

Delaware City Schools Preschool Program



Parent and Student Handbook 2024-2025 School Year



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Please note that this handbook is a supplement for preschool students. The Woodward school handbook is also a resource that should be referred to as necessary as it contains additional information regarding school policies and procedures. The school handbook is distributed at the beginning of the school year to all students. If you need a copy, please contact the school office.

District Vision/Mission Statement

The Delaware City Schools will promote a culture of excellence that engages and empowers students and staff to embrace the challenges of our global society. We will build on our traditions, respect our diversity and partner for a strong community.

Step Up to Quality

In 2018, the DCS preschool program was awarded a 5-Star rating by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. This 5-star rating is the highest rating awarded to an early childhood program and has been maintained since being awarded.

What is SUTQ?

SUTQ is a 5-star quality rating and improvement system. SUTQ recognizes and promotes learning and development programs that meet quality program standards that exceed licensing health and safety regulations. The program standards are based on national research identifying standards which lead to improved outcomes for children.

Preschool Philosophy

Early childhood is an exciting time! Each child is full of curiosity and fascination about our world. Early childhood education experiences are the foundation on which our children can adapt and find success in an increasingly complicated world. We are committed to providing a quality preschool program today so our children can be prepared for their future.

A quality preschool program begins with the effective integration of children with disabilities or delays with their typically developing peers. We encourage the belief that effective integration enhances the development of children with disabilities or delays as well as the development of typically developing children.

Our preschool program also rests upon the understanding that every child is different with an individual pattern of growth and development. Thus, all children are capable of learning when provided with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities from adults and other children. Our program curriculum, materials, and staff are responsive to each child's abilities and interests. Different levels of ability and development are expected, accepted, and addressed in appropriate learning activities.

Activities begin at the point of each child's level of ability and proceed in a developmental sequence taking into consideration each child's interests, strengths, and needs. Included in the activities are the developmental areas of physical, social emotional, language, self-help and school readiness skills.

DCS preschool acknowledges that our families play a key role in the development of children. Therefore, we hope to assist families in identifying and accomplishing their goals for their child and to provide information to families which will enhance their child's development. We join hands with each child's family to provide quality learning experiences for each child.

Goals

- To help children be comfortable away from home and to encourage them to form trusting relationships with adults and friendships with their peers
- To help children develop the ability to take care of their own needs, including good habits of safety, nutrition, and cleanliness
- To help children develop the ability to express themselves creatively through art, music, and movement
- To provide varied experiences in which children will increase their knowledge and understanding of our world
- To provide opportunities to explore the outside environment and the community
- To help children develop language skills for both speaking and listening
- To encourage the development of early school readiness skills
- To provide many opportunities for children to explore their environment using their senses and large and small muscles
- To help children develop a positive self-concept in an atmosphere where they experience success daily
- To help children learn to work and play with others and to value one's own rights as well as others
- To provide support for parents in their child's early years
- To form a positive, lasting relationship between home and school

Facility

Our program is located at:
Woodward Elementary
200 South Washington Street
Delaware, Ohio 43015
740-833-1600

The Woodward Elementary facility undergoes building inspections by the Fire Department and Health Department annually.

How Parents Can Help

Parents are their child's first and most important teachers. Collaboration is the best way to develop your child's skills. You could:

- Volunteer in the classroom
- Attend Back-to-School Night– Scheduled at the beginning of each year. Families are encouraged to attend and share this special time with their children.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences – conferences are scheduled twice during the school year
- Read School Communication – Throughout the school year, we will send out classroom, preschool program, and building newsletters. Please use this information as a way to talk to your child about school.

Attendance

So that you and your child may receive maximum benefits from our program, regular attendance is necessary. Your child's adjustment will be much easier if s/he comes to school each day, has a chance to become a member of the group and takes advantage of all educational and social opportunities that are offered.

If your child is going to be absent, both the school and the bus driver should be informed. If a message is not received, the school will make repeated attempts to reach you in order to ensure your child is safe and to determine the reason for the absence.

Safe Arrival allows parents to report their child's absence quickly and conveniently in several ways:

1. Parents can log into a website, go.schoolmessenger.com to access a Safe Arrival Parent Portal where an account can be set up to report absences. The email used to set up the account must match the email you gave to the school.
2. Parents can call into an automated interactive telephone system via a toll free number (1-844-817-5313) through which absences can be reported.
3. If you have an Android or Apple device, you can also download the School Messenger app. You can go to the Google Play store or the Apple App and search using the keyword "School Messenger". Download the app with the blue swirl logo.

School Delays & Closing Information

When inclement weather or other school emergencies necessitate school delays and closings, the district will use the automated calling system, district website and social media to communicate with families. Typically the decision to delay or close will be made by 5:45 a.m.

In addition, the following radio and TV news stations will be notified of delays and school closings:

TELEVISION - 10 TV, NBC 4, ABC 6, FOX 28

RADIO – 97.9 and 95.1

TWO-HOUR DELAYS - When weather conditions necessitate a delayed start to school, the following schedule will be followed for a two-hour delay:

A.M. Preschool: 10:40-12:15

P.M. Preschool: 1:30-3:15

Arrival and Departure Procedures

For the first day of your child's attendance, you are permitted to walk your child into the school and to the classroom. **After the first day, it is very important that parents release their child to a staff member to be escorted to the classroom by the school staff.** This is an important process so that your child can start his/her day off well and learn to develop confidence in themselves. This also ensures the safety of our other students. Your classroom teacher, program supervisor, or building principal can help support this separation process if this is a concern for you and/or your child.

Your child has three options for arrival to and departure from preschool. Those three options are: car rider, walker, or bus.

AM Arrival:

Car rider: If your child arrives to school by car, the drop off time is 8:35 – 8:45. Drop off is located off of S. Washington St. Once you pull through the loop line with your child, an adult will meet your child at the car and ensure his/her safety into the school and to the classroom.

Walker: If you walk your child to school, you will walk your child to the loop line entrance between 8:35 – 8:45. Drop off is located off of S. Washington St. You will be greeted by an adult who will then ensure your child's safety into the school and to the classroom. **Parents are not permitted to drop their student off at the bus alley entrance.**

Bus: If your child rides a bus, staff members will meet the children at the bus to ensure his/her safety off the bus and into the school and to the classroom.

AM Departure:

Car rider: If your child is being picked-up via car, the pick-up time starts at 11:20. The loop line is located off S. Washington St. Once a school employee verifies that you are on the approved pick-up list, your child will be walked out to your car. You must meet your child at the car and buckle your child into his/her seatbelt.

Walker: If you walk to pick-up your child, you will wait on your child at the loop line located off S. Washington St. Children will be dismissed at 11:20. You will be greeted by an adult who will verify that you are on the approved pick-up list and then your child will be escorted to you.

Bus: If your child rides a bus, staff members will walk the students out to the correct bus for their departure. The bus driver will ensure that their safety harness or seatbelt is in place.

PM Arrival:

Car rider: If your child arrives to school by car, the drop off time is 12:30-12:40. Drop off is located off of S. Washington St. Once you pull through the loop line with your child, an adult will meet your child

at the car and ensure his/her safety into the school and to the classroom.

Walker: If you walk your child to school, you will walk your child to the loop line entrance between 12:30 – 12: 40. Drop off is located off of S. Washington St. You will be greeted by an adult who will then ensure your child's safety into the school and to the classroom.

Parents are not permitted to drop their student off at the bus alley entrance.

Bus: If your child rides a bus, staff members will meet the children at the bus to ensure their safety off the bus and into the school and to the classroom.

PM Departure:

Car rider: If your child is being picked-up via car, the pick-up time is 3:15 p.m. The loop line is located off S. Washington St. Once a school employee verifies that you are on the approved pick-up list, your child will be walked out to your car. You must meet your child at the car and buckle your child into his/her seatbelt.

Walker: If you walk to pick-up your child, you will wait on your child at the main entrance door located off South Washington St. at approximately 3:15 p.m. You will be greeted by an adult who will verify that you are on the approved pick-up list and then your child will be escorted to you.

Bus: If your child rides a bus, staff members will walk the students out to the correct bus for their departure. The bus driver will ensure that their safety harness or seatbelt is in place.

It is important to note that all adults picking up a child must have proper identification and be listed on the approved pick-up list.

Program Description

Our preschool program offers a continuum of services. We offer the following different classes:

General Education Preschool Classroom: Taught by a licensed early childhood teacher. In this class, at least 51% of the student population are peer models.

Integrated Preschool Classroom: Taught by a licensed special education early childhood teacher. The goal is to have 50% of the population as peer models.

Itinerant Services: Taught by a licensed special education early childhood teacher in the location other than the district's center-based classrooms. These services can take place in the community setting or in the child's home.

The program is supported by speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and other related service personnel as appropriate.

About the Classrooms:

Morning classes are offered four days a week (Monday-Thursday) from 8:45 a.m. – 11:20 a.m. This class typically includes our younger children (3-4 years of age)

Afternoon classes are offered four days a week (Monday-Thursday) from 12:40 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. This class typically includes our older students (4-5 years of age).

Ratios:

Dependent upon your child's classroom, the child to teacher ratio may vary. For the general education classroom, a ratio of 2:18 (adult to student) will be present. For the special education classroom, a ratio of no more than 2:16 (adult to student) will be present.

Transition

Our hope is to make the transition to a preschool program and from a preschool program to a school-age program a positive, successful experience for the child and his/her family. We understand the anxiety involved when your child moves from one program or school setting to another. Concerns may range from whom the new teacher will be to whether the new program will meet your child's needs. We will make every effort to answer those questions for you prior to the beginning of the new school year.

Below is the information that involves all transitions to and from preschool:

Transitions will occur for the following:

- Peer Model transition
- EI to PreK transition
- Switch between preschool classrooms
- PreK to K transition

Transition Plans will be completed for the transition situations that are described above. Parent input for these transition plans will be gathered Transition Planning Conferences (for students exiting Help Me Grow services), during parent-teacher conferences, and other communication with the parents.

Peer Model Transition into Preschool

- Parents complete an application on the school district website.
- Once the application is completed, a questionnaire will be sent to the parent in order to provide the program with more detailed information.
- Parents are informed if their child has been chosen for the peer model spot by the end of March. Information regarding enrollment procedures, financial agreement and tuition schedule will be provided after a family has accepted their child's peer model spot.
- Parents are emailed a packet in July with the supply list, handbook, and other necessary materials.
- Parents and children are invited in for back to school night in order to meet the teacher, see the classroom, and explore the preschool environment

EI to PreK Transition

- Initial contact with family occurs at the Transition Planning Conference (TPC). The valuation process is discussed as well as program options. Attendees include Help Me Grow Staff, family, and district representative.
- Upon child's determination of eligibility and development of IEP, a Transition Plan will be completed to identify any activities that need to occur. These could include classroom visits, modified attendance schedule, etc. Participants in development of transition plan include ETR and IEP team members.

Switch between Preschool Classrooms or AM/PM Times

- Discussion occurs between teacher and parents regarding potential classroom change or change between AM/PM slot.
- If transitioning into another room, there will be a scheduled visitation in new setting for parent and/or child.
- Once transition has been determined, complete Transition Plan to identify any additional activities that need to occur. These could include additional classroom visits, closure activities with current classroom, etc. Participants involved in the development of the transition plan includes the sending and receiving teachers, parent, and any other team members that can provide input for successful transition of student.

PreK to K Transition

- Transitions are determined based upon student age (if mandatory) or parent choice (if not mandatory kindergarten age). Discussions occur no later than winter parent-teacher conferences.
- A transition plan will be reviewed at conferences or sent home via email, US mail, or backpack to document parents' expectations/concerns and to identify activities to support the student for the upcoming school year.
- Transition plan will identify both district-sponsored transition activities as well as individualized transition activities. Individualized activities may include school and classroom visits, development of individualized social stories, modified schedule, inclusion in kindergarten activities near end of preschool year, etc.
- Revisions of transition plan may be necessary later in spring if a transition evaluation needs to be completed. Participants in revisions of plan will include sending and receiving teachers, additional

representatives from receiving building as deemed appropriate, parents, and any other individuals who can the support transition.

- Parents will be reminded that they need to contact the district enrollment office in order to register their child for Kindergarten for the following school year. At this time, parents will schedule their child for the Kindergarten screening time.
- Parents are also given the date and time of the Kindergarten Information Night. This night allows all parents of incoming Kindergarten students to meet the Kindergarten team as well as the other school team that will work with their child.
- Children will be provided a “take home” tool kit so that they can engage in activities that support Kindergarten readiness.

Curriculum

Our curriculum for the preschool program will follow the Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards. We will use a curriculum approved by the Ohio Department of Education to guide instruction.

Since a child learns something from every experience s/he has, our program will focus on providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences in these areas:

- *Approaches to Learning
- *Creative Development
- *Mathematics
- *Science
- *Social Studies
- *Cognitive Development
- *Language and Literacy
- *Physical Development & Wellness
- * Social and Emotional Development

Each day will include time for each child to:

- Explore and discover things through play in a prepared environment which is both age and individually appropriate.
- Experience social interaction with peers and adults.
- Use large and small muscles both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting).

Program Schedule

All classrooms will maintain the same components, but scheduling may vary from class to class.

Arrival

Developmental Play - Free choice time (may vary):

Manipulatives

Block Area

Sensory Table

Puzzles

Dramatic Play

Writing Center

Reading Area

Art Area

Circle/Group Time – Sharing stories, singing songs, calendar talk, learning about readiness concepts such as colors, shapes, counting, patterns, and following directions.

Learning Centers – Free choice time in the above listed center areas as well as small group teacher-guided and/or directed activities.

Outside (weather permitting)

Snack Time

Dismissal

What to Bring

1. A large book bag or backpack (labeled with child's name)
2. A change of clothes (including socks). Please label everything and put in a plastic bag. The clothes can stay in their cubby.
3. Send shoes if your child wears boots.
4. Clothes for outdoor play (sturdy shoes, coat, hat, etc.)
5. Additional underwear and diaper wipes should be sent along with diapers. We do not provide diapers and you are required to maintain an adequate supply at school, if applicable.

Please see 2024-25 supply list for additional items.

Snacks and Birthdays

We like to serve the children daily nutritional snacks and would appreciate your help in providing them. We want to encourage healthy snacks for our students. If you are able to provide fresh fruit or vegetables a few times during the school year, please let the teacher know. This would be greatly appreciated!

It is requested that all packaged items are nut free. Many of our students have allergies and/or do not tolerate food dyes, so please keep that in mind when shopping for snacks for school. Some healthier snack options are graham crackers, cheese sticks, yogurt, fruit cups, pretzels, crackers, applesauce, unsweetened cereal, granola, raisins, etc.

Birthdays are a special time and we want to give families the opportunity to celebrate birthdays in a manner that keeps all students safe. Rather than sending in an edible item, families are more than welcome donate a book in their child's name to the class, donate their child's favorite game for the class, donate a bag of inedible birthday favors, etc. Please consult with your child's teacher.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our curriculum, which provide your child an opportunity to apply the skills they are learning in school to real life situations. Children learn best by experiencing real objects instead of just talking about them. We take the children into the community to see, hear, feel, taste, and smell a variety of activities. These trips are carefully planned to provide specific learning objectives.

Each child's parent or guardian must sign a field trip permission slip.

Parents are always encouraged to join us. You are not permitted to ride on the bus, but can meet us at the field trip location.

Child Guidance and Behavior Management Plan

Our rules in the classroom reflect safety for all, respect for each other, and respect for the environment.

Delaware City Schools' written discipline policy for consequences and misbehaviors will follow:

1. Positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior
2. Redirection to a more appropriate behavior/activity
3. Talking about the specific situation
4. Natural consequence
5. Age appropriate time away from situation (3 minutes of time-out for a 3-year old, 4 minutes for a four-year old, etc.).

All persons on the preschool premises must adhere to the following restrictions:

1. There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking or biting.
2. No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
3. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, so the child may regain control.
4. No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
5. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
6. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
7. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
8. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use, and food shall not be used as a reward for behavior.
9. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.

10. The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.
11. A staff member who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected is to immediately notify the public children services agency and a serious incident report is to be completed and submitted to the department in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

In order to support positive behaviors within the school setting, the preschool program has established the following positive behavior expectations:

- Be Safe
- Be Kind
- Be A Good Listener

At the beginning of the school year and again after the winter break, as well as throughout the school year, classroom teachers will be teaching students how these expectations look throughout the preschool environment including on the bus, on the playground, in the hallways, and within the preschool classroom.

The preschool staff will find ways to reinforce students for following these expectations with a combination of individual, classroom, and program-wide recognition opportunities.

Riding the Bus

Bus services are offered for any children enrolled in the preschool program. Please read the following guidelines:

1. Please note the number of the bus your child rides and the name of the bus driver.
2. Please help the bus driver to stay on schedule by having your child ready when the bus arrives. Times may vary somewhat due to traffic or other unplanned happenings.
3. Please remember to call Transportation (833-1650) if your child is not going to school. Even five minutes before the bus arrives is not too late to call.
4. Please do not give verbal messages to the bus driver to pass on to the teacher. This type of information should be written down and put in your child's book bag.
5. Please make sure that a responsible adult helps your child on and off the bus. The driver is not permitted to let your child off the bus without an adult present.
6. Please remember that if you are changing addresses for pick-up and drop-off locations, you must provide transportation with ample notification in order for the change. Generally, the rule is to provide at least 3-4 days for the change to take place.
7. Please talk to your child about good bus manners:
 - Buckle up.
 - Stay in your seat.
 - Be nice to the other people on the bus.
 - Use a quiet voice on the bus.
 - Listen carefully to what the bus driver tells you.

Safety Policy

1. No child is to be left alone or unsupervised.
2. Parents who do not use our bus transportation must accompany their child to the designated location for the building. Please send a written note if your child will not be using his/her usual form of transportation.
3. The school will release no child to anyone other than the usual adult unless requested by the parent in a written note or other reliable means of communication.
4. Fire, tornado and safety drills are conducted monthly throughout the year. Fire and tornado procedures are posted in each room.
5. In case an accident or injury occurs, the teacher will file an incident report. Parents will be notified and given a copy of the report.
6. First-aid supplies are available in the classroom.
7. Staff members are trained in first-aid, communicable diseases, and recognition of signs of child abuse and neglect. We are required, by law, to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

Communication and Involvement

As stated in our Philosophy section, we hope to join hands with each child's family to provide quality learning for each child. If you would like ideas of things you can do at home with your child, please contact your child's teacher.

Communication between preschool and home is an important link and building block for learning with your child. During the school year, parent conferences will be scheduled to discuss your child's progress. Additionally, periodic updates/progress reports will be given by the teacher to gauge ongoing learning and development. Staff may also keep you informed by class newsletters, notes, telephone calls, and/or student notebooks. For special needs children, IEP meetings can be called at the request of the parent to review and revise the IEP. Your participation is critical in the IEP development as you are the child's first teacher.

Communicable Disease Policy

1. A Communicable Disease Chart is posted in the classroom.
2. Please do not send your child to school with:
 - Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period)
 - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
 - Difficult or rapid breathing
 - Yellowish skin or eyes
 - Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain
 - Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method
 - Untreated infected skin patch(es)
 - Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool
 - Stick neck with an elevated temperature
 - Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
 - Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
 - Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptoms of illness
3. If a child becomes ill or is suspected of having a communicable disease, s/he will be isolated and attended to by an adult until the parent or responsible person is contacted by telephone and arrives to take the child home. Children must be free of fever for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Please contact us if your child has a contagious disease so that other parents may be alerted as appropriate.
4. When a child returns from an absence, s/he may need to bring a doctor's note, especially when the illness or incident may pose a risk of infection to other students or further risk to the child.
5. A doctor's release is required whenever surgery or significant injury occurs so that the program can be aware of any special needs affecting the child's participation. If the child needs to have medication administered at school, the "Request to Administer Medication" form must accompany your request.

License Compliance

The Ohio Department of Education conducts site reviews at least one time per school year. Copies of the current license and compliance reports are posted within the program. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) processes any complaints regarding violations of licensing rules and regulations. ODE's phone number is 877-644-6338. This is also the number you may call to report any suspected violations of the license code.

School Forms

The majority of school forms are required to be completed on-line. It is vital that these forms are completed prior to your child starting in the program.

Online forms are as follows:

1. Emergency Medical Authorization – This form enables parents to authorize emergency treatment for children when parents cannot be reached. Complete Part 1 or Part 2 and return it to school.
2. Student Registration Form – This provides some personal information about your child. Please complete and return to school.
3. Parental Permission for the Release and Publication of Student's Photograph/Image
4. Student Network/Internet Use Agreement – This form allows your child to use the technology available in the classroom.

Additional forms are required to be completed to maintain licensing or SUTQ requirements. Those forms are as follows:

1. Child Medical Statement for Child Care – This form is completed by and signed by your child's medical doctor and includes a statement that they in suitable condition to participate in group care. It also requests your child's current up-to-date immunizations. This information must be current and within the last year. Please note: Immunizations of all students must be in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code. Failure to provide written evidence of immunization is cause for exclusion from school per the Ohio Department of Health.
2. Parent consent/acknowledgement of the following: Parent PreK handbook, sharing contact information for your child, and field trip consent.

Resolution of Conflicts

If you have concerns about our program we would like to offer the following procedure for resolution. First, approach your child's teacher and/or specialist to resolve the concern to your satisfaction. If you are unable to resolve the concern, please contact Woodward Elementary and ask for the Preschool Supervisor.

Confidentiality

Our preschool program follows procedures consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Acts of 1975. Records and files are available only to staff directly involved with your child, direct district personnel and others as permitted by the law. All other access requires written parental permission

If you wish to review your child's records, please contact the supervisor of the program to arrange a time. You may review and receive copies of any reports maintained. Each year, with your permission, we will make available a roster of children in your child's class with a parent's name and phone number. This is available to parents of enrollees only.