



Early Learning Parent Handbook

The Early Learning Office is located at:

Central Education Center
7145 Harriet Ave S
Richfield MN 55423

Contact numbers:

Early Childhood Office -----	612-243-3007
Spanish Outreach -----	612-243-3009
Somali Outreach -----	612-243-3010
Director of Early Learning Programs -----	612-243-3006
Early Childhood Social Worker -----	612-243-3065
Prek-12 Transportation -----	612-798-6075
Early Childhood Special Education Program -----	612-243-3004
Early Childhood Screening -----	612-243-3048
Fax -----	612-243-3067
Email -----	earlylearning@rpsmn.org
Centennial Elementary School -----	612-798-6800
Central Education Center -----	612-243-3000
Richfield Dual Language School -----	612-798-6700
Sheridan Hills Elementary -----	612-798-6900
RSTEM Elementary -----	612-798-6600

Welcome to Preschool!

Welcome to the Richfield Public Schools. In our preschool program, we are committed to providing you and your child with a high quality preschool experience that will prepare them for success in school. Please review this handbook and let your child's teacher know if you have questions. Program procedures and policies subject to change.

Philosophy and Position Statement

The overall philosophy of the program is to encourage in each child a love and excitement for learning, and to prepare children with social and academic skills they need to be successful in kindergarten and throughout their educational career.

Curriculum

The preschool curriculum is based on the Minnesota State standards and aligned with the Richfield Public Schools kindergarten learning standards. The program provides common preschool experiences for all children in Richfield to ensure success in kindergarten and beyond. By aligning preschool programs with kindergarten curriculum and standards, we ensure that all students begin kindergarten with the same basic skills to promote success. Lessons are planned using the *Scholastic Big Day* curriculum, an early childhood version of the *Everyday Math* curriculum and *Second Step* social and emotional skill building curriculum.

Sample Daily Schedule

All preschool programs follow the Early Childhood Workshop (ECW) model. Early Childhood Workshop aligns with structures that children will later experience in Reader's and Writer's workshop in kindergarten. These are the components to the ECW model:

Ease Into the Day and Sign-In

Each child's day begins with a personal greeting from the teachers. Following the greeting, children sign-in for the day by identifying and writing their name. Activities are planned that allow children to make a smooth transition from home to school.

Morning/Afternoon Meeting

The purpose of this time is to build classroom community and instruct the children in core content areas. Three elements of the meeting time include: greeting, daily message and read aloud.

Small Group Instruction

Children are divided into groups of 6-8 and participate in a teacher directed activity usually focused on math, literacy or fine motor skills.

Journaling

A weekly small group activity where children can draw a picture based on what they have been learning at school. A teacher talks with the child about their picture they drew and writes down their words.

Active Learning

Children have the opportunity to explore the classroom's literacy rich learning centers designed to help them become self-directed learners, talkers, readers and writers.

Snack Time

Outdoor Play or Gym Time

Re-Group to Revisit

This is the closing meeting of the Early Childhood Workshop.

The class gathers in a large group to revisit the day's lesson, explore some other aspect of the children's work or to plan an extension of learning for the following day.

Admission Procedures

The goal of our Early Learning Programs is to provide purposeful education for as many students and parents as possible within our resources and regulations. Enrollment eligibility is regulated by the funding sources for our programs within Richfield Public Schools. Enrollment priority will be given to Richfield School District residents.

Applications for enrollment must be completed in full in order to be considered for placement. Program funding sources require disclosure of family size and annual financial income. All information will be kept confidential. All families will be asked to complete an Educational Benefits application form.

If your child is placed on a waitlist and a space becomes available for enrollment, Early Learning staff will contact you. If you do not respond within three days, the spot will be offered to the next person on the waitlist.

If requesting to change your child's classroom placement, the request must be submitted in writing. Requests for change will only be honored if the request is within enrollment criteria and space is available. No Preschool Change Request Forms will be accepted after the date that is two weeks prior to the first day of school.

Early Childhood Screening

All students entering school are required to complete an Early Childhood Screening. This is a session lasting approximately 50 minutes that is a free and used to identify potential health or developmental concerns in young children who may need a health assessment, diagnostic assessment and/or educational evaluation. This screening is not the same as a doctor's well-child visit.

You are encouraged to schedule your child's screening as soon as you are able. Appointments fill up quickly, especially toward the beginning of the school year. To schedule your screening or ask any questions, email ecscreening@rpsmn.org or call 612-243-3048.

Communication and Conferences

Parents/Guardians have the opportunity to meet with the preschool teachers in a scheduled conference each fall and winter. Conference schedules will be posted on district calendars, websites and through communication from your child's teacher. A regular communication with your child's teacher is important and additional conferences can be arranged if needed. Parents can expect regular communication through classroom newsletters.

Important! Check your child's backpack every day for notes from your child's teacher and the office.

Assessments

The authentic, ongoing, observation-based assessment system that helps teachers and administrators like you focus on what matters most for children's success. Grounded in our 38 research-based objectives for development and learning, *GOLD*® supports effective teaching and assessment, while providing you with more time to spend with the children in your program. Accessed through *MyTeachingStrategies*™, *GOLD*® automatically links teaching and assessment, making it easier to connect the dots across the most important aspects of high-quality early childhood education.

With *GOLD*®, teachers can:

- Use a variety of online tools to gather and organize meaningful data quickly, including online portfolios where children's work can be stored;
- Create a developmental profile of each child to answer the questions, "What does this child know? What is he or she able to do?" that can be used to scaffold each child's learning; and
- Generate comprehensive reports that can be customized easily and shared with family members and other stakeholders.

Children are assessed in the areas of literacy, math, social-emotional and cognitive development in the fall, winter and spring using the TS Gold . Teachers will share assessment data with parents at parent-teacher conferences twice per year. You will receive a paper copy of your child's assessment by mail or in your child's backpack at the end of the year.

Policies and Procedures

Drop-off / Pick-up:

Be on time when dropping off and picking up your child from school.

- Drop off
 - o If you arrive for class early, please wait with your child outside of the classroom door until the teacher opens the door.
 - o Take your child to the classroom and tell a teacher that your child is there.
- Pick up
 - o If a person who is NOT on the child's emergency contact form will be picking up a child from school, the parent or guardian must let the teacher know in advance. The person picking up the student must show photo identification.
 - o When picking up your child from school, please plan to arrive **5 minutes** before class ends.

Late Pick-Up Procedures

1. If we have not heard from a parent/guardian **5 minutes** after the end of class time and/or they are not at the bus stop to receive the student, staff will call emergency contacts.
2. If a pattern is repeated a program social worker will be available to assist in addressing the concerns.

We understand that occasionally conditions beyond one's control exist (inclement weather). If these conditions arise, you must notify your school as soon as possible and make arrangements for someone else to pick up your child.

Non-Custodial Parent Pick-Up

A copy of a current court order must be on file with the school if a non-custodial parent is not allowed to pick up a child from the program.

Bus Transportation

- Preschool for 4s
 - Busing is available for children who live within the designated busing routes.
 - The transportation department will determine bus stop locations and times.
 - Your child's bus stop information will be available at open house.
- Preschool for 3s
 - Busing is available for afternoon sessions for children who live within the designated busing routes
 - The transportation department will determine bus stop locations and times.
 - Your child's bus stop information will be available at open house.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for their child's behavior and safety before he/she gets on the bus and as soon as he/she gets off the bus.

Bus Stop Rules

- Pick up (before school)
 - An adult must be with the child at the bus stop.
 - Make sure you are ready at your bus stop **5 minutes** before your scheduled pick-up time and wait until 10 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time. If your bus doesn't arrive within this time frame, please call (61) 798- 6075.
 - Drivers will wait 1 minute before going on to the next stop.
- Drop off (after school)
 - If no adult is at the bus stop, the driver will not let your child off the bus. After waiting for 1 minute, your child will be returned to the school office where your emergency contacts will be called and will need to pick him/her up.
- 4-year old preschool uses full size buses for transportation. Preschool students sit in the front seats. Full size school buses do NOT stop in front of houses for pick-up and drop-off.
- If your child requires special transportation needs, documentation is required to apply for accommodations.

If there is no adult present at the bus stop more than 3 times, your child will be suspended from the bus for one day. If no adult is at the bus stop 5 or more times, your child will be suspended from the bus and may lose the privilege of riding the bus for the rest of the year.

Bus Behavior

Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege, not a right. If your child's behavior on the bus is not safe, he or she may lose the privilege of riding the bus to and from school. Parents and teachers will work together to teach appropriate bus riding skills for your child.

Expected behaviors include:

- Sit in the first few rows of the bus
- Remain seated on your pockets facing forward the whole ride
- Use a quiet voice
- Do not stand up until the bus driver says its ok to stand up
- Listen to the bus driver

Absences

It is important for your child to be at school every school day. When possible, please schedule doctor and other appointments during times when school is not in session. If your child will be absent from class, please call your school. Phone numbers are listed below.

If your child misses **5 or more** days of school, the teacher will call you.

If your child misses **15** consecutive days of school, he/she will be disenrolled from the program in alignment with state statute.

Attendance Lines

Centennial -----	612-798-6800
RSTEM-----	612-798-6600
Richfield Dual Language -----	612-888-7357
Sheridan Hills -----	612-798-6900
Central -----	612-243-3007

Snow Days/Emergency Closing

If Richfield Public Schools close, all Richfield Preschool classes will close. Information will be posted at www.richfieldschools.org, <https://www.facebook.com/RPSCCommunityEd> as well as on local TV stations or radio stations KSTP-1500 AM/WCCO-830.

Health Guidelines

Please help to keep our classrooms healthy. If your child is sick with any of the following, keep them home until these symptoms are gone and they feel better. If a child has a contagious condition, notify the classroom teacher immediately even if the child stays home.

- Fever 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours that is not related to a known chronic condition
- Undiagnosed rash that is unexplained or that is not related to a known chronic condition
- Unexplained tiredness, crying, paleness, restlessness
- Have breathing difficulties, wheezing
- Have a cold with yellow-green mucus or cough unrelated to a chronic health condition
- Have a contagious condition that has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others (for example: pinkeye, strep-throat, impetigo, scabies, ringworm)

Illness or Injury at School

If your child becomes sick or is hurt at school and cannot continue with the school day, we will call you to come and pick your child up. If we are not able to reach you, we will call the emergency contact person. You must have a person listed on the emergency card who would be able to pick up your child if necessary. A child who is sick may be separated from the group and an adult will stay with the child until he/she is picked up.

Immunization Record

Your child's up-to-date immunizations or a legal exemption must be on file at school and will be reviewed by the school nurse. **Children who are not up-to-date on documentation will not be able to begin school.**

Medical Concerns and Medications at School

If your child has health concerns and/or needs medication at school, please let your child's teacher know and we will work with you and your child's healthcare provider in following our medication procedures and/or response to your child's health concern at school.

The following is needed in order to give medicine at school:

- A Medication Consent Form from a licensed prescriber. This form is available under "Health Services" at www.richfieldschools.org
- Signed permission from the parent/guardian
- Labeled medication in its original container

Please provide a written excuse letter if there is an activity that you do not want your child to participate in for health or other reasons.

Toilet Training

Any child who is entering school must be toilet trained prior to the start of the program unless the child has been previously granted developmental and/or medical exemption by a healthcare provider or Early Childhood Special Education staff.

Definition of Toilet Trained:

- Children who can successfully use the toilet without prompting; being vocal and alerting staff when and if they need to use the bathroom.
- They need to be able to pull up and down their clothing using little or no assistance from the teacher.
- Children will come to school without needing to wear a pull-up or diaper.

We understand that children of all ages have an occasional accident. Our staff will work with your child to achieve many skills, including reinforcing those that are necessary for independent toileting and hygiene.

School Supplies

- All students should bring a backpack everyday to exchange important information and to take home the child's papers.
- Send an extra set of clothes and write your child's name on all clothes and other things he or she brings to school.
- No additional school supplies are needed for your child to start preschool.

Clothing

Children should wear clothing that is:

- Comfortable and casual for play.
- Easy for them to take on and off by themselves to go outside or to the bathroom.
- Appropriate for the weather:
 - Winter – coat, boots, hat, mittens, snow pants
 - Spring and Fall – long pants and light jackets
- Comfortable shoes for running and playing, like tennis shoes.
- The school is not responsible for lost jewelry.

Snacks

Children will have a light breakfast or snack and water or milk each day. Snack time is learning time for preschoolers. Children practice self-help skills (unfolding their napkin, pouring their own water, opening a package). Snack time is also a great time for children to practice talking with one another and with the teachers.

Parents will be asked to provide nutritious snacks throughout the year. All snacks must follow USDA Smart Snacks in School guidelines. Snacks **must be store-bought** and/or commercially prepared and brought to school in an **unopened package**. Please select snacks that are low in salt and sugar content and **peanut free**. Your child's teacher may provide you with a list of suggested snack items. **If your child has food allergies, please inform the teacher.**

Children in full day classes may either bring a lunch from home or eat through the school lunch program.

Holidays and Celebrations

While teachers may teach about religious holidays as part of an objective and secular educational program of teaching about religion, celebrating religious holidays in the form of religious worship or other practices is unconstitutional. Teaching about holidays with both a religious and secular basis may be constitutional if it furthers a genuine secular program of education, is presented objectively, and does not have the effect of advancing or inhibiting religion. The study of religious holidays should reflect this nation's diversity and bountiful heritage

Behavior Guidance/Discipline in the Classroom

What guidance looks like in the classroom:

- Staff teach children how to act in the classroom.
- Adults support children as they learn what is expected.
- The activities in the classroom help children stay involved in learning.
- When children need extra help with making friends, solving problems or telling us how they feel, adults will teach children these skills.

Teaching children social emotional skills is an important part of the preschool program. We use positive ways to help children learn and practice appropriate behaviors, and are committed to working with your child while they learn these skills.

In addition to teaching and learning, our role is to ensure a safe, secure classroom for all children and staff. If your child needs more support, we will work with you to develop a plan. Sometimes we will work with Early Childhood Special Education staff, social workers or behavior specialists in order to help your child. ***If parents and staff are not able to agree on a behavior plan, if your child is hurting other children or staff or doing something very dangerous s/he may***

be removed from the program. This action would only take place after talking with the parent and after other methods have not been successful.

If your child's behavior at school is not safe, your child's teacher will call you. **If the behavior is dangerous to your child, to other children or staff, you will need to come to school to pick your child up within 20 minutes.** If we are not able to reach you, we will call the emergency contact person.

Parent Participation

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. Children do better in school when their parents are involved in their learning. During the year, the program will offer ***Families Learning Together (FLT)*** days. Parents or another special adult (grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc.) are encouraged to join your child at school on these special days. FLT days include time for you and your child to engage in fun learning activities in the classroom, as well as parent education and discussion. Teachers will send notes home in your child's backpack inviting you to ***Families Learning Together*** days.

Children's Basic Needs

In order to grow and learn, all children have basic needs including safety, good nutrition, shelter, medical attention, clothing, appropriate discipline and love. Parents or guardians who are having difficulty providing for their child's emotional or physical needs are encouraged to ask for help. Our Early Childhood Social Worker will work with you and can be reached at 612-243-3065.

Mandated Reporting

Staff are mandated by the State of Minnesota to file a report with Hennepin County Child Protection or the Sheriff's Department if there is suspicion of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect.

Weapon-Free Policy

No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in this policy. The school district will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer, or member of the public who violates this policy.

A "weapon" means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nunchucks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.

No person shall possess, use or distribute any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or non-functional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.

Withdrawal from the Program

If you wish to withdraw your child from the program, a written notice must be submitted to the office at the Central Education Center a minimum of *one week* in advance.

Tuition Payments

(For 3-Year-Old Preschool Classes)

If tuition is part of your child's program, 9 installments will be collected on the 15th of August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and April.

Automatic Payments: Families may sign up for monthly automatic tuition payments using any of the following: VISA, Mastercard, Discover, Checking or Savings Account. Sign up for AutoPay directly online through your preschool account at <https://richfield.ce.eleyo.com> or call 612-243-3007 for assistance in setting it up.

Credit Card Payments: VISA, Mastercard or Discover

Cash: If you wish to pay your account in cash, please deliver in exact amounts directly to the main office of the Central Education Center so that our staff can provide you with a written receipt.

Check or Money Order: Make payable to ISD 280 Community Education and either drop off or mail to the office. (Please write your child's name in the memo line).

Late Payments: If your payment will not be on time, please call the office immediately at 612-243-3007. If you do not call, a late notice will be mailed to you. If payments are more than two months past due, and you have not contacted the preschool office, we reserve the right to remove your child from the program.

All accounting and payment information must be communicated directly with the office staff at the Central Education Center (in person, by phone, by email, etc.) Classroom staff cannot accept payments.

Preschool Plus Parent Information & Policies

Welcome to the new, extended preschool experience in Richfield Public Schools! Preschool Plus pairs with the morning Preschool for 4s program at Central and meets every school day. Our curriculum builds on the fun and learning from the morning session while offering a longer school day and convenient, flexible pick up time for parents. All policies and information from the Early Learning Handbook apply to Preschool Plus, along with those below.

Enrollment:

Space is limited to the first 20 children who complete the required paperwork and payment. The annual tuition is paid by 9 installments, collected on the 15th of August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and April. Registration deposits of \$100 per child are applied to your first month's tuition, and are non-refundable after June 1, 2020.

Automatic Payments: You may sign up for automatic monthly payments using any of the following: VISA, Mastercard, Discover, Checking Account or Savings Account. Sign up for AutoPay directly online through your preschool account at <https://richfield.ce.eleyo.com> or call 612-243-3007 for assistance in setting it up.

Credit Card Payments: VISA, Mastercard or Discover

Cash: If you wish to pay your account in cash, please deliver in exact amounts directly to the main office of the Central Education Center so that our staff can provide you with a written receipt.

Check or Money Order: Make payable to ISD 280 Community Education and either drop off or mail to the office. (Please write your child's name in the memo line or include the invoice)

All accounting and payment information must be communicated directly with the office staff at the Central Education Center (in person, by phone, by email, etc.) **Classroom staff cannot accept payments.**

Cancellation:

If the program does not reach its required number of participants, the program may be cancelled and tuition will be refunded. Parents who wish to cancel their participation in Preschool Plus must submit notice in writing to the office one month prior if possible. Payments already made may not be refunded or prorated.

Late Payments:

Invoices that are not paid by the 15th of the month will be charged a late fee of \$15 per child. If payments are more than two months past due, we reserve the right to remove your child from the program. Please contact the office with questions or concerns. We also have staff who can assist with tuition assistance applications.

Lunch/Snack:

A cold lunch must be brought from home everyday. A small snack will be served to each child. If your child has any food allergies please inform the teachers and make sure your child's health form is updated to reflect all known allergies.

After School Pick-Up:

Children must be picked up by 4:30pm. There will be a \$10 late fee assessed for every 10 minutes past 4:30pm due with your next tuition. If a person who is NOT on the child's emergency contact form will be picking up a child from school, the parent or guardian must let the teacher know in advance. The person picking up the student must show photo identification.