Little Zebras Preschool Handbook

Columbia Elementary
2026-2027

Building Principal: Jason Snyder
General Education Teacher: Stacia Conrad
General Education Teacher: Kasi Balanow
General Education Teacher: Jennifer Keller

CONTACT INFORMATION

Principal: Jason Snyder	574-223-2501 x2011 Jason.Snyder@zebras.net
Teacher: Mrs. Stacia Conrad	574-223-2501 ext. 2056 Stacia.Conrad@zebras.net
Teacher: Ms. Kasi Balanow	574-223-2501 ext. 2055 Kasi.Balanow@zebras.net
Teacher: Mrs. Jennifer Keller	574-223-2501 ext. 2057 Jennifer.Keller@zebras.net

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TO REPORT ABSENCES (24 HOURS) 574-223-0506

SCHOOL HOURS
8:30am - 2:15pm: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
9:00am - 2:15pm: Wednesday

Welcome to Preschool

We are very excited for your child to attend Little Zebras Preschool at Columbia Elementary! This Parent Handbook provides general information about the Preschool's program, operating guidelines, and health and safety policies. We look forward to working with you and helping your child grow throughout this school year. The preschool program is specifically for four year olds who will be attending kindergarten the following year. The program offers a rigorous play-based curriculum geared

toward the individual needs and learning styles of each individual student.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Our curriculum aligns with Indiana's Early Learning Foundations. The students switch classrooms between Language Arts, Science and Mathematics. The students have a small mini lesson and then are divided into four different learning stations where they have hands-on learning. Students rotate to a new station each day Monday- Thursday. On Fridays our students participate in specials which include gym, music and art lessons.

TUITION, PAYMENTS, AND GRANTS

Cost is $2100 per year, or $210 per month (August through May).Payment is to be made on the 1st of every month. You may pay online through your student's harmony account or send cash/check with your student. If you have any questions regarding payments you may contact Natalie Leslie, Columbia ECA Treasurer, at the Columbia Elementary office at 574-223-2501 x 2004.

We are an ***On My Way Pre-K*** provider. On My Way Pre-K is a program administered through the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning under the direction of the Family and Social Services Administration. On My Way Pre-K provides grants for 4-year-olds from lower income families, so they may have access to high-quality pre-K programs the year before they begin kindergarten. For more information and to apply, go to OnMyWayPreK.org and fill out the easy to use online application.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Before and After School Care is available through our childcare program at Columbia.

Before School Care (6:30am-8:45am):	1 Child	$15.00/week
	2 Children	$25.00/week
	3 Children	$33.00/week
After School Care (2:15pm-5:30pm):	1 Child	$25.00/week
	2 Children	$43.00/week
	3 Children	$59.00/week

If your child is attending Before Care they will need to be dropped off by 7:50a.m. at the door just south of the main entrance, Door E16, to the before care program. If your child will be later than the 7:50a.m. deadline for before care then they must wait until normal car drop off time of 8:30 a.m.
For more information, please contact the Childcare Supervisor, Mrs. Deb Bryant at, 574-223-2501 or Brooke.Towell@zebras.net.

DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES

Drop Off: All students will be dropped off in front of the school. Parents will pull up in front of the school in the "car line" on the east side of the school. Please wait with your child in the car and the preschool staff will come to each car to get your child. Drop off

time is 8:30a.m.- 8:40a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Wednesday, drop off time will be 9:00a.m. - 9:10a.m. due to late start Wednesdays.

Pick Up for Car Students: Pick up will be the same as drop off. All parents will need to pull up in front of the school in the "car line" on the east side of the school. Please wait in your car until your child is brought to you by a teacher. If your child is not able to buckle themselves, please pull forward out of the car line to get out to assist them. All car students must be picked up by 2:15 p.m. If your child is not picked up by 2:15 pm. they will be placed in after school care which will result in extra fees.
If you have older children at Columbia, you will need to pick up your preschooler first and then get in the car line for regular car pick up for other Columbia children. Your preschooler will not be permitted to go with their older sibling to the car room.
Students Riding Bus: Parents of students who are riding the bus will be contacted by their child's bus driver. The bus driver will inform you the time your child will be picked up and dropped off for the school year. Please be sure to write these times down and be prompt when getting your child out of the door to the bus.

DELAY SCHEDULE

Preschool will start at 10:30 AM on a 2 hour delay. In the event of a 3 hour delay, all day preschool will be canceled for the day.

UNPLANNED EMERGENCY DISMISSAL & SCHOOL CLOSING

There may be instances, especially in the winter, when it is necessary to either begin school late or close school early or for an entire day. In the event of heavy snow, severe fog, etc., parents should listen to the radio station: WROI - Rochester, or watch one of two television stations in South Bend: WSBT or WNDU or Channel 4 on RTC. Announcements will be made only when schools are closed, dismissing early, or beginning late. Parents/Guardians are requested to provide the most updated information so School Messenger, our automated calling system, can contact parents in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal, delay or closing, or other school information. If there is no announcement, then school will be in session as usual. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OFFICE OR THE RADIO STATION. These calls only tie up telephone lines which need to be kept open in order to handle the emergency. Parents can also look for postings on the school district website: www.zebras.net. **In the case of early dismissal, preschool students will be dismissed ½ hour before school-age students.** For example, if early dismissal is at 1:00 p.m. for Columbia students, all day preschoolers will be dismissed at 12:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

If your child will be absent from school, call the school before 8:45 a.m. and leave a message for the attendance secretary. The 24-hour attendance telephone number is **574-223-0506**. **If the office has not received a call by 9:15 a.m., a call will be placed to your home or work to verify your child's absence.**

If your child becomes ill at school you will be notified and must make arrangements to get them home.
For the Columbia Preschools, a **95% attendance rate** is required to maintain eligibility in the preschool program. When absenteeism begins to become an issue a letter will be sent home informing the parents that the child is under the 95% attendance rate. If the absenteeism continues a meeting will be held with the director and teacher to discuss the reasons for excessive absences. If the absenteeism is not part of an excused absence a plan may be put in place as to when the child will be removed from the program.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE

Please be sure to notify the office promptly if your address or phone number changes. This is the only way we will be able to contact you if we have delays, cancellations or if your child is sick.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROCEDURE

Breakfast is available for any child whose parent wishes for them to eat at school. Please notify your child's teacher if you wish for them to eat breakfast.
Lunch will be provided to all who haven't brought lunch from home. If you are packing your child's lunch please be sure that it is in a lunch box labeled with your child's name. Lunches will not be able to be warmed in a microwave. Please contact Dena Lehman, Cafe Manager, at 574-223-2501 x2009 if you have any questions or special dietary circumstances for your child.

Lunch price:	$3.40
Breakfast price:	$2.15

SNACKS

Teachers will provide a snack schedule each month. Please look for your child's name on the monthly calendar.

BIRTHDAY TREATS POLICY

You may provide unopened store-bought cupcakes or cookies for your child's birthday. They will be distributed during snack time. As per school policy, we are not allowed to hand out birthday party invitations at school

MEDICAL SERVICES

Nurse's Clinic: The goal of our Nurse's Clinic is to keep students comfortable, safe, healthy and learning. With this in mind, we may provide various first aid and/or hygiene products according to the student's needs. These could include over the counter topical itch creams, antibiotic ointment, redness relief eye drops, oral relief gel, or burn gel, etc. You may contact your school nurse for further information on what products might be used in the clinic. **If there is a particular product that shouldn't be used on your child please notify the School Nurse in writing immediately.** Students will be treated and returned to class immediately in most circumstances. If seriously ill or injured, the student may remain in the clinic to rest and rehabilitate with the hopes of returning to

class, otherwise a parent/guardian or designated emergency contact will be notified that the student needs to be sent home from school.

Allergies: If your child has an allergy, a Physician's order is required in order for accommodations to be made. This order will remain in effect for the entirety of the student's time at Rochester School Corp. If the allergy has resolved, another Physician's order is required to stop accommodations. We cannot solely accept parent requests due to new laws and regulations.
Emergency Medication: Each school is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator (AED) in case of cardiac emergency, and stock epinephrine (Epipen) in case of anaphylactic allergic reaction. If your child has a known allergy and uses an epipen or similar product you must provide this to the school nurse so that a specific plan of care can be made for your child.
Head Lice: If your child is found to have head lice, the nurse will work with you and let you know what needs to be done. Our policy on this can be found at Zebras.net policy #8451 - PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)
Immunizations: Students need to be immunized as required by the state of Indiana in order to attend school. Parents and/or students will be notified of requirements in advance. On or by the first day of school, proof of immunization is required. Immunizations need to be entered into the state database (CHIRP) by the health care provider or documented proof must be provided to the school. If the student is not in compliance as of the first day of school, communication with your school nurse is crucial as the student risks exclusion from school for noncompliance.
Medications: All medications taken at school need to be administered through the health office. Only Food and Drug Administration(FDA) approved medications will be administered. **Students may not carry any medications including cough drops with them at school or store in lockers, or backpacks, etc.** All medications need to be submitted to the Nurse's office with a signed medication consent form or a permission letter stating the medication, dosage, time to be given, dates to be used and parent signature. Consent forms can be found on Zebras.net or supplied by the school. All medications must be in the original bottle/container. Prescription medications must have the pharmacy label or doctor's order with the child's name, name of medication, the correct dosage, and the instructions for administration. Elementary through Middle School students may NOT transport medication to school, and parents/guardians need to pick up medications from the school.
All communicable diseases such as pink eye, fifths disease, strep, etc. will follow the RCSC Policy, per the IDOH guidelines. Students will be excluded from school activities until examined by a healthcare provider approving readmission or by completing the maximum period of communicability as outlined by the IDOH.
The school nurse is available for consultation and recommendations. Diagnosis and treatment are prescribed only by the student's family doctor.

TOILETING

Your child is expected to be potty trained before enrolling for preschool. Teachers are not permitted to assist with the cleaning of toileting needs. Children must be able to

clean themselves by wiping and disposing of the toilet paper. Please discuss any toileting needs your child has with the teacher.

REST TIME

Students will be required to rest for one hour. They do not have to sleep, but do need to stay on their cot for the hour rest time. Sheets will be provided by the school. All blankets will be washed at the school weekly.

SPECIALS

Students will be incorporated into the Columbia specials schedule. They will attend gym, art, library, music, and STEM each week.

ZEBRA ZONE

Your child will be attending Zebra Zone one Friday each month. Zebra Zone is a program put on by the faculty of Columbia which teaches character traits. Zebra Zone is not open to the public.

PARENT CONFERENCE

Parent/Teacher conferences will take place in the Fall and Spring. If you have concerns in between conference times please contact your child's teacher to set up a conference.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

For safety reasons please do not allow your child to bring any toys or candy to school. Toys can easily become broken, lost or stolen. Teachers will not be responsible for toys brought to school.

BACKPACK SUGGESTIONS

All students will need a backpack large enough to hold a 9x12 inch notebook inside without folding or bending. Many backpacks look alike, please label your child's backpack with his/her name visible on the outside. Please make sure your child brings a backpack to school every day!
RCSC reserves the right to search any backpack, purse, fanny pack, handbag or any other item designed to carry personal belongings at all RCSC functions to ensure the safety of all in attendance.

COMMUNICATION FOLDER

Each child will be given a communication folder at the beginning of the school year to provide parents with information on your child's school day activities and preschool happenings. It will go home with your child every day and will include all papers, artwork, notices, newsletters, etc. It needs to be returned daily in your child's backpack. All monies sent in the folder must be in an envelope and it must be labeled with your child's name and what is in the envelope such as lunch money, tuition etc.

Supply Checklist

Please only label your child's backpack and extra clothes, the rest of the supplies will be used by the whole class. Thank you!

- Backpack
- Extra Clothes and underwear
- 1 container plastic spoons
- 4 Dry-Erase Markers-any colors
- 1 package napkins
- 1 package baby wipes
- 4 large sized glue sticks
- 1 package markers
- 1 package crayons
- Girls: 1 box of Sandwich sized ziplock bags
- Boys: 1 box of Gallon sized ziplock bags
- 1 container of play-doh

Positive Disciple and Child Guidance Policy

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management for children. Positive interactions with teachers help students develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities and self-discipline.

Step 1: Create a Positive Environment: The preschool classroom will provide a safe, childproof environment to foster the student's behavior.

Step 2: Clarify Expectations: Expectations will be taught the first week of school. Preschoolers are at an age where they are just beginning to understand right from wrong. Realistic expectations will be used to help students gain independence.

Step 3: Set Clear, Fair and Consistent Rules and Limits: We teach self-discipline through expecting and setting reasonable limits for children. When children help develop these guidelines, they understand what is expected and can actively participate in the learning process.

Step 4: Develop a Relationship with the Child: Teacher/Student relationships are very important to gaining respect and trust. This also fosters a love for school.

Step 5: Model Positive Behaviors: Teachers serve as positive role models to their students. Teachers will speak and act in ways in which we want our students to speak and act.

Step 6: Teach Consequences: In a child-centered environment, teachers listen, guide, and help children. When children hear simple words, they can better understand the problems associated with destructive behaviors. We help children understand why a change is needed and value mistakes as learning opportunities.

Step 7: Teach Problem Solving Skills: Teachers will collect information about the situation, acknowledge and support the child's feelings, state the problems clearly in a language the child understands, and help the child to generate several solutions to the problem. We teach life skills.

Step 8: Anticipate and Redirect: We anticipate potential problems and redirect the child's interest.

Step 9: Discuss in Private: We privately help the children learn how to verbalize their feelings.

Step 10: Change Technique and Allow Renewal Time: All children respond differently to situations. We observe and try to find solutions that work best for each child. When necessary we allow children space to get away from the situation and calm down.

Parents will always be informed of problems and progress involving their children. Parent teacher conferences/ phone calls are encouraged for private conversations about your child.

Provider's Name:**Little Zebras Preschool**

In response to your child's misbehavior, hitting, kicking, spitting, hostile verbal behavior and other behaviors which will hurt another child are not permitted.

In response to these behaviors, I will not use:

- Threats or bribes
- Physical punishment, even if requested by the parent
- Deprive your child of food or other basic needs
- Humiliation or isolation

In response to misbehavior, I will:

- Respect your child
- Establish clear rules
- Be consistent in enforcing rules
- Use positive language to explain desired behavior
- Speak calmly while bending down to your child's eye level
- Give clear choices
- Redirect your child to a new activity
- Move your child to a time-out chair for no longer than one minute per year of your child's age, if necessary.

Any severe behavior that disrupts the classroom will result in removal of the child from the classroom until he/she can gain control of him/herself. A note will be sent home that day for the parents to sign and return the following day. In the extreme case of a child inflicting or attempting to inflict harm to another (e.g. kicking, biting, punching), a parent will be called to take the child home.

Children displaying chronic misbehavior will require an intervention plan to remain enrolled in the preschool program. This plan will be developed during a meeting involving parents, the Director and the student's teachers. Timelines for behavior improvement will be agreed upon and criteria will be set for continued enrollment in the school.

_____ _____

Parent Signature Date

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Child's name