

2024-2025



HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Welcome to the School Town of Munster pre-kindergarten program! We are thrilled to embark on this exciting educational journey with you and your child. We aim to foster an environment where students can demonstrate academic growth and social responsibility within a supportive and intellectually stimulating setting.

We believe in the power of early childhood education to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and success. Our dedicated team of educators is committed to nurturing each child's unique potential, helping them develop essential skills and a love for learning. We strive to create a warm, inclusive, and engaging atmosphere where children feel safe, valued, and inspired to explore their world.

Our vision, "A District of National Distinction, Supporting Every Child Every Day," drives us to provide exceptional educational experiences catering to each student's needs. We are proud to be part of a community that prioritizes excellence in education and supports the growth and well-being of every child.

We look forward to partnering with you to ensure your student's positive and enriching pre-kindergarten experience. Together, we can help them build a strong foundation for future academic success and social responsibility.

Program Overview

The mission of our pre-kindergarten program is to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment where young children can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We are dedicated to fostering a love for learning, promoting social responsibility, and supporting each child's growth.

Program Locations 2024-2025

Building	James B. Eads Elementary School	Frank H. Hammond Elementary School
School Address	8000 Jackson Ave., Munster, IN	1301 Fran Lin Parkway, Munster, IN
Phone Number	(219) 836-8635	(219) 838-2060
Building Administrators	Mrs. Linda Bevil, Principal Ms. LaToya Edwards, Assistant Principal	Ms. Kelly Boersma, Principal Mr. Anthony Sanchez, Assistant Principal
Pre-kindergarten Teachers	Ms. Ashley Coleman Ms. Candice MacNeill	Mrs. Hilary Heller

Curriculum

The School Town of Munster utilizes the High Scope Preschool Curriculum aligned to the Indiana Department of Education Early Learning Standards. The HighScope Curriculum is uniquely designed to provide a rich academic foundation while promoting young children's independence, decision-making, cooperation, creativity, and problem-solving. The curriculum includes student learning objectives, emphasizes effective adult interaction strategies, and provides assessment measures that help programs ensure a high-quality experience for all learners.

Prekindergarten student learning is focused on the following eight content areas:

- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies
- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Language, Literacy, and Communication

Fifty-eight key developmental indicators (KDIs) guide learning in these eight areas. Each KDI identifies an important learning goal for young children. We recognize that the normal pace of children's development and learning varies widely across these eight categories, and the KDIs reflect that continuum of widely held expectations. Our curriculum is designed to help teachers scaffold learning for every child across all areas.

Teachers arrange and equip the classroom with diverse, open-ended materials that reflect children's home, culture, and language to create a predictable and active learning environment. The room is organized and labeled to promote independence and encourage children to carry out their intentions. Teachers act as partners, working alongside children and communicating verbally and nonverbally to encourage learning. Key strategies for adult-child interactions are sharing control with children, communicating as a partner, scaffolding children's play, using encouragement instead of praise, and taking a problem-solving approach to support children in resolving conflicts.

A consistent framework for the day provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. Children engage in individual and social play, participate in small- and large-group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. The most important segment of the daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make decisions about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children. These higher-level thinking skills are linked to developing executive functions needed to succeed in school and life.

Ongoing child assessment is also an underlying component of the HighScope Curriculum. Objective anecdotal observations of children collected throughout children's natural play allow teachers to assess child progress and plan meaningful learning experiences.

Enrollment, Tuition and Attendance

Ensuring proper enrollment and maintaining consistent attendance is vital for your child's success and development in our program. Here, you will find important information and guidelines to help you navigate the enrollment requirements, understand our tuition and attendance policies, and learn how we work together to create a positive and enriching learning experience for every child.

Enrollment Requirements

Students enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program must be four years of age by August 1st of the current school year, toilet independently, and be legal residents of Munster or eligible children per Board Policy 5111.

Program	2024 - 2025 Tuition	August Payment	9 Monthly Payments	Registration Fee
Half Day	\$3,325	\$175	\$350	\$65
Full Day	\$5,225	\$275	\$550	\$65

Tuition

Monthly payments can be made by check, payable to the School Town of Munster, and sent via mail or delivered in person to 8616 Columbia Avenue, Munster, IN 46321. Please include your student's ID number in the memo section of the check. Cash payments will also be accepted in person at the same location from 8:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Parents may pay in full or follow our monthly payment schedule listed below.

Monthly Tuition Payment Due Dates			
1	Friday, August 2, 2024	6	Friday, December 27, 2024
2	Friday, August 30, 2024	7	Friday, January 31, 2025
3	Friday, September 27, 2024	8	Friday, February 28, 2025
4	Friday, October 25, 2024	9	Friday, March 28, 2025
5	Friday, November 22, 2024	10	Friday, April 25, 2025

Tuition payments received after the due date will result in a \$50 late fee. Failure to pay tuition by the due date may also result in your student being excluded from class until the account is up to date or removed from the program. If your account is not paid in full by the last day of the school year, the Business Office will forward it to collections.

Attendance

Consistent attendance in pre-kindergarten is essential for building a strong foundation for future academic success, developing routines, and fostering social skills. It maximizes learning opportunities, allows for early intervention, encourages parental involvement, and helps children understand the importance of responsibility and commitment.

- 1. Building Foundations: Regular attendance helps young children build a strong foundation for future academic success.** Each day in pre-kindergarten is filled with activities that promote cognitive, social, and emotional development, setting the stage for lifelong learning.
- 2. Establishing Routines: Consistent attendance helps children develop a sense of routine and structure.** These routines are essential for creating a stable and secure learning environment, which in turn supports children's ability to focus, follow directions, and engage in classroom activities.
- 3. Social Skills Development: Attending school regularly provides children with numerous opportunities to interact with their peers and develop crucial social skills.** These interactions help children learn to share, cooperate, and resolve conflicts, which are essential for building positive relationships.
- 4. Maximizing Learning Opportunities: Each day in pre-kindergarten offers unique and valuable learning experiences.** Regular attendance ensures that children do not miss out on key lessons and activities that contribute to their overall development and readiness for kindergarten.
- 5. Early Intervention: Consistent attendance allows teachers to closely monitor each child's progress and identify areas where they may need additional support or intervention.** Early identification and support can address potential learning or developmental issues before they become more significant challenges.
- 6. Parental Involvement: Regular attendance fosters a strong partnership between families and the school.** It allows parents to stay informed about their child's progress and participate more actively in their education, creating a supportive network that enhances the child's learning experience.
- 7. Building Responsibility: Attending school regularly helps young children understand the importance of responsibility and commitment.** These values instilled early on, can positively impact their attitudes toward education and other responsibilities in the future.

Absences

If your child will be absent from school, please notify the main office before 9:00 A.M. on the day of the absence. If the absence will be extended (such as due to a hospital stay or prolonged illness), you only need to inform the main office on the first day of the absence and state the date the student will return to school.

If you must pick your student up from school before dismissal, please provide a note in the morning stating the time and reason for the early dismissal. A parent or guardian must sign a student out of


school from the main office when being dismissed early. An adult must walk students arriving late to school into the main office before going to class.

Health and Safety

The well-being of our students is our top priority, and we are committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for all children. We understand that young children are particularly vulnerable and take every precaution to protect them. From healthy meals and immunization requirements to emergency procedures and safety drills, we strive to provide a secure and nurturing space for your child's growth and development.

Immunization Requirements

Required and Recommended School Immunizations, Indiana 2024-2025



Updated 1.30.2024

Grade	Required	Recommended
Pre-K	3 Hepatitis B 4 DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis) 3 Polio	1 Varicella (Chickenpox) 1 MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) 2 Hepatitis A
K-5	3 Hepatitis B 5 DTaP 4 Polio	2 Varicella 2 MMR 2 Hepatitis A
6-11	3 Hepatitis B 5 DTaP 4 Polio 2 Varicella	2 MMR 2 Hepatitis A 1 MCV4 (Meningococcal) 1 Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis)
12	3 Hepatitis B 5 DTaP 4 Polio 2 Varicella	2 MMR 2 Hepatitis A 2 MCV4 1 Tdap

HepB: The minimum age for the third dose of Hepatitis B is 24 weeks of age.

DTaP: Four doses of DTaP/DTP/DT are acceptable if fourth dose was administered on or after the fourth birthday.

Polio: Three doses of Polio are acceptable for all grade levels if the third dose was given on or after the fourth birthday and at least six months after the previous dose.
*For students in grades K-12, the final dose must be administered on or after the fourth birthday and be administered at least six months after the previous dose.

Varicella: Physician documentation of disease history, including month and year, is proof of immunity for children entering preschool through 12th grade. Parent report of disease history is not acceptable.

Tdap: There is no minimum interval from the last Td dose.

MCV4: Individuals who receive their first dose on or after their 16th birthday only need one dose of MCV4.

Hepatitis A: The minimum interval between first and second dose is six calendar months. Two doses are required for all grade levels.

For additional immunization information, visit: in.gov/health/immunization or call **1 (800) 701-0704** during normal business hours.

Safety Procedures

Each school has established an emergency plan to handle various situations. Disaster drills are conducted twice a year, while lockdown and other safety drills are practiced regularly throughout the year. Additionally, each school must conduct a fire drill at least once a month. Students are notified of these practice drills and are prepared for the drill by the classroom teacher.

Health Services

Nursing services are available at all schools daily. The School Nurse services various health areas, including screening tests, maintenance of health records, health records, health education, individual student health problems, emergency first aid, conferring with parents, and consultation with staff members.

Medication will be administered by the school nurse upon receipt of:

- A physician's written order with the student's name and medication, dosage amount and time schedule for administering the medication, and dates during which the order is in effect.
- A written request from the parent/guardian.
- The medication must be in a container with a pharmacist's label and contain no more than four weeks' supply.

Student Illness

To reduce the spread of germs, which can cause colds, flu, etc., please use the following guidelines when determining whether to keep your child home:

1. If your child's temperature is 100 degrees F or greater, he/she should stay home and remain home until he/she has not had a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
2. If your child is vomiting or has diarrhea, stay home for 24 hours past the last episode.
3. If your child has drainage from an ear or eye, it may indicate infection.
4. If your child has a severe, uncontrollable cough.

Meal and Snack Information

Students may purchase breakfast and lunch at school. The Food Service Department follows the guidelines of the National School Lunch Program, and hot lunches are served each day. Breakfast and lunch menus are posted on the School Town of Munster website. The school will provide one snack per day to pre-kindergarten students.

There are two methods to fund your student's meal account.

- Option 1: Cash and checks to add money to your student's lunch account should be sent in an envelope marked with the child's full name and teacher's name and labeled "Lunch Money." Checks should be made payable to the school.
- Option 2: Parents may create a secure online account at www.MySchoolBucks.com to add funds to their student's lunch account.

Communication and Parent Involvement

The School Town of Munster values effective and consistent communication with students and families. Parent involvement is essential to the success of the individual student and the school community.

Communication

Pre-kindergarten teachers utilize Canvas to communicate daily and/or weekly learning and activities to parents. We recommend that all parents download the Canvas app and allow push notifications to receive messages consistently.

PowerSchool is the School Town of Munster Student Information System. As your child progresses through K—12, student grades and attendance will be stored here and accessible to you using your username and password.

Celebrations

Three classroom parties are held annually, with additional information being provided by the school:

1. Halloween Party: Parade and parties will be held in the afternoon following the regular lunchroom schedule. Costumes that depict violence, including those that are bloody, gory, or make use of weapons, are prohibited at school. Any weapons, even pretend ones, are not allowed at school.
2. Winter Holiday Celebration: Classroom parties before the December Winter Break
3. Valentine's Day: The exchange of valentines is customary during this event.

Birthday Celebrations: Due to food allergies and the wellness of our students, if you feel you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please only use non-food items for birthday treats. Pencils, stickers, pens, bookmarks, and other similar items make great individual gifts for all of the students in the classroom. No outside birthday planning, sending of invitations, or other arrangements may be made during the school day.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Parents assist with classroom parties, field trips, special projects, and other activities when extra help is needed. Volunteer parents must accept the responsibility of supervising students to facilitate learning and enhance safety during the assigned activities. All parent volunteers must have a completed background check up to date and be on file with the school district.

Behavior and Discipline

The School Town of Munster recognizes that all children develop social skills and adjust to the school environment at their own individual rate. There is a wide range of typical behaviors when adjusting to the preschool setting. Our teachers and staff strive to work collaboratively with our families to meet the individual needs of each student so that they can grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Behavior Expectations

Each of our pre-kindergarten classrooms will establish consistent and age-appropriate behavior expectations. Our basic expectations for our mini-mustangs are as follows:

- Respect One Another -- Students are encouraged to be kind and considerate, ensuring everyone's physical and emotional well-being.
- Safety First -- Students are encouraged to make safe choices to protect themselves and others.
- Respect the Environment -- Students are encouraged to care for equipment, materials and property.

In addition, your student must be toilet trained to participate in the pre-kindergarten program. Students must be independent in taking care of bathroom needs. We understand that children of this age may have accidents; if your child has a bathroom accident, we will assist your child with changing to dry clothes. If additional clean-up is needed, parents may be called.

Discipline

The following age-appropriate strategies are utilized based on the individual needs of each child experiencing dysregulation:

- Distraction and Redirection: Teachers suggest and model appropriate behavior to guide children positively.
- Individual Discussion: Teachers respect children's feelings by getting down to their level, making eye contact, and giving them undivided attention to discuss their current needs.
- Praise: Teachers identify children making "good choices" and praise them for their actions.
- Using Examples: Teachers model expected behaviors, such as whispering when asking children to use calm voices.
- Positive Redirection: Teachers give a gentle forewarning and, if needed, redirect children to another area while explaining the reason and discussing better choices.
- Guidance in Social Behavior: Teachers guide children in learning and expressing socially appropriate behavior tailored to each child.
- Transition Warnings: Children are given a 5-minute warning to help them transition smoothly from one activity to another.
- Questioning vs. Telling: Teachers ask questions like, "What kind of voice should we use inside?" or "How do we treat our classmates?" to encourage reflection and understanding.

The School Town of Munster is committed to supporting every student socially, emotionally, and academically in conjunction with their family and support system. Parents will be informed promptly as maladaptive behaviors arise, and a meeting to develop a support plan may be scheduled. Students exhibiting consistent and pervasive maladaptive behaviors may experience a reduced pre-kindergarten day or removal from the program.

The information below includes our general guidelines for ongoing behavioral concerns within our preschool classrooms:

- **Implementing Positive Behavior Reinforcement Strategies:** The teacher will implement the above behavior strategies. We ask that parents reinforce the rules outlined by the classroom teacher while at home with their child.
- **Parent Involvement:** The teacher communicates with the parent/guardian about the behavior, and together, they develop strategies to support the child's behavior improvement at home and at school.
- **Behavior Plan:** If the behavior persists despite interventions, a behavior plan may be developed in collaboration with parents and the school-based intervention team. This plan would outline specific goals and strategies to address the behavior.
- **Review Committee:** In extreme cases where maladaptive behavior continues to pose a significant challenge to the child's learning or the learning and safety of others, a review committee involving teachers, parents, and the school administrator may be convened to discuss additional supports or options, including the possibility of reduced time in the program or temporary removal if necessary.

School staff will remain in contact with families during each step of the progressive discipline ladder. Our goal is to always work collaboratively with families towards a resolution that allows a student to remain in our preschool program, however, there are circumstances which may arise that would warrant an immediate removal from the program in order to ensure the safety of all students in the classroom.