CAMBRIDGE ELEMENTARY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM



Family Handbook

2025-2026

Welcome to our pre-kindergarten program!

Welcome to Cambridge Elementary Early Childhood Program! The ages of 3 – 5 is an exciting time for both you and your child. We are so glad that we have the opportunity to share it with you! The year ahead will be filled with many opportunities for your child to learn and grow through experiences that allow them to explore, create, interact with their peers, and most importantly, have fun!

In pre-k, we value the families of our students. We believe that parents are the first and most important educators of their children. We encourage parent involvement and invite you to participate in our program by signing up for opportunities such as chaperoning field trips, reading to children in the classroom, teaching an activity, singing or playing an instrument, or helping prep materials. Your child will benefit most from the pre-k experience when we work together as a team.

In this family handbook, you will find information about our programming and some general information about policies, procedures, and practices. Your child's teacher will give you an overview of the information during your orientation and answer any questions you may have about the year ahead.

We are always available to talk with you and welcome your ideas, questions, and involvement in our classrooms. We look forward to working with you to help your child develop, grow and become a participating member of our learning community!

The Cambridge Elementary Early Childhood Program Staff

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INTRODUCTION TO OUR PROGRAM

About our Program

The Cambridge Elementary Early Childhood Program is a four STARS, play-based early education program. We are an inclusive setting and serve all abilities of three – five-year-old children in our community, free of charge. Our program is available, for thirty-five weeks per year, ten hours each week between September and June. Our days of operation and closings fall within the Cambridge Elementary School calendar during those months. Except for one Monday a month, our preschool program closes for a half day for professional development.

Our pre-k classrooms are warm and inviting to the children and designed to be developmentally appropriate for their learning. The classroom is arranged into learning centers that align with the Vermont Early Learning Standards Objectives for Development and Learning. The centers are arranged to promote learning in social/ emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts. Each day your child will have the opportunity to engage in individual, small group, and large group activities that are child-led and teacher-directed.

Program Options

We offer programming for children ages 3 - 5. The program options are either (4's) Tuesday and Thursdays from 8:00-2:00 (dismissal begins at 1:50) or (3's & 4's blended) Wednesday and Fridays from 8:00-2:00 (dismissal begins at 1:50). Children must be three by September 1st.

Educational Philosophy

Our philosophy is based on children and families working together in education. We value and respect the diversity of each child and the families we serve. We practice a strong policy of inclusion with respect to diverse cultures, belief systems, lifestyles, and points of view in each family. Our staff will model and support a perspective of non-biased caring and interaction with each child and their family.

Pre-k children learn best through play and hands-on experiences in socially enriched environments. Our program provides diverse materials and experiences that stimulate children to be creative, think, question, and investigate their world. We believe that children approach learning with their own unique skills and perspectives. It is our role to support and nurture the intention and curiosity of each child by providing a nurturing enriched experience in our social and learning environment. Our goal is to guide your pre-kindergarten child to reach their full potential.

We will prepare your child for kindergarten by supporting them in being able to express themselves appropriately, resolve conflicts, and respect themselves, others, and their environment.

Our Mission

Our mission is to embrace the teachable moments that happen every day by fostering the social, emotional, creative, intellectual, and physical growth of our students and create a lifelong commitment to learning.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Confidentiality

All child and family records are confidential and stored/kept in a secure location. The Cambridge Elementary Early Childhood Program keeps general education records for one year after the child leaves the program. After the year, all records are destroyed. Lamoille North Supervisory Union keeps child records in a secure location throughout the child's school career.

The CES staff shall not disclose or permit the use of any information regarding an individual child or family gained through interaction with the child and family, or records, files, videotaping, tape recording, photographing, assessments, or any type of documentation unless parental permission is specifically granted, except to entities with statutory authority for issues relating to the health, safety, and protection of children.

You (the parent/guardian) will sign a form giving permission to take photos of your child if you agree. Photos are used for monthly newsletters, documentation, handbooks, ClassDojo, and the Cambridge Elementary School website.

Positive Behavior Support and Management Policy

In early childhood, children are developing social and emotional skills and learn behavioral expectations. These skills are taught over time and require lots of practice. We use the Second Step Social-Emotional curriculum to teach skills in expressing emotions, problem-solving, and building healthy relationships. Some children need extra support in working on challenging behaviors. Our pre-k program follows the steps outlined in the Cambridge Elementary School Parent Handbook. CES has been working toward creating a caring community. Using guidelines of the Vermont Department of Education and working with The Responsive Classroom model, Cambridge is committed to creating a positive and safe school climate for all.

The School Wide Principles and Rules are:

BE SAFE

RESPECT YOURSELVES AND OTHERS

RESPECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

During our first six weeks of school, we focus on building community (getting to know one another), creating rules, and learning expectations.

Classroom staff will provide a variety of positive methods of guiding and disciplining students by using re-direction, explaining consequences, modifying the environment, providing routines, setting boundaries, giving choices, and allowing the child to lead when possible.

When a student acts in an inappropriate manner, they are reminded of what is expected. When students are arguing, staff will help them problem-solve and reach a solution. Praise and encouragement are used to reinforce positive behaviors. If a child is hurtful to anyone or unable to self-regulate, they will be removed from the activity immediately and asked to choose a different activity or some time away from the group until they feel safe again and have control of themselves.

If at any time you have questions or concerns about your child's behavior at home or at school, please talk to your child's teacher. Together we will work with you and other people supporting your family to make a plan about how we can best support and guide your child. Children will not be removed from our program due to behavior.

Healthy and Sick Policy

For the health and safety of all children and staff, children or their family members who are sick or who are contagious, should not attend school. At the Cambridge Elementary Early Childhood Program, we follow appendix A in the State of Vermont Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations as a guide for illness (available in the classroom or online). We ask that you use this guide to determine if you need to keep your child home from school.

Please keep your child home if they:

- Have signs of a sickness that can be spread, like a fever of 100 degrees or higher, sore throat, throwing up, or diarrhea
- Have a sore that is oozing
- Are too sick to participate in all daily activities

Students must remain fever-free for 24 hours without medication/ fever reducers before returning to school.

Please call your child's teacher if you are unsure whether to keep your child home or not or with questions regarding our illness policy.

Medication Policy

Sometimes a child needs to take medication during school hours. This is true for prescription and non-prescription medication. Our school nurse administers all medication to students. We DO NOT administer medication in the classroom. The following steps are required in order for the nurse to administer medication:

- Fill out a Medication Permission Form. We will need a note, signature, or health plan from your child's doctor.
- An adult must give the medication to your child's teacher. DO NOT send medication in with your child or in their backpack/lunch box.
- All medicine must be in the original package. If it is a prescription, it must have the prescription label attached.

For rescue medication such as inhalers or Epi-Pen, medicine must be kept in the nurse's office (or in travel backpacks in the event of an off-premises field trip). Ask your child's doctor for a second prescription of the medicine to be kept at school in order to avoid bringing the medication back and forth each day. If your child has an allergy or asthma and requires a rescue medication, we will post information about their action plan, along with their picture in order to alert all staff and to keep your child safe.

Immunization Policy

Immunizations are a State of Vermont requirement for all children within the public school system unless there is a State of Vermont Immunization Exemption Form on file. Immunization records must be up to date and must be kept on file by the first day of enrollment.

Physical Exams and Treatment

Vermont Child Care Licensing requires children to be up to date with yearly physical exams within 45 days of enrollment. All students in our program must have a physical form signed by their child's doctor stating the date of their last physical.

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance is important! When your child comes to school regularly, they will be more successful in the classroom and better prepared for kindergarten. With regular attendance, students are more comfortable with their routine, they know what is expected of them, and they make better connections with their peers. When students miss many days of school, they may feel left behind, feel disconnected from their peers, and miss important times for learning.

If your child is ill, you will need to call your child's teacher and let them know they will not be attending school that day. Please let your child's teacher know when your child will be missing school for any reason by 8:00 a.m. If you do not call, we are required to call you according to the State of Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations. If there are a large number of unexcused absences, your child's slot in the program may be forfeited and filled with another student on our waiting list.

Drop Off and Pick Up

All pre-k students must be accompanied by an adult to the classroom. The adult is responsible for helping the child put their belongings away and wash their hands. The adult dropping the student off is required to sign the student in on the documentation sheet near the door with the time of drop off and signature. Drop-off time is 8:00, and dismissal is at 1:50-2:00p.m.

Adults picking students up must be named on the "Permission to Pick Up" form. Adults must pick students up in the classroom, help the child gather their belongings, and sign the student out on the documentation sheet with the time of pick up and signature. The pick-up time is at 1:50 p.m. every day. If your child needs to be picked up earlier, please let your child's teacher know in advance. **Children need to arrive and get picked up on time.** If a child is not picked up on time, staff will try to contact the child's parent or guardian. If 15 minutes have gone by and we still cannot reach the parent/guardian, staff will call the emergency contacts. If staff cannot reach anyone, they will call DCF to make a report.

Necessary Enrollment Information

The following information must be submitted before your child's first day of enrollment and must be updated annually.

- A completed child's registration form signed and dated by the parent/guardian
- The child's name, current home address, and current home telephone number
- The child's date of birth
- Name, address, and all applicable current telephone numbers for parent/guardians

- Name, address, and all applicable current telephone numbers for two other people designated by the parent/guardian as the emergency contact
- Names for all persons authorized to pick the child up from school
- Record of an annual physical and health history signed by the child's doctor
- A description of any special medical, developmental, emotional or educational need of the child including allergies, existing illnesses or injuries, previous serious illnesses or injuries and any prescribed medication including those for emergency situations
- Written authorization from the parent/guardian for the program staff to be able to obtain emergency medical care and transportation
- Child's immunization record or Vermont Department of Health approved exemption document
- Child's birth certificate (only required one time)
- Proof of residency in Cambridge or Jeffersonville
- If applicable, a copy of court orders on custody and visitation arrangements

Field Trips

We follow the CES field trip procedures found in the CES Parent Handbook. Parents are given notification prior to all field trips. Forms will be sent home with the information containing the place, activity, date, and time and student permission required by a signature from a parent/guardian to be returned to school.

Evacuation Safety Plans

Lockdown and evacuation of the building procedures are listed under item #60 in the CES Family Handbook or can be found in CES Parent Handbook .

Fire drills are practiced once per month as a class or with the entire school. Students evacuate the building with their class and go out onto the playground in a designated area.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All CES staff, working with children are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect pursuant to 33 V.S.A. 4913 and are required by law to call the Vermont Department for Children and Families, Families Services Division (DCF) when they reasonably suspect abuse or neglect of a child. This report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed.

No Smoking Policy

Cambridge Elementary School is smoke-free. There is no smoking allowed on the school premises or during any school event such as field trips.

Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Impaired Drivers

Alcohol and illicit drugs are not allowed on school premises or school events such as field trips. If an adult picking up a child at the end of the day is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will notify the police and DCF.

Complaint Procedure

The Early Childhood Program staff works hard to provide a high-quality program for you and your child. There may be a time that you have questions or concerns about the program. Please discuss these with your child's teacher first. Your child's teacher may refer you to the principal if you are not able to resolve the issue.

CLASSROOM PROGRAM LOGISTICS

Classroom Schedule

See the last page of the parent handbook to view your child's classroom schedule. If you arrive early with your child, please wait in the hallway while the teachers prepare for the day.

Classroom Closings

The Cambridge Elementary Early Childhood Program follows the school calendar, September – June. Please check the school calendar for days your child will not have class.

If the school must close unexpectedly for any reason, such as due to severe weather, parents will be notified via a robo-call from the superintendent or principal.

Things to Bring to the Classroom (Please Label All Belongings)

- A backpack or bag for belongings
- Outdoor gear appropriate for the weather
- Water bottle
- Food for breakfast/Lunch (unless purchasing from the cafeteria)
- A set of extra clothes including pants, underwear, shirt, socks, pull ups/diapers/wipes
- Sturdy walking shoes

Please Do Not Bring to the Classroom

- Candy
- Soda or sugary drinks
- Toys
- Money

Breakfast/Snack and Lunch

Parents will need to provide a daily breakfast/snack or lunch for their child. We encourage healthy choices. We eat breakfast/snack in the morning around 8:00.

If you choose to have your child eat breakfast from the cafeteria, please walk your child down to the cafeteria to help you choose their breakfast choice.

Lunch can either be provided from home or the cafeteria (The Abbey Group) CES Parent Handbook. Menus can be found on the Cambridge Elementary website and will be posted on the classroom bulletin board. Please let your child's teacher know if your child will be receiving lunch from the cafeteria.

If you plan to pack your child's lunch, please be sure to send in two ice packs and an insulated lunch box. We do not have a refrigerator. Please do not pack lunches that require heating.

(Breakfast and lunch are available to all students free of charge this year).

Outdoor Play

We go outside every day except in inclement weather such as bitter cold (less than 10 degrees) or if there is a thunderstorm. Please ensure your child is prepared for the weather by supplying them with proper outdoor gear. If your child is too sick to go outside, then your child should not come to school that day.

Sickness and Injury While at School

If your child becomes sick or injured while at school, we will call you to come pick them up. If we cannot reach you, we will call your listed emergency contact person(s). If your child needs emergency care, we will contact rescue to transport your child to the hospital while we try to reach you.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Curriculum

We use and incorporate the following curriculums to support your child's learning in math, literacy and social-emotional skills. Join your child's teacher in October for "Curriculum Night" to learn more about these curriculums.

- Math: Bridges Pre-K includes lessons to teach counting, numeral recognition, shapes, sequencing, patterning and early addition and subtraction.
- Literacy: Fundations for Pre-K or Handwriting Without Tears includes activities to teach letter names, letter sounds and letter writing.
- Social- Emotional: Second Step Social-Emotional Learning includes lessons to teach children how to form healthy relationships with peers, manage their emotions, problem solve and make good decisions.

Screening

All pre-k students receive a universal speech screening by our school speech and language pathologist in the beginning of the school year.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is a tool to help screen the developmental progress in the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving and personal- social skills. Parents are asked to fill out the questionnaire either during preschool screening or upon enrollment. The teacher or early childhood special educator scores the screening in order to determine if a more in depth evaluation should be done.

If at any time you are concerned about your child's growth and development, speak to your child's teacher to determine whether a referral for an in depth screening or evaluation should be done by our early childhood special educator.

Assessment

Teaching Strategies Gold is a Vermont State mandated assessment. Authentic, on-going observational assessments of students in the areas of social/emotional, language, literacy, math, cognitive, motor, science, social studies and the arts are collected and documented to help drive curriculum. Collection periods are from September – November and February – May. Parent-

Teacher conferences will be held in November and May/June to discuss student progress. Parents/Guardians may request to meet with teachers any time they feel necessary.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Early Childhood Special Education- Services for Children Age 3 to 5

Early Childhood Special Education is special education and services for children ages three–five years old. Lamoille North Supervisory Union provides these at no cost to parents. Special education is instruction that meets your child's unique needs. Related services are services a child needs in order to benefit from special education, such as physical therapy or speech therapy.

Program staff work collaboratively with the parents/guardians, the case manager and the whole team which may include the early childhood special educator, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and other community agencies to support the child in accessing their education and meet their full potential.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Vision Test

The school nurse screens all student's vision in the beginning of the school year by using a SPOT Vision Screener to test how well your child's eyes are working. Parents/Guardians will be notified by the nurse if a referral to the doctor or ophthalmologist is recommended.

Hearing Test

The school nurse screens all student's hearing in the beginning of the school year by using an OAE machine. Parents/Guardians will be notified by the nurse if a referral to the doctor or an otolaryngologist (ENT) is recommended.

PARENT RESOURCES

Cambridge Elementary School

186 School Street Jeffersonville, Vermont 05464

Phone- (802) 521-5600 Fax- (802) 644-6531

http://www.cesvt.net/

- Classroom Teacher/Director: Teri Sibenaller, Assistant: Amy Naylor
  Phone- (802) 521- 5613
  tsibenaller@lnsd.org , anaylor@lnsd.org

- Early Childhood Special Educator: Teri Sibenaller-interim ECSE/Carrie Bullard Director of Student Support Services grades prek-grade 5
  Phone- (802) 521-5613, (802) 851-1513
  tsibenaller@lnsd.org cbullard@lnsd.org

Child Care Consumer Concern Line

Call 1-800-649-2642 toll free in Vermont to:

- Get information about child care providers (e.g. when they become licensed, if they are accredited or have a STARS rating, and if they've had any licensing violations in the past year);
- Voice a concern about a provider (e.g. unregulated, lack of supervision, too many children, unqualified or not enough staff, inappropriate guidance and discipline, unsafe environment); or
- Make a formal complaint about a child care provider

Child Care Licensing Regulations

Our pre-k classroom follows the State of Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations. A copy of these regulations is available in your child's classroom or by visiting:
https://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Docs/Licensing/CBCCPP_Regulations_FINAL.pdf

Vermont Agency of Education

For general questions: Call (802) 479-1030 or aoe.edInfo@vermont.gov

Lamoille Family Center

480 Cady's Falls Road Morrisville, Vermont 05661

Phone: (802) 888-5229 or 1-800-639-1932 Fax: (802) 888-5392

Email: info@lamoillefamilycenter.org

Lamoille County Mental Health

72 Harrel Street Morrisville, Vermont 05661

Phone: (802) 888-5026 Fax: (802) 888-6393

Vermont Family Network

South Entrance, 600 Blair Park Road Williston, Vermont 05495

Phone: 1-(800)-800-4005

2-1-1

Provides information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and crisis.

Attachment A: State of Vermont Signs and Symptoms Flow Chart

Attachment B: Classroom Schedule