SCOPE Pre-K/UPK Instructional Program

Parent Guide: Toileting & Self-Care in Pre-K/UPK

Toileting independence is one of the most important self-care skills your child will practice in Pre-K. This guide explains what to expect at school, how to support your child at home, and how we work together to keep every child comfortable, confident, and successful.

What We Expect in the Pre-K/UPK Instructional Program

Children entering Pre-K are expected to have basic toileting skills, but we understand that every child is at a different stage of development. Our teachers and staff are trained to support children with patience, dignity, and care.

Children should generally be able to:

- Recognize and communicate the need to use the bathroom
- Pull pants and underwear up and down independently
- Use toilet paper appropriately
- Flush the toilet after use
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly with soap and water

Our Classroom Routine

Structured bathroom breaks are built into every Pre-K school day. Teachers schedule group bathroom trips at regular intervals — typically after arrival, before and after outdoor play, before lunch, and before dismissal. Children are also encouraged to ask to use the bathroom at any time.

At School, We Will:

- Provide scheduled bathroom breaks throughout the day
- Remind children gently and consistently
- Support children who need additional assistance
- Communicate with families about any concerns
- Maintain privacy and dignity for every child

We Ask Families To:

- Practice bathroom routines at home daily
- Send children in clothing that is easy to manage
- Provide a complete change of clothing in the backpack
- Notify us of any special needs or medical considerations
- Share what words your child uses for bathroom needs

Clothing Tips for Success

One of the easiest ways families can support toileting independence is through clothing choices. When children can manage their clothing on their own, they feel proud and capable.

- Choose elastic waistbands over buttons, snaps, or belts
- Avoid overalls, onesies, or complicated buckles
- Opt for pants or shorts that are easy to pull up and down quickly
- Make sure clothing fits well — too tight or too loose can cause accidents
- Label all spare clothing with your child's first and last name

Accidents Happen — And That's Okay

Toileting accidents are a normal and expected part of early childhood. They are never treated as a source of shame or embarrassment in our classrooms. Our staff respond to accidents calmly, privately, and with kindness.

What Happens After an Accident

- The child is gently guided to change in a private space
- Soiled clothing is sealed in a bag and sent home for laundering
- The child changes into their spare clothing kept in their backpack
- Staff notify families via the daily communication log or a phone call if needed
- There is no punishment, scolding, or negative response of any kind

Handwashing: A Non-Negotiable Habit

Handwashing after every bathroom visit is a health and safety expectation in our program. We teach children the full handwashing sequence as part of our daily routine.

The five steps we teach:

- Wet hands with clean, running water
- Apply soap and lather by rubbing hands together for at least 20 seconds
- Scrub all surfaces — backs of hands, between fingers, under nails
- Rinse thoroughly under running water
- Dry hands completely with a paper towel

Supporting Toileting at Home

Consistency between home and school makes a tremendous difference. Here are some ways families can reinforce toileting independence at home:

- Establish a bathroom routine at consistent times each day (after waking, before bed, before and after meals)
- Use the same language for body parts and bathroom functions that your child hears at school
- Celebrate effort and progress — not just success
- Avoid rushing your child; allow enough time in the routine
- If your child is still developing independence, have them practice pulling clothing up and down during every bathroom visit
- Read picture books about using the bathroom — ask your teacher for recommendations

When to Talk to Us

We encourage families to reach out to their child's teacher or the UPK program office at any time. Please contact us if:

- Your child is experiencing frequent accidents after the first few weeks of school
- Your child expresses fear or anxiety about using the school bathroom
- Your child has a medical condition, physical limitation, or sensory need that affects toileting
- There has been a recent change at home (new baby, illness, stress) that may affect bathroom behavior
- You need guidance on supporting your child's toileting development

Questions? We Are Here to Help.

- Speak with your child's Pre-K teacher at drop-off, pick-up, or by note
- Contact the SCOPE UPK Program Office: Mellisa Krauss, Senior Director for Instructional Services
- Email: mkrauss@scopeonline.us | Questions & Concerns: mobrien@scopeonline.us
- Visit us at scopeonline.us for program resources and family information