

Cincinnati Public Schools Early Childhood Education Program

2023 - 2024



Handbook for Families, Visitors, and Friends

Phone: (513) 363-0240

Website: <https://www.cps-k12.org/preschool>



PREPARING STUDENTS
FOR LIFE

Through Academic Achievement
Personal Well-Being
Career Readiness



Cincinnati Public Schools*
Preschool

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Mission: The mission of Cincinnati Public Schools, Early Childhood Education is to provide high quality, comprehensive programs and collaborative services to support young students and families for lifelong learning.

Program Philosophy: The Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) Early Childhood Education (ECE) Department offers families many choices throughout the Cincinnati community to help prepare their students for Kindergarten and life beyond. With preschool programs in forty-five (45) different CPS buildings, there are many options to meet student needs.

The ECE Department provides a set of philosophical beliefs to support staff as they individually meet the needs of the families and students being served. These beliefs are derived from the understanding that all students have the ability to learn and acquire knowledge when 5 main components are implemented. These 5 components are:

- The Role of the Teacher
- The Role of the Family
- What students Learn
- How students Develop
- The Learning Environment

The Role of the Teacher: All students learn through the context of positive relationships with trusting adults. The staff of CPS intentionally designs experiences that create a safe learning environment so students can thrive. Teachers and paraprofessionals spend time observing what students do so that they can accurately assess students' learning and prepare students for life.

The Role of the Family: The ECE Department understands that the family is a child's first teacher and must be included as part of the educational team. Families can anticipate many opportunities to give and get information about a student's classroom experience so that CPS can provide the best services possible. Teachers and Family Service Assistants (FSA) will regularly share information about your student's learning community. We welcome input and appreciate active participation.

What students Learn: The CPS Early Childhood Department utilizes Ohio's Early Learning Development Standards as a foundation for planning what students need to prepare for Kindergarten. These standards are comprehensive, research based and address content in the following areas: social emotional development, language and literacy, cognitive and general knowledge, approaches towards learning, physical well being and motor development.

How students Develop: Using Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards as a foundation for planning, teachers are able to predict some common behaviors and interests of most preschool students. Staff provide students with activities and experiences that will help students be excited to come to school and learn. Throughout the course of the school year, teachers use information learned about student's individual interests and need to set specific goals to guide students towards mastery in areas that may be new to them. This individualized support ensures all students who attend preschool will be ready for Kindergarten.

The Learning Environment: When students are offered a well prepared environment with a balanced schedule, they become independent and confident learners. All Early Childhood classrooms will have safe and interesting materials for students to engage with throughout the day. Students will have periods of very active play and some times that are quieter. There will be opportunities for your student to choose their own activity and times that the teacher will choose for them. For specific questions about the experiences your student will have as well as their schedule, be sure to connect with the classroom teacher.

All CPS early childhood classrooms are unique to the learning community. The ECE Department has provided this philosophy as a foundation for each school building. When you enroll your child in a CPS preschool learning experience, you can be certain that they will thrive.

Program Goals: Goals for the program are established annually by the ECE Policy Council and serve as a component for continuous improvement.

Program Goals include:

- Access to high quality preschool programs
- Commit to putting safety, physical, social and emotional health of our students
- Kindergarten Readiness

Curriculum CPS Early Childhood Education programs provide broad and enriching learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate for each child. We implement a play based curriculum that is research based and developmentally appropriate for diverse learners. It includes activities and experiences that support the development of the whole child. Families play an integral role in their child's education. Therefore, CPS values family participation in classroom experiences and the learning process.

Social Emotional Learning - SEL: School Social Workers are employed throughout the CPS School district from PreK to grade 12. School Social Workers take an active role in teaching SEL in the classrooms and providing classroom behavior management support to classroom teachers. Social and emotional health prepares students to achieve educational success by recognizing emotions in others, developing empathy and self-regulating emotional responses. Students that are in control of their emotional responses excel academically, develop confidence, and form lasting relationships.

Communication: At CPS, we recognize that communication between home and school is positively linked to student's success. CPS has several methods to promote communication with families.

- Schoology: All families will have access to an account.
- Conferences: Throughout the school year, your child's teacher will schedule time for you to learn more about your child's school experience and plan together the best ways to help your child excel in school.
- Family Newsletters: The ECE Department shares a newsletter monthly that includes topics such as upcoming important dates, suggested educational activities to complete at home and health and wellness information.
- Electronic Communication: CPS Staff is committed to open communication. Please allow ample time for staff to respond.

Preschool Enrollment and Registration: CPS welcomes all 3 and 4 year old preschool students. Family Service Assistant Coordinators (FSAC) and Family Service Assistants (FSA) are available to answer questions. Staff are available to answer questions, Monday through Friday during business hours at 513-363-0240.

Option 1= Vine located at 2120 Vine Street 45202

Option 2= LEAP located at 2001 Baltimore Ave 45225

Option 3= Carthage located at 125 W. North Bend Rd 45216

513-363-1575 = Cheviot/Westwood located at 3132 Mozart Avenue 45211

513-363-0017 = Bramble located at 4324 Homer Ave. 45227

Registrations for Early Childhood Education programs may be completed at a convenient hub location or by using the online registration system at www.cps.k12.org/enroll/preschool-enrollment. Every effort is made to enroll children in a high quality CPS preschool program.

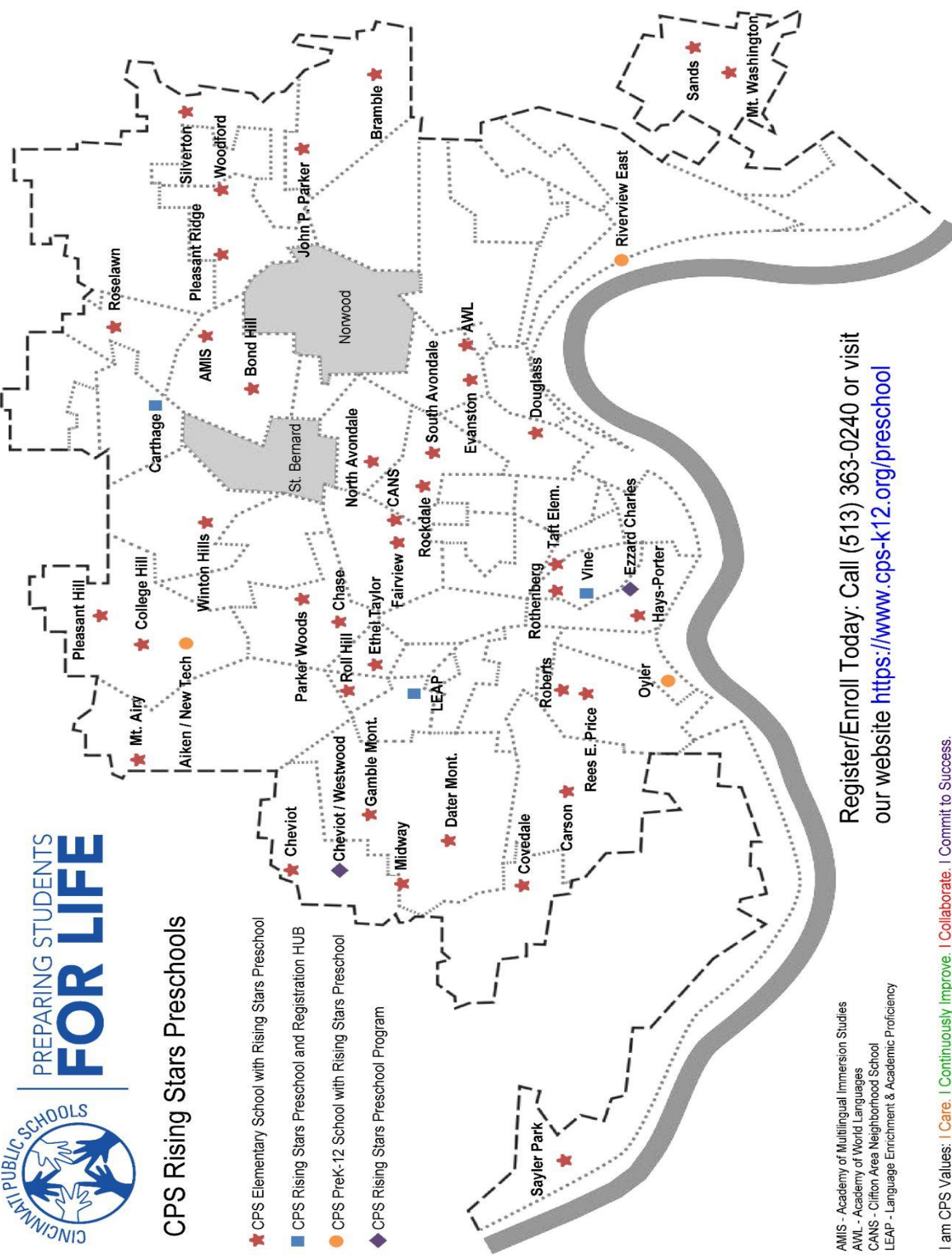
The CPS preschool registration process includes a family interview. The following documents are needed at registration: Child's birth certificate (custody papers if applicable) Immunization records, Proof of income (within the last thirty days and w-2 or tax return), District approved proof of residency (lease/mortgage statement, gas/electric/water bill, federal/state document etc.), Guardian photo ID, Well Child Check (within the last twelve months), Dental exam (within the last six months). All student records are kept according to CPS Policies and in compliance with federal and state law. CPS offers program options for students with disabilities.



PREPARING STUDENTS
FOR LIFE

CPS Rising Stars Preschools

- ★ CPS Elementary School with Rising Stars Preschool
- CPS Rising Stars Preschool and Registration HUB
- CPS PreK-12 School with Rising Stars Preschool
- ◆ CPS Rising Stars Preschool Program



AMIS - Academy of Multilingual Immersion Studies
 AWL - Academy of World Languages
 CANS - Clifton Area Neighborhood School
 LEAP - Language Enrichment & Academic Proficiency

Register/Enroll Today: Call (513) 363-0240 or visit
 our website <https://www.cps-k12.org/preschool>

Fees: CPS preschool programs offer multiple funding options. A child that is not eligible for a subsidized program or tuition assistance, may be required to pay tuition. Tuition families are required to pay a deposit within 2 weeks from the time of registration to secure the child's seat. Monthly payments, as outlined in the tuition contract, are due on the 1st of each month from September through April.

All payments should be made in the form of cash, money order or certified check made payable to the CPS Treasurer or through the use of the online payment system, www.payforit.net, (service fees apply).

A child may be withdrawn for delinquent fees. If fees are not paid in full, your child may lose their magnet seat and must reapply during the next lottery cycle.

Hours of Operation: CPS has both full day programs (that operate 6.5 hours a day) and half day programs (that operate 3 hours a day). All preschool programs are aligned with the district school year calendar. In case of inclement weather, please listen for CPS school closing information on radio or television. You may also check the CPS website: <https://www.cps-k12.org/families-students/alert-policies>.

Attendance: CPS recognizes the importance of students attending school everyday. It is important that students arrive at school and are picked up from school on time each day unless they are sick. If a student will be absent, you must report the absence to the classroom teacher or the school office. Contact will be made if your child is not in attendance. Staff will contact you if your child misses school for 2 consecutive days. Only scheduled medical and dental appointments are considered excused absences.

Drop off and Sign in Policy: CPS takes your child's safety seriously. A policy is in place for students to be signed in and out daily. Students are only released to individuals that you authorized for pick up and staff will ask to see identification prior to releasing your child. Guardians must notify school office staff if sending someone who is NOT listed on the Consent form/PowerSchool. Guardians are responsible to immediately update the Consent form/PowerSchool if an additional individual is to be added to emergency contacts.

Daily Schedule: Each teacher posts a daily classroom schedule of activities in which instruction takes place. Full day students must participate in rest time during the day. During this time, students are not required to sleep but must rest quietly on their cots so that they do not disturb other students.

Licensing Information: Each program is licensed to operate by the Ohio Department of Education. This license and the most recent licensing inspection report are posted in your child's classroom.

The program's complete licensing record, including compliance reports, are on file and available upon request both at the school and in the ECE Office, 363-0240.

In the event that you have complaints or concerns that have not been addressed to your satisfaction, you may call CPS Early Childhood Department at 513- 363-0240, or the ODE Department Ombudsman (1- 877-644-6338).

Nutrition: Our Early Childhood programs provide breakfast, lunch, and a snack for students enrolled at no cost to our families. Full-day students will receive all three meals, whereas half-day students will receive breakfast and lunch or lunch and snack. Additional paperwork will need to be completed with your child's teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Breakfast, lunch, and snack menus are posted monthly in your child's classroom. Menus are planned by Student Dining Services with the help of the Health & Nutrition Coordinator and family input.

If your child is on a special diet, due to allergies or a medical condition, a "Special Dietary Needs Form" must be completed and signed by a physician. If a diagnosed food allergy/medical condition exists, the replacement foods must meet the federal and state nutritional guidelines. All meals must be well-balanced, with a combination of foods and/or drinks from a variety of different food groups. All foods must have limited amounts of fats and sugars. USDA guidelines are enforced and checked daily for compliance with CPS' Early Childhood Outside Food Policy. [For more information, please contact the Health & Nutrition Coordinator at 513-363-0263.]

All students will go through the lunch line following ODE and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) guidelines. Students are encouraged, but not forced to try unfamiliar foods. If you choose to provide a packed lunch, you must follow these guidelines.

- Preschool is a **nut free** environment. No nut milk alternatives, no trail mix, no peanut butter
- Water and milk only, no juice.
- No candy or chips of any kind.
- No desserts - No cookies, pies, doughnuts, toaster pastries, cakes, brownies allowed
- Milk must be unflavored, low fat milk or fat free milk (soy milk, rice milk, oat milk are allowable alternatives)

Snack and meal times must be structured and used as learning opportunities that foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child's learning, development, and socialization. All meals served during the school day must, by federal law, meet the nutrition guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For additional information refer to Student Dining Services.

<https://sites.google.com/a/cpsboe.k12.oh.us/food-service-department/>

Health: All students must have a current medical exam on file no later than 30 days after enrollment. All students must have a current dental exam on file (except when a dentist is unable to complete an exam). We will ask about follow up treatments for medical and dental needs. Proper dental hygiene is promoted through healthy meals and healthy snacks. Following ODE and ODH guidelines, we may have students participate in on-site lessons to promote oral hygiene. ECE encourages students to brush their teeth twice a day, for two minutes.

Required Screenings: Every student that is enrolled in a CPS preschool program will receive a variety of screenings. The purpose of a screening is to be certain that your child is ready for the experiences that will be offered at school. The results of your child's screenings will always be shared with you. Should your child need to be referred for additional support because of a result of one of these screenings, Early Childhood Staff will provide you with resources to get the help your child may need. Listed below are the types of screenings performed:

- **Medical Screenings:** During the first few weeks of school you can expect that your child will be screened for height, weight, hearing, vision, communication, and BMI. If your child has not been screened for lead or hemoglobin by your primary physician, the ECE Nurse will follow up.
- **Developmental Screening:** Families/Guardians will be asked to complete a tool known as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. This Questionnaire will ask a variety of questions about the things that you know your child can do. This tool looks at five areas of development: communication, fine motor, gross motor, problem solving and personal-social. The results of these screenings will help your child's teacher plan for your individual child.
- **Social Emotional (SE) Screening:** Families/Guardians will be asked to complete an additional tool known as the Ages and Stages, SE. This tool looks specifically at the social and emotional development of your child. The results of this screening will also help your child's teacher plan for your child.

If at any time you have any questions about this information, please contact child's teacher or the Early Childhood Office.

Health Checks and Healthy Environments: Early Childhood Staff members are trained in the signs and symptoms of communicable diseases. Each day upon arrival to the classroom, staff and students will have a health check completed. Each classroom has a required posting titled “Child Day Care Communicable Disease Chart.” Early Childhood Staff use this chart to determine if a student has any symptoms that may exclude them from school.

During the school day, students who are not feeling well and/or exhibit symptoms of one of the communicable diseases listed on the chart, are able to rest comfortably in an isolated portion of the classroom or other school designated area. A staff person will remain with the student until the family/guardian arrives. Families/Guardians will be contacted to pick up their child if any of the symptoms below occur during school hours:

- A fever of 100 °F or above
- Unusual spots or rashes that have not been identified by a physician
- Diarrhea or vomiting 2 or more times in a day
- Rapid or difficulty breathing
- Evidence of head lice or other parasites
- Conjunctivitis
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Unusually dark urine or grey/white stool
- Untreated infected skin patches
- Stiff neck
- Excessive fatigue
- Pain that interferes with normal activity
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Students will be readmitted if they have no symptoms of communicable disease for at least 24 hours or with a physician’s statement saying that the child is no longer contagious. According to ODE Preschool Licensing Rules and CPS District, policies and procedures are in place for managing communicable diseases. Please contact your school if you have any specific questions.

If your child is taking medication at home or if medication needs to be administered at school, please talk to your child’s teacher immediately to complete additional documentation. We must follow all district/state requirements for having medication on site and we want to help your child stay healthy by following the doctor’s exact instructions.

CPS Early Childhood Department collaborates with community partners to ensure that we are providing the healthiest and safest environments for our students.

Your school's leadership team will develop an arrival and dismissal procedure to ensure student safety. These procedures will include but are not limited to:

- Staff will complete wellness check upon arrival
- Handwashing will occur upon arrival, dismissal and throughout the day

Immunizations: Families are expected to provide proof of immunizations at registration. Our goal is for all students to be fully immunized or at least in the process of becoming fully immunized by the start of the school year. Students must have at least 1 of each of the following immunizations for Preschool Enrollment:

- 1 DPT (**D**iphtheria, **P**ertussis, **T**etanus)
- 1 OPV/IPV (Polio)
- 1 MMR (**M**easles, **M**umps, **R**ubella)
- 1 HIB (Haemophilus influenza type b)
- 1 HEP B (Hepatitis B)
- Hepatitis A (new requirement)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Rotavirus

If your child is not immunized (for reasons of conscience including religious convictions), families/guardians **must** sign an immunization waiver annually with the understanding your child will be excluded from school in the event an outbreak occurs.

Medication will not be administered without the required documents.

District and state licensing requirements include:

- Written Doctor's orders related to your child's Health Plan.
- Medication in the original container dated and labeled with your child's identifying information.
- Administration of Medication form with guardian signature giving permission to give the medication to your child.
- All medication will be stored in a secure, locked location.

Safety: Our preschool programs are in alignment with district policies and state licensing regulations that have been developed to keep your child safe while in our care. Students are never left alone or unsupervised. Emergency numbers and emergency procedures are posted in the classroom for quick access to necessary services. Each site has a First Aid Kit available in the classroom. If an accident or injury occurs, district policies will be followed at the school site and the family will be notified. Other procedures used to help keep your child safe include:

- Conducting emergency drills in compliance with district and state licensing policies and procedures. Records are on file in the classroom.
- Smoking is not permitted on any Cincinnati Public School premises.
- The use of aerosol sprays are not used in a student's presence.
- There is at least one staff member available at all times trained in first aid, CPR, communicable disease and child abuse recognition and prevention. The CPS Preschool programs do not participate in swimming activities.

Emergency Information: CPS ECE Preschool Programs obtain written guardian authorization for emergency medical transportation for each child enrolled in the program (Emergency Medical Authorization form). If a child is injured and needs immediate attention, staff will call 911. Families will be notified immediately. **Please notify your child's teacher of any changes to your address, telephone number, and who to contact in case of an emergency.**

Family Participation: Communication between home and school is a program priority. We encourage family involvement. Families can participate in their child's classroom via Google Meet, Bluejeans, in person or by phone.

Suggested family involvement:

- Volunteer to cut or assemble materials for a classroom project.
- Share a talent, read a book or demonstrate a cooking activity virtually.
- Welcoming staff for "home visits" virtually or at an alternate location (i.e.park) to discuss School to Home learning.
- Become involved in ECE Program Governance by representing your program and families at virtual or phone monthly policy meetings.
- Volunteer on a program committee or help with the annual program review.
- Participating in family conferences and progress report meetings.
- Participating in monthly curriculum planning with your child's teacher and give suggestions for lesson planning.

Volunteer Guidelines

School site volunteers must adhere to district and school policies for the safety of all students and staff. Volunteers must follow health and safety guidelines made by ODE, ODH, the CDC and local health departments.

- Work with your school site to obtain a background check and badge.
- Complete the program Standards of Conduct form.
- Provide documentation of a current Tuberculosis (TB) test.
- Work with the school to determine your volunteer days.
- Follow building procedures; no smoking, snacking, follow staff guidance and directions, document activities on the volunteer time sheet.
- For more information refer to: Ohio Family Information and Resource Center (Ohio PIRC) 1-800-872-5327.

Family Roster: Rosters of names, telephone numbers, and addresses of families in the program are available upon request. The roster will NOT include the name and phone number of any family requesting information not to be shared. Rosters may be updated upon request.

Classroom Family Meetings: Parent meetings are scheduled to address training information requested from the Family Surveys which are completed at registration. In addition to your requests, required meeting topics include: program introduction, literacy/child development, mental health, health/nutrition education and transition to kindergarten. Meetings will be held virtually and led by the Family Service Assistant (FSA). Training and meeting information will be posted to Schoology. A portion of the meeting may involve your child's teacher who will provide curriculum information and classroom updates.

Program Governance/Policy Committee Representative/Alternate: The families from each classroom will elect a representative and alternate to represent them at virtual/in person monthly Policy Committee meetings. Representatives and alternates will receive a list of duties, responsibilities and orientation training. During monthly virtual/in person meetings, representatives will provide updates for their school and vote on program issues. Policy Committee representatives work together along with community members to form a cohesive group to promote program goals and initiatives.

For more information contact your preschool FSA. Each program site has a Family Notebook which outlines site and program information. Family Notebook contents will also be available to review on Schoology.

Family Conferences: Preschool staff will collaborate with families/guardians at least two times throughout the school year. The family conference is a time to discuss your child's progress with the classroom teacher and to discuss specific strategies to improve your child's performance in school. Dates for family conferences are determined by the school. Always feel free to discuss your child's academic and social progress with their teacher.

Family Contact: Preschool staff conduct at least two home visits each school year at an agreed upon location or virtually. During this collaborative time we will have an opportunity to develop goals for your child and family, identify community resources available and provide support to meet your family's needs.

Clothing: What to wear is an important decision. We strongly encourage families to follow the school's policy. We offer the following suggestions:

- Label all clothing. Provide outer garments that are easy to put on and take off.
- Clothing should allow for active play.
- Clothing should be appropriate for the weather.
- Please send one complete set of seasonal clothing to be kept in the classroom.

Records: Student's educational records are confidential and will not be released without your written permission. Family/Guardian may request to review their child's educational records or obtain copies at any time.

Behavior Management/Discipline Policy: Our preschool classrooms remain in compliance with CPS and state licensing policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. Daily activities and engagement teach and encourage positive interactions and conflict resolution to all students. Ample supplies of materials and equipment are available in each classroom. Students are encouraged to be independent and manage their own behaviors. This allows students to develop initiative and practice problem-solving techniques. We believe all young students are capable of learning self-control as a sign of respect for self and others. For additional information refer to CPS Code of Conduct for all students

[PRESENTATION - Student Support Guide Code of Conduct SY 2023-24 7.17.23.pdf \(1,523 KB\)](#)

PBIS - Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports: Our preschool classrooms remain in alignment with state licensing policies and CPS Student Support Guide - Code of Conduct for behavior management. Daily activities and engagement teach and encourage positive interactions and conflict resolution to all students. Social Emotional Learning - SEL is provided to students at a Schoolwide (Tier 1) level. Targeted (Tier 2) and Intensive (Tier 3) supports are offered as determined and needed. Ample supplies of materials and equipment are available in each classroom.

Kindergarten Options and Transitions:

What Families can do:

- For information regarding ALL CPS kindergarten programs please visit <https://www.cps-k12.org/enroll>
- Magnet Schools (Montessori, Foreign Language) apply online for lottery starting in December.
- Neighborhood/Vision 2020 Schools begin registration in spring: Schools located within neighborhoods of Cincinnati Public School District (See CPS website for school list and phone numbers).
- Contact the schools you are interested in your child attending and visit the schools website.
- Summer Activities:
 - Read to your child and talk about what you are reading.
 - Ask open ended questions about the books you are reading.
 - Have your child “read” a favorite book to you.
 - Provide paper and pencils/crayons to encourage writing and drawing.
 - Practice ABC’s and letter sounds.
 - Count items around the house (windows, steps, vegetables on a child's plate).
 - Work on number, letter, shape and color recognition.
 - Do cooking activities together (measuring and pouring).
 - Attend library story times.
 - Play card games with your child (Fish, Crazy Eights, Old Maid).
 - Provide coloring books/crayons, have your child color within the lines of pictures.
 - Drive to the school and notice the front door where you will walk in on the first day of school.
 - Talk with your child and wait for your child to respond to your questions.