

Lakewood Local School District

Early Education Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why does Lakewood Local School District have to provide preschool services?
Special Education rules and regulations at both the Federal and State level ensure that each school district must provide “a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is made available to all children with disabilities between the **ages of three** and twenty-one, inclusive, ...” as defined in paragraph (B) (56) of rule 3301-51-01 of the Administrative Code and as provided by rule 3301-51-01 of the Administrative Code.
2. What is an inclusionary preschool?
Lakewood Local School District's two preschool classrooms are taught by an early childhood intervention specialist. Each preschool classroom has a morning and afternoon session. Preschool is offered Monday-Thursday. The preschool program's primary purpose is to fulfill the federal and state requirement to serve children with disabilities whose ages are between 3 and 5. The maximum number of children with a disability per preschool session is 8. The classroom also includes an equal number (8) of typically developing peers. Of the 8 typically developing peers, at least 6 are required to meet the family income eligibility under the Early Childhood Education grant. Typically developing peers must be 4 on or before October 1st of the school year. Families from the Lakewood Local School District are welcome to apply for a preschool spot.
3. How is the Early Childhood program funded?
The Lakewood Local Early Childhood program is funded through multiple sources. The majority of funding comes from State Preschool Special Education funds. The next largest funding was awarded to Lakewood Local as the Early Childhood Education Grant for low-income families. Preschool tuition contributes the smallest amount of funding.
4. What is the Early Childhood Grant?
Lakewood Local School District is fortunate to be awarded funding from the Ohio Department of Education to support preschool services to at-risk children from lower income families. The requirements of the grant stipulate that Lakewood Local provides services to 24 eligible families and that the preschool fulfills rigorous quality criteria. We are proud that our Lakewood Local Preschool has a 5 out of 5 star quality rating.
5. What is Step Up To Quality? Is our preschool a high quality program?
Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) is Ohio's Star Rating system for licensed early learning and development programs. It is the criteria and process for Ohio's Tiered Quality Rating & Improvement System. The program standards are based on national research identifying standards which lead to improved outcomes for children. The Ohio Dept. of Education states: “According to the 2016 SUTQ Validation Study, children who regularly attend Star Rated programs score higher on Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment”. “Research



confirms that when a program takes steps to increase quality, the children they teach are better prepared for the future. Children display more confidence, a curiosity about the world around them and are eager to learn. These are important skills for success in school and life".

Lakewood Local School District's preschool is proud to continue to be awarded the highest possible rating of **5 out of a 5-Star rating**. A 5-Star rating ensures our preschool program has fulfilled multiple criteria demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement, has highly trained teachers, focuses on family engagement, and provides for the development of school readiness skills. Our preschool demonstrated through on-site observations and documentation high quality and fulfillment in all of the four Step Up To Quality standards of Child Learning and Development, Administrative and Leadership Practices, Staff Qualifications and Professional Development, and Family and Community Partnerships.

6. How is preschool student progress measured?

Preschool student progress is measured many times before and during the school year using multiple and diverse methods of assessment.

The Lakewood Local School District uses the following tools:

A. *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning 4th edition.*

This tool is used to screen development before enrollment, at the beginning of the preschool year and then again at the end of the preschool year to gauge growth in Motor, Concepts, Language, Self-Help, and Social Development.

B. *Early Learning Assessment (ELA)*

This assessment for preschool-aged children was developed by Ohio, in partnership with Maryland. The Early Learning Assessment is a part of Ohio's Ready for Kindergarten Assessment System. The Early Learning Assessment will provide information about a student's progress from early preschool to kindergarten.

C. *Standards Based Report of Key Skills*, a teacher designed assessment of essential readiness skills and concepts. The assessment is augmented by individual student Portfolios.

D. *Early Childhood Outcome Performance Measure*. Under IDEA 2004, Ohio must report prescribed information to the Office of Special Education Programs in the U. S. Department of Education. The data is intended to identify trends in how preschool children with disabilities make progress in relationship to same-aged, typically developing peers. The outcomes are focused on:

- a. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships).
- b. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy).
- c. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

7. What do the preschoolers learn? Are there content standards and a curriculum?

School District's preschool programs must provide instruction based **upon Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards** (birth to kindergarten entry). These Standards are the basis for the Early Learning Assessment. The standards and assessment focus on seven areas of a child's growth and development:

1. Social Foundations (including social and emotional development, and approaches toward learning)
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Language and Literacy
6. Physical Well-being and Motor Development
7. Fine Arts

Lakewood Local School District's has adopted the Creative Curriculum as the foundation for the preschool program. Additional curricula resources utilized are Handwriting without Tears, Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS), Foundations (also used at the K-2 level),

8. How do I apply for a preschool spot?

Go onto the Lakewood Local website and under the "district" tab; look for "District Student On-Line Registration" to complete a Preschool application. The application process has one additional step beyond the usual K-12 student registration. The additional appointment includes a complete review of documents, and a free developmental/speech screening for your child.

9. What are the days and hours of the preschool classes?

Preschool classrooms operate Monday through Thursday. Fridays are held for evaluations, staff training, itinerant services, and meetings. Currently, there are two classrooms. Each classroom has a morning and afternoon session. The morning session is 8:30 to 11:45 and the afternoon session is from 12:20 to 3:45. Placement in a session is dependent of school transportation routes. There is no "full day" option available.

10. Is school transportation available to all?

School transportation is available to preschool students with a disability who have an IEP. School transportation may be available to typically developing peers dependent on routes, availability of busses and spaces, and time requirements. Pick-up and drop-off addresses must be within the Lakewood Local School district boundaries. There is no cost to parents/guardians for school transportation.

11. How are students placed in a class or session?

Each session may have a mixed group of ages; with 3, 4 and 5 year old children. At least half of the children are typically-developing, and children with a disability comprise the other half. Placement is based on a number of factors; completion of all steps of the application process, required documentation, age, personality, ability, gender, and zones of transportation routes. Unfortunately, typically developing peer spots are limited and not all applicants are placed in the preschool program.

12. Why are there tuition fees to attend as a typically developing peer?

There are no federal or state mandates to educate children before the age of 5. Since preschool in the US nor Ohio is not compulsory, there is also no funding to provide universal education to preschool-aged children. Lakewood Local is fortunate to be one

of the few school districts to have been awarded an Early Childhood Education grant from the Ohio Department of Education. The funds are limited to 24 children who are 4 years of age on or before October 1st, and whose family income is within criteria aligned to the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Lakewood Local in an attempt to provide more opportunity - holds 8 spots for children who are 4 and who do not have a disability and who are not eligible under the Early Childhood Education grant. The 8 spots do not have any federal or state funding so the cost for these limited spots is higher.

13. How and where do we pay preschool tuition fees?

Tuition can be paid with a check or money order to Lakewood Local School District, and mailed or delivered monthly to Debbie Bowman, JIS B secretary.