



educational service center  
*of Central Ohio*

# Early Learning Program

## PARENT HANDBOOK





## educational service center *of Central Ohio*

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# Early Learning Parent Handbook

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# **Educational Service Center of Central Ohio**

## **Early Learning Programs**

### **Philosophy**

It is the philosophy of the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio's Early Learning Program to facilitate children's development in communication, social-emotional, play skills, cognition, motor skills, self-help and a positive self-concept. As we focus on the development of the whole child, each preschool classroom team provides an active, safe and nurturing environment for children to interact with peers, adults and materials to achieve individual goals and objectives. We believe in providing varied experiences in recognition of the diversity of students' abilities, interests and cultural backgrounds. The program follows the Ohio Department Of Education's Early Learning and Development Standards and all preschool classrooms are licensed by the Ohio Department of Education.

We believe that children construct their own understanding of the world through active involvement with materials, people and concepts. The staff's role is to facilitate children's understanding of their world by creating opportunities for self-planned activities and to facilitate each child's reflections of his/her activities. The staff supports children's exploration by providing appropriate materials, planned spaces, play opportunities, and a consistent daily routine based on developmentally appropriate practices.

We believe that all children develop a greater understanding of their world when given the opportunity to model and interact with peers of various developmental levels within the school community. Our Early Learning classrooms provide opportunities for integration with typically developing peers.

We believe that families are the child's first and most important facilitators. Family support is provided through parent conferences, supplemental reading materials, and classroom newsletters. We strive to maintain open communication with staff and parents.

We partner with students' home districts to make the transition to kindergarten successful.

# Early Learning Program Mission Statement

**Our mission is to collaborate with schools in developing programs while helping our families and students achieve their maximum potential during their preschool experience.**

The ESC of Central Ohio Early Learning Program is designed for children ages 3-5 identified with delays in one or more developmental areas and typically developing peers.

- Our goal is to provide children with opportunities in: fine motor, gross motor, pre-academic, self-help, and language development as well as increasing self-esteem and social/emotional skills.
- Quality instruction is provided with an emphasis on the individual needs of the child.
- Developmentally appropriate classroom activities are guided by Early Learning and Development Standards and our Board adopted curriculum.
- Individual, small and large group instruction is utilized to develop and promote age-appropriate skills.
- The opportunity for parent involvement is available through ongoing communication with classroom staff, newsletters, parent meetings and parent resources.
- A multi-factored evaluation, Evaluation Team Report (ETR) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) identifies the instructional and therapy services to be provided based upon the needs of the child and are incorporated into the classroom by related service personnel.





# Program Descriptions

## Center-Based Program

The Educational Service Center of Central Ohio provides early learning programs in school districts throughout Delaware, Franklin, Licking and Union Counties. It is our goal to educate preschoolers in their home school districts to the maximum extent possible. Preschoolers with special needs and typical peer models who participate in our center-based classrooms attend a full day or a 2.5 hour a.m. or p.m. session. Parents are provided a daily schedule upon enrollment in the program.

Each preschool classroom is staffed with a certified Early Childhood Intervention Specialist and a paraprofessional (teaching assistant). A speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and adapted physical education instructor are assigned to classrooms as prescribed by Individual Education Plans (IEP's).

## Itinerant Program

Our itinerant based program is designed to assist identified preschoolers with disabilities in their home, local preschools and/or daycare center. This placement option entitles students to a minimum of four hours per month of services and may include speech and/or motor therapy. Your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) outlines the goals/objectives to be worked on, location and type of services. The itinerant teacher provides feedback and encouragement to the parent/caregiver/teacher as well as suggestions and modeling of alternative teaching techniques. This option is available for students who are not enrolled in the center-based program.



## Peer Model Program

Our Early Learning Program integrates typically developing preschoolers (peer models) with our preschoolers with disabilities. Our peer models must be 4 or 5 years of age and toilet trained to enroll in our early learning program. Enrollment is open to children of district residents and staff of local school districts. Peer models should exhibit good social, communication, and play skills and the ability to follow directions. All of our preschoolers benefit from a high quality literacy enriched program.

Peer models are eligible to attend based upon the following guidelines:

- Complete enrollment packet (including medical).
- Parent/guardian is responsible for monthly tuition.
- Parent/guardian must provide transportation to/from preschool program, unless the district provides transportation.
- Child would be good role model to others; separates easily from parent, attends to adult guided activity, and is willing to take turns.
- Child enjoys playing with other children: interacts well with others, manipulates toys, and engages in age appropriate activities without assistance.

Please contact the Center for Student Services if you have further questions or to request a peer model enrollment packet at 614.542.4106.



# Curriculum

Each ESC classroom uses HighScope, an approved, research based curriculum, which guides classroom planning in the following areas:

## Approaches to Learning

- Initiative and planning
- Problem solving with materials
- Reflection

## Social and Emotional Development

- Emotions
- Building relationships with adults
- Building relationships with other children
- Community
- Conflict resolution

## Physical Development and Health

- Gross-motor skills
- Fine-motor skills
- Personal care and healthy behavior

## Language, Literacy and Communication

- Speaking
- Listening and comprehension
- Phonological awareness
- Alphabetic knowledge
- Reading
- Book enjoyment and knowledge
- Writing

## Mathematics

- Number and counting
- Geometry: Shapes and spatial awareness
- Measurement
- Patterns
- Data analysis

## Creative Arts

- Art
- Music
- Movement
- Pretend play

## Science and Technology

- Observing and classifying
- Experimenting, predicting, and drawing conclusions
- Natural and physical world
- Tools and technology



#### Social Studies

- Knowledge of self and others
- Geography
- History

#### English Language Learning (ELL)

- Listening to and understanding English
- Speaking English

This curriculum aligns to the State of Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards to provide students with a wide variety of learning experiences. The Early Learning Content Standards are the introduction to school age learning standards in the areas of Social-Emotional Development, Approaches Toward Learning, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge, and Language and Literacy Development. Purposeful activities, materials and environments help to support children's active learning and kindergarten readiness.

The curriculum includes ongoing assessment of a child's development with input from educational team members, including classroom teacher, teaching assistants, parents and may include related staff – SLP, OT, PT, APE. Through observation of planned activities, interviews of parents/caregivers and daily routines, team members record data on children in all developmental areas, giving us a picture of the whole child in his/her natural environment(s).

The curriculum, content standards, assessment results and individual student IEP goals are used in planning lessons and designing classroom learning environments. Lessons are presented in large/small group activities and individual instruction delivered by a classroom team. All classroom events, transitions, play areas, teacher-led activities and interactions provide learning opportunities for students.

Three other assessments required by the Ohio Department of Education are conducted in the fall and spring:

1. Preschool Early Learning Assessment
  - Evaluates students' skills in the domains of learning
  - Assessment administered twice yearly
2. ECO (Early Childhood Outcomes) – survey of the student's cumulative performance over time – completed by teacher in collaboration with other team members.
3. COR (Childhood Observation Record) – a curriculum based assessment which is recorded two times per year.

Periodic reports of student's progress are provided to parents.

## Ohio's Early Learning Program Guidelines

Ohio's Early Learning Program Guidelines were developed to provide a framework for preschool and childcare programs across the state to better meet the educational needs of children. The Early Learning Program Guidelines serve as the foundation for all programs funded through the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness. The guidelines encompass the desired outcomes and goals considered essential for children's learning and healthy development. The Educational Service Center of Central Ohio is striving to follow the recommendations of these guidelines.

The guidelines are divided into four sections, representing the philosophy that:

- All children are born ready to learn
- Environments matter
- Relationships are influential
- Communication is critical

These guidelines were constructed on the following beliefs:

- Children are competent and resourceful learners;
- Children can and do make meaning of complex ideas and concepts;
- Children want and do contribute to their own learning;
- Learning takes place through social interaction;
- Learning experiences can be tailored for different periods in a child's life and also for the contribution to the intellectual and social child of the future;
- Learning experiences can take place in the context of play as well as through structured activities in the hands of competent teachers;
- Families have the right to participate in their child's education journey;
- Families desire to be competent parents;
- Families have a right to educational experiences that recognize cultural, linguistic and racial identity;
- Teachers hold a position of power and by sharing the power contribute to the learning of all;
- Teachers grow in confidence and competence through relationships and connections with children, families, their peers, and community services; and
- Teachers by virtue of their position, have an obligation to do their very best for children within their care.

In the 2013-2014 school year, the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio began the transition to Step Up to Quality, a tiered quality rating and improvement system. Step Up to Quality will replace the Early Learning Program Guidelines and will be used by all state funded early learning programs throughout the state of Ohio.

# Preschool Early Learning and Development Standards

## Introduction

In December 2011, Ohio was awarded the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. To be awarded the funding, Ohio was required to have *Early Learning and Development Standards in all Essential Domains of School Readiness, Birth to Age 5*. These five domains included:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Well-being and Motor Development
- Approaches Toward Learning
- Language and Literacy Development
- Cognition and General Knowledge

Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards describe key concepts and skills that young children develop during the birth-to-five-year period. Their purpose is to support the development and well-being of young children and to foster their learning. The standards promote the understanding of early learning and development, provide a comprehensive and coherent set of expectations for children's development and learning, and guide the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment and instructional practices with young children.

The standards present a continuum of learning and development from birth to age five in each of the domains. Because the infant/toddler years are marked by rapid developmental change, the standards are divided into three meaningful transitional periods: Infants (birth to around 8 months), Young Toddlers (6 to around 18 months), and Older Toddlers (16 to around 36 months). The standards during the preschool years describe those developmental skills and concepts children should know and be able to do at the end of their preschool experience.

The Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards were created as part of a collaborative effort of state agencies serving young children including Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Mental Health, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and the Governor's Office of Health Transformation. The state agencies worked with national experts and writing teams made up of Ohio-based content experts and stakeholders to revise and expand the standards in the five developmental domains.

Ohio's revision of standards builds upon the strong set of existing standards in Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines (for children birth to 36 months of age) and the Pre-Kindergarten Standards (for children ages 3 to 5). Ohio's *Infant and Toddler Guidelines* was the major source for the development of the infants' and toddlers' standards. Similarly, Ohio's *Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards* were revised and expanded in the Language and Literacy and Cognitive Development domains. The Cognition and General Knowledge standards were aligned with the kindergarten Common Core State Standards in English-Language Arts and Mathematics and Ohio's Revised Academic Content Standards in Science and Social Studies. Finally, the standards were reviewed and revised with particular attention to being appropriate for children with disabilities and for children with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Knowledge of the strengths and needs of each child is pertinent in order to implement differentiation strategies and culturally responsive pedagogy in a manner to help each child meet the standards.

## Organization of the Standards

The standards within each domain are organized according to **strands**, the developmental or conceptual components within each domain. Each strand contains one or more **topics**, the area of focus within each strand, and the **standard statements**, those concepts and skills children should know and be able to do for the different age-groups. Some topics reflect learning and development across the birth-to-five continuum, with standards for all age levels: infants, young toddlers, older toddler, and Pre-K, while other topics pertain only to a specific age-period. For example, some knowledge and skills such as *the ability to identify and describe shapes* or skills related to social studies and science emerge in preschool. Topics that address those competencies include standards only at the Pre-K level. Other topics such as *Self-Comforting* and *Social Identity* have standards only at the infant-toddler levels, because these foundational skills developed during the early years lead to more specific competencies at the preschool level.

## An Overview of the Domains

**Social and Emotional Development.** The standards for Social and Emotional development involve behaviors that reflect children's emotional growth and their growing ability to successfully navigate their social worlds through interactions with teachers and peers. These standards include a focus on children's developing abilities to regulate attention, emotions, and behavior, and to establish positive relationships with familiar adults and with peers. Research indicates that early skills of social competence and self-regulation are foundational to children's long-term academic and social success (National Research Council, 2008). Strands in the social and emotional domain are *Self* and *Relationships*.

**Physical Well-Being and Motor Development** Physical Well-Being and Motor Development standards address motor skills and health practices that are essential for children's overall development. These skills include the ability to use large and small muscles to produce movements, to touch, grasp and manipulate objects, and to engage in physical activity. These standards also describe the development of health practices that become part of children's daily routines and healthy habits such as nutrition and self-help. These skills and behaviors play an important role in children's physical well-being and set children on a path leading toward a healthy lifestyle. Healthy children are more likely to attend school, to be physically active, and to learn more effectively (Bluemenshine and others, 2008). The two strands in this domain are *Motor Development* and *Physical Well-Being*.

**Approaches Toward Learning.** Approaches Toward Learning centers on the foundational behaviors, dispositions, and attitudes that children bring to social interactions and learning experiences. It includes children's initiative and curiosity, and their motivation to participate in new and varied experiences and challenges. These behaviors are fundamental to children's ability to take advantage of learning opportunities, and to set, plan, and achieve goals for themselves. This domain also includes children's level of attention, engagement, and persistence as they do a variety of tasks. These factors are consistent predictors of academic success (Duncan et al., 2007). Finally, children's creativity, innovative thinking and flexibility of thought allow them to think about or use materials in unconventional ways, and to express thoughts, ideas and feelings in a variety of media. The standards in the domain Approaches Toward Learning are organized in the following strands: *Initiative*; *Engagement and Persistence*; and *Creativity*.

**Language and Literacy.** The standards for language and literacy reflect knowledge and skills fundamental to children's learning of language, reading and writing. Young children's language competencies pertain to their growing abilities to communicate effectively with adults and peers, to express themselves through language, and to use growing vocabularies and increasingly sophisticated language structures. Early literacy skills include children's developing concepts of print, comprehension of age-appropriate text, phonological awareness, and letter recognition. Research has identified early skills of language and literacy as important predictors for children's school readiness, and their later capacity to learn academic knowledge (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). The Language and Literacy domain consists of the following strands: *Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing*.

**Cognition and General Knowledge.** This domain includes those cognitive processes that enable all other learning to take place, as well as children's knowledge of the social and physical world. This domain is organized into the strand, *Cognitive Skills* and those concepts and skills in **sub-domains**, *Mathematics, Social Studies* and *Science*.

**Cognitive Skills.** This strand refers to the underlying cognitive mechanisms, skills and processes that support learning and reasoning across domains, including the development of memory, symbolic thought, reasoning and problem-solving.

- **Mathematics.** The sub-domain of mathematics encompasses the mathematical concepts and skills that children develop during the birth-to-five-year period, including children's developing understanding of number and quantity, number relationships, and basic algebraic concepts. A meta-analysis conducted by Duncan and colleagues (2007) suggests that specific early math skills such as knowledge of numbers and ordinality are important predictors of later achievement in math and reading. The Mathematics sub-domain also addresses children's developing knowledge of key attributes of objects, including size and shape, and the way objects fit, are positioned, and move in space. The standards in the domain of mathematics are organized in four strands: *Number Sense, Number Relationships and Operations; Algebra; Measurement and Data; and Geometry*.
- **Social Studies.** The sub-domain of social studies includes basic skills and competencies that set the foundation for learning about concepts of social science. At a young age, children begin to develop their social identity and to think about their place in the social world. As they grow, they develop an increased awareness of their personal histories and heritage, and a sense of time and place. Through everyday interactions with children and adults, they develop an appreciation for rights and responsibility within a group, and how social rules help people in promoting safety and fairness (Mindes, 2005). Such competencies are described in the domain of Social Studies under the following strands: *History; Geography; Government; and Economics*.
- **Science.** This sub-domain focuses on children's curiosity to explore and learn about their environment. It includes behaviors of exploration and discovery, and fundamental conceptual development such as problem solving and cause and effect. These early behaviors develop into increasingly systematic inquiry skills, and the ability to observe, investigate and communicate about the natural environment, living things, and objects and materials (Gelman and Brenneman, 2004). Early competencies in science are organized in four key strands: *Science Inquiry and Application; Earth and Space Science; Physical Science; and Life Science*.

Ohio's early learning and development standards illuminate the breadth of learning and development from birth to kindergarten entry that strengthens school readiness. An understanding of learning and development in each domain guides programs and teachers as



they plan developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and environments for young children. In particular, teachers can use an understanding of standards to focus on the kinds of interactions and environments that support, for example, language development or approaches toward learning. While the standards facilitate a focused look at young children's learning in each domain, teachers and others responsible for the care and education of young children need to keep in mind that infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children learn holistically.

Moreover, social and emotional development stands at the center of their learning. For example, as an infant or toddler builds security in a relationship with a caring adult, that child is also learning to communicate with language and to use the relationship as a secure base for practicing new movement skills and building knowledge about the world through exploration. Likewise, as preschool-age children tell stories about family experiences they are expanding their self-awareness, using their growing cognitive capacity to remember the past, and practicing narrative skills. Such examples of integrated learning are endless. In addition to providing focused looks in each domain, the standards can help us see how learning occurs in different domains at the same time.

Teachers and others can use the standards as starting points for observing and understanding young children's learning and development. With each learning encounter teachers observe, they can refer to the standards and ask what knowledge and skills are the children gaining in the areas of language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, social and emotional development, physical well-being and motor development, and approaches toward learning. Teachers can use their observations of integrated learning to plan new learning encounters for young children and support the building of knowledge in all essential domains of school readiness.

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## Update

On June 15, 2022, the State Board of Education adopted [Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards](#) in all domains of school readiness to reflect the comprehensive development of children beginning at birth to the end of preschool. These standards replace previous versions of Ohio's early childhood education standards and represent a collaboration between state agencies serving young children including the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Mental Health, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and the Governor's Office of Health Transformation. The state agencies worked with national experts and writing teams made up of Ohio-based content experts and stakeholders to revise and expand the standards. The [2012 version of the standards](#) will remain available to programs still aligned to this version until all programs must be aligned to the new standards.

**[Click Here to View Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards](#)**

## **Progress Reporting**

Each of our preschool students who have an identified disability has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which requires an annual review. In addition, we will have several other opportunities to share your child's achievements. Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice during the school year, in conjunction with your school calendar, to discuss progress and you will have the opportunity for a home visit from our staff if you wish. Written progress reports will be sent home on a quarterly basis, and teachers are available by phone or email. If you have any questions regarding your child's progress, you are encouraged to talk with your child's teacher.

## **Home Visits**

ESC of Central Ohio teachers may offer home visits throughout the school year. These visits may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing teacher and child one-on-one time in the child's environment.
- Strengthening the family-school relationship.
- Reinforcing the child's feeling of self-worth.
- Helping the child feel the connection between home and school.
- Allowing a child to organize and carry out the visit.
- Inspiring curricular design by incorporating home interests and activities in the classroom.

## **Photo Permission**

From time to time, the Educational Service Center staff take pictures or video of students in their learning environments. The photographs and videos can be used in a variety of publications to document our programs. The images may appear in, but not limited to program newsletters, publications and or the website.

The ESC of Central Ohio keeps a record of students who do not have permission to be photographed. Forms are sent home at the beginning of each school year.

## **Clothing**

A change of clothing should be sent to school marked with your child's name. Please label outside clothing, including boots and mittens. During cold weather, it is wise to send a sweater that may be kept at school. All items of clothing must be labeled to avoid confusion and loss.

# General Information

## Attendance

Daily attendance is encouraged and expected. Students benefit most from our program when they can be part of the classroom every day. Of course, there are good reasons for excused absences from school, which may include: personal illness, illness in the family, observation or celebration of a religious holiday.

## Reporting Absences

If your child will not be attending school, it is important to call:

- Your building secretary (or person identified by classroom teacher)
- Transportation Department at phone numbers provided.

Leave your child's name, teacher's name and reason for his or her absence on the school voice mail, if we are unable to answer your phone call.

It is important to know the reason your child is absent, especially if he or she has a contagious illness, such as chicken pox, pink eye, mumps, measles, etc. A note would be sent home to other classmates to be aware of the illness.

Please, do not send your child to school with a fever, bad cough or severe cold (within the past 24 hours).

Please inform your teacher in writing of any changes in medication including the addition of antibiotics.



## **Should I keep my child home from school today?**

**Yes**, if she/he has:

- diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- severe cough, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- severe cold
- undetermined rash
- temperature of 100° or higher within the last 24 hours
- sore throat – difficulty swallowing
- red, watery, burning, itching eyes
- vomiting within the last 24 hours
- nits in hair
- exposure to a contagious disease that could jeopardize the health of others
- stiff neck

The above symptoms/conditions may mean the start of a communicable disease or nuisance condition that could affect many of the other children in your child's classroom. Also, your child may be too sick to learn in school that day. In fairness to ALL children, keep your child home until you can determine what else may be developing. See communicable disease policy on page 23 for further information.

Contact the school nurse if you have any questions. If both parents are employed, please make arrangements to have a caregiver available in case your child becomes ill while in school. Include these names on your emergency forms.



## Missing Children Act

The ESC of Central Ohio supports activities that may locate and identify a missing child. Therefore, efforts will be made by the school to identify possible missing children and to notify the proper persons or agencies. It is extremely important that parents or persons responsible for the child provide the school with a current address as well as home, work and emergency telephone numbers. **It is equally important that parents contact the school if their child is absent for any reason.**

## School Delays or Calamity Days

In case of hazardous road conditions or severe weather, the starting of classes may be delayed or school may be canceled. When this occurs, the delayed starting time or closing of school will be announced on the local radio and television stations.

Follow your local district guidelines for school cancellations and delays.

Our primary contact list, along with locations on the dial, includes:

FM Radio	Q-FM 96	(96.3)	Television	WOCC	(Ch. 3)
	WSNY	(94.7)		WCMH	(Ch. 4)
	WNCI	(97.9)		WSYX	(Ch. 6)
	CD101	(102.5)		WBNS	(Ch. 10)
AM Radio	WTVN	(610)	Internet	Web sites of above TV Stations	
	WBNS	(1460)			
	WCOL	(1230)			
	WUCO	(1270)			

## Arrival and Dismissal

Children should arrive at the time indicated on their early learning calendar. If you are transporting your child, please escort him/her into the building/classroom and inform the teacher or teacher assistant of your child's arrival.

Arrival time requires the careful attention of both the classroom teacher and assistant. Therefore, staff is unable at this time to focus and respond appropriately to questions or communication concerning your child. You are welcome, however, to send a note, leave a phone message, or schedule a conference at any time to address your needs.

Children will only be released to assigned bus drivers, parents/guardians, or those individuals who are designated on the transportation release form. If someone else is picking up your child, please send a note or call the school. Those individuals unfamiliar to classroom staff may be asked to show identification.

## Transportation

Transportation of children with disabilities is the responsibility of the school district. Arrangements will need to be made prior to students beginning the early learning classroom.

## **Field Trips**

In the event that a field trip is planned for your child's class, families will be notified in advance. Each child will bring home a permission slip with information including where they will be going, date of the trip, how they will be transported, and who is responsible for the trip. First aid supplies and emergency transportation cards will be brought along on all field trips. Students will wear an identification tag with their name, school name, address, and phone number. Please refer any additional questions regarding field trips to your child's classroom teacher.

## **Snacks**

We support the belief that strong nutritional habits are formed at a very early age. During snack time, we are learning to try new foods and discover different textures and tastes. In efforts to promote life-long health habits we strive to provide all children with nutritious food choices. Your classroom teachers will discuss with you specific snack procedures (ex. group snack verses individual snack).

### **Some healthy snack suggestions are:**

- Fresh fruit
- Applesauce
- Dried fruit (raisins, cherries, banana chips, apple chips)
- Raw vegetables
- Cheese
- Rice cakes
- Yogurt
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Pretzels
- Cheese crackers
- Popcorn
- 100% fruit juice (please no pop or carbonated beverages)
- Milk boxes

While nutrition is important, we are aware of the excitement of birthday treats. Please check with child's teacher regarding procedures for treats for special celebrations.

### **Inform your child's teacher of any food allergies.**

## **Supplies**

At the beginning of the school year, your children may be asked to bring in supplies. Your child's teacher may send you a list after the beginning of school to indicate what is needed for the early learning classroom. If you have any questions, please contact your child's teacher.

## Parent Participation

The Educational Service Center of Central Ohio Early Learning Program recognizes parents and families as valuable members of each child's educational team. There are many opportunities to be involved in our program such as:

- Forms – These are required by State of Ohio Licensure
  - Fill in and turn in all preschool forms on the first day of school year; please make sure forms are completed in pen.
  - A Medical Form must be completed and signed by a physician every 13 months, including an updated immunization record.
- Early Learning Program Open House – held before opening of school; a specific supply list will be handed out as well as required forms to be completed.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences are offered following district calendars and/or as needed or requested by the parent.
- In addition, annual IEP conferences are held for special needs students.
- Special Events/Celebrations – check with your child's teacher for details on classroom celebrations for special days and other opportunities to volunteer.
- Ongoing Communication through notebooks, folders, parent newsletters, messages and phone calls. Please check with your child's teacher for the best times of the day to call classroom staff directly. Messages can be left with the building secretary.
- Parents will have opportunities to donate additional supplies or materials for special projects. Ask your child's teacher if there is a class wish list.
- Classroom Roster – A class roster of parent/child names, addresses and phone numbers is available to the families in your child's class. It is your choice to be on the roster or not. Parents can be a great support and resource for each other. The roster can also provide contacts for families to get students together outside of school.
- Classroom Visitations – We would love to share our classrooms with you, however, due to the needs of some of our students, visitors may be very distracting to some classes. To keep disruptions at a minimum, please use the following procedure:
  - Arrange a visit with your child's teacher in advance.
  - Sign in with the building office and follow procedures for visitation.
  - Since staff are directly responsible for students, please reserve questions and discussions with classroom staff for a time when they are not involved with students.
  - Please refrain from interrupting student routines.
  - Please respect the confidentiality of other students.
  - Each building/district may have policies that vary from this general statement. Please see your child's teacher for specifics.

**Opportunities to collaborate with classroom staff:**

- Act as a resource for staff on assessments and surveys.
- Bring questions and concerns to classroom teacher.
- Share and request information on resources for children, therapies, families and more.

**School begins at home**

You can make sure your child starts each day on a positive note by cooperating with and supporting your efforts in the following ways:

1. It is very important to establish a bedtime and routine for your child. Young children need between 8-10 hours a night and learn best when they are refreshed and awake while at school.
2. Please dress your child in comfortable clothing. Tennis shoes are best for daily gross motor activities.
3. Good nutrition maximizes your child's day at school. Please provide your child with a nourishing breakfast or lunch.
4. Please label all clothing and supplies sent to school with your child's name.
5. Please send your child to school on time, not too early or late.
6. Teach and model respect for adults in both the home and school community.
7. Talk with your child about treating other children in the same manner as he/she wishes to be treated (avoid name calling, arguing, etc.).
8. Above all else, tell your child when he/she is trying their best at school – praise him/her for good efforts and good behavior at school.



## Behavior Management/Discipline

The ESC Early Learning Program provides a safe and nurturing environment by use of such techniques as positive reinforcement, praise and redirection. If needed and upon request, the child's team will work with the family to develop a consistent plan for behavior modification. Discipline plans vary based on individual student and classroom needs. In our effort to create a safe and structured environment for your child, the following guidelines are implemented:

- A preschool staff member in charge of a child or group of children shall be responsible for their discipline.
- The program shall have a written discipline policy describing the philosophy of discipline and specific methods of discipline used. This written policy shall be on file in the program for review. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are to be used at all times and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation and praise for appropriate behavior.
- The program's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:
  - There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to punching, pinching, shaking or biting.
  - No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
  - No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
  - No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
  - No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
  - Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep or for toileting accidents.
  - Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
  - Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
  - Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
  - The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the early learning program.
- The parent of a child enrolled in a center shall receive the program's written discipline policy.
- All preschool staff members shall receive a copy of the program's discipline policy for review upon enrollment.



## **Confidentiality**

The ESC of Central Ohio's early learning program follows the procedures consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Records and files are available only to staff directly involved with your child, direct district personnel and others as permitted by the law. All other access requires written parent permission.

If you wish to review your child's records, please contact the Early Childhood Supervisor to arrange a time. You may review and receive copies of the reports maintained. Each year, with your permission, we will make available a roster of children in your child's class with a parent's name and phone number. This is available to parents of enrollees only.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting**

As required by law, all school employees and administrators must immediately report any suspicions of abuse or neglect to their respective Children's Services.

## **Communicable Disease Policy**

In an effort to create a healthy experience for your child, we follow these guidelines:

- Children who are ill will be more comfortable at home.
- Children who exhibit one or more of the following symptoms should be kept at home:
  - Temperature at or above 100 degrees F. (Child should be fever free for 24 hours)
  - Sudden skin rash
  - Diarrhea and/or vomiting two or more times per day
  - Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasite infection
  - Difficulty or rapid breathing
  - Yellowing skin or eyes
  - Dark urine and/or gray or white stool
  - Stiff neck
  - Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)
  - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Symptoms of common childhood illnesses can be found on the Communicable Diseases Chart posted at each site.
- If symptoms appear at school, the child will be kept in a quiet, comfortable location away from the group.
- Parents will be notified and be responsible for responding as quickly as possible.
- Parents will be notified in writing and bulletins will be posted whenever the child has been exposed to a communicable disease.
  - Medications, prescribed lotions, vitamins, or special diets will not be administered to any child without written instructions, signed, and dated by a licensed physician and prescribed for a specific child. Written and signed instructions (by parent and physician) on the appropriate ESC form are also required.
  - Prescription or non-prescription medication must be kept in original container. Prescription medication must contain the child's name and the label must be legible and should be given directly to teacher/nurse by the parent.

## **Immunization**

Records must be on file at each state licensed early childhood program showing that each child has received immunizations required by statute for admission to school. Records should be on file, unless evidence is provided (written documentation) that the series is currently in process, that your child's physician advises against it, or that it is against your religious beliefs. If your child is medically or religiously exempt from immunizations, please make sure your child's medical form is complete and up to date.

The following are the minimal state required immunizations for the 2013-2014 school year for Early Learning Programs:

- 3-4 HIB
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 4 DTP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus)
- 3 Polio
- 1 MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)

### **Exemptions: Parent Objections**

- A student shall be exempted from mandatory immunization if the parent objects in a written signed statement upon the grounds that the parent declines to have the student immunized for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions.
- This statement will be kept by the school as part of the student's immunization record.

### **Provisional Admission to School**

- A student may be admitted to school on a provisional basis if a physician or health department indicates that immunization of the student has been initiated and that the student is in the process of complying with all immunization requirements.
- Such provisional admission shall be only for a length of time necessary to complete the inoculations.

### **Documents Accepted as Evidence of Immunizations**

- The following documents will be accepted as evidence of a student's immunization history provided they comply with State requirements and contain the date when each immunization was administered.
  - An official school record from any school
  - A record from any public health department
  - A certificate signed by a licensed physician

### **Required Records**

- Each school shall maintain a record of immunization for every student, which shall include the date of each individual immunization.
- If a student transfers to another school, this record or a copy thereof shall be sent to the new school.

## Safety and Health

- No child will be left alone or unsupervised at any time.
- The staff has access to a telephone at all times. Emergency medical procedures are posted near each telephone as well as in the classroom.
- Fire and tornado drill plans are posted in each classroom. Plans for rapid dismissals and lock-down drills are available in individual buildings.
- First-aid supplies are available in all preschool classrooms.
- Staff members are trained in first aid, communicable disease, and child abuse recognition.
- Medical and dental emergency plans are posted in each preschool classroom.
- Each child must have completed annually a medical evaluation (including updated immunization record) and emergency medical authorization form. All required forms are kept in student files in classroom.
- Each classroom has hand-washing procedures posted in the classroom.
- Specific procedures for toileting and use of universal precautions are outlined in licensing manual in each classroom.

## Release of Information

Parents and eligible students have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records;
- Seek, in accordance with administrative regulations, to correct parts of the student's education records, including the right to a hearing if the school authority decides not to alter the records according to the parent(s) guardian or eligible student's request;
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if the District violates relevant Federal law, specifically the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and
- Acquire information concerning the procedure which the parent(s)/guardian or eligible student should follow to obtain copies of this policy, the locations from which these copies may be obtained, as well as fees to be charged for such copies.



## Complaint Procedures

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the programs of Educational Service Center of Central Ohio shall have the right to present a request, suggestion or complaint concerning ESC of Central Ohio personnel, the program, or the operations of the ESC of Central Ohio. At the same time, the Governing Board has a duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide the means for judging each public complaint in a fair and impartial manner and to seek a remedy where appropriate.

It is the desire of the Board to rectify any misunderstandings between the public and the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio by direct discussions of an informal type among the interested parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences, shall more formal procedures be employed.

Please contact the Director of Student Services or your classroom supervisor for further information regarding complaint procedures or if you have a problem to solve.

ESC Central Office: 614.445.3750

All complaints and reports concerning the operation of the early learning program may be reported to the Department Ombudsman at the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness at 614.466.0224. Parents may also receive copies of inspection reports of the program from their child's classroom teacher or from the ESC Center for Student Services.



## Links to Ohio Service Agencies and Resources

Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (ODEW)

<http://education.ohio.gov>

Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (ODEW), Special Education

<http://education.ohio.gov/gd/gd.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=967&ContentID=11843&Content=57780>

Ohio Coalition for Children with Disabilities <http://www.ocecd.org>

Parent Mentors of Ohio [http://www.ocecd.org/parent\\_mentor.php](http://www.ocecd.org/parent_mentor.php)

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/>

Help Me Grow: A program for Ohio's expectant parents, newborns, infants and toddlers

<http://www.ohiohelpmegrow.org>

Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) <http://www.mh.state.oh.us/>

Ohio Behavioral Health Systems <http://www.bhg.org/system.htm>

Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC) <http://www.rsc.ohio.gov/>

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/>

Bureau of Services for Children with Medical Handicaps

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/cmh/cwmh/bcmh1.aspx>

Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council <http://www.ddc.ohio.gov/>

Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) <http://www.jfs.ohio.gov/>

Ohio Department of Youth Services <http://www.dys.ohio.gov/dysweb/default.aspx>

The ARC of Ohio <http://www.thearcofohio.org/>

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) of Ohio <http://www.namiohio.org/>

Service Agency Guide of ARC Ohio <http://www.thearcofohio.org/Ohio.pdf>

Our Services – Services for Ohio Families (ODJFS)

[http://www.jfs.ohio.gov/ocomm\\_root/0002OurServices.stm](http://www.jfs.ohio.gov/ocomm_root/0002OurServices.stm)

Mental Health Service Locator

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/kdata.aspx?state=OH>



## **Links to State and Federal Laws**

IDEA News and Resources on Special Education and Rehabilitative Services <http://idea.ed.gov>

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

National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance <http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee>

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) <http://www.nsttac.org/>

North Central Regional Resource Center (NCRRC) <http://www.rfcnetwork.org/ncrrc>

Ohio Legal Rights <http://www.olrs.ohio.gov/>

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep>

US Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml?src=a>

Wrightslaw: A website about special education law and advocacy <http://www.wrightslaw.com>

## **Links to Disability Information**

Autism Society of Ohio <http://www.autismohio.org>

Ohio Autism Service Guidelines <http://www.ddc.ohio.gov/Pub/ASDGuide.PDF>

Bridge to Success Skills Training <http://www.bridgetosuccess.net/>

Cerebral Palsy of Central Ohio <http://www.ucpofcentralohio.org>

Children and Adults with ADHD <http://www.chadd.org/>

National Down Syndrome Society <http://www.ndss.org>

Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio <http://www.dsaco.net>

Learning Disabilities Association of America <http://www.ldanatl.org/>

LD Online: A leading website on learning disability and ADHD <http://www.ldonline.org/>

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) <http://www.nclld.org/>

National Disability Organization <http://www.nod.org/>

Nonverbal Learning Disabilities for parents and professionals <http://www.nldontheweb.org/>

OCAI: Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence <http://www.ocali.org/>

Rett Syndrome <http://www.rettangels.org>

## Links to Curriculum and Instruction

Information about our curriculum: <http://www.highscope.org>

A fun colorful website with animation and games introducing touch typing to children aged 7 to 11 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing>

Council for Exceptional Children <http://www.cec.sped.org/>

Don Johnston Incorporated offers educators supplemental and intervention solutions <http://www.donjohnston.com/>

Kids Games <http://www.readingupgrade.com/html/index.htm>

Learning Upgrade (online courses for reading, comprehension & math) <http://www.readingupgrade.com/html/index.htm>

Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D) <http://www.rfbid.org/>

Spark Top: Activity based site for kids <http://www.sparktop.org/>

Test Prep Preview <http://www.testprepreview.com/>

What Works Clearinghouse: A central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Wilson Foundations for K-3 is a phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling program for the general education classroom. <http://www.foundations.com/>

World of Math Online <http://www.math.com/>

## Links to General Information

Abbreviations and Acronyms Dictionary <http://www.acronymfinder.com>

Action for Children <http://www.actforchildren.org>

Columbus Metropolitan Library <http://www.cml.lib.oh.us/>

Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities (DCBDD) <http://www.dcbdd.org/>

Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities (FCBDD) <http://www.fcbdd.org/>

Union County Board of Developmental Disabilities (UCBDD) <http://www.ucbdd.org/>

Early childhood information, products, and ideas <http://www.earlychildhood.com/>

Great Schools <http://www.greatschools.net/>

Guardianship information <http://www.co.franklin.oh.us/probate/departments/guardianship.cfm>

Special Needs Planning: Financial planning for families planning for the future security of a member with a disability <http://www.specialneedsplanning.com>

OACCA: Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies is a state-wide network of public and private child and family serving agencies <http://www.oacca.org/>

Service Directory: A Guide for Families  
[http://www.namiohio.org/Service\\_Coordination\\_080905.pdf](http://www.namiohio.org/Service_Coordination_080905.pdf)

Ohio Developmental Disabilities Profile <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/>

Family Caregiver Support—Ohio Facts <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/forum/fcsohio.htm>

Family Support Collaborative <http://www.ddc.ohio.gov/Pub/Mission.PDF>

Parent Involvement: Strategies for Success <http://www.ddc.ohio.gov/Pub/ESCParent.PDF>

Medicaid in 2006: A Trip Down the Yellow Brick Road?  
<http://www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/1589>

Clearinghouse for Community Living Exchange Collaborative <http://www.hcbs.org/>

Milestones <http://www.milestones.org/>



