

**Prince George’s County**

**Public Schools**

Three Year Old

 Preschool Opportunity Program

Parent Handbook

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**Welcome to Prince George’s County Public Schools’ Early Childhood Program. The Early Childhood Program continues to support opportunities for typically developing three year olds to serve as language and behavioral models in an inclusive special education setting.**

**The Preschool Opportunities Program seeks typical three year old children that will be role models for children with special needs for language, social emotional and adaptive skills. If your child has a developmental delay or you suspect a developmental delay, the school can provide you with resources to assist in accessing appropriate services. Three year old students with disabilities may be eligible for participation in the program through the IEP process.**

Your child will have the opportunity to participate in a developmentally appropriate early learning experience for three year olds. The goals of the Early Childhood Program for all children are:

* To develop children’s abilities to make decisions about what they are going to do and how they are going to do it.
* To develop children’s ability for self-expression - - enabling them to speak, write, dramatize, and graphically represent their experiences, along with the ability to communicate these experiences to others.
* To develop children’s ability to apply their reasoning capabilities in a wide range of naturally occurring situations, using a variety of materials.
* To develop children’s spirit of inquiry, openness to knowledge, and understanding of the point of view of other people.
* To develop children’s ability to work with other children and adults so that the work done is a result of group planning, cooperative effort and shared leadership.
* To develop children’s self-discipline and their ability to identify personal goals so they can pursue and complete self-chosen tasks.

**All children can learn, blossom, and grow.**



**CURRICULUM**

The curriculum is evidence-based. It supports development through active exploration and investigation, personal discovery and interaction with peers and adults. The curriculum focuses on the following areas:

\* Communication: Focuses on children’s abilities to communicate through the acquisition of language skills. This encompasses language content, language structure, and language use.

\* Personal Social Development: Focuses on children’s feelings about themselves, including self-concept and self-control. It also looks at their approach to learning, interactions with others, and social problem solving, which are needed for successful functioning within the school environment.

\* Scientific Thinking: Focuses on process skills as children actively investigate the natural and physical world. Investigating includes observing, exploring, describing, recording, questioning, hypothesizing and solving problems.

\* Social Studies: Focuses on the acquisition of social and cultural understanding through direct experience with people and their environments. It encompasses skills in the areas of history, economics, citizenship and geography. Children have an opportunity to practice these new skills through role playing, interacting with others, and relating personally meaningful experiences.

\* Literacy: Focuses on developing children’s interest in books, letters, and words; understanding the functions of print, beginning reading behaviors, comprehension skills, phonological awareness and writing skills.

\* Mathematical Thinking: Focuses on mathematical concepts and problem solving skills including numbers and operations; patterns, relationships, and functions; geometry and spatial relations; and measurement.

\* Physical Development and Health: Focuses on young children’s gross motor and fine motor skills, along with personal health and safety. This addresses children’s ability to move using control, balance, and coordination; to perform simple tasks using strength, control, and eye-hand coordination; and to manage self-care, health, and safety.

**INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**ARRIVAL AND LATE PICK-UP**

1. **Children must be signed in and out** in the school's main office by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Only those persons approved by the child’s parent(s) may take a child from the school.

Opening class instruction is an important component of the day. Please arrive on time so your child can be ready to start the day and make a smooth transition into the classroom. All children look forward to being picked up on time and no child likes to be the last child remaining. We ask that you make every effort to pick up your child on time. **Three** late arrivals and/or late pick-ups will result in your child being dismissed from the program.

SCHOOL HOURS – AM Session: 9:30 – 12:00 / PM Session: 1:00 – 3:30

ATTENDANCE – First come, first served, based on space available. Number of days per week will be determined by individual sites.

Late Arrival/Pick up Policies:

1. After the **first late arrival/pick-up** without a valid excuse or contact from the parent, a **First Notice** will be given to the parent by the classroom teacher. Teacher and parent will sign and date the notice. A copy will be given to the school principal and the parent.
2. After the second **late arrival/pick-up** without a valid excuse or contact from the parent, approved by the Principal, will result in the issuance of the **Second Notice** from the teacher. Teacher and parent will sign and date the notice. A copy will be given to the school principal and the parent.
3. After the **third arrival/late pick-up** a notice will be given to the parent that the child has been dismissed from the Program. Teacher and parent will sign and date the notice. A copy will be given to the school principal and the parent and the child will be dismissed from the program.

**VISITORS:**

Parents are invited to visit the school to meet the teachers and teaching assistants. Discuss opportunities to visit the classroom with the teacher to maintain minimum disruption to the class. **For safety reasons, all visitors must have identification and report to the school front office upon arrival. You will be given an identification badge to wear during your visit. Classroom observations must be coordinated with the principal to minimize classroom disruptions.**

**VOLUNTEERS:**

**All volunteers must follow Board of Education Policy (Administrative Policy 4215, Part A & G)**

1. Volunteers working in a capacity where no uncontrolled access is anticipated on a one time basis only, or on a sporadic basis, do not need to have a background check, i.e. parents volunteering on Career Day, Book Fair, or any other one-time event.
2. Parents and volunteers who volunteer in a classroom on a regular basis in a supervised setting must obtain a commercial background check through Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS). Questions may be addressed to the Fingerprinting Office (301)952-6775.
3. Any parent that volunteers must have a copy of the fingerprinting receipt housed at the Early Childhood Center. ALL persons for any reason coming to the school and spending any time in classrooms with students MUST have the fingerprinting.  Parents can make arrangements to be fingerprinted with the Fingerprinting Office.

**TRANSPORTATION:**

Parents are responsible for arranging transportation. Transportation will **not** be provided by Prince George’s County Board of Education.

**DELAYED OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS:**

All Early Childhood Programs follow the same delayed opening and closing procedures used by Prince George's County Public Schools. Please listen to your radio, TV or check pgcps.org for school delays or closings.

 **If schools are one hour late:**

A.M. session will begin one hour late and ends at the regular time.

P.M. session will have no change.

 **If schools are two hours late:**

 ***NO SCHOOL FOR EITHER A.M OR P.M. SESSIONS***

**HEALTH:**

Before entering school, all children must have received the immunizations required under the State of Maryland Immunization Regulations. Prior to entering school, evidence must be presented that the required shots have been completed or a medical certificate provided by the physician, stating that they are in the process of receiving these immunizations. As per Maryland State Law, children who do not have the necessary shots must be excluded from attending school. All students entering the Maryland Public School System for the first time must have a physical examination. Children are expected to take part in motor development classes and go out for recess unless excused by a note from their doctor. If you have any concerns regarding your child's health at school, please contact the school nurse to discuss them.

Medication will only be given at school if times cannot be readjusted for home administration. **If your child needs to take any medication while at school, whether prescription or over the counter, it is necessary to have a medication form completed and signed by a physician before we can administer any medication. NO SCHOOL PERSONNEL CAN ADMINISTER ANY MEDICATION, EVEN IN AN EMERGENCY, WITHOUT A PHYSICIAN'S ORDER**. Please call the school for appropriate forms if your child must take medication at school.

**If your child must take medication at school, you must personally hand-deliver the medication to the school nurse.**

Each medication container must be labeled by the pharmacy with the child's name, the name of the medication, dosage and directions for use. The doctor's name should also be on the label.

**ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL**

Please keep your child home at the **FIRST** sign of illness (cold, fever, rash, flu, diarrhea, infected mucous, etc.) These illnesses spread quickly through the class of your children. If your child is absent for any reason, please call the teacher.

If a child is suspected of being ill at school, he/she will be taken to the Health Room to be assessed by the school's Registered Nurse. If the illness is minor and not contagious, the child will be allowed to rest until able to return to the classroom.

If your child has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea or a communicable illness is suspected, parents will be called and asked to take the child home immediately.

The school nurse will care for minor injuries at school. In the event of more severe injuries, parents will be notified immediately and arrangements will be made for the care of the child.

**It is critical that the school office and Nurse have current phone numbers to be used in an emergency. In addition to parents, each child should have one or two other contacts that could take responsibility for the child if the parents are unavailable.**

**Health Room facilities are very limited so it is important that parents make arrangements ahead of time to pick up their child as rapidly as possible in the event they should need to leave school.**

**If a child is sent home with fever, vomiting or diarrhea, by state law, they may not return to school or daycare until they have been without symptoms and medication for twenty-four hours after the last occurrence.**

**If a child is sent home because a communicable illness is suspected, they may not return to school without a doctor's certificate specifying diagnosis and proof of treatment if ordered.**

**EMERGENCIES:**

**Early Dismissal of a child:** If you want a child dismissed for a necessary reason, such as a medical or dental appointment, please send a note to the teacher. NO child will be dismissed to a non- custodial adult on the basis of a telephone call.

**Unscheduled school closings:** If it becomes necessary to close school during the school day because of weather, road conditions, or building mechanical problems, the decision to dismiss will be made by the Office of the Superintendent of the school system. This decision will be relayed to county schools. The Superintendent’s office will notify radio and television stations to make early dismissal announcements to parents.

**LABELING CLOTHES:**

Label all clothing such as jackets, boots, sweaters, hats, lunch boxes, etc. Labeling will help the teacher and the children determine the proper owner.

**BRINGING VALUABLE ITEMS TO SCHOOL:**

Students should not bring toys, electronic games, or anything of significant value to school as we want them to be fully available to engage and participate with the group. In addition, PGCPS cannot insure against their loss or damage.

**SNACK:**

Please notify your child’s teacher, verbally as well as in writing, if there are any specific food allergies or health concerns related to your child. Snacks should be store bought in original packaging. Please no snacks containing peanuts or peanut butter.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

Throughout the school year there may be special events. A small fee for some in-house events may be requested. Some parents may not wish their children to participate in holiday events, parties, or other types of special events because of religious beliefs or other personal preferences. Children should be kept home on those days. If this is the case in your family, please notify the classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year.

**PARENT CONCERNS:**

If parents have any questions or concerns regarding their children's education, please contact the teacher, special education coordinator or principal. Effective communication between school teams and parents is vital to supporting student achievement.

**RULES OF THE CLASSROOM:**

We believe in a strength-based approach using positive reinforcement strategies with our preschoolers to help nurture a positive self-image in all children and manage disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior is managed with redirection, active listening, I-messages, natural or logical consequences, conflict resolution, recognizing and dealing with strong emotions, and withdrawal from emotion-laden situations.

* **If a child continues to display behavior that is disruptive to other children and teachers, the principal and teacher will hold a conference with the parents to develop an action plan to address the behavior.**
* **If the child’s disruptive behavior continues, the child will be dismissed from the program as this would be considered atypical behavior.**
* **If appropriate, the family will be referred to the Preschool Child Find Office.**

**Parent Handbook**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt**

Please read this handbook carefully and refer any questions you may have to your school principal. After you have read this handbook, please complete this acknowledgment and return it with your application.

* I have read and fully understand the guidelines and procedures set forth in the handbook. I have received a copy of the handbook for future reference.
* I understand that acceptance in the inclusive opportunities for three year olds does not guarantee acceptance in the four year old Pre-Kindergarten program. If I am interested in the four year old Pre-Kindergarten program, I must apply and follow all Pre-Kindergarten registration policies and procedures.
* I agree to comply with the arrival and pick up times and policies.
* I understand that there is a thirty (30) day probationary period where children must demonstrate typical age appropriate skills.
* I understand that no transportation is provided.
* I am aware of the Holidays/Closings and Inclement Weather Procedures.
* I am familiar with the illness guidelines in the Parent Handbook and will not

 bring my child to school if I suspect he or she has a communicable illness. In

 addition, I have listed two other responsible parties available to pick up and care for my child should he or she become ill while at school and I cannot be contacted.

* I understand the rules of the classroom and consequences of ongoing disruptive behavior, including dismissal from the program.
* This has been reviewed with me and any questions have been answered. My failure to comply may cause my child to be dismissed from the classroom.

Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Parent/ Guardian

(Please Print)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by with parent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_