

Los Alamos Public Schools
2026-2027
Parent & Family
Preschool Handbook



Preschool Director, Jennifer Washnok

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2075 Trinity Drive
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Los Alamos Public Schools

Vision:

100% of LAPS Students will meet or exceed grade level expectations in Academic Excellence, Social-Emotional Wellbeing, and Civic Responsibility.

Mission:

Los Alamos Public Schools exist to provide a safe, engaging learning environment that honors diversity and ensures every student thrives.

Core Values:

Stay Meaningfully Engaged
Be Accountable for Every Child
Address the Root Causes
Ensure Student Have a Voice in the Process
Filter all decisions through the lens of the whole child

School Hours

3Y Preschool Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

AM Class: 8:00 am – 11:00 am

PM Class: 11:40 am – 2:40 pm

No school on Friday

4Y Preschool Schedule – Daily

8:10 am School begins

2:40 pm Dismissal, (1:40pm Dismissal on Fridays)

Important Dates

Teachers will contact parents before class lists are posted and before the start of school to conduct Family Visits, which is a meeting with parents and the child. Family visits will be conducted on Monday August 10th and Tuesday August 11th.

Preschool will begin **Wednesday August 12, 2026.**

Attendance

Although there is no compulsory attendance for preschool-age children, consistent attendance is important for learning. If your child will be absent, please call the Absence Hotline at your child's elementary site. When possible, please also email your child's teacher.

- If you arrive after the official start time for class, please sign your student in at the office.
- If you plan to pickup your child early from school, you must go to the office first to sign him or her out. The secretary will call into the classroom to notify the teacher.
- We understand that emergencies and illness do occur but please bear in mind that the guideline is to maintain attendance with no more than 10 days of absence per school year.

Closures and Delays

- Any activities before school are canceled on delayed starts and snow days.
- 10:10am. – Elementary schools. Morning 3Y preschool will be canceled on a 2 hour delay schedule, though Afternoon 3Y will attend.
- Buses will arrive at bus stops two hours later than the usual pickup time.
- If we have a 2-hour delay, we will NOT have breakfast meal service on that day; however, lunch meal service will be provided.

Please read the School Handbook for further information on Snow Days.

Transportation

If you plan on having someone other than yourself pick up your child, either make sure they are on your list of approved emergency contacts, or provide written authorization stating you give permission to release your child to the specific person. Anyone picking up your child MUST provide a photo ID and check in at the front office upon arrival.

****Parents, if you are on campus during school hours, you MUST sign in at the office and get a visitor pass.****

To ensure that all eligible students have access to their preschool programs, the following arrangements are available for preschool transportation. If the student or parent



has unique needs or access issues related to a disability that require curb-to-curb transportation for the student, school bus transportation to and from school will be provided. If the child requires bus transportation per the issues described above, the parent must complete the Special Education Bus Card on the LAPS website, as soon as possible.

Transportation is only available to students who are placed in the program through an IEP or through the NMPREK program (no bus service at Chamisa for NMPrek).

If there are unique circumstances not covered in these options, parents may send a description of the circumstances along with the transportation requested for the child and the district will problem-solve options to meet transportation needs. It is the district priority to ensure that each eligible student is able to attend the program.

Daily Meals

Students will be provided with breakfast, lunch and a snack during the day, (just a snack for 3-year-old preschool). If you choose to send your child with a snack, please ensure there are no peanuts. All food is prepared by the district's food service provider, Chartwells, in compliance with the USDA nutritional requirements for preschool children. Information regarding individual food allergies or special nutritional needs is collected by the preschool teacher and provided to Chartwells. Family-style meals are meals in which food is placed or passed around in small containers from which children serve themselves. Serving family-style meals is a great way to allow children the freedom to make decisions and develop their own personalities, as well as join in on conversation with peers and adult staff.

A Typical Preschool Day

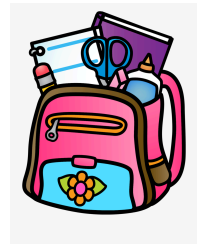
- **Arrival:** Parents will walk students to the predesignated area at each elementary school site. The teacher will be waiting to greet them.
- **Circle Times:** The children will be working on recognizing their names, learning nursery rhymes, counting and more. Our circle time will also include time for a story, game or other learning activity related to the current theme.
- **Specials Classes:** All students (4Y only) will participate in an art, music, library, and PE class of 30 minutes each week.



- **Outside Time:** We will have active times for climbing and running, so send your child in shoes that are safe for active play. **(No flip-flops please).** Please apply sunscreen at home before arrival.
- **Center Time:** For our students, work time means PLAY time. Each day your child will have the choice of going to Dramatic Play, the Construction Zone (blocks), Art, Sensory, the Discovery Center (Math and Science), Writing, Library, and ABC centers.
- **Clean Up:** All the children are expected to work together to clean up the toys when they leave a center and at the end of work time.
- **Daily Meals:** Students will be provided FREE breakfast, snacks and lunch each day. All food is prepared by the district's food service provider, Chartwells, in compliance with the USDA nutritional requirements for preschool children. Information regarding individual food allergies or special nutritional needs is collected by the preschool teacher and provided to Chartwells.
- **Dismissal:** PreK will begin dismissal at 240 pm.

Backpack Folder

We will put a folder in your child's backpack for daily correspondence. Please leave this folder in the backpack each day. Check the folder daily for any paperwork or notes from the teacher. If you have any notes or information for the teachers, please put it in the folder. This folder will help keep paperwork from tearing and help each of us quickly find any information that is coming home or to school.



Weekly Newsletter

Every week you will receive a newsletter with information about our current or upcoming curriculum theme, skills, and concepts. These newsletters may also include important events and dates to add to your calendar.

Dressing for Preschool

Please dress your child in play clothes. Preschool can be messy. We use paint, glue, and other messy materials that will get clothes dirty. Although we use washable paint and washable markers, we don't want to have any special clothes ruined in case stains don't wash out. We will have active times for climbing and running, so send your child in shoes that are safe for active play, **please have students wear tennis shoes. Please do not bring students in large dresses; this makes bathroom time more difficult.**

If possible, please label your child's clothing including jackets, coats, and hats. Children sometimes have trouble identifying their clothes, and often children have similar clothes.

Outside Playground

While the weather is warm we will be playing outside. Please apply sunscreen on your child before school. In the winter, we will play outside if the playground is clear from snow and the temperature is above freezing. **If snow boots are needed outdoors, please have them bring another pair of shoes to change into for the classroom.**

Birthdays

If you would like to send a special birthday snack to school in honor of your child's birthday, please let us know. Please avoid snacks with nuts. All snacks need to be checked by the school nurse, along with the ingredient list before they enter the classroom. We need to be extra careful just in case of other food allergies. Individual portions are easier to pass out.



In order to avoid hurt feelings, please do not send birthday party invitations to school to be distributed unless all the students in the class are receiving an invitation.

Preschool Program Goals



Our goal at LAPS is to provide a well-rounded curriculum that helps each child grow in all areas of development. We help strengthen language skills through conversations, singing songs, circle-time discussion and daily story time.

We build on emotional and social skills through play in our Dramatic Play Area, Block Area and Art Center. Children learn to wait their turns, ask for help and talk with each other to express their needs and interests.

To support social and emotional learning, we use the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. The Pyramid framework promotes social emotional competence in preschool children in the context of nurturing relationships with strategies to prevent and address the challenging behavior of young children. Staff participate in training to implement positive behavior supports to provide individualized interventions that address challenging behaviors as needed. The approach is to develop an understanding of why the child engages in the problem behavior and strategies to prevent

occurrence while teaching the child new skills. This approach has been shown effective to address a range of behaviors from aggression, tantrums, property destruction and social withdrawal.

We strengthen thinking skills in our Discovery Center (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), through group games and experiments, and classroom discussion. We work to develop pre-literacy skills through our curriculum, Frog Street for PreK.

We provide activities for children to strengthen the fine muscles in their hands by painting, drawing, cutting, and using sensory materials such as play dough. We offer time for large muscle play with climbing, balancing, swinging, and using balls and riding toys. We allow time for children to develop creativity through free-art choices and music/movement activities.

NM-PREK Program (4Ys)



New Mexico PreK is a voluntary program created by the Pre-Kindergarten Act of 2005 and is administered by the Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD). The program has been available in selected communities in the state but this is the first program of its type here in Los

Alamos. There is a maximum enrollment contingent upon state funding. Applications are part of a lottery process. The program is in session for 6.5 hours per day, Monday through Friday, during the school year.

- To participate in New Mexico PreK, children must be 4 years old on or before August 31, 2026.
- Transportation is available to children attending PreK in their neighborhood school zone (except Chamisa Elementary).
- Parents must transport their children to Pre-K classes not in their neighborhood school.

The process for application to the New Mexico PreK program is advertised in local media, through PTO, through the district website, on Facebook, and through local preschools. Parents are directed to access the online application through the district website. If parents do not have access to a computer or internet, they are welcome to come to a school site to complete the application.

The application goes live beginning the first Monday in March and closes in Mid-June. Participants are selected by lottery and those selected are notified by June 30th. A waiting list is maintained and vacancies are filled in the order students were placed by the lottery on the waiting list. Selected students are required to complete the registration process by August 1st to keep their place in the program, if they had not done so already.

3Y Program

This program is available at the beginning of the year to students with disabilities who are three years old and have an IEP. Students who have been identified with a disability, have an IEP and turn three during the school year will be enrolled in the program beginning on their 3rd birthdays. Typically developing peers who are three by September 1 of the school year are selected for the program the week before school starts in August. A list of interested peers is maintained by Student Services beginning in March of the previous year. All students on the list receive a Child Find screening as part of the selection process. Those selected must enroll in the district through PowerSchool and provide proof of residency in Los Alamos County with other registration documents before attending. Only Barranca Mesa, Mountain and Pinon Elementary Schools host 3-year-old preschool programs.

Parent Conferences & Home Visits

We will have official parent-teacher conferences twice a year, as per the LAPS school calendar. If your child is on an IEP, we will meet at least annually for IEP meetings, or as requested by parents or staff (please refer to Parent Rights). However, any time you have concerns about your child, you may email, call, or set up a time to meet in person. One home or family visit is required annually. Arrangements will be made with your preschool teacher.

Curriculum

Frog Street Pre-K provides a research-based program built on the latest findings in neuroscience, math, and literacy and language acquisition. It features a clear and specific scope and sequence that gives children the opportunity to build foundational skills to support the acquisition of higher-level skills. We respect the developmental level of young children by offering concrete, hands-on, child-centered, engaging activities.

Teachers will also be utilizing Heggerty Phonics- Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum. This includes 35 weeks of teacher-friendly phonological and phonemic awareness lessons for your preschool

students. Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Pre-Kindergarten lessons are meant to supplement existing literacy curriculum and are easily integrated into half-day or full-day preschool programs.

Waterford is an online preschool learning program. Waterford was developed at the request of the Utah legislature to meet the needs of their rural children. The company has done research in New Mexico, and the NM legislature provided funding. Waterford can be used in class as a center, or in a computer lab, but is designed to be done at home, 15 minutes per day, 5 days a week.

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/prek/>

The preschool teachers in the district participate in the required FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality trainings including LETRS-EC Strategies, Intentional Teaching, and New Mexico Pyramid Framework. To learn more about the components of these training programs, consult the website:

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/special-education/prek/>

District Enrollment

It is critical to have current custodial and contact information for your child. When you move, change phone numbers or change emergency contact names, contact your school immediately.

Admission Requirements

Required documents to enroll:

- Proof of child's date of birth presented in person to the school secretary (Birth certificate, or Passport/Visa, or other legal/notarized identification)
- Proof of parent/guardian identity
- Proof of parent/guardian relationship or custody
- Current immunization record
- Proof of residency

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5100/5100R

Immunizations

According to New Mexico law, all students are required to provide proof of current immunizations prior to or at the time of enrollment. Students without current immunizations will not be allowed to attend class until the immunizations are current, or documentation is received that the child is in process of receiving the required immunizations. These immunizations include: Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis, Polio, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chicken Pox), Measles, Mumps and Rubella. Preschool-aged students also require Haemophilus Influenzae type B, Hepatitis A, and Pneumococcal.

Documentation of required immunizations by a medical provider or public health official must be brought to the school nurse before a child may attend school.
LAPS Policy/Regulation 5141/5141R

Dental Exams

Beginning July 1, 2021 students new to the district cannot meet *initial* enrollment requirements until the parents provide evidence of an exam or sign a waiver. The Public Education Department (PED) adopted an amendment to 6.12.14 NMAC, COVID-19 School Reentry Requirements, March 24, 2021. The PED also adopted a new rule 6.12.13 NMAC, Student Dental Examination Requirements for Enrollment, effective April 20, 2021. Below please find a link to the published rules.

Link to 6.12.13 NMAC published rule: <http://164.64.110.134/nmac/nmregister/xxii/6.12.13.pdf>

Link to 6.12.14 NMAC published rule:

http://164.64.110.134/nmac/nmregister/xxii/6.12.14emerg_amend_xxii7.pdf?

Residency Verification

Assignment of students will be based on the residence of the student. Families shall provide proof of physical residency of students every year during registration and/or enrollment by May 1st. Acceptable documents to establish physical residency include any of the following:

- Current (dated within the last 60 days) utility bill, or
- Current (dated within the last year) rental/lease agreement for the residence, or
- Current (dated within the last year) property tax bill, or
- Current (dated within the last 60 days) mortgage statement, or
- Deed, or
- House Closing Statement for the residence.

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5100/5100R

Child Find Procedures

Parents who have a concern about a child's development may request a child-find screening by calling Los Alamos Public Schools Student Services at (505) 663-2208. All preschool students, those with and those without IEPs, participate in a number of health and developmental assessments at the beginning of the school year. These include the Early Childhood Observational Tool (ECOT) as well as vision and hearing screenings. Speech pathologists, occupational therapists, school psychologists and physical therapists participate regularly in the preschool classes as they provide inclusive services to students with IEPs. There is a wealth of expertise on child development available to identify suspected developmental delays or disabilities. If there are concerns, the preschool teacher shares them with the parents at regular parent conferences along with the interventions that are being implemented to address the concerns in the classroom.

Data is collected regarding the student's progress and if there is continued concern regarding a suspected disability, a referral for a full evaluation is made to Student Services.

Additional Information: Recruitment, Enrollment and Attendance

For families who have made daycare arrangements with private preschool providers in the community, the district will establish bus stops at those locations to transport students to and from the programs (No transportation is available at Chamisa Elementary). Transportation is only available to students who are placed in the program through an IEP or through the NMPREK program. The district does not have the space to transport 3Y peer models. If a child is attending a daycare and requires bus transportation, parents must complete the Student Bus Card attached on the LAPS website as soon as possible.

If there are unique circumstances not covered in these options, parents may send a description of the circumstances along with the transportation requested for the child and the district will problem-solve options to meet transportation needs. It is the district priority to ensure that each eligible student is able to attend the program.

Transition to Kindergarten

Family conferences are held in May for 4Y students with IEPs preparing for transition to kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers from the receiving schools are invited to attend.

We look forward to a fabulous year with your youngsters!

Sincerely,

LAPS Preschool Staff

