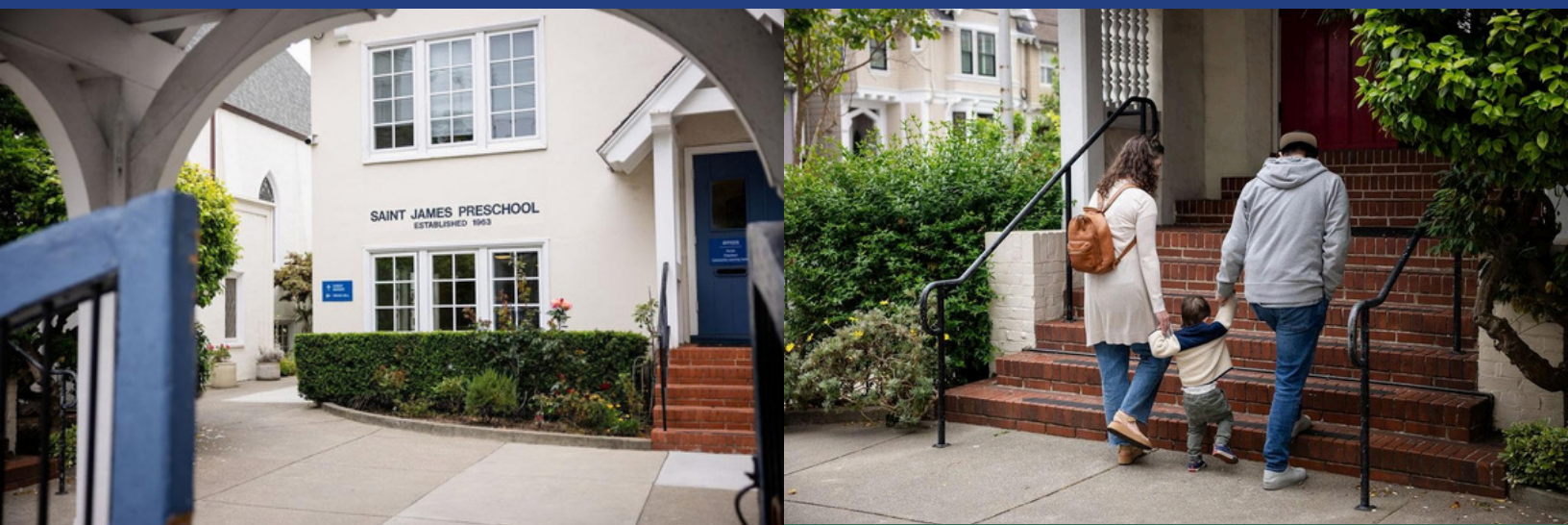


ST. JAMES PRESCHOOL

Executive Director | July 2027

San Francisco, CA





THE OPPORTUNITY

St. James Preschool (SJP), a thriving, child-centered preschool in San Francisco, CA, is seeking a visionary, strategic, and relational leader to serve as its next Executive Director.

Founded in 1963, St. James Preschool has been a beloved part of San Francisco's Inner Richmond neighborhood for over six decades. A vibrant, inclusive, non-profit school, St. James serves children ages 2 to 6 in an intimate, nurturing environment defined by an exceptional child-to-teacher ratio and a highly engaged family community. Through a dedicated child-centered and play-based curriculum, the school honors each child's unique spirit, cultivating curiosity and a lifelong love of learning. Described as a "hidden gem" and a "tight-knit village," SJP celebrates each child's individuality while championing kindness and fostering community.

The next Executive Director will combine educational expertise, operational acumen, and warm, transparent, and relational leadership to cultivate trust and guide the school toward strengthened curriculum, faculty empowerment, and deepened community engagement. This is an exceptional opportunity for a dynamic and emotionally intelligent early childhood leader to shape the future of a school with a rich history, a deeply dedicated faculty, and an active and involved family community. SJP is ready to welcome a new director who can bring vision, stability, and transparency to an inclusive school full of warmth and potential.

The Executive Director will collaborate with teachers, families, St. James' rector, and trustees to sustain the school's joyful, intimate and inclusive culture, skillfully guide families through kindergarten application and matriculation processes, and ensure a thriving future grounded in curiosity and connection.





PROGRAM

St. James Preschool operates on the core belief that young children learn best through play, discovery, and meaningful human connections. The developmental Creative Curriculum and Kimochois SEL curriculum respect the unique timeline of each child, fostering self-confidence, curiosity, compassion and emotional resilience.

Core Classroom Programs

- **Turtle Program (Twos):** Tailored for young children establishing their first social connections outside the home. With a low ratio of 2 teachers to 10 children, the program offers an intimate setting focused on sensory exploration and social-emotional growth.
- **Wildcat Program (Threes):** Designed for three year-olds to expand their social awareness, language skills, and collaborative play in a structured yet flexible environment with a 2:18 ratio.
- **Rabbit/Pre-K Program (Fours):** Prepares four year-olds for the transition to kindergarten through inquiry, cooperative problem-solving, and independence within a 2:18 ratio.

Unique Curriculum Offerings

- **Playball with Coach Steve:** Develops physical coordination, motor skills, and teamwork through structured movement and play.
- **Music with Teacher Leo:** Introduces rhythm, singing, and auditory exploration to inspire creative expression.
- **Spanish Instruction:** Led by Chelsea and Teacher Diana, cultivating early language acquisition and global awareness through interactive songs and games.
- **Nature Connections with Lauryn:** An immersive outdoor program for Pre-K students featuring 9 sessions in the Marin Headlands to foster environmental stewardship.
- **Fun Bunch:** Church members host the Rabbits for an hour each month to read stories and engage in themed arts and crafts projects.
- **Chapel with Chaplain Martha:** Chapel is a spiritually-grounded moment for the children to talk about "big things" like kindness and peace. Families are welcome to use this time to share their faith expressions, and are also welcome to opt out of chapel for their children.
- **Great Books Project:** A cherished parent-run initiative that exposes children to 100 foundational picture books over their three years at SJP.





MISSION

Nestled in the heart of the Inner Richmond for over 60 years, St. James Preschool is a beloved non-denominational preschool empowering young children to thrive. Drawing on aspects of the Waldorf, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia philosophies to develop a unique play-based curriculum, our experienced and loving teachers help ignite curiosity and joy, while inviting families to share and celebrate their cultural backgrounds. Students play, explore, form lasting friendships, and build kindergarten readiness skills. Together, our team of teachers, staff, and parents creates a shared school community to ensure each child can grow into who they are.

FAST FACTS

Location	San Francisco (Inner Richmond)
Programs Offered	Turtle Program (Twos), Wildcat Program (Threes), Rabbit/PreK Program (Fours)
Class Ratios & Sizes	3 classes: Turtles -2 teachers, up to 10 children; Wildcats & Rabbits - 2 teachers, up to 18 children
Program Schedule & Hours	2, 3, 4 and 5 day per week and part or full-day options, depending on class; flexible drop-off as early as 8 AM; pickup options extending to 5:30 PM
Faculty & Staff	Highly experienced, long-tenured educators (ranging up to 22+ years) paired with new perspectives
Enrichment Offerings	Playball, Music, Spanish, Nature Connections (Marin Headlands), Fun Bunch, Chapel with Chaplain Martha (optional), parent-led Great Books Project
Tuition Assistance	Need-based financial support & participant in SF Dept. of Early Childhood Early Learning for All
Annual Budget	\$1.28M (no debt)
Annual Fund	Average \$65,000-\$70,000; 97% parent participation (2025-26)



COMMUNITY & BEYOND PRESCHOOL

St. James Preschool is defined by its vibrant, inclusive, and supportive community where family participation is deeply valued. Families are welcomed into our diverse, respectful community through open communication, shared traditions, parent partnership, events and excursions, and daily moments of connection. SJP celebrates diversity in all its forms, ensuring every child and family feels welcome and honored. The new preschool director and Chaplain Martha will partner to create meaningful opportunities for collaboration to enrich the broader St. James community.

Faculty & Governance Support

St. James Preschool benefits from an exceptionally dedicated and caring faculty and administrative team, many of whom have served the school for over a decade or two. To ensure seamless administration during this leadership transition, former SJP Director Roger Setterfield has returned as Strategic Advisor to support the staff, leadership team, and Board.

Kindergarten Support & Matriculation

St. James Preschool provides dedicated support to guide families through the San Francisco elementary school selection and application process, offering orientations, individual guidance, and parent panels. SJP graduates matriculate to a wide variety of respected public, parochial, and independent schools across the Bay Area.

"Thank you St. James Preschool for being a consistent, reliable, nourishing, kind, and irreplaceable partner for us these past vital years of childhood. You are far more than just preschool. Not only have you taught and loved our children, you have taught us and helped us grow and become better parents and improved adults."

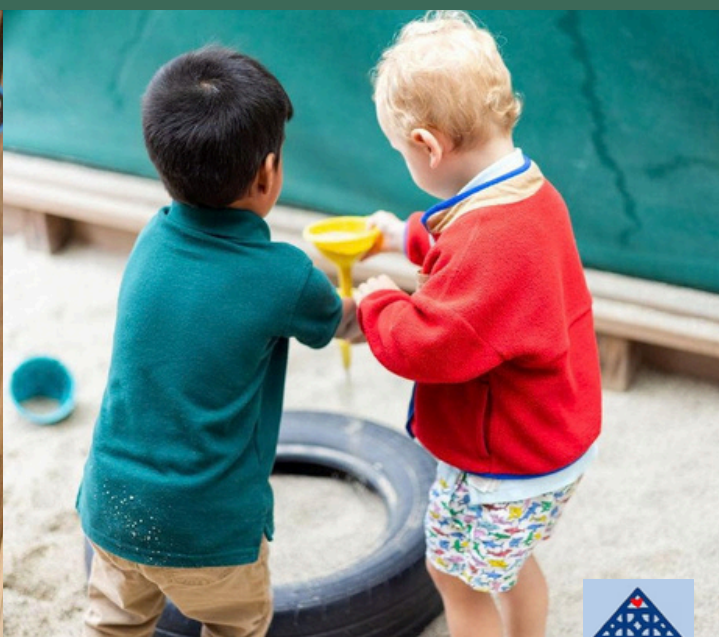
— former St. James Parent



OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The incoming Executive Director will lead the implementation of SJP's strategic priorities in partnership with the Board of Trustees. Key priorities include:

- **Provide Visionary Educational Leadership:** Preserve and enhance SJP's child-centered, play-based philosophy and curricula while championing contemporary early childhood best practices, ensuring program quality and alignment across all classrooms.
- **Recruit and Retain Excellent Faculty and Build Trust:** Attract and discern strong, mission-aligned educators; inspire, mentor, and support professional development, fostering professionalism, collegiality, and collaboration between and among long-tenured teachers and new staff.
- **Cultivate Kindergarten Pathways:** Establish and build relationships with the San Francisco independent and public school communities to foster robust kindergarten guidance and outcomes.
- **Drive Operational Excellence:** Manage day-to-day operations, maintain compliance, and streamline administrative systems and procedures while honoring SJP's warm, community-focused identity.
- **Nurture Community & Governance Relationships:** Build strong, transparent relationships and clear communication with parents, the Board of Trustees, and St. James Church leadership that cultivates trust, alignment and connection.
- **Ensure Financial Sustainability:** Oversee annual operating budgets, manage need-based tuition assistance and public funding partnerships (such as SF Early Learning for All), and foster family philanthropic engagement.
- **Sustain Enrollment & Community Visibility:** Lead admissions, outreach, and marketing efforts to maintain robust enrollment, advance plan around class composition dynamics, and articulate SJP's unique value proposition across San Francisco, including curriculum quality and kindergarten readiness as well as SJP's embracing, joyful and child-centered community.



THE NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- A Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or similar.
- All director qualifications per the California Community Care Licensing Division.
- A valid First Aid and CPR Certificate upon hire or within 3 months.
- All applicable background clearance, health screening, and mandated reporting training requirements.
- A Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or a related field is desired.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Proven early childhood teaching and leadership experience, ideally in a progressive, Reggio-Emilia, Montessori, or Waldorf-inspired early childhood center, independent school, or non-profit.
- A deep understanding of early childhood development and play-based pedagogical frameworks.
- Strategic vision and planning experience, with demonstrated skill communicating clear goals and galvanizing constituents.
- Experience building, supporting, and retaining successful school teams.
- Demonstrated competence in administrative and operational leadership and fiscal and enrollment management.
- Prior experience with independent school governance and board partnership
- Experience navigating the Bay Area preschool and K-8 admissions landscapes, supporting families through the kindergarten admissions process, and discerning best fit for each child and family.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- An approachable, empathetic, and solutions-oriented leadership style built on active listening and emotional intelligence.
- A present, curious, and collaborative approach to leadership and service to community
- Excellent communication skills, with a proven ability to engage constituents, partner effectively, and build connections across differences.
- An authentic, confident, and steady temperament; skilled at establishing boundaries and expectations with clarity and compassion.
- A genuine commitment to cultural humility, inclusivity, equity and belonging.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The annual salary range for this position is \$170,000–\$200,000 (based on experience), with a comprehensive benefits package including full health coverage, a generous retirement savings plan, and support for professional development.



APPLICATION PROCESS

St. James Preschool's next Executive Director will assume their role on July 1, 2027. The school is partnering with **Educational Directions** to assist in conducting the search and transition.

Confidential inquiries, nominations, and candidate application materials should be directed to the search consultant **Shoshanna Lurie** | shoshanna.lurie@edudx.com

Interested candidates should begin the application process as soon as possible and email the consultant with a resume at least one week before the application deadline and prior to submitting other materials. After an initial conversation with Shoshanna, applicants should submit the following application documents in **a single PDF document** via email before the 11/30/26 application deadline:

- A cover letter addressed to the Members of the Executive Director Search Committee explaining interest and qualifications for leading St. James Preschool.
- A complete resume detailing administrative and teaching achievements.
- A statement of early childhood educational and leadership philosophy.
- The names, email addresses, and phone numbers of five professional references with a brief explanation of their relationship to the candidate.

Search Calendar



November 30, 2026

Application Deadline

January 9-10, 2027

Semifinalist Interviews

January 25-29, 2027

Finalist Interviews (on site)

Timelines are flexible and may be adjusted based on the progress of the search.

St. James is eager to speak with candidates who are committed to young children, families, and our intimate and caring community. References will not be contacted without the prior agreement of the candidate, and finalists will be expected to furnish three additional references.

