
LAKEWOOD CITY SCHOOLS

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Family Handbook

2026–2027 School Year

 13701 Lake Ave. | Lakewood, OH 44107
Superintendent: Mrs. Maggie Niedzwiecki

Welcome to the Lakewood City Schools Early Childhood Program

We are delighted to have your family join our community. This handbook provides essential information about our program, policies, and procedures. Please review it carefully and contact us with any questions.

Office of Student Services (Preschool Office)

 216-529-4214

- Gordana Dimacchia Coordinator of Student Services
- Cheryl Bourne Secretary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Our Philosophy
2. Non-Discrimination Notice
3. Admission, Placement, and Withdrawal
4. Tuition and Payment
5. Potty Training Requirements
6. Arrival and Dismissal
7. Attendance
8. School Calendar
9. Parent Participation and Conferences
10. Discipline and Behavior Management
11. Health and Immunizations
12. Communicable Disease Policies
13. Medication and Medical Reports
14. Program Policies and Procedures

OUR PHILOSOPHY

A Nurturing Environment for All Learners

The Lakewood Early Childhood Program creates a nurturing and engaging environment where all young learners can thrive. Through a continuum of preschool services—including special education, integrated, and general education classrooms—we support the diverse needs of every child. Our inclusive classrooms reflect the spirit of the **Vision of a Lakewood Graduate**, where children learn empathy, collaboration, and a growth mindset as they learn and grow together.

Our Curriculum

We utilize the Creative Curriculum for Preschool. The Creative Curriculum for Pre-K is a research-based, play-centered program that builds children's skills across all early learning domains through purposeful, hands-on exploration. It emphasizes responsive teaching, strong family partnerships, and developmentally appropriate practice, with embedded assessment to inform instruction. Key benefits include fostering curiosity and independence, supporting social-emotional growth, and building foundational readiness in language, literacy, math, and science. Our curriculum is aligned with **Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards**. The Learning occurs across multiple domains simultaneously, and children are provided with a range of opportunities that support their development across all areas.

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Lakewood City School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or genetic information in its programs and activities, and provides equal access to Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Coordinators for Non-Discrimination Inquiries

Section 504 Officer

Dr. Stephanie Morgan
Director of Student Services
Lakewood City School District
13701 Lake Ave.
Lakewood, Ohio 44107
 (216) 529-4201

Title IX Officer

Mr. Jeff Schlade
Director of Human Resources
Lakewood City School District
13701 Lake Ave.
Lakewood, Ohio 44107
☎ (216) 529-4215

ADMISSION, PLACEMENT, AND WITHDRAWAL

Registration Requirements

To register your child in the Early Childhood Program, the following **forms are required**:

- Student Registration Form
- Release of Academic Records Authorization
- Home Language Survey
- Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- Parent Consent Form
- Family Assessment Form
- Residency and Custody Affidavit (signed before a Notary Public)
- 2 Proofs of Residency OR Owner Affidavit Form (signed before a Notary Public)
- Child's Birth Certificate
- Child's Immunization Record
- Driver's License or State ID (parent/guardian)
- Custody Documents (if applicable)
- Copy of special education records (if applicable)
- Physician's Medical Report (completed by child's physician)
- Dental Health Record (completed by child's dentist) *optional*

Online Registration

To register your child, visit:

[New Student Registration](#)

Classroom Placement

Children are placed in classrooms based on **availability**. Students with special needs are placed based on their **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**.

Withdrawal from the Program

To withdraw your child from the program, please contact the Early Childhood Office at

TUITION AND PAYMENT

Tuition Schedule

- **Due Date:** 1st of each month (before attendance)
- **Monthly Amount:** Calculated as an average of school-year days divided across 10 months
- **Includes:** Short months, five-week months, holidays, and snow days

 **Registration Fee:** Non-refundable

Payment Methods

Tuition can be paid through:

1. **Online:** PaySchool account
2. **In Person:** Taft Center for Innovation (13701 Lake Ave.)
3. **By Mail:** Checks made payable to *Lakewood City Schools* with child's name in memo, sent to:
Lakewood Board of Education
13701 Lake Ave.
Lakewood, OH 44107
Attn: Preschool Program

Important Policies

 **Outstanding Balance Policy:** Any account with an outstanding balance of one month's tuition will result in **immediate withdrawal** from the program.

 **Illness Deductions:** Deductions for 14 consecutive days of absence due to illness (with doctor's note) may be made on an individual basis.

 **Family Vacation:** No deductions are made for family vacations.

Please do not give payments directly to teachers or individual school staff.

POTTY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

 **Children must be fully potty-trained** to attend preschool, **unless the student receives special education services.**

Before the **first day of school**, students must:

- Use the restroom **independently**
- **Not** attend school with pull-ups

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Your child's teacher will share **specific arrival and dismissal procedures** for your child's building.

Important Guidelines



Punctuality: Please be prompt for drop-off and pick-up. **Supervision is not available before or after class time.**



Authorized Pick-up: Anyone designated to pick up your child **must be at least 18 years of age**. Children **cannot be released to school-age siblings**.

ATTENDANCE

Notification of Absences

Please notify the school office **each day** your child is absent.

Encouragement for Regular Attendance

To initiate good school habits, we **strongly encourage** your child to:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time
- Participate consistently in classroom activities

Transportation Absences

If your child receives transportation and will be absent, please contact the **Transportation Department immediately at 216-529-4214**.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Inclement Weather Policy: If Lakewood City Schools are **closed due to inclement weather**, the Early Childhood Program will **also be closed**.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND CONFERENCES

Our Partnership Approach

Thank you for enrolling your child in our Early Childhood Program. We look forward to a **collaborative relationship** to enhance your child's learning and development.

How You Can Get Involved

We welcome parent involvement in:

-  Parent-teacher conferences
-  Parent Information Meetings
-  School events
-  Volunteer opportunities

Ask your child's teachers about volunteer opportunities!

Building Access and Evaluation

Any parent of a child enrolled in the program shall be **permitted unlimited access** to the school during its hours of operation to:

- Contact their child
- Evaluate the care provided
- Assess the premises
- Visit for other purposes approved by the director

Upon entering the premises, please **report to the school office**.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

- **Frequency:** Held annually
- **Scheduling:** Conferences are scheduled with your child's teacher
- **Calendar:** Please see the academic calendar for the date of elementary conferences
 - [26-27 Preschool Calendar](#)

DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our Philosophy

It is the philosophy of the Early Childhood Program that children can **resolve problem behaviors with modeling and support**. Children will be:

- ✨ Redirected in a **positive and caring manner**
- 📌 Informed of expectations
- ☀️ Praised for appropriate behavior

Parents will be **informed** if behavior begins to interfere with learning.

Ohio Department of Education Compliance

We follow the **Ohio Department of Education's policy for behavior management and discipline.**

Constructive Guidance Techniques (Permitted)

- ✓ Redirection
- ✓ Separation from problem situations
- ✓ Talking with the child about the situation
- ✓ Praise for appropriate behavior
- ✓ Developmentally appropriate child guidance

Prohibited Discipline Practices

- ✗ No cruel, harsh, or corporal punishment
- ✗ No punching, shaking, spanking, or biting
- ✗ No delegation of discipline to other children
- ✗ No physical restraints (except brief protective hold)
- ✗ No locking children in rooms or enclosures (closets, boxes, cubicles)
- ✗ No profane language, threats, or derogatory remarks
- ✗ No withholding food, rest, or toilet use
- ✗ No discipline for toileting accidents, failure to eat, or sleep
- ✗ No techniques that humiliate, shame, or frighten

Discipline Procedures

Our discipline policy prioritizes **safety, respect, and positive behavior support.**

- Staff members are responsible for **guiding behavior** in a developmentally appropriate manner
- **Physical punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse is strictly prohibited**
- A copy of the discipline policy is provided to all parents and staff upon enrollment and hiring

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Immunizations

State of Ohio Requirements

Children are **required to receive immunizations in accordance with** the State of Ohio Immunization Requirements.

Required vaccinations may include:

- DTap (diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis)
- MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella)
- Polio
- Hepatitis B
- MCV4 (Meningococcal)
- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis)
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Hepatitis A
- Influenza
- Hib
- Pneumonia

 **An immunization record must be on file by the first day of class.**

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

Staff Training

All Early Childhood staff are **trained** to:

- Recognize common signs of communicable disease and illness
- Prevent, recognize, and manage communicable diseases
- Respond appropriately to suspected illness

Notification and Isolation Procedures

When a Child Shows Signs of Illness

The program shall **immediately notify** the parent or guardian when a child is observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

A child with **any of the following** signs or symptoms shall be **immediately isolated and discharged** to parent or guardian:

-  **Diarrhea**
-  **Severe coughing** (whooping sound, causing child to turn red or blue)
-  **Difficult or rapid breathing**
-  **Yellowish skin or eyes**
-  **Conjunctivitis (pink eye)** – redness, thick pus discharge, matted lashes, burning, or pain
-  **Fever** (100.4°F or higher)
-  **Infected skin patches**
-  **Stiff neck**
-  **Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool**
-  **Evidence of lice, scabies, or parasitic infection**

Mildly Ill Child Policy

A **mildly ill child** is one experiencing minor cold symptoms **without communicable disease symptoms**, or a child who doesn't feel well enough to participate in activities.

The school district reserves the right to discharge this child to the parent, guardian, or designated person.

Keep Your Child Home If They Have:

- Persistent, disruptive cough
- Diarrhea (until ceased for 24 hours without medication)
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher (until below 100°F for 24 hours without medication)
- Lice or nits (until treated; must be checked by clinic before returning)
- Rash
- Strep throat or scarlet fever (until 24 hours on antibiotics)
- Vomiting (until ceased for 24 hours without medication)

If Your Child Becomes Ill at School

- You will be **notified immediately**
- Your child will be **separated** from other children
- Your child will be permitted to **rest**
- Your child will **remain under adult supervision**
- You are **expected to pick up immediately**

If you cannot be reached, the **emergency contact number** you provided will be called.

Please keep emergency contact numbers current and notify the designated person that they may be called.

MEDICATION AND MEDICAL RECORDS

Administration of Medication

An **Administration of Medication form** must be completed for **each medication** before bringing it to school for administration. Forms must be completed **annually**.

Physician's Medical Report

A **current medical report** (within the last 12 months) must be on file in your child's classroom for your child to be left in our care.

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Developmentally Appropriate Materials and Equipment

Our program ensures that all materials, equipment, and activities are:

- ✦ **Developmentally appropriate**
- ✦ **Supporting cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth**
- ✦ **Engaging and inclusive**
- ✦ **Adaptable to individual learning needs**

All materials and equipment are selected based on **safety, durability, and developmental suitability**. Educators regularly assess and update classroom resources to promote exploration, creativity, and learning.

FERPA Compliance (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

We comply with **FERPA regulations**, ensuring that student records remain **confidential**.

Parents have the right to:

- Access their child's educational records
- Request corrections if necessary
- Control sharing of personal information (per FERPA guidelines)

Health and Safety Procedures

Our program follows all **health and safety guidelines** outlined in **Ohio Revised Code 3301-37-07**, including:

-  Proper sanitation
-  Illness management
-  Emergency procedures
-  Staff training in first aid, CPR, communicable disease recognition, and child abuse recognition

Parent Roster Requirements

A roster of enrolled children, including names and contact information, is **available to parents upon request**. Parents **may opt out** of having their information included in the roster.

Staff Qualifications and Background Checks

All staff members **meet the required qualifications** as outlined by state licensing regulations. **Background checks and professional references** are thoroughly reviewed before hiring to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.

Access to Student Records

Staff members have **access to each child's cumulative and health records** as needed to provide appropriate care. **Confidentiality is maintained**, and information is used solely for the child's well-being.

Injury and Incident Reporting

Written Notification

Parents are **notified in writing** when a child is injured or if a serious health or safety incident occurs. If medical attention is required, parents are **contacted immediately**.

Incident Log

All injuries and incidents are **documented in a log** that is regularly reviewed to:

- Ensure compliance with safety procedures
- Identify potential areas for improvement

Nutrition and Meals

If a Child Forgets a Meal or Snack

Our program will **provide a nutritious alternative**. Parents are encouraged to communicate dietary restrictions or preferences in advance.

Nutritious Meal Guidelines

We provide parents with **guidelines on nutritious snacks and meals** that align with state health recommendations. Parents are encouraged to send **balanced, healthy foods** for their children.

Communicable Disease Notification

All parents are **notified in writing** when a child in the program has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. We follow **state health guidelines** for managing illnesses and preventing the spread of infection.

Supervision of Play Areas and Facilities

Staff members **actively supervise** all indoor and outdoor play areas to ensure children's safety. **Regular inspections** are conducted to maintain a secure environment.

Child Abuse Reporting

Staff are **mandated reporters** and are trained to recognize signs of abuse and neglect. **Any suspected abuse is reported immediately** to the appropriate authorities in compliance with state law.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Healthchek Services

Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program for babies, kids, and young adults **younger than age 21** enrolled in Ohio Medicaid.

Purpose

To discover and treat health problems **early**.

Coverage

- 10 check-ups in the first two years of life
- Annual check-ups thereafter

Comprehensive Physical Examination Includes:

- Medical history
- Complete unclothed exam (with parent approval)
- Developmental screening
- Vision screening
- Dental screening
- Hearing assessment
- Immunization assessment
- Lead screening
- Other services or screenings as needed

For more information: Call the Healthchek hotline at **1-800-324-8680**

IDEA Part C Assessments and Screenings

If your child is **diagnosed with a developmental disability**, or you suspect a developmental disability, contact your **local County Board**.

Two Primary County Board Functions:

1. Determining Eligibility

Your County Board will work with you to determine eligibility for services.

Eligibility criteria vary by age:

- **Ages 0–2:** Eligibility report from Help Me Grow

- **Ages 3–5:** County Board eligibility requirements (may include school district evaluation)
- **Ages 6+:** Standard assessment tools measuring functional abilities in life activities (mobility, self-care, self-direction, independent living, learning, language)

2. Service Coordination

Once eligible, a Services and Support Administrator (SSA) will develop an **Individual Service Plan** outlining needed supports.

When to Contact Your County Board:

- Your child is diagnosed with (or you suspect) a developmental disability
- Additional support is needed to achieve goals
- You are moving to a new community and want to continue services

INSPECTION REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS

The Lakewood City Schools Early Childhood Program operates under the **Preschool Program Licensing Rules** of the Ohio Department of Education.

Routine inspection reports are available in the classroom upon request.

QUICK REFERENCE: CONTACT INFORMATION

Preschool Office

Office of Student Services (Preschool Office)

☎ 216-529-4214

- **Gordana Dimacchia** | Coordinator of Student Services
- **Cher Bourne** | Secretary

District Administration

Lakewood City School District

13701 Lake Ave.

Lakewood, OH 44107

- **Superintendent:** Mrs. Maggie Niedzwiecki

Special Services Coordinators

Section 504 Officer

Stephanie Morgan | Director of Student Services

☎ (216) 529-4201

Title IX Officer

Mr. Jeff Schlade | Director of Human Resources

 (216) 529-4215

Transportation

 216-529-4214

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ✓ Keep emergency contact information current
- ✓ Report absences daily to the school office
- ✓ Arrive on time for drop-off and pick-up
- ✓ Maintain tuition payments on schedule
- ✓ Notify the office of any changes in authorized pick-up contacts
- ✓ Review communication from teachers and staff regularly
- ✓ Share dietary restrictions and health concerns in advance

Thank you for being part of the Lakewood Early Childhood Program family!

If you have questions about anything in this handbook, please contact the Preschool Office at **216-529-4214**.

Lakewood City Schools Early Childhood Program 2026-2027