



PLOVER PROGRAM

Scarborough Community Services

Parent Handbook 2024-2025

Welcome to Scarborough's Plover Preschool Program!

Scarborough Community Services welcomes you to our Plover preschool program. We are a non-profit recreational program, complying with all the recommendations for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities established by the State of Maine. Our mission is to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of each child by providing a high-quality child care program. This program enriches the experiences of children as we view the home, school, community, and child care settings as complementary and interrelated domains that affect children's growth and development.

The following information is designed to give you a more in-depth look at our program. We welcome and encourage you and your child/children to visit our Plover program facility prior to registering. For more information about our programs, please visit www.scarboroughmaine.org/departments/community-services/child-care.

Program Description

The Scarborough Community Plover Program will help your children ages 3.5 to 5 work towards the social, physical, and academic skills they will need for Kindergarten and beyond. Some of the goals of the program include:

- Recognizing letters and some of their sounds
- Recognizing and writing first name
- Recognizing some common words
- Recognizing and printing some numbers
- Recognizing basic shapes and colors
- Using words like "please" and "thank-you"
- Asking for help
- Learning to take turns and share
- Ability to self-dress
- Taking responsibility for belongings
- Adjusting to new situations

A combination of free-play time and group activities and discussions allow the children to practice the social readiness skills necessary to begin Kindergarten with a positive self-image. Fun themes (seasons, weather, holidays, feelings, etc.) will be incorporated throughout the year to make foundational learning outcomes that much more relatable and memorable. There will also be weekly scheduled time for music, art, gym, and outdoor exploration, a key piece to teaching the whole-child.

Our program respects the uniqueness of each child and their family and works together with all our families to provide children with an experience that fosters a lifelong love of learning, while allowing children to play, learn and grow at their own pace.

***New this year, the Plover Program will not follow the Scarborough School's calendar as it relates to no-school days. We will be open on all teacher inservice days.**

The maximum student headcount is 15 students (2:15 teacher/student ratio). Students will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, with a waitlist taken should we exceed our maximum headcount of 15.

Basic Schedule

8:00-9:20	Arrival, greeting, free play, and learning centers
9:20-9:30	Clean up from free play
9:30-9:45	Circle time
9:45-10:00	Snack
10:00-10:15	Morning stretch
10:15-10:45	Recess
10:45-11:05	Circle time: Stories, group games
11:05-11:45	Specials (Letter of the Week, Art, Social Studies, Math, Music, Cooking)
11:45-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:45	Recess
12:45-1:15	Rest time
1:15-1:45	Free choice play
1:45-2:00 pm	Pickup
-- OR --	
2:00-4:00 pm	Extended Care Free Play <i>Small group play and free play time (no set curriculum during this time block)</i>

Important Info

- Children must be potty trained before attending this program.
- The program operates Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, with the option of extended care until 4:00 pm (additional fee applies).
- All participants must pack a water bottle/drinks, snacks, and lunch daily, as they are not provided.
- This program is eligible for state subsidy or in-house financial assistance.



Registration Information

- Registration begins on **March 4 at 8:00 am** for the 2024-25 school year.
- Registration may be completed online at <https://web1.myvscloud.com/scarborough.html>. Please be sure to set up a household ahead of time with all pertinent information, such as accurate date of birth, hospital preference, allergies and medications, etc. You may call us at 207-730-4150 ahead of the registration and we would be happy to assist you with the household creation.
- Registration will remain open until we reach our maximum headcount of 15, after which we will begin taking a waitlist. Waitlists are retained for the entire school year in case students drop from the program throughout the school year.
- There will be an initial **\$150 registration fee** that is separate from the monthly tuition and must be paid at the time of registration. In the event a student drops from the program, this registration fee is non-refundable.

2024-25 Monthly Plover Fees

Two Options	
<i>Both options are 5-day, regardless of days used</i>	
Regular Program Hours 8:00 am to 2:00 pm	\$741
Extended Program Hours 8:00 am to 4:00 pm	\$893

Participants are debited from a checking or savings account, of their choice, on a monthly basis, on the 1stst of each month.

To simplify billing, we have calculated the total school year cost and divided it by 10 months, September through June.

We reserve the right to change the rates on any of the payment options with at least one month's written notice.

Tuition

The billing period is September through June (10 months). Billing is done through ACH from a saving or checking account. We require account numbers at registration to set up the auto-billing in our system.

Please Note: With our installment billing system, we are only able to withdraw funds from one savings or checking per child -- we cannot split one child's bills between two accounts. Households with two or more children setting up payment plans may connect a different account to each child, if they choose to.

Insufficient Funds: If we receive an "insufficient funds" notice from your bank, we will NOT be making a second attempt to collect from your account on file. A \$30 fee will be added to your current monthly child care balance. We will then contact you and you will be responsible for paying the total within 48 hours. If we do not receive payment within that time frame, we may be obligated to terminate child care services at the end of that week. Additionally, if we receive an "insufficient funds" notice a total of three times during the year, termination of care will be likely.

Receipts: Once payments have been posted to household accounts, a receipt may be emailed to you upon request or you may access it online using your user name and password.

Mid-Month Registrations: Should you register in the middle of the month your bill will be prorated for that partial month and payment will be due at time of registration along with the registration fee. Auto-debit payment will begin during the next month's billing.

Withdrawal from Program: A one-month written notice must be provided prior to withdrawing your child from our program. If you fail to give proper notice, you will be billed for that time and payment will be expected. Please remember, it is your responsibility to notify us appropriately so you will not have to pay for services not used.

Other Tuition Info

- We do not offer any hourly rates.
 - At this time, the only option is all five days, Monday through Friday.
 - Please understand that our Plover Program is self-supporting and we therefore expect payment for the requested days regardless of whether your child, or children, attend and regardless of the reason for their absence.
 - If there are any unpaid child care fees on an account, no registration for any Community Services programs will be allowed until payment is received.
 - Scholarships are available based upon financial need. Please request information from the Community Services via email at comserv@scarboroughmaine.org.
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What to Bring Daily

The following items should be packed daily for the Plover Program:

- Change of clothes
- Blanket for rest time
- Water bottle
- Sneakers
- Outdoor gear (based on weather)
- Sunscreen and bug spray (during warmer months)
- Lunch
- Snacks

We will be providing basic supplies for each child. Please keep household items such as toys at home. Please clearly mark your child's name on ALL belongings.

Holidays

We do NOT provide care on the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Day before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving
- December School Break
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents' Day and February School Break
- Patriot's Day and April School Break
- Memorial Day

If town hall closes for a holiday, then the Plover Program is also closed. If additional holidays are added to the schedule, we will notify all participants by email and post the information online.

Storm/Snow Days

The Plover Program will be open as long as schools remain open. If we do close due to weather, we will be on the closure list on Channel 8, we will email all program attendees, and we post on our Facebook page.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up:

Drop-off begins at 8:00AM. We request that drop-off is no later than 8:30 AM as programming will be underway at that time. Check-in will be completed in the Plover Program area. Pick-up is at 2:00PM sharp unless your student is part of the extended care program.

Pick-up Authorizations

On a daily basis our staff is challenged in determining who is authorized to pick up children attending our programs. One of the worst situations for both staff and children is being caught in the middle of a parental custody issue; therefore, there is a time during registration that you may indicate names of people who may pick up your child. NO CHILD will be released to anyone not authorized by the parent. **We do not accept notes that are sent with the child and we will not accept notes from the person picking up the child -- we have no way of verifying who wrote the notes.**

Authorization for someone other than the people listed on the registration forms must be put in writing and delivered by the custodial parent prior to the time of pick-up. When registering, please consider this carefully and include everyone whom you would allow to pick up your child.

Please note that staff are required to ask for identification from any unfamiliar person entering our child care site. This means that anyone picking up a child must provide to our staff a proper picture I.D. before we will release that child from our care. This would also include parents who may be picking up for the first time.

In situations of divorce or separation, please include instructions about who may pick up and under what circumstances, plus a copy of any court orders regarding custody of the child. We must have these documents on file in order to protect your child. Both parents have a right to view the files of their children, regardless of which parent has been given custody; therefore, each parent should make sure that the information in the file is current and correct. You can be assured that this information will be kept strictly confidential and used only to ensure your child's safety. We urge your full cooperation in this matter to avoid putting your child and our staff in an uncomfortable position.

Attendance and Absenteeism

Once you have registered your child, a spot is guaranteed in that program and full payment is expected regardless of child's attendance. If your child is going to be absent for any reason, we request that you contact us at the Community Services Office at 730-4150 or email us at comserv@scarboroughmaine.org. This is to ensure that all children are accounted for at the beginning of each program day.

Behavior and Discipline

We design our program with clear expectations for children's behavior. When situations occur, either with individual children or a group of children, we use these times to teach children how to make better choices and how to negotiate differences. We use logical consequences, such as loss of privileges, time out, or time away from the activity, if necessary. At no time will any child be humiliated, hit, or denied a snack as a "punishment." It is our hope that we can participate in the process of teaching children appropriate behavior and responses to conflict.

Discipline Policy

Proper behavior and adherence to the program rules are expected from each and every child. It is not fair to the children in our program when one child continually misbehaves or causes problems with others. If misbehavior or problems occur on a continual basis, the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff will review the rules often and give consistent reminders about inappropriate behavior and its consequences.
2. A staff member will talk to the child on a one-on-one basis and give a timeout.
3. Logical consequences will be imposed, if necessary.
4. A written warning will be given for repeated misbehavior.
5. A citation will result from further misbehavior or for a serious infraction of the rules. This misbehavior would include, but not be limited to, hurting another child, damaging property, or willfully disregarding the staff's instructions.
6. The program administration will be kept apprised of developing situations and will set up a meeting with the parent to discuss the child's behavior and agree on a strategy for handling future problems, if necessary.
7. If the behavior continues, the parent may be called to remove the child from the program. The child may be asked to take a day or more off from the program.
8. Continued misbehavior may result in being asked to leave the program.

It is our hope that we never get to the final step in this process. We feel that with the cooperation of the parents we can use this disciplinary process to correct problems and ensure that all children in our program are in a pleasant and safe environment for their out-of-school hours.

Sickness

Any child who has a fever, is vomiting, has a contagious disease, or has a draining wound may not attend the program. Children with such sickness may not return to our program until 24 hours after the conclusion of the symptoms or after appropriate medications have been started. In some cases, you may be required to provide a doctor's note before your child may return. If your child becomes ill while at the program, you will be contacted by staff and required to pick up your child within the hour. Please note that if your child is not feeling well and is in attendance in our program, they will still be required to go outside weather permitting. We do not have the ability to keep children inside.

COVID-19 and other Communicable Illness

- Participation in Scarborough Community Services programs and related events and activities includes possible exposure to and illness from infectious diseases including but not limited to MRSA, influenza and COVID-19. While particular rules and personal discipline may reduce the risk, the risk of serious illness and death does exist.
- If your child/children are in a population identified by the CDC as high risk, you will need to consult with your child's primary care physician before deciding to attend Scarborough Community Services Plover Program.
- Should your child become ill while in our care, a parent or emergency contact person is expected to pick up the child within 30 minutes of being notified of illness.
- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, administrators will notify local health officials, staff and families immediately of any case of COVID -19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Child Abuse and Neglect, Reporting of

In accordance with Maine state law, all of Scarborough Community Services program staff are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

Factors that may lead up to a report are:

- Injuries that appear to be non-accidental.
- Excessive punishment.
- Emotional or mental injury or impairment.
- Sexual abuse or exploitation.
- Inadequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or health care.
- Deprivation of normal childhood living experiences (emotional neglect).
- Failure to protect a child from abuse or neglect.
- Children who are abandoned.
- Parents who are unable or unwilling to safely care for their children.

The protection of the child, not punishment of the parents, is the goal of the law. In the vast majority of cases, the best way to help the child is to help the family. Supportive social services for the parents and the child can usually keep the family together. Parents may need help in child-rearing and homemaking skills. Troubled families may need help in coping with stress. A report can be the first step in rehabilitative services to preserve families.

Email Communication

We use email as a means to communicate with parents. When parents provide us with their email address, we will send letters, requests for information, and notices of emergency early closings. Our email address, comserv@scarboroughmaine.org, is checked daily so parents should feel free to communicate with us through this address.

Emergency Procedures

Our staff has been trained in emergency first aid and CPR, and our building has easily-accessible first aid kits and supplies. In the event of a serious emergency, an ambulance will be called and the child will be taken to the nearest hospital (or the hospital of preference listed on the medical authorization slip). The child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

Medication Policy

State-licensing laws are specific concerning the dispensing of medication at a child care site; therefore, we have adopted the following policies concerning medication:

- **No prescription medicine of any kind will be dispensed unless authorized by a physician's signature.** Any request to dispense medication must be made in writing for each illness or each medication. We have medication forms available that include the date, amount, and time to be given. Medication must be in the original container.
- **Medication must be dropped off to the site by the parent.** Please do not send medication in your child's lunch box or backpack. Medication could spill from the containers, other children may discover it, or children may decide to take the medication before the appropriate time or even in incorrect dosages.
- Acetaminophen, ibuprofen or other non-prescription medications will not be given to a child without written, signed, and dated parental authorization naming the medication and the dosage. All medications must be supplied by the parent.

Parental Conduct

The success of our program relies on the involvement of parents and guardians, as well. We encourage parents and guardians to make suggestions and give us feedback at any time. We encourage you to visit the program at any time and take part in any ongoing activity.

As a parent or guardian, it is also your responsibility to be a positive member of our program. To provide the children in our program with an environment conducive to growth, learning, and development, parents and guardians must behave in a manner consistent with respect and courtesy. Parents and guardians must display respectful and professional behavior toward staff, children, fellow parents, and the public. Parents and guardians must refrain from any behavior deemed to be discourteous, dishonest, confrontational, disrespectful, or offensive to others. Parents and guardians who violate this policy may be dismissed from the program. Any parent or guardian who engages in activity or conversation that results in discrimination, harassment, distress, fear, discomfort, marginalization, or alienation of any child or adult affiliated with our program will be subject to dismissal from our program.

Parental Involvement

Communication between parents and staff is a vital component of a successful program. To keep you updated on program news and your child's progress in the program, we have established a parent board in the classroom. Please check this area daily for important information. We encourage you to discuss your child's needs and interests with members of the staff, and, in the same spirit, our staff will discuss any concerns or anecdotes about your child with you. By keeping our lines of communication open we feel we can ensure that the needs of each child are being met.