout, each candidate must:

- ❖ Submit an enrollment/application form
- ❖ Submit a teacher recommendation
- ❖ Submit a parent observation
- ❖ Submit most recent test scores (standardized, I.Q., etc.)
- ❖ Interview with the director

Each candidate will be carefully considered for the program. Sprout does not discriminate against any person in admission, employment, or otherwise because of race, religion, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or age.

Once enrolled in Sprout, each child will be welcomed back into subsequent sessions. Enrollment will be discontinued due to extenuating circumstances or a lack of payment (as stated previously).

## Arrival and Departure of Sprout Children

Sprout is open from 2 to 6 p.m. during the school year.

Children are to be dropped off at the front of the building or brought in by 4 p.m. and will sign in upon arrival. Children must be picked up by 6 p.m. by a guardian or by an approved adult, unless a waiver is signed by the guardians. If the child is not picked up by 6 p.m., a late fee will be assessed (as explained in the previous section).

# Important Dates

Here are some important dates to keep in mind:

January

16 - Spring Session I begins

February

16 - Spring Session I ends

20 - Spring Session II begins

March

23 - Spring Session II ends

26 - Closed for Spring Break

April

3 - Spring Session III begins

May

4 - Spring Session III ends

8 - Spring Session IV begins

June

8 - Spring Session IV ends

25 - Summer program begins (summer program runs each week until August 17)

August

17 - Summer program ends

20 - Back to School Week

September

4 - Fall Session I begins

# Guidance and Discipline Policy

From my experience as a classroom teacher, I have found that most discipline problems come from students who are bored. Sprout's purpose is to stimulate the minds of gifted children; boredom should never be a problem. Sprout's environment is filled with a combination of interesting, stimulating material, and a calm, nurturing area for reflection and growth. Sprout's discipline policy, therefore, is one that is created by children for children. We have one rule:

Respect yourself and others.

If a child's behavior becomes an issue, a simple question can be asked: "By doing that, are you respecting yourself? Are you respecting your peers?" This allows the child to take responsibility for his or her actions before the behavior becomes a problem. If there is a behavior issue, the guardians will be notified by the director, either at pick-up or in writing. We will then all work together to understand the source of the problem, and create a fitting solution.

Sprout is a voluntary program that is meant to lead the gifted child down a path of creativity and exploration. It is a place for them to feel free to try things without the risk of being judged. They are allowed, and encouraged, to express their feelings and emotions in a safe environment. Appropriate behavior is always expected, but 'school behavior' is not necessarily 'Sprout behavior'.

# Parent Communications

Every session, a newsletter will be sent home. The newsletter will contain a recap of the past month at the center, announcements of upcoming projects, speakers, and events, any updates about the center itself, any work submitted by a child that wishes it to be published, and professional articles relating to giftedness. Attached to the newsletter will be an individual narrative report about your child's experiences of the past month.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the director of Sprout whenever there is a question, comment or concern. Please do not hesitate to call or stop in.

# Procedures

## Emergency Medical Care

In the event of an emergency, the person designated on the medical form as the emergency contact will be notified immediately. If the emergency contact person is not the primary guardian, the guardian will be notified as well.

If the situation requires the immediate intervention of a physician or hospital, 911 will be called. **If you wish to refuse medical care, Sprout must be notified in writing at the time of enrollment.**

## Field Trips

Any trip off the premises (excluding pre-approved neighborhood destinations) will require signed permission from the child's guardian. Notification about any field trip will be sent home at least 2 weeks prior to the event.

## Personal Belongings

Sprout is not responsible for any personal items brought to the center that are lost, stolen, or broken. Each child will be assigned a hook to hang a backpack and coat, as well as a cubby to store projects and other items to remain at the center.