

ISD 728 COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM

PARENT HANDBOOK



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 728

Discovery Learning

PRESCHOOL

2024-2025

Our mission is to **Educate**, **Inspire** & **Empower** our diverse learners, to shape their futures, to accomplish their dreams and to contribute positively to our local and global communities.



WELCOME TO ISD 728 DISCOVERY LEARNING PRESCHOOL

Discovery Learning Preschool is a highly recognized and sought after 4-star Parent Aware Rated school readiness program conveniently offered in Elk River, Otsego, Rogers and Zimmerman. We offer a customized preschool experience for your child in a safe and fun environment staffed by professionally trained, caring preschool teachers.

3-4	Program Information
5	Classroom Information
5	Arrival
5	Separation
5	Technology
6	Snacks
6	School closings
6	Birthdays
6	Holidays
7	Inclusion
8	Parent Involvement
9	Health
10	Safety
11	Screening
11	Additional Services

LOCATIONS:

Handke Center
1170 Main St
Elk River, MN

Otsego Elem
8125 River Road NE
Otsego, MN

Prairie View Elem/MS
12220 80th St NE
Otsego, MN

Rogers Elem
12521 Main St
Rogers, MN

Zimmerman Elem
25959 4th St W
Zimmerman, MN

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Discovery Learning Preschool/Early Childhood Family Education office is located within Handke Center in Elk River.

Office: 763-241-3524 Fax: 763-241-3521 Email: ECFE@isd728.org

PROGRAM INFORMATION

At Discovery Learning Preschool we strive to create environments for children and families that will support growth across all areas of development and promote a love of learning. Activities are intentionally planned to provide opportunities for hands-on learning and creating, interaction with others and making friends, and developing skills that will prepare children to enter kindergarten.

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM EMBEDDED IN EACH CLASS:

- Creative Curriculum
- Teaching Strategies GOLD
- EZ-Write Handwriting curriculum
- High Five (Pyramid Model/Classroom Engagement Model)
- ECFE Nature Classroom (at Handke Center)

CREATIVE CURRICULUM

Focusing on key components of how children learn. Creative curriculum utilizes the learning environment and addresses areas of development including social-emotional, cognitive, math, literacy, and language.

TEACHING STRATEGIES GOLD

An authentic and comprehensive assessment program that is aligned with state guidelines. This assessment tool is used to support all types of learners and is tailored to monitor the growth of all learners.

EZ-WRITE HANDWRITING CURRICULUM

This handwriting curriculum matches the ISD 728 K-5 program to ensure continuity upon kindergarten entry. Eight basic strokes are taught to form letters and numbers.

ECFE NATURE CLASSROOM (AT THE HANDKE CENTER)

The Nature Classroom is an outdoor classroom space devoted to reconnect children with the natural world through developmentally appropriate nature education.

BIG (BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION GROUP)

BIG is an intervention and prevention program for children ages: three to five, who are at risk of losing their childcare or preschool placement (outside of Discovery Learning) because of negative behaviors. BIG is a team made up of parent educators and behavior specialists. BIG works with parents, preschool teachers, and childcare providers as a team to build positive behavior skills. Children in the BIG program may be participating in your child's class. If you are interested in BIG, please contact the ECFE/SR office for more information. Your support and understanding of the process will contribute to the child's success.

HIGH FIVE (PYRAMID MODEL/CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT MODEL)

High Five is a social emotional framework adopted by our ECFE/SR and ECSE programs in ISD 728. Originally named TACSEI (Technical Assistance Center on Social and Emotional Intervention), Minnesota was chosen as a federal demonstration program state for TACSEI. The Elk River ECFE/SR/ECSE program was chosen to be one of the first three sites in the state to implement the TACSEI program in 2010. This is a program of staff development, through the use of coaching, that supports social and emotional development of children birth through kindergarten and equips them for success in school. Outside staff members including: behavior specialists, internal coaches, etc. may be working with classroom staff and observing classrooms. Data will be collected on children in the classroom if any behavior incidents occur, and if further intervention is needed. Data will be shared with a specialist team and families. Staff will work with families if any concerns are present to help every child succeed. Your child will be a part of and benefit from this program when they attend ECFE/SR classes.

In 2014, our program was again selected for another opportunity - to work with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center to help promote child engagement! We have combined these frameworks to help children feel more confident and secure by increasing opportunities for interaction. We are provided Classroom Engagement Model coaching as a part of our High Five program and will collect data on child engagement. Our Early Childhood staff will be in Pyramid Model training offered by Minnesota Centers of Excellence (MNCoE) to enhance best practices for social emotional development

**OUR PROGRAM FOLLOWS THESE FIVE GUIDING RULES:
BE SAFE, BE KIND, BE HELPFUL, HAVE FUN, AND RESPECT EVERYONE!**

ISD 728 Early Childhood
High Five



**Be Kind • Be Safe • Be Helpful
Have Fun • Respect Others**

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Before your child arrives, we are preparing the learning environment for your child's day - the classroom door will be closed until the scheduled start of the class. Your child's teachers will share drop-off/pick-up procedures specific for your class and will meet/dismiss students at the start/end of classes.

Parents are expected to pick up their child within five minutes of the end of the class. A late fee of \$1 per minute, per student will apply after the five-minute grace period. This fee will be billed to your account. Chronic late pick-ups or extreme lateness can result in other penalties, including exclusion from the program.



Cubbies/lockers are provided for coats and backpacks. They are located in the classroom or in a hallway near your classroom. Please do not bring toys and/or valuable items from home to Discovery classes. (You may bring a "security" item to help ease separation anxiety if needed.) If a toy from home is inadvertently brought to class, we will ask your child to set it aside until after class. In accordance with school district policy, objects or toys resembling weapons of any kind are not permitted on school property; such items will not be allowed.

SEPARATION

Parent/child separations can be difficult. We recommend that you prepare your child by telling them in advance when he/she will be going to school. Tell them what you will be doing while they are at school and what fun activities they will get to do while they are at school. Remind them who will be coming to pick them up (or meeting them at the bus). Please talk with your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns about separation.

CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable play clothes and shoes. Some activities may be messy, please dress your child accordingly. We also ask that you keep a change of clothing in your child's backpack in case of accidents or spills. Please label personal items: backpacks, jackets, snow pants, mittens, hats and boots.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

There will be district staff, including the ECFE/SR Manager and Assistant ECFE/SR Manager, who may attend or observe classes. We utilize multiple coaching experiences in our classrooms. We also provide opportunities for student teachers to work in the classes.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology continues to evolve and is a key component in the Discovery Learning Program. Each classroom has their own SeeSaw account where families can access photos, information, tips, blogs, newsletters and more. In addition, computers, touch screens, ipads and SMART TV's are utilized within the classroom.

SOCIAL MEDIA

You have the opportunity to interact and stay connected to our program using our ECFE/ Discovery Learning program Facebook page. Please be respectful of our program and participants when using social media. In order to maintain professional learning environments and relationships, our ECFE/SR staff members will not “friend” any participant of our programs, for the duration of the programs on any social media platform. Please refrain from trying to “friend” staff.

SNACKS

Individual snacks will be provided during the Discovery Learning class sessions.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND CLASS

If you are unable to attend class due to illness or other family obligations, please contact your child’s instructor or the office at 763-241-3524 before your child’s class.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Consult our website, local television stations or Facebook for the latest information if inclement weather arises. Please do not put you or your child at risk if you feel that weather is an issue. If inclement weather forces the District 728 schools to close, or dismiss early, one of the following announcements will be made:

- **Two Hour Late Start** means morning Community Education and ECFE/SR classes will be cancelled. Afternoon and evening classes will meet as scheduled.
- **No School** means morning, afternoon and evening Community Education and ECFE/SR classes will be cancelled.
- **Emergency Early Dismissal** means all Community Education and ECFE/SR classes for the balance of the day (afternoon and evening) are cancelled.
- **E-learning:** Your child’s teacher will be sending home choice boards for any e-learning days that may arise. More information will be shared by your child’s teacher.

CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

Children’s birthdays will be acknowledged in class (song, notes) unless parents request that they not be. **Birthday treats (food) will not be permitted due to our healthy snack policy.** Any birthday invitations should be given discreetly outside of the classroom/school out of respect for all children.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Holidays are not celebrated during Discovery Learning Preschool. Educational information and activities to help children understand a variety of holidays and cultural traditions may be included in your child’s activities.

Outside of Discovery Learning Preschool, ISD 728 Community Education has a variety of holiday/ cultural offerings throughout the year for all ages. For information on these offerings please see the ISD 728 Community Education website: www.728communityed.com.

INCLUSION IN SCHOOL DISTRICT 728 EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

WHAT IS INCLUSION?

Inclusion describes children of all abilities learning, playing and working together in a positive early childhood environment. Children with special needs may be included in any or all of our programs.



WHO IS INVOLVED?

Families and children who participate in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Discovery Learning Preschool, and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) may be involved in inclusive classrooms. Staff may be from ECFE, ECSE, and Discovery Learning.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSION?

Children benefit when they...

- Make friends
- Learn to accept others as they are
- Develop patience and compassion
- Learn to help others
- Learn to accept their own strengths and needs
- Accept others as individuals, not “labels”
- Build interdependence and ability to develop skills to deal with conflict
- Develop better language and communication skills
- Learn self-respect by being part of a positive, natural environment
- Notice similarities between themselves and others.
- Teaching tailored to the way each student learns best.

Families and community benefit...

By involvement in an inclusive setting all families can have the opportunity to develop a greater understanding and sensitivity towards all people. Families have opportunities to learn about and discuss differences in human growth and development. Families can learn to accept a variety of people and discover individual differences and strengths in learning styles and abilities.

HOW MIGHT AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM LOOK?

- All children will be involved in classroom activities.
- Staff members may provide individualized activities for specific children as well as incorporate adapted activities in small and large group activities.
- Caring and knowledgeable staff will assist children who are learning to manage their behaviors and emotions. This process generally takes many small steps. Patience and acceptance by staff, parents and children will help to support this.
- Staff with expertise in a variety of areas will contribute to the operation and quality of the class. These staff members may participate in the classroom on a daily or weekly basis.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We look forward to your regular participation on parent-child/family days. Your involvement is key to your child's success. Discovery Learning Three year old classes have parent-child family days scheduled each week and are an important part of the class. Four/Five year old classes will have parent-child family days scheduled throughout the year. Parent volunteer opportunities may be offered throughout the year. Background checks will need to be completed for classroom volunteers, please contact your child's teacher for information.



CONFERENCES

Family conferences are scheduled twice per year (October and February). These conferences are an opportunity for program staff to share a child's progress in school and partner with families in setting goals. Additional conferences may be scheduled by parent request.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

Children in ISD 728 can receive educational services from the Early Childhood Special Education program in the district. Home-based instruction, classroom instruction and parent education are offered. For more information on how to arrange a developmental evaluation for your child or for any other questions you may have, call 241-3400 ext. 5546.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Our ECFE/SR Advisory Council consists of a group of parents who want to be involved in our ECFE/SR programs. Their purpose is to represent parent participant concerns and to assist staff with program planning. They sponsor annual activities and fundraisers. Parent Advisory Council meetings are held monthly during the evenings with free childcare available. Please inquire through the office 763-241-3524 for more information.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT CARE

Program Participant Childcare is on-site childcare for the children of participants enrolled in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classes at the Handke Center. Program Participant Childcare takes place during class time and parents MUST REMAIN on-site throughout care. This childcare is supervised by staff specifically trained in Early Childhood and School Age best practices. Fees: \$3 per session (day) per child.

How do I register?

- Register at isd728.ce.eleyo.com; payment is not due at time of registration.
- Your childcare account will be invoiced by 5pm on Thursday the week prior to scheduled attendance with auto payments processed on Friday of the week prior to attendance.
- Schedules and payments are online only: email and phone registrations will not be accepted.
- Scheduled days can be completed weekly or monthly; you will be invoiced weekly.
- Please note: Site staff cannot accept registrations, changes or cancellations.

HEALTH INFORMATION

ALLERGIES AND HEALTH CONCERNS

At the time of registration parents will be asked to complete a form indicating any allergy, health, or special needs of their child or children participating in class. Parents may be asked to provide additional information regarding their child, and/or a treatment plan with the school nurse. Information is required to comply with school district requirements and to insure the well being of your child while at school. Information collected is confidential and will only be shared with staff directly involved in your child's class.

IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

It's hard to miss a session but out of respect for others, please stay home with sick children, especially those with fever, diarrhea, chicken pox or the flu. If your child becomes ill during a session, we will ask you to take your child home. (For additional information, please refer to the ISD 728 Health Services webpage at www.isd728.org/HealthServices.)

IS MY CHILD WELL ENOUGH TO GO TO CLASS?

Many parents are frequently concerned about when their child should stay home or attend class. Remember that a child ill with an infectious disease can spread the disease when in contact with others in the family and the community.

The following information is intended to help with this decision:

- If your child is absent due to illness, please call your child's instructor.
- If your child has had a fever of 100 degrees or more, your child should stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal, without fever reducing medication.
- If your child has vomited or had diarrhea, your child should stay home for 24 hours after the last episode.
- If your child has any rash, check with your health care provider before sending your child to class.
- If your child is found to have live lice and/or nits within 1/2 inch from the scalp, a parent/guardian will be notified.

When children are ill in class, an attempt is made to first contact the parent and then the name listed on the student emergency information. If you have any questions regarding the above information or your child's illness, please call your child's instructor or family physician.

ABOUT IMMUNIZATIONS

Per Minnesota law, up-to-date immunizations or medical exemption or a notarized objection letter must be submitted to the Discovery Learning Preschool office and kept in the minor child's record.

SAFETY AT PRESCHOOL

SAFETY

The safety of your child outside of the classroom is your responsibility. Supervise them at all times. Due to the volume of traffic on the streets and in the parking lots, supervising your child is imperative. Hold their hand when crossing streets/parking lots. If you need assistance at arrival or departure time, please ask a staff member.

SECURITY

HANDKE CENTER ELK RIVER

Enter the school through the main doors to the building (Door 5). You will need to check in at the office and receive a visitor sticker. Other entrance doors to the school will be locked to provide additional security.

ROGERS ELEMENTARY, PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY/MS AND ZIMMERMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Enter the school through the main doors to the Early Childhood Center. You will need to buzz for entrance at the door panel. Other entrance doors to the school will be locked to provide additional security. If you need access to any other part of the building outside of the early childhood center, you must check in through the school's main office.

OTSEGO ELEMENTARY

Enter the school through the main doors. A staff member will escort students and/or families to the classroom. Arrivals outside of regular class hours will need to check in through the main office.

PARKING

Parking is not allowed in front of the buildings/sites or anywhere there is a yellow curb. They are fire lanes and you can be ticketed. Also, please be respectful of nearby residents' driveways and businesses within the area. For safety's sake, please do not leave babies or children in unattended, parked vehicles.

DATA PRIVACY AND RELEASE INFORMATION

At the time of registration you are asked to provide ECFE/SR with information about your child. Data collected by ECFE/SR is used for the following: To enroll participants in our programs, to assist with program planning and goal setting, to report to parents regarding child's progress, and to track payment. The data will be provided to the instructor(s), and staff whose jobs require the data, and to staff who may need to contact parents. Data may also be shared with the school district census office. Information will be released to outside agencies/persons when a Consent to Release Information form is completed by the parent. Additional information about data privacy and release of information will be available at the time of enrollment.

MANDATED REPORTING

It's a state law that all ECFE/SR staff must report any suspected child abuse or neglect to County Social Services or Law Enforcement.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Personal information discussed within the parenting groups is confidential. However in cases of suspected child abuse, staff members are mandated by law to report it to the proper authorities.

LOCKDOWN/TORNADO/FIRE DRILLS

Each school in the district is required, by law, to conduct five lockdown drills each year to determine how a crisis situation might be handled if one should occur at our school. Fire and tornado drills occur multiple times a year as well. Drills are a necessary part of preparing for possible emergencies. We do this to ensure that all students and staff are safe and we take appropriate steps to deal with each situation. In the event of a drill, please be patient if you are on school grounds. *Please note: if you are in the school during a drill, we ask that you do not take your child away from the class as we need to make sure all children are safe and accounted for.

INJURIES

As much as we try to prevent them, minor accidents sometimes happen. Staff will use first aid supplies. Any significant injury will be documented in an injury report with parents being notified.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

TRANSPORTATION

If your home address is within the ISD 728 boundaries, you can choose transportation for your child to preschool classes for an additional fee. Transportation is provided by Vision Transportation, the vendor for all district busing. Your child will be picked up by a bus or van with enough time for them to arrive for the start of class; you are responsible for handing your child over to the bus driver. Upon arrival at preschool, your child will be escorted off the bus by our preschool staff and brought to his/her classroom. Upon completion of class, your child will be escorted to the bus by the preschool staff and transferred onto the bus; families are responsible for meeting the bus at drop-off. Transportation requests are processed by the Early Childhood office at Handke; please contact the ECFE office for information, to request, or to make changes with transportation services.

EDVENTURE CLUB-DISCOVERY LEARNING CHILDCARE

Community Education is offering child care services to extend your child's experience with their Discovery Learning Preschool class. Childcare is available for eligible classes before and after your child's preschool class to help accommodate your needs. If you have additional questions about Edventure Club-Discovery Learning please contact EdVenture Club at 763-241-3544.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING

Because of the importance of a child's early years to their later development, Early Childhood Screening is required before children attend Discovery Learning Classes and kindergarten. Through the screening process parents can discuss their concerns and find out about resources in the school and community and problems can be identified early. Children are eligible to be screened at age 3. Families will be contacted by mail and email about scheduling appointments for Early Childhood Screening. Call the office at (763) 241-3525 with questions. Scan the QR code to register.



*Thank you for choosing Discovery Learning Preschool for your child.
We are looking forward to a great school year!*

SCHOOL READINESS (ECFE/SR) OFFICE

1170 Main Street | Elk River, MN 55330
763.241.3524 | ecfe@isd728.org

STAY **CONNECTED...**



728ECFE



728_ecfe



For more information or to register, visit the ECFE/SR website at www.isd728.org/ECFE or Call 763.241.3524.