



# COMMUNITY EDUCATION and EARLY LEARNING

## Family Handbook for Preschool Programs



This handbook is not intended to be exhaustive in nature and may be updated throughout the year. A complete listing of District 280 policies and regulations may be found on the Richfield Public Schools' website.

Please contact the Early Learning Program if you have any questions or concerns.

We value your partnership.

The Early Learning Office is located at:

**Central Education Center**

7145 Harriet Ave S

Richfield MN 55423

**Contact numbers:**

Early Learning Office -----	612-243-3007
Spanish Outreach -----	612-243-3021
Somali Outreach -----	612-243-3009
Early Learning Coordinator -----	612-243-3006
Early Childhood Social Worker -----	612-243-3027
PreK-12 Transportation -----	612-798-6075
Early Childhood Special Education Program -----	612-243-3004
Early Childhood Screening -----	612-243-3048
Fax -----	612-243-3067
Email -----	earlylearning@rpsmn.org
Central Education Center -----	612-243-3000
Richfield Dual Language School -----	612-798-6700
RSTEM Elementary -----	612-798-6600
Centennial Elementary -----	612 798-6800
Sheridan Hills Elementary -----	612 798-6900

# Welcome to Preschool!

Welcome to the Richfield Public Schools. At our preschool program, we are dedicated to providing you and your child with a high-quality educational experience that will prepare them for success in school and beyond. Richfield Public Schools (RPS) is committed to viewing and analyzing our work through a racial and cultural equity lens that intentionally subverts the policies and practices of institutional racism. All students deserve a safe and supportive school environment in which to thrive academically and developmentally. ([RPS Equity Statement](#)).

Our Preschool Handbook covers both our 3- and 4-year-old preschool programs. Throughout the handbook, you may see different program names used. **PreK (Prekindergarten)** refers to children in their 4-year-old year (children who are 4 by September 1st of the school year). **Preschool for 3s** refers to children in their 3-year-old year (children who are 3 by September 1st of the school year).

Please review this handbook and notify your child's teacher if you have any questions. Program procedures and policies are subject to change.

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## General Information

### Dressing for School

Please send outdoor clothing with your child every day. If the temperature and wind chill are below 10 degrees, your child will have limited time outside and will play indoors. In rare cases, children may need to stay indoors if playground conditions or air quality are unsafe, or if there are conflicts with special events in the classroom.

- Dress for messy play with durable shoes for running and climbing, no sandals
- easy for them to take on and remove themselves when going outside or to the bathroom.
- Appropriate for the weather:
  - Winter - coat, boots, hat, waterproof mittens, snow pants
  - Spring and Fall - long pants and light jackets
- The school is not responsible for lost jewelry.
- Label all clothing
- Dress in layers and send an extra set of dry clothes
- Please contact our social worker if you need any assistance (612) 243-3027

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### School Supplies

- All students are required to bring a backpack to school every day.
- Send an extra set of clothes and write your child's name on all items they bring to school.
- School supply lists will be distributed over the summer.

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### Food

When a student attends a Full-Day or Half-Day preschool class at the elementary sites, food is provided through the school lunch program. Students enrolled in a half-day program will be offered a "snack" which contains a grain, a fruit, and milk. Students may also bring an individually packed, well-balanced, nut-aware lunch.

Snack time is learning time for preschoolers. Children practice self-help skills (unfolding their napkins, pouring water, opening a package). Snack time also allows children to practice talking with one another and the teachers.

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## Communication and Conferences

A “Connect and Assess” event will be held each fall to welcome children into the classroom and begin connecting with families to partner in learning. Additionally, parents/guardians can meet with preschool teachers in a scheduled conference each fall and winter. Conference schedules will be posted on district calendars and websites and communicated via Parent Square by the building administration. Regular communication with your child’s teacher is essential; additional conferences can be arranged as needed. Parents can expect regular communication from teachers via Parent Square, newsletters, and all-district communications.

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## Language Support

If English is not your primary language, translation programs are available. We want to do our best to support you and your child. Please notify your child’s teacher if you wish to use this service.

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## School Closings

Richfield Early Learning Programs' closures coincide with those of the rest of the Richfield School District. Information will be posted at [www.richfieldschools.org](http://www.richfieldschools.org), <https://www.facebook.com/RPSCCommunityEd>, and on local media outlets, including KSTP, WCCO, FOX, and KARE 11. If Richfield has a late start, morning half-day classes will be cancelled, but the afternoon half-day classes will open as scheduled. If schools dismiss early, afternoon half-day preschools will be cancelled. Full-day preschool classes will follow the elementary school schedule. Listen to WCCO 830AM or watch KARE 11 TV for details. An email will also be sent to families.

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## Special Needs

If you have concerns about your child’s development, contact Richfield Schools' Early Childhood Special Education. ECSE provides free professional assessments and educational programming for children with needs ranging from minor to significant.

If you have questions or need more information about this process before calling ECSE, please don’t hesitate to talk with your teacher. If you or your child has any special needs (hearing impairment, limited mobility, behavioral concerns, developmental delays, etc.) that require accommodations within our program, contact Richfield Early Childhood Special Education so we can assist you.

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## Volunteers

We want you to volunteer in early learning. Come partner with us in your child’s classroom. Please take a moment to **complete this districtwide volunteer interest form**. All volunteers will receive a Volunteer Introduction Video covering essential safety information for working with volunteers in our classrooms.

We occasionally have volunteers from Richfield High School. Students receive an orientation and are never alone with children.

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## Confidentiality

We recognize that every parent, child, and family has unique strengths and challenges, as well as the right to privacy. Information about your child is shared between staff members only on a need-to-know basis, in

a private room with the door closed. Documentation for academic assessments, health records, and other personal child or family information is kept in the individual child's file. Children's files are kept in a secure cabinet in the office. Access is strictly on a need-to-know basis to ensure accuracy and address your child's individual needs.

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## Data Privacy

Data privacy is essential to Richfield Early Learning School staff. Early childhood student data is not released to the public.

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# Curriculum and Assessment

## Philosophy and Position Statement

The overall philosophy of the Richfield Early Learning programs is to encourage in each child a love of learning and excitement for learning, and to prepare children with the social and academic skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and throughout their educational careers.

The early childhood curriculum across all programs will offer play experiences, emphasizing all four areas of development – social, emotional, intellectual, and physical. It will encompass all eight domains of the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs):

- Physical and movement development
- Language
- Literacy and communications
- Mathematics
- Science
- Approaches to learning
- The arts
- Social and emotional development

The ECIPs are aligned to the Minnesota Kindergarten Standards.

- At the Richfield Dual Language School preschool class (RDLS), 90% of instruction is delivered in Spanish and 10% in English.
- Central Education Center's Spanish enrichment classes are a 50% -50% blend of Spanish and English.



## Creative Curriculum:

Our foundational academic curriculum is the Creative Curriculum. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that emphasizes exploration and discovery as learning approaches, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical-thinking skills. It is designed to provide educators with a foundation for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels.



## Teaching Strategies GOLD - (TS Gold)

TS Gold is an assessment tool used by the Richfield Early Learning programs with three- and four-year-old children in preschool classes. The TS Gold objectives align with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) established by the Minnesota Department of Education and assess 38

research-based developmental and learning goals. This assessment focuses on children's growth and progress throughout the year, recognizing that children develop at varying rates. The assessment data collected is shared with families during conferences and at the end of the year.



The Richfield Early Learning preschool program is a 4-star Parent Aware-rated program. It operates in accordance with the highest early childhood standards. As a result of this rating, scholarships are available through the state Pathways II program.

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## Early Childhood Screening

The state requires all students entering school to complete an Early Childhood Screening after age three but before kindergarten entrance. This free, play-based session, which lasts approximately 50 minutes, is used to identify potential health or developmental concerns in young children. Screenings are offered in English and Spanish. This screening is not the same as a doctor's well-child visit.

You are encouraged to schedule your child's screening as soon as possible. Appointments fill up quickly, especially toward the beginning of the school year. To schedule your screening or ask any questions, email [ecscreening@rpsmn.org](mailto:ecscreening@rpsmn.org) or call 612-243-3048.

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## Student Assessment

In accordance with School District policy, students are assessed in various ways. Parent input helps teachers determine the most effective assessment methods and how the results are used to benefit the child. All programs at the Richfield Early Learning School utilize the TSGold Assessment for students aged 3 and above. Gold assesses 38 research-based objectives for development and learning.

Assessment scores are entered into the district's kindergarten transition database and are available to out-of-district families' teachers upon request or at parent-teacher conferences. Data is used to plan for the individual child and the curriculum. At regular family-teacher conferences held throughout the year, you will receive updates on your child's progress.

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# Student Health

## Illness or Injury at School:

If your child becomes ill or is injured at school and cannot continue the school day, we will contact you to arrange pickup. Other injuries are reported to parents at the end of class. We will contact the emergency contact person if we are unable to reach you. You must have a person on the emergency card who can pick up your child if necessary.

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## Sick Child Policy:

Please report all potentially communicable health conditions to the school office within 24 hours. The district follows Hennepin County Infectious Diseases in Childcare Settings and Schools guidance when determining whether a child and parent may attend class. If your child is not at school due to illness or injury, please report all diseases or health conditions to your child's school attendance line or email.

Generally, your child should stay home with the following symptoms:

- Fever 100 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea (frequent, loose, watery stools not related to a known chronic health condition)
- Vomiting (that is not associated with a known chronic health condition)
- Rash (unexplained or not related to a known chronic health condition). Keep in mind that there are several possible causes for a rash. Common conditions that cause a rash are
  - Allergic reactions (Examples include medications, food, detergents and other cleaning products, insect bites and stings, and others.)
  - Illnesses (Examples include bacterial illnesses such as strep throat, viral diseases, fungal infections such as ringworm, and others.)

Also, pay attention to **nonverbal cues** your child may use to communicate they are feeling ill, such as changes in sleep, appetite, behavior, or mood.

Remember that children may:

- Be sick enough to stay home, even if they don't have a fever.
- Have a low-grade fever, yet still be well enough to attend school.

Your child can return to school when their **symptoms have significantly improved**, and they have been free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for **at least 24 hours** (without using medication to reduce symptoms).

## Medical Concerns and Medications at School

If your child has health concerns and/or needs medication at school, please let your child's teacher know. We will work with you and your child's healthcare provider to follow our medication procedures and/or respond to your child's health concerns at school.

The following is needed to give medicine at school:

- A Medication Consent Form from a licensed prescriber. This form is available under "Health Services" at [www.richfieldschools.org](http://www.richfieldschools.org)
- Signed permission from the parent/guardian
- Labeled medication in its original container

## Children's Basic Needs

To grow and learn, all children have basic needs, including safety, good nutrition, shelter, medical attention, clothing, appropriate discipline, and love. If parents/guardians are interested in resources for their child's emotional or physical needs, they can contact our Early Childhood Social Worker at 612-243-3027.

If your family is experiencing homelessness, such as staying in a shelter, hotel, or temporarily with others, we can help ensure your child's educational stability through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. For help accessing these services, please contact your school's Social Worker at 612-243-3027.

## Behavior Guidance

In preschool, our goal is to teach social-emotional skills that help children learn and grow. We recognize that children enter preschool with varying levels of experience. Our job is to help all children learn social skills by modeling and teaching:

1. Districtwide positive behavior expectations - we are kind, we are safe, and we are responsible.
2. *Second Step* Social Emotional Curriculum
3. *Conscious Discipline* practices

If your child is struggling to stay safe or participate with others, we will contact the parent/guardian to understand what is happening at home and develop a plan with the classroom team to support your child.

If the safety or other concerns persist, we may:

- Collaborate with the parent/guardian and the Richfield Early Learning Collaboration team to develop a plan to support the student's success
- Teach skills to minimize behaviors
- Ensure implementation of the plan and communication regarding the success and progress of the student
- If the intervention plan doesn't provide enough support for the student, and safety concerns are noted after interventions have been implemented, the Early Learning team may:
  - Propose a referral to school resources, which may include ECSE, a behavior specialist, or a parent educator
  - Propose a different preschool class
  - Consider disenrollment or alternative placement in another preschool classroom
  - Disenrollment may also occur if the student's or a family member's conduct jeopardizes the safety of children and/or staff.

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## Alternative Placement related to Full-day PreK:

Please note: Richfield Early Learning Full-day Preschool is a preschool program. Richfield Full Day Preschool operates on a 1:10 ratio; preschoolers must be able to participate successfully in this ratio and transition between locations throughout the day. If a child cannot participate safely in a full-day preschool program at this ratio, the child's team will develop a plan with the family for a different Richfield Preschool option, which may include a half-day or reduced hours option.

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# Policies and Procedures

## Forms/Required Paperwork

1. **Birth Certificate:** All children must have a copy of their birth certificate by the child's date of attendance in Richfield Early Learning Preschool Programs. Please email a copy of the birth certificate to [earlylearning@rpsmn.org](mailto:earlylearning@rpsmn.org) or bring it to the Early Learning School office.
2. **Emergency Form:** When registering your child, you completed the questions necessary for this form. We will keep the form on file for your child. This information must be updated yearly.
3. **Immunization Form:** State law requires that immunization forms be on file for each child in our program on the **first** day of class. This form must be submitted yearly. A doctor's signature is not required. Under state law, parents who conscientiously object to certain immunizations must sign this exact form, have it notarized, and submit it to the school by the first day.

To quote Minnesota law on the web address below:

**Q:** *Can a school refuse to enroll a child who does not meet the minimum requirements of the law?*

**A:** **YES.** *The law requires it and specifically states, "No person over two months old may be allowed to enroll or remain enrolled in any Elementary or secondary school or childcare facility .... until [a record of immunizations in compliance with Minnesota law].. has been submitted." [M.S. §121A.15 subd. 1]*

**Q:** Can a school dismiss a student who is already enrolled if he or she does not meet the law's minimum requirement?

**A: YES.** Since one of the statute's objectives is to prevent the introduction and spread of disease, permitting unimmunized persons to enroll or remain enrolled in schools **violates the language of the law** as well as its purpose."

If a child has not received the recommended doses or types of vaccines for their age, they may be excluded from school if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs.

For complete information on Minn. laws governing school immunization [requirements](#), click on this link.

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## Student Pick Up

No child will be released to an unknown person without prior written authorization and a photo ID. Ensure all authorized pickups are included on the child's enrollment form.

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## Non-Custodial Parent Pick-Up:

If anyone other than the child's legal parent/guardian will be picking up the child, that person must be added as an emergency contact by the legal parent/guardian in advance.

If there is a legal reason someone may not pick up a child, a copy of the court order must be on file with the school office.

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## Late Pick-Up Procedures

1. If we have not heard from a parent/guardian 5 minutes after the end of class, and they are not at the bus stop to receive the student, staff will call the emergency contacts.
2. If a pattern is repeated, a program social worker will be available to address the concerns.

We understand that conditions occasionally exceed one's control (such as inclement weather). If these conditions arise, you must notify your school immediately and arrange for someone else to pick up your child.

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## Requesting Bus Transportation

### Prekindergarten for 4s

- Students in a 4-year-old program who live within the school district boundaries are eligible for busing. Richfield Public Schools does not provide transportation to any location outside district boundaries. Community school boundaries apply.
- Requests for transportation received after July 31st may not be ready for the first day of school.
- School buses do not stop in front of houses to pick up and drop off 4-year-olds.

### Preschool for 3s

- Busing is not available for 3s. To apply for transportation accommodations, you must document an Individualized Education Plan.
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## Bus Stop Rules

Parents are responsible for their child's behavior and safety at the bus stop and when they get off the bus.

- **Pick up (before school)**

- An adult must accompany the child to the bus stop.
- Be at your bus stop 5 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time and wait until 10 minutes after. If your bus arrives after this time frame, please call (612) 798-6075.
- If no one is at the stop, the driver will proceed to the next stop immediately.
- **Drop off (after school)**
  - If an adult is not at the bus stop, the driver will keep your child on the bus until an adult arrives. After 1 minute, your child will be returned to the school office, where your emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick them up.

***If no adult is present at the bus stop more than 3 times, your child will be suspended from the bus for one day. If no adult is at the bus stop five or more times, your child will be suspended from the bus and may lose the privilege of riding the bus for the rest of the year.***

## **Bus Behavior:**

Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege, not a right. If your child’s behavior on the bus is unsafe, they may lose the privilege of riding it to and from school. Parents and teachers will work together to teach your child appropriate bus-riding skills.

Expected behaviors include:

- Sit in the first few rows of the bus
- Remain seated on your pockets, facing forward, the whole ride
- Use a quiet voice
- Do not stand up until the bus driver says its ok to stand up
- Listen to the bus driver

## **Absences**

**Your child needs to be at school every school day.** Please schedule doctor and other appointments outside of school sessions. If your child will be absent from class, please call your school. Phone numbers are listed below.

The teacher will contact you if your child misses five or more school days.

If your child misses **15** consecutive days of school, he/she will be disenrolled from the program in alignment with state statute.

## **Attendance Lines**

RSTEM-----	612-798-6600
Richfield Dual Language -----	612-888-7357
Central -----	612-243-3010
Centennial Elementary -----	612798-6800
Sheridan Hills Elementary -----	612798-6900

## **Building Emergencies:**

Staff are trained and prepared to take the necessary safety steps in the event of an emergency in the buildings. Fire, lockdown, and tornado drills are practiced throughout the year, and safety plans have been developed for hazardous weather.

Richfield Public Schools has developed a plan that includes procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lockdowns for all buildings. When it is safe to do so, parents will be notified of any emergency via the information provided in the submitted emergency form. Information will be shared with parents regarding the situation and the process for safely reconnecting with their child(ren).

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## Mandated Reporting

All Richfield Early Learning School staff are mandated reporters. A staff member suspecting that a child is in danger or has been abused or neglected in the preceding 3 years is required by law to call the proper authorities. If a child is in immediate danger, we will call 911.

Reports of suspected abuse or neglect can be made by anyone in the community to Hennepin County Child Protection at 612-348-3552 or the city police where the incident may have occurred. Call 911 to contact the police department.

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## Toilet Training

Children must be toilet-trained before attending preschool unless a previously granted medical/developmental exemption applies. Children must be wearing underwear. A child who has accidents daily is not considered toilet-trained. Please note that wearing pull-ups does not constitute toilet training.

Why do children have to be toilet-trained before they begin preschool?

- There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull-ups; our classrooms are not equipped for this.
- When an adult is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it reduces learning time for all students and removes one adult from direct supervision and interaction with the rest of the class.

We do understand that even toilet-trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, teachers will help children change their clothes, encouraging independence wherever possible.

It is not uncommon for a child who is entirely toilet-trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Preschool staff are aware of this and will assist children as needed. Please have your child wear clothing they can manage independently. Please send a complete set of change-of-clothes items suitable for the season. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child reaches this milestone at a different age. Therefore, we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate that they have achieved this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable in the classroom, we will discuss the issue with the parents.

*A child will not be considered toilet-trained for our preschool program if they consistently experience toileting accidents after the first four weeks of school.*

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## Holidays/Celebrations

While teachers may teach about religious holidays as part of an objective and secular educational program on religion, celebrating religious holidays through religious worship or other practices is unconstitutional. Teaching about holidays on both a religious and secular basis may be constitutional if it furthers a genuine secular educational program, is presented objectively, and does not have the effect of advancing or inhibiting religion. The study of religious holidays should reflect this nation's diversity and bountiful heritage.

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## Transfer Procedures

Transfer requests will be evaluated on an individual basis. Requests will be honored only if they meet the enrollment criteria and space is available.

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## Tuition And Fees

- Fees are determined by a sliding-fee scale based on household income and VPK eligibility. See the fee scale on the website for exact monthly fees.
  - The person listed as the account owner who completes the online registration form is responsible for payments.
  - Accounts will be billed on the first business day of each month for care used in the prior month, or immediately upon contract termination.
  - Fees are due by the 1st of each month. Unpaid balances after the 5th of each month will be charged a \$15 late fee.
  - No credit will be given for absence.
  - No credit will be given for weather/emergency closures.
  - No credit will be given for times children leave preschool to participate in other programs.
  - 9 equal payments, regardless of the number of sessions per month
  - 30-day notice required by the first of the month for withdrawal, or pay for the next full month's tuition.
  - Tuition is not refundable or transferable to another month.
  - Pathways II scholarships are available for families that qualify
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## Automatic Payments

We encourage you to sign up for monthly automatic tuition payments using any of the following: VISA, Mastercard, Discover, Checking, or Savings Account. You can sign up for AutoPay online through your preschool account at <https://richfield.ce.eleyo.com> or call 612-243-3007 for assistance setting it up.

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## Payment Options:

- **Credit card** - VISA, Mastercard, Discover & American Express
  - **Cash** - If you wish to pay your account in cash, please deliver the exact amount to the Central Education Center's main office, and our staff will issue a written receipt.
  - **Check/Money Order** - Make payable to ISD 280 Community Education and drop off or mail to the office. (Please write your child's name in the memo line.)
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## Late Payments

If your payment is late, please call the office immediately at 612-243-3007. If you do not call, you will receive a late notice by mail. If payments are more than two months past due and you have not yet contacted the preschool office, we must meet in person to create a firm plan.

**All accounting and payment information must be communicated directly with the Central Education Center office staff (in person, by phone, by email, etc.). Classroom staff cannot accept payments.**

**PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

**I acknowledge receipt and review of the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.**

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Parent/Guardian (s) Printed Name

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Student (s) Printed Name:

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Parent/ Guardian (s) Signature

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Date Signed

Please return this signed copy to your child's teacher or school office.