



Parent Handbook

2025-26



Welcome to Smart Start! We are thrilled and honored to have your family join our community. Our team understands how important it is to choose a safe, engaging environment for your young learner. Thank you for placing your trust in us!

We are committed to providing a learning atmosphere that is warm, joyful, and loving, all while encouraging curiosity, creativity, and kindness. Our goal is to offer a developmentally appropriate program that inspires exploration, discovery, and a strong sense of community.

Please take a moment to review this handbook, which includes important information about ArtWorks and Smart Start.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with your child. We recognize the privilege of caring for your most precious gift. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your input and support are important to us.

Sincerely,

Leah Anderson

Smart Start Program Director

HISTORY OF ARTWORKS

ArtWorks is a non-profit, community arts education center that opened in June 2017. We are committed to providing all people in our community with quality arts education. Through dance, theatre, music, and visual arts, led by passionate and qualified teachers, we aim to cultivate imagination and ingenuity and to nurture creative expression, inspiring our children and citizens to reach their full potential.

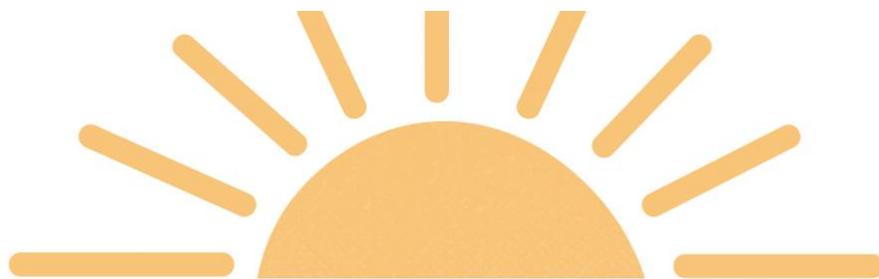
We are located in Russell County, Kentucky in the city of Jamestown. Our main location, ArtWorks on the Square, is situated on the Historic Square in Jamestown, Kentucky, in Treasure Alley, within the building once known as Guthrie's. This location hosts our Aerial, Dance, and Fitness Programs. Our second location, ArtWorks on Main, is located at 94 N. Main St. in Jamestown and serves as the home for our Smart Start Arts Immersion Early Education Program and Visual Arts Program. We also have ArtWorks at the Creek, located at 640 Townbranch Rd. in Jamestown, which is dedicated to our Nature and Culinary Arts Camps, with many more exciting activities to come.

ArtWorks aims to be a vibrant hub for local artists of all ages, and to enrich and enliven our community through the arts. We offer classes, camps, and workshops for children and adults.

OUR PUROSE AT SMART START

At Smart Start, our mission is to honor and nurture the curiosity, wonder, strength, and potential of every child. Through connection, art, and play, we invite our students to explore a variety of tools that empower them to become independent, creative, passionate, and lifelong learners.

We use a creative arts and play-based approach to teaching, which helps spark a child's natural curiosity and sense of wonder. Art and play provide opportunities for children to think creatively, explore their own ideas, solve problems in multiple ways, try new things, and collaborate with others. These experiences create a strong foundation for academic learning, making it both natural and fun as children continue their educational journey.



OUR CORE VALUES

1

CONNECTION: We are deeply connected with one another and the world around us.

2

KINDNESS: We model how to honor, respect, and treat everyone in our classroom family with dignity and kindness.

3

WONDER: We will act as facilitators, guiding children as they use their natural curiosity to seek and discover answers.

4

ART: We believe every child is an artist, capable of expressing the imagination, intelligence, and ideas that lie within.

5

ENVIRONMENT: We will design and organize our space to reflect our values and intentionally use it as a tool for instruction.

6

COMMUNICATION: We will foster open and respectful dialogue, modeling active listening, and encouraging diverse forms of expression. Words are important.

7

PARTNERSHIP: We encourage you to be active partners in this journey of your child's learning. Reach out with questions, watch for resources, and let us know how we can best support your child and their needs.

GOALS

Early Childhood is defined as children from birth to 8 years of age.

- We strive to hire well-qualified, dedicated teachers who are trained in child development, education, and/or the arts and who care about young children.
- The team at Smart Start are committed to providing a high-quality, developmentally appropriate program for young children.
- Our team will take into account the developmental needs of the children, while planning to promote the creative, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual well-being.
- The team works together to offer an environment where the self-esteem will grow through rich and varied experiences with the arts in combination with sound early childhood education.
- The daily curriculum encourages and supports active and involved children who explore, experiment, observe, talk, play, and process with a wide range of developmentally appropriate materials.
- The team uses positive techniques when disciplining, including a wide variety of methods that teach children to cooperate, respect, and care for others. Through play and development of appropriate communication skills, we provide opportunities to foster empathy and consideration of others.
- We strive to keep children safe and healthy. We promote good health habits and a healthy environment.
- We aim to help children become the best young learners they can be!

LINE OF AUTHORITY

Problems should be brought to the attention of the Smart Start Program Director. The Program Director shall report to the ArtWorks Executive Director, with the final authority being the Board of Directors of ArtWorks Community Arts Education Center.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

ArtWorks Community Arts Education Center will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, sex, national origin, religion, or disability.

WHAT WE WILL LEARN AND SOME WAYS WE WILL LEARN

Everything we teach will be developed through play, curiosity, creativity, open communication, and cooperation. Learning begins with modeling how to use tools and toys in a way that is expected. Teachers learn alongside the students.

- **Math:** music, blocks, calendar, weather, sequencing, counting, puzzles, games, etc.
- **Science:** color mixing, observing, engineering, tactile and sensory experiments, sand and water play, gardening, cooking, etc.
- **Reading:** daily book reading, listening to stories, buddy reading, acting out stories, poems, rhyme, songs, chants, etc.
- **Writing:** painting and artwork with a multitude of tools, small motor activities, scissors, sculpting with clay, journaling, letter practice, etc.
- **Social Skills:** communication, collaboration, problem-solving, conflict resolution, etc.

Choices: real choices “What would you like to do first?” “What color would you like to use?” Giving children plenty of practice making choices and expressing them helps build their independence and confidence.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

We believe every child can learn. Our goal is that everyone can grow to their greatest potential. We understand that preschool age children are learning and exploring, and we look to give guidance as to proper behavior while learning to live in community. Our teachers will model and encourage proper behavior as children learn to work collaboratively. As your child is learning and growing, we are still mindful of others in our classroom. Should behaviors not progress in a positive way and the child remains disruptive, teachers will meet with parents to decide if the child is ready to continue being at Smart Start.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline means an ongoing process of helping children develop inner control so that they can manage their own behavior in a socially approved manner. It is a learning process. In our classroom we connect to find out the why, then redirect. Our goal is always to honor a child's dignity and development and set expectations that are appropriate. One resource guide we use is No Drama Discipline by Daniel J. Siegel. We also celebrate positive behaviors by using brag beads, which reward exceptional acts of kindness, personal progress, and special achievements. A calm down corner will also be utilized when a friend may need a few minutes to take a break from being over stimulated.

COMMUNICATION

Smart Start uses the Remind app for quick and easy communication. We also post on our Facebook group page. Reminders and announcements will be sent through the Remind app and posted on the Facebook group page. The telephone number for ArtWorks is 270-343-ARTS. If you need to reach us during the Smart Start day, please call ArtWorks. Please message the Program Director using the Remind app with any questions or to report an absence. We encourage you to follow ArtWorks on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

TOILET TRAINING

Children need to be fully toilet trained and wearing underwear before attending Smart Start. Please note that we understand that young children have occasional accidents or may need assistance from time to time. We will help in those circumstances. Fully toilet trained and wearing underwear means they are able to go to the bathroom individually and know when to ask for help. Toilet training is not a function of our program. Children have the opportunity to use the restroom as needed, as well as during scheduled visits before traveling as a group to snack and circle. Please send a full set of clothes with your child at the beginning of the year. We will ask for a cold weather set of clothes when winter weather arrives, and we will send the others home.

TIMES

Smart Start will meet from 8:00am-12:00pm. Morning Drop Off is between 7:45am-8:00am. When dropping your child off, please walk your child to the gate. When picking up, please have your pickup card ready and hand to the teacher. Children must be escorted to and from the building by an adult. We ask that you be on time for drop off and pickup. We find that keeping a consistent, structured schedule offers more learning opportunities and less disruption. Occasional late arrivals or early dismissals will occur. We ask that you let the Program Director know in advance to minimize the disruption.

PICKUP AUTHORIZATION

Only people that have your child's pickup card and that you authorize on your child's pickup form may pickup your child. If you find you need additional or replacement pickup cards, please let a team member know. Those are an essential part of pickup running smoothly and quickly. If it becomes necessary for a person not on your list to pickup your child without a pickup card, we will need to receive a note or phone call from you stating the person's name and telephone number.

DISASTER PLANS

- **Tornado Warnings:** In the case of a severe storm that results in a tornado WARNING, the children will be taken to the restrooms for safety and will remain there until an all clear is issued. We will practice tornado safety drills in the fall and in the spring.
- **Fire Drills:** In the event of a fire evacuation, our designated relocation site is the Judicial Center parking lot, directly across Shelby Street. If this should occur, we will send a message via the Remind app regarding pickup instructions.
- **Other Situations:** Should there be any situation arise that we need to evacuate the building, we will relocate to ArtWorks on the Square. We would send a message via the Remind app regarding pickup instructions.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

When Russell County Schools are closed due to bad weather or other emergencies, Smart Start will be closed. Please listen to local news outlets for closings. Cancellations will also be announced via the Remind app and on the Facebook group page.

DRESS

Please dress your child for play that is appropriate and comfortable for messy projects and movement. We will do hands-on activities every day. **Dress with mess** in mind! We will also move, dance, and exercise each day. We encourage shorts/leggings with dresses. It is helpful for long hair to be pulled back.

SNACKS

Parents will need to send a snack and refillable water bottle with their child each day. Snacks do not need to be elaborate, only healthy and sustaining. Snack is typically around 10:30am each day, and we designate 20-25 minutes for eating and cleanup.

BIRTHDAYS/HOLIDAYS

You are welcome to send in a special treat to celebrate your child's birthday. Just let us know in advance if you would like to do this. Holidays are always a time we like to celebrate with a special snack and treats to send home. We will send home announcements regarding special holiday and celebrations. If your child has a food allergy, please send us a list of foods to avoid on these occasions.

HEALTH

Please keep your child at home if they are feeling unwell. **Children must be free of fever and fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to Smart Start.** This helps protect the health of other children and staff. If your child becomes ill or shows signs of a fever while at Smart Start, we will contact you immediately.

As part of our shared community, children interact with common toys and tools daily. If your child has been exposed to lice or bedbugs, please ensure both your child and their clothing are free of lice, bedbugs, and nits before returning. We also ask that you inform us as soon as possible so we can take steps to maintain a clean and safe environment for all.

TUITION AND FEES

The yearly tuition of Smart Start is evenly divided across the months of attendance. Monthly tuition invoices are sent via email on the first of each month, and payments are due by the 15th. If you need to make alternative arrangements for payment, please contact our billing manager at admin@artworks.org or call 270-343-ARTS.

Tuition payments may be made online or set up for automatic withdrawal. You may also pay by check or cash, though a surcharge may apply. Payments can be given directly to a teacher at drop-off and must be received by the due date. If tuition is not paid by the designated due date, your child's enrollment may be suspended. A \$75 re-enrollment fee will be required to reinstate enrollment once the balance is paid in full.