

Parent
Little
Wildcats
Preschool

Handbook
2023-2024



About Our Program

Mission Statement

Chisago Lakes School District Early Childhood programs provide positive opportunities for parents and children to learn together in home, school, and community; understanding parents are the first and most important influence in the development of their children.

Introduction

Welcome to the Chisago Lakes School District Little Wildcats Preschool Program. Our staff members include licensed and certified Early Childhood teachers, Early Childhood Special Education teachers, and Classroom Assistants. We follow all Chisago Lakes School District Policies. The Little Wildcats Preschool program is organized and managed under Chisago Lakes Community Education. If you have questions or concerns please call the Community Education office.

Curriculum

The Little Wildcats Preschool program follows the Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence as we help young children develop their social/emotional, language, early literacy, and self-help skills. Learning Without Tears is also implemented in the classrooms. All of our Early Childhood Programs focus on the child's development in 9 areas: social/emotional, physical, language/communication, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts.

Know when you walk into our classrooms and see children playing, we are creating the best learning environment we can for children through planned, intentional play opportunities. Years of research on children's learning and development document the many benefits of play for children. Intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and language development are all strengthened through play. While playing, children are actively involved in making sense of the world, exploring and establishing understandings, practicing language, solving problems, and developing awareness of others. Play is absolutely essential for optimal development of young children.

Three year olds often engage in solitary or parallel play. Four and five year olds do as well, but increasingly their play will involve other children. Teachers structure centers so children can build increasingly complex skills. Children approach play in their own unique way; some approach a group with great gusto while others observe for a while before joining in. Others may need to be taught how to join in.

Assessment

We use the state approved online assessment tool called "Teaching Strategies GOLD" (TS GOLD). It is an ongoing, authentic, observation-based, whole-child assessment system. This means we do not test children. Instead, we engage in an ongoing process of assessment so we learn about what every child knows and can do (i.e. their strengths, interests, skills, and needs). Our mission is to use this information to help every child experience success in preschool.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

Services are available to provide individually tailored assessment and educational programs for young children with disabilities (birth to kindergarten entry) and their families. Services are provided at no charge to eligible children. Referrals can be made by calling the Early Childhood Special Education Intake at the St. Croix River Education District, 320-358-1217 or toll free 1-800-452-6944.

You can go directly to Help Me Grow at 1-866-693-4769 or helpmegrowmn.org to make a referral for your child.

Class Information

Enrollment & Registration Requirements

Enrollment in the program is open to the public. Chisago Lakes is committed to all people having equal access to programs and facilities without regard to race, creed, color, sex, or national origin. The dates of registration are advertised each year in publications. **Children must be fully toilet trained, wearing underwear full-time, and independent in the bathroom before starting Little Wildcats Preschool.**

In filling openings, a waitlist is maintained. As openings become available, we notify those on the waitlist. Children must be the stated age for a particular class; no exceptions are made to age eligibility. The program year runs from September to May and generally follows the Chisago Lakes School District calendar for holidays and staff development non-school days. Little Wildcats class calendars will be provided for families with start and end dates and additional non-school dates.

Tuition and Fees

A non-refundable registration fee of \$35 is due at the time of registration, along with the last month's tuition (May). Monthly class fees are due on the 1st of the month. Parents/guardians are responsible for setting up the automatic payment option in Eleyo. Auto payments will be posted on the 1st of each month. If payment is declined, you will be contacted by the school to correct the payment. Any payments received after the 1st of the month will be charged a \$10 late fee.

If tuition is not paid, your child will lose their place in the class. Tuition will not be refunded when discontinuing services. Full tuition will be paid regardless of start date.

Change of schedule or end of service requires a two week written notice. Parents/guardians are responsible for tuition payments until written notification is received.

Due to our program reliance on tuition, no refunds will be given for an absence or School District closings (ex. inclement weather days).

Little Wildcats Preschool Tuition:

2 Days/Week \$110/Month

3 Days/Week \$164/Month

5 Days/Week \$274/Month

Tuition Assistance

Little Wildcats Preschool qualifies for a limited amount of financial assistance. This is available to families in the Chisago Lakes School District. Children must fit certain criteria and be at risk for kindergarten readiness to participate. Priority is given to a child in the year before they begin kindergarten. For more information, call 651-213-2281.

Attendance

Regular attendance is critical for success in school. We expect children to attend preschool each day. Please call or email your child's teacher if your child will be absent.

Emergency Contact Information

It is important a parent/guardian fill out the emergency contact information online completely. If addresses, phone numbers, or any other contact information change, let your child's teacher know, as well as making changes to your online Eleyo account.

Staff NEED to be able to reach parents/guardians in case of an emergency.

If there is someone you **DO NOT** want to pick up your child, we need to know and have that information on file. If there are arrangements that define parental custody or contact rights, we need to have a copy of the legal document ordering such arrangements in the Early Childhood office.

School Closings

If District #2144 schools are closed for any reason, Little Wildcats classes will also be canceled. If school starts 2 hours late, **morning** Little Wildcats classes will be **canceled**. For school closing information, listen to WCCO radio or 830 AM, or Channel 4, Channel 5, Channel 9, or Channel 11 television news. Information will also be posted on the district website: www.isd2144.org

Census Information

The Family Center gathers census information for the District to ensure all families with young children will be provided with appropriate school information. You can assist this process by encouraging families with young children who are new in the community to contact the Family Center at Primary School.

Policies & Procedures

Safety & Security

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety requires schools to conduct 5 fire drills, 5 lock down drills, and 1 tornado drill a school year to ensure each student knows what to do in each situation. Teachers are familiar with these drills and emergency procedures. Classrooms have posted procedures for fire and tornado emergencies. Teachers will guide your children to safe areas. You can help prepare your child for this by telling them there may be flashing lights and loud noises, and they need to follow their teacher's instructions. The district has procedures in place to handle emergencies that may arise within the school or community. Your child's safety is a priority for us; you can help by keeping emergency numbers up-to-date.

Dress

Children must be fully toilet trained, wearing underwear full-time, and independent in the bathroom before starting Little Wildcats Preschool. Teachers and assistants cannot change diapers or pull-ups. They can verbally assist the child in getting changed. If extensive or repeated accidents occur, parents will be contacted to come change their child, and a meeting will be set up to discuss further action.

Clothing that is comfortable, sturdy, washable, and easily managed by children is recommended. This encourages independence by the children. Many toilet accidents are prevented when children can button or pull down pants without a struggle. Children are encouraged to wear closed-toed shoes during class. Tennis or rubber soled shoes are safer than those with slippery soles. Flip flops are dangerous on the playground - please do not wear them. Children are often taken outside to play in good weather, so please dress them appropriately for the weather. Make sure to label your child's belongings with their name. Please be sure to include a change of clothes in your child's backpack in the case of an accident.

Children's Belongings

Each child has the use of a cubby in which to store personal items and papers while at school. Please avoid letting children bring toys from home to school. Do not send electronic devices to preschool with your child; we cannot be responsible for them. "Look-a like" weapons (i.e. toy guns, knives, etc.) are not allowed. Each child should have a full-size backpack to carry items to and from school.

Photography & Video Recording

Photo taking and videotaping are allowed in the classrooms. If you do **not** want your child to be included in any photos or video recording, please fill out a "Data Privacy Request Form 515 F" found on the District Website.

Snacks

Snack time provides a valuable learning experience for children. They experiment with taste, smell, color, texture, taking turns, making choices, and helping themselves. Children will wash their hands before snack and all sit down to eat together. Staff sit at the table with the children at snack time and children are encouraged, but not forced to try new foods.

Each day, parents will be responsible for providing a healthy, nutritious snack for their child. Children attend half day so they will need **one snack each day**. Please label your child's snack with their first and last name. Please avoid all nut products, including, but not limited to, peanut butter, and any packaging that states "may contain nuts" or "manufactured in a facility that processes nuts". This is to maintain a safe environment for children with allergies. Snacks will **not** be refrigerated. Please make sure your child is fed before class time. Children will be provided small pitchers of water to practice their fine motor skills when pouring. Water bottles and other beverages are not encouraged.

Program Information

Arrival & Departure

We ask parents/guardians and children to arrive no more than 10 minutes before class begins. Teachers are busy preparing the classroom for the day and cannot take responsibility for children until the stated class start time.

Children will be allowed to leave only with the people listed on the emergency contact information. Staff must be informed in writing if anyone other than those designated on their emergency form will be picking up your child and they must have a current picture ID. No child will be released to an adult who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

If there are arrangements that define parental custody or contact rights, we need to have a copy of the legal document ordering such arrangements in the Early Childhood office.

Late Pick Up

Picking up your preschooler late will result in a late fee. A charge of \$5 will be assessed after 5 minutes and at a rate of \$1 per minute thereafter. Late fees **must** be paid when the child is picked up or the card on file will be charged. If children are not picked up 20 minutes after class time is over, the child will be brought to Kids Club for care. Parents will be responsible for all fees incurred for this extra care.

Sample Daily Schedule

Arrival/Sign In: Please plan to arrive at the scheduled class time. Children practice writing their names.

Circle Time: Daily message, calendar, songs, stories, and theme related discussion.

Art/Centers/Free Choice Time: Children are encouraged to learn to make choices from activities offered. Centers include: reading, writing, science, blocks, dramatic play, and art.

Small Group Time: Literacy, math, and social skills are the focus. These may include rhyming, alliteration, letter sounds, reading stories, counting, patterning, and other math activities. Time to practice skills in recognizing feelings in self and others and coping strategies.

Clean-up/Bathroom Break: Children are encouraged to help in keeping their classroom clean and organized by picking up after they are finished with a toy or center. Children must be fully toilet trained, wearing underwear full-time, and independent in using the toilet to attend Little Wildcats Preschool. Teachers and assistants cannot change diapers or pull-ups. They can verbally assist the child in getting changed. If extensive or repeated accidents occur parents/guardians will be contacted to come change their child, and a meeting will be set up to discuss further actions.

Snack: Snack time provides a valuable learning experience for children. They experiment with taste, smell, color, texture, taking turns, making choices, and helping themselves. Children will wash their hands before snack and all sit down to eat together. Staff sit at the table with the children at snack time and children are encouraged, but not forced to try new foods. Each day, parents will be responsible for providing a healthy, nutritious snack for their child. Water will be provided. Children attend half day so they will need one snack each day. Please label your child's snack with their first and last name. Please avoid all nut products, including, but not limited to, peanut butter, and any packaging that states "may contain nuts" or "manufactured in a facility that processes nuts". This is to maintain a safe environment for children with allergies. Snacks will not be refrigerated.

Book Look: Children are given time to sit on the carpet to look at books and have staff read to them.

Story Time/Large Motor/Music and Movement: Stories are read aloud to the group. Music and movement opportunities are provided. This may include outside time on the playground, weather permitting.

Dismissal: Children put paper/folders, etc., in backpacks and get ready to go home or to childcare.

Early Childhood Screening

What is Screening

An Early Childhood Screening is required for all children before starting Kindergarten in a public school in Minnesota. This screening is a simple check of a young child's health and development. Early Childhood Screenings check your child's: vision, hearing, height, weight, immunization status, thinking & communication skills, and social & emotional development. Parents will have the opportunity to discuss the results of the screening with an Early Childhood Screening staff member. The entire process should take about 90 minutes.

All families in the Chisago Lakes School District are invited to schedule a free screening appt. Screenings are held monthly during the school year and recommended for children after their 3rd birthday.

2023-2024 Screening Dates:

Thurs. August 24th	Tues. November 21st	Fri. February 2nd	Thurs. April 25th	Fri. May 31st
Thurs. September 28th	Thurs. January 11th	Thurs. March 14th	Wed. May 29th	K ONLY Mon. June 3rd
Tues. October 17th	Thurs. February 1st	Tues. April 9th	Thurs. May 30th	

How to Register

Go online (www.isd2144.org/earlychildhood) to schedule an appointment

What if I would prefer not to have my child screened?

Parents/Guardians have the option to “opt out due to consciously held beliefs”

Please see the attached “Parent Frequently Asked Questions for Early Childhood Screening” document from the MN Department of Education which speaks to this process.

[Parent Frequently Asked Questions for Early Childhood Screening](#)

[Parent Video about Early Childhood Screening](#)

Supplemental Programs

Transportation

The child must be 4 on or before September 1, 2023 and attending Little Wildcats Preschool in order to ride the bus. There is no midday (11:30 am - 1:00 pm) bus. A transportation form must be completed and turned into 4.0 Bus Service prior to busing usage. Call 651-213-2020 or email warmstrong@isd2144.org with any questions. To see details on our transportation services, go to www.fourpointo.com.

Busing

Except in the case of emergency, students are expected to ride to and from school on their assigned bus. Riding the school bus is a privilege. Improper conduct will result in that privilege being denied. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus will be at the sole discretion of the school district. Consequences for school bus misconduct will apply to all students and addressed on a case-by-case basis depending on the infraction, however a general continuum is provided below:

1st Offense: written warning, bus driver contacts the parent / guardian, principal meets with student. Parent contact via phone or in person is made by the driver.

2nd Offense: written warning by the driver. Principal meets with student and contacts parent. Bus suspension warning is given.

3rd Offense: written warning by the driver. Principal meets with student and contacts parent. Student is suspended from riding the bus for up to three days.

4th Offense: written warning by the driver. Principal meets with student and contacts parent. Student is suspended from riding the bus for up to five days (length of time dependent on offense)

Kids Club - Preschool Care

The child must be 4 on or before September 1, 2023 and attending Little Wildcats Preschool to attend Kids Club care. Kids Club offers before and after preschool care for families who register. Registration and further details are available online at www.isd2144.org/kidsclub. Email kidsclub@isd2144.org with any questions.

Parent Engagement

Communication

Communication is the key to bridging home and preschool. Newsletters and flyers are posted electronically on the Community Education website and sent home regularly. All teachers can be reached via phone/voicemail or email.

Conferences

Conferences are held twice a year, fall and spring. Please make every attempt to participate in your child's conference. "My Conference time" will be used for families to sign up for a conference. Of course you may come to the teacher at any time throughout the year with questions, concerns, or information regarding your child.

Parent Advisory Council

Parents from each of our Early Childhood programs are invited to join the Family Center Parent Advisory Council. The council meets 4 times during the school year. Members provide feedback and suggestions for our Early Childhood programs. Also, most of our special events are sponsored by the Parent Advisory Council. **Any interested parent/guardian is welcome to attend the meetings!** Please consider becoming a member of our Advisory Council. Being a Parent Advisory Council member is an excellent opportunity to become involved with your child's learning and also a great way to meet new friends. Contact the Family Services & Education Director with questions.

Scholastic Book Club

Scholastic Book orders will be sent home periodically with children. You may order books from these orders if you wish. When ordering, make your check payable to Scholastic Books. Send the order form, including your child's teacher's name and check, in an envelope to school. Orders are generally due within 2 weeks of being sent home. We use the points from your orders to receive free books and classroom materials. Every child in our program receives at least one free book during the year.

Lending Library

The Family Center has a variety of parenting books and children's books available for use at home.

Research has shown the single most important thing that a parent can do to help their child acquire language, prepare their child for school, and instill a love of learning in their child, is to read to them (Russ et al., 2007).

Newsletters

Newsletters and reminders will be sent home monthly. Please read these thoroughly. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Special Events

Our annual special events include but are not limited to: a field trip to an Apple Orchard, Trick-or-Treating at Parmly Apartments, Holiday Family Fun Night, North Pole Workshop, Spring Make It and Take It, and Wheels. Special event dates will be listed in the monthly reminders and community education catalog. Some special events may require pre-registration.

Health Policies

Immunizations

State law requires that an immunization record for each child enrolled in the program be on file at the Family Center **prior to the first day**. You or the hospital may email (cwoeltge@isd2144.org) or fax (651-213-2250 attn:Carmen) your child's record.

Allergy Awareness

The Chisago Lakes Early Childhood Programs are allergy aware. As such, the Early Childhood staff will work proactively to address known student allergy conditions and attempt to minimize the potential for adverse reactions to identified allergens that may be present from time-to-time in the public school environment. Recognizing that literally hundreds of students attend our schools on a daily basis, we cannot guarantee that the school will be free of potential allergens. However, when staff is informed of your student's specific allergy, strategies and procedures will be implemented with the goal of reducing the risk of exposure. We do not allow any children to bring peanut/nut products or any products that are manufactured in a facility that processes peanuts to school for snack. The district has a policy #540 limiting animals in the classroom. All Parents/guardians must fill out an Early Childhood Health Concerns form.

Cleanliness & Sanitation

We strive to maintain an environment that minimizes risk of contracting illnesses or aggravating allergies, etc. Tables, toys, and equipment are cleaned regularly. Hand washing is promoted after using the bathroom, after wiping or blowing noses, after contact with any nose, throat, or eye secretions, and before preparing or eating food. Students and staff are encouraged to sneeze or cough into their elbow.

Is My Child Well Enough To Go To School?

Regular attendance at school is very important, yet we do not want children to come to school when they are ill. Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Excluding an ill child may decrease the spread of disease to others in the school setting. Children should stay home for the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 or more - your child should stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal
- Vomiting or diarrhea - your child should stay home for 24 hours after the last episode
- Strep throat - if your child has a confirmed case of strep throat, your child needs to stay home until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started and until well enough to attend school
- Severe nasal drainage or congestion
- Persistent cough
- Pink eye - if your child has eye drainage and is diagnosed with pink eye, your child should stay home for 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun
- Any undiagnosed rash (other than diaper or heat rash) that may be oozing or spreading. Check with your health care provider or licensed school nurse before sending your child to school
- Contagious stage of any communicable disease including chicken pox, scabies, lice, fifth disease, etc.

Parents should notify staff if their child contracts a communicable disease and has exposed children while at school. We will then notify those class participants if they've been exposed.

If a child becomes ill while attending a class, parents will be called, and the child will be made comfortable until the parent/guardian or other emergency contact can come and pick them up.

Medication Administration

Generally, School Board policy states that medication shall be administered only when the student's health requires that they be given during school hours. Written authorization from the student's parent/guardian and licensed prescriber are required for all medications and over the counter drugs. All medications must be supplied in a properly labeled prescription bottle or original over-the-counter container brought to school by a parent/guardian. Medications will be kept in a locked cabinet and be administered by or under the supervision of the school health assistant.

Behavioral Guidance

Guidance & Positive Discipline

Wildcat Way

Be respectful. Be safe. Be responsible. Always try your best.

Our classrooms are created to promote success. We want children to actively explore, create, try new things, test, and problem solve in a safe environment. But even with the best designed environments, guidance is needed. We will help children learn self-control by setting limits, creating routines, redirecting, reinforcing the positives, and encouraging cooperation in alignment with Chisago Lakes School Discipline Policy #506.

Bullying

We strive to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from harassment and violence, hazing, and bullying. Chisago Lakes Schools creates an environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation. Incidents of such harassment, violence, or bullying are to be reported to the program director. See school board policy #514 and bullying prohibition.

Mandatory Reporting

In Minnesota, anyone who works with children is required by law to report suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of children to authorities. As mandatory reporters, our Early Childhood Staff will report any suspected maltreatment of a child to Chisago County Human Services.

Board Policies

To view board policies, visit www.isd2144.org, click on “Our District”, and click on “District Policies”. This handbook referred to a few policies:

1. 506 - Student Discipline
2. 514 - Bullying Prohibition Policy
3. 515 - Protection & Privacy Of Pupil Records
4. 515F - Data Privacy Request Form
5. 516 - Student Medication
6. 540 - Animals in School Building

Office Information

Location & Office Hours

The Chisago Lakes Early Childhood offices are located at the Primary School site in Chisago City.

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

Phone Number: 651-213-2282

Messages can be left at 651-213-2281 for all Chisago Lakes Early Childhood programs. If you need to contact your child's teacher, please call the Little Wildcats Preschool rooms directly.

Class Locations

Chisago Lakes Primary School & Taylors Falls Elementary

Primary School: 11009 - 284th Street, Chisago City, MN 55013

Room 1: 101 Phone: 651-213-2289

Room 2: 102 Phone: 651-213-2295

Room 3: 103 Phone: 651-213-2290

Room 4: 104 Phone: 651-213-2291

Room 5: 105 Phone: 651-213-2292

Room 6: 106

Room 7: 107 Phone: 651-213-2288

Room 8: 112 Phone: 651-213-2294

Taylors Falls: 648 West Street, Taylors Falls, MN 55084

Room 1: 117 Phone: 651-213-2123

Room 2: 119 Phone: 651-213-2113

Contact Information

Early Childhood Office	11009 - 284th Street, Chisago City, MN 55013	651-213-2282 www.isd2144.org/earlychildhood
Family Services & Education Director	Carmen Woeltge	651-213-2281 cwoeltge@isd2144.org
Community Education Office	29400 Olinda Trail, Lindstrom, MN 55045	651-213-2600 Fax: 651-213-2094 clcommed@isd2144.org
Community Education Director	Dan McGonigle	651-213-2601 dmcgonigle@isd2144.org

2023-2024 School Calendar

September 7 or 8	First Day of Little Wildcats Preschool
October 2	No School (Staff Development)
October 16-20	No Little Wildcats (Parent/Teacher Conferences & MEA)
November 6	No School (Staff Development)
November 22-24	No School (Thanksgiving)
December 22 - January 1	No Little Wildcats (Winter Break)
January 15	No School (MLK Day & Staff Development)
January 22	No School (Staff Development)
February 1 & 2	No Little Wildcats
February 19	No School (President's Day)
March 4-8	No School (Spring Break)
March 29	No School (Staff Development)
April 1	No School (Staff Development)
April 8-12	No Little Wildcats(Parent/Teacher Conferences)
May 22 or 23	Last Day of Little Wildcats Preschool