

Parent Handbook

E C F E

Early Childhood Family Education

2025-2026



About Our Program

Mission Statement

Chisago Lakes School District Early Childhood programs provide positive opportunities for parents/caregivers and children to learn together in home, school, and community; understanding parents/caregivers are the first and most important influence in the development of their children.

Introduction

Welcome to the Chisago Lakes School District Programs, including Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE). **So much learning occurs before your child enters school and you, the parent/guardian, are the most significant, lifelong teacher.** Community Education Programs throughout Minnesota have designated special programs to focus on parenting children during the early years. ECFE offers support, encouragement, and information along the way. All families with a child between birth and kindergarten enrollment are welcome to attend our ECFE program. Our staff members include licensed and certified Early Childhood teachers, Early Childhood Special Education teachers, and Classroom Assistants. We follow all Chisago Lakes School District Policies.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

Services are available to provide individually tailored assessment and educational programs for young children with disabilities (birth to kindergarten entry) and their families. Services are provided at no charge to eligible children.

You can go directly to Help Me Grow at 1-866-693-4769 or helpmegrowmn.org to make a referral for your child.

Census Information

The Early Childhood Program gathers census information for the District, so that all families with young children will be provided with appropriate school information. You can assist this process by encouraging families with young children who are new in the community to contact the Early Childhood Programs Office located at the Primary School.

Class Information

Enrollment

Enrollment in the program is open to the public. Chisago Lakes is committed to all people to have equal access to programs and facilities without regard to race, creed, color, sex, or national origin. The dates of registration are advertised each year in publications.

In filling openings, a waitlist is maintained. As openings become available, we notify those on the waitlist. Children must be the stated age for a particular class on or before September first of that school year; no exceptions are made to age eligibility. The program year runs from September to May and generally follows the Chisago Lakes School District calendar for holidays and staff development non-school days. ECFE class calendars will be provided for families with start and end dates and additional non-school dates on the first day of class. They are also made available on the district website.

Tuition

ECFE class tuition is based on your annual family income on a sliding fee scale and is paid based upon what your family can afford. Monthly class tuition is due on the 1st of the month. Auto payments will be posted on the 1st of each month. **No Chisago Lakes School District family will be excluded due to their inability to pay.**

Any paid tuition will not be refunded when discontinuing services. The starting months full tuition will be paid regardless of start date. Change of schedule or end of service requires a two week written notice.

Monthly Tuition:

\$75,000+	\$40
\$55,000-\$74,999	\$30
\$35,000-\$54,999	\$20
\$20,000-34,999	\$10
Under 20,000	\$3

Sibling Care

Limited sibling care will be provided for ECFE classes. The monthly charge is \$15 for your first child and \$24 for 2 children. Family income under \$25,000 will pay no fee. **Sibling care fees must be paid at the time of registration.** Parents/guardians must provide immunization records for children attending sibling care. If not registered, there is a \$5 drop-in charge per child as space permits. You must notify the teacher at least 1 business day in advance.

Attendance

Regular attendance is critical to success in school. We expect children to attend class each day. Please call or email your child's teacher if your child will be absent.

Emergency Contact Information

It is important a parent/guardian fill out the emergency contact information online completely. If addresses, phone numbers, or any other contact information change, let your child's teacher know, as well as making changes to your online Eleyo account.

Staff NEED to be able to reach parents/guardians in case of an emergency.

School Closings

If District #2144 schools are closed for any reason, ECFE classes will also be canceled. If school starts 2 hours late, **morning** ECFE classes will be **canceled**. For school closing information, listen to WCCO radio or 830 AM, or Channel 4, Channel 5, Channel 9, or Channel 11 television news. Information will also be posted on the district website and social media sites.

Program Information

Arrival & Departure

We ask parents/caregivers and children to arrive no more than 10 minutes before class begins. Teachers are busy preparing the classroom for the day and cannot take responsibility for children until the stated start time. Staff must be informed in writing if anyone other than those designated on their emergency form will be attending with your child and they must have a current picture ID. No child will be released to an adult who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

If there are arrangements that define parental custody or contact rights, we need to have a copy of the legal document ordering such arrangements in the early childhood office.

Separation

Separation may be difficult for children. We hope to ease the separation anxiety by offering you the following suggestions:

1. Show your child you are hanging up your coat by his/hers and tell them you will return to get it after class.
2. Allow your child to bring a favorite object such as a blanket or stuffed toy to class at least for the first few weeks. Show your child where their object is (i.e. "Your blanket will be on the chair if you need it").
3. When it's time for you to leave make your good-bye **brief and cheerful**, rather than asking your child's permission to leave (i.e. "Mommy's going to go now, okay?"). Reassure them with your decision to go in simple terms such as "It's time to go meet with the adults now. I'll be back after you play with your friends and have a snack. I love you! Bye." Then leave.
4. **Rest assured that if your child is distressed and the teacher cannot comfort them, they will come and get you.**

Weekly Parent/Child Classes

Weekly parent/child classes are offered for all parents/caregivers in our school district with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entry. During an infant and 1's class, parents/caregivers and children remain together throughout the entirety of the class. Most other classes have three separate components described below.

Parent/Child Interaction Time

At this time, parents/caregivers and children are involved together in deciding what activities they choose to do. During this time your responsibilities as a parent are:

1. To spend your time with **your child**. Use this time to communicate with your child, not with other adults in the room or your cell phone.
2. To observe your child's behavior and interests. Let your child determine how long they wish to stay at an activity.
3. To offer equipment and toys but let your child select their favorite activities.
4. To encourage trying new activities.
5. To allow your child to do art activities as independently as possible, allowing freedom of expression.

Parent Discussion Time

During the second half of class, parents/caregivers leave the room for a discussion group. Topics for discussion are based upon parents'/caregivers' interests and needs and may include growth and development, child nutrition, effective daily parenting techniques, and more.

Children's Activity Time

While parents/caregivers are in discussion, children are having fun with friends and learning to get along with others. They continue their play, read stories, play games, and have a snack under the guidance of a licensed teacher and other staff.

Policies & Procedures

Safety & Security

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety requires schools to conduct 5 fire drills, 5 lock down drills, and 1 tornado drill to ensure each student knows what to do in each situation. Teachers are familiar with these drills and emergency procedures. Classrooms have posted procedures for fire and tornado emergencies. Teachers will guide your children to safe areas. You can help prepare your child for this by telling them there may be flashing lights and loud noises and that they need to follow their teacher's instructions. The district has procedures in place to handle emergencies that may arise within the school or community. Your child's safety is a priority for us; you can help by keeping emergency numbers up-to-date.

Dress

Clothing that is comfortable, sturdy, washable, and easily managed by children is recommended. This encourages independence by the children. Children are encouraged to wear closed-toed shoes during class. Tennis or rubber soled shoes are safer than those with slippery soles. Flip flops are dangerous on the playground - please do not wear them.

Photography & Video Recording

Photo taking and video Recording are allowed in the classrooms. If you do **not** want your child to be included in any photos or video recording, please fill out a "Data Privacy Request Form 515 F" found on the District Website.

Snacks

Snack time provides a valuable learning experience for children. They experiment with taste, smell, color, texture, taking turns, making choices, and helping themselves. Children will wash their hands before snack and all sit down to eat together. Staff sit at the table with the children at snack time and children are encouraged, but not forced to try new foods.

Each class, a light snack will be provided for children. Please make sure your child is fed before class time.

We will not serve peanut/nut products or any products that are manufactured in a facility that processes peanuts due to allergies.

Please notify the teacher of any food allergies your child has. Parents/caregivers are welcome to bring in an individual snack for their child.

Acceptable Snacks for 1 & 2 Year Olds

- Crackers - such as graham, animal, low-salt
- Cheese - mild flavor
- Dry Cereals –such as Kix, Cheerios, other non-sugar coated
- Fruit - will be prepared by a teacher in class—no grapes, apples or raisins

Acceptable Snacks for 3 & 4 Year Olds

- Crackers - such as goldfish, rice cakes, Triscuits, low-salt, graham, cheese filled
- Cheese - curds, mild flavored such as Monterey Jack, Colby, American and String
- Vegetables, Fruits - will be prepared by a teacher in class
- Muffins - whole grain and commercially prepared
- Pretzels , Mini Granola Bars, Apple Sauce, Canned Fruits

The following are some of the top choking foods and will not be served to children under age 4: hard candy and gum, peanuts, raisins, and grapes.

Early Childhood Screening

What is Screening

An Early Childhood Screening is required for all children before starting Kindergarten in a public school in Minnesota. A screening provider will check how your child moves, plays, talks, and behaves. This knowledge can help parents find resources to support their child's growth and development to best help them learn and think. The earlier you have your child screened the more time you have to address any needs and set them up for success. Parents/caregivers will have the opportunity to discuss the results of the screening with an Early Childhood Screening staff member. The entire process should take about 60 minutes or less.

All families in the Chisago Lakes School District are invited to schedule a free screening appt. Screenings are held monthly during the school year and recommended for children between their 3rd and 4th birthday.

2025-2026 Screening Dates:

Thurs. September 25th	Thurs. February 19th
Tues. October 14th	Thurs. March 26th
Tues. November 25th	Thurs. April 23rd
Thurs. January 29th	Wed. May 27th
Fri. January 30th	Thurs. May 28th

How to Register

Go online (<https://ce.isd2144.org/early-childhood>) to schedule an appointment

What if I would prefer not to have my child screened?

Parents/guardians have the option to "opt out due to consciously held beliefs"

Please see the attached "Parent Frequently Asked Questions for Early Childhood Screening" document from the MN Department of Education which speaks to this process.

[Parent Frequently Asked Questions for Early Childhood Screening](#)

[Parent Video about Early Childhood Screening](#)

Parent Engagement

Communication

During classes, teachers will be available to talk briefly if needed. They can also be reached by phone or email before or after classes, during school hours.

Lending Library

The Early Childhood Programs have a variety of parenting books and children's books available for use at home for 2 weeks. Please look around the parent room and check out books at any time.

Research has shown the single most important thing that a parent can do to help their child acquire language, prepare their child for school, and instill a love of learning in their child, is to read to them (Russ et al., 2007).

Building Communications

Building principals will send weekly newsletters home via Smores Office Notes. Please read these thoroughly as they contain important dates and other information regarding your child's program. Additional educational materials may be sent home periodically. If you have any questions about the content of these newsletters, please do not hesitate to ask.

Health Policies

Immunizations

State law requires that an immunization record for each child enrolled in the program be on file at the Early Childhood Programs Office **prior to the first day**. You or the clinic may email (cwoeltge@isd2144.org) or fax (651-213-2250 attn:Carmen) your child's record.

Allergy Awareness

The Chisago Lakes Early Childhood Programs are allergy aware. As such, the early childhood staff will work proactively to address known student allergic conditions and attempt to minimize the potential for adverse reactions to identified allergens that may be present from time-to-time in the public school environment. Recognizing that literally hundreds of students attend our schools on a daily basis, we cannot guarantee that the school will be free of potential allergens. However, when staff is informed of your student's specific allergy, strategies and procedures will be implemented with the goal of reducing the risk of exposure. We do not allow children to bring peanut/nut products or any products that are manufactured in a facility that processes peanuts to school for snack. The district has a policy #540 limiting animals in the classroom. Parents/guardians must fill out an Early Childhood Health Concerns form.

Cleanliness & Sanitation

We strive to maintain an environment that minimizes risk of contracting illnesses or aggravating allergies, etc. Tables, toys, and equipment are cleaned regularly. Hand washing is promoted before entering the classroom, after using the bathroom, after wiping or blowing noses, after contact with any nose, throat or eye secretions and before preparing or eating food. Everyone is encouraged to sneeze or cough into their elbow.

Is My Child Well Enough To Go To School?

Regular attendance at school is very important, yet we do not want children to come to school when they are ill. Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Excluding an ill child may decrease the spread of disease to others in the school setting. Children should stay home for the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 or more - your child should stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal
- Vomiting or diarrhea - your child should stay home for 24 hours after the last episode
- Strep throat - if your child has a confirmed case of strep throat, your child needs to stay home until 12 hours after antibiotic treatment is started and until well enough to attend school
- Any undiagnosed rash (other than diaper or heat rash) that may be oozing or spreading. Check with your health care provider or licensed school nurse before sending your child to school
- Contagious stage of any communicable disease including chicken pox, scabies, fifth disease, etc.

Parents/caregivers should notify the staff if their child contracts a communicable disease and has exposed children while at school.

Behavioral Guidance

Guidance & Positive Discipline

Wildcat Way

Be respectful. Be safe. Be responsible. Always try your best.

Our classrooms are created to promote success. We want children to actively explore, create, try new things, test and problem solve in a safe environment. But even with the best designed environments, guidance is needed. We will help children learn self-control, by setting limits, creating routines, redirecting, reinforcing the positives and encouraging cooperation in alignment with Chisago Lakes School Discipline Policy #506.

Bullying

We strive to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from harassment and violence, hazing, and bullying. Chisago Lakes Schools creates an environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation. Incidents of such harassment, violence, or bullying are to be reported to the program director. See school board policy #514 and bullying prohibition.

Mandatory Reporting

In Minnesota, anyone who works with children is required by law to report suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of children to authorities. As mandatory reporters, our Early Childhood Staff will report any suspected maltreatment of a child to Chisago County Human Services.

Board Policies

To view board policies, visit www.isd2144.org, click on “Our District”, and click on “School Board” then “District Policies”. This handbook referred to a few policies:

1. 506 - Student Discipline
2. 514 - Bullying Prohibition Policy
3. 515 - Protection & Privacy Of Pupil Records
4. 515F - Data Privacy Request Form
5. 516 - Student Medication
6. 540—Animals in School Building

Office Information

Location & Office Hours

The Chisago Lakes Early Childhood offices are located at the Primary School site in Chisago City.

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

Phone Number: 651-213-2282

Messages can be left at 651-213-2281 for all Chisago Lakes Early Childhood programs. If you need to contact your child's teacher, please call the ECFE rooms directly.

Class Locations

Chisago Lakes Early Childhood Office

Primary School: 11009 - 284th Street Chisago City, MN 55013

Parent Room: 105

Phone: 651-213-2292

Classroom: 106

Phone: 651-213-2278

Contact Information

Early Childhood Office	11009 - 284th Street, Chisago City, MN 55013	651-213-2282 www.isd2144.org/earlychildhood
Family Services & Education Director	Carmen Woeltge	651-213-2281 cwoeltge@isd2144.org
Community Education Office	29400 Olinda Trail, Lindstrom, MN 55045	651-213-2600 Fax: 651-213-2094 clcommed@isd2144.org
Community Education Director	Dan McGonigle	651-213-2601 dmcgonigle@isd2144.org

2025-2026 ECFE calendar at a glance

September 9-12	First Day of ECFE Classes
October 14-17	No ECFE Classes (Parent/Teacher Conferences & MEA)
November 26-28	No School (Thanksgiving)
December 12	Last Day of ECFE Classes (before Winter Break)
January 29 & 30	No ECFE Classes
February 16	No School (President's Day)
March 9-13	No School (Spring Break)
March 30	No School (Staff Development)
April 3	No School
April 6-10	No Little Wildcats (Parent/Teacher Conferences)
May 20 or 21	Last Day of Little Wildcats Preschool