

Pottsgrove School District Pre-K Counts Family Handbook 2025-2026



In Partnership with the Tri-County YWCA, Pottstown, PA 19464

Classroom Location: Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School 1329 Buchert Rd. Pottstown, PA 19464

Phone Number: 610-323-7510

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Pottsgrove PreK Counts Family Handbook

Welcome to the Pottsgrove School District! We are proud to be able to offer free pre-K programming to residents of the Pottsgrove School District. Pre-K Counts is a state funded grant that we are able to offer in partnership with the Tri County YWCA. We are dedicated to providing our students with a high quality pre-kindergarten experience that will prepare them for entering kindergarten when they become eligible.



Our program operates under the guidance of OCDEL in Pennsylvania (Office of Child Development and Early Learning) and we operate in partnership with the Tri-County YWCA. The program follows a similar school year calendar of the Pottsgrove School District. See Appendix A at the end of this document for the 2025-2026 calendar.

The teachers and support staff in our program are highly qualified and certified in early childhood education. They participate in professional development with the Pottsgrove School District professional staff.

Eligibility: Pre-K Counts is a free program for families meeting the income eligibility requirements set forth in the grant, which is at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Children aged 3 or 4 on or before August 31 are eligible to participate. Children may participate for up to 2 years depending on their birthdate and they must be registered for kindergarten when they are 5 years of age on or before August 31. Prioritization of applicants who are eligible is determined by level of risk (see risk factors listed in the Pre-K Counts enrollment form).

Curriculum: In accordance with Pre-K Counts Regulations, we use the Creative Curriculum. The research based curriculum provides the children with many developmentally appropriate experiences across a broad range of topics. Lessons are integrated with early literacy, early math, science, social studies and social emotional elements. The curriculum is broken into themes across the school year. There is also the flexibility for the teachers to include other activities and experiences based on the immediate needs of the children. There are elements of music, stories and play experiences that provide many opportunities for the children to grow and learn during the course of the school year. There are routines built into the day so the children can learn to follow routines similar to what they will experience when they go to kindergarten. The children will be assessed every 45 days on developmental benchmarks that are then shared with the family. If a child is not making adequate progress, we may refer parents to the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit for early intervention support. Typical supports may be speech, occupational therapy or behavioral support. We partner with the family through the referral process so we can work together to determine the best way to meet the needs of each individual child.



Assessment: This is completed the first time within the first 45 Days of enrollment. Parent conferences will then be scheduled in late October to review the checklists. This is then completed again in January and at the end of the school year. Additional conferences will be scheduled in May to review progress over the year.

During the first 45 days, Pre-K Counts requires children to be screened using the ASQ-3 (academic) and ASQ-SE (social emotional) assessments. The purpose of these screenings is to ensure a child's development is on schedule and to identify any areas of support.

We will also be participating in independent reviews of our overall program and the interactions between students and teachers. This helps us determine how we can best support the growth and development of all students. We will be using the CLASS observation instrument in accordance with YWCA and PA PreK Counts expectations. This is done by a third party agency in order to provide non-biased feedback to our staff.

Communication: Our primary mode of communication will be through the My Teaching Strategies App. Parents will be given the information on how to access the app at their registration meeting. **It is also important that we maintain up to date contact information in case we need to reach parents in an emergency situation.** All student information is kept confidential and nothing is shared without parental permission.

Enrollment: Applications are accepted on a first come first served basis. Once the class reaches capacity (15), children will be added to a waitlist. If openings exist, once an application is received you will be scheduled for a registration meeting. At that time, we will review and collect all required documents including:

- Birth Certificate (original copy)
- Parent Identification (drivers license)
- Income Verification (One month of pay stubs, W2, financial support letter, compass benefits statement, or zero income declaration letter).
- Residency Verification- copy of a lease, mortgage or if you are not the leaseholder we will need a multiple-occupancy form signed and notarized.
- Proof of Immunizations, health, dental, and vision screenings
- Copy of IEP if one is in place through Early Intervention



At the registration meeting, we will also have you complete an emergency form which will include contact information for you and any designated emergency contacts you may wish to include. This will also include medical insurance information.

Model Behavior: Please remember that you are in the presence of children and school staff when you are dropping off, picking up or visiting the classroom. Use of negative or inappropriate language will not be tolerated. While we all have bad days or things do not go our way, it is important to remember that our children are watching and listening. We teach all of the children to have respect for all and to maintain dignity even when we are upset. Please help us in our mission by being a positive role model to your child. Bullying, using abusive language or

threatening staff will not be tolerated and could result in your child being removed from the program.

Program Operations: Our classroom at Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School will operate in conjunction with the Pottsgrove School District school calendar (appendix A). The school day will run from 9:00 AM- 3:30 PM. There will be no before/after care available at the Lower Pottsgrove site (please see transportation for more information) however if additional hours of care are needed before or after school, other providers (i.e. YWCA) may be utilized. On days that the school building is operating on an early dismissal schedule, Pre-K Counts will be operating on a full day schedule. Parent drop off and pick up will take place in the upper parking lot at Lower which is in the rear of the building.

During the school day, the children will participate in a variety of engaging activities designed to promote social emotional growth and pre-academic skills. There are small motor and gross motor activities during the day. The children also learn how to share and work together in the classroom community. There are opportunities for creative and free play, art activities, music and listening to stories. The teacher will communicate daily with families about the goings on in the classroom, including pictures of your child engaging in different activities throughout the day.



Transportation: The Pottsgrove School District will provide transportation at no cost to families for the Pre-K Counts program. Children will be transported via a school district vehicle that will be equipped with the necessary safety equipment for our young students. Once the roster is set we will determine the transportation route and provide approximate times for pick up and drop off. Families will receive timely communication if the time is to change for any reason. We will be able to pick up at local before and after care programs located within the greater Pottstown area. Please provide that information when registering your son or daughter.

Clothing and Personal Items: The Pottsgrove School District is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items. Please send two sets of clothing labeled with your child's name to keep in the classroom in case of any "accidents". Children may bring a blanket for naptime and a water bottle. Please be sure everything is clearly labeled. If your son or daughter is still in pull ups or diapers, please provide a supply of those items along with wipes, clearly labeled, for use in the classroom. The classroom staff will notify you when there is a need for more supplies. Spare clothing will be sent home periodically when the weather changes or the items become too small for your child. Weather permitting, the children go outside every day. Please make sure your child is dressed for the weather. Water bottles should be clearly labeled and not contain any liquid except water. Children should not bring any outside food or beverages into the classroom at any time. Blankets will be sent home weekly to be laundered. There is a limited supply of extra clothing on hand in case of an "accident". These items should be laundered and returned to the classroom. Students should not bring electronic devices of any kind to school. Children should come to school prepared to participate in a variety of activities, shoes should attach to the child's foot. Slides and flip flops are not safe choices for school.

Photographs: During the course of the school year, we will be taking photographs of the children engaged in many activities. These may be used on the school district website and social media platforms. There will be 2 opportunities during the school year(fall and spring) for more formal school photos by Lifetouch. Details will be provided in advance of the scheduled dates.

Inclusion: Pre-K Counts is a fully inclusive program. Our program is developmentally appropriate for students ages 3-5 and we support full access for all students. As the teachers get to know the children, modifications are made to meet the unique needs of each child. We are happy to work with outside agency staff in support of your child. Prior to working with outside agency staff, we will need a copy of your son or daughter's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Additionally, we need a signed release form giving us permission to communicate with the agency as well as clearances for the outside agency staff person. **It is important to bring IFSP or IEP documents to your registration session to avoid a delay in service for your child.**



Suspension/ Expulsion: At Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School, all staff involved in the Pre-K Counts program follow the [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\) framework](#). This means we focus on teaching and encouraging positive behaviors through consistent routines, clear expectations, and reinforcement of appropriate actions. For example, children are taught to use kind words, take turns, and follow directions using visual cues, role-playing, and praise when expectations are met. Staff also use tools like behavior charts, calm-down spaces, and social stories to help children manage emotions and make good choices. Parents are consulted to gain insight into the individual needs of the child and glean strategies that work best when faced with challenging behaviors.

Our goal is always to support each child's development in a caring and structured environment. Suspension or expulsion is considered only as a very last resort. However, if a child's behavior poses a serious risk to the safety or health of other students or staff, a suspension may be necessary, and is at the discretion of the school administration. Children who have 10 or more consecutive unexcused absences or more than 10% unexcused absences over the course of the school year (more than 18 days total) and have not responded to program support must be dismissed from the program.

Steps Taken Before Suspension or Expulsion

Before any consideration of suspension or expulsion, LPES will implement the following comprehensive intervention steps, focusing on understanding the child's behavior, collaborating with families, and providing targeted support:

1. Observation and Documentation - Staff will observe the child and document the behavior, including time, context, triggers, and responses. Patterns of behavior will be recorded objectively and shared with the center director.

2. Family Communication - A meeting will be scheduled with the child's family to discuss the behavior. Open, respectful dialogue will be encouraged to understand the child's needs and possible contributing factors at home or school.
3. Implementation of Support Strategies - Individual behavior support plans may be developed. Teachers may adjust the classroom environment, routines, or expectations. Visual aids, sensory tools, and additional supervision may be provided.
4. Referral to Specialists - If needed, referrals will be made to early intervention programs, mental health consultants, or other specialists. Families will be supported in accessing community resources.
5. Ongoing Monitoring and Communication - Progress will be reviewed regularly with the family and adjustments made to the support plan as needed. Consistent communication between staff and families is required to continue through ongoing monitoring.

Suspension Guidelines

A child may be temporarily suspended only when:

- Their behavior poses an immediate risk to themselves or others.
- All support strategies have been attempted without success.

Expulsion Guidelines

Expulsion will only be considered when:

- The child's behavior continues to be unsafe despite exhaustive intervention.
- The program is unable to meet the child's needs even with support from outside professionals.

Before expulsion:

- A final meeting will be held with the family and director.
- Assistance will be offered to help the family find a more suitable program.

Referrals: As we get to know your son or daughter, we may see areas that need support above what is provided in the classroom. Examples could include a need for speech support or behavioral support. Concerns may be discussed at the scheduled parent conferences or as need arises during the school year. For many areas we would recommend connecting with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit for evaluation through the Early intervention program. Additionally, local agencies such as Creative Health, Indian Creek or Devereux can also be a benefit.

Social/Emotional Learning: One of the key benefits of our Pre-K program at Lower Pottsgrove Elementary is helping children build essential social and emotional skills in a supportive school environment before they enter kindergarten. Through the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), we teach children how to follow routines, manage emotions, and interact positively with peers. Classroom expectations are clearly modeled and reinforced each day, and staff use strategies such as visual schedules, calm-down spaces, and social stories to guide children through challenging moments. By nurturing skills like sharing, taking turns, and problem-solving, we help children gain the confidence and self-regulation needed for long-term success in school and beyond.

Holidays and Celebrations: We recognize that our diverse classroom may have children that celebrate different holidays throughout the year. We respect the rights of all to celebrate holidays in their own way. Holidays will not take precedence over the daily curriculum in the classroom but will be incorporated into those daily routines. Children may engage in activities related to the secular representations of the holiday (pumpkins, trees, snowflakes, etc.). For example on Halloween, we may have children experience a pumpkin carving activity in place of a costume party. The teacher will include books, stories and videos depicting many holidays around the world to expose children to the concept that there are many different holidays and not everyone celebrates every holiday or celebrates in the same way. Children will be given choice when the class engages in holiday themed activities so they can be more aligned with their family beliefs and traditions.

Birthday Celebrations: The classroom teacher will develop their own classroom celebration around student birthdays. These celebrations will not include the use of food in any manner. Parents may not bring in any edible treats for student birthdays. In adherence to our district food allergy policy, outside food is not permitted. Families may choose to talk to the teacher about another way to celebrate with the class. For example, parents may wish to come into the classroom and share a story and a special craft with the students or send in an age appropriate favor for the children in the class to take home.

Kindergarten Transition: For many children and families, Pre-K Counts may be the first experience in a school setting. To support a smooth transition, our staff will work closely with families to build comfort and confidence through consistent communication, orientation activities, and welcoming classroom routines. As the children become of age to transition to kindergarten, the school district will notify parents of important dates for registration and screening. The teacher will also collaborate with district kindergarten staff to provide meaningful classroom experiences that help prepare children for the next step. If possible, eligible students may participate in a short field trip to visit a kindergarten classroom.



Health and Safety Guidelines: While in the classroom, on the bus or outside at play, the children will be actively supervised at all times. Per Pre-K Counts guidelines there will be a minimum ratio of one adult to every 10 children at all times. Lower Pottsgrove has a school nurse on site who would be available in an emergency situation. If your child is sick please keep them at home. Young children spread germs easily and we want to avoid other staff or students getting sick. If your child has a fever, is vomiting or has diarrhea they should be kept home until they are symptom free for 24 hours. If your child has an unknown rash, please seek a medical opinion before sending children to school, this is also the case for other highly contagious conditions such as Impetigo or Ring Worm. If a child is found to have live lice on their person, they will be sent home for treatment and can only return when cleared by the school nurse. If a child tests positive for Covid, flu or any other contagious virus, they should be kept home until cleared to return by their medical professional.

Allergies, Asthma or Other Health Diagnosis: If your son or daughter has a diagnosed allergy, asthma or other condition such as a seizure disorder or diabetes, we must have a Care Plan on file from your child's medical care professional. This plan and any directions for medication administration must be on file in the classroom and updated as there are changes in the plan. If your child must take medication during the school day, we must have proper authorization from the doctor with directions for administration and the medication must be in the original container and the label must display all pertinent information. This includes prescription and over the counter medications. This also includes rescue inhalers and Epi pens. If your child is to wear sunscreen or insect repellent while playing outside, you will be required to complete a permission form for the teacher to apply either. Children are not permitted to apply on themselves and the products must be kept out of the reach of children as they are poisonous if ingested. In the event of a true emergency, the school has the right to contact 911. If 911 is called, parents will also be notified.

Attendance: School attendance is a key factor to student success. If your son or daughter is absent, a written note with the date of and reason for the absence is required within 3 school days of the child's return to school. If you will be traveling, an educational trip form needs to be completed before the absence occurs.

Full attendance means five school days per week, with the student present from 9:00am-3:30pm. Families will be contacted when children are absent for 3 consecutive days to learn the nature of the absence and offer support, as appropriate. When children have more than 5 consecutive unexcused absences, the school and family, together, must discuss the reasons for the absence and determine ways to support the student's attendance in school. Children who have 10 or more consecutive unexcused absences or more than 10 percent unexcused absences over the course of the school year (more than 18 days total) and have not responded to program support must be dismissed from the program.

Custody Agreements: If there is a child custody order in place, it is imperative that we have a copy of the order on file. This is also imperative if there is a PFA in effect that includes the child.

Smoking is not permitted at any time on school grounds or in school buildings. This includes smoking in your vehicle while it is on school grounds.

Visitors to the classroom will be required to check in at the main office at Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School and present their ID before coming to the classroom. Visitors without proper identification will not be permitted to enter the classroom. Advance notice of an early dismissal is preferred but we do understand that emergencies do occur. Only authorized individuals will be permitted to pick up your son or daughter from the classroom.

Emergency Drills: We will participate in all mandated emergency drills that the school participates in and will follow those evacuation procedures. This includes fire drills, weather drills and intruder drills. The children will be instructed on the procedures to follow prior to the drills and families will be notified once a drill is complete so that you may follow up at home.

Family communications: Families will receive daily updates from the classroom about their child's day. This may include photos or written messages. Communication is a key factor in student success and communication between home and school is highly encouraged.

Guiding Principles (PA Framework Aligned)

1. Family engagement is a shared responsibility. We work together with families as equal partners.
2. Family engagement is continuous across a child's life. Engagement begins at enrollment and continues through transitions and developmental stages.
3. Family engagement occurs across settings. We connect learning between home, school, and the community.
4. Family engagement is culturally and linguistically responsive. We honor each family's values, culture, language, and traditions.

Goals of LPES Family Engagement Policy

- Build trusting relationships with all families.
- Support family participation in their child's education.
- Provide families with tools and resources to promote development at home and in the community.
- Encourage two-way communication and shared decision-making.
- Facilitate smooth transitions for children and families.



Key Strategies

1. Welcoming Environment - Create inclusive and respectful spaces for families. Display family photos, home languages, and cultural artifacts. Provide orientation and onboarding for new families.
2. Two-Way Communication - Use multiple communication methods (email, texts, newsletters, apps, in-person). Hold regular parent-teacher conferences and family check-ins. Offer translation/interpretation as needed.
3. Family Participation and Leadership - Invite families to participate in classroom activities, events, and field trips. Encourage families to share their talents, traditions, and expertise. Create opportunities for families to serve on advisory boards or committees.
4. Home-School Connection - Share learning activities families can use at home. Involve families in goal-setting and individualized learning plans. Provide resources that support literacy, health, and social-emotional growth at home.
5. Culturally Responsive Practices - Respect and incorporate families' cultural values, beliefs, and languages. Provide professional development for staff on cultural competency and bias.
6. Community Partnerships - Connect families with local support services (health, housing, food, parenting programs). Collaborate with early intervention, mental health services, and family support networks.
7. Transitions - Provide guidance and support during key transitions (home to center, preschool to kindergarten). Offer transition meetings and collaboration with receiving schools or programs.

Naptime: Per Pre-K Counts guidelines, as a full day program, we are required to have a one hour nap time. Children will have an assigned cot that they will use daily. While we understand that not all children nap regularly, they will be required to at least remain quiet on their cot during the one hour naptime. Books or other quiet activities may be offered to support the students during this time. Students may bring a blanket and or favorite stuffed animal for nap time, please make sure everything is labeled with the child's first and last name.

Meals: Students will be served breakfast, lunch and a PM snack during the school day. All meals are served family style in the classroom. Students are encouraged to serve themselves and to try everything. Dietary restrictions must be shared and a doctor's note provided. If your child cannot eat certain foods for religious purposes, please let us know at registration so this can be communicated to our food service provider. We cannot serve outside food or beverages. Please do not send extra snacks with your child.

Cleanliness: The classroom is cleaned daily by the school custodial staff. Additionally, cleaning and sanitizing by the classroom staff occurs frequently throughout the day. Most notably, before and after meals and cots are sanitized daily after naptime. The staff and children engage in handwashing throughout the school day.

Toileting: There is a bathroom located in the classroom. Children do not have to be potty trained before entering the program. Staff are on hand to support the students with toileting needs including changing diapers or pull ups. We will do our best to support your potty training efforts at school, but we do not believe that forcing the issue is the best course of action for the children. Please provide a supply of diapers/pull ups and wipes for your child labeled with their name.

Open House: We will have an Open House in the fall before school starts for parents and students to visit our classroom and meet the staff. Dates will be announced in early August. We look forward to seeing our returning students and meeting our new friends!



Pottsgrove School District Pre-K Counts Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I certify that I have read and understand the Pottsgrove Pre-K Counts Handbook. I understand that this information is in accordance with Pre-K Counts regulations and the policies of the Pottsgrove School District.

Signature

Printed Name of Guardian

Date

Child's Name

The [Pre-K Counts Handbook Acknowledgement Form](#) can be completed electronically in the link.

APPENDIX A - 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR STUDENT CALENDAR

Pottsgrove School District Pre-K Counts Calendar

Pre-K Counts Calendar

	JULY 2025							JANUARY 2026							19 Student Days
	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	
4 - Holiday No School			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1-2 Holiday No School
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	19 - Holiday No School
	27	28	29	30	31			25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
7 Student Days	AUGUST 2025							FEBRUARY 2026							19 Student Days
	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	
						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16 - Holiday No School
20 - First Day for Students	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30								
29- No School	31														
21 Student Days	SEPTEMBER 2025							MARCH 2026							22 Student Days
	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	
1 - Holiday No School		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
	28	29	30					29	30	31					
20 Student Days	OCTOBER 2025							APRIL 2026							18 Student Days
	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	
				1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4	1-3 Holiday No School
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	1 - Snow Make up #1
13- Holiday No School	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	2 - Snow Make up #2
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	6- Holiday No School
30-31 Conferences	26	27	28	29	30	31		26	27	28	29	30			
16 Student Days	NOVEMBER 2025							MAY 2026							19 Student Days
	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	
							1							1	2
4 - Staff Day-No Students	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	19 - Conferences
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	25- Holiday
26-28 Holiday No School	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29-Graduation Day
	30							31							
17 Student Days	DECEMBER 2025							JUNE 2026							3 Student Days
	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	3- Last Student Day
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19 Holiday - No School
24-31 Holiday No School	28	29	30	31				28	29	30					
Snow Makeup Days (April 1 & 2)															
No School															Total Teacher Days
First Day and Last Day for Students															189
Parent / Teacher Conferences - No Students															Total Student Days
Early Dismissal															181
Fall Checkpoint - October 29, 2025															
Winter Checkpoint - February 13, 2026															
Spring Checkpoint - May 15, 2026															
This calendar may be revised by the BOE as needed. * Last day may change if unexpected closures occur.															