

Mountain Elementary School
2025-2026
Parent & Family
Preschool Handbook



Megan Lee, Principal

Jennifer Schmierer, Assistant Principal

Mountain Elementary School

2280 North Road

Los Alamos, NM 87544

Main Line 663-2326

School Absence Line 663-2325

District Snow Line 663-2223

Transportation 663-2255

<http://laschools.net/mountain>

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	Leadership
Well-Being	Teamwork
Individual Growth	Innovation
Integrity 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

Mountain PreK Staff

Katya Chandler - Classroom Teacher 3Y- Portable P4

Jennifer Nunz - Educational Assistant

BreAnna Gilleland - Educational Assistant

Holly Garcia - Teacher 4Y - Room 204

Francince Martinez- Educational Assistant

Nancy Parga- Classroom Teacher 4Y - Room 205

Sandra Romero - Educational Assistant

Taylor Carreti - Special Education Contact Coordinator

Signe Moore and Taylor Carreti- Speech

Pathologist

TBA - Physical Therapist

Amanda Vander Wiel- Occupational Therapist

Scott Gramer - School Counselor



School Hours

Office: 7:45 AM - 3:45 PM 663-2325

24 Hour Absence Line 663-2326

<http://laschools.net/mountain>

3Y Preschool Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

AM Class 8:00-11:00

PM Class 11:40-2:40

No school on Friday

4Y Preschool Schedule - Daily

8:10am School begins

11:15am Lunch

2:40pm Dismissal

Important Dates

Teachers will be contacting parents before class lists are posted and before the start of school to conduct Home or School Visits, a meeting with parents and the child.

Preschool will begin **Monday August 11th**.

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 663-2326, and transportation at 663-2255 if your child rides the bus. When possible, please also text or email your child's teacher.

If you arrive after 8:10, 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. If a child does not attend and there is no notice from the family, the parent will be contacted to check on the child's welfare.

Closures and Delays

- Any activities before school are canceled on delayed starts and snow days.
- 10:10 A.M. - Elementary schools. Morning 3Y preschool will be canceled on a two hour-delay schedule, though Afternoon 3Y will attend
- Busses will arrive at bus stops two hours later than the usual pickup time
- If we have a 2-hour delay we will NOT have breakfast meal service on that day, however, lunch meal service will be provided.

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 have 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.

Family Engagement Activities

Meet and Greet activities:

Family Conferences: 2 per school year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Individual appointments will be scheduled with families to review progress and share successes and concerns.



An additional family conference is scheduled individually during the school year. For students with disabilities, this is an IEP meeting. For typically developing students, it is a family conference.

Additional family engagement activities are scheduled as listed below. Each of these activities relates to one or more of the seven Essential Indicators of the FOCUS program: Health and Well-Being; Literacy; Mathematics; Creativity; Scientific Inquiry; Self, Family and Community; Approaches to Learning.

Special Events

The preschool staff will plan four family engagement events during the year, including an end of year promotion ceremony

- TBD - Open House -
- TBD - Fundrun - September
- TBD - Halloween Carnival - October
- TBD - Holiday Show - December
- TBD - Preschool Culmination -

Supplies 2025-2026 List

- 2 boxes of Kleenex
- 2 boxes ziplock bags (gallon size)
- 1 container Clorox wipes
- Place in a Ziplock Bag with their name:



- 2 medium size bottles of Elmer's school glue
- 2 packages of glue sticks
- 1 package of washable markers
- 2 pocket folders
- ½"-1" Binder
- 1 backpack with name on it (large enough to hold a binder)
- 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.

Daily Meals

Students will be provided breakfast, lunch and snacks during the day, (just a snack for 3 year old preschool). If you choose to send your child a snack, please ensure there are no peanuts. 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. Family style meals are meals in which food is placed or passed around in small containers from which children serve themselves. Serving family-style meals is a great way to allow children the freedom to make decisions and develop their own personalities, as well as join in on conversation with peers and adult staff.

A Typical Preschool Day

- Arrival: Parents will walk students to his/her classroom in the morning and afternoon at the start of preschool day. If your child rides the bus to school, there will be an adult meeting those students and taking them to the appropriate classroom.
- Circle Time: The children will be working on writing and recognizing their names, counting, and talking about the weather. Our circle time will also include time for a story, game or other learning activity related to the

current theme.

- 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). A hat labeled with your child's name is also a good idea.
- Center Time: For our students, work time means PLAY time. Each day your child will have the choice of going to Building Blocks, Art, STEM Center, Reading Center, Writing Center, Sensory Play or Dramatic Play, as well as centers changed monthly.
- Clean Up: All the children are expected to work together to clean up the toys at the end of work time.
- Dismissal: Bus students will be walked up to the bus. Pick up students must be picked up in front of the school.



...a fun place to
play and learn!

Notes Home

On some days you may receive either a note, email or phone call to give updates about your child. On extra busy days, we sometimes don't have time for a note.



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. 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.

Monthly Newsletter

Every few weeks 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. (No flip flops please).

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. Unless it is currently snowing, your child shouldn't need boots, however, send a warm jacket.

Birthdays

We will celebrate birthdays at preschool by singing to your child and celebrating via the entire class. If you would like to provide treats for



the class, please check with the teachers ahead of time to make sure you are bringing something the whole class can enjoy together. (Some children may have allergies).

Parent Conferences

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.

Curriculum

We will utilize Frog Street Pre-K and 3Y curriculums in our classrooms as a supplement to them and to provide structure and focus during circle time and center time. Frog Street curriculums are comprehensive, research-based programs that integrate instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. The program is engaging for both teachers and children and is easy to implement!

The cornerstones of the program are:

- An extensive integration of theme, disciplines, and domains
- Social and Emotional development includes Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline ®
- Differentiated instruction
- Equity of English and Spanish materials and instruction
- Joyful approach to learning

<http://www.frogstreet.com/curriculum/>

In addition to the Frog Street Curriculum, all Mountain preschool teachers participate in the required FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality training, including LETRS-EC Strategies, Intentional Teaching, and New Mexico Pyramid Framework. Teachers will also be utilizing Heggarty Phonics- Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum. 35 weeks of 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. To learn more about the components of these training programs, consult the website:

<https://families.ped.state.nm.us>

Finally, we will be utilizing Waterford- an online preschool learning program championed by Senator Mimi Stewart. 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.

Home Visits

One home or family visit is required annually. Arrangements will be made with your preschool teacher. Due to COVID restrictions, and personal preference, home visits may be done virtually and at school.

Mountain Preschool Program Goals

Our goal at Mountain 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 house 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 to 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 “maker space” (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), through group games and experiments, and classroom discussion. We work to develop pre-literacy skills through our new curriculum, Three Cheers. Our Speech Therapist leads a weekly “Language Group” to build vocabulary and awareness of sounds.

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



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.
- Children who reside in Los Alamos County are placed initially, then any available slots are filled with open enrollment for out of district children.
- Transportation is available to children attending Pre-K in their neighborhood school zone (Mountain 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 PTA, 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.

3Y Program

This program is available at the beginning of the year to students with disabilities who are three years old and have an IEP. Students who have been identified with a disability, have an IEP and turn three during the school year will be enrolled in the program beginning on their 3rd birthdays. Typically developing peers who are three by September 1 of the school year are selected for the program the week before school starts in August. A list of interested peers is maintained by Student Services beginning in March of the previous year. All students on the list receive a Child Find screening as part of the selection process. Those selected must enroll in the district through PowerSchool and provide proof of information before attending.

Additional Information: Recruitment, Enrollment and Attendance

1) For families who have made daycare arrangements with private preschool providers in the community, the district will establish bus stops at those locations to transport students to and from the programs. Transportation is only available to students who are placed in the program through an IEP or through the NMPREK program. The district does not have the space to transport fee-paying peers. If a child is attending a daycare and requires bus transportation, parents must complete the Transportation Emergency Card attached and return to Student Services as soon as possible.

2) For families who can drive their students to/from the preschool programs, the district will offer the option of a per capita feeder reimbursement at the rate of \$.67 per mile round trip. For a family driving both to and from the program, this reimbursement would cover two round trips per school day. If a parent wishes

to request reimbursement, a per capita feeder agreement must be completed and submitted by July 15th along with copies of the driver's license of the driver and the auto insurance card. Submission of monthly mileage logs will be required for reimbursement throughout the year. Note that reimbursement is available only to and from the student's home and school.

3) 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.

Transition to Kindergarten

Family conferences are held in May for pre-k students preparing for transition to kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers from the receiving schools are invited to attend.

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.

We look forward to a fabulous year with your youngsters!
Sincerely,

Mountain Preschool Staff