

The background of the page features a large, circular seal. The outer ring of the seal contains the text "THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MILLCREEK" at the top and "ERIE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA" at the bottom. The inner circle of the seal depicts an eagle with spread wings, perched on a shield. Below the shield are three sheaves of wheat.

REVISED
2024
- 2025

PRE-K PROGRAM GUIDE

MILLCREEK TOWNSHIP
SCHOOL DISTRICT

MTSD Pre-K Program

3740 West 26th Street, Erie, PA 16506

814-836-6091



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The following are outlined in this Program Guide:

4 / WELCOME MESSAGE

Introduction to MTSD Pre-K

6 / BUILDING OVERVIEW

MTSD Pre-K Locations and classrooms

7 / A SUCCESSFUL 1ST DAY

Helpful Tips, Family Involvement, and Learning Environment

10 / HOW CHILDREN DEVELOP & LEARN

Social & Emotional, Physical, Language, and Cognitive Development

14 / WHAT DO THEY LEARN

Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, The Arts, Technology, Process Skills

17 / IT LOOKS LIKE PLAY..

Overview of how various activities that look like playing actually help students learn

18 / PROGRESS MONITORING

Overview of how we measure student success

19 / POLICIES, PROCEDURES, & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Arrival/Departure, Potty Training, Supply List & More!

MISSION STATEMENT

The Millcreek Township School District Pre-K Program believes in the importance of quality early learning experiences as the building blocks for future success. We strive to provide a fully integrated, enriched, student-centered, and hands-on learning environment that meets the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of students ages 3-5. Our schools, families, and community work together to provide the foundation for life-long learning.

WELCOME TO MTSD PRE-K

Welcome to Millcreek Township School District. Preschool is such an important part of your child's life, and we are so excited to be a part of it! MTSD Pre-K programs provide fully integrated, enriched, student-centered, hands-on learning environments that engage students in a structured curriculum. Learning is centered around social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development. We have carefully aligned our Pre-K curriculum with the District's kindergarten curriculum to assure all students participating have a smooth and seamless transition to kindergarten. Each Pre-K classroom has an experienced team of professionals, led by a certified teacher and a Pre-K assistant.

We welcome and encourage parent involvement! We believe that home and school are a child's two most important worlds. It is important to us that you feel completely comfortable as a parent or family member when you walk into one of our Pre-K programs. Through quality early learning experiences provided daily in the Millcreek Township School District Pre-K Program, children form the building blocks needed for future academic success and lifelong learning. If you have questions at any time please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,
The MTSD Pre-K Program Team



DR. SUSAN GREENAWAY
Supervisor of Pre-K Programming



DR. JOHN CAVANAGH
Superintendent



TREVOR MURNOCK
Assistant Superintendent



PREPARING YOUR STUDENT FOR SUCCESS FROM AN EARLY AGE

Research shows children are born with an incredible capacity and desire to learn. It is critical that their first academic steps be in the right direction.

Research also shows children who are given the opportunity to participate in a quality early learning experience thrive when they enter kindergarten. These students have a higher percentage of secondary education than students who do not participate in a Pre-K program.





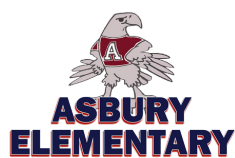
HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION IN A REAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

FIVE

UPDATED SCHOOL
BUILDINGS

SIX

CLASSROOMS
WITH CERTIFIED
TEACHERS



Our Pre-K students are given a significant advantage by being in our school buildings. They become familiar with MTSD schools, teachers, and programs -- making it a smoother transition into Kindergarten. Our Pre-K curriculum is aligned to the PA Early Learning Standards, in addition to the MTSD Kindergarten curriculum.

Within each school, the Pre-K students are included in appropriate school activities that enhance their learning, like 'Reading Buddies,' parent activities, and collaborative class projects.

MTSD Pre-K Teachers are PA-certified in Early Education. Many hold master's degrees and additional teacher certifications. Both Pre-K Teachers and Pre-K Assistants participate in district-aligned and annual individualized professional development.



The Key to a Successful 1st Day

→ AT MTSD PRE-K

Introduction

As wonderful as this new experience may be, it can also be quite stressful for the young child. New situations and change can, at times, be unsettling for all of us. For many children this may be their first experience of separation from parents or care givers at home. It is common for even the most out-going child to be anxious the first day of school.

Remember the MTSD Pre-K staff will be available to provide support and assistance making your child's first school days happy days!

Helpful Tips

- Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect. Answer all questions directly and honestly.
- Convey a positive attitude. Young children are aware of our feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure your child that school can be a fun and exciting place.
- Establish a routine involving both the night before a school day as well as morning preparation. Rituals and routines will add predictability and are comforting in unfamiliar situations.
- Bring something from home. This is acceptable and often reassuring in helping the child with the initial adjustment to school. This item may be a treasured blanket or even a photo from home.
- Clearly state to your child where you will be and when you will return. It may also be helpful to discuss what will happen when you are reunited.

Saying, “See you soon!”

Maintain a clear good-buy routine. This may include warning the child you are leaving in 3 minutes, a kiss and hug, or a wave from the window. Once you tell your child you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the good-bye with “Ok, just one more kiss, and then I really, really have to go.” tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Avoid sneaking out; this seems to encourage children to become less trusting and makes the second day of school even harder.



The Importance of Family Involvement

We encourage families to observe our classrooms prior to preschool registration. Meeting the teachers and seeing the classroom environment is a very important step in choosing the early learning community which best fits your family's needs.

There are scheduled orientation days for families and students to meet their teacher and see their classroom before school starts, as well as two parent teacher conferences at mid-year and year-end to go over student progress and review portfolios.

MTSD Pre-K Programs have an open-door policy for families, we welcome guest speakers and guest readers. Families will find sign-up sheets for such events and are encouraged to participate as much as their schedule will allow. If you have a hobby, skill, song, or family tradition you would like to share, we invite you to do so.

Teachers plan special events into the school day, such as ‘Muffins for Mom’ and ‘Donuts for Dad’ days. Teachers also plan sing-alongs, plays, and graduation ceremonies to incorporate family participation.



Have a question or suggestion?
Contact us:

814-836-6091
www.mtsd.org/prek
greenaway@mtsd.org
3740 West 26th Street, Erie, PA

Your Student's Learning Environment

Research shows the learning environment plays a key role in a child's ability to learn and feel comfortable in their school setting. In our Pre-K programs you will find students and families are always greeted with a warm welcome. Our classroom environments convey very important messages to our students such as:

- **You are in a good place** – Students' work is displayed attractively at a level which children can see it. The room is welcoming and friendly.
- **You are able to be independent, to build self-esteem, and to do many things on your own here** - Materials are stored on low shelves so students can reach them without help. Materials are organized logically and are located in areas in which they can be used. Environmental print is everywhere, and labels are prevalent to encourage independence.
- **You belong here and are an integral part of our community** – Each child has a cubby, or basket, labeled with his or her name or picture on it. Pictures of children and their families are displayed.
- **This is a place you can trust and feel safe and comfortable to explore and try out your ideas** – Equipment and materials are arranged consistently so children know where to find the things they need. Shelves are neat and uncluttered; materials are labeled so children can make choices easily. There is a well-defined illustrated schedule displayed so children learn the order of events that occur each day and know what to expect. Daily routines stay consistent.
- **This is a safe place to explore and try out your ideas** – Areas are protected and well defined. All interest areas include all items needed for students to be successful (e.g. smocks in the art, water, and sand areas). Toys are rotated frequently and new things are added to keep the interest of children.



Each of our classrooms are welcoming environments, promoting learning and showcasing students' work throughout the school year.

How Children Develop & Learn



Child development may be divided into four areas—social/emotional, physical, language and cognitive. These four categories are closely related and often overlap. It is important for educators and parents to remember that development in one area affects and is influenced by development in all other areas. Pre-K teachers are actively aware of this and are constantly paying attention to every area when guiding your child's learning.

Social & Emotional Development

Social/emotional development in the preschool years is about socialization. It is about becoming a competent and confident person, as well as the process by which children learn the values and behaviors accepted by society.

MTSD Pre-K teachers focus on three goals for social/emotional development:

1. **Achieving a sense of self** – The ability to know oneself and relate to other people; both children and adults.
2. **Taking responsibility for self and others** – The ability to follow rules and routines, respect others, and take initiative.
3. **Behaving in a prosocial way** – The ability to show empathy and get along in the world. For example, sharing and taking turns.

Physical Development

Physical development involves gross motor (large muscle) and fine motor (small muscle) skills. Pre-K teachers work hard to create a classroom environment which promotes individual physical development. As children learn what their bodies can do, they gain self-confidence. This self-confidence promotes a student's willingness to try new and challenging tasks, creating a positive cycle, which effects learning as a whole over time.

Physical Development (Continued)

MTSD Pre-K teachers focus on two goals for physical development:

1. **Achieving gross motor control** – The ability to move the large muscles in the body, especially the arms and legs, consciously and deliberately. Gross motor control includes balance and stability and movements such as running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping. In addition, physical manipulations such as throwing, kicking, and catching are learned.
1. **Achieving fine motor control** – The ability to use and coordinate the small muscles in the hands and wrist with dexterity. As these fine muscles develop, children are able to perform self-help skills and manipulate small objects such as scissors and writing tools. It is important to note the achievement of fine motor skills generally lags behind gross motor development.





Language Development

Language development includes understanding and communicating through words, spoken and written. In Pre-K, a child's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings through spoken language takes on new importance as language becomes the principle tool for establishing and maintaining relationships with adults and other children.

It is important to remember that language development is closely related to cognitive development because words represent objects and ideas.

Language and literacy skills go hand in hand. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing develop interdependently in children.

MTSD Pre-K teachers focus on two goals for language development:

1. **Listening and speaking** – The ability to use spoken language to communicate with others. Teachers look for the student's ability to enlarge one's vocabulary, express oneself, understand the oral speech of others, participate in a conversation, and use language to solve problems. It is important to note that as children learn to listen and speak, they gain control of themselves and their world. They relate to others and gain and store more information.
2. **Reading and writing** – The ability to make sense of written language. Students will begin to understand the purpose of written symbols and words and how they work. They will gain knowledge of the alphabet and begin to write letters and words.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development refers to the mind and how it works. It involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn.

MTSD Pre-K teachers focus on three goals for cognitive development:

1. **Learning and problem solving** – The ability to be purposeful about acquiring and using information, resources, and materials. As children observe events around them, teachers are observing: are they able to ask questions, make predictions, and test possible solutions, as learning reaches beyond just acquiring facts.
2. **Thinking logically** – The ability to gather and make sense of information by comparing, contrasting, sorting, classifying, counting, measuring, and recognizing patterns. As children use logical thinking, they organize their world conceptually and gain a better understanding of how it works.
3. **Representing and thinking symbolically** – The ability to use objects in a unique way. For example; using a cup to represent a telephone, pretending to be a mommy or a firefighter, portraying the world through charts or pictures (e.g. making a graph to show the weather over time or drawing a picture to show what happened in a story). Such representations and symbols show that students are able to use materials and their imaginations to explore abstract ideas.



WHAT DO MTSD PRE-K STUDENTS LEARN?

Literacy

MTSD Pre-K teachers thoughtfully and purposefully interact with children and plan experiences that support emerging literacy. A print-rich environment that allows children to practice literacy skills in real-life experiences, combined with explicit teaching of key concepts, is the foundation of literacy learning in Pre-K. As children's excitement about their newfound ability to read and write increases, teachers create multiple opportunities for continued literacy learning.

Components: increased vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, letters, and words, comprehension, understanding books and other texts, literacy as a source of enjoyment.

Mathematics

MTSD Pre-K teachers' knowledge of the substance of math content provides facts and concepts needed to promote and extend children's mathematical thinking. Teachers use multiple opportunities throughout the day to help children build competence in math. When children give each person at the table a cracker, pour water from one container to another, put all the big buttons in one pile and the smaller ones in another, or clap a rhythmic pattern, they are learning math.

Components: number concepts, patterns and relationships, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, data collection, organizational, and representation



Science

Scientific facts are important, but how they are put together into meaningful ideas is more significant. Pre-K children learn science by exploring the world around them. When you provide an environment with many varied materials, they try out things to see how they work, they experiment, they manipulate, they are curious, and they ask questions. As they seek answers to their questions they are learning to enjoy and appreciate their surroundings. These activities are scientific to young children.

Components: physical science; physical properties of objects, life science; living things, and the earth and the environment

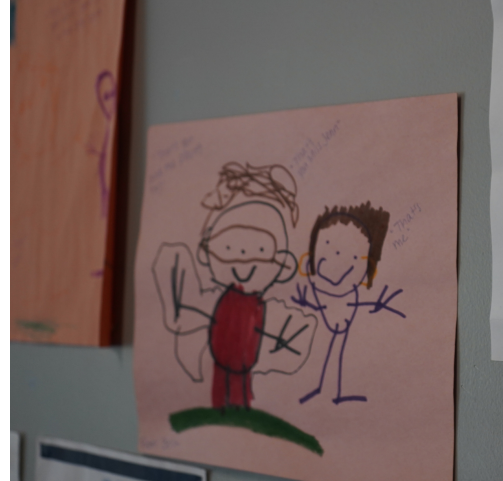


Social Studies

In Pre-K, everyday experiences pertinent to children's lives are the foundations for learning social studies. Board games or the challenge of riding around a tricycle path teach mapping skills. Children learn about time (history) from the established daily routine. When the teacher sets up a play grocery store and helps children learn about jobs, buying, and selling, they are helping the children learn about economics. Preschoolers learn about civics by learning to cooperate and resolve differences within their classroom setting.

Components: Spaces and geography, people and how they live, people and the environment, people and the past.





The Arts

MTSD Pre-K teachers expose students to a wide variety of experiences in the arts throughout the day. Children mix paints; pound and shape clay; build structures with blocks, boxes, and Lego's; dance; dramatize stories; clap rhythms; and sing chants and songs. Pre-K children love to get their hands into materials and move their bodies.

Components: Dance, music, theater, or performing arts (what we preschool teachers call dramatic play), and visual arts.

Technology

Children learn technology by exploring how things work. If you view technology from a broad perspective, you can see how it can be integrated into all aspects of the Pre-K classroom. MTSD Pre-K teachers know technology as the study of tools, machines, materials, techniques, and sources of power that make work easier and that solve problems. When children figure out what kind of tool they need to build a structure using wood scraps, they are solving a technological problem. When children sing songs into a tape recorder or create colored lines on the screen by dragging a mouse, they are using technology tools.

Components: awareness of technology, basic operations and concepts, technology tools, people and technology

Process Skills

Methods of learning are called process skills. Children are learning methods of communicating, thinking mathematically, doing what scientists do, conducting social science research, creating as artists, and using technology through each curricular content area.

Components: observing, exploring, problem solving, connecting, organizing, communicating, and representing information.

“IT LOOKS LIKE I’M PLAYING, BUT...”



Each Pre-K classroom has a variety of learning centers at which students will play. During the Pre-K day, the children are given multiple opportunities to play at the centers of their choice. Play is very important for this age group. It is how they learn. The Pre-K teaching team circulate among the children as they are playing to encourage their development through conversation, acknowledgement, modeling, and reinforcement.

You might think the children are ‘just’ playing. But they are truly learning!

- **Art:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing my creativity, small motor skills, problem solving, sharing skills, cooperation, independence, and responsibility.
- **Blocks:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing motor skills, math concepts (e.g. number, size, shape, space), oral language, social skills, eye-hand coordination, self-control, and my imagination.
- **Dramatic Play:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing social skills, emotional skills, independence, oral language, my imagination, responsibility, and executive functioning.
- **Library:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing alphabet knowledge, oral language, print knowledge, listening skills, eye-hand coordination, concepts about the world, and the desire to read.
- **Literacy:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing letter and sound recognition, and learning sight words, to write, and to comprehend.
- **Math:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing oral language, social skills, small motor skills, concepts about quantity, shape, size, and patterns, and an interest in math.
- **Science:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing a curiosity about the world, sensory skills, problem solving, language skills, and experience with the scientific process (i.e. observing, predicting, experimenting, recording, reporting).
- **Social Studies:** It looks like I am playing, but I am learning about maps, my community, the earth and land forms, and cultures.
- **Writing:** It looks like I am playing, but I am developing eye-hand coordination, small motor skills, alphabet knowledge, self-confidence, vocabulary, and an interest in print.



PROGRESS MONITORING



HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Pennsylvania has helped guide preschools to develop programs which will lay a solid foundation for life-long learning, through the use of the Early Learning Standards which define the ways in which children learn, the ways teachers can support children's learning, and the expectations of learning and development for children when they enter kindergarten.

Prior to starting the Pre-K year, parents are requested to complete an Ages & Stages Questionnaire about their child. This information is given to the preschool teacher at the start of the school year, allowing her to tailor your child's Pre-K experience to his/her needs.

During the school year, teachers chart a student's developmental progress through the use of portfolios. Each student's portfolio includes teacher observations, student work samples, and formal assessments. Portfolios are an excellent way to track a student's progress over time.

Teachers formally assess children three times a year:

1. Initial evaluations occur within the month of September, and show the teachers and staff where each child is within the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. This information gives each teacher a starting point for future lesson planning.
2. Mid-year evaluations show each student's progress throughout the first half of the school year and are followed by a mid-year parent teacher conference to review student progress and discuss strengths and any areas for future improvement.
3. Year-end evaluations show a student's year-to-date progress. Year-end evaluation information is compiled and shared with parents at year-end.

Although student portfolios stay in the classroom, teachers keep parents abreast of their children's progress through formal and informal communication throughout the school year.

Should parents have a specific concern about their child's development, they may schedule a meeting to discuss their concerns with the teacher and/or Pre-K Program Supervisor, at any time. Parents are also able to access their child's portfolio by signing it out for review.



Policies, Procedures, & Important Information

→ FOR MTSD PRE-K

Contacting the Teacher

Email is the best way to contact your teacher. If you prefer to leave a phone message, there is a phone in each Pre-K classroom.

Please do not worry if the teacher does not immediately respond to your email or phone message. Instructional times, as well as arrival and departure times, are very busy times for the children and the teacher.

When your teacher is available, they will email or call you back. Also, you can set up a conference with the teacher if you wish to discuss anything. Feel free to arrange a meeting time with your child's teacher.

Arrival & Departure Procedures for Parents

Please make sure that you are signing in and out every single day upon arriving and departing. This is very important for many reasons, and it is essential to our daily operations.

When you sign in/out you must remember the following:

Sign In:

- Provide your child's name.
- The time you entered the classroom.
- The person who dropped the child off.
- The emergency contact number you can be reached at on THAT DAY!
 - PLEASE NOTE THIS NUMBER MUST HAVE AN AREA CODE AND WE MUST BE ABLE TO REACH YOU IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY!
- The person who will be picking up your child.

Sign Out:

- The time your child is picked up.
- YOU MUST SIGN YOUR CHILD OUT FOR THE DAY WITH A SIGNATURE!
- Only parents and persons to whom the child may be released as noted on the Parent Consent & Emergency Contact Form can pick up your child. Be prepared to bring your ID at pick up until the Pre-K team knows you. Also, inform anyone who intermittently or rarely picks up your child to also bring their ID
- After you sign out your child, please remember to empty his/her mailbox every single day. Important information goes home on a daily basis.

Potty Training

We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, 'accidents' are unusual incidents and happen infrequently. In these instances, the Pre-K teams do help children change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

Children must have sufficient toilet self-help skills for the Pre-K classroom environment. Students need to be aware and able to communicate their need to use the restroom and have at least basic independence using the restroom in the school setting. MTSD Pre-K classrooms are not physically structured nor staffed in such a way to regularly dedicate the time it takes to change children's diapers and pull-ups.

If you have questions about your child's skill level, please contact us to discuss your circumstances.



Have a question or suggestion?
Contact us:

814-836-6091
www.mtsd.org/prek
greenaway@mtsd.org
3740 West 26th Street, Erie, PA



Supply List

The following list includes items that your child will need to bring to school to ensure the first day goes as smoothly as possible:

- A backpack or small tote that has your child's name clearly written somewhere on the bag.
- One folder (this is a take home folder to go in their bag every day).
- A Ziploc bag with your child's name written clearly on it that contains a change of clothes in it. Please make sure that throughout the year the clothes are updated so that they are seasonally appropriate and include the following:
 - Fresh underwear
 - Socks
 - Shirt and/or Sweater
 - Pants
 - **Please note that every time clothes are sent home fresh ones will need to be returned the next day in case of an accident.**
- If your child is wearing pull-ups, you will need to pack and clearly label a fresh box of wipes and the pull-up of your choice.
- Lunch: Because lunch falls within our preschool schedule and is a very important social part of our day, you will need to either pack lunch (please be sure your child's name is clearly written on your child's lunch bag/box) or buy lunch from the school cafeteria.
 - You will be provided with a monthly school lunch menu.
 - Should your child buy lunch, you will need to fill out the daily lunch form found near the sign in and out sheets.
 - Please be sure to specify what menu option your child will be purchasing that day and what type of milk he/she will be purchasing.
- Naptime Essentials:
 - Pillow
 - Sleeping bag or blanket
 - One warm fuzzy from home (stuffed animal or plush toy)
 - Crib Sheets (these fit the cots perfectly)
- You will be provided with a Pre-K Open House flyer which will list any additional supplies needed for your child's Pre-K experience.



Packing Lunches

- Please pack your child's lunch in a bag or lunch box that has his/her name on it.
- Please remember to pack utensils the child may need for his/her lunch.
- Always remember to pack a napkin for your child every day.
- If there are any special instructions you have for your child's lunch, please place a note inside, and we will be sure to read it.

Snacks

Snack is an important part of our school day. Your child will be assigned a snack day monthly. On your child's snack day, we ask you bring a healthy snack to share with your child's class. If you are not able to provide a snack to share with your child's class, please contact our MTSD Pre-K Program office at 814-836-6091.

If your child has food allergies or if your family has an alternative diet, please make the staff aware of any foods that should be avoided.

Visiting & Volunteering

As is true in all of our schools, Millcreek Township School District asks that all parents check in at the school office when visiting the building. Whether volunteering, observing, or dropping an item off for your child or your child's teacher, proceed to the office first. Once there, sign the visitor's book and obtain a badge to wear.

Throughout the year you may want to volunteer in your child's classroom. Volunteer requirements include current clearances and health assessment w/ TB test. For detailed information regarding how to become a volunteer, refer to our website and visit the Parent Resources page.

Please keep in mind all of this is done in an effort to keep our students safe and to keep interruptions to the classes to a minimum. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Transitions

Students entering Pre-K can meet their teacher during a Pre-K Open House before the school year starts. During the Open House, the students and their families meet the teacher, get a chance to see and play in their classroom, take a tour of the school, and can ask questions and learn about the upcoming school year.

During the school year, students are increasingly exposed to experiences to help them prepare to move on to Kindergarten. For example, they may eat lunch in the cafeteria with the other students in the school to help them be prepared for this in future years.

Toward the end of the school year, students moving on to Kindergarten the next school year have several opportunities to prepare for their upcoming transition. Students may have the opportunity to meet the Kindergarten teachers and take a tour of their future classrooms. Teachers plan Pre-K graduation experiences to help the children and their families celebrate their preschool experience and their academic advancement. For students participating in an early intervention program, the Pre-K team meets with the school age team to share information to help ensure the student's success for transitioning to Kindergarten.

Required Program Forms & Student Files

When a child is enrolled in one of our programs, the parents complete the application along with required program forms. These forms are kept for each student in a student file, kept confidential and in a locked space. All forms must be kept up-to-date throughout the school year. Let your child's program staff know immediately if any changes occur.

Required documents in the student files include:

- **Agreement form:** This form designates which schedule option you have chosen for your child and clearly lists the required payment policies. The Agreement form lists persons designated by the parent to whom their child may be released. Agreements must be completed and submitted with the annual registration fee before a student may begin preschool. Refer to our webpage for tuition information.
- **Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form:** This form identifies the family's contact information as well as indicates persons to whom the child may be released if parents are unavailable. Only identified family members and those listed as 'designated to release to' persons may pick up the child. Individuals new to staff are required to provide identification before the child is released to him/her. Additionally, the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form includes medical information, such as allergies or other medical conditions, as well as doctor and insurance information.
- **Child Health Report:** Each enrolled child must have a current health record completed by your child's doctor at enrollment. A new health assessment and immunizations are required each year your child is in our preschool program. The Office of Child Development regulations further require participating children have documentation of an annual flu shot or an exemption from the flu shot letter from the parent on file each school year. Please provide this to your child's teacher for his/her student file.
- **Parent Permission form:** Parents are required to sign this form when they have received the Parent Program Guide for Preschool. Parents can sign the photo release, the permission to share student academic information, and hand sanitizer sections on this form as they deem appropriate.
- **Medication forms, if applicable:** Children are not permitted to have any medicines on their person or in their book bag. If your child has a medical condition requiring medicine, the MTSD Medication Guidelines must be followed. Inform your child's teacher immediately if your child has any medical conditions.

Be sure to inform the preschool teaching team of any changes you need to make to your forms. Additionally, the Pre-K teaching team will ask you to review your Agreement form and the 'Emergency Contact – Parental Consent' form at least twice during the school year: typically, at the start of the school year and in January.

Attendance

With exceptions to illness or physical injury, quarantine, death in the family, school sponsored tours and trips, non-school-sponsored education experiences with pre-approval, medical and dental appointments, required court attendance, family emergency, hazardous travel and severe weather conditions, or religious observations, all children are expected to be at school. Our goal is to have children come to school every day especially since missing just one day can seriously impact the learning and experience of the child. Please note the following policy:

- If your child will be absent from school, please contact your child's teacher by 8:45 in the morning by leaving a message on the classroom answering machine.
- If your child is absent due to illness or appointments, please be sure to let your child's teacher know.
- If a child is absent without communication from the parent/guardian, the preschool teacher must call to find out why the child is absent.
- Please provide your child's teacher with written excuse on the day your child returns to school.

Emergency Evacuation Plans & Safety Drills

The MTSD Pre-K Program Emergency Evacuation Plan is aligned with the MTSD school safety requirements.

The Emergency Evacuation Plan uses the Standard Response Protocol to outline what students and staff are to do in an emergency that necessitates a response of:

- "Hold,"
- "Secure,"
- "Evacuate,"
- "Shelter"
- "Lockdown,"

The Emergency Evacuation Plan identifies locations within the school and outside the school to where students are to evacuate if needed in response to an emergency. Also, maps of evacuation routes are located in each program space.

Teachers participate in the Emergency Plan training each school year and when, if needed, the plan is updated throughout the school year. Students and teachers practice emergency drills on a regular basis. Each preschool classroom maintains a list of all drills in which the class has participated.

Weather-Related Delays, Early Dismissals & Cancellations

Weather may cause the school district to have a 2-hour delay, an early dismissal, or a school closure. Please follow inclement weather reports on the local TV and radio stations for school delay, dismissal, and closure notifications. Whatever the district implements, please remember your discretion will best determine your child's attendance during inclement weather.

2-Hour Delays:

- (In the event of a 2-hour delay, stay tuned to the TV and radio stations should the school delay change to cancellation due to worsening weather conditions.)
- Given the size of the school district, time is needed to ensure passable parking lots and walkways for everyone's safety, as well to ensure full staffing. As a result, the Pre-K programs will operate on a delay.
- Note: In the event of an exceptional weather-related challenge, Pre-K families will be notified through the District's Infinite Campus Notification System. Pre-K Programs will begin at 11:00 am, instead of 9:00 am. Drop off time begins no earlier than 10:45 am.

Early Dismissals:

- When the school district enacts an early dismissal, the MTSD Pre-K Program will dismiss at 1:30 pm. Parents are required to pick up their children early.

School Closings:

- When the school district closes, Pre-K will implement the MTSD Pre-K Flexible Learning Plan

Extra Clothes

Whether from over exuberant water play or a toileting accident, it is always helpful to have an extra set of clothes at school. Please send an extra set of seasonally correct clothes, including underwear and socks, to school with your child. It would be helpful to have clothes stored in a labeled gallon size Ziploc bag.

Outdoor play happens throughout the school year unless the weather is inclement. Please be sure to dress your child for outdoor play, including coats, hats, boots, gloves, and snow pants, when appropriate. Mark each piece of clothing with your child's name.

Going Outdoors

Students will participate in outdoor activities daily weather permitting. The Pennsylvania Position statement on "weather permitting" states students can participate in outdoor activities daily if the temperature is above 24 degrees with wind-chill. We believe these outdoor experiences are vital to your child's learning experience, and any child well enough to attend school is well enough to participate in outdoor activities.

Student Illnesses, Allergies, & Medications

If your child is ill, please keep him/her home from school. This includes occurrences when your child has a fever, is vomiting, has diarrhea, or has cold symptoms. As you can imagine Pre-K classrooms are a great place for sharing colds and other germs. Children must be fever and symptom free, without the aid of a fever reducing medicine, for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school. We appreciate your cooperation as we attempt to minimize the spread of illness.

Please make the staff aware if your child has been exposed to or contracted a communicable disease (e.g. chicken pox) as we need to inform other parents. There are medically vulnerable students enrolled in our classes. Also, please make the staff aware of any allergies your child has or develops.

Prescription Medications: If your child must receive prescription medications while at school, a permission form must be completed. The form, available from your child's teacher or the school nurse, must include specific information about the time and dosage of medication to be administered, as well as the physician's signature. All prescriptions must be clearly marked and in the original bottle from the pharmacy.

Health Assessment & Flu Vaccine

Due to the fact that MTSD Pre-K and Pre-K Counts programs operate under the PA Department of Education, as well as under the PA Department of Public Welfare Office of Child Development regulations, all students participating in preschool must have a current (within the past year) health assessment (physical) on file.

Should your child be in need of a physical, you do have 30 days after your child's start date to return the completed and signed physical form to the classroom teacher. Any student who does not have a physical within 30 days of their start date is unable to return to preschool until their physical has been completed and the teacher has the appropriate forms on file. Health Assessments must be completed annually for preschool students.

The PA Office of Child Development regulations further require participating children provide documentation of having a flu shot or an exemption from the flu shot letter from the parent each school year. Please provide this to your child's teacher.

Inclusion

The MTSD Pre-K Program welcomes all students in an inclusive environment. Inclusion is defined as “including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities; facilitating individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster development, friendships with peers, and a sense of belonging.” (HHS/ED Policy Statement, 2015)

Children of all abilities, needs, backgrounds, cultures, religions, and economic circumstances participate in our programs. We are committed to providing developmentally appropriate experiences that support the access and participation of each child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure each child has the opportunity for optimum success. We communicate with families daily and have meetings as needed. We work with therapists, special educators, and other professionals to integrate accommodations, modifications, and strategies when students need their services. We can help families as they secure additional help and resources.

If your child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), we request you share this with your preschool teacher at enrollment. We will follow these plans, supporting your child in making sustained and meaningful progress.



Family Support

Additional support for families and staff can be found through the following resources:

- Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:
 - <https://www.ecmhc.org/>
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, Practical Strategies for Teachers/Caregivers:
 - <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#teachingskills>
- Common Sense Education:
 - <https://www.commonsense.org/education/toolkit/familyengagement-resources>
- The Incredible Years:
 - <https://incredibleyears.com/>
- National PTA:
 - <https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/Parents-Guides-to-StudentSuccess>
- PA Department of Education:
 - <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/equityandinclusion/EPH/Family/Individual/Pages/default.aspx>
- Pyramid Model:
 - <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

