



PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

Arlington Public Schools

WELCOME

The Arlington Public Schools Preschool would like to welcome you and your child to the beginning of his/her formal education. As your child begins his/her early education experience with us, we are hopeful that it will be a positive and rewarding experience that will enable your child to master new skills in the world around him/her. We strive to provide an atmosphere where each child will develop skills at his/her own rate. We are committed to a philosophy that meets each child where he/she is in his/her development. We acknowledge you, the parent, as the child's first and most significant teacher, and seek to build upon the foundation you have laid.

Our goal is to nurture the growth of the whole child by providing an atmosphere that fosters cognitive, social-emotional, physical, language, literacy and mathematics development.

We are pleased to have you and your child become a part of our program. We want you to know that you are always welcome to visit your child's classroom.

The Early Education Staff

Gail Barth, PreschoolTeacher (gail.barth@apseagles.org) 402-478-4121 ext. 173

Jacque Morgan, Elementary Principal (jacqueline.morgan@apseagles.org) 402-478-4121 ext. 159
402-359-2151

Mrs. Cindy Martens, Secretary (cindy.martens@apseagles.org) 402-478-4121

Records Required For Admission to Early Education Center

Before your child may attend the Early Education Center, the following must be provided to the school:

- 1) A photocopy of your child's state issued **Birth Certificate** This is required by legislation commonly known as the "Missing Children Identification Act".
- 2) A copy of your child's **Immunization Record**. The Nebraska School Immunization Rules and Regulations require the following immunizations before attending classes:

- *4 Doses DTap, DTP or DT Vaccine
- *3 Doses Polio Vaccine
- *1 Dose MMR Vaccine at or after 12 months of age
- *3 Doses of HIB Vaccine or 1 Dose at or after 15 months
- *3 Doses of Pediatric Hepatitis B Vaccine
- *1 Dose Varicella (chicken pox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age
- *4 Doses of pneumococcal Vaccine or 1 dose of pneumococcal Vaccine on or after 15 months of age

If you do not have a record of your child's immunizations, you must either obtain the record or your child will need to begin another series of immunizations. Exceptions to the immunization requirement are made only if a medical reason is documented by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner, or for valid religious objections.

- 3) You will also be required to fill out **Student Information Papers and a Census Form** which was sent to you last spring. These forms need to be completed and returned to the elementary office as soon as possible.

Thank you for assisting us in complying with state requirements by providing this information to us before your child begins school.

Individual Family Service (IFSP)/Individual Education Plan (IEP)

For those children receiving Special Education Services, an IEP or IFSP will be developed following the testing (verification) and before the child is placed in the Early Education Center. This IEP/IFSP will be reviewed on a semi-annual/annual basis. Parent input is vitally important in creating a complete and useful IEP/IFSP. Parental participation in the IEP/IFSP is essential to program success and is required by state regulations. Every effort will be made to find an acceptable time and place for the parents to attend the meeting.

Personnel typically attending the IEP/IFSP reviews may include teachers, therapists, services coordinator, and school district representatives. New goals and objectives developed from suggestions by those present may be added to the IEP/IFSP at this meeting. Progress reports and testing data may also be discussed.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences take place two times a year with your child's teacher. For a child with an IFSP/IEP, one conference will be optional. The dates for the conferences are listed on the school calendar.

Your Child at School

Please leave all toys, money, and candy at home—not at school please. When your child wants to bring something to school, we ask that the child and/or parent get permission from the classroom teacher. There will be times throughout the year when your child will be invited to bring something from home to share with the class.

The staff is interested in any information providing insight into your child's behavior, especially unusual circumstances such as inability to sleep well at night, a newborn in the family, a parent's absence, or house guests. Please do not hesitate to inform us about such matters, as this will allow us to help your child.

Health

Please call the elementary secretary or e-mail the teacher when your child is ill and will be absent from school. Please notify your transportation if applicable. **Please call the secretary at the elementary school at 402-478-4121.**

It is the parent's responsibility to inform and update the school regarding their child's health status. This assists staff in identifying potential classroom emergencies and health issues, which may affect your child's learning. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that the school always have current emergency contacts and phone numbers.

A child who is ill should be kept home from school until he/she is well enough to return to a normal routine. Proper care in the early stages of an illness can reduce recovery time for the ill child and reduce the possibility of spreading the illness to others. The following are guidelines to assist you in deciding when your child should stay home from school.

Irritability, headache, poor appetite, tiredness, achiness are vague symptoms. Changes in a child's normal behavior can often signal the beginning of an illness. An ill child is unable to benefit from school activities.

Fever of 100 degrees or greater. Take your child's temperature if he/she complains of feeling tired, headache, sore throat or stomachache. A child should be fever-free for 24 hours without use of medication before returning to school.

Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, Keep your child home as long as these symptoms occur. Be sure your child is able to tolerate fluids and food without difficulty before returning to school or daily routine.

Nasal secretions and coughing/sneezing spread respiratory infections easily when these symptoms can't be controlled. Remember some children in our classrooms are very susceptible to infection.

Suspected communicable conditions - undiagnosed rashes, head lice, pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox. A child must be sent home until identified symptoms are evaluated and conditions to return to school are documented by a health care provider.

Medication

Medication will be administered to students during regular school hours only if it is required to enable a student to attend classes. We will not purchase, prescribe, or provide any medication (including cough drops) to any student. Parents who wish students to receive medication should make provisions with the teacher according to regulations.

When a student is required to take medication, the following regulations must be followed:

- 1) The Arlington Public Schools medication authorization must be completed detailing written orders from the physician, including the name of the drug, dosage, and time interval the medication is to be given; and written parent permission requesting the compliance with physician's order. The medication must be given directly to a staff member and **not placed in the child's backpack.**
- 2) The parent or legal guardian is responsible for the safe transport of medication to school. The medication must be sent in the original or pharmacy container appropriately labeled with the student's name, date prescribed, name of medication, dosage and time medication is to be given.
- 3) Medication will be administered by a designated person who has demonstrated competency in medication provision.
- 4) A written record is to be kept of all medications given.
- 5) Medication must be securely stored.

Snow Days

On occasion the Arlington Public School closes due to severe weather conditions. The Alert Now system will be used to notify families of school closing. You may also listen to KFAB-AM or your local television for school closings. If school is closed for the day, both sessions of preschool will be cancelled.

School Clothes and Supplies

The optimum shoe choice is sneakers/tennis shoes. Sturdy shoes and play clothes enable your child to participate freely in all preschool activities. Let your child wear clothes he/she can easily manage for the bathroom. Avoid dressing your child in "best" clothes in case of spills and messy activities. The children are here to "learn by doing" and cannot do this if pressures are placed on them to stay neat and tidy at all times. Most styles of sandals, flip flops, slick soled shoes, jellies, and boots **are not as safe** or as adaptable to the preschool's equipment and activities.

Please mark sweaters, jackets, coats, mittens, hats, etc., with your child's name so we can get the proper clothing home with the right child.

At the beginning of the school year, a change of clothing in case of accidents of one kind or another will be required. Please provide us with a suitable change of clothing, including socks and underwear. Remember to consider the weather when providing clothing. If your child wears diapers or pull ups, please make arrangements to have enough supplies at school to accommodate your child's needs.

Please send a backpack or bag to school every day for your child to transport his/her papers and other possessions. Good communication between school and home is necessary to foster children's development. Parents are encouraged to let teachers know significant events or information that may affect the child's mood or behavior that day.

If a child has any food allergies or special dietary needs or restrictions, we ask that the parent inform the teacher.

Preschool Times:

Preschool is in Session Monday-Thursday

Morning Session: 8:05-11:05

Afternoon Session: 12:15-3:20

Arrival Time

Unless your child is transported to school by a district van, please bring the child into the classroom and leave him/her in the care of the early education staff. Please do not leave your child unattended, in the event that no one is in the classroom at the particular time. **We cannot allow you to drop your child off more than a few minutes prior to the beginning of the school day.** The staff members must have this time to carry out numerous responsibilities they have in conjunction with their positions. **Students should not be dropped off prior to 8:00 a.m. for the morning session and prior to 12:15 p.m. for the afternoon session.**

Dismissal Time

Promptness in picking up children is essential. The staff members have other responsibilities after the children leave, so please do your part in helping us stay on schedule. If you know you will not be able to get to school to pick your child up on time, please call to inform the staff.

Tuition

For those families paying tuition, **tuition will be due the 1st of each month. You WILL NOT receive a bill for your tuition payment. Your first payment is due September 1st (This is a double payment for August/September/May). The following 7 payments are due on the first of each month.** If you are more than 2 months delinquent on your account, your child's preschool opportunities can be revoked. Please make checks payable to Arlington Public Schools. Payments can be made in the elementary office or if you prefer to send the payment in your child's backpack the preschool staff will make sure it gets sent to the office.

Please call the Superintendent's Office (402-359-2583) if you qualify for free or reduced lunch to determine if your tuition may be reduced.

Early Education Center Staff

A variety of professional staff members are assigned to the Early Education Center. All professional staff members hold required degrees and are certified by the State of Nebraska and are employed by your local school district.

The **Early Childhood Special Education Teacher/Coordinator** organizes and manages the classroom and plans a wide variety of activities that encourage development of skills to meet the individual child's needs. The early childhood special education teacher also functions as a liaison to other staff and administrators.

The **Speech and Language Pathologist** plans individualized speech and language therapy programs for the children. The speech and language pathologist works to incorporate speech and language goals into the everyday school routine. Individual sessions and small groups are offered as needed. The speech pathologist also consults with parents to provide appropriate speech and language stimulation at home.

Paraeducators work directly with children in the classroom under the supervision of the certified staff. The use of paraeducators helps provide a lower child to staff ratio in the classroom and additional individualized programming.

Support Help:

1. **Occupational and Physical Therapists** work both in the classroom and individually with identified children to improve fine and gross motor skills. The therapists also consult with teachers and parents to suggest activities that will encourage the child's motor development. Physical and occupational therapists are assigned to the classroom each Fall.
2. A **Psychologist** is available to consult with parents and staff members and to evaluate children on an individual basis.

A Developmental Approach

Curriculum

The Arlington Preschool program is a program designed to enhance language development and pre-academic skills. The goals of the program are:

- *Develop language, social, pre-academic, fine motor, gross motor and self-help skills in all students
- *Develop skills to help students make a successful transition to Kindergarten
- *Encourage students to interact appropriate with their peers
- *Develop listening and following direction skills

The students will learn and develop skills by participating in small and large group activities and while participating in free and teacher directed play. Research shows that the highest level of thinking occurs during play and that play is the foremost way to learn language. During play, students will have the opportunity to learn basic skills and concepts.

During class time, children are given ample time to explore and learn at their own rate. The preschool child learns best by doing, and the daily routine offers many experiences that allow him/her to actively become involved with materials and the world around them.

Daily Routine

The Arlington Public Schools Preschool assessment is designed in accordance with Teaching Strategies Gold, which is the assessment chosen by the Nebraska State Department of Education for developmentally appropriate education for young children. It is a tool, using mostly observational records to assess each child's learning and progress.

Arrival/Free Play

This is a very important part of your child's day, as it can "set the tone" for the entire school day. Teachers welcome children as they arrive and aid the child-parent separation process. During this brief and casual time, many important skills develop as children take care of their personal belongings (hanging up back packs, coats, hats, mittens, etc.), wash their hands and check in. Students are then given opportunities to participate in play with their peers while also working on bathroom and self-help skills.

Opening/Calendar

During opening, the large group (the entire classroom) comes together for a short time. The children will sing some songs and work on key academic concepts, such as letter and number recognition, color recognition, literacy, and counting. Students will also work together to put the correct date on the calendar, talk about the weather and our day. Each day a calendar helper is chosen where students get the opportunity to ask their classmates questions in order to help fill in the calendar day, weather information, etc.

Small Group Time

During small group, the students work in small groups with a teacher or paraprofessional. During this time, the students are working on specific skills to help with letter recognition, counting, number recognition, and pre-writing skills. During this time a program called "Handwriting Without Tears" is also utilized. This program helps students develop necessary writing skills by using lots of manipulatives to help children learn how to form letters and numbers correctly.

Center Time

Center Time is the longest portion of the day. During this time, each child selects an interest area to "work" in. Adults move around the room, observing how each child plays, supporting children in their play as facilitators. Common social-emotional goals lend well to this time: problem solving, and entering into children's play to encourage, extend, and set up new problem-solving situations. The majority of data collected by the teacher is collected during this time. When a child is finished in an interest area, he/she is expected to pick up his/her items he/she was working with before moving to another area.

Story-Time

Reading is a critical component in a child's learning. A teacher will read to a large or small group each day, asking questions of the group and encouraging participation. Commenting on stories demonstrates comprehension, which is a skill that is essential, especially in future years. There is also an opportunity for building vocabulary and reinforcing concepts that are already in-place for many children.

Project Time

This is a time for children to work on their fine motor skills and also following directions. A wide variety of materials are used to allow children to explore and create their projects.

Music Time

This is a time for children to work on language skills and also following directions. Music is used throughout the day for a variety of purposes, but during this specified "music time" songs and finger plays are sung that relate to the theme being studied. Students are encouraged to participate using various movements.

Snack Time

This is a time for children and adults together to enjoy a snack in a supportive social setting. Many language and cognitive concepts are encouraged during meal time. Also snacks are provided for. Many times, students create a snack related to the theme that is being studied.

****Sometimes we have special snacks if it is a child's birthday or we are having a party. Parents may offer to provide snacks for parties and birthdays, but the items MUST BE PRE-PACKAGED so that ingredients may be read in case of food allergies.**

Large Motor/Recess

During this period, the entire group is involved in motor activities either indoors or outdoors. Children have a chance to practice their large muscle skills with balls, bean bags, tunnels, etc., and with other outdoor and indoor play equipment.

Closing Meeting

During the final group of the day, the activities of the day are reviewed, including events that occurred with individual groups during Free Choice Time, encouraging language development and turn-taking.

Family Involvement

The support of your child's education is one of the most effective ways of assuring positive growth and development. Our preschool program embraces a strong family involvement component to the program. Families come in all shapes and sizes—each of them is unique. We understand that every family has a different type of routine, so we offer a variety of ways to support your child's educational program and encourage families to communicate how we can better fit your family.

Overall Support and Interest

Even if a family is not able to spend a lot of time volunteering for classroom activities, the most effective way to be involved in your child's education is by showing interest in what your child is doing at school. Reviewing the materials he/she brings home would be one way to initiate a conversation and show your interest.

Field Trips/Parent Gatherings

During the school year, the preschoolers are involved in at least one field trip. The preschoolers also have at least one time during the school year where parents are invited to a gathering. More specific information about field trips and parent gatherings will be sent home as specific dates, times, etc. are arranged.

Parent/Teacher Communication

The staff will schedule formal meetings/conferences to review your child's progress. Less formal ways, and more frequent, of communicating (i.e., e-mails, conversations, daily notes, phone calls, home visits) are just as important. Please, always feel free to contact your child's teacher. We can best support your child together.