



2025-2026
EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY

Student Handbook





The Early Childhood Programs in West Aurora

**Handbook for Families
2025-2026**

The Early Childhood Program

- Our goal is to help children be ready for success in kindergarten.
- We develop the whole child. We provide learning experiences in language development, motor development, social and emotional development, fine arts, and thinking skills.
- Young children learn by doing. They use their senses, their muscles, and their minds to learn.
- The work of young children is PLAY. That is how they learn. Our school is child-centered.
- The teacher's role is to guide and encourage. Teachers use language with children. Teachers help by putting words to the children's experiences. Children need to participate in various experiences with words on a daily basis.
- Children need adults to guide their development; like teachers and family members.
- Always remember that YOU are your child's first teacher! We will be partnering with you, as families, to do our best to guide your child's development together.

How Families Can Help

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

Attendance Policy

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

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

Absence Reporting

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

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

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

Students are dropped off and picked up in specific locations based on the color of their car sign. Please see your child's car sign for information and follow the instructions on the back of your child's car sign packet.

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

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

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

When picking up your child, use your assigned car line (same as drop-off). Make sure your car sign is visible on the windshield. If you don't have it with you, you will have to exit the car line, park your car, and come into the main office door 1 to retrieve your child. Children will only be released to adults listed as guardians or emergency contacts on the enrollment form. **All persons picking up a child from school will be asked for their ID for identification purposes. If no ID is presented, the child will not be released**

(no exceptions will be made). Please keep the office updated on any changes as children WILL NOT be released to any adult NOT listed. If your child will be picked up by a babysitter or daycare, please make sure a responsible adult is added to your emergency contact list.

Early Learning Academy Car Lines

There are three designated car lines at the Early Learning Academy. Please see your child's car sign for location. Families with a green, blue, and orange sign will use the car line or walk up to Door 1 and wait for a staff member to call their child's name for dismissal. The car line you will use and the car line process will be covered when you pick up your orientation paperwork. **You may NOT park in the car line for any length of time.** If you need to exit your car for any reason, please park and walk up to the building. are several parking spaces available to park in if you would rather park and walk up to the building. If you have any questions about the car line process, please call the office at 630-301-5016 or talk with your child's teacher.

If a Child Is Not Picked Up

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

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

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

Health Services

General Information

Parent/Guardian should notify the health office and provide relevant documentation for any student's chronic health conditions, life-threatening conditions, medications and therapeutic regimens on an annual basis or when it changes. Students who become ill during the school day or those who require first aid may visit the health office during school hours. Parents/Guardians will be notified of more severe incidents. In the event of a medical emergency, school personnel may call 911 for additional assistance. District Guidelines for returning to school after an illness will be followed in conjunction with any related health provider documents.

If a student is not feeling well they must check out in the health office and authorization must be given before leaving the building or the absence will be considered unexcused. No student will be excused from school unless a parent/guardian or person designated has been notified and appropriate transportation arranged. Under certain circumstances, the District may require parents/guardians to present medical documentation

of physical or emotional conditions causing student absence. In the event EMS services are provided to a student, West Aurora School District 129 reserves the right to request follow-up medical documentation. This may include, but is not limited to, medical clearance for the student to resume athletic activities, participate in physical education, or confirm the student's ability to safely attend school.

Anaphylaxis Prevention, Response, and Management Program

Parents/Guardians of students with life-threatening allergies or those at risk for anaphylaxis should provide the school health office with written instructions from the student's health care provider for handling allergic reactions and all necessary medication for implementing the student-specific order on an annual basis. *For information on District 129's Anaphylaxis Response Policy, please contact your student's health office.*

District 129 participates in the National School Lunch/School Breakfast program. According to the USDA's Food and Nutrition Services Instruction 783-2 Revision 2, a medical statement from a physician detailing food allergies must be provided before the school can make any restrictions or substitutions for students. If your child has any dietary restrictions, please contact the Certified School Nurse at your child's school.

Communicable and Chronic Infectious Diseases

The district will observe recommendations of the Illinois Department of Public Health in correspondence with the Kane County Health Department regarding communicable diseases. *Please visit our website at SD129.org, for additional information on Influenza disease and Meningococcal disease.*

Concussion Safety

Students who exhibit signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or head injury during school hours will be removed from participation or competition at that time. For the safety of the injured student, they will not be permitted to return to play unless cleared to do so by a licensed physician or a certified athletic trainer. Students who have experienced concussions will be supported by the District in accordance with the Return-to-Play and Return-to-Learn protocols. Parents/guardians should notify the building administration and health office if they are aware their student has suffered a concussion either during or after school hours.

Diabetes

A diabetes care plan shall be submitted to the school at the beginning of the school year; upon enrollment, as soon as practical following a student's diagnosis, or when a student's care needs change during the school year. Parent/Guardian shall be responsible for informing the school in a timely manner of any changes to the diabetes care plan. *Please visit our website at SD129.org, for additional information on Type 1 Diabetes.*

Head Lice

Students with head lice do not need to be sent home early from school. When lice/nits are found on a student at school, the student's parent/guardian will be informed. Any household contacts that attend school in West Aurora School District will be called to the health office to be checked. Student's with lice are encouraged to begin treatment promptly. *For additional resources regarding lice treatment, please contact your student's health office.*

Health Examinations & Immunizations

- **Physical Examination and Immunizations**

- A complete physical examination and immunization record within one year prior to the following is required: entering kindergarten or the first grade, entering the sixth and ninth grades and enrolling in an Illinois school for the first time.
- Immunization requirements for children enrolling or entering a school in Illinois are available on the Illinois Department of Public Health's website.
- Unless the student is homeless or some other exemption or extension applies, failure to comply with the above requirements by October 15 of the current school year will result in the student's exclusion from school until the required health forms are presented to the District. New students who register after October 15 of the current school year shall have 30 days following registration to comply with the health examination and immunization regulations.

- **Vision Examination**

- Before October 15th of each school year, all students enrolling in Kindergarten or enrolling for the first time in an Illinois school shall show proof of having been examined by a physician who performs eye examinations or an optometrist within the previous year.

- **Dental Examination**

- Before May 15th of each school year, all students in Kindergarten, Second, Sixth and Ninth grades shall present to the school proof of having been examined by a licensed dentist. The examination must have taken place within 18 months prior to May 15th of that school year.

- **Vision and Hearing Screening**

- Vision and Hearing Screenings will be conducted on those students specified under the guidelines set forth by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Students whose test results meet referral criteria will be referred to an eye doctor, audiologist or family physician for further evaluation.

- **Exemptions**

- In accordance with rules adopted by the Illinois Department of Public Health, a student will be exempted from the policy's health requirements on medical grounds if a physician provides written verification or on religious grounds if the student's parents/guardians presents a statement for each immunization/examination requested along with the completed Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption, signed by the student's healthcare provider (MD/OD, APN, PA), submitted on the same schedule as the requirement referenced above.

Jeff Craig Family Resource Center

The school-linked health center is powered by VNA Health Care and is accessible to any District 129 student. The VNA provides a range of services, such as medical care, mental health services, and dietician services. The goal is to improve students' health and well-being, enhance their academic performance, and reduce absenteeism by ensuring easy access to necessary healthcare services. *For more information about the VNA's services and the necessary consent forms, please visit our website at SD129.org.*

The Marie Wilkinson Micro-Pantry provides essential food assistance to District 129 students and families to help address food insecurities and ensure students have the necessary resources to succeed academically and personally. Located at the Jeff Craig Family Resource Center, the micro-pantry will provide a variety of

non-perishable food items, school supplies, and other basic necessities. For more information about how to access the micro-pantry, please speak to the administration at your child's school.

Medication Authorization

- **Procedure for Medication Administration**

- The administration of medication to students during regular school hours and during school-related activities is strongly discouraged unless absolutely necessary for the critical well being and health of the student. When a student's licensed health care provider and parent/guardian believe that it is necessary for the student to take a medication during school hours or school-related activities, the parent/guardian must request that the school dispense the medication to the student and otherwise complete the District's *Medication Authorization Form* and follow the District's *Medication Policy & Procedures* on dispensing medication.

Physical Education Excusal Requests

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

Toilet/Potty Training

Toileting accidents may happen on certain occasions. We kindly request that parents pack a change of clothes in their child's backpack in case of an accident.

Undesignated Medication

The District may secure and maintain a supply of undesignated asthma medication, epinephrine, glucagon and/or opioid antagonist when available, in the name of the District and provide or administer them as necessary according to State law. Registered Nurses or trained personnel may administer undesignated asthma medication, epinephrine, glucagon and/or opioid antagonist to a person who they, in good faith, believe is having a health crisis. The provision for undesignated medications will be VOID when the District is unable to secure a prescription for, or the supply of the medication. Undesignated medications are not intended to replace individual student medications. West Aurora School District is required to notify parents/guardians of undesignated medication protocols at the time of enrollment. By enrolling your child at West Aurora School District and reviewing this handbook, you acknowledge that you have been informed of such standing protocols.

Meal Program

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

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

Birthdays and Celebrations (No Food Treats)

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

School-to-Home Communication

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

Clothes

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

Other things from home

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

Parent Educators

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

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

Volunteers/Visitors

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

Student Teachers and Observers

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

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management program that empowers both teachers and students. Based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices, the goal of the program is to provide systematic changes in schools by fostering the emotional intelligence of teachers and students. Conscious discipline leads programs through a process that promotes permanent behavior changes in both teachers and students. The change is from a traditional model of discipline to a relationship-based community model. The “school family” is the core of the program. The school family is held together through communication skills taught during conflict moments in the classroom and through active learning lessons. The goal of the family is to create problem-solvers. This system is built on three premises: controlling and changing

ourselves is possible and has a profound impact on others, connected governs behavior and conflict is an opportunity to teach (Bailey, 2001).

Crisis

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

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

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

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

PAT (Parents as Teachers) Program

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

Important Phone Numbers

Early Learning Academy at West Aurora Learning Center

1870 W Galena Blvd, Aurora, IL 60506

Principal: Dr. Laurie Klomhaus

Office: 630-301-5016

Safe Phone: 630-301-5470

Freeman Elementary

153 S. Randall Rd, Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mrs. Jana Ream

Office: 630-301-5002

Safe Phone: 630-301-5135

Greenman Elementary

729 W. Galena Blvd, Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mrs. Kelly Papp

Office: 630-301-5004

Safe Phone: 630-301-5175

Hill Elementary

724 Pennsylvania Ave., Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mrs. Elizabeth Smith

Office: 630-301-5007

Safe Phone: 630-301-5255

McCleery Elementary

1002 W. Illinois Ave, Aurora, 60506

Principal: Mr. Daniel Ulrich

Office: 630-301-5012

Safe Phone: 630-301-5375

Student Support Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

9-8-8

Suicide Prevention Services (Batavia)

630-482-9699

National Crisis Counseling Text Line

Text HOME to 741741

SAFE2HELP Illinois

Seek Help Before Harm

1-844-4-SAFEIL

Text - 72332

Download the SAFE2HELP Illinois mobile app

Bookmark the page: www.safe2helpIL.com