

**WARREN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY FAMILY HANDBOOK  
2025-2026**



## WCPS Early Learning Academy Directory

<b>Early Learning Academy</b>	<b>270-904-8800</b>
Stephanie Paynter, Principal	
Alaena Petersen, Counselor	
<b>WCPS Preschool Enrollment</b>	
Chelsea Hale, Preschool Data Clerk	<b>270-904-8808</b>
<b>Warren Co Board of Education</b>	<b>270-781-5150</b>
Debra LaSala, Preschool Director	
Christina Sanders, Assistant Preschool Director	
Donna Williams, Preschool Consultant	
Ashley Cowan, Preschool Consultant	
<b>Bus Garage</b>	<b>270-843-3703</b>

### School Address & Phone Number

1846 Loop Drive Bowling Green, KY 42101

270-904-8800 (phone)

(fax)

### School Hours

Our school hours are 7:45am-2:45pm Monday-Thursday. Early Learning Academy tuition students will also attend school on Friday. Students may arrive between 7:15-7:45 am either on the bus or through the car rider line. Students arriving after 7:45am must be signed in at the front office by a parent/guardian.

### Preschool Mission Statement

The Warren County Preschool Program empowers students and families by nurturing social and emotional competence and developmental opportunities for preparation in meeting Kentucky's Kindergarten Readiness Definition.

### The Goal of Preschool

The goal of the Warren County Preschool Program is to prepare children to start kindergarten ready and eager to learn. The foundation of the program is based on the philosophy that young children learn by directly interacting in their environment.

### Preschool Learning Objectives

Preschool provides a setting in which children can be successful and develop a love of learning through:

- Recognizing and celebrating the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each child
- Providing activities for children based on knowledge of child development
- Acquiring and using knowledge of each child's interests and experiences as the basis for learning and activities

- Providing countless opportunities for each child to make decisions, solve problems and express creativity
- Encouraging children to explore, discover and ask questions
- Actively listening to each child and helping to expand conversational skills
- Nurturing children's social skills by providing opportunity for cooperation
- Celebrating each child's successes and providing the opportunity for each child to become independent and responsible
- Recognizing parents as the first teacher of children and involving parents in children's education through parent education and volunteerism

## **Preschool Eligibility Requirements**

The Kentucky Preschool Program is available to all children determined to be eligible. Families may begin the process to determine eligibility by completing the online application, <https://goo.gl/KojuLM>

**Four-year-old children without a disability or developmental delay** must meet **ALL** the following criteria:

- Must be four years old before or on August 1 of the current school year
- Must be a resident of the Warren County School District
- Must meet income eligibility guidelines

**Three and four-year-old children** may be eligible for preschool upon the child's third birthday **if the determination has been made by the Admissions and Release Committee that the child has a developmental delay or disability** and may be in need of special education services. To begin the process of determining if a child will qualify based on any of the following criteria, please view this link, <https://sites.google.com/warren.kyschools.us/preschool/home>,

- To qualify based on family income
- To determine if a child has a disability or developmental delay and qualifies for special education services

If it is determined that your child does not qualify for the Warren County Preschool Program, you are encouraged to consider our tuition program.

## **Tuition Program**

Children who will be four years old by August 1 of the current year and who are not eligible for preschool may participate in our tuition program. Tuition slots will be offered at Early Learning Academy on a first-come, first-serve basis, as space exists. Those children participating in tuition programming will participate alongside eligible preschoolers in the full-day program. Tuition paying children will receive the same high-quality learning opportunities and will engage in hands-on, interactive activities. Those items specific to families who are paying tuition include:

- Non-refundable deposit of \$50
- Monthly tuition of \$650=5 days/week
- Parent provided transportation
- Parent pay or parent provided breakfast, lunch or snack
- Parent/teacher conferences (in lieu of home visits)

## Enrollment Information

A parent or legal guardian may enroll a child in preschool after eligibility has been determined or after being notified that a tuition slot is available. The child must enroll under his or her full legal name. Children enrolling in the Warren County Preschool Program will need:

- **Up-to-date Kentucky Immunization Certificate or exemption (KRS 158.035) (required before a student can begin attendance)**
- **Proof of residency (copy of lease, rental agreement, deed, utility bill, etc.) (required before a student can begin attendance)**
- **Completed Warren County Schools enrollment documentation, including Student Emergency Card (required before a student can begin attendance)**
- **State-issued birth certificate or reliable proof of age and identification (required before a student can begin attendance)**
- Proof of current (within one year) **medical examination/physical** from doctor of parent choice **(required before a student can begin attendance)**
- Proof of **vision examination** by an optometrist/ophthalmologist of parent choice (due by January 1 of the first preschool year)
- Proof of custody, if applicable (official court documents must be on file at the school in order to enforce custody or restraining issues)

## The Creative Curriculum

Each day brings each child opportunities to work, investigate and grow through interactions in the preschool setting. Teachers build your child's experiences using the *Creative Curriculum* as the foundation for teaching and learning. The *Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers* is based on 38 objectives for development and learning that include predictors of future school success and are aligned to *Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards*. The *Creative Curriculum* addresses all the important areas of learning, from social emotional and math to technology and the arts, and promotes learning throughout every part of every day. What's more, it supports individualized instruction, helping teachers meet the strengths, needs and interests of every learner. The *Creative Curriculum* allows teachers to plan the kinds of experiences that help children become capable and enthusiastic learners as they ready for the kindergarten experience. The preschool experience can be thought of as three different areas that promote learning: environments, routines and interactions.

### Environments: The Classroom

Your child's classroom has been carefully planned to maximize exploring and learning. Developmentally appropriate materials are readily available to children. This allows children to explore and problem solve. The classroom is arranged in learning centers. Children may choose to work in the block center, dramatic play center, science center, art center, computer center, book center or a variety of other centers. Research has supported that play is a child's work and children learn best through play. We choose to call children's play "work." As children work in learning centers, they develop skills that prepare them for the kindergarten experience.

## **Routines: The Daily Schedule**

Structure and consistency are very important to young children. Children become secure when they know what to expect next. Your child's preschool day will be filled with predictable routines. Children work and learn individually and in small and large groups with a balance that optimizes their learning. Children who are secure are eager and ready learners.

## **Interactions: Teaching Strategies**

The teacher prepares the preschool classroom for children so they can be independent and successful. Teachers plan open-ended, hands-on activities that foster exploration and learning. Children will interact with materials, concepts and one another. Children are encouraged to be active participants in learning. Children are not expected to be lectured to or participate in large group, non-interactive activities like worksheets. It is the goal of the teacher to recognize each child's individual learning style and level of development and plan activities that both challenge and support the young learner

## **Student Progress**

Teachers monitor the progress of each child every day. They plan what to teach based on where each child is in their learning and development. Preschool children are not ready to do worksheets or take paper and pencil tests. Teachers work with children in large groups, small groups and individually to teach new skills and concepts and to reinforce those skills and concepts in which children are already familiar. While they are working with children, teachers observe to see how each child is performing and they record this by writing notes. Teachers take many notes about children each day in order to compare children's progress over time. They take notes in many areas, monitoring each child's progress in each of the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, 3 – 5 Years*. Three times during the school year, you will receive a progress report from your child's teacher detailing your child's progress and the next steps for his learning. While formal progress reports are only distributed four times throughout the year, families are welcomed and encouraged to talk with the child's teacher any time about their child's learning and development. Families will also receive 3yr & 4yr Preschool Skills Checklists in October and May.

## **Screening**

Vision, hearing and developmental screenings will be done with every preschooler (including tuition preschoolers). Results of these screenings will be shared with families. Teachers and parents will work as a team and use these results to make a plan for meeting the child's needs. Parents will complete a parent questionnaire as a part of this screening. Parental input is very important as this gives us the greatest insight into each child!

## **Kentucky System of Intervention (KSI)**

If your child is suspected of having a disability or developmental delay based on screening information, your child will be able to participate in KSI. This program provides intervention for your child in the area of suspected delay, for a period of at least six weeks. During this time, a certified teacher will work with your child in the area(s) of suspected delay(s). This service is provided in a group setting with other preschool-age children. Students will participate in activities planned specifically for preschoolers. The KSI teacher will work specifically with your child on those areas of concern. For example, if your child showed concerns in the area of language, the KSI teacher would provide activities for large group, small group and individually to help your child grow in this area. The teacher will observe your child and make notes daily and that data will be shared with the family. At the end of the KSI period, your child will be rescreened to see if progress was made. The KSI teacher would then recommend further evaluation or conclude that your child has made progress and is developing typically for his age.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are very important to the overall success of the preschool experience for their children. There are many things parents can do to help both at home and at school. Some things parents can do include:

- Have your child attend regularly, except when the child is ill
- Teach your child self-reliance and responsibility to put on, take off, and hang up clothes, put away toys, and have regular meals and bedtimes
- Know your child's teacher and talk with her about your concerns
- Talk with your child's teacher but avoid discussing your child when your child can hear
- Take an interest in the work your child brings home
- Participate actively in the parents' program and visit the classroom
- Help your child learn his/her full name, age, address and phone number
- Listen to your child's daily experiences and talk about them
- Do things with your child, work and play together as a family group!

### **Home Visits**

A strong partnership between families and teachers lays a great foundation for children's education. Preschool teachers will be making at least two visits to each non-tuition eligible preschool family's home throughout the school year. Tuition families will be invited to at least two parent/teacher conferences. These scheduled visits are a time for you to share goals and concerns you have for your child. This will also be a time for the teacher to share news about progress and your child's program for the next school year. Home visiting helps teachers better understand parents' dreams and goals for their child and preschool age children love for the teacher to visit their home!

## **Parent Activities**

Preschool is not just for kids! At least once per quarter, special activities are planned just for preschool parents. These activities may be social or educational or both! These activities are planned around topics in which parents have expressed an interest. One of the topics for Parent Activities might be Preschool for Parents, a fun night in which preschool children “walk” their parents through the day of a preschooler. Other topics may include Family Game Night, Family Reading Night, how to help your child learn at home or effective discipline. If there is an activity or topic that interests you, please let your child’s teacher know!

## **Communication**

Your child’s preschool teacher will send home a weekly newsletter letting you know what is happening in the classroom and about any upcoming events. Your child will receive a two-way communication folder that is brought home daily. The teacher will put notes and your child’s work in this folder. Parents are encouraged to return or send notes to the teacher in this same folder. This helps teachers to find those important messages from you. You are encouraged to contact your child’s teacher anytime you have questions or concerns. Sending a note in the two-way communication folder or calling the office and leaving a message for the teacher to contact you are both great ways to contact the teacher. It is difficult for teachers to write lengthy notes, talk on the phone or have face-to-face meetings while children are present. It is also very difficult, and hardly private, to try to talk during field trips, classroom parties or school festivals. Teachers’ number one job is the safety and supervision of your children.

We will use Talking Points this year as a two-way communication piece which allows you to receive and send important information both to our office staff and your child’s teacher. Talking Points is connected to Infinite Campus and will automatically translate all messages into your preferred language. You can either decide to receive text messages or download the Talking Points app to any smart phone.

## **Parent Volunteers**

Parent volunteers are welcomed and valued at ELA. To become a parent volunteer, parents must complete a Criminal Record Check that is approved by the state of Kentucky and they must complete Volunteer Training. There will be sign-ups for Volunteer Training at Open House or you may call the office for additional dates/times. Once you have been approved as a volunteer, your child’s teacher will work with you on volunteer opportunities. While some parents prefer to volunteer in the preschool classroom, there are other ways parents can help. Teachers are often very willing to send home materials that need to be cut out or put together and sent back. Early Learning Academy will have a Family Resource Center and volunteers often assist with Clothes Closets and Food Pantries. ELA’s Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) is always in need of help. When children see parents active in their school, it helps them see the value of education and allows you to be more active in that education. A parent must be an approved volunteer to accompany their child on a field trip. Grandparents or others, who wish to volunteer, must be approved as volunteers also.

## **ELA Family Resource Center**

Family Resource Centers operate as a part of the school to serve the needs of preschool and elementary school students and their families. The purpose of the Family Resource Center is to help students overcome barriers to learning. By meeting students' needs and families' physical, emotional and social needs, the Family Resource Center helps prepare students to learn.

All students and their families enrolled in the preschool program can use the Family Resource Center services. The Family Resource Center is readily available each school day to help students and families with on-going issues or emergencies. Services provided by the Family Resource Center include:

- Referral to community agencies for food, clothing, utility and housing assistance
- Family crisis services
- Referral to health and mental health services
- Referral to full-time childcare for infants and toddlers
- Education to enhance parenting skills
- Referral for continuing education opportunities for parents
- Parent volunteer training

### **Attendance**

Regular and punctual attendance contributes to a quality preschool experience. Parents play an important role in getting their preschooler to school on time. If a child is consistently tardy (late), it may be difficult for the child to leave the parent or enter an already busy classroom. Parents are asked to contact the front office to make their child's teacher aware of any absence. We will contact families if students miss at least two consecutive school sessions and there is no word from the family. Teachers worry about their students when they are absent. Announcements will be made on local television, radio stations, and social media outlets when school closes due to bad weather or other crisis. Families will also receive notification of school closures through Talking Points (text or app).

### **Bathroom**

Teachers will supervise a child in the bathroom, teaching good health habits and assisting with toileting skills when asked by a child or the teacher notices a need. Parents are encouraged to make the teacher aware of any assistance needed in toileting. Private changing areas are provided for children who are not toilet trained or who have toileting accidents. Parents are asked to furnish diapers and wipes if a child is not toilet trained. Every child should bring a complete change of clothes (including underwear and socks) in case of an accident.

### **Clothing**

When dressing your child for school, keep in mind that children will be moving about all through their day. Play clothes and gym shoes (tennis shoes) work best. Some activities include water play, paint and play dough. Children will be offered breakfast, lunch, and a snack while at school. Your child's clothes may get dirty while playing or eating. It is very helpful if every child brings a complete change of clothes (including underwear and socks). Your child will also be going outside every day if the temperature is above 32 degrees and below 100 degrees. Please dress your child appropriately for outside play and send a coat or jacket when the temperatures are cool. You may also choose to send mittens or gloves and a hat. Please label your child's clothes with his or her name or initials.

## **Backpacks**

Children are encouraged to bring a backpack to school each day. Children will have their own special cubby to store their backpack in during the time they are at school. Teachers will send newsletters, notes and your child's work in a two-way communication folder that your child will bring home each day. Parents are encouraged to send notes to teachers in this folder. Backpacks should be large enough for your child's folder, a change of clothes, and nap blanket. Children may not bring toys to school unless notified by the teacher of a special event. Teachers will not replace any personal toys if brought to school and they become lost or broken.

## **Communication**

Our teachers value the relationship they have with parents. We are eager to talk with parents. What parents have to say is very important, but teachers are not able to talk with parents while safely supervising children. Before children arrive at school in the morning or after children leave in the afternoon allows the teacher to focus on the parent. Parents are encouraged to call or send a note to make an appointment. Teachers want to hear what you have to say and they want to answer your questions!

## **Discipline**

One goal of the Early Learning Academy program is to teach social skills and help children learn self-control. The techniques used will be based on the developmental level of the child and may include: positive reinforcement, re-direction, and helping the child learn to problem solve. Children will be made aware of expectations through the consistent use of clearly defined limits. No adult (teacher or visitor) may use physical or harsh verbal discipline.

## **Field Trips**

Parents will be informed of all special activities through the classroom newsletter or special notices via Talking Points. A Field Trip Permission Form will be sent home in advance of each field trip. Families must complete this form, including parent/guardian signature, providing written consent for their child to participate in the field trip. Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate on field trips. Parents must pay any admission fee and provide their own transportation. Younger siblings or other guests may not attend the field trip. If a parent or a parent designated adult (grandparent, uncle, aunt, friend) wants to participate, they must complete volunteer training and must have an approved criminal record check. Criminal record check forms can be obtained from the preschool teacher or school office. Your preschool teacher or our school counselor will assist parents in scheduling volunteer training.

## **Head Lice**

The parent of a student infected with head lice will be notified and asked to pick up the student. The student may return after he/she is treated for lice. A student may not return to school with active lice. The parent is responsible for transporting the child to school to be checked by staff before returning to the classroom.

## Health Practices

Parents must complete and sign an emergency card. If your child has an accident or becomes ill at school, our front office staff will try to contact you. If emergency medical attention is necessary and the front office staff is unable to reach you, emergency medical services will be contacted. Any child showing signs of communicable illnesses such as severe colds or chicken pox or has an elevated body temperature should be kept at home. Per district policy, sick children who are running a fever, vomiting or who have diarrhea will be sent home and may not return until they are symptom free without medication for 24 hours. It is very important that we are able to contact a parent or other adult designated on the emergency card. Please be sure to let our front office know of any phone number changes for anyone listed on the emergency card.

## Meals

A nutritious breakfast and lunch are provided to all WCPS preschool students free of charge. The school lunch menu is printed bi-monthly and is sent home with each student or can be found online. Our preschool teachers and preschool instructional assistants help children at mealtime, encouraging their independence. Food is never used as punishment or reward in the preschool classroom. Children will be served all items provided by the cafeteria but may choose what they actually eat. Teachers will encourage children to try a variety of food, but children are never forced to eat anything. Children are welcome to bring a healthy, well-balanced lunch from home. Food brought from home will not be refrigerated or heated by our preschool staff. Fast food and soft drinks are not allowed in Warren County Public Schools.

If your child suffers from any type of food allergy or is on a medical diet as prescribed by a doctor, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide written documentation from the child's doctor to the front office before the child begins attendance. Our licensed nurse will work with the parent, teacher, instructional assistant and cafeteria staff to ensure that the doctor's orders are carried out as directed.

## Free/Reduced Meals

WCPS preschool students in all schools receive free breakfast and lunch and must complete a household income form annually. The application is a household application and should include all children in the household. The Household Income Form (HIF) will need to be completed for each household and returned to school .

## Medicine

All medication, including both nonprescription and prescription drugs, should be sent to the office by the parent/guardian in the original container with specific instructions for the student listed on the school medication form. **Students are NOT allowed to carry medication on the bus nor can they bring it to school without being accompanied by a parent/guardian.** Please note that no medicine will be administered to a student without a medical form signed by the parent/guardian, nor will medicine be administered that is not brought to the school in the original container.

## Nap Time

Children will be provided a required rest time of about an hour each day. A foldable vinyl mat should be sent to school for your child to lie on during this midday rest time. Each teacher will set a guideline for the length of time a student must rest on the mat before he/she is allowed to do a quiet

activity like looking at picture books. Parents are asked to send a small blanket for your child to cover himself/herself. Blankets should fit entirely within the child's backpack and be laundered regularly. Your child's teacher will share her classroom policy regarding sleep toys from home.

### **Parties**

Preschool children and teachers love to celebrate! The preschool teacher will plan classroom celebrations that are respectful of all children and families. Teachers welcome families to share information about their beliefs and values. Teachers welcome the help of parents in party planning. Let them know if you are interested! If your child is celebrating a birthday and you wish to bring treats for your child's class, please plan with your child's teacher. All treats must be store bought and individually wrapped in order to protect children with food allergies. The teacher must review all treats before they can be served to children.

Parents are welcome to join in celebrations and must sign in at the school office. Children are expected to continue to follow classroom rules and teacher directions when parents are present. Parents may take their child home when a party is over after letting the teacher know they are taking the child and after signing the child out in the front office.

### **Photos/Publicity**

Photographs or video recording of students may be published, printed or shown in newspapers, newscasts, newsletters, teacher web page, district website or social media from time to time. If you do NOT want your child's photograph or video to be made public, you must contact the front office and complete a "Photo Opt Out" form.

### **Visitors**

All visitors must report to the front office upon entering the building. Visitors must be listed on the child's emergency card or accompanied by a parent. Visitors will be required to sign in through our Raptor ID system and wear an ID badge while inside the school. Visitors may be asked to present a picture ID. Visitors may not interrupt instruction and are encouraged to visit by appointment. Visitors are welcome to eat with their child. Parents are encouraged to make the child's teacher aware of an upcoming visit so they can explain where and how to get the meal.

### **Transportation**

Transportation is available to eligible children on safety-inspected buses with qualified drivers and monitors. Arrangements may be made to pick up and deliver the child to a parent-designated location within the child's home school district. Children in the preschool program will wear reflective vests furnished by the school district for visibility and safety as children come and go from school. Our preschoolers will only be allowed to board the bus if wearing the reflective safety vest issued by the preschool teacher. Any change in a student's daily transportation requires a note from the parent to the front office informing her of the change. In the event of an emergency, the parent should email the transportation change link and inform the office staff of any last-minute change. The office staff will notify the preschool teacher. Please do not email your child's teacher directly as they are not able to always check their email during the school day.

A guardian must bring the child to the bus stop and wait with the child until the child boards the bus and the bus leaves the bus stop. A designated guardian must also be at the bus stop to take the child off the bus. The parent or guardian is responsible for the child's safety to and from the bus stop. The parent/guardian will accompany the child to and from the bus stop and will be in control of the child at all times. Hand-to-hand pick-up and drop-off is required. If there is no designated guardian, the child will be returned to school and the parent will be called to pick up the child. (Designated guardians are those individuals listed on the child's emergency card that is signed by the parent or legal guardian.)

## **Bus Rules and Regulations**

School Board policies governing school bus transportation:

- The driver is in full charge of the bus and pupils must obey at all times.
- Drivers may assign pupils to a special seat that shall be occupied as directed until such a time as it may be necessary to change.
- Children and parents or a designated adult shall be on time at the place of loading/unloading on the bus; drivers will not wait unless they see you coming.
- Children should stand a safe distance from the road while waiting for the bus.
- Children sit with the bus monitors in the center section of the bus next to the window.
- Students are to keep arms and all other parts of the body inside the bus at all times.
- Students are to keep the bus neat and clean at all times.
- No loud talking, yelling or unnecessary shouting inside the bus or out windows will be tolerated.
- Students are not to change seats while the bus is in motion—this means they are not to be out of the seats for any reason until the bus stops at its destination.
- Students are not to use indecent language of any form while riding the bus.
- Students are not to leave the bus without the driver's and the monitor's consent and then only with the parent or designated guardian.

Students are taught safety rules for riding the bus. However, it takes small children some time to understand all the rules. You as a parent need to become familiar with these rules and help us to get the message across to them. Encourage your child to obey the rules. Monitors are provided on the bus for the safety of all preschool children. Parents will be made aware of and asked to assist in any discipline problems that occur on the bus.

## **Parent Transportation**

Regardless of whether a child is transported to and from school by private means on a daily basis or occasionally, the following guidelines provide for safety and must be strictly followed. Preschool children may not be dropped in the morning car rider line unless an adult is there to receive the student and an adult escorts the student to the preschool teacher or preschool assistant.

- Preschool children may not enter the building without an adult. All adults must sign in the front office each time they enter the building.
- Parents/designated guardians must stay with the child until greeted by a member of the school staff.

- The preschool teacher or instructional assistant (or designated school staff member) will accompany each child to the child’s vehicle at group dismissal. It is the responsibility of the parent/designated guardian to secure the child into a child safety restraint.
- Anyone picking up a preschooler must be listed on the child’s emergency card. Anyone picking up a preschool child may be asked to provide photo identification.

## **Community Resources**

<b>Community Needs Hotline</b>	<b>211</b>
American Red Cross	270-781-7377
Barren River Area Health Department	270-781-8039
Barren River Area Safe Space-BRASS	270-843-1183
Bowling Green Housing Authority	270-843-4239
Child Advocacy Center	270-783-4357
Child Abuse Reporting	270-746-7447
Child Care Aware KY	270-745-2216
Commission for Children	270-746-7816
Community Action	270-782-3162
Community Education	270-842-4281
Family Enrichment Center	270-781-6714
First Steps	270-746-0729
Greenview Regional Hospital	270-793-1000
HOTEL, inc.	270-782-1263
International Center	270-781-8336
KY Safe	270-846-2163
Lifeskills, Inc.	270-901-5000
Medical Center	270-745-1010
Parks & Recreation	270-393-3249
Pregnancy Support Center	270-781-5050
Public Library	270-781-4882
Salvation Army	270-843-3485