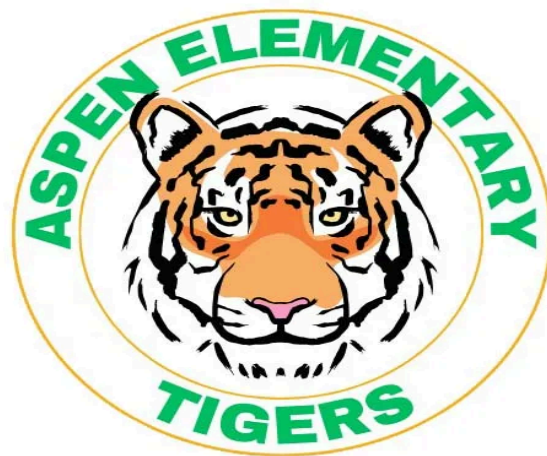


Aspen Elementary School

2025-2026

Parent & Family

Preschool Handbook



Liz Janusz, Principal
Aspen Elementary School
2182 33rd St
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Main Line 663-2275
School Absence Line 663-2276
Transportation 663-2255
Website:
<https://laschools.net/aspen>

LAPS Strategic Plan

Vision

“We prepare capable and confident life-long learners.”

Mission

We enable our students to become resilient and resourceful adults who are able to achieve their personal goals in an ever-changing world.

We Value

Student Well-Being	Leadership
Individual Growth	Teamwork
Integrity	Innovation
Respect	Transparency
Empathy	Diversity

Commitments

Students will achieve at least expected academic growth each year.
All students will attain skills, knowledge and abilities to succeed in 21st century society.
All schools and workplaces will be safe and civil.
LAPS will effectively communicate with parents, students, employees and the Los Alamos community.

Focus Areas

Student Well-Being
Student Learning
Teacher and Staff Excellence
Fiscal Responsibility

Quality Facilities
Innovative Leadership
Communications and Collaboration
Integrated Technology

Aspen Vision Statement

Aspen students will inspire excellence and shape a brighter future.

Aspen Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide each student with quality instruction and rich learning experiences that prepare them for tomorrow's opportunities.

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Aspen's Beliefs

- **Supportive Culture:** OUR school teaches, models, and provides opportunities to practice kindness, empathy, understanding, and cooperation.
- **Engaged Learning:** OUR teachers use differentiated and active instructional strategies that promote students' curiosity, critical thinking, and passion to learn.
- **Growth Mindset:** OUR school fosters a growth mindset by building on our strengths and encouraging resourcefulness and resilience in response to challenges.

2025-2026 Staff

Liz Janusz – Principal

Denise Alcala— NM PRE-K 4y Teacher

Brittney Vollans- NM PRE-K 4y Teacher

Educational Assistants – Lianne Valdez, Trang Nguyen, Charlotte Pope, Victoria Cass, Jessica Points

Shannon Trujillo – IEP Contact Person

Danna Pelland, Jette Roberts – Speech Language Therapist

Hailee Baer – Occupational Therapist

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Aspen's Bell Schedule

School Hours

Office: 7:45 AM – 3:30 PM 663-2275

24 Hour Absence Line 663-2276



4Y Preschool Schedule – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

7:55 - PreK Arrival: Students unpack, answer Question of the Day, wash hands, and play at their tables

8:10 - Greeting Circle and Literacy

8:45 - Snack/Recess

9:10 - Wash Hands/Heggerty

9:20 - Math/Science

9:40 - Centers

10:40 - Clean up/Read Aloud

11:00 - Lunch/Recess

11:45 - Nap

1:00 - Specials

1:30 - Small Groups

1:50 - Snack

2:00 - Recess

2:20 - Closing Circle

2:40 - Dismissal



Supplies 2025-2026 List

Please label the following with child's name:

- 1 refillable water bottle
- 1 backpack with name on it (large enough to hold a pocket folder)
- 1 full change of clothing
- 1 towel for naptime

Name not needed:

- 1 package of washable markers
- 1 package of 24 count box of pencils
- 1 package of *Ticonderoga "My First Pencil"* (fat chubby pencil-not a standard pencil)
- 4 glue sticks
- 4 dry erase markers (any color)
- 4 black sharpies
- 1 watercolor paint set*
- 1 *1-inch* binder*
- 25 count of *heavy duty page protectors*
- 1 bottle of Lysol Spray
- 1 roll of clear packaging tape
- 1 boxes zip-close plastic bags (sandwich, quart, gallon size or snack)
- 1 boxes of facial tissues
- 1 container baby wipes
- 2 containers of Disinfectant Wipes
- 2 bottles of hand sanitizer
- 1 shelter in place kit

A change of clothes (including underwear, socks, pants, and shirt or dress) in a zip-lock bag labeled with your child's name. We will keep this bag at school in case the clothes get wet. If the clothes get soiled, we will send them home for cleaning and please send them back to school. If your child still uses diapers or pull-ups, please send a supply to keep at preschool with an extra box of wipes.

Attendance

Although there is no compulsory attendance for preschool age children, consistent attendance is important for learning. If your child will be absent please call the Absence Hotline at 663-2276. When possible, please also text or email your child's teacher:

- If you arrive after the official start time for class, please sign your student in at the office.
- If you pick-up your child early from school, you must go to the office first to sign him or her out. The secretary will call into the classroom to notify the teacher.
- We understand that emergencies and illness do occur but the guideline is to maintain attendance with no more than 10 days of absence per school year.

Closures and Delays

If there is a two-hour delay, children should arrive at school at 10:10 and they will be dismissed at the regular time. Please keep on the lookout for information when closures and delays are happening.

Please read the Aspen Handbook for further information on Snow Days.

Transportation

If you plan on having someone other than yourself pick up your child, either make sure they are on your list of approved emergency contacts, or provide written authorization stating you give permission to release your child to the specific person. Anyone picking up your child MUST provide a photo ID and check in at the front office upon arrival.

Parents, if you are on campus during school hours, you MUST sign in at the office and get a visitor pass.

To ensure that all eligible students have access to their preschool programs, the following arrangements are available for preschool transportation. If the student or parent has unique needs or access issues related to a disability that require curb to curb transportation for the student, school bus



transportation to and from school will be provided. If the child requires bus transportation per the issues described above, the parent must complete the Transportation Emergency Card attached and return to Student Services as soon as possible. [Emergency Bus Card Form](#)

Transportation is only available to students who are placed in the program through an IEP or through the NMPREPS program.

If there are unique circumstances not covered in these options, parents may send a description of the circumstances along with the transportation requested for the child and the district will problem-solve options to meet transportation needs. It is the district priority to ensure that each eligible student is able to attend the program.

A Typical Preschool Day

- Arrival: Parents will walk students to the outside door of the classroom. The teacher will be waiting to greet them.
- Circle Times: The children will be working on recognizing their names, learning nursery rhymes, counting and more. Our circle time will also include time for a story, game or other learning activity related to the current theme.
- Special Classes – All students will participate in an art, music, library, and PE class of 30 minutes each week.
- Outside time: We will have active times for climbing and running, so send your child in shoes that are safe for active play. **(No flip-flops please)**. Please apply sunscreen at home before arrival.
- Center Time: For our students, work time means PLAY time. Each day your child will have the choice of going to Dramatic Play, the Construction Zone (blocks), Art, Sensory, the Discovery Center (Math and Science), Writing, Library, and ABC centers.
- Clean Up: All the children are expected to work together to clean up the toys when they leave the center and at the end of work time.
- Daily Meals: Students will be provided FREE breakfast, 2 snacks and lunch each day. All food is prepared by the district's food service provider, Chartwells, in compliance with the USDA nutritional requirements for preschool children. Information regarding individual food allergies or special nutritional needs is collected by the preschool teacher and



provided to Chartwells. Breakfast will be in the cafeteria and lunch is every day at 11:00am. Pre-K students will eat lunch in the classroom.

- **Dismissal:** We will begin dismissal at 2:30pm. Please pick up your student at the front of the school.

Backpack Folder

We will put a folder in your child's backpack for daily correspondence. Please leave this folder in the backpack each day. Check the folder daily for any paperwork or notes from the teacher. If you have any notes or information for the teachers, please put it in the folder. This folder will help keep paperwork from tearing and help each of us quickly find any information that is coming home or to school.



Weekly Newsletter

Every week you will receive a newsletter with information about our current or upcoming curriculum theme, skills, and concepts. These newsletters may also include important events and dates to add to your calendar!

Dressing for Preschool

Please dress your child in play clothes. Preschool can be messy. We use paint, glue, and other messy materials that will get clothes dirty. Although we use washable paint and use washable markers, we don't want to have any special clothes ruined in case stains don't wash out. We will have active times for climbing and running, so send your child in shoes that are safe for active play. **Please have students wear tennis shoes. Please do not bring students in large dresses; this makes bathroom time more difficult.**

If possible, please label your child's clothing including jackets, coats, and hats. Children sometimes have trouble identifying their clothes, and often children have similar clothes.

Outside Playground

While the weather is warm we will be playing outside. Please put sunscreen on your child before school. In the winter, we will play outside if the playground is clear from snow and the temperature is above freezing. **If snow boots are needed outdoors, please have them bring another pair of shoes to change into for the classroom.**

Birthdays



If you would like to send a special birthday snack to school in honor of your child's birthday, please let us know. Please avoid snacks with nuts. All snacks need to be checked by the school nurse, along with the ingredient list before they enter the classroom. We need to be extra careful just in case of other food allergies. Individual portions are easier to pass out.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, please do not send birthday party invitations to school to be distributed unless all the students in the class are receiving an invitation.

Aspen Preschool Program Goals

Our goal at Aspen is to provide a well-rounded curriculum that helps each child grow in all areas of development. We help strengthen language skills through conversations, singing songs, circle-time discussion and daily story time.

We build on emotional and social skills through play in our dramatic play area, block area and art center. Children learn to wait their turns, ask for help and talk with each other to express their needs and interests. To support social and emotional learning, we use the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. The Pyramid framework promotes social emotional competence in preschool children in the context of nurturing relationships with strategies to prevent and address the challenging behavior of young children. Staff participate in training to implement positive behavior supports to provide individualized interventions that address challenging behaviors as needed. The approach is to develop an understanding of why the child engages in the problem behavior and strategies to prevent occurrence while teaching the child new skills. This approach has been shown effective to address a range of behaviors from aggression, tantrums, property destruction and social withdrawal.



We strengthen thinking skills in our discovery center (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), through group games and experiments, and classroom discussion. We work to develop pre-literacy skills through our curriculum, Frog Street for PreK.

We provide activities for children to strengthen the fine muscles in their hands by painting, drawing, cutting, and using sensory materials such as play dough. We offer time for large muscle play with climbing, balancing, swinging, and using balls and riding toys. We allow time for children to develop creativity through free-art choices and music/movement activities.

NM-PREK Program (4Ys)



New Mexico PreK is a voluntary program created by the Pre-Kindergarten Act of 2005 and is administered by the Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD). The program has been available in selected communities in the state but this is the first program of its type here in Los

Alamos. There is a maximum enrollment contingent upon state funding. Applications are part of a lottery process. The program is in session for 6.5 hours per day, Monday through Friday, during the school year.

- To participate in NM Pre-K, children must be 4 years old on or before August 31, 2025.
- Transportation is available to children on an IEP attending Pre-K in their neighborhood school zone (Aspen School).
- Parents must transport their children to Pre-K classes not in their neighborhood school.

The process for application to the NMPREK program is advertised in local media, through PTO, through the district website, on Facebook, and through local preschools. Parents are directed to access the online application through the district website. If parents do not have access to a computer or internet, they are welcome to a school site to complete the application here.

The application goes live beginning on the first Monday in March and closes in Mid-June. Participants are selected by lottery and those selected are notified by June 30th. A waiting list is maintained and vacancies are filled in the order students were placed by the lottery on the waiting list. Selected students are required to complete the registration process by August 1st to keep their place in the program, if they had not done so already.

Parent Conferences & Home Visits

We will have official parent-teacher conferences twice a year, as per the LAPS school calendar. If your child is on an IEP, we will meet at least annually for IEP meetings, or as requested by parents or staff (please refer to Parent Rights). However, anytime you have concerns about your

child, you may email, call, or set up a time to meet in person. One home or family visit is required annually. Arrangements will be made with your preschool teacher.

Curriculum

Frog Street Pre-K provides a research-based program built on the latest findings in neuroscience, math, and literacy and language acquisition. It features a clear and specific scope and sequence that gives children the opportunity to build foundational skills to support the acquisition of higher-level skills. We respect the developmental level of young children by offering concrete, hands-on, child-centered, engaging activities.

Teachers will also be utilizing Heggarty Phonics- Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum. 35 weeks of teacher-friendly phonological and phonemic awareness lessons for your preschool students. Heggarty Phonemic Awareness Pre-Kindergarten lessons are meant to supplement existing literacy curriculum and are easily integrated into half-day or full-day preschool programs. Waterford- an online preschool learning program. Waterford was developed at the request of the Utah legislature to meet the needs of their rural children. The company has done research in NM. Waterford can be used in class as a center, or in a computer lab, but is designed to be done at home, 15 minutes per day, 5 days a week.

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/prek/>

District Enrollment

It is critical to have current custodial and contact information for your child. When you move, change phone numbers or change emergency contact names, contact your school immediately.

Admission Requirements

Required documents to enroll:

- Proof of child's date of birth presented in person to the school secretary (Birth certificate, or Passport/Visa, or other legal/notarized identification)
- Proof of parent/guardian identity
- Proof of parent/guardian relationship or custody
- Current immunization record
- Proof of residency

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5100/5100R

Immunizations

According to New Mexico law, all students are required to provide proof of current immunizations prior to or at the time of enrollment. Students without current immunizations will not be allowed to attend class until the immunizations are current, or documentation is received that the child is in process of receiving the required immunizations. These immunizations include: Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis, Polio, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chicken Pox), Measles, Mumps and Rubella. Preschool aged students also require Haemophilus Influenzae type B, Hepatitis A, and Pneumococcal.

Documentation of required immunizations by a medical provider or public health official must be brought to the school nurse before a child may attend school.

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5141/5141R

Dental Exams

Beginning July 1, 2021 students new to the district cannot meet *initial* enrollment requirements until the parents provide evidence of an exam or sign a waiver. The Public Education Department (PED) adopted an amendment to 6.12.14 NMAC, COVID-19 School Reentry Requirements, March 24, 2021. The PED also adopted a new rule 6.12.13 NMAC, Student Dental Examination Requirements for Enrollment, effective April 20, 2021. Below please find a link to the published rules.

Link to 6.12.13 NMAC published rule: <http://164.64.110.134/nmac/nmregister/xxii/6.12.13.pdf>

Link to 6.12.14 NMAC published rule:

http://164.64.110.134/nmac/nmregister/xxii/6.12.14emerg_amend_xxii7.pdf?

Residency Verification

Assignment of students will be based on the residence of the student. Families shall provide proof of physical residency of students every year during registration and/or enrollment by May 1st. Acceptable documents to establish physical residency include any of the following:

- Current (dated within the last 60 days) utility bill, or
- Current (dated within the last year) rental/lease agreement for the residence, or
- Current (dated within the last year) property tax bill, or
- Current (dated within the last 60 days) mortgage statement, or
- Deed, or
- House Closing Statement for the residence.

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5100/5100R

Child Find Procedures

Parents who have a concern about a child's development may request a child-find screening by calling Los Alamos Public Schools Student Services at 663-2208. All preschool students, those with

and those without IEPs, participate in a number of health and developmental assessments at the beginning of the school year. These include the Early Childhood Observational Tool (ECOT) as well as vision and hearing screenings. Speech pathologists, occupational therapists, school psychologists and physical therapists participate regularly in the preschool classes as they provide inclusive services to students with IEPs. There is a wealth of expertise on child development available to identify suspected developmental delays or disabilities. If there are concerns, the preschool teacher shares them with the parents at regular parent conferences along with the interventions that are being implemented to address the concerns in the classroom. Data is collected regarding the student's progress and if there is continued concern regarding a suspected disability, a referral for a full evaluation is made to Student Services.

Transition to Kindergarten

Family conferences are held in May for 4Y students with IEPs preparing for transition to kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers from the receiving schools are invited to attend.

We look forward to a fabulous year with your youngsters!

Sincerely

Aspen Preschool Staff

