



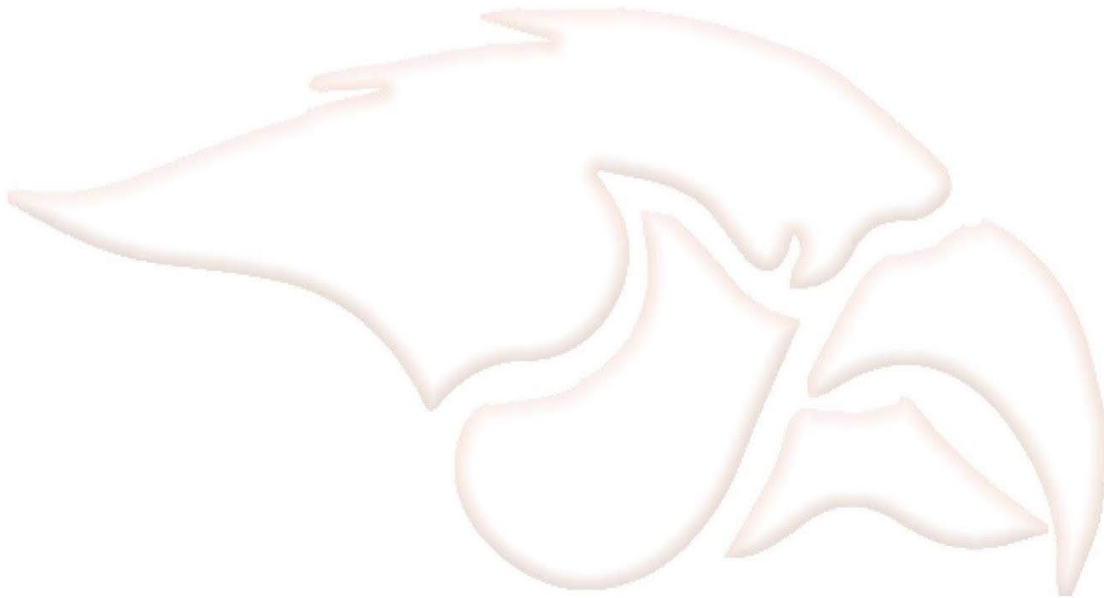
CEDAR SPRINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Cedar Springs

Early Childhood Center

Parent/Student Handbook

2024-2025



204 E. Muskegon St
Cedar Springs, MI 49319
616-696-1716 | preschool-staff@csredhawks.org
earlylearning.csredhawks.org

WE CAN. WE WILL. WE ARE. TOGETHER.



Table of Contents

WELCOME	4
Staff	4
Early Childhood Center Main Office Information	4
Cedar Springs Public Schools Mission, Vision, and Core Values	4
Philosophy.....	4
Home and School Partnership	4
PROGRAM GUIDELINES	5
Admittance Checklist	5
Start of the Year Forms and Checklist.....	5
Social and Ethnic Considerations	5
Contact Information.....	5
Family Involvement.....	5
Behavior Expectations.....	6
Confidentiality.....	6
Curriculum and Assessments	6
Food Service and Nutrition	7
ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES	8
Withdrawal Policy	8
Absences	8
Policy for Late Pick-Up or Early Drop-Off.....	8
Child Release Policy.....	8
HEALTH GUIDELINES	9
Health Policy	9
Temporary Exclusion.....	9
Returning to School.....	9
Hand Washing Procedures.....	9
POLICIES	10
Mandated Reporters.....	10
Classroom Field Trips/School Events	10
School Closing and Delays.....	10
Weather Policy	10



Clothing	11
Birthday Celebrations	11
Integrated Pest Management Plan	12
CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICIES.....	13
In the Event of a Building Evacuation	13
In the Event of a Building Lock-Down	13
In the Event of a Hazardous Exposure	13
Picking Up Children in an Emergency	13
PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	14



WELCOME

The Cedar Springs Early Childhood Center staff would like to welcome you and your child to our early childhood programs. This handbook is designed to explain the policies and operation of the program. Please read this handbook and any other information that you may receive, so you have a clear understanding of the partnership between home and school as it pertains to this program.

Staff

Our preschool staff and teachers are committed to providing high-quality programming for young children and their families. Our teachers are highly qualified and continue to participate in professional development every year.

Early Childhood Center Main Office Information

Main Office	Fax: (616) 696-3104	(616) 696-1716
Cassandra Chartier, Director	cassandra.chartier@csredhawks.org	(616) 696-9884 x5920
Jennifer Drew, Building Secretary	jennifer.drew@csredhawks.org	(616) 696-9884 x2905

Cedar Springs Public Schools Mission, Vision, and Core Values

MISSION STATEMENT

We exist to equip every learner to thrive.

VISION STATEMENT

We aspire to prepare all learners to exceed their potential.

CORE VALUES

We believe in the unique promise of each learner.

Philosophy

The Cedar Springs Preschool Program is guided by developmentally appropriate practices. This means teaching in ways that match how children develop and learn. Our early childhood professionals make decisions around the education of children on the basis of three types of information: child development and how children learn, individual strengths, needs and interests of each child, and each child's family and community cultures.

The following principles guide our practice and help us understand the reasons for intentionally setting up and operating the preschool program:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

Our philosophy validates the vital role of a child centered, play-based model. It highlights the essential roles teachers play in building a strong foundation for children's success in school and in life. This philosophy aligns with the NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice Position Statement, The Connect4Learning Curriculum and the Standards of Quality and Curriculum Guidelines set by the Michigan State Board of Education.

Home and School Partnership

We believe that collaboration between home and school fosters a successful early childhood learning experience. We are respectful of individual differences and value the contributions that brings to our learning environment. Through collaboration we build relationships with school and community organizations to support families. As a partner in this important work of building life-long learners, communication and engagement is important and encouraged.



PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Admittance Checklist

The following documents must be completed and submitted before acceptance into the program:

Completed Child Information Record (card)

Completely filled out and signed, including permission to seek emergency medical care; and with information CURRENT and COMPLETE – including phone numbers – for ALL individuals authorized to pick up your child from the classroom. *[This Information Card is due at the time of initial attendance in the classroom.]*

Immunization Record

Showing a minimum of one dose of each immunizing agent specified by the Department of Community Health; or a waiver if not having your child immunized for religious or other reasons. *[This Immunization Record is due at the time of initial attendance in the classroom.]*

Completed Physical

Performed within the preceding year, SIGNED by a licensed physician or his or her designee; and with any restrictions noted. *[This Physical is due within 30 days of initial attendance in the classroom.]*

Copy of Birth Certificate/Government Document

Stating your child's age.

Start of the Year Forms and Checklist

Medication Permission and Instructions

If necessary, used when a child has an allergy or medical action plan

Volunteer Background Check Acknowledgement Form

Permission to Photograph/Videotape Form

Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals (if applicable)

Food/Medical Allergy Form

If applicable, emergency allergy information is provided so that it can be in the Licensing Notebook and posted large enough to be visible to all adults in the classroom. Some districts have required allergy forms that are available in the school office.

Written Information Packet Documentation Form

Confirmation of Family Handbook and Licensing Notebook information was received.

Social and Ethnic Considerations

Cedar Springs Preschool Programs admit children of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to children at school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in any way, including admissions and educational policies, assistance and other school-related activity or programming. Diversity is valued, encouraged and reflected in the classroom environment.

Contact Information

It is important that we have up to date contact information. It is your responsibility to notify the teacher and office to make the changes to telephone numbers, addresses, emails or changes to authorized pick ups and emergency contacts.

Family Involvement

The family involvement component of the preschool is based on the belief that the best environment for children exists



where there is close family-school interaction. **DO NOT PLAN TO VISIT SCHOOL!** We would love to have you! Family members planning to visit our preschool must have a completed background check prior to your visit. (Background checks are required for classroom parties, field trips and celebrations).

Behavior Expectations

Appropriate classroom behavior is expected at all times. This includes respecting others and their possessions, being responsible for their own belongings, being courteous, being on time, and being prepared with the necessary materials.

The district's Code of Conduct can be found on the district's website. Parents are asked to review the Code of Conduct with their child(ren). Please remind children to report any problems, suspicions of a problem, or violations of school rules to an adult.

More important than our response to misbehavior is our proactive action to create an environment that encourages positive behavior.

Confidentiality

Our tuition PreK programs maintain confidentiality and do not reveal information regarding your child except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of individuals and families we serve.

Photos/Videos: Photos of children will sometimes be taken to display in the classroom. Legal guardians can choose whether they permit photos and/or videos to be taken of their child while joining in school activities to be used for publication in local newspapers, classroom newsletters, etc. You may specify whether or not you will allow photos and videos to be taken of your child on the Photo Release Form. It is a strict policy of CSPS that teachers will not post identifying photos or videos of children enrolled in our program to their personal social media accounts. Through permission using the Photo Release Form, however, teachers may post to closed groups of people on social media.

School Records: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-380) assures the parents and legal guardians of public school students the right to:

- Inspect student records maintained by a school district
- Prevent disclosure of education records to a third party without their consent except in certain limited situations
- Request a correction of any part of the student record which you believe to be inaccurate, misleading or violates your rights
- Protest to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Office Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20202 concerning the program's failure to comply with FERPA

Divorced parents have equal access to the records unless one parent or the other is prohibited from having any contact with the child by the court order granting the divorce. Written documentation must be on file to limit adult contact.

Curriculum and Assessments

Your preschool classroom will provide a safe, secure and happy place for children to learn and grow. The curriculum has a play-based and developmentally appropriate philosophy. Attention is given to social, cognitive and physical development. Children interact in both large and small groups. The environment and activities are designed to assist in the development of pre-reading, pre-math, science, social studies and the arts. All of the learning areas are designed to support the "Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-Kindergarten" adopted in 2013 by the Michigan State Board of Education. The Connect4Learning curriculum is the State approved curriculum used in our classrooms. Teachers will monitor your child's progress regularly. Your family will meet with the teachers during the year at Open



House and Conferences. Parent Teacher Conferences will be held twice per school year. During conferences your teachers will share how your child is doing, as well as ideas for you to assist in your child's development. You will receive progress reports highlighting your child's development.

Food Service and Nutrition

We can help form good eating habits by introducing healthy foods early in a child's life. All school provided meals are in accordance with the minimum meal requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus with noted food substitutions are posted in the classroom. Children with special dietary needs will be provided meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs. Please notify your child's teacher immediately of these needs.



ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Withdrawal Policy

- Your family should notify the classroom staff of the intent to withdraw their child from the program at least two weeks prior to the withdrawal date.
- Leave a forwarding address or school contact if the child will be enrolled in another school program.

Absences

- Contact the ECC office when your child will be absent at 616-696-1716 or Email preschool-staff@csredhawks.org

Policy for Late Pick-Up or Early Drop-Off

Dropping off and picking up preschoolers at the scheduled time is very important. If you're late arriving at school parents will need to enter through the Early Childhood Center's office to sign in your student. They will then be escorted by staff to their classroom.

The classroom teachers will follow the local school district building policy for late pick-ups with no communication. If there is not a local school district building policy in place, the teacher will do the following;

- Ten minutes after the dismissal time, the teacher will contact all persons listed on the child information record.
- One-hour after the dismissal time, the teacher will notify Child Protective Services.

In situations where continual or substantial neglect is perceived, Child Protective Services will be notified. We will make every effort to work with families regarding pick-up and drop-off issues, but repeated incidents may result in program withdrawal.

Child Release Policy

To provide the safest environment for dismissal we will follow these guidelines:

- No child will be released to a person other than a parent or legal guardian, during school hours, without the WRITTEN permission of parent or guardian as provided on Emergency Contact information.
- If you want your child to be released to another person who is not indicated on the Emergency Contact information, the following must be received in WRITING:
 - a) The name of the person to whom the child is to be released
 - b) The time of and the length of time for which the child is to be released
 - c) The purpose of the release
- Exceptions will be made only in times of emergency. The Program director or designee will make the determination of whether an emergency exists. The person to whom the child is to be released will be required to sign a log indicating the time and purpose of the release.
- Anyone picking up your child should always bring a photo ID. If the person is not known or recognized by the staff person, identification will be required. If the principal or designee has any doubts about the documentation presented, a decision to not release will be made.
- No preschool child will be permitted to walk home alone during school hours.
- The parent/guardian, or authorized adult must pick up the child at school.

DIVORCED OR SEPARATED PARENTS:

- A birth parent without custody may have access to his/her child or have the child released to him/her.
- Where applicable, families with custody agreements should inform the school of custody arrangements and, if necessary, provide a court order (restraining order), which will be kept on file in the School Office. Without this court order, the school cannot legally prevent the non-custodial birth parents from taking the child from school.



HEALTH GUIDELINES

Health Policy

To ensure a positive, healthy school experience for children, the preschool program will have the following policy regarding illness.

You will be asked to come and take home your child if any signs/symptoms of being ill are seen while at school. The school staff must exclude children from the classroom for illness or other health-related problems. Please keep your child at home if he or she has any of the following symptoms or is unable to participate in any part of the day, including outdoor play.

Temporary Exclusion

Your child should be kept at home when he or she has:

- Temperature above normal
- Earache
- Runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Red or watery eyes
- Diarrhea
- Chills or fever
- Coughing
- Skin rash
- Sore throat
- Lice or ringworm

If your child is too ill to remain in the group he or she will be placed in a separate area and cared for and supervised until a family member arrives. Items and facilities used by an ill child or adult are not used by any other person until washed, rinsed, and sanitized.

If the preschool becomes aware that a staff member, volunteer or child has contracted a communicable disease, staff will notify you of the name and symptoms of communicable disease with a note and/or posting in the classroom.

Returning to School

Children, staff and volunteers should remain at home until the contagious period of an illness has ended. Your child may return when:

- There have been no symptoms of illness for 24 hours (without the use of medication)
- Your child has been on prescribed medication, such as antibiotics, for at least 24 hours.
- A physician's statement verifies the condition (rash, cough, etc.) is no longer contagious.

Hand Washing Procedures

Hand washing is probably the most critical element in reducing the spread of germs. Thorough washing is cleansing the hands with soap and warm, running water for at least 20 seconds. Children will develop healthy habits by washing their hands before eating, after using the restroom, when returning from the outdoors and other times as deemed necessary by staff. Encourage these same habits at home with your child. All staff and volunteers follow hand washing procedures. Guidelines are posted in food preparation areas, in toilet rooms, and by all hand washing sinks.



POLICIES

Grievance Policy

All families are encouraged to address questions or concerns with their child's teachers. Ongoing communication is vital to your child's success. Most concerns can be addressed at the classroom level; however, if you and your child's teacher are not able to reach a satisfactory resolution, you may discuss your concern with the Early Childhood Program Director. Contact the director by emailing preschool_staff@csredhaws.org.

Mandated Reporters

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. GSRP staff members are mandated reporters. All Cedar Springs Public Schools staff members are not required to discuss their suspicions with families before reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition before making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate nutrition for your child
- Leaving a child unattended
- Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside

Classroom Field Trips/School Events

If your child's class takes a field trip, you will receive notice in writing before the event. Trips are connected to children's learning and may include visiting local businesses or community parks and done within walking distance from the school.

School Closing and Delays

Preschool will be canceled if your local school district is closed. The A.M. session will be canceled if your school district has a delay. Please contact your child's teacher for more information. Communication on closings and delays will be posted through the district's communication system and local television and radio stations.

Weather Policy

Preschool guidelines suggest that children are engaged in a minimum of thirty minutes of outdoor play where they can be active. This includes but is not limited to running, jumping, climbing, and so on. The outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom and provides students with opportunities to explore and continue to build skills. Research states, "Good physical health and well-being, and a safe environment contribute to improved learning. Gross motor development enhances body awareness, understanding of spatial relationships, and cognitive growth." [MI Dept. of Education]

Preschool classrooms will follow the weather policy of the local school district. Please send your child to school with the appropriate outdoor clothing (coat, hat, mittens, snow pants, boots, etc.) Your child may be going outside in light



rain, snow, sleet, and wind.

The Department of Human Services states that:

- Frequent exposure to fresh air, exercise, and sunshine increases a child's general fitness and resistance to infections.
- During active play outdoors, the viruses and bacteria are dispersed into a larger, more mobile air space **decreasing** the risk of spreading to others.
- Physical activity actually increases the air exchange in children's lungs and improves blood flow through the body giving germs shorter contact with respiratory surfaces.
- Playing outdoors in cold weather does not cause illness in children.

Colds, flu and illness are caused by viruses and bacteria. Children confined in warm, stuffy rooms with several other children have greater exposure to germs causing sickness.

Clothing

Your child will be comfortable when:

- They have comfortable closed toed shoes. Open shoes like flip flops can be difficult to play in. Preschoolers should have a change of shoes in the winter as boots can be hot and bulky in the classroom. Preschool will get messy. Fancy dress up clothes are special and could be ruined at school. Your child's clothing will be exposed to paint, sand, and markers and more.
- There are extra clothes to change into. Accidents happen. Please send a full set of extra clothes for those little spills, splashes and bathroom accidents.
- Clothing and items are labeled with your child's name. Keeping track of items, especially in winter, is hard when you are little. **Put your child's name on everything.**
- Please dress for the weather, layers are a great way to get through Michigan's changing weather. A large backpack or large bag is a good item to carry home all belongings, notes and treasures.

Birthday Celebrations

We acknowledge student birthdays on our daily morning announcements and gift students with a pencil and eraser from the office.

We try to keep birthday recognitions at school low-key. Birthday treats are not expected, and students will be unable to visit other classrooms to deliver treats to other teachers or students. However, we know some students may want to bring in an edible treat to pass out at breaktime. If your student would like to bring in a snack to celebrate with their class, please consider:

- A non-sweet treat, such as popcorn, cheese crackers
- A non-edible treat, such as pencils, stickers, or coloring books
- Please do not pass out birthday party invites at school unless the entire class is invited

Teachers each have their own practices in regard to birthday celebrations, and these practices support the Wellness Policy adopted by the Cedar Springs Board of Education. Teachers will communicate these practices at the start of the school year.



Integrated Pest Management Plan

Families will receive advanced notification of pesticide applications through the following two methods:

- Letters will be sent home with students
- Notices will be posted at the Center entrance and on classroom Family Information Boards

This advanced notice shall contain the following information:

- Information about the pesticide, including the target pest or purpose
- Approximate location and date of the application
- Contact information at the Center
- The toll-free number for the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC):
- 1-800-858-7378 (answers questions about pesticides, 9:30 am to 7:30 pm Eastern Time, seven days a week except holidays).

Per child care licensing regulations, liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications will not be performed in any classroom unless the room will be unoccupied for not less than 4 hours or longer if required by the pesticide label use directions.



CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Cedar Springs Public School defines crisis as an unexpected, critical event that disrupts normal business operations and could threaten people's safety and welfare on the property where the program is located, including but not limited to: intruders, bomb threats, custody disputes, power outages, or violence. Cedar Springs Public School has a crisis management process in place that is developed in cooperation with the local school district.

Both internal and external communication takes place in cooperation with local law enforcement. Phone numbers for emergency personnel, as well as the building address and nearest cross streets are posted in each GSRP classroom for immediate and effective response to any emergency situation.

In the Event of a Building Evacuation

A relocation site has been predetermined to ensure that all children and adults are effectively and safely moved to an alternate clean and secure site. Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file.

In the Event of a Building Lock-Down

Lock-down procedures have been put in place to ensure the safety of all children and adults in the building. Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file. The severity of the threat will determine how lock-down procedures are enforced. In a 'Code Two Lock Down', family members will not have access to the building until law enforcement has issued an 'all clear'.

In the Event of a Hazardous Exposure

A plan for responding to a situation of hazardous exposure has been put in place to ensure the safety of all children and adults in the building. Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file. In this situation, family members will not have access to the building until law enforcement has issued an 'all clear'.

Picking Up Children in an Emergency

Once law enforcement determines that the emergency has been resolved, family members/designated adults will be contacted via phone using the contact information provided on your child's information card. Adults will be provided details on how, when and where to pick up their children. You will be able to reach and pick up your child from the relocation site or school once law enforcement has declared it safe to do so.

IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT YOUR CHILD'S INFORMATION RECORD IS KEPT UP-TO-DATE SO THAT YOU MAY BE REACHED.



PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Child's Name _____

Teacher _____ School Year _____

CHILD CARE LICENSING INFORMATION

This center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, any special investigation reports issued and all related corrective action plans. This notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours. Licensing inspection and any special investigation reports from the past two years are also available on the Bureau of Children & Adult Licensing website, located at: michigan.gov/michildcare.

I have received and reviewed the Preschool Parent Handbook. If I have any questions I can consult my child's teacher or the parent information board.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____