VOORHEES
TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Preschool Handbook for Families

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WELCOME

Welcome to The Voorhees Township Public Schools preschool program! We are delighted to welcome you and your child(ren) to our school district.

This handbook explains policies, procedures, and expectations for families participating in our preschool program. Please refer to this handbook as needed, throughout the year.

Wishing you and your family a joyful school year filled with learning and growing!

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Hours:

The preschool day begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 3:25 p.m.
Hours on early dismissal days are 9:00 a.m. to 1:40 p.m.
Your site will send more detailed information regarding times.

Inclement Weather:

When inclement weather causes the closing of school for the entire day, or a delayed opening, parents will receive a phone call and an email announcement.

Transportation:

All students are eligible for transportation. You will receive information about your child's bus and route. Questions regarding transportation should be directed to the Transportation Office, 751-8446 extension 6124 or email graham@voorhees.k12.nj.us. Further information about transportation is available on our school website, under the heading Transportation.

Bus Procedures

In order to provide a safe and efficient transportation for students the following procedures must be followed:

- Preschool and kindergarten students will be picked up at street intersection corners.
- Children are to be ready and waiting when the bus arrives.
- By law, caregivers are not permitted on the school bus at any time.
- To ensure the safety of your children, individual transportation schedules cannot be honored. The pick-up and drop-off address for a student must be the same every day, in accordance with Voorhees Board of Education Policy.
- Any child being picked up early must bring a note to the teacher/contact the office each time this occurs. Please do not message the teacher at dismissal as they may not see the message in time. Please call the office with any last minute changes.
- Any changes in the child's established schedule requires written notification to the teacher.
- If a child does not ride home on a bus, or is picked up by any person other than the parent, a note must be sent each day. The person picking up must show identification.
- If your child will not be attending school, please contact the bus company. If no one is at the bus stop in the morning, the driver will wait for a reasonable length of time and then leave.

- Someone must be at the bus stop to receive the child after school. If no one is at the stop, the child will be returned to the school. The child's caregiver will be responsible for coming to the school to pick the child up.

Safety Is Everyone's Responsibility

Please be patient during the first few days of school as the route is established.

Arrival:

Drop off procedures for each location will be sent from your child's school. Students are expected to arrive on time each day. Students who arrive late an excessive number of times may be removed from the program.

Dismissal:

Pick-up procedures for each location will be sent from your child's school. Students are expected to participate for the full day. Students who leave early an excessive number of times may be removed from the program.

Before/After Care:

If your child attends our program at a provider site (Fervent Beginnings and Today's Learning Center) the directors can provide you with the fees for optional before and after care services.

While we do not currently offer preschool before/after care at district sites, the district is planning to offer before and after care services in January 2025. More information will be provided at a later date.

Visiting the School:

Please have your identification with you any time you plan to enter a school building.

Release of Children:

At the time of acceptance, parents must provide a list of people authorized to pick up their child in Genesis. If a non-custodial parent has been denied access or granted limited access to a child by a court order, the School shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the person(s) authorized to pick up appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired, the School shall ensure that the child will not be released to that impaired individual. Staff will attempt to contact the child's other caregiver or alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s).

Absentee Policy:

All families are to notify the school if a child will not be in school. Teachers and office staff will reach out to families if a child is absent for 1 or more consecutive days. If a student is absent for 10 consecutive days, they will be excluded from the program and their spot will be forfeited to another student on the waitlist. Please note that the district will address extenuating circumstances related to absenteeism at its discretion (ex - sickness or death in the family) on an individual basis.

Student Health:

All students are required to submit an up-to-date immunization record and Universal Health Form completed by your child's pediatrician (and to be submitted annually following your annual visit) upon acceptance into the program. State requirements dictate that your child receive a seasonal influenza vaccine for ages 6 months through 5 years. Please note that vaccines given before September 1st will not be considered valid. All influenza vaccine immunization documentation should be received by December 31 and submitted to the school office. Failure to provide documentation of your child's influenza vaccine will result in your child's exclusion from the preschool program during the entire flu season. If your child starts after December 31st and up to March 31st, one dose is required since it is still influenza season.

Please do not send children who are unwell to school. Please use the following guidelines to assist in determining if your child should go to school**:**

- Students must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine before returning to school after an illness.
- Students must have no episodes of vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school after being ill.

Health Office:

The district's preschool nurse oversees the private provider sites. In the event of an emergency or injury, the director of Fervent Beginnings or Today's Learning Center will contact the preschool nurse. You will receive a call to receive more information regarding the incident from the nurse and/or director as appropriate.

At Kresson and the future Voorhees Early Childhood Development Center, your child will visit the health office during school hours in the event of an injury or illness. You will receive a call from the health office and you will receive more information regarding the incident from the classroom teacher, as appropriate.

Medication may be provided to your child while in our care in accordance with our policies, as well as state regulations. ONLY MEDICATIONS AUTHORIZED BY A PHYSICIAN WILL BE GIVEN TO A CHILD IN SCHOOL. Over the counter medications will not be permitted unless recommended in writing from a doctor or healthcare provider. Any medication brought by you for your child must be personally handed over to the teacher, not left in a child's bag. Medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's first and last name, labeled with date, and a completed prescription form from the doctor that includes directions and dosage information. If your child requires medication during the school day, please contact our preschool nurse for further information.

Safety Drills

To keep our students safe, and in accordance with NJ law, schools are required to hold a minimum of two drills a month; one fire drill and one security drill. These drills are conducted with support from local emergency responders. All drills are introduced in developmentally appropriate ways and notifications are sent to families when there is a security drill.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Classroom Configurations:

Voorhees School district utilizes same age (3-year old and 4 year old) and mixed-aged instructional groupings. From a curriculum and instruction perspective, the state-approved Creative Curriculum that Voorhees adopted serves both configurations (same age and multi-age settings). Each lesson in the curriculum offers opportunities for teachers to meet each child at their individualized developmental level, for each specific skill and objective. There are multiple options to differentiate instruction for students, regardless of age. The focus shifts to each student's current abilities based on the 38 Objectives for Development and Learning.

Birthday Celebrations:

We enjoy celebrating birthdays in preschool! Edible treats are not permitted at school. Families can coordinate celebrations with the classroom teacher that may include: fun clothing days, reading a story to the class, sharing non-edible treats with the class, or a special visit.

Communication Methods:

Our preschool program, across all sites and classrooms, will be communicating with families using both a weekly newsletter and a communication app.

Our weekly newsletter will consist of curriculum and classroom information, including suggestions for at home learning. The communication app will include updates about activities and photos, and serves as a space for families to communicate with the teacher.

Information about snack, toileting, and nap is included in the daily schedule, which is shared by the classroom teacher with families. Any food not eaten will be sent home. Any toileting accidents or issues will be communicated privately. While transitioning from daycare to public school classrooms can be an adjustment, you can still expect consistent parent communication.

Our preschool staff members work towards getting as much one-to-one time with our students as possible, while in the classroom. Our staff members spend this quality time with the children and not on an app. These crucial interactions with your children are the foundation of our curriculum. They allow our staff to better know your children as people, and also give them the chance to determine where all of their skills fall for each of the Objectives of Development and Learning. In addition, you will receive a Report Card from Teaching Strategies GOLD, called a Development and Learning report, three times a year, based on these Objectives.

Toileting

If your child does not use the toilet independently, please notify your teacher. If your child is wearing pull-ups or diapers, please send in a package, labeled with your child's name. Please send additional toileting items labeled with your child's name, such as wipes.

Change of Clothing

All children should have a full change of clothing in the event of a spill or accident. Please send your child to school with a complete change of clothing that includes undergarments, clothing items, and socks. Please have these items labeled with your child's name in a ziplock bag. These will be swapped out seasonally.

Bookbags

During the school year, your child will be bringing home projects, notices and papers. They will need a standard size book bag or backpack to handle all of their belongings. Please label your child's backpack. Backpacks with wheels are NOT recommended.

Daily Checks

Please be sure to check your child's backpack each night for notes, newsletters, permission slips and other written communication. Families may set up a time to discuss any questions or concerns about their child, in addition to the annual parent-teacher conference.

Snack

Each day, students enjoy a snack brought from home. Teachers request it be a healthy snack. Please be aware that food allergies may exist in your child's classroom and the teacher may request that some food products be eliminated. Children are expected to be able to feed themselves.

Lunch

Students will be eating lunch in the classroom each day. Students may bring lunch from home or eat the food provided by the cafeteria (free, reduced, or paid lunch). Menus will be sent home from your child's school. If your child is eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch, meals and snack will be provided for them.

Note: Some sites do not have a cafeteria; however, Free/Reduced lunch options still apply to ALL sites and eligible families.

The application for Free and Reduced lunch is available on our website.
Please use this link to access the application:
https://www.voorhees.k12.nj.us/Page/343

Below is the recommendation from the American Academy of Pediatrics. This is a 5 step approach to selecting food for preschool children.

1. Select a mix of foods from the five food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, low fat dairy and quality protein sources, including lean meats, fish, nuts, seeds and eggs.
2. Offer a variety of food experiences.
3. Avoid highly processed food.
4. Use only small amounts of sugar, salt, fat and oil with nutritious food to enhance enjoyment and consumption.
5. Offer appropriate serving sizes.

Rest Time

Each full day of school there will be a resting period after lunch for approximately one hour. A cot or mat will be provided for your child. Your child will need a crib sheet and a small blanket/nap mat. Please send these items in a bag marked with your child's name. All bedding must fit in a small space in the

classrooms, so please be mindful of the size of items. Bedding will be sent home at the end of each week to be washed. Return the items to school on the following Monday.

Outdoor Time

All preschool classes go outside daily when the temperature/wind chill is above freezing and it is not precipitating. Please plan accordingly and be sure your child is dressed for the weather with coats, hats and gloves as needed. Families are encouraged to have their children wear protective footwear, such as sneakers, each day to prevent injury during outdoor play.

Labeling

It is extremely important that you label all of your child's belongings. Sometimes children do not recognize their own items, which can make it challenging to determine which items belong to each child. Please label all items before sending them into school with a permanent marker, label, or sewn in label.

Field Trips

Your child will take virtual field trips and an in-person field trip during the school year. Permission slips and trip dates will be sent home in advance. We encourage families to attend when possible to ensure the safety of the children and to strengthen the home-school connection. We may limit the number of chaperones allowed on a trip. No siblings may attend a field trip. Certain field trips may require a chaperone in order for your child to attend.

Toys

Toys from home should NEVER be sent to school unless requested by your child's teacher for a special event. Your child may bring one small stuffed animal or doll to sleep with at rest time; however, please do not send any treasured items. We have plenty of toys at school to share with your child.

Preschool Promotion

Students who are exiting the preschool program to enter kindergarten will participate in a Preschool Promotion celebration which will be held at the child's school. Details will be sent prior to the event.

CURRICULUM

Our program follows state mandates including the Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines and the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards as they relate to providing preschool children with a high-quality education.

Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards:

https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2014/standards/preschool.htm

The Creative Curriculum Overview:

Our preschool utilizes the research-based curriculum: The Creative Curriculum. The curriculum is developmentally appropriate and provides learning experiences for all content areas and all developmental domains. This high-quality programming is based on comprehensive early learning standards that address the whole child. Each day, children will follow a schedule that consists of a morning meeting, small group instruction in literacy and math, choice time for intentional play experiences, large group time, gross motor time, snack, lunch, rest, shared reading, and shared writing.

Studies:

In The Creative Curriculum, students learn through studies. Studies are hands-on, project-based investigations of topics that are relevant to children's everyday experiences. Studies are exciting and engaging because they tap into children's natural curiosity, resulting in a learning environment that is both fun and intentional. The study approach is a method of integrating content learning through children's in-depth investigations. Children raise questions about the topic, and through exploration and discovery, they find answers to their questions. This allows for deep, firsthand exploration of topics offering myriad ways to learn about each topic. Plus, the study approach encourages children to develop skills across all domains as they apply the investigative process to their learning.

Studies include: Buildings, Clothes, Cameras, Gardening, Exercise, Light, Reduce/ Reuse/Recycle, Simple Machines, Tubes and Tunnels, Trees, Wheels, Boxes, Balls, Sand, Light, Trees, Music Making, Pets, Roads, Sand, Signs, Water, and Bread.

Wow! Moments

The Creative Curriculum recommends sporadic "Wow" experiences, in which students are exposed to people and places related to the topic of study. These experiences help students relate what they are learning in school to the real world. We invite families and community members to participate in our Wow! Moments.

Celebration of Learning Events

At the end of each study, students will celebrate their learning with a special activity. Caregivers will be invited to one celebration of learning in the beginning of the year, and one at the end of the year.

CREATIVE CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES AND DEVELOPMENT FOR LEARNING

The Creative Curriculum teaches and assesses 38 research-based objectives. These objectives for development and learning are at the heart of the curriculum and define the path teachers take with children in their classroom. These objectives cover 10 different areas of development and learning within broad developmental areas, content areas, and English language acquisition. Using these objectives, teachers effectively scaffold learning experiences to respond to each child's individual current strengths and needs.

Social-Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
    1. Manages feelings
    2. Follows limits and expectations
    3. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
    1. Forms relationships with adults
    2. Responds to emotional cues
    3. Interacts with peers
    4. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
    1. Balances needs and rights of self and others
    2. Solves social problems

Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
    1. Uses fingers and hands
    2. Uses writing and drawing tools

Language

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
    1. Comprehends language
    2. Follows directions
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs

1. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
2. Speaks clearly
3. Uses conventional grammar
4. Tells about another time or place

10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
    1. Engages in conversations
    2. Uses social rules of language

Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
    1. Attends and engages
    2. Persists
    3. Solves problems
    4. Shows curiosity and motivation
    5. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
12. Remembers and connects experiences
    1. Recognizes and recalls
    2. Makes connections
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
    1. Thinks symbolically
    2. Engages in sociodramatic play

Literacy

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness, phonics skills, and word recognition
    1. Notices and discriminates rhyme
    2. Notices and discriminates alliteration
    3. Notices and discriminates discrete units of sound
    4. Applies phonics concepts and knowledge of word structure to decode text
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
    1. Identifies and names letters
    2. Identifies letter–sound correspondences
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
    1. Uses and appreciates books and other texts
    2. Uses print concepts
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
    1. Interacts during reading experiences, book conversations, and text reflections
    2. Uses emergent reading skills
    3. Retells stories and recounts details from informational texts
    4. Uses context clues to read and comprehend texts

5. Reads fluently

19. Demonstrates writing skills
    1. Writes name
    2. Writes to convey ideas and information
    3. Writes using conventions

Mathematics

20. Uses number concepts and operations
    1. Counts
    2. Quantifies
    3. Connects numerals with their quantities
    4. Understands and uses place value and base ten
    5. Applies properties of mathematical operations and relationships
    6. Applies number combinations and mental number strategies in mathematical operations
21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
    1. Understands spatial relationships
    2. Understands shapes
22. Compares and measures
    1. Measures objects
    2. Measures time and money
    3. Represents and analyzes data
23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

Science & Technology

24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies

29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts

33. Explores the visual arts
34. Explores musical concepts and expression
35. Explores dance and movement concepts
36. Explores drama through actions and language

English Language Acquisition

37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

ASSESSMENT

Teaching Strategies Gold Overview

The Creative Curriculum is assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD. The formative assessment model used in GOLD is based on classroom observations, checklists, photographs, work samples, and family input as related to the 38 research-based objectives for development and learning. GOLD follows widely held expectations for children from birth through third grade, which allows room for differentiation for each child, for each skill. GOLD takes a whole-child approach to assessment. The objectives have color-coded progressions which guide teachers toward selecting and adapting activities that support each child's development and learning. Meaningful reports inform classroom practices. GOLD is rigorously and regularly tested, and it yields reliable, valid, and culturally sensitive information**.**

Progress Reports

Preschool Report Cards are sent home three times per year and are based on your child's progress in each of the objectives.

Conferences

Conferences are held once per year, in November. At this time, you will receive a Development and Learning Report.

DEVELOPMENTAL MARKERS

Developmental Markers: Three- to Four - Years

Movement milestones

- Hops and stands on one foot up to five seconds
- Goes upstairs and downstairs without support
- Kicks ball forward
- Throws ball overhand

● Catches bounced ball most of the time
● Moves forward and backward with agility

Milestones in hand and finger skills

● Copies square shapes
● Draws a person with two to four body parts
● Uses scissors
● Draws circles and squares
● Begins to copy some capital letters

Language milestones

● Understands the concepts of “same” and “different”
● Has mastered some basic rules of grammar
● Speaks in sentences of five to six words
● Speaks clearly enough for strangers to understand
● Tells stories

Cognitive milestones

● Correctly names some colors
● Understands the concept of counting and may know a few numbers
● Approaches problems from a single point of view
● Begins to have a clearer sense of time
● Follows three-part commands
● Recalls parts of a story
● Understands the concept of same/different
● Engages in fantasy play

Social and emotional milestones

● Interested in new experiences
● Cooperates with other children
● Plays “Mom” or “Dad”
● Increasingly inventive in fantasy play
● Dresses and undresses
● Negotiates solutions to conflicts
● More independent
● Imagines that many unfamiliar images may be “monsters”
● Views self as a whole person involving body, mind, and feelings
● Often cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality

Developmental Markers: Four- to Five - Year Olds

Movement milestones

● Stands on one foot for ten seconds or longer
● Hops, somersaults
● Swings, climbs

● May be able to skip

Milestones in hand and finger skills

● Copies triangle and other geometric patterns
● Draws person with body
● Prints some letters
● Dresses and undresses without assistance
● Uses fork, spoon, and (sometimes) a table knife
● Usually cares for own toilet needs

Language milestones

● Recalls part of a story
● Speaks sentences of more than five words
● Uses future tense
● Tells longer stories
● Says name and address

Cognitive milestones

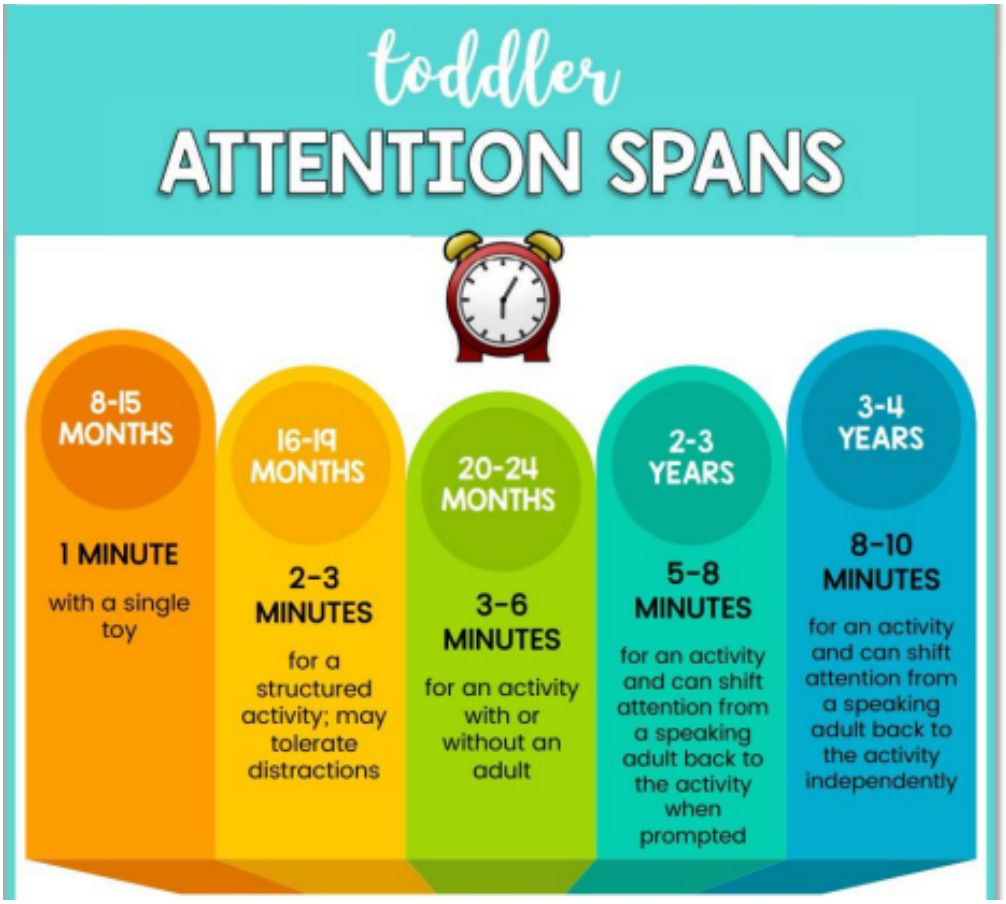
● Can count ten or more objects
● Correctly names at least four colors
● Better understands the concept of time
● Knows about things used every day in the home (money, food, appliances)

Social and emotional milestones

● Wants to please friends
● Wants to be like her friends
● More likely to agree to rules
● Likes to sing, dance, and act
● Shows more independence and may even visit a next-door neighbor by herself
● Able to distinguish fantasy from reality
● Sometimes demanding, sometimes eagerly cooperative

Source: Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 (2009 American Academy of Pediatrics)

ATTENTION SPANS



REVIEW OF THE PRESCHOOL DAY
GENERAL EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS

Arrival:

- Child will handle their belongings (example: backpack/coats) with minimal or intermittent assistance
- Child can access and identify cubby
- Child can select an independent activity

Meals / Snacks:

- Child can get to and sit at the table
- Child can manipulate food containers (example: milk/straws) with minimal or intermittent assistance
- Child can use individual utensils (example: spoon/fork) with minimal or intermittent assistance

● Child can use serving utensils (example: family style meals) with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child can engage in conversations with peers and adults
● Child can clean up after meals with minimal or intermittent assistance

Large Group Meeting time: (10-15 minutes):
● Child can get to, find place, and sit in large group meeting time (example: find place to sit on carpet) with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child can participate in singing songs, finger plays and sharing news
● Child can attend and respond to teacher instruction
● Child can select interest area for choice time
Choice time: (60-90 minutes; substantial portion of the day)
● Child can engage in child initiated activity
● Child can remain in interest area to complete child directed activities
● Child uses a variety of materials and tools in play with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Play skills reflect developmental expectations of same age peers
● Child can work appropriately with peers in interest areas
● Child can initiate and maintain conversations with adults and peers similar to same aged peer
● Child can follow expectations; e.g., clean up routine

Small Group Activities: (15-20 minutes):
● Child can participate in Literacy, Math, Science activities by listening/responding, with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child can participate in Literacy, Math, Science activities that include fine motor skills with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child can participate Literacy, Math, Science activities that include socialization skills with minimal or intermittent assistance

Group Story Time (10 minutes):
● Child can attend to the group story with minimal or intermittent assistance.
● Child listens and responds to the story (answers questions, identifies rhyming words, recognizes letters/numbers) with minimal or intermittent assistance.
● Child can use a variety of materials (felt pieces, props, and books) to retell the story with minimal or intermittent assistance.
Outdoor (min. 30 minutes in full day program)
● Child can use outdoor equipment and materials as intended (example: climb, pedal, steer) with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Gross Motor skills reflect developmental expectations of same age peers
Self–Care Skills: (throughout day)
● Child can express need to use the bathroom with minimal or intermittent questioning

● Child can manage own clothing with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child can use the toilet with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child can wash hands with minimal or intermittent assistance

Rest Time: (60 minutes in full day program):
● Child can prepare own materials for rest time (example: put sheet on cot) with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child can remain in quiet activity if they are not resting
● Child can follow resting routine

Transitions: (throughout day):
● Child follows structured classroom routines with minimal or intermittent assistance
● Child responds to transition cues (example: songs, lights blinking, chimes) with minimal or intermittent assistance

Source:https://www.nj.gov/education/earlychildhood/preschool/docs/CCIEP.pdf

Project Child Find

To identify a preschool age child with a potentially disabling condition, contact the Child Study Team at 856-751-8446 Ext. 6134.

Children with developmental delays and disabilities from birth to age 3 can receive early intervention services from the New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS). Parents can make a direct referral by calling 1-888-653-4463.

For children with special health care needs from birth to age 21 can be referred through the 21 county Special Child Health Case Management Units (SCHS-CMUs). Additional information can be found at http://nj.gov/health/fhs/sch/sccase.shtml or 1-800-999-9045.

Additional information can be found at http://www.childfindidea.org/.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING TOOL AND PROTOCOL

Individually administered screening instruments identify children who may need special education services to perform successfully in school. All students in the preschool program will be screened in November. Notification will be sent to parents about when the children will be screened and the results of the screening. If your child scores in the “refer” or “rescreen” range, we will provide additional support and information.

PYRAMID MODEL

The Teaching Pyramid Model
for
Promoting Social Emotional Competence and Positive Behavior Supports

The Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) operates to promote the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid to meet program goals for all of our students. The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) developed The Pyramid Model, which is widely used across states including New Jersey. The Center promotes Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) as a problem-based model to prevent and reduce inappropriate behaviors through

teaching and reinforcing positive social and emotional behavior. Our program staff has access to resources for Scripted Stories, lesson plans for varied children's books, and strategies to teach and integrate social and emotional skills.

In order to handle challenging behaviors, teachers will (1) use preventive universal strategies; (2) systematically support children to develop specific social-emotional skills, and (3) develop and implement individualized intervention when necessary (Fox & Hemmeter, 2014; Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2017; Marion, 2015; Shonkoff, 2017). In partnership with parents, coaches, PIRT and other staff the teacher will evaluate and remediate classroom practices and deficits in the students' social-emotional skills to individualize strategies to promote positive behaviors.

The following outlines the program process for utilizing The Pyramid Model:

<u>Foundation:</u>
The foundation is the basis that supports all of the tiers in the Pyramid Model. The goal in this foundation is to create an effective workforce. To ensure this occurs all staff are trained in the Pyramid Model. The professional development that occurs throughout the year will be rooted in evidence-based approach and policies that will maintain strong and effective instruction. This high standard foundation is met with the consistent coaching, modeling and support by coaches.

<u>Classroom Management Universal Support Tier 1:</u>
At the universal level we include the practices needed to ensure the promotion of the social development of all children.

- High Quality Environments
    - Inclusive early care and education environments
    - Supportive home environments
- Nurturing and Responsive Relationships
    - Essential to healthy social development
    - Includes relationships with children, families and team members

Teachers incorporate class rules as well as guide problem solving opportunities. The universal support offered for all children will include having high quality environments and nurturing responsive relationships. The teachers will facilitate this with inclusive opportunities and building a partnership with families to extend learning beyond the classroom. The classroom rules will be established the first week of school and reviewed throughout the school day.

Prevention and Social Emotional Support Tier 2:
The prevention level includes the provision of targeted support to children at risk of challenging behavior.

- Targeted Social Emotional Supports
    - Explicit instruction and support
    - Self-regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, developing social relationships and problem-solving

During this portion of behavior management, the staff are working on meeting social emotional growth needs of our learners. Preschool students are just starting to learn about feelings, emotions and how to manage these through strategies and self regulation. The program focus is on problem solving and developing social relationships. These goals will support behavior management by preventing challenging behavior that erupts through frustration and skill deficits.

Intensive Interventions Tier 3:
The tertiary level of the Pyramid Model describes the need to provide individualized and intensive interventions to the very small number of children with persistent challenges.

- Individualized Intensive Interventions
    - Family-centered, comprehensive interventions
    - Assessment-based
    - Skill-building

Even when staff and family are appropriately supporting tier 1 and 2 some learners may need a more individualized approach. For these students we offer a student centered, evidence -based process. It is at this point in the process that a formal PIRT file begins as the interventions become individualized as opposed to classroom based. During this process of individualized interventions our program Behavior Analyst will collect data on the learner, evaluate what supports have already been applied, conduct a functional assessment and create a plan that will be monitored and analyzed. The student data, teacher and family input will drive the programming to most efficiently apply interventions for the best possible outcome.

The Role of Parent Involvement in the PIRT Process:
Family members play an important part in the behavior management and learning process. You are an equal member of the team and are invited to participate in all steps of the Pyramid Model PTR-YC. (Prevent, Teach, Reinforce-

Young Children) Parents and/or caregivers may attend meetings in person or contribute in other ways (e.g., video conferencing, phone calls, or providing input over email). Children are powerfully affected when teachers and caregivers are on the same page, collaborating to carry over the strategies and skills being built in the classroom. Our staff and teachers are always available to collaborate with families to make a successful home- school connection.

Families will receive a separate PIRT Handbook if applicable.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Communication Flow

Please use the following flow for communication:

1) Teacher
2) Case Manager (only if the student has an IEP)
3) Director or Principal
4) Administration

Preschool Contact Information & Role Descriptions

- Transportation Office- 856-751-8446 extension 6124 or email Ms. Andrea Graham at graham@voorhees.k12.nj.us.
- Preschool Social Worker/Community and Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS): The CPIS/Social Worker works directly with parents to ensure access to community resources and parent support. There are many opportunities to become involved in your child's education both at home and in school. Please look out for notices sent home about special events. For more information, please contact our Social Workers: Ms. Briella Taylor and Ms. Kate Cardente.
- Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS): The PIRS makes recommendations about appropriate strategies, classroom modifications, and the selection of adaptive materials to address the needs of children with challenging behaviors or potential learning difficulties. Our PIRS are our district Pyramid Model experts, Mrs. Kirsten Ambrozaitis and Ms. Jessica Jenkins. They can be reached at ambrozaitis@voorhees.k12.nj.us and jenkinsj@voorhees.k12.nj.us.
- Preschool Intervention and Referral (PIRT): The Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) assists teachers and families in creating and implementing strategies to help students succeed academically and socially in their classroom environment.

- Child Study Team (CST): The Child Study Team performs t ests, determines eligibility, and creates individual education plans (IEP's) f or students found eligible f or special education services. Please contact t he Child Study Team office at 856-751-8446 Ext. 6134 if y ou have concerns r elated to y our child's development and/or t o identify y our child f or eligibility f or services.
- Preschool I nstructional Coach (PIC): The preschool instructional coaches are available t o provide support and assistance r egarding program quality and curriculum implementation f or staff, students, and f amilies. For more information r egarding t he curriculum or program, please contact Ms. Julie Musulin musulin@voorhees.k12.nj.us or call 856-751-8446, Ext. 6152.
- Home Language Support Services: Our preschool program is dedicated t o providing t he best educational program f or all students. Children whose first language is not English are encouraged t o use t heir home language to communicate. I n addition, students and t eachers use gestures, communication boards, communication devices, sign language, pictures and other developmentally appropriate t ools t o communicate when needed. Eligible students whose first language is not English can r eceive additional support t hrough ESL services. The Director of Early Childhood and Literacy K-5, Ms. Jaimi Molinelli-Bragg, will be available t o assist with questions. Her contact information is molinelli-bragg@voorhees.k12.nj.us.
- Harassment, I ntimidation, and Bullying (HIB): On J anuary 5, 2011, Governor Chris Christie signed into law P.L.2010, Chapter 122, an act concerning HIB in school settings t hat amended v arious parts of t he statutory law. I n particular f or school policies and procedures, t he act amended N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 et seq., which includes t he r equirements f or the prevention and intervention of HIB on and off school grounds, at school sponsored functions and on school buses. District Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Susan Donnelly donnelly@voorhees.k12.nj.us, Ext. 6117
- Administration
    - Director of Early Childhood & Literacy K-5: Ms. Jaimi Molinelli-Bragg

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