



2024-2025
EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY

Student Handbook





The Early Childhood Programs in West Aurora

**Handbook for Families
2024-2025**

The Early Childhood Program

- Our goal is to help children be ready for success in kindergarten.
- We develop the whole child. We provide learning experiences in language development, motor development, social and emotional development, fine arts, and thinking skills.
- Young children learn by doing. They use their senses, their muscles, and their minds to learn.
- The work of young children is PLAY. That is how they learn. Our school is child-centered, not teacher-directed.
- The teacher's role is to guide and encourage. Teachers use language with children. Teachers help by putting words to the children's experiences. Children need to participate in various experiences with words on a daily basis.
- Children need adults to guide their development; like teachers and family members.
- Always remember that YOU are your child's first teacher! We will be partnering with you, as families, to do our best to guide your child's development together.

How Families Can Help

- See that your child is healthy, rested, and ready to go to school each day.
- School is important but so is your child's health. If your child is sick, they should stay home and rest.
- Dress your child to be ready to play; tennis shoes, coats, hats, and mittens(when appropriate). Please dress your child in clothes that they can actively play in.
- Make sure your child attends school each day.
- We understand that life is busy! Read with your child as much as you can.
- Check your child's backpack for papers and look for notes that may be pinned on it. Return backpack to school each day.
- Read the calendar and notes from school to stay informed of school activities. Talk with your child about the classroom newsletter. Check your child's Seesaw classroom messages.
- Stay in touch with your Classroom Teacher or Parent Educator to keep us informed of what we need to be doing to help your child.
- Attend Parent Education Programs.
- Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- Attend evening educational programs, such as Family Reading Nights.
- Keep the school informed of changes (phone, address, work schedule, babysitter or events affecting your child).

Attendance Policy

Attendance is important. The Early Learning Programs have a waiting list. To maintain your child's enrollment in the program, it is important to communicate all absences with your school.

School administration realizes that at times there may be extenuating circumstances related to school attendance such as prolonged illnesses. Building administration will make every attempt to work with families on an individual basis. Should a family require an extended absence from school, these must be pre-approved in the school office. Frequent absenteeism that does not improve after discussions with staff can result in the student being dropped from the program.

Absence Reporting

As soon as you know that your child will be absent, please call the Safe Phone/Absence Line **(630-301-5470)**. DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE. If you receive an automated call from the absence line regarding your child's absence from school that day, please call the absence line and leave a message. DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE. Listen and follow directions: child's name, teacher, your name, call back phone number, date of absence, and reason. The message will ask for an ID number. If you do not have this information, just simply say you do not know and move on to the next step. This message also plays in Spanish.

- Students in the Special Education program who are absent should also call the Durham Bus Company (1-630-892-3050) for that day to let the bus company know that your student will not be riding the bus.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures in the Early Learning Academy (ELA)

Students in the following classrooms should be dropped off and picked up on the Green Side of the building, entering the parking lot from Reimer Dr. and enter through door number 1:

Gloria Garcia – Bear classroom (221)
Lauren Adamo - Butterfly classroom (219)
Mary Peterson – Dolphin classroom (215)
Grace Franckowiak – Penguin classroom (217)
Jordan Heller- Giraffe Classroom (218)
Rebecca Thomas- Zebra Classroom (214)
Bonnie Ramirez – Fish classroom (222)
Sandra Medina -- Monkey classroom (208)

Students in the following classrooms should be dropped off and picked up on the Orange/Blue side of the building, entering the parking lot from Galena Blvd. and enter through door number 1:

Jane Schaefflein- Otter Classroom (314)
Rebekah Proctor- Frog Classroom (304)

Lindsey McCrimmon- Tiger Classroom (305)
Alyssa Barrutia - Lion classroom (206)
Morgan Gray – Cheetah classroom (209)
Teri Peot – Turtle classroom (204)
Taryn Austin-- Wolf classroom (213)

Drop-off times are 8:30 – 8:40 & 12:00 – 12:10

DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD UNLESS A STAFF MEMBER IS THERE! Students arriving after the arrival time will need to be escorted into the building through door number 1 by an ADULT and signed in.

Pick-up times are 10:55 – 11:05 & 2:25 – 2:35

When picking up your child, use your assigned car line (same as drop-off). Make sure your car sign is visible on the windshield. If you don't have it with you, you will have to exit the car line, park your car, and come into the main office door 1 to retrieve your child. Children will only be released to adults listed as guardians or emergency contacts on the enrollment form. **All persons picking up a child from school will be asked for their ID for identification purposes. If no ID is presented, the child will not be released (no exceptions will be made).** Please keep the office updated on any changes as children WILL NOT be released to any adult NOT listed. If your child will be picked up by a babysitter or daycare, please make sure a responsible adult is added to your emergency contact list.

Early Learning Academy Car Lines

There are two designated car lines at the Early Learning Academy. ~~These car lines have been set up and implemented with the help of the city of Aurora and the Aurora Police Department.~~ All families will use the car line or walk up to Door 1 and wait for a staff member to call their child's name for dismissal. The car line you will use and the car line process will be covered when you pick up your orientation paperwork. **You may NOT park in the car line for any length of time.** There are several parking spaces available to park in if you would rather park and walk up to the building. If you have any questions about the car line process, please call the office at 630-301-5016 or talk with your child's teacher.

If a Child Is Not Picked Up

It is your responsibility to pick your child up on time. If your child is not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal time (11:15 in the morning session & 2:45 in the afternoon session) we will contact you and/or the people listed as emergency contacts. If after one (1) hour (12:00 in the morning session and 3:30 in the afternoon session) your child has not been picked up and we cannot contact anyone to give us pick up information, we will contact the Aurora Police Department to do a Well Check visit at the home address. Please remember to keep your contact information current with the office staff.

Drop off and Pick Up Procedures for Classrooms in the Elementary Buildings

Drop-off and pick-up procedures for students placed in Elementary buildings will vary based on individual building plans. You will receive more detailed information specific to your building in a classroom introduction letter.

Health Services

General Information

All student medications must be delivered to the health office by a parent/guardian with the appropriate medical documentation. Students may not hand-carry prescription or over-the-counter medications to school. All school accidents must be reported immediately to a school official. If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must report to the nurse for assistance. The health office will follow District *Guidelines for Returning to School after an Illness*. Additional criteria for exclusion due to communicable disease will follow Health Department guidance based on physician confirmation of disease/illness.

- Please note, when young children have a bad cold or are coughing frequently it can be hard for them to participate in school. We encourage parents/guardians to keep their sick children home until symptoms improve to help prevent and reduce the spread of infection.

A registered nurse or health assistant will be in the building during school hours. Please contact the health office staff for any medical concerns regarding your child so they can provide you with any required paperwork that may be needed.

Concussions

Parents/guardians should notify the building principal and nurse if they are aware that their student has suffered a concussion. Physician documentation noting diagnosis and any restrictions must be submitted to the health office.

Food Allergies

Parents of students with known life-threatening allergies and/or anaphylaxis should provide the school with written instructions from the student's healthcare provider for handling anaphylaxis and all necessary medications for implementing the student-specific order on an annual basis.

In the event your child brings a snack from home, we ask that you be mindful of foods that may be considered higher risk for those with food allergies. The safety and health of all students is our priority. Any specific classroom notifications in regard to food allergies and/or food safety concerns will be communicated by the health office and classroom teacher.

Head Lice

Students with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. When lice/nits are found on a child at school, the child's parent/guardian will be informed. Any household contacts that attend school in West Aurora School District will be called to the health office to be checked. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to take their child(ren) home for treatment.

Physical Activity Excusal Requests

A student may be excused from physical activity (gym/recess) for up to two days with a note or request from the parent/guardian. However, for longer periods of non-participation, a doctor's note is required. The doctor's note should clearly state the duration of time for which the student is unable to participate in physical activity.

Toilet/Potty Training

Children attending preschool are not required to be potty-trained. We recognize that some children may already be potty-trained or may currently be working on this skill. We kindly request that parents pack a change of clothes in their child's backpack in case of an accident.

Meal Program

Children attending Preschool have the opportunity to eat breakfast and/or lunch provided by the program.

- Families with students in preschool are required to fill out a Federal Lunch Application. The application can be completed online or you can get a paper copy from the main office. The information obtained from these forms is confidential and used for state reporting purposes.
- A medical statement from a physician detailing food allergies must be provided before the school can make any restrictions or substitutions for students. If your child has any dietary restrictions, please contact the School Nurse at your child's school.

Birthdays and Celebrations (No Food Treats)

The West Aurora School District does not allow students (or students' families) to bring in any treats, gifts, or party favors for any occasion. There are no exceptions to this rule to ensure the safety of all students. Celebrations will take place in the classroom as appropriate.

School-to-Home Communication

Check your child's backpack for things they have made at school. Newsletters and calendars will come home in their backpack. Classrooms and Parent Educators will use Seesaw as an electronic communication tool, sending individual communication, newsletters, and information of upcoming events. Please check with your Parent Educator if you need assistance in signing up for Seesaw. Your school's website and Facebook pages are updated on a regular basis.

Clothes

Please send your child to school ready to play. Children in preschool play outside daily and will get dirty. Being ready to play includes wearing clothing and shoes that are safe for active play, such as running, jumping, and climbing. Closed-toe gym shoes and comfortable clothing are preferred. Please send your child to school one full set of spare clothes (shirt, pants, underpants, socks, and shoes) that is seasonally appropriate. Please store your child's clothes in a ziplock bag with the child's name written on the bag. Please help us by putting your child's name on all items, especially coats, sweaters, and jackets. On any given day the teacher and classroom paraprofessional will have as many as 20 children to assist with jackets, etc... Young students cannot always identify their own clothing. Any lost items can be claimed in the main office lost and found. As the season changes, please send a set of clothes that is appropriate. Also, clothing that depicts inappropriate language or advertising, such as drug paraphernalia or alcohol, or is derogatory to another person or group of people is not allowed, your child may be asked to change clothes and the principal will phone the guardian(s) to discuss the situation.

Other things from home

Children should not bring other items (toys, books, etc.) from home. Their backpack is all they need. Children can become extremely distracted when they have these items from home and this impacts learning. We recommend children do not wear jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, dangling earrings). These items could cause an injury, or get lost or broken. The school is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen at school.

Parent Educators

The Parent Educators are your link between the home and school. They will provide you with help or assistance you may need, including resources in the community. You will make plans with them about your participation during the year. They will try to answer your questions and help you find solutions to problems or concerns. Parent Educators will send out contact information specific to your building.

Early Learning Academy (ELA)	Full-Day Expansion Program	
Luz Palacios Grace Romero Margaret Carlile	Johanna Arroyo-Kieser Beatriz Hernandez	Greenman, McCleery Freeman, Hill

Volunteers/Visitors

Parent volunteers are welcome in our buildings and classrooms. If you would like to volunteer you will be required to fill out a volunteer form in the main office which authorizes your school to conduct a general background check. You will also need to have a photo ID registered in the main office and will be asked to show it each time you want to enter the building. All volunteers must wear a visitor sticker from the main office during their entire visit. Any adults without the proper visitor sticker will be escorted out of the building if they are unable to provide the main office with a valid photo ID.

Student Teachers and Observers

As part of the school district, it is possible for high school or college students to spend time in our preschool classrooms observing or interacting with children in the classroom in order to complete observation or clinical hours for school. They will be monitored by classroom staff and program staff and may be present in the classroom throughout the year.

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management program that empowers both teachers and students. Based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices, the goal of the program is to provide systematic changes in schools by fostering the emotional intelligence of teachers and students. Conscious discipline leads programs through a process that promotes permanent behavior changes in both teachers and students. The change is from a traditional model of discipline to a relationship-based community model.

The “school family” is the core of the program. The school family is held together through communication skills taught during conflict moments in the classroom and through active learning lessons. The goal of the family is to create problem-solvers. This system is built on three premises: controlling and changing ourselves is possible and has a profound impact on others, connected governs behavior and conflict is an opportunity to teach (Bailey, 2001).

Crisis

All buildings practice and perform several safety drills each year. During our fire drills, students exit the building with their teachers safely and walk to our evacuation location. Students are supervised at all times under the direction of teachers, paraprofessionals, and administration. We take attendance and ensure the safety of all students before returning to the building. We use the fire alarm to help children learn to respond to this bell.

During our tornado drills, all students make their way to the first floor of our building to an assigned location. We take attendance and make sure all students are safe before returning to our classrooms.

For our evacuation or ALICE drills, we are working as a district to make choices in the event of an emergency that will keep us safe. Students will follow the lead of their teacher to remain safe in the classroom or evacuate the building. We are going to be reviewing the procedures with the students and reading some stories to help students learn the routines. We will have a drill with the Aurora Police Department. More information will be provided prior to any evacuation or ALICE drill.

We will also practice drills to maintain safety in our classrooms many times this year. During these drills, we will continue our day, but ensure that we have a safe and secure environment. Our number one goal is student safety and teaching our students that all teachers and adults are here to keep them safe. This practice allows us to be prepared in the event of an emergency. Should you have any questions, please let us know.

PAT (Parents as Teachers) Program

The PAT (Parents as Teachers) Program services parents and their children aged 0-3. This program is a Home Visiting Program. The Home Visitor performs developmental screenings and meets with families two times a month to share developmental-centered information to meet all their child’s needs. There are monthly opportunities for parents to meet other parents through Group Connections. Group Connections may take place at the Early Learning Academy or at various locations in the community. Home Visitors also have a wealth of information regarding resources in the community that are beneficial to many families. If you have a young child aged prenatal - 3 or are pregnant and are interested in more information on Home Visiting, please call 630-301-5371.

Important Phone Numbers

Early Learning Academy at West Aurora Learning Center

1870 W Galena Blvd, Aurora, IL 60506

Principal: Dr. Laurie Klomhaus

Office: 630-301-5016

Safe Phone: 630-301-5470

Freeman Elementary

153 S. Randall Rd, Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mrs. Jana Ream

Office: 630-301-5002

Safe Phone: 630-301-5135

Greenman Elementary

729 W. Galena Blvd, Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mrs. Kelly Papp

Office: 630-301-5004

Safe Phone: 630-301-5175

Hill Elementary

724 Pennsylvania Ave., Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mrs. Elizabeth Smith

Office: 630-301-5007

Safe Phone: 630-301-5255

McCleery Elementary

1002 W. Illinois Ave, Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mr. Daniel Ulrich

Office: 630-301-5012

Safe Phone: 630-301-5375

Student Support Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

9-8-8

Suicide Prevention Services (Batavia)

630-482-9699

National Crisis Counseling Text Line

Text HOME to 741741

SAFE2HELP Illinois

Seek Help Before Harm

1-844-4-SAFEIL

Text - 72332

Download the SAFE2HELP Illinois mobile app

Bookmark the page: www.safe2helpIL.com