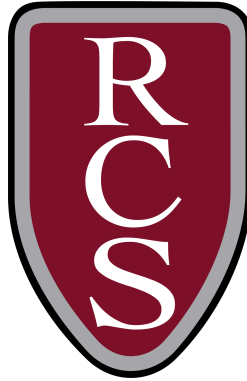


Early Childhood Programs Family Handbook



Rochester Community Schools
3838 N. Rochester Road, Oakland Township, MI 48307
248-726-4800
prek@rochester.k12.mi.us

Notice of Nondiscrimination: Rochester Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed or ancestry, age, sex, marital status, height, weight, familial status, arrest record or physical and mental disabilities in accordance with the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) MCL 37.2206, Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act (PWCRA), MCL 37.1206, Title II, Title VI, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendment Act of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (8U.S.C., Section 1324A Et. Seq.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition, individuals will not be excluded from, or be denied, the benefits of participation in any program or activity for which the Board of Education of the Rochester Community School District is responsible.

Rochester Community Schools has designated the following individuals as Compliance Coordinators at 52585 Dequindre Rd., Rochester, MI 48307. Title II and Section 504 – Students: Assistant Superintendent of Secondary and Adult Education, (248) 726- 3131; Equal Employment Opportunity/Section 504 for non-students: David Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, (248)726-3118; Title IX Coordinator: David Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, (248)726-3118.

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About Our Program

Rochester Early Childhood Programs

3838 Rochester Road, Oakland Township, MI 48306

248-726-4800

prek@rochester.k12.mi.us

<https://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/schools/pre-k/>

Director- Annemarie Miller

Mission Statement

The mission of the Rochester Early Childhood Program's is to provide a secure and caring environment which encourages children to grow in independence, curiosity, self-confidence, and social skills, as they begin their journey of lifelong learning.



Program Philosophy

Our Guiding Principle: All children are capable, curious, and full of potential.

We Believe that

- Preschool matters. It helps your child grow, learn, and prepare for school and life.
- Families matter. You are your child's first and most important teacher, and we're excited to work with you.
- Every child and family is special. We welcome and respect who you are and what you bring to our community.
- Relationships matter. Children thrive when they feel safe, loved, and supported.
- Play matters. Through play, children ask questions, try new things, and make sense of the world around them.

These beliefs guide everything we do. We're here to build on your child's strengths and help every family feel welcomed, valued, and supported.

Learning and Development

Curriculum

RCS Early Childhood programs use learning plans that are approved by the state and based on research. These plans help children build strong skills and support their growth in every area.

HighScope - Children and teachers are partners in learning! In HighScope, kids learn by doing through hands-on activities and daily routines like planning, doing, and reviewing. This approach helps children grow in areas such as language, math, science, art, and social skills.

Watching Your Child Grow

Developmental Screening - We ask parents to complete a short screening called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as part of the enrollment process. It helps us learn more about your child's development and what supports may be helpful. You'll get the results and some fun learning activities to try at home. If the screening shows that extra support might help, we'll talk with you and make a plan together. ASQ Link: <https://www.asqonline.com/family/89357c?single=true>.

Ongoing Assessment - Families are important partners in the assessment process. Parents can support their child's learning by sharing observations, photos, questions, and information about their child's strengths, routines, and development at home and in the community. This is the assessment system used in your child's classroom:

HighScope Online Child Observation Record (COR) - We use COR to learn about and support each child's growth during the school year. Teachers observe children during daily activities and use what they know to plan experiences that build on each child's strengths. Families receive a My Child's Developmental Profile two times a year to see their child's progress.

Families and Teachers: Better Together

Opportunities for Families

Children learn best when families and teachers work as a team. **Your voice matters**, and you're always welcome in our classroom! Here are some ways families can be involved:

- **Classroom volunteering:** Ask your child's teacher how you can help. There are many ways to be part of your child's learning!
- **Conferences:** We meet with families 2 times a year to share progress, set goals together, and build strong partnerships. Two conferences are scheduled at set times during the year, and give us time to talk about your child's growth and learning at home and school.
- **Parent orientation:** A chance to meet the team, connect with other families, and get helpful information at the start of the year.
- **Open House:** Children and one adult attend an open house before school begins to get to know the classroom and teachers.
- **Field Trips:** We may host family-friendly, fun events throughout the year to learn, play, and grow together. One parent/guardian must transport and accompany their child on these trips. These are not required.

We're here for you. Whether you need support finding resources, understanding your child's development, or just want to talk. We will listen, partner with you, and support your family every step of the way.

Miscellaneous

Celebrations and Holidays

We welcome families to share their home traditions and celebrations with our classroom community. You can talk with your child's teacher, the program director. We support celebrations in ways that align with the curriculum and program rules.

End-of-Year Celebrations

At the end of the year, we celebrate your child's growth together as a community. We focus on relationships and fun activities children enjoy, like a playground party or an open house. Instead of caps and gowns, we create a joyful, child-centered event that honors learning and connection. More details will be shared as the date approaches.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special! While we don't allow treats or items from home due to allergies and health goals, we celebrate every child with a small book and a kind message from their teacher on their birthday—or half birthday for summer birthdays. Thank you for your cooperation.

Fundraising

If our program participates in a fundraiser or donation drive, it will follow these guidelines:

- Participation is optional
- No competition between students or classes
- No big prizes for raising the most

Guests and Visitors

We enjoy having guests and volunteers join us to support learning and community. Visitors may share about a topic children are exploring, like a veterinarian talking about animals, or sit with children during a meal or activity. If you know someone who would be a great guest, please let your child's teacher or the program director know.

Picture Day

Picture day happens each fall. Children will be included in a class photo and individual portraits. Families can purchase individual and class pictures and if they choose. If you do not want your child to participate, please notify the teacher and program director.

Toys from Home

Children may want to bring items from home, but we do not take responsibility for lost or damaged toys. If a toy becomes a challenge in the classroom, we will work with you and your child to find a solution.

Daily Life in Our Program

Calendar, Weather, and Hours

Calendar - You will receive a program calendar before the first day of school. It includes key dates like the first and last day, holidays, breaks, and planned closures. Need another copy? Just ask your teacher or program administrator. Calendars can be found on our website, under Parent/Caregiver information:

<https://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/schools/pre-k/>

Classroom Hours - Class schedules follow our program's established calendar. Specific class location and times can be found here:

<https://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/schools/pre-k/>

Weather & Emergency Closures - If school closes due to weather, power outages, or other emergencies, you'll be notified via local TV and radio or through direct messages. If school closes early during the day, we'll contact families right away for pick-up. Our program will close if the Rochester Community Schools district is closed. Please note that we do not reimburse tuition costs for these closings.

Daily Routine

Children do best when they feel safe and connected and know what to expect. Each classroom follows a welcoming, predictable routine that helps children feel confident and ready to learn.

A typical day includes:

- Warm welcome on arrival
- Nutritious food
- Individual, small group, and whole group learning
- Child-led play and exploration
- Outdoor time and movement
- End-of-day transitions and goodbyes

This daily rhythm builds curiosity, independence, and strong relationships. It helps children learn through play, connection, and discovery.

To support this, we post the daily schedule outside and inside the room for adults, and inside the classroom at child's eye level. Having the routine at the child's level helps them see and understand it.

Outdoor Play - Children play outside every day as long as the weather allows. Please dress your child for the weather and send boots, coats, or snow gear when needed. Outdoor time is part of our learning and supports your child's health and well-being. Each child must have a complete change of clothes (underwear, socks, shirt, and pants) that will be kept in the classroom. Each piece of clothing must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. If you are in need of any of these items please let your classroom teacher or program administrator know. If your child is too sick to go outside, it's best to keep them home and let them rest.

Snacks at School - Snack time is an important part of the day, during which teachers focus on building social and emotional skills, language and literacy skills, fine motor skills, and math skills. In tuition Pre-K 3 & 4 classes, parents are asked to provide a nutritious snack for their child each day. We are unable to prepare or warm any item for snack; the child must be able to eat whatever is packed in the manner that it is packed. If your child has a food allergy, it needs to be included on the Health Appraisal form and a Rochester Community Schools Medical Action Plan must be submitted. (Available on the RCS website.) Individual snacks are to be pre-packaged and labeled by the manufacturer.

Attendance - Please make every effort to arrive at school on time. When children arrive after the day has started, they miss out on important parts of the routine. Children who consistently arrive on time and are in school every day quickly master the routine, learn more, are happier to be in school and receive the maximum benefit from our preschool program. If your child will not be in attendance, please call or email the classroom before the program day begins and let them know your child's name and the reason for not attending.

Drop Off / Pick-Up Reminders - Teachers will meet children outside and escort them into the building and classroom at the beginning of the school day and escort them back outside at the end of the school day. Care will be taken to support children in transitioning to and from the classroom successfully.

You will need to sign your child in and out each day.

If you are arriving after the class has left for the classroom, teaching staff will not come back to the doors until 15 minutes past arrival time.

Children will only be dismissed to those listed as authorized pick up persons.

We reserve the right to question the release of a child to any adult under the suspected influence of drugs, alcohol, and/or medication.

If a child is not picked up by the end of the session, parents will be assessed a late charge of \$5.00 per five minutes per child. This will be added to your next tuition payment. If your child has not been picked up and parents cannot be reached after 30 minutes, the police will be called.

Health, Safety, and Well-Being

Accidents & Emergencies

- For minor injuries, you'll get an "accident/incident report" to explain what happened.
- For serious injuries, we'll call **911** and contact you right away.
- Reports are filed with licensing when required.

Health Guidelines - Please note that it is important for your child to be regularly seen by a physician.

At the beginning of each school day, teachers will check to ensure that children are healthy. This includes observing their physical appearance as well as their social and emotional well-being. If a child appears unwell, parents may be asked to take their child home.

Even with good care at home and school, children may become ill during the year. If your child gets sick at school, we will call you to pick them up. If we can't reach you, we will contact someone listed on your Child Information Record. Please plan to pick up your child within one hour of being notified.

If your child has been out of school due to a communicable disease (such as strep throat or pink eye), a doctor's note may be required before they can return to school.

Please **do not send your child to school** if they have any of the following:

- A fever (100°F or higher). Your child must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine before returning.
- Diarrhea or vomiting (2 or more episodes within a 24-hour period). Your child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning.
- Red or draining eyes
- Ear discharge
- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Persistent or productive cough

- Sore throat
- Skin rash
- Ringworm (children may attend unless the rash could easily spread to others) hand-foot-mouth disease, or any other contagious illness (Refer to Oakland County Health Division for guidance.)

Please notify the school if your child has a communicable disease or an extended illness. If needed, the school will inform other families of any exposure to illness. A doctor's note may be required to return after a communicable disease or a long illness.

Henry Ford Rochester Hospital	248-652-5000 - Henry Ford Rochester Hospital
Oakland County Health Division	248-858-1280 - https://www.oakgov.com/health
National Capital Poison Center	800-222-1222 - www.poison.org
General Health & Wellness	American Academy of Pediatrics
	Healthy children
	Bright Futures
Nutrition	My Plate (USDA)
	American Dietetic Association
Violence & Bullying	https://www.stopbullying.gov/

Toileting - Children enrolling in any Pre-K class must be fully toilet trained. If a child is mostly independent when using the toilet, staff will support the child when necessary. In most cases this is done through verbal prompting. When needed staff will offer additional support if a child has an accident and needs help getting into clean, dry clothes. Staff will place wet clothes in a plastic bag for you to take home and launder. In the event of a bowel movement parents may be called to come to school and support the child in getting cleaned.

*If you prefer that staff not offer this level of support please let your child's teacher know so that an alternate plan can be arranged.

Medication - To keep all children safe, we follow clear guidelines when giving any medication at school.

Before we can give your child medication (prescription or over-the-counter), you must complete an Authorization to Administer Medication Form. In some cases, a doctor's signature may also be required. We follow all steps noted in the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers, Rule 400.8152.

Here's what you need to know:

- Only trained adult staff will give or apply medication.
- We can only give medication with written permission from a parent or guardian.
- All medication must be in its original container, clearly labeled with your child's name.
- Prescription medication must include a pharmacy label with:
 - Your child's name
 - The doctor's name
 - Medication name and strength
 - Clear instructions for use
- Nonprescription medications (like Tylenol, sunscreen, or insect repellent) must be labeled and provided by you.
 - You'll need to give us written permission each year to use them.

If you have questions about medication procedures or forms, your child's teacher or program staff can help.

Supporting Children with Food Allergies - The health, safety, and well-being of every child in our program is very important to us. To support children with food allergies, we follow Michigan Child Care Licensing requirements related to food allergies and medical emergencies. If your child has a diagnosed food allergy, families are asked to provide a completed **Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan** from your child's health care provider. This plan helps our staff understand your child's specific allergies, the symptoms to watch for, and the steps to take if an allergic reaction occurs. Our staff is trained to recognize and respond to allergic reactions and to follow each child's individualized care plan to help keep all children safe.

Each child's allergy care plan must include, at a minimum:

- The child's name and a list of their food allergies
- The names of medications, dosage amounts, and instructions for how the medication should be given if a reaction occurs
- Guidance for staff on how to recognize the child's allergic reaction symptoms

The child's care plan will be readily available to staff and will also be carried out during field trips, so children remain safe while outside of the classroom.

To help prevent allergic reactions, our program also follows important safety practices, including:

- Sharing information with families about known food allergens so those foods are not brought into the classroom or program
- Posting a child's name and food allergy information in the classroom or other appropriate areas, with parent or guardian permission, to help staff remain aware
- Training staff and unsupervised volunteers to recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis
- Preventing food sharing between children

If an allergic reaction occurs, staff will follow established emergency procedures, including:

- Promptly administering medication according to the instructions in the child's care plan.
- Calling emergency medical services (911) immediately if a child experiences a serious allergic reaction, if a new serious allergic reaction is suspected, or whenever epinephrine is administered, even if the child appears to recover.
- Notifying parents or guardians right away if a child is suspected of having an allergic reaction, ingests a food allergen, or comes into contact with a problem food, even if a reaction does not occur.

Families can learn more about food allergies and access a sample emergency care plan here: **Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan:**

<https://www.foodallergy.org/living-food-allergy/food-allergy-essentials/food-allergy-anaphylaxis-emergency-care-plan>

If your child has food allergies or other medical needs, please speak with program staff so we can work together to support your child's health, safety, and well-being while they are in our care. Please visit the RCS website for required forms:

<https://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/header-utility/familiescommunity/health-wellness>

Keeping Children Safe - Your child's safety and well-being are our top priorities. All staff are trained to recognize and respond if a child may need help. Because we care deeply about protecting children, staff are required by law to report any concerns of possible abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). Staff are not required to notify families before making a report, as these steps are meant to ensure that children receive help and support as quickly as possible.

Emergency Preparedness & Family Communication

At RCS Early Childhood Programs, the safety and well-being of your child are our highest priorities. We have developed comprehensive emergency plans to ensure a swift, organized response to a range of situations, from inclement weather to building emergencies.

Our Emergency Protocols

Our staff undergoes regular training and conducts monthly drills so that emergency procedures become second nature. We prepare for four primary scenarios:

- Evacuate: If the building is unsafe, children are escorted to our primary assembly point.
- Shelter-in-Place: Used for severe weather (such as tornado warnings). Children are moved to designated interior "safe zones" away from windows.
- Lockdown: Used if there is a perceived threat inside or near the building. All doors are secured, and children remain out of sight until an "all clear" is given by emergency personnel.
- Relocation: If we cannot return to our building for an extended period, children will be transported to our secondary site.

Communication During an Emergency

In the event of a real emergency or an unplanned school closure, we will communicate with families as quickly as possible. Please do not rush to the school until you receive instructions, as this can block emergency vehicles and complicate safety procedures.

How we will contact you:

- Email / Text / Phone Call through Kaymbu, ParentSquare, etc.

Note: It is vital that your contact information remains up to date. If you change your phone number or email address, please notify the office immediately.

Reunification Process

In the event of a relocation or early dismissal, we will implement a formal Reunification Process to ensure every child is released to an authorized adult.

- Identification Required: No child will be released to an adult without a valid photo ID.
- Authorized Pick-up: We will only release children to individuals listed on the Emergency Contact Form. No exceptions will be made during an emergency.
- Signing Out: Parents/Guardians must sign the reunification log before departing with their child.

Guidance and Enrollment

Positive Guidance and Support

Guiding Positive Behavior and Peer Relationships - In our program,, we believe all children can learn to express themselves in kind and respectful ways. We guide children as they build important life skills like self-control, confidence, and cooperation.

To help with problem-solving, we use a caring, six-step process:

1. Stay calm and make sure everyone is safe.
2. Show empathy and name each child's feelings.
3. Invite children to share their side of the story.
4. Restate the problem using their words.
5. Help them think of solutions and choose one together.
6. Support them as they follow through.

We encourage families to use these same steps at home. When children see the same caring guidance in both places, they feel safe and confident.

To keep our classroom safe and supportive, we will never use physical punishment or hurtful words. **Our staff will never:**

- Hit, spank, or restrict a child's movement
- Shame or threaten
- Withhold food, rest, or bathroom use
- Exclude children from play or learning
- Confine a child in a small or locked space

We are committed to helping your child grow through kindness, respect, and developmentally appropriate support.

Supporting Children with Challenging Behaviors - All children deserve care, support, and the chance to learn. When a child needs help with behavior, we take steps to understand what's going on and how to support them. We:

- Watch and listen to understand the child's needs.
- Work together with families to make a plan.
- Give each child the support that works best for them.

How We Handle Challenging Behaviors - We believe every child deserves care, support, and the chance to succeed. When challenging behaviors arise, we work with families step-by-step to provide the right support based on the child's needs, strengths, and safety.

Level I: Early Support & Observation

When behaviors are frequent or may be unsafe, we start with:

1. Raising a Concern – A teacher or parent can share concerns; we may use a simple screener.
2. First Steps – We look at triggers and quick ways to help. A specialist may observe.
3. Trying New Strategies – Teachers try different approaches and track results for ~3 weeks.
4. Family Partnership – With your permission, support staff may observe your child and meet with you.
5. Support Team Observation – A team member offers helpful notes from their visit.

6. Planning Together – We meet as a team to decide if a Behavior Intervention Plan is needed.
7. If your child has an IEP or IFSP, we will align support with your special education team.
8. Creating a Plan – If needed, we build a personalized, positive plan for home and school.
9. Follow-Up – We check in after two weeks and adjust as needed.
10. Timeline – This process typically takes 4–8 weeks.

Level II: Continued Support

If behavior challenges continue, we review progress as a team:

- What's working at home and school?
- Are we using strategies consistently?
- Are there positive changes or ongoing concerns?

Together, we decide whether to keep building on the plan or explore more support.

Level III: Alternate Options (*Used only when needed for safety*)

In rare cases, if safety is still a concern, we reserve the right to exclude any child from one of our programs who may be injurious to himself/herself, the other children, or the staff.

Confidentiality - We keep all information about your child and family private. We only share it if you give permission or if the law requires it (like in cases of suspected abuse). If a student is attending a program administered by a public school, their *My Child's Developmental Profile* and attendance records may be passed on to the students' Kindergarten school building.

Enrollment and Procedures

Admission - We recommend that children enrolling in a Pre-K 3 class turn three on or before September 1. We recommend that children enrolling in a Pre-K 4 class turn four on or before September 1. Children enrolling in any Pre-K class must be fully toilet trained.*

- No child will be discriminated against because of race, national origin, sex, or disability.
- A waiting list is available in the event that a class becomes full.
- Registration is open to families who reside within the Rochester Community Schools district.
- Registration is done online; current families are offered a one-week early registration period.
- Health Appraisal forms must be submitted within 30 days of initial attendance. (Please be sure that this form is signed and dated by your physician.)

- Failure to comply with immunization standards will result in the termination of your child from our program. (Immunization record or waiver must be on file in order for child to begin.)
- Licensing requires that ALL sections of all forms be completely filled in.
- If the Health Appraisal indicates that a child has seizures, diabetes, asthma or allergies, a Medical Action Plan ("MAP") must be filled out and on file in the child's classroom. Please see:
<https://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/header-utility/familiescommunity/health-wellness>
- Children are not eligible to begin school until any outstanding monies due have been paid.
- Children are not eligible to begin school until any outstanding monies due have been paid.

*If a child is mostly independent when using the toilet, staff will support the child when necessary. In most cases this is done through verbal prompting. When needed staff will offer additional support if a child has an accident and needs help getting into clean, dry clothes. If you prefer that staff not offer this level of support please let your child's teacher know so that an alternate plan can be arranged.

Tuition -

- A non-refundable registration fee of **\$75** per child or **\$120** per family is due at the time of registration.
- The first tuition payment is due August 15th and is not refundable.
- The remaining payments are due on the fifteenth of each month, September through May.
- A \$10 late fee will be added to accounts for payments received after the 15th of each month.
- A \$25 transaction fee will be added to any account that comes back with insufficient funds.
- If payment is not received by the 20th of each month, a phone call will be made in an attempt to secure a payment. If payment has not been received by the 25th of the month, your bill may be sent to a collection agency and your child may be dismissed from the program.
- In the event that a child is dismissed from the program for non-payment, the child may not enroll in any program until the account has been paid in full.

We do not reimburse for vacation or illness days.

Withdrawal Process -

We understand that sometimes families need to make changes. If you decide to leave the program, please let us know as soon as possible. This helps us notify families on the waitlist and support a smooth transition for your child.

A 14-day notice is required prior to withdrawing your child from one of our programs. (You are required to pay tuition for this time period.) Please submit a request via email to prek@rochester.k12.mi.us

We reserve the right to exclude any child from one of our programs who may be injurious to himself/herself, the other children, or the staff.

Extended Vacation -

- In the event of an extended vacation you have two options:
 - Withdraw the child from the program. Per the Withdrawal Policy above a 14-day notice is required. If there is space in your child's class when you return, you may register for the same class by calling the office at 248-726-4800. (As a courtesy the Registration Fee will be dropped.)
 - Continue to pay tuition so as to ensure your child's spot in the class upon your return.

Grievance Policy - If you have a concern:

- Start by speaking with your child's teacher.
- If the issue is not resolved, please contact the program administrator.

Licensing Notebook - Our program keeps a Licensing Notebook with all inspection and investigation reports. You can review it anytime. Reports from the past two years are also online at Michigan.gov.

Notice of Nondiscrimination - Rochester Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed or ancestry, age, sex, marital status, height, weight, familial status, arrest record or physical and mental disabilities in accordance with the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) MCL 37.2206, Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act (PWCRA), MCL 37.1206, Title II, Title VI, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendment Act of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (8U.S.C., Section 1324A Et. Seq.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition, individuals will not be excluded from, or be denied, the benefits of participation in any program or activity for which the Board of Education of the Rochester Community School District is responsible on the basis of such characteristics. Rochester Community Schools has designated the following individuals as Compliance Coordinators at 52585 Dequindre Rd., Rochester, MI 48307. Title II and Section 504 – Students: Assistant Superintendent for Special Populations, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, (248) 726-3060; Equal Employment Opportunity/Section 504 for non-students: Title IX District Coordinator: David Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, 248-726-3118.

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