



St. Jerome Early Childhood Center



Issue 6

Monthly Newsletter

JANUARY 2024

'St. Jerome Early Childhood Center, a Catholic Community, provides a loving and accepting environment that fosters respect for all people, by modeling Christian values as our children grow and learn.'

Administrator Message:

Dear Families and Friends,

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful Christmas season and that the joy and peace of our Savior Jesus remain in your hearts and homes. It was a happy celebration when our students and their families gathered for a Christmas Sing Along on the playground.

During December, our staff shared their Christmas Cultural Traditions through dance, music, stories and more! Read on to get a glimpse into these beautiful presentations.

On behalf of the staff at SJECC, I wish you a very Happy New Year!

May God continue to bless all we do in His name,
Phyllis Steele



Nativity at Christmas Sing Along

MARDI GRAS
50/50 Raffle
Supporting St. Jerome Early Childhood Center
Jan. 20th- Feb. 12th, 2024
Drawing on 2/12/24 (Facebook Live) @ 7 pm
Winner need not be present to win!
Suggested Donation
\$1 per ticket
\$5 for 6 tickets
727-596-9491
LICENSE # C900209

SJECC

Summer Camp

Join us for fun and learning this summer!

June 3 – 28

Monday through Friday

Half and Full Day options

Enroll in one, two, three or four weeks!

Only open to current SJECC students.

More details coming soon!

2024-25 St. Jerome Early Childhood Center Re-enrollment and

Application Process:

Application packets for currently enrolled two and three-year olds will come home January 25/26. If you are currently enrolled and will have a new sibling entering our program next year, please call the office to request a packet. All students, including those currently enrolled, who plan to attend St. Jerome ECC for the 2024-25 school year will need to apply or re-enroll as outlined below. St. Jerome ECC is currently participating in the state Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program for four year olds. Our ECC families can assist St. Jerome ECC by spreading the word to other families with preschool age children. Let friends, family, and neighbors know that we have an Open House on Sunday, January 28th from 10:30am – 12:00pm.

Families are reminded that our policy does not allow teacher requests or requests to place certain children together. All families are asked to respect this long-standing, important policy and not approach any ECC staff members on this subject. Everyone's cooperation is most appreciated as we have faith in each and every one of our educators and expect the same from all families who have chosen St. Jerome ECC.

Applications/Re-enrollment Packets will include:

- Application Letter/Information
- Application/Re-enrollment Form
- Tuition Fees
- VPK Information (Four-year olds)
- Pledge Letter/Card (Four-year olds)

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| Feb. 5 – Registration begins for currently enrolled children and siblings. Feb. 12 – Open Registration – All are welcome! |
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Our two-year-old program is offered two (TTH), three (MWF), or five (M-F) mornings.

Our three-year-old program is offered two (TTH), three (MWF), or five (M-F) mornings. Students must be three years of age by September 1, 2024 and **fully independent** with toileting skills.

Our four-year-old program is offered five days (M-F).

Extended Day is available for all ages, mornings beginning at 8:00am and afternoons until 3:00pm.

Re-enrollment opens as of **8:00am** on Monday, February 5. **PARENTS MUST SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT AND COME into the office with all paperwork completed (the exception would be for the VPK Certificate of Eligibility – you CAN register if you have applied to VPK but have not received your certificate yet), registration fees, and required signatures. No application/re-enrollment forms will be accepted prior to that time. Please do not send these items in through the children's backpacks.** Information regarding appointment times will be sent to you soon via email.

All fees must be current prior to registration/re-enrollment. *Families that might have a difficulty in this area are asked to contact the ECC office prior to registration.

Four Year Old/VPK Families:

The 2024-25 VPK Application is now available. You will need to create a Family Portal Account (if you do not already have one). You can reach the Family Portal by selecting VPK from the following link:<https://elcpinellas.net/> Families will then receive a Certificate of Eligibility (via email) which will be part of your registration paperwork due to St. Jerome ECC. St. Jerome ECC established a pledge drive for those families attending our VPK program. Families are asked to consider pledging a financial amount that will help offset the difference between what the state is providing per child for the VPK program and what the actual cost is for the nationally accredited, quality ECC program that St. Jerome ECC provides. Families will receive a pledge letter and response card in their registration/ packets. Your participation is optional, but your consideration is greatly appreciated and needed for our center to remain in the VPK program. St. Jerome ECC has participated in the VPK program since its first year in 2005 and increases from the state have been minimal, and some years, no increase at all. Our center employs highly qualified, faith-filled educators to work with your children. Additionally, St. Jerome ECC allows families to enroll for just the VPK portion of the day, which many schools/centers do not allow.

St. Jerome ECC is self-supporting through parent tuition and fundraising events. Our center seeks to offer a quality program, affordable to families seeking a Catholic educational setting for their children.

Kindergarten Information:

- ◆ **Kindergarten for the 2024-25 School Year:** We sent a Kindergarten Information packet home to our 4-year-old students and will continue to share registration information as it becomes available. All ECC families are strongly encouraged to consider our local Catholic Elementary Schools for your child's transition to kindergarten. Visit the Diocese of St. Petersburg Office of Catholic Schools & Centers website <http://dosp.org/schools/> to view the various Catholic Schools offering kindergarten. Scholarships are available – see details on the above website under *Financial Aid* and note that applications for financial aid are time sensitive. Be sure to check out our Catholic Elementary Schools during Catholic Schools' Week, when all Catholic schools host open houses and special events. Private schools now have offer Step Up Scholarships to all families regardless of their financial situation.
- ◆ **Pinellas County School Information:** Those families interested in Pinellas County Schools for the upcoming school year should visit their website at <https://www.pcsb.org/KG>.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- ◆ **Mardi Gras Cash Raffle Fundraiser:** The raffle scheduled for January and February is a 50/50 drawing. Tickets are available beginning January 20th for a suggested donation of \$1 for one ticket and \$5 for six tickets. The cash prize will be awarded on Tuesday, February 13th.
- ◆ **Family Night:** We are pleased to present another fun-filled evening for families. Please join us for a "Drum Circle" by Giving Tree Music. This amazing event is being offered to you free-of-charge! The drum circle will be held at 7:00 pm in the Parish Center on Monday, January 29th.
- ◆ **Catholic Schools' Week:** St. Jerome ECC will join the nation in celebrating Catholic Schools' Week, January 28 – February 2, 2024. Families will receive a special calendar of events for that week. We look forward to some exciting activities such as Pajama Day with our guest Librarian, Donuts with Dad, and Grandparent's Day.
- ◆ **Class Pictures** - Class pictures will be taken February 15th and 16th. Details will be sent home in your child's folder.

REMINDERS

- ◆ **2024-25 Survey:** A survey is being sent to all current families this week. Please indicate your needs and preferences for the upcoming school year. We will take this information into account when making our preparations for staffing, program hours, etc. Surveys are due back to the school office by January 19th. Thank you!
- ◆ **No School:** St. Jerome ECC will be closed Monday, January 15th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- ◆ **Child Car Seat Restraint Law:** Reminder that all children ages 4 and 5 are required to sit in a child safety seat or a booster seat rather than only being buckled in a seatbelt.
- ◆ **Tuition** – Tuition payments are due the first of each month. Payments made after the 10th of the month are considered late and need to include the appropriate late fee.
- ◆ **Appropriate Shoes:** Parents are asked to refer to the Family Handbook with regards to appropriate shoes for school. No boots, crocs or sandals are allowed for safety reasons.
- ◆ **Belongings:** Parents are asked to label all of their child's belongings that are brought to school. Lunch boxes, jackets and hats can easily be lost if not properly labelled.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STUDENTS We're so glad you're here!

Grayson
Benjamin

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jaxson
Benjamin
Beckham



UPCOMING

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Jan. 8 | Classes Resume - <i>Happy New Year!</i> |
| Jan. 10 | Last Day for On-time Tuition Payments |
| Jan. 16 | No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday |
| Jan. 19 | Catholic Schools Week calendar coming home |
| Jan. 25/26 | Re-enrollment & Application Packets Coming Home for the 2024-25 School Year |
| Jan. 28 | Catholic Schools Week begins! Celebrate the 9:00 am Mass with us! Attend our Open House! |
| Jan. 29 | Family Fun Night – Drum Circle (7pm in Parish Center) |
| Feb. 5 | Re-enrollment begins for currently enrolled ECC students & siblings |
| Feb. 12 | Open Registration – New families apply for the 2024-25 school year |

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD **Cultural Traditions**

Thank you to our wonderful staff who shared the cultural traditions of their home countries with our students. How blessed we are to be able to celebrate the diversity that makes each of us unique! By sharing our differences, we teach our children to celebrate their identities and respect one another's. You are welcome to share your family traditions with our classes. We love learning about different cultures!

Bosnia-Herzegovina (Ms. Milenka)



Peru (Mrs. Pollock)



Serbia (Mrs. Danijela)



Russia (Ms. Josie)



More photos from our FAMILY CHRISTMAS SING ALONG!





