

Clarke Caregiver Handbook

2026-2027



**Clarke teaches children who are deaf
or hard of hearing to listen and talk.**

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clarkeschools.org

Alisa Demico, Director

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

August 2026

Dear families:

We would like to welcome your family to ours and thank you for choosing Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech for your child's education! Clarke is the first and largest organization of its kind, offering a continuum of services for students and their families at our multiple locations, in mainstream classrooms and remotely through teleservices.

Since our founding in 1867, we have prepared children to succeed in mainstream schools and the wider world, evolving to meet the needs of children and families today. Our goal is to prepare students with hearing loss to succeed in mainstream classrooms alongside their peers with typical hearing. You can learn more about Clarke's history here - <https://clarkeschools.org/about-us/history/>

This handbook provides you with our goals, expectations, policies and procedures. You have entrusted us to partner with you to provide the child in your life with the best possible education. As we embark upon a new school year working together as a team, may the spirit of cooperation, support, and encouragement lead to a wonderful and successful year at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Alisa Demico in purple ink, with the text "Alisa Demico ASCCC-SLP, LSLS Cert AVT" written below it.

Alisa Demico M.S., CCC-SLP, LSLS, Cert. AVT
Director, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech
Florida

Clarke admits children who are deaf or hard of hearing, providing services to our families regardless of race, color, gender, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin or marital status.

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared as an informational guide regarding Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech (Clarke) policies and procedures. It is an important reference to save and refer to throughout the school year. You are requested to review and discuss its contents with your child, especially sections dealing with child/student responsibilities and behavioral expectations. The handbook was revised in response to suggestions from caregivers and staff while still meeting regulations of *Clarke School for Hearing and Speech Florida, Inc.* under which Clarke operates. Clarke is a state approved private school, which accepts students from public sources. As such, it retains autonomy over admissions. It is important that caregivers read and understand the information in this handbook.

Please sign and return the Signature Page found in the appendix to the Office Manager, indicating that you, as a member of the Clarke community, have read, understand and agree to follow these policies and procedures. The school must have on file the completed signature page as a requirement for admission.

Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination

Clarke does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. Clarke Schools is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 not to discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. The Senior Human Resources Manager, 45 Round Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01060, telephone number 413-582-1155, has been designated as the employee responsible for coordinating Clarke efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 to Clarke Schools may be referred to Andrea Harkins or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, telephone number 800-421-3481.

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Statement of Purpose

At Clarke, we teach children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk.

Children served by Clarke use advanced technologies, including cochlear implants and hearing aids, to maximize their access to sound. We work with children and their families from infancy through their teen years. Our teachers of the deaf, audiologists and speech-language pathologists have the background, training and experience to prepare children academically and socially for a world of limitless possibilities. Clarke children listen and learn in the classroom, run, and laugh with their friends on the playground, and have lives filled with music, sports, family and community. Many children who come to Clarke are ready to attend their neighborhood schools by preschool and kindergarten. In addition to our work with children, we serve families and adults through a wide range of programs and services. With our extensive staff of experts, physical locations along the Eastern Seaboard and a robust teleservices program delivering services remotely, we strive to reach people with hearing loss at all stages of life.

We believe that the home environment is the most influential factor in a young child's life. We believe that teachers and families should work together to ensure the safety, happiness and overall development of children enrolled at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

1. We have an open-door policy for caregivers and families and encourage families to visit at any time their child is at school. We encourage caregivers to spend time in the classrooms to participate or lead activities related to our classroom themes.
2. We use various platforms to promote home/school communication, which include home/school notebook, blog, etc. to collaborate with families and other caregivers to ensure ongoing communication across the child's daily environments. We are happy to arrange progress meetings and or phone calls with the child's teachers or the director.
3. Families are encouraged to participate in caregiver-teacher conferences, guided observations, family fun nights and caregiver workshops at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

We believe that educational planning for children who are deaf or hard of hearing must consider the whole child, and not just the communication needs. Educational experiences should support learning across all developmental domains: cognitive development, social and emotional development, motor development and communication development. We believe that children learn best when curriculum is presented in theme-based units, including hands-on experience with the materials and high levels of teacher guidance and interaction.

1. We provide a comprehensive toddler, preschool and kindergarten program with an enriched language component. The children's educational needs are addressed in a structured, well-ordered, child-centered, process-oriented developmental curriculum designed to promote the acquisition of age-appropriate conceptual and problem-solving skills.

2. We provide age-appropriate activities and materials that encourage children to explore and build foundations for knowledge in Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and History and Social Sciences, Health Education and Arts.
3. Each child is provided with activities and instruction to promote acquisition of new skills based on their individual level of development.
4. Our typical class has four to nine students, providing a small student/teacher ratio which allows for ample individual instruction and attention in the classroom. Each child also receives 30 minutes of daily audition, speech and language instruction outside of the classroom. These sessions may include a peer at times to provide opportunity for peer-to-peer communication, and opportunity for specific work on social routines and conversational skills.

Our team has extensive knowledge in child development, hearing loss, audiology and speech and language development as it relates to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

1. We have a multi-disciplinary team of teachers at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech, including teachers of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, audiologists and early childhood teachers. Our staff works collaboratively to ensure that all the children's needs are met.
2. All staff hold certification to their position. All staff participate in ongoing professional development activities.

Objectives

1. To provide a strong academic base by (a) employing a staff that is certified, well-prepared and abreast of current educational best practices for children who are deaf or hard of hearing; (b) continuously updating curriculum to meet the educational needs and prepare students for the mainstream; (c) increasing the literacy skills of all students.
2. To provide direct instruction on developing the self-awareness and self-advocacy skills to promote confidence with their hearing loss by (a) ability to explain their own hearing loss and equipment, (b) advocate for appropriate accommodations, (c) troubleshoot their own equipment in a variety of settings.
3. To promote the development of listening and spoken language skills throughout the school day by (a) daily audition, speech and language therapy sessions, (b) focused auditory targets embedded into academic curriculum.
4. To provide sound training in communication (speech, language, listening and social skills) by (a) providing adequate amplification devices; (b) providing acoustically sound classrooms; and (c) providing sufficient print and non-print materials to promote development of articulation, voice, language, pragmatic and social language skills.
5. To provide optimal access in all settings by maintaining the integrity of the hearing technology equipment, and ensure the environment is accessible for each child. Individual auditory, speech and language services are also available for children in mainstream programs.
6. To analyze each child's ability to hear specific sounds, identify auditory, articulation and language concerns and dedicate time to building the speech and language skills needed for success in a hearing world.

Additionally, each child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) with individualized goals and specific objectives. The goals and objectives for each individual child are based on the child's levels in the areas of auditory, speech, expressive language, receptive language, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, life skills and social-emotional development.

Program Goals

Clarke Florida

PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech (Clarke Florida) is a private, not-for-profit, institution that uses sophisticated technologies, intensive early intervention and auditory-oral education by a highly trained staff, including certified Listening and Spoken Language Specialists, to teach children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk in preparation for entering inclusive education settings alongside their hearing peers.

TODDLER, PRESCHOOL, PRE-KINDERGARTEN, KINDERGARTEN and FIRST GRADE PROGRAMS

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech in Jacksonville currently offers five school programs: Toddler, Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade. Small classes, hands-on activities, and individualized instruction are the cornerstones of a Clarke education. The faculty encourages students to be inquisitive and confident, to learn to use their residual hearing and hearing technology to their greatest benefit, to strive to master spoken language and to be introduced to written language. All children work on skills that meet or exceed the standards set by the state of Florida.

Students receive intervention and education from teachers of the deaf and ASHA and State Board certified speech-language pathologists. The staff is supervised by professionals who are Listening and Spoken Language Specialists, Certified Auditory-Verbal Educators or Therapists (LSLS Cert. AVEd/AVT) and who also provide direct service to children as part of their daily responsibilities. All professionals work to foster the development of age-appropriate listening, speech, vocabulary and language. All interaction promotes the basic goals of early childhood education and includes structuring the environment to provide opportunities to aid in each child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Each child in our school is an individual. We also recognize that every family has different needs and interests. It is important to our staff to know you and your child and to be a positive, supportive influence in your child's growth and development.

The school community works together to provide the students with the foundation for future learning and growth regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age or disability.

General Information about Educational Programs

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech is a national nonprofit organization using a listening and spoken language approach with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Clarke's continuum of services includes a Birth to Age Three Program, Preschool/Early Childhood Program, Mainstream Services (Massachusetts and Philadelphia) and teleservices. Services are customized to fit various needs and ages.

Daily Schedule

Parents will receive their child's classroom schedule from their teacher at the start of each school year or when their child begins the school program.

Arrival and Dismissal

Each class will enter/exit through their designated facility door. Classes start promptly at 8:55. If you arrive after this time you will need to check in at the office.

- **Students may not enter the building before 8:45 a.m.** Staff members will begin welcoming the children at 8:45 and doors will close at 8:55. ***Please notify the Office if you will be late*** so they can inform the teacher. If a parent is coming to observe, it must be pre-approved by the director. Please wait until 9:00 a.m. to enter the building to observe class/therapy, so that the children can complete putting their belongings away without interruption. Please be mindful that late arrivals disrupt the learning process for the other students.
- If you need to pick up your child early, please do so before 2:00 to minimize classroom disruption or 11:30 am for the toddler class. Routine pick-up is **promptly** at 2:30 (12:30 for half days.) We do not offer an extended day program. If you are going to be more than 10 minutes late, please notify the office.
- Please inform the school if there are any changes in your child's usual going home procedure. Also, be sure your child is aware of this change. Children are not allowed to leave school with anyone but the parent or designated providers without written permission. This policy is for your child's safety and your family's protection.

Curriculum

Preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary classroom activities are designed to enhance children's listening, speech and language while supporting their pre-academic/academic, social, emotional, cognitive, physical and creative skill development. The curriculum follows the Florida Early Learning standards. Children engage in problem-solving, discovery, exploration, reasoning, and experiential activities in a joyful, nurturing environment. Classrooms are designed for the unique acoustical needs of children with hearing loss, and curriculum is aligned with state and national standards. Classes are led by experienced professionals. Classes are taught by teachers of the deaf who are educated in the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) approach to intervention. All children receive daily individual auditory speech and language therapy with a speech-language pathologist trained in auditory-verbal therapy and/or listening and spoken language.

The Clarke Florida curriculum for Toddler, Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade fosters social, emotional, physical, cognitive and creative development in children through their own activity, discovery and exploration....to have the child question thoughtfully and learn to think for themselves. Our staff encourages young children to refine their skills of problem solving, thinking, reasoning, and creating. We utilize the following areas in achieving our philosophy and curriculum goals.

- **Speech and Language:** Our children are engaged in a variety of activities throughout the day that require receptive and expressive language skills and ongoing speech development. Specific activities target the child's auditory abilities, speech, and language stage of development. Daily individual sessions with a speech-language pathologist will also address these objectives. Throughout the day, class activities such as circle time, music, snack, story time, dramatic play and language-rich experiences provide opportunities to work on targeted skills. Small group and one-on-one instruction emphasize language and other cognitive skills simultaneously.
- **Reading Time/Library:** There is daily use of our school-wide and classroom libraries. Each age group has appropriate books for the children to enjoy, and they are taught how to use a book properly. The children are read to daily and have time to explore the books on their own. We use stories for dramatic play and picture interpretation as a basis for the children to dictate their own stories, and for teaching comprehension skills. Storytelling using puppets and props is also an interactive part of our day. In Pre-Kindergarten we learn consonant sounds and the names of letters. In Kindergarten, we draw and write journals. We build a word bank of sight words and words we can sound out. We learn to read simple books using Scholastic guided readers. In First Grade, we use the Journey's reading and reading comprehension curriculum, refine spelling and writing skills and work to achieve appropriate grade-level reading fluency and comprehension. Additionally, in Kindergarten and First Grade, we use the Wordly Wise Curriculum to improve vocabulary which is essential to reading development.

- **Dramatic Play:** In Toddler and Preschool classes, dramatic play activities can take place in the various centers, during music, story-time or creative movement. The children use their creativity and imaginations to role-play daily living skills and events that take place in their lives. Scenarios may include relating to a new baby, acting out a story, interpreting the role of a community helper, or any other theme that is being covered in class. In the Kindergarten/First Grade classrooms, dramatic play centers and activities are built around areas of study. Pizza restaurants, a toy store, a doctor's office, castles, and geographical/cultural representations offer opportunities to build vocabulary and practice language skills. These are wonderful avenues for the development of receptive and expressive language skills between peers.
- **Math:** Math is everywhere! In our programs, the children utilize math concepts in all areas. Number recognition, one-to-one correspondence, counting, shapes, patterning, comparing, measuring, and time sequences are incorporated during calendar, story-time, snack, lunch, and centers. Math concepts introduce many new vocabulary words. Understanding and using these words is our goal. In the Kindergarten/First Grade classrooms the Go Math Florida! curriculum is used in Kindergarten and First grade. we expand our math skills in these areas, and we begin building an understanding of simple addition and subtraction equations. Building vocabulary and language comprehension to follow directions in grade-level texts is a high priority.
- **Science:** In the Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes, science concepts will be explored through hands-on experiences in and out of the classroom. These experiences will include such concepts as animal life (e.g., class hamster and observation of animals in the immediate outdoor environment), the life cycle of a butterfly, frogs, plants, and physical concepts (e.g., float/sink, light/heavy, and magnetism). Kindergarten and First grade use Scholastic to embed Science goals within the curriculum.
- **Social Studies:** In the Toddler and Preschool classes, community helpers, family life, and transportation are just a few of the themes with which we will become familiar. We will explore these themes through books, stories, field trips, cooking, and art experiences. In the Kindergarten/First Grade classes, we learn things about our community, our state, our country, and our world. We learn about the different cultures within our communities and around the world including diverse holiday traditions and lifestyles.
- **Sensory-Motor Integration:** We explore the world around us with our five senses daily in our classrooms. We integrate motor skills and the five senses through various experiences including finger painting, sand and water play, manipulation of materials and experimenting with a variety of textures to provide many enriching experiences. In Pre-K and Kindergarten/First Grade, we spend time developing fine motor skills through use of the Handwriting Without Tears Curriculum. We learn to write letters and numbers, and our projects require increasing levels of manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination.
- **Art:** Art is an ongoing process of discovery and experimentation at all levels. Crayons, paint, finger paint, clay, markers, watercolors, chalk, scissors, and glue are always available to the children. Specific projects

integrating holidays and seasonal themes are always an ongoing part of our art curriculum. Incorporating everyday items such as cotton balls, yarn, macaroni, buttons, straws, fabric scraps, rocks, etc., gives each child many creative options. Displaying the children's art in the classroom and around the school builds a sense of pride and an appreciation for artistic expression.

- **Construction:** In the Toddler and Preschool classes, the block area contains a good assortment of building materials that encourage motor planning, inventing and cooperation with others. We have recently installed a magnet wall ball system in one of our classrooms. This is a fun activity that fosters the student's inclination to explore, build and question.
- **Music:** Music at all grade levels is incorporated into the classroom through a variety of songs and finger plays. Seasonal and holiday songs are taught when appropriate. Music is further integrated into the curriculum by experimenting with musical instruments, tape recorders and record players. Music is another approach to learning and reinforcing listening, speech and language concepts in a simple and repetitive format.
- **Physical Education/Gross Motor Skills:** All students are provided with daily activities that foster the development of gross motor skills. The Toddler and Preschool classes are provided with an indoor facility containing age-appropriate equipment (e.g., slide, toy cars, tunnel, etc.). Additionally, outdoor adventures including pond exploration, listening walks, and sidewalk chalk adventures provide additional opportunities for our youngest students to safely explore the outdoors. The Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten/First-Grade classrooms are allotted time every day to play on our outdoor playground. These facilities include swings, a climbing apparatus, sand box, a seesaw, a playhouse, and riding toys to encourage and develop motor skills of running, jumping and climbing. On inclement weather days the children play indoors. Teacher-directed activities such as creative movement, beanbag games, Simon Says, and Duck, Duck Goose further enhance gross motor skills.

Curriculum Goals

- **Cognitive Development:** Foster the child's development and prepare him/her for the eventual transition into public or private schools with their hearing peers. This includes auditory listening skills (i.e., auditory/speech perception), structured receptive and expressive language skills, speech therapy, reading readiness, math, social studies and science skills, perceptual skills and thinking skills such as classification, serialization, temporal relations and spatial relations.
- **Creative Development:** Foster the child's creative development so that he/she is willing to reach into him/herself and develop new ideas and new modes of expression. The child should feel that his/her own ideas are worthwhile. This is accomplished through art, movement, and verbalization.
- **Social Development:** Foster the child's social development including cooperating, sharing, and interacting with others, making friends, and relating positively to children and adults. This also includes learning to sit and listen as part of a group, follow rules, and participate in an orderly classroom. The child also gains independence, as he/she is encouraged to do things on his/her own.
- **Emotional Development:** Foster the child's development specifically related to maintaining a comfortable separation from parents, a feeling of self-esteem and general happiness and eagerness to participate in school activities. This also includes encouraging the child to verbalize his/her own feelings and their feelings toward others.
- **Physical Development:** Foster the child's physical development including gross and fine motor coordination, increase strength and agility, and an appreciation of the importance of good health habits.

Core Early Learning Standards

Learning standards provide the framework for learning. They provide the foundational information for what children should be able to know and do.

Clarke Florida follows the Florida Early Learning and Development Standards Birth to Kindergarten. The standards and benchmarks reflect the knowledge and skills that a child on a developmental progression should know and be able to do at the end of an age-related timeframe.

Learn more: <http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com/>

Auditory Speech and Language Embedded into the Curriculum and Instruction

Students receive intervention and education from teachers of the deaf and ASHA and State Board certified speech-language pathologists. The staff are supervised by professionals who are Listening and Spoken Language Specialists, Certified Auditory-Verbal Educators or Therapists (LSLS Cert. AVEd/AVT) and who also provide direct service to children as part of their daily responsibilities. All professionals work to foster development of age-appropriate listening, vocabulary and language. All interaction promotes the basic goals of early childhood education and includes structuring the environment to provide opportunities to aid in each child's intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth.

Auditory Speech and Language Therapy (Speech Therapy)

Auditory, speech and language development and strategies are embedded into the curriculum and instruction in addition to being targeted during speech and language therapy sessions.

Each student receives thirty minutes of individual auditory speech and language therapy. The goals of the therapy are based on the individual student assessment results, data collection, and progress monitoring.

Audiology

Clarke recognizes that children who are deaf or hard of hearing need appropriate hearing technology to maximize the use of residual hearing. Clarke audiologists are licensed and certified health care professionals who have training, expertise and state of the art information about amplification devices for children/students ensuring that hearing technology works optimally. In addition, our audiology teams follow recognized protocols for audiological assessments.

Clarke's experienced staff and partners support the audiology care of infants and children.

Clarke offers audiological services and support for our birth-through-high-school-age population including:

- Audiology consultation for young children, as well as students in the mainstream
- Screening and assessment at some locations
- Full-service audiological care for adults at some locations (hearing aid testing and selection)
- Recommendations for local resources

Some Clarke sites have limited audiologic services on site. In these cases, the teacher and SLPs work closely with the child's private audiologist to communicate and troubleshoot equipment. Teachers and SLPs perform sound checks daily in the classroom and in individual therapy. Caregivers send spare batteries in their child's backpack. HAT (Hearing Assistive Technology) and compatible equipment (e.g., receivers) are provided by the family. Clarke uses the Roger Sound Field System in each classroom. Private audiologists provide loaner equipment if needed and respond quickly to requests to help with equipment issues through email or text message. The audiologists consult with the Clarke program regarding children on their caseload with their child's teacher and/or SLP. Some offer complimentary services on site. Examples of services include participation in caregiver meetings, staffing for a particular child, earmolds, impressions and mapping services if warranted on a case-by-case basis.

Spare Parts and Batteries for Cochlear Implants and Hearing Aids:

In preschool, caregivers are responsible for providing this equipment to Clarke to insure a child always has full auditory access.

- Children should wear their hearing aids or cochlear implants during all waking hours. Research shows that children need to wear their technology (hearing aids, Baha, cochlear implants, etc.) at least 10 hours per day to develop age-appropriate listening skills (caregivers are encouraged to discuss wear time with their child's audiologist).
- Please send a supply of these replacement parts and batteries to be left at school.
- Please call or email Clarke in the morning if a child's hearing aid or implant processor did not work prior to the child getting on the bus.
- Caregivers must notify their child's primary audiologist or implant center when replacement parts are needed. Please have at least one spare for each external component of a child's implant and a three-month battery supply at home.
- If your child is sent to school without their hearing aids or cochlear implants, caregivers will be called to bring the device to school immediately.
- Caregivers may be called to pick up their child to bring them immediately to their audiologist, especially if not having amplification creates a safety and health concern for your child.

Library

There is daily use of our school-wide and classroom libraries. Children are taught how to use a book properly and enjoy age-appropriate reading options. Clarke students are read to daily and have time to explore books on their own. We use stories for dramatic play and picture interpretation as a basis for the children to dictate their own stories, and for teaching comprehension skills. Storytelling using puppets and props is also an interactive part of our day. In pre-kindergarten we learn consonant sounds and the names of letters. In kindergarten, we draw and write journals. We build a word bank of sight words and words we can sound out. We learn to read simple books using Scholastic guided readers. In first grade, we use the Journey's reading and reading comprehension curriculum, refine spelling and writing skills and work to achieve appropriate grade-level reading fluency and comprehension. Additionally, in kindergarten and first grade, we use the Heggerty Program and Wordly Wise Curriculum to improve vocabulary which is essential to reading development.

Family Communication

Caregivers and families are the child's primary educators; therefore, we encourage and promote your involvement during these exciting and crucial years.

Parent/Caregiver Communication

The parents/caregivers are the child's primary educators; therefore, we encourage and require your involvement during these exciting and crucial years. For our youngest students, the Auditory Verbal/Parent coaching model is used to help parents learn and use listening and spoken language strategies at home. Guided parent sessions are a cornerstone of children in the birth to three programs. For older students, a consistent daily communication routine will keep home-school lines open, so everyone can reinforce the children's daily experiences into natural opportunities for language. There will be parent-teacher meetings to discuss targets and activities that can be carried over into the home. Parents will also receive frequent emails to communicate valuable information. Please make it part of your daily routine to check for messages from school.

From time-to-time parents/caregivers will have questions or concerns. Please discuss these first with your teacher or therapist. If they are not able to satisfactorily answer your questions, please contact the director. We have an open-door policy and want to help you understand what is happening in your child's school life.

Inclement Weather/Crisis Policy

We follow Duval County's weather policies unless you are otherwise informed via email or text.

Clarke has a "shelter in place" policy and an evacuation policy on file for emergencies. These plans are available on request.

Progressing from Clarke

Progressing from a specialized program, like those available at Clarke, to a mainstream school is an exciting time for each child and family. For many, the age of transition to mainstream settings has decreased to the preschool level over the last 15-20 years because of newborn hearing screening, early identification, early amplification and early education. Clarke guides families through the transition process, providing step-by-step instructions and offering support and guidance throughout this important time of change. During these early years, the staff will provide a continuum of relevant information to direct placement and IEP goals, benchmarks and accommodations.

Once a school is chosen, a Clarke professional begins to prepare the staff of the school to receive the student and is available to provide ongoing support through our itinerant services. Some questions that may come up include:

- What is the best placement for my child?
- What kind of support services will my child need?
- How do we educate our child's teachers and classmates about hearing loss?
- What do we do if something unexpected comes up?

Families form partnerships with Clarke's experienced mainstream staff to create a supportive team dedicated to the success and development of each child.

Family Involvement

Each family is asked to sign a Parent Participation Agreement at the beginning of each year. This provides an opportunity for you to plan the times and activities you will be a part of and observe throughout the year. Each family's schedule is different. The important thing is for each family to make a commitment to observing how professionals are working with your child to develop listening and language skills so that you can use these strategies with your child at home. We encourage the parents' input to accomplish our goals for the children in both environments. Please remember that it disturbs the children and compromises the listening environment when parents socialize in the school building during class hours.

Family Visits and Observations

Parents/caregivers are encouraged to visit at any time and should notify the school office in advance. Observations typically start after 9:00 a.m., to allow the students to transition into the morning routine and end by 2:00 p.m.

Caregiver-Family Rights

Caregivers of children with disabilities from ages three through 21 have specific educational rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These rights are called procedural safeguards. When the caregiver has a concern, it is important that they contact their child's teachers or administrators to talk about their child and any problems they see. Caregivers must be given opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding their child's special education program. Caregivers have the right to participate in individualized education program (IEP) meetings about the special education eligibility, assessment, educational placement of their child and other matters relating to their child's free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Some basic rights you have as a caregiver are:

- To have your child receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE)
- To be a member of the team that develops your child's education program and to attend meetings about that program
- To understand every document, you sign
- To know and understand your rights in the language you understand best
- To pursue other options if you disagree with your LEA

For more information about your rights as they relate to your children, you may refer to Wrights law - <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Progress Reports

Clarke students' progress towards a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and general curriculum acquisition are provided to the caregivers once a year.

Clarke Florida provides progress towards a student's IEP and general curriculum acquisition twice a year. The school will provide an opportunity for parents to learn about their child's progress and needs through individually scheduled conferences. Conferences are scheduled at mid-year and at the end of the year when comprehensive reports have been completed and when requested by parents, teachers, or therapists. An IEP written to specifically fit the child's educational needs as a deaf or hard-of-hearing student. The goals and objectives for each child will be determined and agreed upon by his/her teacher, speech-language pathologist, and the parents. This is a team approach designed to meet the specific needs of your child and to provide the least restrictive environment to maximize your child's potential to learn.

Health Policies

A child should not be sent to school if he/she is not feeling well. It will not make them feel better, and proper care and rest at home will help your child get well and prevent the spread of germs to other children and staff. *Please notify us immediately if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease.* The health form from your physician is essential. Please make sure it is up-to-date and in your child's school file on or before the first day of school. Children brought to school sick or who become sick will be sent home. It is vital that parents respond promptly to calls from school in case of emergency. Children who are sick more than 3 days will need a doctor's note to return to class. Our policy is as follows:

Children will not be allowed to attend classes if they have any of the following symptoms:

1. Fever: Oral temperature over 100.4 degrees. **A child must be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.**
2. Behavior: If a child looks or acts differently; awake all night and crying, unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, irritable or restless.
3. Respiratory: Breathing difficulties (e.g., wheezing).
4. Vomiting: A child must be free of all symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.
5. Diarrhea: Is characterized by frequent watery or green-colored bowel movements, which are not related to medications or food reactions. A child may return to school 24 hours after a normal bowel movement.
6. Rash: Undiagnosed rash other than mild diaper or heat rash.
7. Sore Throat: Sore throats need culturing if other signs are present (e.g., fever, coughing, runny nose).

Re-admittance to the school program for the following communicable diseases shall be as follows:

1. Chickenpox – all lesions are dry and crusted.
2. Impetigo (blisters covered with honey-colored crusts)—at least 24 hours
3. Conjunctivitis (“pink eye” defined as a redness of the eye with burning and thick purulent discharge) – at least 24 hours after the start of medication and/or drainage present.
4. Lice and Scabies – Following medical treatment and child is lice and egg free.
5. Pin Worms – No restrictions following the start of treatment.
6. Hepatitis – Physician's statement required for re-admittance.
7. Strep Throat – No sooner than 48 hours after the start of oral medication
8. Giardia – Following medical treatment.

*Source: State of Florida, Department of Children and Families

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT CLARKE BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY UPON THE DIAGNOSIS OF ANY OF THE ABOVE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

NOTE: Minor bruises, scratches and scrapes will be cleaned and bandaged as needed. Should something occur which we feel requires the attention of a physician you will be notified.

Special Medical Considerations

Parents notify the directors of any special health conditions of a child in writing. Parents then request a meeting with staff members that are in contact with the child daily. Parents discuss needs, provide instructions and sign any necessary documentation to meet the needs of the child. Medications and/or equipment with documentation are kept in a locked cabinet labeled with a child's name and any needed additional information.

Some medical conditions are life threatening and must be vigorously monitored by staff on a daily basis. Some medical conditions are relatively minor. For example, one child might have an allergy that is so severe that the entire classroom has to be free of that allergen as a threat to that child's life while other children may be exposed to an allergen without difficulty as long as that allergen is not ingested.

(Please be sure to include allergies your child may have in addition to foods. These could include such items as latex, certain glue products, animals, etc.)

At Clarke we frequently provide snacks as an extension to vocabulary and as a language activity based on a unit of study. We also have special activities as part of our holiday celebrations that involve food. It is the responsibility of the parents and teachers to work together to make sure that curriculum-based snacks or party foods are safe for the child. Parents may be asked to provide substitute foods. Foods collected as part of a celebration activity (examples: trick-or treat, Christmas stocking stuffers and Easter baskets) are not typically eaten at school. These foods are sent home for parents to inspect and distribute at their discretion. Should teachers vary from this procedure, they are responsible for monitoring each child's needs.

Prescription Medication

When prescription medication is to be dispensed by the school, the name of the child, the doctor, the medication, and the directions must be written on the label. The State of Florida, Department of Children and Family Services form, which is required, must be filled out and signed by the parent. This form is available from our business office and must accompany the medication, stating the prescription name of the medication to be given to the child, the time and amount of dosage. Do not send medicine in a child's lunch. It must be given to the teacher. Student medication is dispensed only with written permission from the parents. Faculty members will administer medications as needed and complete documentation on the medication log. Medication is stored in an upper, latched cabinet out of the reach of children.

Smoking/Tobacco

Clarke is a tobacco-free location. Smoking, vaping, and chewing tobacco are prohibited on all school grounds and on and off-site activities.

Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures

Fire drills, emergency evacuation routes and “alternate” routes are posted within each classroom. Practice emergency procedures will be held periodically throughout the school year. The function of these drills is to practice a rapid, safe and organized method of keeping everyone safe whether in the building or by exiting the building. An additional purpose of practicing the procedures is to also help students and adults remain calm and prepared during an actual emergency. Practiced procedures include scenarios for severe weather emergencies and lockdowns, which would be implemented if there were a possibility of a person within the building causing a risk to students. All drills must be considered an actual emergency and all people present during a drill or actual emergency will be expected to follow the established procedures.

Due to the age of our students, explanations about the emergency procedures will be age-appropriate and will be explained to students prior to any of the practices. If the building must be evacuated, all students and staff will report to their emergency location immediately. No one should return to the building for any reason until the all-clear signals have been given. Emergencies are unexpected, unpredictable and take many forms. No one can be fully prepared for everything that may happen, but guidance and strategies are helpful in any emergency. Clarke’s primary goal is to ensure that our students are safe in any situation.

Food, Snacks and Nutrition

Lunches

We all have a responsibility to provide good nutrition for our children. This will not only help to keep them healthy but will also teach them the basics of a balanced diet. A good lunch consists of food from all basic food groups, or as many as possible. See MyPlate chart on next page.

Examples of a nutritious lunch for your child might be as follows:

1. Peanut butter (or Nut free butters) and jelly sandwich, apple slices and milk
2. Egg salad sandwich, carrot sticks with dip, orange slices and milk
3. Pasta in sauce, celery sticks, cheese stick, banana, and juice
4. Pizza, salad, fruit cocktail, pudding, and water

Desserts: items with a high concentration of sugar, i.e., candy bars, sweetened drinks, packaged cakes, contain empty calories, which serve no good nutritional purpose for your child. We discourage frequent inclusion of these foods. A preferred alternative dessert might consist of a serving of your child’s favorite fruit.

PLEASE NOTE: We are unable to microwave food so make sure your child’s lunch is ready to eat!

MyPlate
newest
of the
States

Pack Smart!

Help your kids stay healthy and focused in school—pack them a nutritious lunch. Each lunch should be about $\frac{1}{2}$ **Fruits** and **Vegetables**, $\frac{1}{4}$ **Grain**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ **Protein** with one serving of **Dairy**.

Encourage children to eat vegetables and fruits by making it fun. Provide healthy ingredients like the ones below and let kids help with preparation!



is the
version
United

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Dairy
<i>Go easy on juice and make sure it's 100%.</i>	<i>Use dark green and orange veggies.</i>	<i>Make half of the grains whole grain.</i>	<i>Use low-sodium, lean or lowfat meats.</i>	<i>Choose lowfat or fat-free dairy.</i>
Apple Orange Pear Peaches Grapes Melon Dried Fruit	Broccoli Carrots Cauliflower Red Peppers Zucchini Broccoli Cucumber	Whole Wheat Bread Pita Bread Brown Rice Cereal Pasta Salad Sunflower Seeds	Chicken Turkey Fish Nuts Seeds Peas Beans	Yogurt Milk Cheese TIP Mix yogurt with cinnamon or garlic to make a delicious dip for fruits or veggies!

Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture

Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food Guidance System (replacing the Food Guide Pyramid). MyPlate depicts proper meal portions of the five food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy), helping Americans build healthy meals.

Helpful Hints

Adjustment to School

Children respond in many ways to starting school. The transition from home to school is a major one in the child's life. Effects of this stress may be observed in a child's behavior and are considered normal and healthy. Some children may cry when they leave home, others may revert to earlier behaviors such as bed-wetting or baby talk, and others may simply refuse to talk about school with their families. It is helpful to be patient and supportive of your child's feelings and to share changes in behavior at home with the teachers.

In the classroom, children adjust to being in a group with other children in various ways. Some children join the group right away, seem comfortable from the start and never seem to have separation problems. Other children may seem to adjust easily at first but show signs of stress after a week or two. We will try to make this transition as smooth as possible for your child and will let you know how your child is adjusting with frequent notes and phone calls during the first few weeks of school.

One of the best methods for a smooth transition in the morning is a hug, a kiss and reassurance that "I'll be back" or "I'll see you soon," then a quick exit.

The staff realize that the separation of a child from their caregiver(s) is filled with emotion for the caregivers, as well as the child. The beginning of school is especially difficult for those caregivers who will be separated from their child on a regular basis for the first time. Clarke's goal is to be supportive of families as well as to their children. Please feel free to talk to staff if you are having difficulty adjusting to separation from your child.

Bringing Things from Home

We discourage children from bringing their own toys to school, as they might be lost, misplaced or broken. In addition, it is often difficult for children to share their special possessions. The classroom teachers often will have a weekly "sharing" time when children can bring special things from home and tell the other children about what they have brought at group time.

Sometimes children need a "transitional object" to help them through the transition from home to school. This is especially true of those children who ride the bus to and from school. A book, a favorite stuffed animal, a photo of the family or a blanket could all serve as transitional objects. We welcome these objects but ask that they remain in the child's cubby during class time. Caregivers can help by assuring the child that while it is fine to bring a reminder –of home to school, their blanket or toy will stay in their cubby during class time.

Clothing

Each child should wear comfortable play clothes that they can manage for toileting. Clothes with elastic waists are ideal. Tennis shoes are preferred. Sandals with backs and straps are permitted. Please, ***no flip-flops or heels allowed***. Children in the preschool and pre-kindergarten classes are required to wear shorts under dresses/skirts. Do not dress your child in clothing that has to be kept especially clean. We encourage the child's use of materials, and we would not want their clothing to inhibit their freedom to investigate and explore.

Accidents do happen

We have many potty-training or newly potty-trained students. In working with young children, we expect that bathroom accidents, spills and general messes will happen. As such, we ask that each child have a bag with a complete change of clothing (e.g., underwear, socks, pants, shirt, etc.). Your child's name should be marked clearly on the bag. In December we will need another set of clothes that are appropriate for the cooler temperatures. If back-up items are used and soiled clothing sent home, please be sure to send in replacements for the classroom.

Pets

As of this writing there are no classroom pets living at Clarke. From time to time, families may have a pet they would like to introduce to their child's class. Arrangements for pet visits should be made in advance with your child's teacher to make sure we can accommodate all safety concerns. There may also be opportunities for community organizations to offer animal visits to our location. Should any such visits be planned, we will inform families in advance in the event they would prefer that their child not participate. Any visiting animals should be leashed and or in a crate and in the sole supervision of their owner.

Social-Emotional Learning and Behavior Supports

Goal:

The goal of the disciplinary policy at Clarke is to provide each child with a safe, nurturing, learning environment that supports the child's opportunity to learn to listen and talk.

Behavior and Children with Hearing Loss:

Children with hearing loss frequently come to the school program with limited language to communicate basic wants and needs or to understand limits on their behavior.

Acceptable Behavior:

Acceptable and unacceptable behavior at Clarke is determined by the age and development of the child. We understand that two children of the same age may have different temperaments and behaviors that are unique to their personalities. We know that certain behaviors are typical, and thus acceptable, for a particular age group. Therefore, there are different expectations for a child at two years of age versus a child who is five years of age. Here are some examples of acceptable behavior needed for a successful classroom placement:

- The child follows the teacher's directions to participate in the established classroom routine.
- The child sits for developmentally appropriate activities as determined by the classroom level and teacher expectation.
- The child responds to redirection from the teacher, assistant or therapist.
- The child demonstrates the ability to replace an unacceptable behavior with an acceptable behavior.

Unacceptable Behavior:

Children with hearing loss may demonstrate unacceptable behavior that impacts their learning within a group environment. Due to frustration and limited language, this is not unusual in the beginning. The staff have a great deal of experience helping children overcome these issues in a relatively short time with consistent expectations and consequences and caregiver support. If the behavior involves physical contact with another child, this requires documentation through accident or incident reports for any children involved. Caregivers are asked to sign the reports which are then kept on file. If a caregiver will not sign, unsigned reports are filed with a notation. Examples of unacceptable behavior that continually disrupt learning may include:

- Hitting, kicking, pinching, biting or scratching with intent to harm
- Throwing implants or hearing devices in frustration
- Random vocalizations or screaming
- Touching or bothering other children repeatedly
- Damaging or throwing materials
- Leaving the work area and running around the classroom or crawling under or on furniture

When a pattern of unacceptable behavior occurs, we first take the time to assess the behavior. We then teach the child the acceptable behavior needed to replace unacceptable behavior. Teachers use a variety of techniques to shape positive behavior in our students. These include extrinsic rewards such as happy faces, stickers, praise and attention. Teachers also hold children accountable for their behavior by withholding rewards, losing a choice or turn, or removal from the group when necessary.

Disciplinary Policy:

Children are naturally in the process of learning to meet expectations and test boundaries. All children will “make mistakes.” **It becomes problematic when a child continues to engage in unacceptable behavior or has multiple examples of these behaviors in a short period of time.** If this happens, the following actions will be taken:

- **If a teacher observes a child leave a mark on another child (or adult) that was inflicted with intent, they will be removed from class. The caregiver(s) may be called to pick up their child.** While we understand parental concerns that the child may see removal from class as a reward. Harming other children will not be tolerated.
- If unacceptable behavior is observed that is developmentally inappropriate and/or is recurring without response to positive change with redirection more than three times a day or five times a week, the child may need to be removed to time-out in school or picked up by caregivers. (See list above.) Behaviors that are disruptive to the learning of other children cannot be allowed to continue. In these circumstances, the staff will meet with the family and make the necessary recommendations (i.e., occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, child psychology or a change in placement).
- Ongoing, unacceptable behavior may result in termination of placement. Clarke will support the family in finding other options and may continue to offer therapy if the child is showing progress in one-on-one sessions.

These policies are in place to provide the greatest consistency of response possible. Although caregivers will get a call from the office or from the director, no decision is made in isolation. By the time caregivers are contacted, multiple members of the staff will have considered the specifics of the situation and the action taken will represent a consensus.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Clarke community is committed to making our school a safe and caring environment for all students. We will treat each other with respect.

Bullying is not always easy to define but is unfair and one-sided.

Young children at times may put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported and that young children do not intentionally wish to cause hurt. Strategies that are used in our program include:

- Recognizing that young children are not always able to manage their own feelings and deliver them appropriately.
- Clarke staff will assist in this management to support their developmental development.
- Offer support to all children who may be involved and to discuss the issues through play, story times and circle time activities.

Clarke students will do the following things to prevent bullying and ensure their friends feel safe at school:

- Treat everyone with respect and kindness
- Will not bully others
- Will not let others be bullied.
- Try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out.

Teachers and staff do the following things to prevent bullying and help children feel safe at school:

- Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground
- Watch for signs of bullying behavior and stop it when it happens.
- Look into all reported bullying incidents.
- Assign consequences based on the school social emotional and behavior supports.

The role of caregivers:

- Caregivers who are concerned or have questions should contact the program director.
- Caregivers are encouraged to support Clarke's policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the Clarke community.
- Caregivers and staff work together to develop their child's social and emotional behavior skills.

School Visitors/Building Security

Caregivers, outside therapists, and site visitors will be permitted with administration approval. ALL visitors must use the main entrance, must sign in and be wearing a visitor pass/id while visiting and then sign out when leaving and return the pass/id.

Sexual Harassment

There is nothing more important to us than the children we teach and support. We understand that children and youth are not only our future; they are a valuable part of the community today. However, our students are also vulnerable. Sadly, because of their vulnerability, awareness and knowledge, they can be taken advantage of or worse, become victims of abuse. Therefore, it is imperative that we are proactive in protecting them and in providing safe environments.

We must, as well, protect those who work with our students. Our school personnel need the security of knowing that they are working in a setting where processes and procedures are in place to minimize any possibility of an erroneous accusation.

Clarke's Plan to Protect® Policy establishes the criteria for the provision of a safe environment for children, youth and school personnel.

Special Events

Five Reasons to Hold Classroom Celebrations

Classroom celebrations – from semi-formal celebrations that include food and drink, music and even special guests – to impromptu opportunities to play outside – help build connections, target skill development, grow relationships, develop social etiquette and improve academic performance. How does this work? Classroom celebrations help build connections.

- Classroom celebrations help develop social skills.
- Classroom celebrations help build positive relationships with the community.
- Classroom celebrations help children practice and develop social etiquette in a real-life situation.
- Classroom celebrations help support academic achievement.

Reminders

Parents receive a copy of the school calendar at the beginning of the year. The school office and development office keep parents informed of special events throughout the year.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important day to be celebrated. To keep our daily schedules and maximize use of instructional time, birthday celebrations should be limited to no more than 30 minutes, following lunch time or at snack time. Bringing small treats or a cake to share with classmates is welcomed.

Holidays

Clarke Florida celebrates many holidays throughout the year. Halloween is celebrated by a field trip to the pumpkin patch, a fall festival and trick-or-treating around the school. Thanksgiving is celebrated with a school-wide feast that includes parent/family participation. We decorate trees and classrooms and exchange gifts for Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Easter is celebrated with a class egg hunt. Holiday activities can be as simple as reading a book about a holiday and as elaborate as having a party in the classroom. Activities often involve a group discussion, art or music related projects. *Families who celebrate other holidays as part of their culture or religion are encouraged to arrange with their child's teacher to visit and share their traditions with us.*

If a student's family does not celebrate certain holidays, we will work with the director and family to devise a plan so that the child does not feel left out or uncomfortable during the holiday teaching or celebration. Families should contact their child's teacher in advance to let them know of any issues. We welcome information related to additional family holidays/celebrations that could be incorporated into the classrooms.

Field Trips

Fees for field trips will be collected through the classroom. Trips are curriculum based and are counted as school days. Please make sure your child can benefit from the trip itself and from the pre-teaching and follow-up activities. The school hours before and after a fieldtrip are academic times. Teachers will inform you if there are changes to this policy. Parents will provide or arrange for transportation for their child; the school does NOT provide transportation.

“Reverse Field Trips”

Sometimes there may be an opportunity for an organization to visit the campus to share an experience with the children. A visit from our neighborhood librarian is a recent example. We will inform families in advance of these visits to provide them the opportunity to “opt out” should they want to do so.

Research, Fundraising, Publicity and Observation Policies

From time-to-time Clarke participates in research projects with other institutions. When such projects arise, we will seek your permission for your child's participation and will provide detailed information regarding the nature of the research study.

Clarke has recently established a process for our own Listening and Spoken Language Data repository. This occurred after the OPTION School LSL Data Repository ended in 2022. All previous data from the Option data repository has been transitioned to Clarke Schools. The Clarke Listening and Spoken Language Data Repository (LSL-DR) goal continues to focus on gathering data on the listening and spoken language outcomes of the children we work with at Clarke. Clarke saves data related to children's enrollments, services, demographic characteristics, assessments and testing. The data is used to monitor each child's progress, to assist in program improvement and to document listening and spoken language outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Fundraising and Publicity

Clarke depends on the support and generosity of those in our community, who know how crucial the work is that we do with young children, to continue this transformative program. Clarke conducts necessary fundraising and publicity for programs and services. If you would like to become more involved with efforts to support fundraising and Clarke's long-term sustainability, please contact develop@clarkeschools.org.

Observations and Student Clinicians

Clarke is committed to training future professionals, such as teachers and speech-language pathologists, to work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- College students and professionals often visit Clarke for the opportunity to observe and learn more about the work we do. Such observers are not allowed to have direct, unsupervised interaction with any child.
- Graduate student clinicians, typically speech/language interns or student teachers - are often accepted for placement at Clarke, as they complete a required component of their professional training. They come from a variety of colleges and universities, such as the University of North Florida, Jacksonville University, University of Florida, and Florida State University. All student interns and student teachers undergo the same rigorous background checks that employees go through. You will be notified if your child's teacher or speech-language pathologist will be mentoring a student clinician.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, or any information contained within Clarke's handbook, please contact:

Alisa Demico, Director

ademico@clarkeschools.org

904-880-9001 ext. 7002

APPENDIX

Appendices

Families in Temporary Housing

Please let us know if you/your child are in temporary housing, such as a shelter. There are special regulations to support your child in enrolling in school and providing more time, if needed, to get some of the health requirements to us.

Back to School Packet Forms to be Completed Prior to the First Day of School

- ☐ Enrollment/Application Form
- ☐ Medical Form: documenting current health, immunizations, and special needs. This form must be consistent with the individual health care plan.
- ☐ *Plan Individual Health Care Needs- This is for children with allergies, asthma, cochlear implants, or other health needs. This must be completed in full by a doctor and it must be consistent with the Medical/Physical form.

*Children with EpiPens cannot be in school without this form completed and an unexpired EpiPen on site.

- ☐ Emergency Contacts and Consent to Pick up:
- ☐ Clarke must have at least 3 contacts to call in case we cannot reach you.
- ☐ No child will be released to a non-parent caregiver if they are not listed on this form.
- ☐ Consent to Obtain/Release Information
- ☐ Media Release and Consent

Additional Forms

These are needed for a child to receive services or required by regulation:

- ☐ Caregiver Handbook Acknowledgement of receiving the enrollment material, including the Caregiver Handbook and all its information.
- ☐ OT/PT Prescription for any child receiving this service.
- ☐ Assistive Technology Intake Form: This form provides us with information about the technology your child uses and the audiologist your child sees outside of Clarke. It also includes specific consent for data logging.

First Day of School Checklist

- ☐ All required paperwork must be submitted before your child can start, including:
 - School Entry Health Exam Form completed by your pediatrician (new student)
 - Birth Certificate (new student)
 - Up-to-date Immunization Record
 - Plan for Individual Medical Needs (required for every child with allergies, regular medication, asthma, cochlear implants, etc.)
 - Emergency Contacts and Consent to Pick-up
- ☐ Backpack-To be brought to school each day. Backpacks should be of reasonable weight. Each child should be able to carry his/her own backpack without assistance. The backpack should fit your child's lunchbox, notebook, and other items.
- ☐ Lunch in a lunch box (each day). No nut products. Clarke does NOT heat food.
- ☐ Change of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) appropriate for the season to be left in school. All items should have your child's name on the tag.
- ☐ Supply of spare batteries for your child's hearing aids or cochlear implant.

Each classroom will be sent a supply list prior to the first day of school by the teacher. Classroom supplies can be brought in on the first day of school or at Meet the Teacher Day.

Connect with the Clarke Community and Online Resources

Clarke produces a variety of resources for caregivers including tips, at-home strategies, blogs, newsletters and more. Visit clarkeschools.org/resources and follow @ClarkeSchools on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to stay connected.



FAMILY/CAREGIVER SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read the Clarke Caregiver Handbook. I/we agree to abide by the policies written within.

Please sign and date below, detach and submit to your school's office manager.

Parent or Legal Guardian

Student Name

Date

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech in Jacksonville

2026 - 2027 School Calendar

July

- 1-2 Teacher Planning Day - No school for students
- 3 Closed for Independence Day
- 6 First Day of Summer Program for Students
- 24 Last Day of Summer Program
- 27-31 No School-Office Open

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

15 Student Days

17 Staff Days

August

- 3-7 No School-Office Open
- 10 Teacher Report Back
- 14 Meet the Teacher
- 17 First Day of School for Students

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

11 Student Days

16 Staff Days

September

- 4 Early dismissal at 12:30 pm
- 7 Labor Day - School/Office Closed

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

21 Student Days

21 Staff Days

October

- 5-9 Speech & Classroom Testing
- 9 Early dismissal at 12:30 pm
- 10 Hear Me On The Runway
- 12 Indigenous People's Day- School/Office closed

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

21 Student Days

21 Staff Days

November

- 2 Report Writing Day - No school for students
- 3 Professional Development Day - No school for students
- 25 No school for students; Office Open
- 26-27 Thanksgiving-School; Office Closed

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

16 Student Days

19 Staff Days

December

- 18 Early Dismissal at 12:30 pm
- 12/21 Winter Break - No School/Office
- 1/1 Closed

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

14 Student Days

14 Staff Days

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

18 Student Days

19 Staff Days

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

19 Student Days

19 Staff Days

January

- 1 New Years Holiday - School/Office Closed
- 4 Teacher Planning Day - No school for students
- 5 School resumes for students
- 15 Early dismissal at 12:30 pm
- 18 Martin Luther King Jr Holiday - School/Office Closed
- 28 100th Day of School

February

- 12 Early dismissal at 12:30 pm
- 15 President's Day Holiday - School/Office Closed

March

- 12 Early dismissal at 12:30 pm
- 15-19 Spring Break - No School/Office Open
- 26 Good Friday Holiday - School/Office Closed
- 29 Teacher Planning Day - No school for students

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

16 Student Days

17 Staff Days

April

- 21 Ice Cream Run Pep Rally-Early Dismissal at 12:30pm
- 3 Ice Cream Run
- 12 Teacher Planning Day - No School
- 13-16 Speech & Classroom Testing

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

21 Student Days

22 Staff Days

May

- 3 Professional Development Day - No school for students
- 28 Early dismissal at 12:30 pm
- 31 Memorial Day - School/Office Closed

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

19 Student Days

20 Staff Days

June

- 4 Last Day of School for Students & End of Year Program
- 11 Last day for teachers/SLPs; if no weather make-up days

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

4 Student Days

9 Staff Days

Staff Days*	197
Student Days	180
Student Summer Session	15

*does not include summer

	No School for Students/Staff; Office Open
	No School for Students; Office Open
	School and Office Closed
	Early release at 12:30pm

School Hours: 8:45 am - 2:30 pm, Monday through Friday for Preschool, Pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st Grade
8:45 am - 12:00 pm, Monday through Friday for Toddler class

If needed, the school reserves the right to make adjustments to the school calendar's scheduled instructional hours.