



## Edison Township Public Schools Preschool Program

The Edison Township Public Schools Preschool Program implements the HighScope Curriculum which emphasizes “Active Participatory Learning.” Active Participatory Learning promotes children to have direct, hands-on experiences with people, object, events, and ideas. Children’s interests and choices are the core of the HighScope. The children build their own knowledge through interactions with the world and the people around them. The children take the first step in the learning process by making choices and following through on their plans and decisions. Learning and development are key elements to develop long-term, trusting relationship with parents or guardians, who are close at hand to support the children as they play. The HighScope routine helps the children answer questions by providing them with a consistent schedule of events they can depend on and understand. A variety of active learning periods provide children with a range of experiences and interactions. These active learning experience include:

- Greeting Time- During this time the children and staff share information, social greetings, plan their day, and focus on routine.
- Large Group- Children and adults come together for multi-sensory activities to build a sense of community.
- Children have opportunities for hands-on, active learning and especially outdoors. Nature provides many manipulatives, choice to move, and discover the natural environment. Also, being outside is a way for children to be seen and heard in ways that walls can restrict. The outdoors provides amazing platforms for emergent curriculum, and planning based on children’s interest.
- Plan, Work, Recall- This time is designed to build on children’s interest capacity for initiative and problem-solving skills.
- Small Group Time – Time to experiment with materials and problems in an activity.
- Outside Time –Time for active physical play. Being outdoors provides the children a rich learning opportunity that benefits their devolvement. While being outside the children have the opportunity to ask questions, learn about their surroundings, and learn about themselves. Outside time enables the children to play together, explore, build fine create their own games and rules, and become familiar with their natural surroundings.
- Transition Times- Transition times are when children move from one area to the other.

Edison’s preschool program for children with disabilities follows the districts HighScope curriculum. The program is taught by certified special education teachers and highly trained support staff. The HighScope curriculum is designed to provide a rich academic foundation while promoting independence, decision making, creativity, and problem solving in young children. The program ensures a high-quality experience for all learners. Along with the HighScope curriculum, the teachers implement ABA strategies. ABA focuses on improving social skills, communication, academics, and adaptive learning skills. Students that are enrolled in the preschool program for children with

disabilities have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that entitles them to attend Extended School Year (ESY) which is offered in the summer. Therefore, the children attending ESY not only work on their IEP, but learn the importance of safety awareness into The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and New Jersey's state special education regulations define ESY services as "special education and related services provided to a student with a disability beyond the normal school year in accordance with the student's IEP at no cost to the parent." ESY services are intended to assist students with maintaining skills learned during the school year to avoid any regression and enhance new skills that students will encounter in the summer months.

When attending ESY, it is imperative that the parents and guardians apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen before the children can participate in outdoor learning activities. Prior to the children going outside, the school nurse must make sure the outdoor temperature is safe. The teachers focus on educating the children about the safety of being outside during the summer days. The children learn about the necessary precautions that must take place. The children learn about the importance of applying sunscreen daily, protecting their eyes and staying hydrated. Social stories and activities are sent home as a reinforcement. Besides the students being properly protected from the sun, the educators are also encouraged to protect themselves. The children and staff use sunglasses, hats and sunscreen to help protect themselves from the direct sunlight they encounter during the summer months. Bringing the students outside all year including the hot months is imperative to their educational needs. We would like to enhance the school property with shaded areas, so that the children can participate in outdoor activities without any health risks.

Outdoor play is critical for young children in schools. Playgrounds are where children can take off and flourish. Children develop skills that must be achieved at a young age such as, exploring, risk taking, greater self-awareness, improved peer-to-peer interaction, fine and gross motor development. Outdoor play is critical for the healthy development. Also, being outside is a way for children to be seen and heard in ways that walls can restrict. The outdoors provides amazing platforms for emergent curriculum, joy in learning and planning based on children's interest.

High/Scope offers best practices in early childhood education and child development. During COVID19, the District follows the following CDC guidelines:

- Create small child use areas when using large spaces to keep children from gathering outside of their group.
- Stagger times for outdoor play or gym time.
- Clean the space in between groups that use a designated area.