Stillwater Area Public Schools

PRESCHOOL

HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Curiosity. Partnership. Community. Leadership. Personalized.

Revised 08/13/2025

Phone Numbers

District 834 Preschool Office 651-351-4000

Early Childhood Special Education 651-351-4023

Early Childhood Screening 651-351-4022

Early Childhood and Family Programs Director 651-351-4018

ECFE Class Information/Registration 651-351-4000

District 834 Transportation 651-309-4601

Staff Contacts:

Amy Berge (Early Childhood Administrator) 651-351-4018

Mignon Ero-Phillips (Early Childhood Coordinator) 651-351-4019

Pam Morrison (Special Ed. Supervisor) 651-351-4023

Shannon DeVos (ECFC Administrative Assistant) 651-351-4020

Preschool Locations

Early Childhood Family Center 651-351-4000
1111 Holcombe Street South | Stillwater, MN 55082

Anderson Elementary 651-351-6600
309 North 4th Street | Bayport, MN 55003

Afton Lakeland Elementary 651-351-6500
475 St. Croix Trail South | Lakeland, MN 55043

Brookview Elementary 651-275-2500
11099 Brookview Road | Woodbury, MN 55129

Lake Elmo Elementary 651-351-6700
11030 Stillwater Boulevard North | Lake Elmo, MN 55042

Lily Lake Elementary 651-351-6800
2003 West Willard Street | Stillwater, MN 55082

Rutherford Elementary 651-351-6400
115 Rutherford Road | Stillwater, MN 55082

Stonebridge Elementary 651-351-8700
900 North Owens Street | Stillwater, MN 55082

Early Learning Philosophy

District 834 Preschools: Our preschool program brings young children together in a safe nurturing and enriched classroom. Licensed preschool teachers provide learning experiences that develop the skills children need to be successful in school. Our language arts curriculum is aligned with the district's kindergarten curriculum so our preschoolers will be well prepared for learning to read. Daily activities help children develop social and emotional skills, a key for the future school success. Each day includes music and movement, sensory exploration, story time, block play, dramatic play, outdoor play, snack and circle time.

Play Based Learning: ISD 834 recognizes that play is the foundation upon which all preschool learning is built. As such, free choice play times are incorporated into our preschool day, as well as guided play-based learning activities that are designed to teach a child a specific skill. Children will experience hands-on and creative activities that stimulate their learning, while allowing them the freedom to explore their environment and express their creativity.

Serving all Children: We are an inclusive community. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion creates a culture of equality for children and families. The preschool staff provides nurturing, responsive care that fosters the growth and development of all children in our care.

EC Literacy Philosophy: Stillwater Area Schools believes literacy in early childhood (birth-5 yrs) is the foundation of all learning domains. Our programs' core literacy priorities include: receptive language, expressive vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts of print, sentence-story recall, and writing. Our program respects and embraces families' cultural and community values while supporting each student's unique communication needs. Learning occurs through intentional, joyful, play-based activities and experiences that encompass both child-centered and teacher-directed approaches.

7 LLC Priorities

1. **Receptive Language**
   How well a child can understand what others say, including spoken words, written words, gestures, and pictures.
2. **Expressive Vocabulary**
   The words a child can use correctly when they talk or write to share their ideas.
3. **Phonological Awareness**
   A child's ability to hear and play with the sounds in spoken words—like clapping out syllables, rhyming, or noticing that "cat" and "cold" start with the same sound.
4. **Alphabet Knowledge**
   Knowing the names of letters, what each letter looks like, and what sound each letter makes.
5. **Concepts of Print**
   Understanding how books and print work—for example, knowing that reading goes from left to right, recognizing the difference between letters and words, and knowing that print has meaning.
6. **Sentence-Story Recall**
   A child's ability to remember and retell the main events or details from a story they've heard or read.
7. **Early Writing**
   A child's first attempts to write which might include drawing, scribbling, writing letters, or making simple words and sentences to share their thoughts.

Special Education: Special Education is provided for those students who are on an IEP within the preschool setting. Special Education teachers and therapists will work alongside preschool staff in supporting students with special education needs on an individualized basis.

Early Childhood Screening: EC Screening is required for preschool as well as for kindergarten entrance. Screening offers a snapshot of your child's health and development that may lead to the need for further health and developmental assessment. This screening time allows time for intervention (if needed) before the start of kindergarten. You must schedule an Early Childhood screening appointment no later than 90 days after the first day of attendance in preschool. You can make this appointment by calling 651-351-4022.

Caregiver Engagement: Meaningful caregiver engagement in children's learning supports school readiness and later academic success. Because you are our primary partner, we ask you to commit in the following ways:

- Attend your child's preschool orientation (4's preschool only)
- Ensure your child's regular attendance at school, and let your teacher know if she/he will be absent.
- Call and make an appointment to schedule your child's Early Childhood Screening within the first 90 days of school. (See above for the phone number).
- Read all communications from the teacher and reach out to the teacher if your child needs support.
- Attend school events throughout the year.

Tuition

Tuition payments are based on a yearly amount divided into nine equal parts. Payment is due on the first day of each month. All payments can be made online (through the Eleyo system), by mail, in person or by phone. Payments can be made with a credit card, personal check or cash. Automatic monthly payment deductions are also an option through your Fee Pay account.

Payment online: Monthly bills will be sent to the email address that you provided when you created your Fee Pay account. Follow the instructions given in the email to submit payment.

Payment by mail or in person: If paying by check, make checks payable to ISD 834 ECFE. Then submit payment to:

The Early Childhood Family Center
% Building Administrative Assistant
1111 Holcombe St. S.
Stillwater, MN 55082

Absence Due to Vacation, Illness or Inclement Weather: No tuition reductions or reimbursements will be made for absences from preschool.

Withdrawing from the Program: You are required to provide our office (at the Early Childhood Family Center) with notice of withdrawal from preschool two weeks before the first of the month. If notice is not received, the following month's tuition will be charged. If withdrawing, call 651-351-4000.

Late Tuition Charges: It is important that tuition be paid on time. However, we understand that life sometimes intervenes. We will provide a grace period of 10 days for each tuition payment. After 10 days, a late fee of $25 will be assessed to your account. *Not paying your bills will result in termination from the program.*

Transportation

Student Drop off and Pick up: Drop off and pick up procedures will be explained by your child's teacher at the beginning of the school year. If you are picking up your child early for any reason, you will need to go through the front office of your school building. ***Please be aware that photo identification is required to enter all Stillwater Area Public Schools.***

Pick up and Drop off from busing: Staff members will meet children at the bus when they arrive at school and bring children to the bus at the end of each school day. Caregivers and/or childcare providers are responsible for walking their children to the bus when they leave home and meeting the bus when children arrive home. Please be ready for the bus five minutes before the scheduled time. If the bus comes to your home, you may wait inside in bad weather, watching for the bus to arrive.

How will I know which bus my child rides?: Bus schedules will emailed to families about 5 days before the start of the new school year.

Canceling a bus: If your child will be absent from school, or will not need transportation that day, please contact the transportation department to let them know. 651-309-4601.

Late Pick up Policy: If you are more than 5 minutes late to pick up your child, or if your child receives transportation and no one is home to receive the child, and they are brought back to school, late fees will be assessed.

- First incident: Warning and reminder of the pick up policy.
- Second Incident: Copy of our late pick up policy and given an invoice for **$30.00 for the first 15 minutes and $1.00 per minute thereafter.**
- Third Incident: Copy of our late pick up policy and given an invoice for **$40.00 for the first 15 minutes and $1.00 per minute thereafter.** In addition, the caregivers will receive a notice from the Family Programs Administrator informing them of district practices and possible consequences.
- Any subsequent incidents, you will be asked to set up a meeting with program administration.

If no one picks the child up at the dismissal time of class, the caregiver will be called at work and/or home. If the caregiver cannot be reached, persons authorized on the emergency card will be called to pick up the child. **If the staff cannot reach anyone after 45 minutes, and do not hear from an adult responsible for the child, the police will be notified.** *Consistently being late for pick-up may result in termination from the program.*

Health Information

Absences: If your child is ill, or will be absent for any reason, please contact your child's teacher and let them know.

Your student should stay home if he/she has:

- Fever of 100° F within the last 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication ("Tylenol" or ibuprofen type medicines)
- Diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Uncontrolled cough
- Mucus/sputum that is green or yellow and cannot be contained
- Strep (may return to school 24 hours after start of antibiotic)
- Chicken pox (may return when pox are crusted over)
- An open wound that cannot be covered

Also, you are required to inform the health office if your child has been diagnosed by a physician with any highly contagious disease (impetigo, pink eye, lice, strep, influenza, etc.). The information will be kept confidential but it is important to prevent spreading.

Allergies: An allergy plan should be completed by your child's physician and a copy should be provided to the health office. If your child has any allergies which the school needs to know about, please talk to your child's teacher about any necessary accommodations. We will work with district nursing staff to meet your child's needs.

Immunizations: Any child entering a Minnesota public school must provide a statement from a physician or public clinic indicating that the child has received immunizations against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, chicken pox and hepatitis B. All immunizations must include the day, month and year for each immunization, and can be written on this immunization form. Should a parent/guardian choose not to have their child immunized based on their beliefs, the parent must submit a statement to this effect, signed by the submitting person and notarized.

Medications: Whenever possible we ask that the caregiver administer medications to students at home, however, we know that some students may require prescribed and/or over the counter medication during the school day. If medication is necessary during school hours, it will be administered in compliance with appropriate law and School District administrative procedures. The following must be provided before a medication (either prescription or over the counter) may be administered to a student at school.

- A written authorization from a parent/guardian.
- A signed order from the licensed prescriber stating the name and dose of medication, times and duration for administration.
- Medications must be sent in the original container or pharmacy labeled container.

Safety

Cold Weather Policy: Outdoor recess is an important part of the school day for our children. Please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Boots, snow pants, mittens and hats are a MUST during the winter months. While most Minnesota days are great for outside play, our District staff will monitor the weather and keep children inside on days where weather conditions make it unsafe to play outdoors (we use 10 degrees or below as a general guideline).

Air Quality: After consulting several sources, we have determined that it is safest to move physical activities indoors when air quality levels reach 151 or higher (red zone). Please see the attached website for air quality and air quality guidelines. *airnow.gov/?city=Stillwater&state=MN&country=USA*

Emergency Contact Information: Emergency contact information is required prior to the start of each school year and needs to be updated with the teacher when there are changes. Be sure to inform all individuals listed on the emergency form that they have been named as potential caregivers in your absence. You will be notified in the event that your child experiences an accident or a sudden illness that makes remaining at school inadvisable, and you will be asked to pick up your child, or send someone listed on the emergency card to pick them up.

Mandated Reporters: Preschool and district staff are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Custody Issues: In the event that a court ordered legal custody situation develops whereby someone is not allowed to pick up your child/children without your consent, we need you to provide your teacher with a copy of the order of protection. This document will be kept on file.

Fire, Tornado and Lock Down Drills: Children and staff participate in fire, tornado and lockdown drills periodically throughout the year.

School Closing Information:

- Closings are announced on the radio (WCCO- 830 AM), Local TV stations, and on the district website. In addition, you can register to receive a district phone call and a district wide email notification.
- If inclement weather or other emergencies cause District 834 schools to close, ALL district preschools will also close.
- ***Class cancellations due to weather will not be made up, nor will there be online learning, e-learning and refunds will not be given.***
- If school is delayed for 2 hours, District 834 morning preschools will be canceled.
- If there is an early dismissal, all afternoon and evening classes are canceled.
- Even though classes may not be canceled by the School District, parents should consider the safety of themselves and their children before traveling in bad weather.

Classroom

Toileting: Children must be independent with toileting without the use of a pull up or a diaper to attend District 834 preschool classes. Children with an IEP are exempt from this requirement.

Backpacks: Your child should bring a backpack to school everyday labeled with their name. Please make sure that their backpack is large enough to fit a sheet of paper. This will help keep his or her belongings in one place and provide a safe way for the school to send important communications, art work and newsletters home with your child. ***Please check the backpack everyday for messages.***

Snacks: Each student will bring a snack from home. Teachers will communicate some healthy snack ideas. Students drink water with their snack.

Preschool Attire: Children should be comfortably dressed for play. They will be exposed to many kinds of materials including fingerpaints, mud, water, clay, etc. Please recognize that your child will occasionally get messy, and dress them accordingly. If your child wears a dress or a skirt, you may want to put shorts on underneath. Kids sit criss-cross and play in the gym and outside daily. Good shoes are important. Please have children wear comfortable shoes without a slippery sole to school. They should be able to take their shoes off and put them on again by themselves. Also, accidents happen, so we ask that you send a complete change of clothing for your child in their backpack (in a gallon sized ziplock bag). Please label clothing with your child's name.

Field Trips: Occasionally, the children will have the opportunity to visit a local park or special event. Caregivers will be asked to sign a permission slip for both bus and walking field trips.

Rest Time (4's preschool only): All full day students will lie down for a 30 minute quiet time in the afternoon. They will be allowed to bring in a blanket or a towel that they can use to create a space on the floor for their quiet time. Music is often played, the lights will be dimmed and students are expected to be quiet so that their friends who need to sleep are able to do so.

Behavior (4's preschool only): Preschool teachers are trained to incorporate strategies that foster a positive learning environment for students. If challenging behavior(s) occur on a continuous basis in the classroom, the teacher may consult with a specialist, in partnership with the caregiver(s), to develop and implement targeted supports to prevent the challenging behavior(s).

Friday Play Dates (4's preschool only): Friday play days are designed to provide care for children whose caregiver works full time and need a five day a week preschool option. These days are staffed by assistant teachers only, and therefore all Friday communications must be directed to them. Fridays are held in the preschool rooms, which allows children to play more extensively with many of the same materials that they may have been exposed to over the week. There is a more relaxed, less structured environment on Fridays, which lends itself to more spontaneous choices about play and activities. For example, assistants may choose to do two outside play times on a beautiful fall day, or go sledding outside in the winter. Assistants are there to supervise kids, keep them safe, and facilitate the play while extending some of the ideas from the week.

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