

Groton Public Schools

Early Childhood

Handbook



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Mission Statement and Program Goals.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Program Locations.....	2
Program Description.....	3
Classroom Practices.....	3
Curriculum and Progress Monitoring.....	4
Family Conferences and Progress Reports.....	5
Sample of Daily Schedule.....	5
School Visitation and Parent Communication.....	5-6
Discipline.....	6-8
 <u>General Operating Procedures</u>	
Pre-Enrollment Paperwork.....	8
Health Policy.....	9
Clothing & Personal Belongings.....	10
Groton Public Schools Snack Guidelines.....	10-11
Program Hours.....	11
Arrival and Departure.....	12
Emergency Closings and Early Dismissals.....	12
Emergency Procedures.....	13
Groton Public Schools Animal & Pet Practices.....	13-14
 <u>Appendix A - Information for Families of Peer Models</u>	
Eligibility.....	16
 <u>Appendix B - Information for Families of Children Receiving Special Education Services</u>	
Special Education Procedures & Eligibility.....	18
Transportation.....	18
Summer School Component.....	18
Support Services.....	19
 <u>Appendix C</u>	
Progress Reports.....	20
 <u>Appendix D – Information Specific to Each Program Location</u>	
Thames River Environmental and Marine Science Magnet School.....	22-25
Mystic River Active Exploration Magnet School.....	26-31

The Groton Board of Education reaffirms that all educational opportunities taught by the Groton Public School System are offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, creed, religion, age, handicap, ancestry, physical or mental disability or lack of proficiency in the English language.

GREETINGS AND WELCOME TO THE GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

MISSION

Our mission is to provide quality educational programs for the children of Groton and educate them to their maximum potential in a safe and nurturing environment. Daily, we help our students acquire the skills necessary to become lifelong learners and contributing members of our society. We succeed as educators, parents, and a community when our students succeed. Join me as we work together to ensure that the children of Groton are properly prepared to take their rightful places in the world. Together we can!

EARLY CHILDHOOD PHILOSOPHY

The Groton Public Schools early childhood programs strive to develop students to their fullest potential and to create in them the desire to learn. In many cases preschool/prekindergarten is a child's first school experience and with separation from family. By working together parents and teachers can make this transition a positive experience. The purpose of our programs is to provide a learning environment and a variety of age-appropriate experiences which will help children develop socially, intellectually, physically and emotionally. This environment will foster self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity and self-discipline within the development of overall social and emotional well-being. The experiences and activities provided will encourage and support the parents as the principle influence in the child's education and development.

EARLY CHILDHOOD GOALS

By the end of preschool/prekindergarten, children will:

- show self-direction with a range of materials
- sustain attention to a variety of tasks
- participate in group activities
- manage transitions, follow routine and rules
- use words to express emotions or feelings
- show empathy and caring for others
- interact cooperatively with their peers
- work to resolve conflicts and use a variety of strategies
- use coordinated large and small muscle movements
- care for self independently
- engage in scientific inquiry
- recognize and make patterns
- relate number to quantity
- understand and participate in conversations with others
- demonstrate spatial awareness
- show awareness of stories and an interest in print
- use beginning writing to convey meaning
- build, construct, draw, or paint to represent own ideas
- expand play to represent experiences and fantasies
- sing and respond to music

Introduction

Welcome to Groton Public Schools. This handbook is part of our on-going efforts to enable open communication between home and school. It should provide parents and other care-givers with some basic information about the program your child is attending. Of course, if you have any questions not covered in this handbook, please ask the staff. Not only will you have your question answered, but you will be providing necessary feedback for improvements in this handbook. At the end of this handbook, you will find information specific to your child's program. This information may include specific class schedules or any other information particular to your child's school or classroom.

Program Locations

Groton Public School Early Childhood Programs are currently located in three schools within the district.

**Thames River Environmental and
Marine Science Magnet School
154 Toll Gate Road
Groton, CT 06340
(860) 449-5655**

Emily Bensko ebensko@groton.k12.ct.us
Catherine Antezzo cantezzo@groton.k12.ct.us
Julie Sparks jsparks@groton.k12.ct.us
Jessica Servidio jservidio@groton.k12.ct.us

**Mystic River Active Exploration
Magnet School
160 Fishtown Road
Mystic, CT 06355
(860) 980-8300**

Rita Mangelinkx rmangelinkx@groton.k12.ct.us
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Jane Robert jrobert@groton.k12.ct.us
Nancy Anderson nanderson@groton.k12.ct.us

**Early Childhood Assessment Team
ECAT
Mary Morrisson School
154 Toll Gate Road
Groton, CT 06355
(860) 235-1725
(860) 815-4983**

Lynn Wallace lwallace@groton.k12.ct.us
Alyssa Skibo askibo@groton.k12.ct.us

Program Description

Groton Public Schools Early Childhood Programs are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC administers the largest and most widely recognized national, voluntarily, professionally sponsored accreditation system for all types of early childhood schools and child care centers. NAEYC is the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators. Programs accredited by NAEYC's National Academy of Early Childhood Programs have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance with the Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs and been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria.

The Early Childhood Programs of Groton Public Schools are designed to provide quality preschool/prekindergarten programming, as well as special education services, to our three, four and five-year-old children in Groton who are eligible. Our integrated preschool classrooms are designed as integrated special education programs, which enroll a combination of children with special needs, as well as typically developing peer role models. The program strives to meet the individual needs of each child participating. The prekindergarten classrooms provide students who will enter kindergarten next year with a comprehensive readiness experience.

Classroom Practices

The Early Childhood programs model their classroom practices after *The Responsive Classroom*® Approach. This unique approach to teaching and learning is based upon the belief that the classroom environment is a learning community in which both social and academic goals are attained. The following six central components integrate teaching, learning, and caring into the daily classroom program.

- **Classroom Organization** that provides active interest areas for students, space for student-created displays of work, and an appropriate mix of whole class, group, and individual instruction
- **Morning Meeting** format that provides children the daily opportunity to practice greetings, conversation, sharing, and problem-solving, and motivates them to meet the academic challenges of the day ahead
- **Rules and Logical Consequences** that are generated, modeled and reinforced with the children
- **Academic Choice** for all children each day in which they must take control of their own learning in some meaningful way, both individually and cooperatively.
- **Guided Discovery** of learning materials, areas of the room, curriculum content and ways of behaving that moves children through a deliberate and careful introduction to each new experience. There is no assumption that children know how to do something before they begin.
- **Assessment and Reporting** to parents is an evolving process of mutual communication and understanding. (Northeast Foundation for Children, 1995, p.3)

Curriculum and Progress Monitoring

Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Curricular Goals and the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework serves as the basis for our Preschool Curriculum.

The Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework was developed by the State Department of Education, Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services.

The early childhood programs recognize that each child is unique and develops at their own rate. Some children have developmental delays or disabilities which may require the staff to adapt their expectations or classroom experiences so that children can participate at their own level successfully.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Curricular Goals and the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework, in conjunction with various curricula, provides opportunities for all children in the early childhood program to develop to their full potential.

Progress Monitoring

The preschool and prekindergarten program implements a system that will assist our highly qualified teachers with monitoring student progress on the skills, abilities and behaviors in the Early Learning and Developmental Standards. This system is called CT DOTS (Documentation & Observation for Teaching System). CT DOTS supports early education providers observe children in naturally occurring situations and to plan engaging experiences that allow for more intentional observations. CT DOTS also provides a structure for providers to partner with families in sharing information about individual children.

Used in conjunction with the CT ELDS (Early Learning Developmental Standards), CT DOTS is a foundation for

- Gathering data about children's skills, abilities and behaviors,
- Planning additional supports (e.g., curriculum, instruction, professional development, family activities, adult support),
- Summarizing evidence of children's progress, and
- Communicating around common goals.

Family Conferences and Progress Reports

Family conferences are made available two times each year for all children. Every effort will be made to schedule a conference at times convenient for families. Progress reports on each child will be reviewed at conferences in fall and spring. Progress notes are sent home during January and June of each school year. These reports include information about various areas of development including readiness skills, socialization, behavior, and motor skills in alignment with the Early Learning Developmental Standards (ELDS). Children who attend the program as a result of a Planning and Placement Team recommendation receive updates on their Individual Education Plan at the same time that the progress reports are sent home. A conference may be scheduled at any time during the year by either teacher or parent/guardian.

Sample Daily Schedule

The daily schedule and routines form a basic structure for each day. The schedule offers a balance between active and quiet times, large group, small group and individual activities as well as times which are more teacher-directed and times in which children are encouraged to select their own activities.

The consistency of the routines help the children feel more secure because they quickly learn what comes next. This does not, however, mean that the schedule is rigid. Flexibility is built in so that special occasions, child-initiated interests and other interruptions in the daily routine are smoothly incorporated into the schedule.

A sample schedule for the half-day programs might be as follows:

- Arrival/Transition/Individual Activities
- Group “Circle” Time
- Choice Time (child directed play choices) & Snack (open part of the time)
- Clean-up
- Story
- Outside Time
- Group “Circle” Time
- Dismissal

Depending upon group dynamics as well as the composition of children, teachers might rearrange the schedule to offer briefer activity periods with more variety such as two short choice times during the day rather than one long choice time.

You will receive a schedule specific to your child’s class as soon as it is available.

School Visitation and Parent Communication

Students are not allowed to have visitors in school during normal school hours except when granted special permission from a school administrator who has been given one full day’s notice. Once permission has been granted, all visitors must enter the school using the doors at the main lobby.

All school doors are locked; visitors requesting entrance must ring the buzzer on the school's PA/Camera and speak with an administrator. Once the request for access has been validated, the administrator will unlock the doors. All visitors must then report to the school's main office, present identification as needed, and obtain a Visitor's badge which must be displayed on their upper torso while they are on school property. Upon departure, all badges must be returned to the main office. Scheduled opportunities for family volunteers are made available throughout the year.

It is important that families and teachers participate in ongoing communication. The program utilizes several methods of communication so that information will be made available, in a timely manner, to all families. An Open House is scheduled each fall to introduce families to the program and facility. Families are encouraged to take the time for face-to-face communication.

The classroom teachers also maintain contact with families through notes, phone conversations, conferences, and notices which are sent home with your child. Due to the amount of written communication being sent home, it is important that you check your child's bag or backpack daily.

A newsletter is sent home periodically. This newsletter will contain information about special events, theme or activity information and other important information.

Discipline

The following behavior management techniques are used by teachers in the Early Childhood Program when communication and problem-solving strategies are not enough to assist a young person in managing his/her behavior. Staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Examples of discipline techniques that are prohibited are: shaking, hitting, shaming, cursing, and/or rough handling. The following techniques are adopted from Cornell University's Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Training program:

Managing the Environment

Teachers are aware of the classroom environment and manage that environment so there exists a warm, friendly, welcoming tone. Teachers also arrange the classroom environment to promote social interaction and cooperative group work and play.

Prompting

Prompting consists of verbal or nonverbal reminders which cue young people to either begin a preferred activity or stop an inappropriate behavior. Prompts also serve as reminders to assist students in transitioning from one activity to another. They can be in the form of checklists, signs, or posters displayed in the classroom.

Caring Gesture

Caring gestures and statements often help young people deal with a problem or cope with a difficult situation. A caring gesture could consist of a pat on the back, a quick hug, or a special treat. Caring comments let young people know that we care about them even if we don't like the behavior we're seeing.

Hurdle Help

Hurdle help is used by teachers to decrease a young person's frustration and create opportunities for learning. Often teachers provide assistance to young people in getting started or in completing a difficult task.

Redirection

Teachers may divert or redirect the young persons' behavior or change an activity in an effort to diffuse or avoid a potential problem. Interrupting a young person with a question or statement can also serve to distract the young person from the undesired behavior

Proximity

Teachers often position themselves close to young people who may be having difficulty managing their behavior. Often the close physical presence of the teacher is enough to remind young people of their behavior or support them in maintaining appropriate behavior. Teachers also use a gentle touch, with students for whom it is appropriate, to serve as a reminder that help is available. A teacher's hand on the student's arm or shoulder may provide the assistance a young person needs to make the right decision.

Planned Ignoring and Positive Attention

Planned ignoring is used by teachers to decrease the amount of negative attention children receive and is used only when the behavior can be safely ignored. Along with planned ignoring is the use of positive attention to reinforce appropriate behavior. Teachers often use positive attention by praising students for demonstrating desired behaviors.

Directive Statements

Directive statements are often used in situations which are escalating and becoming increasingly stressful. Directive statements provide clear expectations to students regarding what they should do and are phrased in positive ways whenever possible.

Suspension/Expulsion

All employees in the school system shall have an obligation to monitor the behavior of students and to report student misbehavior in accordance with the terms of the Groton Board of Education policy on Suspension/Expulsion. Suspensions/expulsions are determined on a case by case basis. Our overall goal is to limit the use of this practice and only use it if it is absolutely necessary.

Exclusion

Exclusion is defined as any denial of public-school privileges to a student for disciplinary purposes. Groton Public Schools employees will utilize the positive behavioral supports listed above, in addition to any other individualized positive strategies prior to the use of exclusion. Any behavior that continues to put the child and/or his/her classmates at risk will require a higher level of support. Exclusion will be considered only when it is in the best interest of the child.

If a parent requires additional support outside the home, staff will provide a list of community resources to assist.

Groton Public Schools' discipline policy is in compliance with all federal and civil rights laws.

Pre-Enrollment Paperwork

Eligibility will be determined through a screening or other developmental assessment. Once your child is determined to be eligible for the program you must register your child at our Central Office. Follow these steps:

Log on to www.groton.k12.ct.us then click on "How to register your child" located on the left side of the home page. Follow the instructions, download and then complete the necessary forms. After the forms are complete and you have gathered the required documentation listed under "What you will need", call 860-572-2197 and set up your registration appointment. If you are unable to access our web page, please call 860-572-2197 and we will mail you a registration packet.

There are several forms which are required by the Groton Public School system before your child can participate in the Early Childhood programs. The basic registration paperwork includes the following:

- Proof of residency
- Proof of your child's age
- copy of your child's immunizations record
- Groton Public Schools - Student Registration Form
- Permission form for videotaping (on this form you may indicate that you refuse permission for videotaping)
- State of Connecticut Dept. of Ed. Health Record - which must be completed by your child's doctor and reviewed by school nurse prior to your child's entry into the GPS Early Childhood program.

In addition to these forms, there may be others required by individual schools or classrooms.

Please keep in mind the following:

- **If you do not register your child with our centralized registrar your child cannot participate in our programs.**
- **All records are private information included in the registration process is kept confidential. Parent consent is required to share with any personnel outside of the district.**

Health Policy

State law requires us to have a completed health form for each child on file the first day of attendance.

Children should be kept at home, or will be sent home when not feeling well enough to participate in the day's activities. Children should not be in school when they demonstrate the following signs of illness:

- fever (temperature over 100°)
- cold with excessive coughing or colored discharge from nose and eyes
- vomiting/diarrhea
- conjunctivitis (pink-eye)
- impetigo / ring worm
- ear infection
- head lice
- any communicable illness (strep throat, chicken pox, etc.) during the period of contagion.

For the protection of all children and staff, we request that you do not send your child to school with a fever or in any contagious state. Children who have suffered from a high temperature (over100°), diarrhea or vomiting must be kept home for 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child is being kept home for illness, or any other reason, please call the school and leave a message to let us know your child will be out. School policy requires that we attempt to notify the parent whenever a child is absent and a brief phone call from you will save the secretary the necessity of doing so.

Also, please notify us if any childhood diseases (such as chicken pox) are going through your household so that we and other parents can watch for symptoms in others.

If your child becomes ill at school, the school nurse will notify you at home or work. If she cannot reach you, she will contact the individual(s) listed for the emergency number. It is important that these emergency numbers be kept up to date.

Medication in the Schools

Students are not allowed to have any type of medications in the school. A physician's written order and parent's or guardian's authorization is required for a nurse or, in her absence, the principal or designee to administer medications. A form is available at each school to be filled out by the prescribing physician and signed by the parent or guardian. This form is returned to the school and kept with the child's health record. In the case of inhalant medications, self-administration may be approved with a prescription from a physician and written parental consent on file. The medication must be given to the school nurse by the parent or guardian. The medication can then be administered, as prescribed by the school nurse, or in her absence, the principal or designee. These forms must be reviewed at specified intervals. No more than a 3 month supply of medication can

be kept at the school at one time. Parents should pick up any unused medications at the end of the school year or they will be destroyed.

An individual health care plan and emergency plan will be developed for students when appropriate. This plan will be shared with all staff in contact with the student throughout the school day.

All medical records are kept confidential. Records can only be shared with parental consent.

Clothing & Personal Belongings

Your child should be dressed in comfortable, easy to fasten play clothes and safe non-skid shoes. Since outdoor play occurs as often as possible, please be sure that your child is dressed properly for the weather or season. Clothes will get dirty and/or wet due to the large variety of “messy” activities we plan, so a change of clothes should be kept in your child’s backpack or bag at all times.

Children should carry their backpack or bag to school each day. This will allow us to send home any necessary information as well as your child’s projects without worrying about them getting lost or misplaced. Your child might also like to bring an item from home to share with his or her friends. These items should always be labeled with your child’s name.

Groton Public Schools Snack Guidelines

Your child’s teacher will contact you with information regarding the provision of a healthy nutritious snack

It is important that you notify your child’s teacher of any allergies. Food allergies are important because, even if your child brings in his or her own snack, we often have special treats for everybody to enjoy. Other allergies may be triggered by a certain material in the sensory table, the art table or the soap we use so it is important that you notify your child’s teacher of any allergies your child has.

SNACK GUIDELINES

Each classroom provides a designated snack time each day.

Students are to bring a snack from home to eat during that time.

All students are encouraged to bring healthy snacks such as fruit, veggies, cheese, yogurt, whole grain crackers, rice cakes or other foods low in sugar and fat. Candy, gummy treats, and chips are not acceptable.

Low-fat milk is available through the school food services program at a cost of 50¢ per day. Students can choose to have white or chocolate milk. (Free and reduced-price milk is available to qualifying families.)

Children may choose to bring a drink from home if they do not wish to purchase school milk. Drinks such as 100% fruit juice or milk are encouraged. Soda and sugary drinks are not acceptable. Glass containers are not allowed. Fresh tap water is always available to students throughout their school day.

Classrooms do not have refrigerators to keep food and drinks cold.

Children are not allowed to share or trade snacks with other students.

Discarding Snacks

Snacks will be discarded for the following reasons:

- Any uneaten snack will be discarded at the end of the designated snack time.
- Snacks with any expired dates

Choking Hazards

The following foods are choking hazards and are not allowed:

Children **may not** bring the following items for snack as these are known choking issues for young children:

- whole grapes
- nuts
- popcorn
- raw peas
- hard pretzels
- spoonful of peanut butter
- chunks of raw carrots
- meat larger than can be swallowed whole

Program Hours

Morning Session

9:00 am - 11:48 am

Afternoon Session

12:48 pm - 3:35 pm

The Mystic River Early Otters Program also follows an AM/PM schedule.

- **There are no AM sessions on Mondays.**
- **Scheduled Early Dismissal Days: Only the AM session will attend. Dismissal time is 11:08 am. No PM session.**

Arrival and Departure

Please follow the arrival and departure procedures for the school your child is attending. We discourage allowing your car to idle for extended periods of time in our school parking areas. In extreme heat or cold idling is permissible to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

Emergency Closings and Early Dismissals

There are many ways to get the weather closing information:

1. Radio WXLM/Q105/WSUB FM 104.7,105.5 &102.3; 980 AM (New London)
WADK 99.3 FM, 1230 AM (Newport)
WBMW 106.5 FM (Ledyard)
WKSS (KISS) 95.7 FM (Hartford)
BIG 4 - WNLC/WKNL 98.7 FM, 100.9 FM (New London)
WICH/WCTY 1310 AM, 97.7 FM (Norwich)
2. TV WTNH TV 8 (New Haven)
WVIT TV NBC 30
WFSB TV 3 (Hartford)
WTIC Fox 61 News (Hartford)
3. GPS 19 Groton Public School Channel 19
4. Web Sites: Groton Public Schools www.grotonschools.org
WFSB - TV 3 <http://www.wfsb.com>
WVIT - NBC 30 <http://www.nbc30.com>
5. Phone: The Groton Public Schools also has an auto dialing system to notify families in the case of an emergency. Information about this system can be found on the District website.

Information regarding the schedule for delayed openings is sent home. When you get this information please keep it with this handbook to refer to when necessary. When there is an early dismissal the morning students are dismissed at the regular time. The afternoon session is canceled.

All parents have the opportunity to be contacted by telephone in the case of an early dismissal. Please complete the telephone notification form that is available at your child's school (if you have not already done so) and return it to the school.

Emergency Procedures

Fire Drill

Fire drills and lockdown drills are conducted during the school year. During a fire drill, students must pass quickly and silently in a single file to the nearest exit as directed by the teacher and remain with their class. Directions for this procedure will be found in each classroom near the exit door. After the drill, students will return to their classes at the direction of the teacher.

Lockdown Drill

For a drill or in the event of an emergency, a code red lockdown may be initiated. When a “code red” is announced, students and school personnel shall go to the nearest classroom, remain outside or remain in another appropriate location until “code green” is announced. Directions for code red are posted near the exit door in all classrooms.

Potassium Iodide Pills

Potassium Iodide (KI) pills are available for all students. In the event of an accident at any of the nearby nuclear reactors, it is possible that radioactive iodine could be released into the atmosphere. Radioactive iodine can be absorbed into the thyroid gland. Potassium iodide, also known by its chemical name “KI”, is an over-the-counter drug that protects the thyroid gland from radioactive iodine. Your child’s school has been stocked with enough KI pills for all staff and students. All parents/guardians are asked to fill out a potassium iodide (KI) student medication authorization form. This form must be filled out only once for the time the student is enrolled at the Groton Public Schools. This form is available from the school nurse.

Groton Public Schools Early Needs Program

ANIMAL AND PET PRACTICES

Animals and pets are permitted in the classroom as long as they do not present a hazard to students.

Any animal that is deemed a hazard will be removed from the classroom immediately.

If a student has a known pet allergy, the classroom must remain animal-free at all times.

Animals kept in the classroom will not be placed in locations near ventilation systems (fans, air-conditioners, heaters, windows, etc.) to limit air contamination.

Students will wash hands before and after touching any animal in the classroom. Teachers will instruct students to keep hands away from their face while touching animals.

Any student that is injured by an animal in the classroom will be seen by the school nurse immediately and seek additional medical care as deemed necessary.

Parents will be notified in writing about all animals, both visiting and long-term residents, in the classroom before the animal or student enters the classroom.

Only adults will be permitted to clean pet living or containment areas. Cleaning of cages, tanks, etc., will be done on a weekly basis, or more frequently as needed, to maintain proper classroom air quality

Appendix A
Information for Families of Peer Role Models

Appendix A - Information for Families of Peer Role Models Eligibility

The Integrated Preschool Programs are available free of charge to typically developing three and four-year-old children in the town of Groton and Mystic.

Your child is determined to be eligible for the program through a screening process which test for strengths in the area of language, socialization, readiness skills and motor. Currently, we use the Brigance Early Childhood Screening and the Preschool Language Scale screener for three and four-year-old children, in addition to observational information gathered during a brief play time. Children who score within our entrance criteria are eligible for participation into the program. Once your child is determined to be eligible, you will receive a letter asking you to confirm your child's enrollment in either the morning or afternoon session.

Parents of children who do not receive a letter confirming enrollment will be notified of their child's name being placed on a waiting list. In the event an opening occurs, you will be contacted by the Early Childhood Department. If your child attends as a three-year-old, he or she will typically be offered a spot for the following year as a four-year-old. If your child turns five on or before September 1st of the following year, we will work with you to provide a smooth transition between the preschool/prekindergarten program and kindergarten. This will include notification of kindergarten screening and lottery application information.

Appendix B
Information for Families of Children Receiving
Special Education

Appendix B - Information for Families of Children receiving Special Education Services

Special Education Procedures & Eligibility

Children requiring special education services are referred to our Early Childhood Assessment Team (ECAT) either by a parent or one of several Early Intervention Programs such as the Birth to Three programs. The Assessment Team is comprised of Lynn Wallace, a Special Education Teacher, and Alyssa Skibo, a Speech and Language Pathologist. The ECAT office is located at Mary Morrisson Elementary School. The phone number is (860) 235-1725 or (860) 815-4983. The e-mail address is: *ecat@groton.k12.ct.us*. A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting is held to determine the need for evaluations and to review already completed evaluations. Once the team (which includes the child's family) determines that your child meets the eligibility requirements for special education a determination for the amount and type of services required will be made. If the team decides that placement in the Integrated Preschool Program would meet your child's needs an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed to address any areas of need through goals and objectives. The IEP will also describe the number of days your child will attend based on your child's level of need. The goals and objectives will be reviewed at least annually at a PPT meeting.

Families of children who are receiving special education services are guaranteed specific rights which are described in detail in a pamphlet entitled Procedural Safeguards of Children in Special Education. You should have received this pamphlet at your initial PPT meeting. If you did not get this information, please let your child's teacher know and one will be given to you.

Transportation

Children with special needs are offered transportation by Groton Public Schools. At the final pre-enrollment PPT, you should have been given this option. If your child is to be transported by the bus, you should receive a telephone call notifying you of the bus number as well as the approximate time your child will be picked up and dropped off. If you decide to transport your child to/from school yourself, please plan on gathering with the rest of the class out in the preschool/kindergarten waiting area. Please see arrival/dismissal procedures specific to your child's school.

Summer School Component

Eligibility for the Extended School Year services during the summer is determined by the Planning and Placement Team. Summer services are designed to foster skill maintenance over the long summer break. Those children who do not qualify for Extended School Year services will not be eligible for this service.

If your child is eligible for Extended School Year, he or she will be transported to the program Monday through Thursday in t

You will receive the exact dates and times for summer school when they become available. They are generally located in one school in the district, so the program will most likely be in a different

school from the one your child is currently attending. During summer school, the staff will work on maintaining the skills your child learned during the school year. Preschool classes are integrated in the summer with typical peers.

Support Services

In addition to a certified special education teacher and two classroom assistants, each program is served by a variety of people who are available to support the program. The PPT will make recommendations as to any additional related services your child may/may not require based on assessment information.

Speech and Language Pathologist - assists in the development of language and articulation skills

Speech Paraprofessional (varies by building) - assists the speech pathologist in reinforcing language and articulation skills.

Occupational Therapist - works on fine motor skills (cutting, writing) as well as skills involving eye-hand coordination; this person may also work on reducing sensory defensiveness and improving sensory integration.

Physical Therapist - works on gross motor skills (running, walking) as well as those skills involving balance.

Nurse - maintains health records; available for first aid needs.

School Psychologist - performs any necessary psychological testing for those students who may need it.

School Social Worker - may perform observational evaluations on those children who require it; is also a good source of information for parent support groups or other outside agencies.

Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - works with children who have a documented hearing loss which impacts his/her progress and education.

Teacher of the Visually Impaired – works with children who have a documented visual impairment which impacts his/her progress and education.

Appendix C

Progress Report Sample

Groton Public Schools Preschool Progress Report

NAME: _____
 DOB: _____
 TEACHER: _____

This report card is aligned to the learning standards developed by Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood. It provides an assessment of a student's progress against the learning standard. Areas in gray are not assessed during that marking period.

NA= Not Assessed or Not Applicable
 1= Emerging towards the Expectation
 2= Approaching Expectation
 3= Meeting Expectation
 4= Exceeding Expectation

			Winter	Spring
DOMAIN	PROGRESSION	Standard	Winter	Spring
Cognition	Engagement in Learning	Focuses attention to complete activities that involve planning and carrying out multiple steps over time.		
	Symbolic Representation	Uses more complex or abstract representations of people, places, things, or events through play, drawing, construction and/or movement.		
Social and Emotional Development	Regulation	Typically soothes self across situations.		
	Emotional Expression	Discusses emotions and circumstances with trusted adults (It is expected that children of this age will have an inconsistent ability to identify their own emotions.)		
	Sense of Self	Exhibits a beginning understanding of individual and group characteristics and roles.		
Physical Health and Development	Large Muscle	Coordinates several gross motor movements.		
	Small Muscle	Uses coordinated movements when manipulating objects.		
	Self-help	Generally manages basic health and self-care routines without adult assistance.		
Language and Literacy	Receptive Language	Demonstrates understanding of communication that includes 3-4 concepts.		
	Expressive Language	Uses a series of related statements, including multiple concepts, to communicate with familiar adults and peers.		
	Literacy	Responds to and understands simple texts.		
	Print Concept	Demonstrates an understanding of basic print concepts.		
	Phonological Awareness	Shows an awareness of the parts of words.		
Creative Arts	Drawing and Writing	Associates drawings or writing with communication.		
	Appreciation & Engagement in the Arts	Responds to works of art and uses the arts to represent familiar experiences, people or objects.		
Mathematics	Counting and Cardinality	Counts 5 to 10 objects in various arrangements and knows number sequence up to 20.		
	Number Operations	Demonstrates a sense of number operations.		
	Measurement	Compares and describes in more precise language two or more objects based upon use of strategies to determine measurable attributes (e.g., direct comparison, use of standard or non-standard measures, or exploration).		
Science	Geometry	Demonstrates basic understanding of attributes of geometric figures.		
	Scientific Practice	Engages in simple investigation and communicates results.		
Social Studies	Social Studies	Demonstrates an understanding of that individuals and groups share similarities and have differences.		
Please note: This progress report is based on the Early Learning Developmental Standards and is used with preschool children who are three to five-years-old. Throughout preschool, these skills are explored and developed with all students. Three-year-old students are expected to be emerging or approaching towards grade level expectations by the end of the second term.				
WINTER COMMENTS:				
SPRING COMMENTS:				

Appendix D

Information Specific to Each Program Location

**Thames River Environmental and Marine Science Magnet
Early Childhood Program**

*250 Brandegee Avenue
Groton, Connecticut 06340
(860)980-8230*

Jaime Giordano: Principal
Ada Allen: Assistant Principal
Amber Monahan: Assistant Principal
Melanie Russell: Secretary
Denise James: Secretary



Thames River Environmental and Marine Science Magnet Early Childhood Program



Snack

Children should bring in a snack every day. Snack should include a healthy food item and a drink. Milk can be purchased on a weekly basis.

Arrival

Children gather in the front of the building by line. Please do not leave your child alone. **Children must be handed from an adult to one of the staff members.** We do not allow students to get out of cars and walk to the line. Siblings may not bring the child to our line. We are very concerned with the safety of your child.

Dismissal

Morning Class dismisses at 11:48

Afternoon Class dismissal at 3:35

- ☺ Please arrive promptly.
- ☺ If your child is to go home with anyone other than a parent, a note must be sent in to the teacher. Be prepared to show a photo identification
- ☺ If your child will be on vacation or is absent due to illness, please call the office or send in a note to the office to let us know.
- ☺ Please be sure a staff person from the classroom has acknowledged that you have taken your child at dismissal time.

If you have any questions or concerns,
please feel free to contact us.

School Phone: 860-980-8230

Birthday Policy

If you would like to send a birthday treat to school with your child we will have a special group snack to celebrate their day. Please let us know a few days in advance if you are planning on sending something to school.

Home-School Communication

Communication between home and school is critical for your child to have a successful school experience. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child or the program please call the early childhood teachers before or after school. They can also be reached Monday-Friday between 12:00-12:30. Communication sheets will be sent home weekly. This allows families to engage in conversation about the school day and helps to enhance your child's language skills.

General Daily Schedule

- Arrival/ Wash hands/Look at books, do puzzles or other table time activities.
- Morning /Afternoon Meeting- Hello Song, Calendar, Weather/Thematic Topic Discussions
- Center Time
- Snack
- Story/Thematic Discussion Topics or Activities/Songs/Poems/Indoor Gross Motor Activities
- Good-bye song/Dismissal
- Outdoor Recess-weather permitting

Daily Folders/Homework Folders

A folder will be sent home each day with your child. This folder will travel to and from school each day. Please check the folder on a daily basis and remove items on the day they arrive home. A staff person will check the folder when your child arrives at school. If you need to send a note to school please include this in your child's daily folder.

Extra Clothing

Please send in a full change of clothes on the first day of school. This includes a shirt, long pants, socks and underwear/diapers. We will keep the clothing in the classroom and return it at the end of the school year. Please send in long pants rather than shorts to avoid having to switch clothing, as the weather gets cooler. Our classrooms have air conditioning and your child will be comfortable in the long pants. Should we need to send home wet/soiled clothing, please be sure to return a clean set of clothes on the following school day with your child.

**Mystic River Active Exploration Magnet
Early Childhood Program**

*160 Fishtown Road
Mystic, Connecticut 06355
(860)980-8300*

Steve Wheeler -Principal
Paul DiPadua -Assistant Principal
Shira Sabo - Assistant Principal
Kira Rodriguez -Secretary
Kerri Pellegrini - Secretary



**Mystic River Active
Exploration Magnet
Early Childhood Program**



Important Early Childhood Information

Welcome to the Mystic River Active Exploration Early Childhood Program! I am looking forward to having your child join our class. Here is some information that I thought would be helpful to you.

I ask that all children have a backpack or book bag with their name on it so we can keep their artwork and papers from getting lost or ruined. Labeling coats and backpacks is very important as children often end up with the same backpack and become confused at dismissal time.

Your child needs a small healthy snack every day. This might include crackers, fruit, $\frac{1}{2}$ of a sandwich and something to drink.

We go outside everyday weather permitting. Please remember that your little one will be running, jumping and climbing up and down. To ensure their safety, please dress them in appropriate clothing and shoes.

Staff meets busses at arrival time and escorts students to class and brings students to the bus at dismissal time. Students who arrive late must be signed in at the office so their attendance record can be corrected. Please let me know if you need to pick up your child early so that I can make sure he/she is ready. Check in at the office, state that you are picking up your child and the secretary will call me and we will bring you child up to the office. If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, a written note is required with the name of the person. The office will check their ID prior to releasing the child.

Your child will have a school to home folder in their backpack. This is just one of the many ways we can communicate with each other. If you have any questions, or need to send me a note, just place it in your child's folder. You can also reach me by phone at (860)980-8300 School information such as field trips, special projects, and newsletters will be sent home in their folder. Please check it daily.

If your child is not feeling well, please keep him/her at home. Please call the school to let them know that your child will be absent.

I look forward to a wonderful year with your child!

Please listen to your radio, station Q-105, WICH or WNLC, to find out if school has been canceled in the case of snowstorms or other severe weather situations. You can also watch the Connecticut news stations on television to get this information. In addition, the Groton Public School System has a public access channel on Channel 19 or you can check on line at grotonschools.org.

The classroom is staffed daily by a certified special education teacher as well as classroom assistants. At times, there are additional aides depending upon the needs of individual students. In addition to the classroom staff, your child will also come into contact with several other important people during the course of the school year.

Classroom Schedule (sample of typical schedule - Actual schedule will be sent home with your child)

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Puzzles	Puzzles	Puzzles	Puzzles	Puzzles
Music	Library	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
Meeting	Meeting	Circle/	Circle/	Circle/
Circle/	Circle/	Sm. Grp	Sm. Grp.	Sm. Grp.

Sm. Grp.	Sm. Grp	Choice	Choice	Choice
Choice	Choice	Story	P.E.	Story
Story	Story	Outside	Story	Art
Outside	Outside		Outside	Outside
Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

"Choice" is our structured free-play where children make choices on which play centers they will be using. They are able to switch centers freely. Children will be encouraged, however, to remain in a center for increasing periods of time to improve their attention span. Snack is offered as a center during part of choice time. Children will be asked and reminded to eat, however, we do not have a set group time to eat so some children may choose not to eat on some days. If your child has dietary reasons that they must eat a snack every day, please let the teacher know in writing.

Speech/OT/PT: Therapies are provided both in and outside of the classroom depending upon the needs of the students. The schedule for therapies will be sent home when it becomes available.

Miscellaneous Information:

Snack

A healthy, ready to eat, snack should be sent in with your child each day. We do not have a refrigerator in the classroom so if you send in anything that needs to be kept cold, please send it in an insulated lunchbox with a freezer pack.

Daily Communication

All children will be bringing home a communication paper. We try to do this as a daily log, however, when the room gets too busy we occasionally miss a day here or there. On this paper will be listed the activities that your child participated in for the day. This log is a wonderful tool to use to review your child's day. The telephone number at Mystic River is (860) 980-8300.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

School runs from 9:00 a.m. - 11:48 a.m. for the morning class and 12:48 p.m. - 3:35 p.m. for the afternoon class. At 9:00 staff will meet parents and students at the main entrance. At 12:48 the staff will meet parents and students in the front entrance. Staff will bring the students down to the classroom. If you arrive after the group has already transitioned to the classroom, please go directly into the office through the main doors and get a late slip for your child.

At dismissal time, staff will bring the students out the same door you arrived at. If you need to pick up your child before the designated dismissal time, please sign your child out at the office.

At the beginning of the year, please give us a list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. Whenever this list changes, please notify us in writing. If somebody comes to pick up your child, and their name is not on the list, we will not be able to release him or her. Of course, in an emergency, you may call the school to let us know that a different person will be picking up your child.

Emergency Closings and Early Dismissals

Please listen to your radio, station Q-105, WICH or WNLC, to find out if school has been canceled in the case of snowstorms or other severe weather situations. You can also watch the Connecticut news stations on television to get this information. In addition, the Groton Public School System has a public access channel on Channel 19. This channel has other useful information so why not tune it.

If you have any questions or concerns you may write a note to your child's teacher.



Final Thoughts When your child comes home **MESSY**...

Red paint in the hair? Blue paint on the jeans? Sand in the shoes? White socks look brown? Sleeves a little damp?

YOUR CHILD probably...

Worked with a friend

Solved a problem

Created a masterpiece

Negotiated a difference

Learned a new skill

Had a great time

Developed new language skills

YOUR CHILD probably didn't...

Feel lonely

Become bored

Do repetitive tasks that are too babyish

Do worksheet tasks or sit-down work that is discouraging or too easy

YOU probably...

Paid good money for those clothes

Will have trouble getting the red paint out

Are concerned that the teachers isn't paying enough attention to your child

Your teacher...

Was aware of your child's needs and interests

Encouraged the children to try new things

Put smocks on the children

Was worried that you might be concerned

By: Susan Ruane, MA