

# **The Lyme-Old Lyme Schools**



## **Preschool/Pre-K Program**

### **Family Handbook**

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## **Program Description**

The Lyme-Old Lyme Preschool/Pre-K Program provides early childhood education and related services to children between the ages of three and five in the Lyme and Old Lyme communities. The Program is located at Center School where morning, afternoon, and full day sessions are available.

## **Program Philosophy and Goals**

The Lyme-Old Lyme Preschool/Pre-K Program philosophy and belief is that all children learn best through active participation in a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences. It is essential that these experiences are provided in a safe environment staffed by adults who are sensitive and responsive to children's needs. We recognize the family's role in their child's growth and development and encourage family involvement in the program. Parents are viewed as partners in program development and implementation.

### **The goals for the Preschool/Pre-K Program are to**

1. Facilitate cognitive and language development through play and a variety of active learning experiences.
2. Promote physical development, including fine and gross motor skills.
3. Develop self-esteem and appropriate social skills.
4. Promote positive health, safety, and nutritional practices.
5. Support families and provide information to them through ongoing home-school communication.

## **Daily Schedule**

The Lyme-Old Lyme Preschool/Pre-K schedule is as follows:

### **Half-Day Program**

The half-day program runs Monday through Friday. Morning classes run from 8:50 a.m. – 11:20 a.m. and afternoon classes from 12:20 p.m. – 2:50 p.m. and follow the Regional District #18 school calendar with a few exceptions. On early dismissal days, the morning and afternoon classes alternate and run from 8:50 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.

### **Full Day Program**

The full-day program is Monday through Friday from 8:50 a.m. – 2:50 p.m. and follows the Regional District #18 school calendar with a few exceptions. These exceptions are outlined for parents on an annual basis.

## **Curriculum**

The Preschool/Pre-K Program is a language and play based program, using a theme approach. The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards, CT ELDS, is the framework for our program. A variety of themes or units are selected each year, providing the basis for literature and learning activities. Curriculum units may include seasons, habitats, feelings, ocean life, nutrition, and

safety. Creative art activities, stories, songs, and playtime choices provide experiences to enhance the understanding and expressive use of theme-related vocabulary and concepts.

The program follows a consistent routine, which provides predictability and structure to the day. The children may participate in tabletop activities, fine/gross motor activities, circle time, classroom center play, snack, outdoor play, stories, songs, and finger plays daily. Skill development in all domains is fostered throughout the day as follows:

### **Language and Cognitive Development**

Since language and cognitive development are major components of our program, activities are designed to enhance these areas. Children are introduced to content enriched themes at circle time when play choices are made. All children are encouraged to communicate verbally through simple gestures, sign language, or through the use of assistive technology such as pictures, switches, or augmentative communication devices. During playtime, teachers facilitate language skills by modeling appropriate responses, extending the children's ideas and encouraging child-to-child communication. At snack time the children use language to talk about the snack, to request more, to reflect on playtime, to converse with friends and to signal they are finished. Small and large group activities provide opportunities to develop vocabulary, concepts, sentence structure, and functional language skills. Storytelling, role-playing, movement, and games may be included. Electronic devices are used to reinforce pre-academic concepts such as colors, numbers and shapes, as well as vocabulary and language concepts. Songs and finger plays are also included to foster speech and language skills through music and rhyme.

### **Gross Motor**

All children participate in physical activities daily to promote gross motor development. Musical activities incorporate movement, exploration, and exercise. Playground equipment as well as appropriate indoor equipment is utilized. Motor group is provided weekly. Movement utilizing a variety of equipment such as balls, parachutes, scooter boards, and beanbags is included. Activities to develop skills such as walking, running, hopping, jumping, and object control skills such as throwing and catching are all part of motor group. Adaptive equipment is available as determined by therapists to promote independence with movement. (High Hopes Therapeutic Horseback Riding is offered as an option when appropriate for children with special needs.)

### **Fine-Motor Skills**

These skills are integrated into many areas of the curriculum. A variety of manipulatives, puzzles, games, and tactile materials are used to promote small muscle development. In the block area, children are encouraged to take things apart, rearrange, sort, match, compare, and experiment with different building materials. The creative art activities expose children to a wide variety of media, sensory experiences, and prewriting concepts and skills. Individual instruction is provided to reinforce specific fine motor skills.

### **Personal-Social Skills**

Interpersonal experiences with peers and adults are provided throughout the daily routine. Children are encouraged to use language to share toys, ask for assistance, make requests, take turns, seek out a

friend, etc. Child directed play provides opportunities for role playing, imaginative, and cooperative play. Children dress up, work together, express feelings, and use language for a variety of purposes.

The Lyme-Old Lyme Preschool/Pre-K Program supports the district's goals regarding respect for individual differences and diversity. Books, materials, and activities are provided to develop an appreciation and respect for others.

## **Discipline**

Children are expected to follow basic classroom rules to maintain a safe learning environment. The early childhood staff uses positive methods of discipline, which encourage self-control, decision-making, cooperation and positive self-esteem. Techniques used include encouragement, modeling, redirection, individual staff support, or planned alternate activities.

## **Communication with Families**

The Preschool/Pre-K team strives to maintain close communication between home and school. An open house for parents/guardians is held at the beginning of the school year to introduce families to the program. The team maintains contact with families through phone conversations, email, conferences, and newsletters. Individual conferences are offered annually for parents of all students.

## **Eligibility for Special Education**

Children who may require special education services may be referred to the Lyme-Old Lyme Preschool/Pre-K Program by parents, pediatricians, nursery school teachers, Birth-to-Three Program providers, and by other special needs programs. Referrals to the Preschool/Pre-K Program, along with Preschool/Pre-K screenings, are coordinated by the school psychologist. When a child is referred, an initial screening is conducted and, if indicated, a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting is held to plan follow-up evaluations as necessary and to develop an appropriate program for that child. Once a child has been placed in a special education program, a PPT meeting is held at least once a year to review the child's progress. A parent may request a PPT at any time. All children who receive special education services have an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), which includes specific goals and objectives. Parents of children receiving special education have rights, which are described in Procedural Safeguards Notice Required Under IDEA Part B.

## **Costs**

The Lyme-Old Lyme Preschool/Pre-K Program is funded by Regional School District #18. There is no tuition charge to Lyme and Old Lyme families. Transportation is provided at no charge for students with special needs. **Parents of children participating as peers in the Preschool/Pre-K Program must provide their own transportation.**

Non-resident students are eligible for the four-year old program on a tuition basis if they meet the eligibility requirements. Non-residents will be accepted per Board of Education Policy 2420.

## **Enrollment Paperwork**

Prior to enrollment, the following forms are required:

### **District Information**

1. Guide to the Student Registration Process
2. Information Sources in the LOL Public Schools
3. Medical Requirements for All Students
4. Husky Plan Insurance Coverage
5. District Millstone Power Station Readiness Plan

### **District Required Forms**

1. Pupil Registration Form
2. Residency Affidavit for New Enrollments
3. Residency Affidavit for Students without Permanent Address
4. Home Language Survey
5. McKinney-Vento Homeless Act Questionnaire
6. Parent letter for Preschool/Pre-K medical requirements
7. Potassium Iodide K1 Student Medication Authorization Form
8. State Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (Prek)
9. Immunization Record
10. Authorization for the Administration of Medication by School Personnel (if applicable)
11. Emergency Epinephrine Administration to Students Letter
12. Birth Certificate (copy)
13. Proof of residency i.e., ownership/rental/lease (deed, mortgage, tax bill, construction contract, lease or rental agreement along with the name and phone number of landlord and a cancelled rent check made out to the landlord)
14. In addition please provide 2 of the following: driver's license, car registration with residence address, utility or other bill with residence address, bank statement or cancelled check with residence address

### **Additional Forms for Non-Residents of Lyme or Old Lyme**

Policy 2420 Enrollment of Nonresident Students (Please complete Letter of Understanding and Agreement)

Non-Resident Contract (note: tuition is due the first of every month - ten equal payments September - June)

## **Peer Participation Information**

All children learn best through active play experiences, exploration and language opportunities with other children. Children who are selected as peers for the half-day program or those who apply for the full day program greatly enhance the Preschool/Pre-K experience for all students.

### **Half-Day Program Peer Selection Process**

All peer candidates for the half-day program participate in a spring peer visit.

- ❖ All children three years old by September 1 of the coming school year are welcome to participate in a peer visit.
- ❖ A peer visit includes a “mini” Preschool session for the child while the parent attends an informational session.
- ❖ Peer selection is lottery-based for the half-day program, with consideration for age and gender balance in each Preschool class.
- ❖ It is expected that peers will attend regularly and follow all school rules and regulations.
- ❖ If a peer is not selected during the spring peer visit for the half-day program, they will be placed on a waiting list.
- ❖ On rare occasions, unexpected openings occur. In these cases, the team will refer to the waiting list, which is developed by lottery at the time of peer visits.

## **Health Information**

### **General Information**

The Center School Preschool/Pre-K program has a Licensed Practical Nurse on duty during school hours to attend to student health needs. First aid for illness and injury occurring during school hours will be performed according to our district health guidelines and standing orders that have been approved by our medical advisor.

At the start of each school year or upon school entry, a “Health Services/Emergency Information” form is required to be completed by a parent/guardian for each student. Please share any medical information and history pertinent to your child to assist the school team with educational programming and health management. Please provide names and contact phone numbers of additional people who have agreed to be contacted if you are unavailable in the situation that your child becomes ill or injured during the school day. It is the responsibility of the parent to arrange for pick-up of the student if deemed appropriate by the school nurse or administration. Your signature at the bottom of the form authorizes release of your child to the parties indicated, emergency medical transport and treatment, and permits health information regarding your child to be shared by the school nurse with appropriate staff on a need to know basis.

State regulations require each child to receive immunizations according to the current immunization schedule. Proof of mandatory immunization vaccines shall be provided to the school nurse prior to admission to school. The State of Connecticut Department of Education also requires a State of Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment form (physical examination) for Pre-K students to be completed within one year of entry. The front section of Part I is to be completed by the parent and Part II is to be completed by the physician. All mandatory (\*) screening items are to be assessed and recorded by the physician. New entrants from outside the United States are to present a physical examination done by a licensed U.S. physician, a PA or APRN who works under a licensed physician, or a physician, PA, or APRN who works on a U.S. Military Base.

Vision and audiometric screening shall be conducted on each student in the Preschool/Pre-K Program. Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of the screening dates and shall receive a written physician referral if the result of the screening shows a possible deficit in one or more of the screening areas. Parents will also be notified if their child did not receive a health screening with a brief statement explaining why the student did not receive the specified screening procedure.

A student should remain at home from school with the following symptoms of communicable disease or illness:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or greater. Students should be fever-free without use of a fever-reducing medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea. Students should remain at home until the vomiting/diarrhea has ceased for at least 24 hours and the child is able to tolerate fluids and solid foods.
- Sore throat accompanied by fatigue, body aches, and fever.
- A persistent/disruptive cough.
- Eye discomfort with itching, redness, pain, and discharge.
- Skin rash suggestive of a communicable disease.

**Call the Center School at 860-434-0487 or email your child's teacher to report any illness or injury your child has suffered.**

The school nurse will be happy to speak with parents regarding any questions of health-related issues as needed. Remember to always practice and reinforce proper hand hygiene as a primary means of illness prevention.

### **Medication Administration**

State regulations and Board of Education policy mandate that medication shall be administered to students during school hours only when it is not possible to achieve the desired effects by administering the medication at home. If medication of prescribed or over-the-counter medication is necessary during school hours, the following criteria shall be met:

- A medication authorization form for each medication is to be completed by the physician, dentist, APRN (advanced practice registered nurse) or PA (physician assistant) with written



authorization by the parent/guardian and is to be kept on file in the health office. Medication authorization forms are available online at the district website [www.region18.org](http://www.region18.org) under parents/forms, from the school nurse, or from your child's physician.

- The medication must be in its original container properly labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, time of administration, dosage, and no more than a 90-day supply. Any remaining medication is to be picked up at the close of the school year.
- All medication must be brought to the school nurse by the parent or responsible adult and shall be received by the school nurse or in her absence, the child's teacher.
- All medication shall be administered by the school nurse or properly trained staff.

Emergency Epinephrine Administration to students who may be exhibiting signs of a severe allergic reaction who have no previous history of anaphylaxis (PA 14-176) Connecticut State Medication Regulations require that our schools designate and train nonmedical qualified staff who have volunteered to administer emergency epinephrine in cartridge injectors to students who are exhibiting signs of having a severe allergic reaction who have not been previously identified by a physician as having a severe allergy. It authorizes the emergency use of Epipens by nonmedical staff if the nurse is absent or unavailable during the school day hours on school grounds. The qualified staff must meet annual training requirements.

**Any parent or guardian of a student who does NOT want epinephrine given to their child who has NO PREVIOUS HISTORY OR DIAGNOSIS in the event of a severe allergic reaction must submit a letter in writing to the school nurse.**

## **Transportation**

M&J Bus, Inc., provides transportation for children identified with special needs. If your child will not be using transportation for any reason, please contact the company directly at 860-434-1052. Transportation is provided only within Lyme and Old Lyme.

**Resident and non-resident children who are not identified with special needs in the program are transported by their families.**

## **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

Parents bringing children to school and picking them up should use the designated entrance, which is where Preschool/Pre-K staff will greet and dismiss children and parents. **Drop off/greeting begins at 8:40 a.m. for the morning and full day sessions, and at 12:10 p.m. for the afternoon session.** Staff will be responsible for escorting children to and from the classroom. Each child not transported by van/bus must be met by a parent or authorized adult. **Pick up/dismissal ends for the morning session at 11:20 a.m., and the afternoon and full day sessions end at 2:50 p.m.** If you are unable

to pick up your child at dismissal, please make arrangements for an adult to do so and notify the staff of the change in writing.

### **Clothes and Personal Belongings**

Your child should be dressed in comfortable, easy to fasten play clothes and safe, non-skid shoes. **Sneakers must be worn on gross motor group and physical education days.** Since outdoor play occurs as often as possible, please see that your child is dressed properly for the weather. Apply sunscreen daily.

Children should carry a **full-size backpack** to school each day. They may bring items from home to share with the group, especially those which may relate to the current classroom theme, scheduled on show and share days. Please be aware that these items could become lost or broken. Please label all possessions sent to school. Parents of children who are not yet toilet trained are asked to provide disposable diapers, wipes, and an extra set of clothes. The staff will assist children with toileting as needed.

### **Snacks and Birthday Celebrations**

Our program encourages the eating of a variety of nutritious snacks during snack time. Snacks may include crackers, cereal, cheese, fruit, and juice. **Please label your child's snack and juice.** Also, children are sometimes involved in a planned cooking activity. Your child's teacher may request a donation of a food item to be included in a class cooking activity. **Please notify us if your child has special dietary restrictions.**

Birthday celebrations are welcomed in our program. Please notify the staff if you would like to contribute a special snack for your child's birthday.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are occasionally scheduled for the Preschool/Pre-K class. Permission forms are sent home and must be signed and returned prior to the field trip. Parents of peers are expected to provide transportation for their children.

### **Preschool/Pre-K Team**

Early Childhood/Special Education Teachers  
School Psychologist  
Speech-Language Pathologist  
Occupational Therapist  
Physical Therapist  
Teaching Assistants  
Administrative Support Staff  
Director of Special Services

## **Support Services**

A variety of services is available in the Preschool/Pre-K Program to children who qualify. The service your child receives depends on his or her individual needs and is determined at the PPT meeting. To the greatest extent possible, support services are provided within the classroom setting. A brief explanation of each service follows:

### **Speech and Language Services**

The role of the Speech and Language Pathologist is to identify children who have speech and language delays and disorders and to provide services to encourage and facilitate speech and language development. Children may be eligible for services based on difficulty with speech intelligibility, understanding and/or expressive use of language, speech fluency, and social communication skills. Services are provided within the program on an individual or small group basis. Children who are not eligible for the program but may have mild to moderate speech and language difficulties may receive individual or small group speech and language therapy outside of the Preschool/Pre-K Program.

### **Occupational Therapy**

The Occupational Therapist promotes development of motor skills. Direct therapy, consultation to the family and staff, and assessment are available in the Preschool/Pre-K Program. Children are generally seen in the classroom. Areas of focus include the development of hand skills, play skills, greater independence in feeding and self-care, and sensory-motor integration.

### **Physical Therapy**

The Physical Therapist provides services to facilitate the development of motor skills. Direct therapy, consultation to family and staff, and assessment are available. Treatment is provided within the classroom when possible. Areas of focus include balance, coordination, sensory-motor integration, ambulatory skills, ball play, playground skills, and safety within the school environment.

### **Psychological Services**

The school psychologist provides consultation to parents and the Preschool/Pre-K team in the areas of child development, cognition and learning, and social, behavioral, and emotional growth. Observations of children's behavior and learning are on-going aspects of our Preschool/Pre-K Program.

## **Emergency School Closings and Delayed Openings**

The following procedures will be followed in the event of the cancellation, delayed opening, or early closing of schools due to inclement weather or other emergency situations. All decisions will be based on the most current weather forecasts available and observations of road conditions. **You will be contacted by our automated calling system if you are registered.**

### **Cancellation of School**

If the weather conditions indicate that school will be closed, announcements will be made on the following radio stations and television channels:

**A.M.: WTIC 1080    WLIS 1420    WLNC 1510**

**F.M.: WTYD 100.9    WSUB 105.5**

**Television: Channels 3, 8, 30**

### **Delayed Openings**

At times, weather conditions may indicate the need to delay the starting time of school rather than close for the entire school day. In such cases, delayed opening announcements will be made on the above stations by 6:30 a.m. The delay starting time schedule, with dismissal times, is as follows:

**In case of delayed opening, A.M. Preschool classes will be cancelled. The P.M. Preschool and full day Pre-K classes will begin at 12:20 p.m.**

### **Early Closings**

**It is sometimes necessary to close schools earlier than usual because of emergency situations such as storm, loss of heat, etc.** In these cases, the **P.M. Preschool classes will be cancelled and the full day Pre-K classes will go home at 11:20 p.m.** Parents who may not be home should make arrangements to ensure that a responsible adult is available to care for their child in this event.

**On early closing days, only one session of the half-day Preschool classes will be held. A.M. and P.M. sessions will alternate with the A.M. Preschool scheduled for the first early dismissal day.**

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