

Preschool Handbook

School #1 Preschool Program

665 McBride Ave
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Dr. Giovanna Irizarry ~
Director of Early Childhood Education

Mrs. Kim Leary ~
Master Teacher

Mrs. Lynn Meeker ~ School Secretary
Main Office ~ 973-317-7772

It is very important that you notify the office staff of any changes to your address, phone numbers (home & work) and emergency contact phone numbers should they occur during the school year.

Mrs. Lauren Avallone ~ School Nurse
Nurse's Office ~ 973-317-7774

School Hours:
In-Person Learning
Three-Year-Old's: 8:25am - 12:25pm
Four-Year-Old's: 8:40am - 12:40pm



Welcome to the School #1 Preschool Program!

We are excited to work with you and your child to develop the foundation for your child's future academic and developmental success. We strive to offer a quality program that recognizes and values each child's unique traits and potential. This handbook was designed to acquaint you with our program policies and procedures. Please read and refer to this handbook as needed to familiarize yourself with our program.

Curriculum and Assessment

The curriculum that is used for the preschool program is the Creative Curriculum for Preschool 6th Edition. The Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that are based on the following five fundamental principles:

1. Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
2. Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
3. Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
4. The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
5. Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is a researched-based curriculum that enhances social emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. It balances both teacher directed and child initiated learning while responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths, and identifies the knowledge, skills, and concepts that are important for preschool children to acquire in the following areas:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Literacy
- Mathematics Development
- Scientific Reasoning
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

The assessment system used in the preschool program is Teaching Strategies GOLD. The assessment system is linked to the curriculum and aligned to the NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards for Preschool and the NJ Student Learning Standards for Kindergarten. It is based on a progression of learning and development and provides preschool teachers with an opportunity to collect authentic assessment data while children are interacting in a natural environment.



Our goal is to address the needs of the whole child by enhancing their social- emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development. There are 36 objectives that are organized into nine areas of development and learning.

The first four areas focus on the major areas of child growth and development:

Social-Emotional Development ~

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations

Physical Development ~

1. Demonstrates traveling skills
2. Demonstrates balancing skills
3. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
4. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination

Cognitive Development ~

1. Positive approaches to learning
2. Remembers and connects experiences
3. Uses classification skills
4. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present

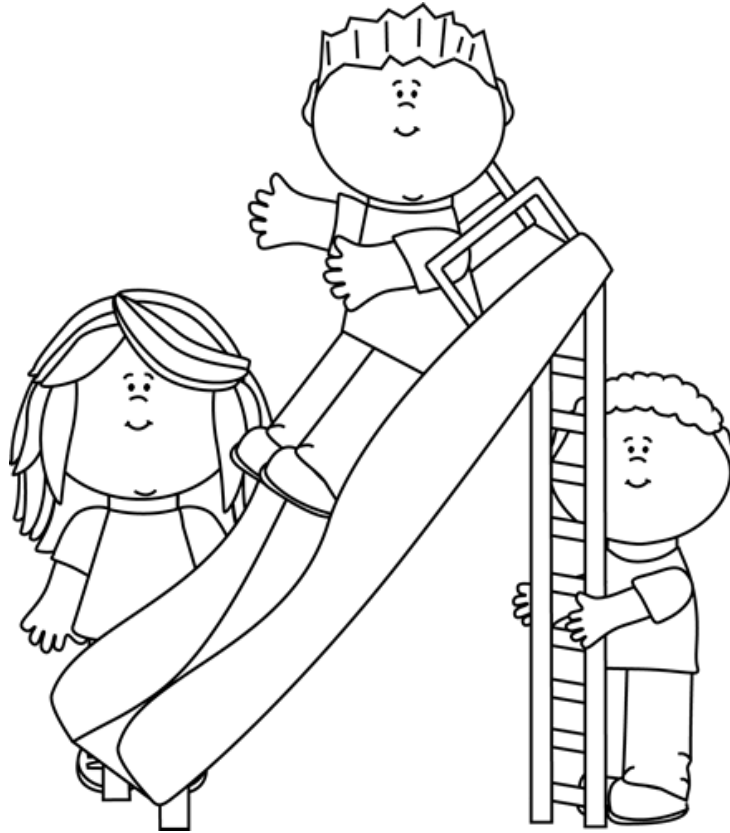
Language Development ~

1. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
2. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
3. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills

The following five areas focus on content learning and support the learning of early learning standards:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies
- The Arts

Play is the work of children and is the basic way in which young children gain knowledge. Just as elementary teachers use instructional techniques for teaching, our preschool teachers plan opportunities for spontaneous play, guided play, directed play, or investigative play to teach new skills and concepts. Our preschool program is designed to encourage learning through play, hands-on activities, and small and large group discovery time.



Important Health Information

- Please be sure that **phone numbers** and **emergency contacts** are always up-to-date. We need to be able to reach you if there is an emergency with your child.
- Create a back-up plan for your child when he/she is sick (grandparent, family member, friend, neighbor, etc). It is your responsibility to pick up your child when they are sick.

Attendance:

- All absences must be reported to the school nurse by 8:00am at 973-317-7774 or email lavallone@wpschools.org. Please give your child's name and the reason for the absence.
- Make sure your child is on time for school.
- If your child has a fever of 100.0 degrees or more, he/she cannot return to school until fever free for 24 hours without the use of any medication to reduce the fever.
- If your child has diarrhea or vomiting, he/she cannot return to school until free of these symptoms for 24 hours.
- Please schedule dentist and doctor appointments after school hours.
- Be sure to have immunizations up-to-date, this is mandated by the district and NJ State law. Your child will not be able to start school if they are not up-to-date. Please send any copies of immunizations to the nurse as soon as possible.
- A current physical is required prior to beginning school, be sure to have this done as soon as possible and make sure you send a copy to the nurse.
- Please let the nurse and teacher know if your child has any allergies, wears glasses, has any health issues or serious illnesses. We have to work together to ensure your child's health needs are met.
- Please be advised that all preschool children are **required** to receive annually, at least one dose of the influenza vaccine between September 1 and December 31 of each year. Any preschool child who does not receive their flu immunization by January 2nd will need to contact the nurse.

Medication Policy

- Any type of medication that is to be administered during school hours must be FDA approved.
- All medications must also be brought to the health office by the parent, not sent in with your child. Medication must be in the original container with the child's name on it.
- Any medication that needs to be given during school hours must have the required forms to be filled out and signed by doctor and parent. All forms are available on the district website.
- Asthma medications require use of the Asthma Action Plan.
- Epipens require the use of the FARE Plan.
- Seizure medications require use of the Seizure Action Plan.
- All other medications require the use of the Medication Authorization Form.

Healthy Habits

Your child Should:

- Know how to blow their nose and use tissues when needed
- Cough/sneeze into their elbow
- Get a good night's rest (10-11 hours per night)
- Eat a healthy breakfast

Snacks

- Please be sure to provide healthy snacks for school such as; fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, cracker, pretzels, granola bars. No candy or soda.

Please keep in contact with the nurse regarding any changes in your child's health. All forms are available on the district website under, health office.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

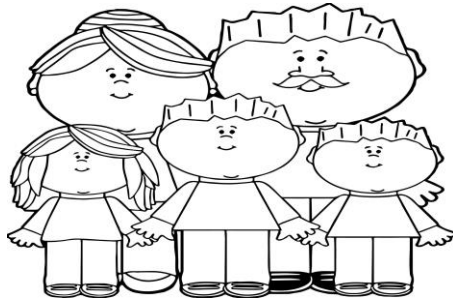
Morning Drop-Off Procedure

- The official start of our school day for **three-year-old's** is **8:25am**.
- The official start of our school day for **four-year-old's** is **8:40am**.
- Parents/guardians will utilize the **designated parking spaces located on McBride Ave and Newby Ave** to park and walk your child into the School #1 parking lot and main entrance, to meet your child's teacher.
- All parents and children must have on a mask when you get out of your car to enter school grounds.
- When dropping off your child, please be sure to meet your child's teacher at their designated drop off location.
- Children in **Ms. Gilhooley's and Ms. Mete's preschool classes** will enter school using the side entrance/exits of the building located in the parking lot. Please be sure to utilize the parking spaces located on **Newby Ave** for easy access to your drop-off location. If there is a line when arriving at the side entrances, please be sure to use the 6ft. apart markings located on the ground to ensure the safety of all children and adults.
- Children in **Ms. Guariglia's and Ms. Casasnovas' preschool classes** will enter school using the main entrance/exit of the building located in the front of the school. Please be sure to utilize the parking spaces located on **McBride Ave** for easy access to your drop-off location. If there is a line when arriving at the main entrance, please be sure to use the 6ft. apart markings located on the ground to ensure the safety of all children and adults.
- Late arrivals will enter through the main entrance of the school, where you will sign your child into school and a staff member will walk your child to their classroom.

Afternoon Pick-up Procedure

- The official dismissal of our school day for **three-year-old's** is **12:25pm**.
- The official dismissal of our school day for **four-year-old's** is **12:40pm**.
- All parents/guardians picking up children must wear a mask when on school grounds.
- Please follow the same parking lot procedures as you do in the morning. **Designated parking spaces for pick-up will be located on McBride Ave and Newby Ave.**
- All preschool children being picked up from **Ms. Gilhooley's, and Ms. Mete's preschool classes** will exit from the side entrance/exits of the building located in the main parking lot. (Same location as morning arrival).
- All preschool children being picked up from **Ms. Guariglia's and Ms. Casasnovas' preschool classes** will exit from the main entrance/exits located at the front of the building. (Same location as morning arrival).
- If there is a change to your child's regular dismissal plan (adult picking up etc.) please be sure to inform your child's teacher immediately so that we may ensure that all children leave school safely and as planned.

Our utmost priority is the safety of all our students and their families.



It is not unusual for a child to become teary when separating from a parent in an unfamiliar situation. Remember, this is a new environment with new faces. A child is bound to feel a little uncomfortable. Be encouraging. Your smile, eyes and body language communicate a lot. If a child senses any type of apprehension on your part, this enhances their own feeling of uncertainty.

It is important, all throughout the school year, that you inform the teachers of any changes before they happen (ex. one parent has to take a trip, illness/hospitalization in the family, changes in the family make up, parents changing jobs, etc.) Changes that may seem routine or ordinary to an adult are regarded as unusual by a young child who has not had as many years of experience in dealing with change. These changes and others often lead to different behavior in the room. We can work better with your child if we are aware of the changes at home.

We understand that there will be days when your child has a doctor's or other appointment that means arriving late or leaving early. We strongly urge that you make your appointments for early or late in the day. When children arrive at transitions, lunch or nap time, or are taken out and returned in the middle of the day, it often negatively affects the rest of their day. They are aware of what they have missed and often have difficulty with the rest of their day.

Dress Code

Please label all sweaters, jackets, coats, school bags, backpacks, etc. with your child's name. Often a child will have a garment identical to someone else's in the classroom.

The preschool program follows the districts dress code policy:

- **Shirts** – polo collard, long or short sleeve- solid color only (navy or maroon)
- **Sweaters/Sweatshirts** – solid color only (navy or maroon)
- **Pants** - chinos or dress pants - solid color only (khaki or navy)
- **Shorts, Skirts or Dresses** – solid color only (khaki or navy), shorts same style as chinos. Skirts and jumpers solid color (khaki or navy) and shorts must be worn underneath.
- **Gym Clothes** – solid color only (navy) and sneakers
- **Shoes** – must be closed toe and closed heel back shoes or sneakers

Your child will need at least one seasonably appropriate change of clothing which will include – a top, pants, underwear and a pair of socks. The clothing must be placed in a large Ziploc bag and labeled with your child's name.

Please provide any diapers or pull-ups your child will need for the week if potty training.

Rest Time

(rest time will not be a part of the half-day schedule)

Your child will have an hour rest period daily and a cot is provided by the school district. You will need to send in a **FITTED CRIB SHEET** which will be put on your child's cot daily. You will also need to provide a light-weight child size blanket. **DO NOT SEND A PILLOW or STUFFED ANIMAL.** Relaxing music will be played and the lights will be turned off. If your child does not fall asleep, they will stay on the cot to relax with a quiet activity. The sheet and blanket should be sent to school every Monday in your child's backpack and will be sent home every Friday or the last day of the week to be laundered.

Meals

Each day the children have a fun time together around the table as they snack. Snack time teaches patience, manners, independence, and language development.



Due to the current pandemic, breakfast and lunch will be free for all children until December 2020. If you do not want your child to take breakfast and lunch home daily, please let your child's teacher know.

When packing your child's snack, please place it in a **lunchbox**.

Please send your child to school with healthy snacks, no "junk food". We define junk food as any food that is high in fat, sugar and/or salt and low in nutritional value. Some examples include candy, chips, cookies, cake, donuts, etc.

Please provide foods that are prepared in a way that is easy for your child to handle independently. Please send food in small, manageable portions. All foods should be prepared so that they are ready to eat, such as cut into small pieces, peeled etc.

Tips

Choices are offered in our preschool classrooms to encourage children to make good decisions and to take responsibility for their actions. Teachers assist the children with gentle reminders or redirection.

Positive strategies that are used in our preschool classrooms and are also effective in the home are:

- Setting clear, consistent rules helps children learn what is expected of them (i.e. “Blocks are for building, balls are for throwing”).
- Using short, simple phrases helps children to focus on what is important (i.e. “indoor voices,” “Chairs are for sitting”).
- Establishing reasonable, predictable routines helps children to feel secure and to begin to manage their own behavior (i.e. “First we clean up the blocks and then we can read a story”).
- Giving limited choices supports children’s independence and can reduce power struggles (i.e. “Do you want to put your coat on by yourself, or do you want me to help you?”). Too many choices can be overwhelming and actually increase frustration for young children.
- Using natural consequences helps children better understand cause and effect relationships (i.e. “If you throw sand again, you will need to leave the sandbox”).
- Teaching children problem-solving skills supports their creativity and independence (i.e. “I see two children who both want the same stroller. What can we do? Hmm, maybe we can find another stroller!”). When adults model these skills by thinking aloud, children can be encouraged to make suggestions and begin to learn how to solve problems by using their words.
- Acknowledging children’s feelings can help to defuse conflicts and develop empathy (i.e. “Hitting hurts. I can see that you want the truck, but I can’t let you hurt your friend.”).
- Addressing the behavior, not the child, helps children learn what is and is not acceptable without damaging their self-esteem (i.e. children are never “bad” even when a particular action might not be appropriate).
- Praising desired behaviors motivates children to keep on trying since they know that we are paying attention to their efforts (i.e. “You used your words to ask for a turn with the bike!”).
- Gentle redirection keeps the focus on the positive and reduces the risk of a power struggle. Some useful techniques include:
 - Distraction: “Let’s go look at the fish.”
 - Humor: Appealing to children’s sense of humor can quickly reduce tensions and help lay the foundation for creative problem-solving.
 - Motivation: “Where does your coat go?” rather than “Hang up your coat.” Pretending you forgot where the coat goes often thrills young children.
 - Novelty: Singing, whispering or using a silly voice to get children’s attention can work wonders.
- Ignoring temper tantrums and waiting until the child is calm enough to talk will help both adult and child find a more effective way to address the problem. When children are completely upset, they will not understand rational arguments or consequences. By modeling self-control, adults help children learn to better regulate their own emotions.

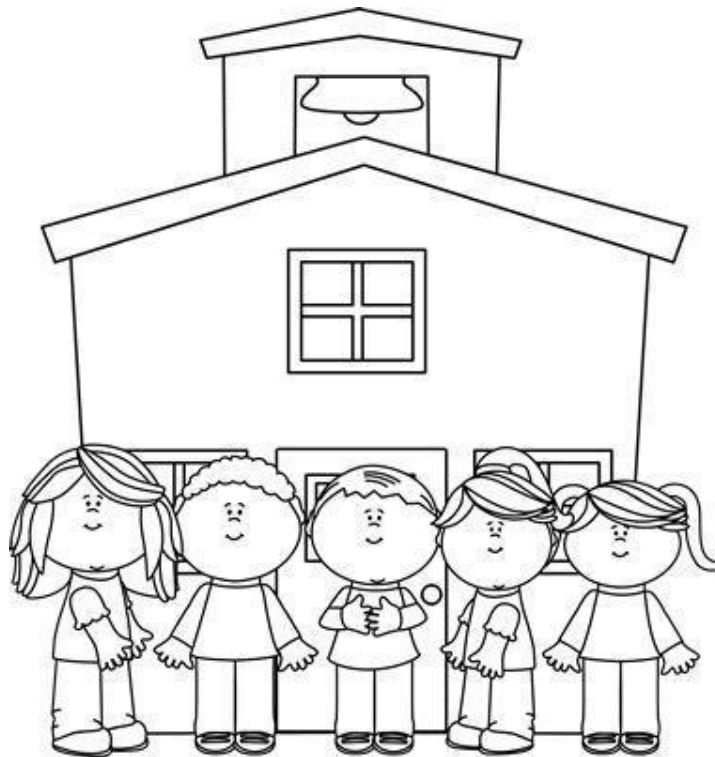
Partnerships

★ Home and School Association

- Ms. Tami Hajbi - President
- Dana Camacho - Vice President
- Maisoun Muhammed - Co-Vice President
 - Gina McQuin - Secretary
 - Amy Dean - Treasurer

★ Alfred H. Baumann Free Public Library

- Ms. Linda Hoffman – Library Director



School and parent partnerships are the key to every child's successful school experience!

Medical Home

A medical home is a trusting partnership between you, your child, and your pediatric primary health care team. Your pediatrician can help you and your child access and coordinate specialty care, other health care and educational services, in and out of home care, family support, and other public/private community services that are important to the overall well-being of you and your child. Visit the AAP's [National Center for Medical Home Implementation](#) site to learn more about the importance of a medical home for you and your family.

Playground Safety and Physical Activity

Outdoor play is an important part of a child's physical development and provides learning opportunities different from the indoor environment. Adequate supervision in a safe environment allows children to explore more freely. Play in a safe outdoor environment promotes good health and reduces the risk of injury to children and staff. A playground safety checklist is performed daily to ensure that there are no hazards and for the health and safety of all children. An inspection log is kept in the main office.

Developmental Screening

Developmental screening is a way to identify potential developmental and instructional needs. Used within 45 days of a child's first day of school. It provides educators information about the various aspects of a child's development, such as language, cognition, perception, and motor development. The WPSD Preschool uses the NJ state approved ESI-R tool. If there is a need for additional services based on the results of the screening then the child will be referred to the Child Study Team.

Home Language Policy

We make every effort to communicate with children and families whose primary language is not English. Parents are asked to share words in their home language with their child's teacher to help make their child feel more comfortable in the classroom. Teachers will attempt to label some of the classroom materials in the home language of the students. Parents are also encouraged to share books or other materials in their home language with the class. Non-English speaking parents are encouraged to bring with them someone who can help interpret and translate questions, concerns, and documents.

Arrival and dismissal time communication

One teacher is designated as the arrival-time greeter. If you wish to share something at this time, please mention it to the teacher, and he/she will set up another time to talk or will arrange to talk with you at that time. In-person and phone discussions can always be set up. You may also email in the morning and mention the email to the teacher at arrival time in case he/she had not yet seen the email. We always want to share information, but not in the presence of the child.

If the teacher has something to share individually with you at the end of the day, he/she will ask other teachers in the classroom to supervise your child or will give you a call or email you to discuss or set up another time to meet.

Community bulletin board

We post upcoming community events on the bulletin board in the front hallway. We also include some of these items in our weekly newsletter; these may include museum exhibits, concerts, storytelling, and theater for children.

Confidentiality of child file

At School #1 and Charles Olbon School we make sure that information about your child and his/her progress is kept confidential. Our child files are locked in the main office. Teachers and parents can be given access to the files by request.

Conferences

There are two parent-teacher conferences a year. The first is in the fall. At this time, the Teacher and the parents meet to share information about the child. A family conference form is filled out that includes goals for the child for the school year. The second conference is conducted in the spring. At this time, the teachers and the parents take a look at how the child is progressing developmentally, using Teaching Strategies Gold. Plans are made together on how to assure continued overall development and a written form is shared with the parents at each conference.

Emails

Each teacher has their own email. Parents may email the teachers if there is a concern that they would like to share, to request an in-person or telephone conference, and to share any information that they think is important for the teachers to know. Families may email them at any time for information, to express concerns, etc.

Facilitating the child's transition

When your child is staying at School #1 Preschool for another year, the teachers share any pertinent information with the incoming teachers in order to help orient them to the needs and interests of each child. If your child will be transitioning to Kindergarten we provide families with information about the district's Kindergarten process. In addition, the Preschool Teacher fills out the appropriate Kindergarten Transition Form and meets with the Kindergarten Teachers to discuss the form. Our goal is to ensure that each child is comfortable and ready to move on to the next class assignment.

Newsletter - Check your email on Fridays and the class bulletin board will have a printed copy!

Parent bulletin board for communication

Each classroom also has a parent board that includes the lesson plans for the week, the whiteboard for daily information and special events for the classroom.

Parent Resource Binder

We maintain a binder that includes information about services for children and families such as physical health, mental health, oral health, nutrition, parenting and children's programs, assessment, and educational services. This resource can be accessed by the family from the main office or in conjunction with planning with the child's teacher. The teachers help to locate, contact and use these community resources to support the needs and interests of the children and the families.

Website

The School #1 Preschool website has information about weekly changes on the [homepage](#) and on the [parent page](#). Check the planning forms every week to see what will be happening in your child's class. [The Preschool Events Calendar](#) lists parent conferences, parent chats, and other special events.

Parent Workshops

Families are provided health and safety workshops and/or resources annually in topics that include: preventive health care, mental/behavioral health issues, nutrition and obesity, medication administration policies and procedures, oral health practices, communicable disease prevention.

Teaching Strategies Gold On-Going Assessment

Teaching Strategies Gold is the assessment tool used by the program to evaluate and track each child's individual development during their time at Preschool. It is an on-going assessment system, meaning that teachers are continually watching, observing and documenting each child's development. By tracking a child's development, our teachers are able to plan activities that are appropriate for each child's developmental abilities.

Screen time

One hour a day or less of screen time is recommended for preschool age children.

I/We have read and understand the policies and procedures in this handbook

Print Name

Sign Name

Date