

Welcome to the Arlington Heights Park District Preschool program! We offer classes for three, four and five year old children from mid-September through mid-May. This handbook is intended to inform you of the purpose, philosophy, goals, policies, curriculum and procedures of the program. Please read carefully and keep it for future reference. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to grow with your child.

Skilled professionals schooled in early childhood and/or elementary education teach the program. Our instructors are kept informed of current trends in education by attending early childhood workshops and conferences throughout the year.

The philosophy of our Preschool program (formerly known as Playcenter) is to allow the children to learn through play. We give them the opportunity to grow socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. The children develop positive feelings, establish friendships and increase physical and motor skills when allowed to play. Our program provides a sensitive and safe learning environment. Working, playing and sharing with other children, developing new interests, learning good work habits, developing the ability to follow instruction, as well as establishing self-direction are our basic goals. Our primary task is to develop a well-rounded program to meet individual needs and help each child feel good about himself.

Program Schedule – Our Preschool program provides a carefully planned, play-oriented curriculum developed with the guidance of the District 25 staff. Our teachers encourage creative freedom through free play, imaginative play, arts and crafts, music, science, and gross and fine motor activities. Field trips and guest speakers are also incorporated into the curriculum. What looks like play to the observer and feels like play to the child, is really a carefully planned program, developed to build self confidence, expand understanding, teach responsibility and increase motor skills.

Daily activities planned by the individual teachers include:

1. INDEPENDENT PLAY - all interest centers are open to the children: library, housekeeping, gross motor area, art, small manipulatives (puzzles, games, peg boards, blocks), sand and water table, music, science and woodworking areas.
2. CITIZENSHIP - CALENDAR - FINGERPLAYS
3. CRAFT
4. SNACK
5. LANGUAGE ARTS - CREATIVE ARTS
6. GROUP PLAY - records, songs, gym or outside activities

Ongoing skills emphasized during our two year program are:

1. Recognize and print first name with first letter in upper case and remaining letters in lower case.
2. Find upper and lower case letters when named.
3. Name basic colors and shapes.
4. Recite numbers 1-20; Count objects from 1-10.
5. Dress independently.
6. Speak clearly in front of a group.
7. Use scissors with moderate control.
8. Look at books from left to right.
9. Know address and phone number.
10. Develop large motor skills through games and activities.
11. Play independently and with classmates.
12. Listen to and follow simple directions.
13. Participate in songs, fingerplays, and circle time discussions.
14. Control use of a crayon, marker, pencil, and paintbrush.

Birthday Celebrations - We celebrate each child's birthday. If you would like to bring in a special snack, please notify your child's teacher ahead of time so she can plan accordingly. Please avoid large portions as the children seldom finish eating a large treat. Due to peanut allergies, we do not allow any peanut products for birthdays or snacks or home baked snacks.

Extra Special Time - During the course of the program an Extra Special Time will be scheduled. This gives dads or a significant adult an opportunity to observe a shortened version of the preschool program.

Health/Illness - For your child's protection as well as other children and our staff, you will need to keep your child home if he or she has any of the following:

- sore throat and/or cough
- discharge from the eyes or ears, or severe nasal discharge
- diarrhea and/or vomiting
- temperature over 99 degrees Fahrenheit
- contagious disease

In the case of contagious disease, please contact your child's teacher immediately. If your child contracts any of the following, notification is necessary: measles, mumps, chicken pox, head lice or strep throat. All parents will be notified as soon as possible. Your cooperation is appreciated. If your child does contract head lice, they can return to school only after a lice removal treatment has taken place, and with a note from a school nurse or doctor's office stating that all "nits are removed from your child's hair."

Inclement Weather Policy – If classes in School District 25 are cancelled for the entire day due to inclement weather, Preschool programs will be cancelled for the entire day. District #25 information will be broadcast on local radio and TV stations. You can also call the Park District hotline (847) 577-30003 and press #7 for information.

Weather Policy - For children who are in good health and properly dressed, going outside proves better than remaining inside during the entire class period. All children, when outside, are told to inform their teacher if they get uncomfortably cold. At the teacher's discretion, the children will remain indoors if the temperature with the wind chill factored in is below 15°.

Calendar - Preschool runs from mid-September through mid-May. Classes will not meet when School District 25 is not in session.* If School District 25 cancels classes because of inclement weather, preschool will also be cancelled.

* The calendar is subject to change with notification. Also, there may be some days that District 25 is off and Preschool may still have classes.

Arrival/Departure - Parents are responsible for transportation to and from school. Please be prompt. We would like the children to arrive no earlier than five minutes before class time. The time prior to class is very important for the teacher to prepare a successful day for your child. Therefore, please stay with your child outside the classroom until the teacher opens the door to greet the children. For your child's safety, parents are required to come into the building to pick up and drop off the child.

The Park District and local Fire Department would appreciate your cooperation in not parking in the fire lanes. These are marked by yellow curbing. You will also avoid a possible parking ticket. **A written note is required in advance if the child is to be picked up by anyone other than the parents or those indicated on the information form.** In the event of an emergency, verbal approval will be accepted.

Late Pick-Up – Please arrive on time to pick up your child at the end of class. A child left waiting can become quite upset. Parents will be charged a late fee for frequent or recurring late pick-ups. The late fee will be \$5.00 for every 10 minutes (or portion thereof) after the end of class.

Clothing - We recommend your child be dressed in clothes that do not restrict participation in activities. Comfortable play clothes are necessary. Please label all clothing that can be removed and lost such as mittens, boots, scarves and hats. Boots should be large enough for the child to slip on easily. Please send

shoes for inside use. We frequently use the outdoor playground so please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play.

Behavior and Discipline - Participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. If a child is acting inappropriately, staff of the Arlington Heights Park District will have a discussion to find where the problem may be. We will attempt to make the changes necessary to eliminate inappropriate behavior. Positive statements and redirection of negative behavior are practiced. When this fails, these guidelines will be implemented:

- a conduct report is written by staff and discussed with the parents.
- a copy of this report is given to the parent.
- a conversation will take place with the staff to discuss further action if necessary.

If inappropriate behavior continues and a child has had repeated conduct reports written on him/her during the program, then the following procedure would take place:

- (A) A behavior contract is implemented. (This behavior contract would start after (B))
- (B) The child will be suspended from class for a minimum of 2 classes.
- (C) If the problem continues after the suspension, the child will be removed from the program.

Examples of Inappropriate Behavior

- Hitting, kicking, physical abuse, throwing objects towards staff or participants.
- Defiance of authority.
- Abuse of equipment, supplies or facilities.

Toys from Home - Because toys from home can be lost or misused by other children, they are not permitted at Preschool.

Enrollment - Class size is limited to 15-16 children in the 3-4 year old program and 20 children in the 4-5 year old program. Please consult the schedule and fees sheet for specific times and locations of all classes.

Registration Requirements – Registration is held in late winter or early spring of the previous year until classes fill. Those registered in the 3-4 year old program are given priority and may register for the 4-5 year old class prior to the general public. Those registering for the 3-4 year old program must be three years old by September 1 and those registering for the 4-5 year old program must be four years old by September 1. Proof of age is required at the time of registration. You must show a birth, hospital or baptismal certificate. It will be helpful to have two phone numbers to contact in case of emergency. One adult per family is required for registration.

Toilet Training – **Children must be toilet trained when classes begin in the fall.** Pull-up pants are not appropriate. Repeated “accidents” could result in removing the child from the program until toilet training is successful.

3-4 Year Old Classes with Teacher Aides and Parent Helpers – Parents are required to assist the instructor throughout the year. Registration confirms acceptance of this policy. This averages approximately five times throughout the year for a full class. Classes that are not full would require

coming in as a parent helper at additional classes. Siblings may not accompany the parent helper. Your undivided attention is needed in class.

When assisting, you will be assigned to bring juice, napkins, and a nutritious snack for the children. Two 48-64 oz. juice containers are recommended when bringing juice. Nutritious snacks include: fruit, vegetables, granola bars, popcorn, cheese, etc. Sign up for September-January parent helper dates is conducted in the fall. The remainder of the year is done in January. We also ask that all snacks be “peanut-free” due to allergies.

If you are unable to assist on your date, **you are responsible for finding a parent to switch or take your place.** Please notify the teacher of any changes in the original schedule.

Parent Helper Duties - Any and/or all of these tasks may be expected of you as parent helper. Please be prepared to assist the instructor in any way deemed necessary; 100% active participation is essential. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

- Arrive 5-10 minutes prior to the start of class.
- Set up activities and put out supplies.
- Help greet children and pass out name tags upon their arrival.
- Trace and cut crafts or paper projects.
- Lead games and participate in activities during free play.
- Label projects and papers in upper and lower case letters.
- Clean up after activities. Put away supplies and equipment. Wipe off tables and counters.
- Assist in gym or playground activities and supervision.
- Assist children in hand washing and shoe tying.
- Provide juice, napkins, and snack and pass them out to the children.
- Notify teacher of discipline problems.
- Pass out projects at the conclusion of class.
- Remove name tags and help with coats.

4-5 Year Old Classes You are required to supply juice, napkins and “peanut-free” snacks throughout the year. This averages approximately five times throughout the year for a full class. Classes that are not full would require bringing in these items at additional classes.

Developmental Recommendations - Most children require a certain amount of time to adjust to the Preschool program. After this initial adjustment period, if the teacher has a concern about a child's developmental progress, she may recommend a referral. The referral would be to a local agency designed to accommodate the child's individual needs.

Fees - Payment is due at the time of registration. You may pay the discounted rate in full or choose the payment plan. For those choosing a payment plan, payment must be made at the office during regular registration hours or mailed to Arlington Heights Park District, Attn: Registration Clerk, 410 N. Arlington Heights Rd, Arlington Heights, IL 60004. Please do not give any money or checks to the teacher. For exact fees please consult the schedule and fees sheet. The Arlington Heights Park District reserves the right to suspend or remove a child from the program if fees are not paid on a timely basis.

Equal Access - No eligible participant shall, on the basis of race, sex, creed, national origin, or disability be denied equal access to programs, activities, services or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage or opportunity.

We invite any resident with a special need to contact our staff upon registration so that a smooth inclusion may take place.

