

**Faithful Beginnings at St. Mark's Catholic School  
(NAEYC accredited)**

**1983 Dayton Ave., St. Paul, 55104 651-644-5030**

<http://www.markerspride.com/index.php/preschool-home>

*Hours:* 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Monday-Friday

*Ages:* 33 months - 5 years, 1:9 ratio

*Staff Training:* Licensed staff. First aid and CPR trained. Top 20 trained

*Rates:* Half or Full-day options. Maximum cost is \$930/month. \$100 registration fee.

*Food:* Healthy snacks provided. Lunch is available and prepared by an in-house chef.

*Secure entrance:* Families bring children to their own classroom each morning for drop-off and pick-up at the classroom as well.

*Curriculum:* Highly-regarded, Creative Curriculum. Staff change out materials and resources every three weeks with the changing themes. Site is also a Catholic IDEALS (Innovation, Differentiation, Enrichment, Activity, Leadership, Spirituality) site. Daily religion class. Top 20 character-building embedded in curriculum.

*Enrichment:* Spanish, physical education, music, art, media classes with the specialist teachers in the specialist settings. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Montessori approach, for children to learn about and explore faith and God. Mixed-age experiences, such as, buddying with 8th grade students for learning activities. The older students serve as a role model and help the younger children with an activity or read with them. Both children grow from the experiences and connection. Mystery Readers visit the classroom. Field trips and on-site community helper visits. Several school-wide events throughout the year.

*Communication:* Daily communication at drop-off and pick-up. Newsletters and schedules posted and shared. Conferences in fall and spring.

*Site observation:* "The setting is clean and very organized. The preschool rooms are right near the door, and would be convenient for drop-off and pick-up times. Materials within the classrooms are up-to-date and engaging. Staff were actively engaged with the children and the children seem to know the routine and be content in the setting. The site, itself, has been around for a long time. That said, the materials and the high energy of the staff made it feel fresh and new. I was impressed with the knowledge of the staff and the overall program."

**The Little School  
(Accepts infants)**

**1795 Ford Parkway, St. Paul, 55116 651-779-0843**

[www.thelittleschoolsaintpaul.com](http://www.thelittleschoolsaintpaul.com)

*Hours:* 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM, Monday-Friday

*Ages:* 6 weeks-5 years, low staff-to-child ratios

*Staff training:* College degreed. First aid and CPR trained. On-going professional development.

*Rates:* \$77-97/day, \$50 registration fee

*Food:* two snacks provided, milk served at lunch. Families bring home lunch.

*Secure entrance.*

Peanut/Tree Nut free facility.

*Curriculum:* Teacher-planned weekly themes focused on student interest and readiness. Schedule shared with families. In-school field trips. No outdoor playground climbing equipment, rather, a large outdoor space with garden, smaller equipment, and a variety of open-ended resources for students to create their own large motor play (i.e. a low wooden platform students use as a boat, stage, vehicle, or whatever else they imagine).

*Enrichment:* Monday - Spanish, Tuesday - yoga, Wednesday - American Sign Language, Thursday - science, Friday - music. Rest time.

*Communication:* Daily communication sheets sent home to tell families about the day. Conferences in the fall and spring.

*Site observation:* "The setting is a small home-type building with ample street parking right on Ford Parkway. It was inviting, clean, and very organized. Children have no screen time in this program. The children were happy and engaged throughout the site observation. Staff interacted, consistently, with the children throughout, as well. The children clean up their own snacks and transition confidently to their next activity. They know and follow classroom routines successfully. The left and right sides of the site are split, so preschoolers and toddlers have their separate spaces. Infants were upstairs. I was pleased with the calm and comfortable space for children, and found it would be a good fit for families who are looking for something different than a center experience. It's small, yet this didn't stop them from having current and engaging opportunities for kids."

**Minnehaha Academy (PreK-8)  
(4-Star Parent Aware)**

**4200 West River Parkway, Minneapolis, 55406 612-721-3359**

<http://www.minnehahaacademy.net/schools/preschool/>

*Hours:* 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Monday-Friday

*Ages:* 3-4 years, 1:8 and 1:9 ratios

*Staff:* Licensed teachers, early childhood certifications. On-going professional training. First aid and CPR trained.

*Rates:* \$6,780 (3 y/o 3 partial days - \$15,890 4 y/o 5 full days)

*Food:* Home lunch in classroom. Once in Kindergarten, can do school lunch in cafeteria with multiple options.

*Secure entrance.*

*Curriculum:* Highly-regarded, Creative Curriculum used. SMART program: “each day they have fun moving their bodies in specific activities that challenge their visual, motor, auditory, sensory, and proprioceptive systems.”

*Enrichment:* STEM focus. Specials that include art, media, technology/coding/STEM, music, Spanish, and physical education. Specials taught by specialists in the individual teaching spaces (i.e. physical education in the gym, art in the art room, technology in a lab). Rest time. Chapel time once per week.

*Communication:* Daily communication with families, weekly newsletters and lesson plans (also posted outside each classroom), class website, and conferences in the fall and spring. GOLD assessment data shared.

*Site observation:* “I found the setting to be very secure, clean and organized. Staff are highly trained and knew individual children, as well as the breadth of the programming, well. The tour guide talked about how the media teacher really gets to know the interests and abilities of children (ages 4 and up) in order to help them select books they’ll enjoy and be able to read. Very intentional programming, across the board, with curriculum and materials age-appropriate and engaging to the children. The playground is age-appropriate and near the preschool classrooms. An additional playground is on site for older children. There are opportunities for learning ice skating in physical education, in the winter, on the school’s indoor rink. Opportunities for cross-age experiences, as preschoolers are part of a larger school community, and opportunities are intentionally planned to facilitate these connections (i.e. all-school chapel time, buddy opportunities, school events, music programs). My observation found programming to be high-quality, purposeful, part of a larger mission, and comprehensive.”

**New Horizon Academy**

**(Accepts infants, NAEYC accredited and 4-Star Parent Aware)**

**1975 Ford Parkway, St. Paul, 55116**

**651-340-6956**

<https://newhorizonacademy.net/location/st-paul-highland-park/>

*Hours:* 6:00 AM - 6:30 PM, Monday-Friday

*Ages:* Infant-PreK, Ratios: infant 1:4, toddler 1:7, preschool 1:10

*Staff Training:* Meet or exceed state licensing guidelines. CPR and First Aid trained.

*Rates:* \$322-420/week

*Food:* Breakfast, lunch and snacks provided. Partners with the Farm to School initiative, so healthy food from farms is used within the school. No outside food in the school.

*Secure entrance.* Families sign children in and out on a computer at the entrance, and walk the child to his/her own classroom. Security cameras throughout the site.

*Curriculum:* High Reach, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), sign language. Also partners with the St. Paul School District to do work in collaboration, and in doing so, is kept current in what’s important for them to do to prepare children for Kindergarten.

*Enrichment:* Sign language instruction. In-school and out-of-school field trips. Two playgrounds, one for children under 3 years old, and one for children 3 and older.

*Communication:* Weekly lesson plans shared and posted outside classrooms. Daily Connect app for parents to get information and photos throughout the day. Conferences in the fall and spring. GOLD assessment data shared.

*Site observation:* “I found the setting to be clean, organized and secure. Staff were very competent and informed. Children were engaged and having fun throughout the site. Classrooms are filled with age-appropriate resources for the children. I was pleasantly surprised at how purposeful instruction was, at this type of a site, and how connected their programming was to what children need to be able to know and do in preparation for Kindergarten.

**Kinderberry Hill, located at 1457 Grand Ave., St. Paul**

<https://www.kinderberryhill.com/schools/st-paul/> Location is still under construction, and is set to open in 2018. Other sites are 4-star Parent Aware rated and NAEYC accredited. Web search showed a strong focus on high-quality staff, communication and resources.

**St. Catherine University Early Childhood Center  
Early Learning Program and Montessori Program  
(NAEYC accredited and 4-Star Parent Aware)  
2004 Randolph Ave., #4050, St. Paul, 55105 651-690-6608**

<https://www.stkate.edu/students/support-and-assistance/ecc>

*Hours:* 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM, Monday-Friday

*Ages:* 33 months - 6 years, ratios 1:10 or less

*Staff Training:* Degreed and licensed staff, plus 14 student aides from the university who support students and teachers. CPR and first aid certified staff.

*Rates:* Maximum fee is \$279/week for AM/PM program. \$50 registration fee.

*Food:* Two healthy snacks with milk for lunch. Families provide home lunch.

*Secure entrance.* Campus security on-site and as a resource for all programming.

*Curriculum:* Early learning program uses a teacher-developed curriculum based on interests and needs of the children in the class. Montessori program uses Montessori-developed resources and approach for instruction.

*Enrichment:* Outdoor learning space outside the two classrooms, which included student-planted and student-tended garden, as well as, outside seating and open-ended play materials. Outdoor, traditional, playground is used, as well. Opportunities for music, art, and science learning, along with literacy, math, motor, and social-emotional learning.

*Communication:* Lesson plans shared. Conferences in the fall and spring. Daily opportunity for families to connect with staff at drop-off and pick-up.

*Site observations:* "I found the setting to be easy to access. There is reserved parking for families right near the door. The setting is small, on a large campus, as it included the two classrooms, playground, and the outdoor learning space. The classrooms are very distinct from each other in their appearance and approach. Both were organized, child-friendly, and filled with age-appropriate resources. Staff engage with children, consistently, attending to individual needs, questions, or conversation. The children appear to be confident in the routines and resources, and make expected choices. The website painted a picture of a site that is very clear on vision, mission, and execution of a high-quality early childhood program, and my visit affirmed that. The campus is big. The site is small and has been there for quite some time. All that said, the programming and experiences for the children are grounded in quality and care."

**Other sites families may wish to consider (shared in alphabetical order)...**

Highland Park Montessori, located at 1550 Summit Ave., St. Paul and at <https://www.highlandpark-ms.org/> Program uses Montessori-developed curriculum and resources. It is a Monday-Friday program with hours from 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM.

Jean Lyle Children's Center, located at 130 Howell Ave. N., St. Paul and at <http://www.jeanlyle.org/> Program is 4-star Parent Aware rated and NAEYC accredited. Serves children ages 3-6.

Primrose School, located at 1533 Dayton Ave., St. Paul  
<https://www.primroseschools.com/schools/st-paul-at-merriam-park/>

Several outdoor playgrounds, fenced, and separated by age groups. No "hidden" fees for field trips or enrichment classes. Special events for families. Daily communication at drop-off and pick-up and through an online app. Investigate staff turnover rates. Sparse resources for the children to engage with in the classroom.

Sunny Hollow Montessori, located at 636 S. Mississippi River Blvd., St. Paul, <http://www.sunnyhollow.org/> Montessori education for children from ages 16 months to 12 years. Program is 4-star Parent Aware rated.

**Helpful Resources** (shared in alphabetical order):

**National Association for the Education of Young Children** <https://www.naeyc.org/>

A center that earns NAEYC accredited has gone through a rigorous self-study, been observed, and has been proven to deliver top-notch early learning experiences. "The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. We support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children."

**Parent Aware** <http://parentaware.org/>

Minnesota Department of Education awards "stars", a maximum of 4, to programs that demonstrate they prepare children for Kindergarten. "Parent Aware gives you the tools and information to find the best quality child care and early education for your child."

**Think Small** <https://www.thinksmall.org/>

Think Small is a resource for families, early childhood professionals, and the greater community. They provide information about policy, resources, and ideals that all focus on high quality early childhood experiences for children.