

Byron 3yr

Preschool Handbook

Byron Preschool..... Where Eagles Hatch



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Program Overview

Early Education Philosophy

The philosophy of our program is to enrich each child's life socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally. Our classrooms promote an atmosphere of acceptance. We strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children's individual needs can be addressed, and all children can flourish and grow under the guidance of a highly effective teaching team.

Our program emphasizes teaching skills geared to each child's stage of readiness and development. Our approach to learning recognizes that children learn by doing. We recognize young children's tremendous capacity and desire to discover and explore their environment through hands-on activities using real-life experiences and materials. Our teachers take pride in helping children develop competence, autonomy, and positive self-concept by challenging and supporting them as active learners. Children are encouraged to do as much for themselves as possible.

Our staff also believes that each family brings their values, language, diversity, and traditions into the program. We, therefore, recognize the importance of forming a partnership with families. We strive to promote home/school relationships enhanced through open communication and activities. We strive to offer families opportunities for involvement that promote their roles as partners in their child's education.

Curriculum

Second Step® helps our students build social-emotional skills—like nurturing positive relationships, managing emotions, and setting goals—so they can thrive in school and in life.

Heggerty introduces phonological awareness. This is a curriculum that introduces language play activities that are oral and auditory. During our three-year-old Pre-K lessons, students learn to hear initial sounds in spoken words and final sounds in spoken words. They learn nursery rhymes and sing songs, all designed to improve both oral and auditory skills in their language.

Michigan Department of Education, Office of Great Start, 608 W. Allegan, PO Box 3008, Lansing, MI 48909 or 517-241-7004.

Confidentiality Policy

Every child and parent in the program deserves privacy and respect. Parents can be assured that staff keeps all information regarding children and families in strict confidence. Licensing has access to all licensing-required child records. Parents/legal guardians have the right to look at or ask for a copy of their child's school record (unless a court order denies such access.) Anyone else requesting information must get written consent from the parent/legal guardian.

Inclusion Policy

Our staff believes ALL children benefit by interacting and socializing with their peers in a high-quality learning environment. We are committed to promoting learning, fostering growth, and ensuring the health and safety of ALL students. We offer an inclusive early childhood program to encourage ALL children's acceptance, understanding, and development. All children develop at different rates and attain skills at different times. We strive to create appropriate activities to meet each child's unique needs. Children are not excluded or expelled because of the need for additional developmental, medical, or behavioral support.

Our program has access through the Shiawassee Regional Education Service District (SRESD) to speech, language, occupational, physical, and social work services for all identified and eligible children per their written Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Cultural Diversity Policy

Young children and their families reflect a great and rapidly increasing diversity of language and culture. In our GSRP classrooms, we follow the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommendations, which emphasize that early childhood programs are responsible for creating a welcoming environment that respects diversity, supports children's ties to their families and community, and promotes both second language acquisition and preservation of children's home languages and cultural identities. Linguistic and cultural diversity is an asset, not a deficit, for young children. Classrooms contain many items and materials, such as books, puppets, dolls, play figures, posters/photos, musical instruments, dress-up clothes, etc., to help represent the diversity of the families and community cultures we serve.

Encouraging Home Language in the Classroom

Creating a culturally responsive and emotionally supportive climate for multilingual children and their families is vital for students to feel comfortable, accepted, safe, and connected to the learning setting. Byron teachers create playful learning spaces where children can use their linguistic repertoire when engaging with others. Examples include:

- Having Families send in pictures and labels from items in their homes to add to the various areas around the room.
- Family members are welcome to come in before school starts or within the first few weeks and help label classroom areas and materials in their home languages.
- Families can share music, songs, or rhymes in their home language.
- Families can record themselves reading books in their home languages.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy

We strongly believe children and employees are entitled to equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, or handicap. The instructional curriculum is both multi-cultural and anti-bias. It complies with federal regulations concerning race, color, religion, and national origin. Children and employees are entitled to work and play in a non-discriminatory environment free of harassment that interferes with an individual's work/play performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work/play atmosphere.

Background Check of Employees and Volunteers

All employees, volunteers, or interns must complete the CCBC for substantiated child abuse and neglect. All employees are also required to complete a national fingerprint/background check.

Referral Policy

A meeting will be held if staff or family have concerns about how a child is developing and/or progressing. This meeting (known as staffing or consultation) will include the family, teacher, program coordinator, and/or support services staff. Families will decide whether further steps should be taken to address the area of concern. The next steps may include any of the following: different learning strategies, other assessments, a modified daily schedule, etc. Please do not hesitate to discuss concerns about your child's development with your child's teacher.

Daily Schedule

Our goal is for your child to feel secure and independent to move from one activity to another as quickly and confidently as possible. We develop the daily schedule with these goals in mind and follow the schedule each day.

Arrival/Greeting Time: Children enter the classroom and have choices of how to begin their first few moments and interact with teachers and other children. When all the children have arrived, the teacher shares morning messages about the day.

Heggerty/Morning Meeting: Children work on both oral and auditory sounds in language.

Small Group Time: Adult-initiated time is based on children's interests and development, where children explore, play, and work with various materials.

Planning: Children indicate their plans to adults in a place where conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible.

Work Time: Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. Adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children's problem-solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.

Clean Up: Children and adults clean up together.

Recall: In small group settings, children choose Work Time experiences to discuss and reflect upon.

Snack

Read Aloud: Reading aloud to children strengthens the part of their brain associated with visual imagery. By reading daily, children pick up on important book smarts, like how to hold a book and which direction to turn the pages. All of which will help children prepare to be successful independent readers.

Gross Motor Development: Gross motor abilities form the basis for fine motor skills and relate to body awareness, reaction speed, balance, and strength.

Outside Time (Half Day Students Will Dismiss After.)

Music & Movement: Children can access musical instruments, songs, and dancing. Exposing children to music at this age teaches them the sounds and meanings of words. Dancing to music helps build motor skills while allowing them to practice self-expression.

Lunch:

Quiet Time: 75 Minutes

STEAM/Fine Motor- Children will wonder, explore, and discover through fun and interactive activities, to allow them to learn about the world around them.

Snack:

Read Aloud: Reading aloud to children strengthens the part of their brain associated with visual imagery. By reading daily, children pick up on important book smarts, like how to hold a book and which direction to turn the pages. All of which will help children prepare to be successful independent readers.

Outside time: By having time outdoors, children develop better physical and mental health, sleep improves, and so does their cognitive growth, both socially and emotionally.

Art- Children will be free to manipulate different materials in an organic and unstructured way. This will allow for exploration and experimentation. Food and Nutrition

Nutrition is essential to your child's healthy physical and mental development. Helping our children develop healthy eating habits and offering diverse food experiences while young can lead to life-long benefits. We are pleased to provide highly nutritious meals and snacks for our full-day students. Our program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and follows its recommendations for daily nutrition components and portions. Lunch and afternoon snacks are included in your tuition. If your child has any food allergies or other special dietary needs documented by the child's doctor, please discuss this with the program director and teacher.

Our school day program provides lunch, and an afternoon snack in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All morning snacks are to be provided by the family.

In accordance with Federal Law and USDA Policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400

Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Family Opportunities

Our program strives to create a solid home-school partnership by providing families with various ways to be involved. We value family input and feedback and fully understand that communication and positive relationships are keys to successful partnerships. As a parent, you have the opportunity to become involved in your child's education in a variety of ways.

Local Advisory/Data Team Meetings: Families are encouraged to participate as active members of our Local Advisory and/or Data Team Meetings, which are held at least twice a year. These meetings seek input from families on program policies and local considerations, including recruitment, food service, field trips, child growth data, attendance, and program quality data.

Shiawassee Great Start Parent Coalition: This group is interested in early childhood planning and decision-making in our county. The group meets monthly at the SRESD Early Childhood Learning Center in Owosso. It is a great way to learn more about community events resources and network with other families. If you want to join this group, please follow the Great Start Shiawassee Facebook page or contact the Shiawassee Great Start Collaborative Director at 989-725-2581.

School Readiness Advisory Committee: This county-wide advisory group meets three times a year to review and advise decision-makers on GSRP policies and review recruitment, access, enrollment, and child outcomes information at the county level. The committee comprises a diverse group of school staff and parents. If you have an interest in serving on this committee, don't hesitate to get in touch with the Shiawassee Great Start Collaborative Director at 989-725-2581

Volunteers

We would love to see you in our classroom! Research shows children whose families are involved in school activities do better in school. Occasionally, staff will specifically ask for family volunteers for special activities like field trips, parties, etc. All volunteers must be supervised by classroom staff at all times. Volunteers attending field trips must have a completed ICHAT form on file and a DHS Central Registry Clearance on file before volunteering, as there may be times when the center staff will not directly supervise the volunteer. This applies to grandparents and other important people who may wish to participate in a child's educational experiences.

Transition Support

Our staff is dedicated to making the transition from three-year-old preschool to GSRP as smooth and as positive as possible. You and your family will be guided through the process with information and support from our staff. Your child will be able to see and discuss the many thrilling things about their next steps. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

The following are specific activities we do in Byron to ensure a child and their family have a smooth transition.

- The district encourages families to visit the child's new learning environment before their first official day.
- The Director, Principal, or School secretary will introduce the child's new caregivers and educators to the family before the first day.
- The Director will provide the family with a tour of the learning environment to build familiarity with the space.
- Teachers will communicate expectations for the child's first day. Classroom teachers will greet the families each day.

Attendance

Our program strongly believes in the importance of regular attendance. Many studies have shown that preschoolers who attend regularly are significantly more likely than chronically absent preschoolers to be ready for kindergarten and attend school regularly in later grades. We want to help you in supporting good attendance habits in your child. We understand that circumstances arise where your child may miss school. **If your child is going to be absent, you must call and inform the teacher or office.** You may call and leave a message any time of the night or early morning.

Withdrawal

It is the expectation that all children enrolled in our program will complete the entire school year. However, if you need to withdraw your child from the program for reasons such as a family move or chronic or severe illness limiting participation, please notify us as soon as possible. If a child has been absent from the program for more than ten days without notice, a letter will be sent asking if you intend to continue. If we do not hear from you within the time stated in the letter, your child will be dropped from the program, and another child on the waiting list will be enrolled.

Weather Policy

If severe weather arises, your child's safety is the first consideration. The following is the policy for bad weather conditions:

The program will be closed if Byron Elementary is closed or delayed due to inclement weather. If a delayed start occurs, the morning preschool session will be canceled. Please listen to radio stations serving the area for all school weather-related announcements. We also offer School Messager as a way to receive notifications by text.

Illness/Health Policy

The immunization law and health requirements will be strictly applied. We encourage safeguarding the health of all our children by requesting families to follow these guidelines when deciding if a child is well enough to attend. In addition, families will be contacted by phone to pick up the child if they become ill at school, which may include exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

Symptom	The child may return to school when . . . .
Fever	Fever registers 98.6 degrees F without medication, and the child acts normally for at least 24 hours.
Running Nose	Thick, yellow, or green discharge clears up
Earache	A physician examines the ears and recommends the child return to school
Rash	A physician determines the cause and recommends the child return to school
Sore Throat	A physician determines the cause and that no strep or communicable infection exists, and the child may return to school.
Pale or Flushed Skin	Color returns to normal
Red or Watery Eyes	Eyes return to normal, and no infection exists
Vomiting or Diarrhea	No further symptoms exist, and the child eats normally without causing upset stomach, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours.
Draining Sore	Until draining stops
Communicable Disease/Condition (e.g., chicken pox, mumps, ringworm, influenza)	The physician approves returning to school. Please call the lead teacher to report this problem, even if the condition first appears during a vacation break.

Emergencies/Accidents

In an injury, accident, or medical emergency, our immediate concern is to aid the child/children. The child's family will be contacted. If we cannot make contact and emergency treatment is required, the child will be taken to the hospital specified on your emergency card. Your authorization for the program to handle emergency medical measures deemed necessary is part of this agreement. An accident report will be completed and filed per childcare licensing guidelines.

Medication Policy

Written permission by the parent or guardian AND your child's doctor is the only way we can administer medication to your child. According to Michigan Law (MCL 380.1178), it will only be under the following conditions:

- All medications must be in the original/prescription container
- The dosage must be clearly stated on the front
- The prescription name must be listed on the container and form
- The child's name must also appear on the prescription container.

When the family brings in medication, it must be hand-delivered to the teacher. It must be accompanied by the "Medication Permission and Instructions for Child Care Homes/Child Care Center Form," as developed by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services—OCAL-1243. All medications must be logged on this form as well.

Medications are stored in an area that is out of reach of children and accessible only to trained designated staff.

Abuse/Neglect Policy

Act 238 of the Public Acts of 1975, known as the Child Protection Law, requires that any school administrator, teacher, counselor, nurse, school social worker, or childcare provider report all cases of suspected physical or sexual abuse or neglect of children less than 18 years old. Therefore, if any staff has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been the victim of abuse or neglect, they must proceed as follows:

- Make an immediate verbal report to the Protective Services Division of the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Notify the Program Coordinator of the suspected abuse/neglect.
- Within 72 hours, file a written report with Protective Services on the approved form, available from the administrator.

Discipline/Guidance Policy

Young children are just learning how to get along in a group. The role of the teacher is to help children learn acceptable ways to achieve the goals they seek. Teachers give children cues about which behaviors to maintain or avoid and which alternative behaviors may be more successful. The overall discipline policy in our program aims to help children learn to develop internal behavior controls and self-regulation. The staff uses specific strategies to help children move towards self-control. Young children need a safe, positive, and consistent environment. To provide this for all children, the staff in our program keep student behavior expectations developmentally appropriate.

Other positive guidance techniques include:

- There are many choices available
- Staff members set clear limits for children's behavior
- A consistent daily routine is established
- Staff model, teach, and provide practice for respectful ways to interact with others and use materials
- Staff members plan for transitions

If a dispute or conflict arises, staff members will use the following conflict resolution steps.

- Approach the situation calmly
- Acknowledge the feelings of all children
- Gather information about the conflict
- Restate the problem
- Ask for ideas for solutions, and choose one together
- Be prepared to give follow-up support

Physical punishment is prohibited in our program by anyone, including a family member, guardian, or parent. Please understand that each situation is different, as is each child. Although we have a discipline policy and trained staff who strive to support and protect all children at all times, there are times when the classroom teacher may notify parents of problems that cannot be resolved or continue daily. Our goal is to work in partnership with families to develop strategies and plans that work toward the best possible outcome for the child.

Dispute Resolution Policy

We strive to work in a positive partnership with all of our families and strive to practice good problem-solving skills. However, there are times when a concern or complaint about your child's program may arise. If you have concerns, the best place to start is with your child's classroom teacher. Please talk about your concern with them to find a solution. If an agreeable solution cannot be found, please address your concern with the program administrator. If necessary, the complaint can be brought to the Superintendent. Finally, the complaint can be

brought to the Shiawassee RESD Early Childhood Contact if unresolved. The SRESD, as a GSRP grantee, has the final authority in resolving all GSRP related disputes.

Licensing Notebook

Our program maintains a LARA licensing notebook of all inspection reports, special investigations, and all related corrective action plans. This notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours. Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Michigan Childcare website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Calendar/Hours of Operation

The program runs a total of 32 weeks (middle of September to the middle of May)

The morning session runs from 8:45 a.m. to 11:45

School Day session runs from 8:45 to 3:45

Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I understand that the policies describe essential information regarding the preschool program my child is enrolled in. If, at any time, I have questions regarding these policies, I will consult a staff member.

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the policies contained in the Family Handbook.

I agree to follow all rules, procedures, and policies in the Family Handbook.

I agree to keep emergency cards up-to-date and notify the staff of any changes to my address, telephone, emergency, or work information.

_____

Child's Name

_____

Parent/Guardian Name

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date