

# Parent Handbook

**E C F E**

*Early Childhood Family Education*

# 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 Programs, including Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE). **So much learning occurs before our child enters school and you, the parent/guardian, are the most significant, lifelong teacher.** Community Education Programs throughout Minnesota have designated special programs to focus on parenting children during the early years. ECFE offers support, encouragement, and information along the way. All families with a child between birth and kindergarten enrollment are welcome to attend our ECFE 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.

## Curriculum

The Preschool Plus Parents program and Little Wildcats Preschool programs follow 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. ECFE classes focus on parent/guardian/child activities that are developmentally appropriate for the ages of the children and promote positive interactions between caregiver and child. ECFE parent discussion groups develop a list of topics within each class, primarily determined by the interest of the parents/guardians.

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 that too, 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](http://helpmegrowmn.org) to make a referral for your child.

# Class Information

## Enrollment

Enrollment in the program is open to the public. Chisago Lakes is committed to all people to have 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.

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. ECFE class calendars will be provided for families with start and end dates and additional non-school dates.

## Tuition

Preschool Plus Parents class tuition is based on your annual family income on a sliding fee scale and is paid based upon what your family can afford. Monthly class tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Auto payments will be posted on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. **No Chisago Lakes School District family will be excluded due to the inability to pay.**

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.

### Monthly Tuition:

\$75,000+	\$40
\$55,000-\$74,999	\$30
\$35,000-\$54,999	\$20
\$20,000-34,999	\$10
Under 20,000	\$3

## Sibling Care

Limited sibling care will be provided for ECFE classes. The monthly charge is \$14 for your first child and \$20 for 2 children. Family income under \$25,000 will pay no fee. **Sibling care fees must be paid at the time of registration.** Parents must provide immunization records for children attending sibling care. If not registered, there is a \$5 drop-in charge per child as space permits. You must notify us at least 1 business day in advance.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is critical to success in school. We expect children to attend class 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.**

## School Closings

If District #2144 schools are closed for any reason, Preschool Plus Parents classes will also be canceled. If school starts 2 hours late, **morning** Preschool Plus Parents 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](http://www.isd2144.org)

## Census Information

The Family Center gathers census information for the District, in order that 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 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 that 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

Clothing that is comfortable, sturdy, washable, and easily managed by children is recommended. This encourages independence by the children. 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'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 video Recording 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, the school will provide a light snack for children. Please make sure your child is fed before class time. Water will be offered for their beverage.

**We will not serve peanut/nut products or any products that are manufactured in a facility that processes peanuts due to allergies.**

**Please notify the teacher of any food allergies your child has.** Parents are welcome to bring in an individual snack for their child.

### Acceptable Snacks for 1 & 2 Year Olds

- Crackers - such as graham, animal, low-salt
- Cheese - mild flavor
- Dry Cereals—such as Kix, Cheerios, other non-sugar coated
- Fruit - will be prepared by a teacher in class—no grapes, apples or raisins

### Acceptable Snacks for 3 & 4 Year Olds

- Crackers - such as goldfish, rice cakes, Triscuits, low-salt, graham, cheese filled
- Cheese - curds, mild flavored such as Monterey Jack, Colby, American and String
- Vegetables, Fruits - will be prepared by a teacher in class
- Muffins - whole grain and commercially prepared
- Pretzels , Mini Granola Bars, Apple Sauce, Canned Fruits

**The following are some of the top choking foods and will not be served to children under age 4:** hard candy and gum, peanuts, raisins, and grapes.

# 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 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.

## Separation

Separation may be difficult for children. We hope to ease the separation anxiety by offering you the following suggestions:

1. Show your child you are hanging up your coat by his/hers and tell them you will return to get it after class.
2. Allow your child to bring a favorite object such as a blanket or stuffed toy to class at least for the first few weeks. Show your child where their object is (i.e. "Your blanket will be on the chair if you need it").
3. When it's time for you to leave make your good-bye **brief and cheerful**, rather than asking your child's permission to leave (i.e. "Mommy's going to go now, okay?"). Reassure them with your decision to go in simple terms such as "It's time to go meet with the parents now. I'll be back after you play with your friends and have a snack. I love you! Bye." Then leave.
4. **Rest assured that if your child is distressed and the teacher cannot comfort him or her they will come and get you.**

## Weekly Parent/Child Classes

Weekly parent/child classes are offered for all parents in our school district with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entry. During an infant and 1's class, parents and children remain together throughout the class. Most other classes have three separate components described below.

## Parent/Child Interaction Time

At this time, parents and children are involved together in deciding what activities they choose to do. During this time your responsibilities as a parent are:

1. To spend your time with **your child**. Use this time to communicate with your child, not with other adults in the room or your cell phone.
2. To observe your child's behavior and interests. Let your child determine how long they wish to stay at an activity.
3. To offer equipment and toys but let your child select their favorite activities.
4. To encourage trying new activities.
5. To allow your child to do art activities as independently as possible, allowing freedom of expression.

## Parent Discussion Time & Children's Activity Time

During the second half of class, parents leave the room for a discussion group. Topics for discussion are based upon parents' interests and needs and may include growth and development, child, nutrition, effective daily parenting techniques, and more. While parents are in discussion, children are having fun with friends and learning to get along with others. They continue their play, have a snack, read stories, and play games under the guidance of a licensed teacher.

# 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	<b>K ONLY</b> Mon. June 3rd
Tues. October 17th	Thurs. February 1st	Tues. April 9th	Thurs. May 30th	

## How to Register

Go online ([www.isd2144.org/earlychildhood](http://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](#)

# Parent Engagement

## Communication

Communication is the key to bridging home and school. 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.

## 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, include 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 allergic 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 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. 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 the 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 he or she will be made comfortable until the parent/ guardian or other emergency contact can come and pick them up.

# 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](http://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 ECFE rooms directly.

## Class Locations

Chisago Lakes Family Center

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

Phone: 651-213-2292

Room: 105

Room: 106

## Contact Information

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

# 2022-2023 School Calendar

September 12-15	First Week of ECFE Classes
October 2	No ECFE Classes (Staff Development)
October 17-20	No ECFE Classes (Staff Development & MEA)
November 21-24	No School (Thanksgiving)
December 15	Last of ECFE before winter break
December 19 - December 29	No ECFE Classes (Winter Break)
February 1 & 2	No ECFE Classes
March 5-8	No School (Spring Break)
March 29	No ECFE Classes (Staff Development)
April 9-12	No ECFE Classes (Staff Development)
May 14-17	Last Week of ECFE Classes