

# Yorkville CUSD 115 Early Childhood Handbook



Hello and welcome to Y115 Early Childhood! We are so excited that your family will be joining us this year. In our program, children enjoy a balance of indoor and outdoor activities each day. There are many opportunities for every child to gain new knowledge, create, explore, and learn about the world around them. We incorporate academic concepts into an interactive, play-based approach. Our curriculum places a focus on building strong language skills and social emotional learning that prepare our students for success in Kindergarten. The Y115 Early Childhood Program is a general education, at-risk, and special education preschool program.

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## Program Specifics

Our program is designed to meet the individual needs of our students in a variety of settings:



**Walk-In Speech Services:** Weekly speech class

**Blended EC Program:**

Combination of general and special education

**Structured Special Education Classrooms:**

Structured learning environments

Blended preschool sessions are 2.5 hours long. Specialized 5 hour programming is available for students who qualify, the year before they enter Kindergarten.

### Fees

Our program is supported by the Preschool for All and IDEA Grants; therefore, there are no fees/tuition to participate or for registration. There are also no fees for field trips and all supplies, materials, and snacks are provided by the program.

### Staff

Each classroom is led by a certified early childhood teacher with credentials in special education and English Language Learner (ELL) education. Additionally, there is a minimum of one paraprofessional in each room. Many classrooms have additional teaching assistants to help meet the needs of individual children. We are fortunate to also be able to support students with the following staff:

- Early Childhood Administration
- School Nurse
- Social Worker
- Psychologist
- Speech Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Music Therapist
- Assistive Technology Specialist
- District Book Ambassador

### EC Calendar

The Early Childhood program follows the same calendar as the Yorkville School District. Seasonal breaks will happen at the same time. However, EC has a few additional days off that may include home visits or special family event days. You will be provided with an EC specific calendar and teachers will remind you of these special days off.

### Snack

Daily snacks are provided by the Yorkville School District through Aramark Food Service. There is no cost for snacks. Snacks will be offered to students each day during center time. Each day, your child will also have access to drinking cups and water. Some days, milk or juice is also provided. If you would prefer, you may supply your own water bottle for your child, clearly marked with his/her name. Water only please.

Your child's safety is our priority. If your child has a food allergy, we will work together with his/her educational team to form an appropriate allergy action plan. Please notify both the school nurse and your child's teacher about any allergies.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Students should not arrive at school earlier than 10 minutes before school begins. Any student not picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal will need to be picked up from the office. If you are late to school, please report to the front office to sign your student in. If your child is going to be absent from school, please contact the front office to let us know.

Each child will be provided with two parent pick-up cards. These cards must be shown in order to pick up your child from school. For your student's safety, we will not release a child to an unauthorized adult. If you need additional parent pick-up cards, please contact your child's teacher.

Anyone coming to the school to pick up a child early must come into the office to sign the student out.

Reminder: For the safety of our students, please be aware of the bus lane in front of the school and be sure not to pass the parked school buses. Tickets can and will be issued for this violation.

## Transportation

For general education and at-risk students, it is the family's responsibility to transport students to and from school each day. Some students may qualify for busing based on their student's IEP.

If your child rides the bus, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the bus company and the school office of a change of address, change of phone number, or change of pick-up/drop-off location. On days when your student is ill, parents are required to call both the bus company and the school. Septran Busing: 630-553-0435. A parent or an authorized adult is required to be at home when the student is picked up for school and when the student returns home. If someone other than the parent will be taking the student off the bus, please contact the school.

## School Dress

Please make sure your student is always dressed for the weather. Having a jacket on days it feels chilly, coats and boots for the snow, etc. will ensure an enjoyable activity time for your child. We go outside each day as long as it is warmer than 25 degrees and cooler than 90 degrees.

We get messy and play hard!! Please dress your child in play clothes and gym shoes so that they can run, climb, and get dirty each day!

**Extra Clothes:** Please send your child to school with an extra set of clothes in their backpack. Sometimes there are accidents which may require a change of clothes. We really appreciate this.

**Backpack:** Please make sure your child brings a full-size backpack to school each day.



## Toileting

Students do not need to be potty trained in order to participate in our program. We are happy to work with your family to help support potty training while your child is at school. For our students who are still in need of assistance with toilet training, we ask that you send the following to your child's classroom teacher: diapers (if pull-ups cannot be used), pull-ups, wipes, and extra clothes.



## Curriculum and Instruction in Early Childhood

Our program utilizes the Creative Curriculum to guide student learning. This research-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum allows for student choices to guide topics of study. These studies might include topics such as gardening, insects, clothing, simple machines, and transportation. This curriculum is widely used across the nation and closely aligns with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS), as well as the Common Core State Standards.



Within the CC framework, there are eleven different interest areas. Each area of study includes branches of investigations that have activities for large group instruction, small group instruction, large motor, outdoor exploration, dramatic play, math, art, blocks, science and discovery, and sensory experiences. Our teachers and staff are dedicated to utilizing Creative Curriculum units of study to inspire students and then responding to each child's individual interests, learning styles and abilities. We have a balanced schedule that includes small and large group instruction, in addition to gross motor time and plenty of play-based learning experiences.

Families can access additional information about our curriculum and the IELDS by exploring the following websites: [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com) and [www.illinoisearlylearning.org](http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org)

### Assessments

The assessment tool used in Early Childhood is the Teaching Strategies Gold. This tool allows for authentic, ongoing assessment of children in our early childhood program. All students will receive a progress report at the end of each trimester. In addition, students with IEPs will also receive quarterly goal updates to monitor the progress of their individual goals.

### CORE Vocabulary

As part of the EC program, we use a system called CORE vocabulary with all students. Core words are 300-400 words that make up about 80% of our communication. They are words such as; I, want, like, get, stop, etc... Core words are made up of all parts of speech, but mainly focus is on verbs. Core words are used by many early language learners. By focusing on core words, students of all ability levels can speak about a variety of topics. They can express their wants and needs, make requests and comment on activities in their daily life. Research shows Core words benefit all students! It increases communication, builds vocabulary, and provides a pathway for social relationships.

### Home Visits

As part of our curriculum, each student will receive a home visit from our EC staff. The purpose of home visits is to build a relationship with your family, talk about your goals for your child, and see if there are any ways that we can help support your child at home. Students remember these visits for years to come and they create such a bond between teacher and student.

Home visits last about 20 minutes and are scheduled with your family in advance. Sometimes, due to health regulations, we provide "virtual home visits." While the format is a bit different, our focus is the same and we look forward to this dedicated time to collaborate with your family.

## Special Services

We provide a wide variety of specialized services as part of our program. RTI, Inclusion, ELL and behavior intervention are all important parts of the services that we provide.

### Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention(s) matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction and goals, and applying the student's response data to important educational decisions. The primary focus of RTI is to maximize student achievement and to reduce behaviors, thus increasing academic progress and success. Yorkville School District is committed to the use of this model in an effort to address both academic and behavioral concerns. Interventions may include the following areas (but not limited to): pre-academics, behavior, speech/language, sensory needs, etc.

### Inclusion

“Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.” Joint Position Statement of Inclusion from Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Inclusion in early childhood programs refers to including children with disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development, friendships with peers, and belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities (<https://www.eclre.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Master-2019-Inclusion>).

Inclusion is the principle that supports the education of children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers rather than separately. Both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Sec. 504) require schools and agencies to provide equal education opportunities for children with disabilities. The primary source for the inclusion requirement is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. IDEA requires that children with disabilities be educated in the “least restrictive environment” (§1412(a)(5) and §1413(a)(1)). Our program is dedicated to providing inclusive experiences for all students.





Additionally, equal educational and extracurricular opportunities, including programs, activities, services or benefits, shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religious beliefs, physical and mental handicap or disability, and actual or potential marital and parental status. Inquiries concerning the implementation of Title VII of the Civil Rights of 1964, Title IX of Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disability Act, 42 U.S.C. 12111 et seq., should also be directed to Early Childhood Administration.

### English Language Support

In the preschool setting, the district provides English Language Learner services to those students that qualify. Students are tested according to the State of Illinois guidelines and placed in the appropriate ELL program with parental/guardian consent. Preschool students who experience a different language at home (even if they don't speak it) will be administered the Pre-IPT screener to see if they qualify for services.

### Speech and Language Screenings

A speech screening referral for any student may be made by a parent, teacher, or another school professional. If you have questions or concerns about your child's speech, please contact your child's teacher.

### Student Behavior

Preschool is a brand new experience for our three to five year olds. Therefore, teachers spend a significant amount of time teaching social-emotional skills and providing frequent opportunities for practice. We strive to teach children to regulate their behavior and to respond appropriately to social situations.

Children are guided and encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, to verbalize their feelings and to work together with their peers and the adults around them to solve problems that may arise. This is done through instruction, modeling, practicing, and role playing. Children experience their day through an established schedule and daily routine that allows students to work and play within a predictable framework. Some students may also have accommodations to help them adjust to the schedules and routines of the day.

The Early Childhood program facilitates and supports early intervention and educational planning for students who present with various needs. If students in the Early Childhood program have difficulty managing their behavior, the teachers will work with the family and a team of professionals to put in place interventions and positive behavior management strategies to help the student become more successful in the classroom. *Please consult the district handbook for more specific details on district wide student behavior policies.*



## Health and Safety

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed some of the protocol and requirements that are typical in our Early Childhood classrooms. While we are unsure at this time what the 2022-23 school year will look like, we will continue to communicate any changes, adjustments or safety measures that need to be made. During this past school year, some of the precautions we took were: using UV light systems to sanitize between each class session, providing individual bins of materials for each student in play centers when needed, removing centers that involve shared materials, wearing masks, and teaching students about social distancing. The Early Childhood program follows all school district Covid-19 policies and guidelines.



## Family Involvement

### Family Days

The EC program offers a variety of family days and activities throughout the year. We will be sure to communicate these dates with you. Sometimes younger siblings are allowed at these events, but as a general rule, we encourage you to find child care for siblings in order to spend this special 1:1 time with your preschool child.

### Volunteers

The Early Childhood teachers welcome volunteers and there will be various opportunities for parents to join us at school throughout the course of the school year. All volunteers will be asked to sign in at the main office and present a valid driver's license, to be scanned using the Raptor System, prior to being able to enter the classroom.



## Questions?

We are always happy to answer any questions that you might have! Please feel free to reach out to your classroom teacher, building secretary, or Early Childhood Administrator with any questions. We are so excited to get to know your family this year!