

The ABC'S of Preschool

Program Guide for Parents 2026-2027

-A-

About Our Preschool Programs- This handbook is designed to introduce the preschool programs to you offered here at Minneota Public School. It contains information about daily schedule and routines, skills your child will be learning, as well as policies that govern the programs. These classes are taught by licensed Early Childhood teachers and includes a classroom assistant. As a parent, you have the option of having your child attend Two Full Days (3-4 year olds, Three Full Days (4-5 year olds) and Four Full Days (4-5 year olds). Four Full Day option available depending on Three's Preschool class size.

Absences- If your child is absent, please make sure to notify the teacher or secretary in the office by 8:00am. The office phone number is (507) 872-6122.

Mrs. Stiklestad: (507) 872-6122 Ext. 1152 Mrs. Sonnenburg: (507) 872-6122 Ext. 1197

Attendance- Regular school attendance is essential for your child to make the most of his/her education. Please make every effort to have your child at school.

Alphabet Knowledge- Your child will learn to recognize uppercase and lowercase letters as well as some of the sounds of the letters.

Assessment- We use several instruments to assess in preschool such as academic assessments, observations, and student/work portfolios. We focus on the following areas of development: social/emotional, adaptive/self-help, language and literacy, mathematical and scientific thinking, and fine/gross motor development. We use High Scope, COR Advantage, and Heggerty for curriculum and assessments.

Arrival- Your child will arrive at school by 8:05am. School goes from 8:05am-3:00pm. We encourage all students to learn to walk into the classroom and hang backpacks/clothing independently.

-B-

Backpacks- Your child's backpack should be big enough to hold folders, notes, projects, and books to and from school. Please check your child's backpack daily.

Birthdays- Birthdays are very important to children. If you would like to bring treats (**store-bought only, peanut free**) for the class on your child's birthday, please let me know. Birthday celebrations will be indicated on monthly calendars. We will celebrate your child's ½ birthday if they have a summer birthday.

Book Orders- We will send home Scholastic Book Orders each month for you and your child to look over. If you want to place an order, please make checks payable to Scholastic. I place all orders online and you can pay online too. It takes about 1-2 weeks for the orders to come in. This is an optional program.

Box Tops- We collect Box Tops!! They are on many food products. There is an App you can scan box tops in to help our school! The App is "Box Tops for Education."

Breakfast- Breakfast is free for all preschoolers. We will eat around 8:20. 3's Preschool will eat in the classroom. 4's preschool will eat in the lunchroom around 8:20.

-C-

Clothing- Please help your child “dress for success”—so they are able to be independent with toileting, dressing and undressing. Consider shoes and boots that are Velcro or z-strap rather than lace and tie. These simple things will help your child feel successful. Also, please consider that we will be painting and doing other messy projects as well as going outside. Clothes that are okay to get dirty, perhaps stained, are recommended. Sturdy shoes that do not slip off the feet are necessary for the playground and gym. It is a good idea to label all coats and sweaters and all winter items (hats, mittens, snow pants, boots) with your child’s name. There is a lost and found area.

Conferences- There will be one spring conference for Mini Vikes (3’s PreK). There will be two set of conferences for Mighty Vikes (4’s PreK), one in the fall and one in the spring. Please feel free to contact us at any time, call the school, send a note, or email me to make arrangements for scheduling a time to talk whenever you feel needed.

Calendar- A monthly calendar will be sent home to let you know the activities that will take place during the given month. Please look over carefully and keep in a special place so your child does not miss their chance to participate in any of the activities!

Communication- Communication between home and school is very important. If you feel the need to talk to the teacher, please call, send a note, or email. You can find contact information on our webpage. If calling or texting, please do so at a reasonable time.

Curriculum- Our curriculum we use is the High Scope and we are learning skills in many different areas including Approaches to Learning (problem solving, planning), Social and Emotional Development (emotions, building relationships, conflict resolution), Physical Development and Health (gross motor, fine motor, personal care), Language, Literacy and Communication (speaking, listening, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, reading, book enjoyment, writing), Math (numbers, counting, shapes, measurement, patterns), Creative Arts (art, music, movement, pretend play), Science and Technology (observing, experimenting, predicting, natural and physical world, tools), and Social Studies (knowledge of self and others, geography, history). We learn these concepts and skills through hands-on and engaging whole group and small group opportunities as well as through PLAY!

-D-

Daily Schedule- Each group follows a daily schedule of check-in time, morning meeting, snack, bathroom breaks, large motor time, centers, free play, lunch/recess, rest time, music, story time, and whole/small group activities.

Discipline- Our classrooms have a specific set of rules such as use walking feet, use inside voice, use gentle hands and feet, and say nice things. We use visuals, pictures and model expectations. Also, we have the children come up with appropriate rules so they feel more responsible for their actions. It is the goal for our classrooms that children learn the daily routine, learn to listen and take direction from the adults in the program, and learn to interact with and learn from their peers. This is truly a learning process for young children. We do expect mistaken behavior to occur. When it does, the children will be gently reminded of the rule they forgot. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to take a break or visit the calm down space until they are able to show appropriate behavior. On rare occasion—if the child’s behavior is too disruptive to the rest of the classroom, the child may be taken into the hallway to calm down or to a quiet room to talk. We always talk about our feelings and come up with ideas how to solve the problem. If such an incident occurs with your child, a note/email will be sent home and/or a call will be made to discuss the incident. If hurtful behavior happens more than three times (including biting), a parent/teacher meeting will be necessary. At this meeting, our hope is to come up with a plan for success. We believe that giving children choices is a great behavior management technique. We will tell them to choose to take a break or do the job that they are supposed to be doing. Please encourage your child to let me know if they are having trouble in any way. Don’t always assume that we already know. We can only “fix” what we are aware of. We are a team and we look forward to working with both you and your child! ☺

Dropoff & Dismissal- Dropoff is from 7:45-8:05am. Preschool eats breakfast together as a whole group. Preschoolers enter into the elementary entrance doors near the bus loading zone. Pickup is at 3:00pm near the elementary entrance. Parents must drop-off and pick-up outside near the entrance. **Please do not drop off your child before 7:45am as there will not be supervision.**

-E-

Email- melinda.stiklestad@minneotaschools.org or caitlyn.sonnenburg@minneotaschools.org

Emergency Cards- Please fill out the Emergency Contact Card (at Open House) so we have up-to-date information in case of an emergency. At least two working phone numbers are required in order to contact parents in case of illness or emergency. Also, include a backup in case neither parent can be reached.

Extra Clothing- Please send an extra set of clothing for your child. Please enclose the clothes in a large, **labeled** ziplock bag to keep at school (pants, underwear, shirt, socks).

-F-

Facebook- Find our page on Facebook! "*Minneota Preschool & ECCE*" We share information and our learning adventures throughout the year.

Field Trips- We will go on a variety of fun field trips throughout the year! (4's Preschool only) Look for a letter in your child's folder regarding important field trip information.

Fine Motor Skills- In order to strengthen writing and cutting, fine motor activities help build the small muscles in your child's hands (tearing paper, eye droppers, tweezers, playdoh, picking up small objects, clay, sorting small objects, squeeze toys, etc.) We encourage you to strengthen these skills at home as well.

Folders- Each day your child will bring home a Take-Home Folder containing their daily work, calendars, newsletters, and anything else home to school related. Check and return folders each day.

-G-

Goals- Daily goals for all children consist of following the rules, working cooperatively, asking questions, and discovering new things. Also, your child will be given individual goals throughout the year based on progress and assessment.

-H-

Handwriting- We will learn how to write the letters of the alphabet and names using Tara West handwriting curriculum.

Hours- Please make note of the school day hours of operation. Our school day begins at 8:05am and ends at 3:00pm. Students are allowed in the building starting at 7:45am for breakfast. Please do not drop your child off any earlier as there will not be any supervision.

-I-

Illness- If your child is ill, please keep him/her home and inform the teaching staff you are doing so. The Minnesota Department of Health describes illness as having had a **fever, vomiting, or diarrhea in the last 24 hours**. Children will be more comfortable being at home if they do not feel well. It can be a scary experience to be ill at school and waiting for a parent to arrive. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted to pick them up. Thank you for your help in keeping everyone healthy!

Immunizations- The state law says that all students must be immunized against certain disease or illnesses. Proof of immunizations must be presented to the school.

Independence- During this age, your child learns self-help skills and becomes more independent. As the year goes on, step back and let your child walk into the school alone or with a friend. Let them be in charge of their own belongings and getting dressed.

-J-

Joy of Learning- Preschool is a time to discover an excitement for learning because this experience may determine your child's attitude about school for the rest of his/her life.

-K-

Kids- Preschool is a special time for you child. We want to make sure this experience is the best possible. "Kids come first!"

Kindness- Students and adults in our classroom are encouraged and expected to treat all members of our class as well as others with kindness and respect. Bothering others, bullying and interrupting learning will not be permitted.

-L-

Label Everything!!- Please label all clothing, blankets, toys, shoes, envelopes, anything that your child will bring to school. There will be many children in preschool and your child might not remember things he/she brought and we can't remember everything either. ☺

Learning Centers- We use learning centers in the classroom for active play. We learn specific concepts and skills, how to cooperate with others, how to share materials and practice taking turns along with many other academic goals. Many of the centers include music, math, science, emotions, sensory, technology, dramatic play, reading, building, and art.

Library- The children will be going to the library once a week and will have the opportunity to check out two books to bring home. Books are due back by the next library day. If your child forgets their books, they will not be able to

check out new ones. If they become lost or ruined, you will need to pay to replace them. Reminder notes will be sent home if you have not returned them.

Literacy- Literacy skills will start to develop more during this age. Your child will enhance their love of reading books and learning important skills such as book handling, concepts of print, phonemic awareness, and alphabet recognition. Reading is so important at building your child's vocabulary and background knowledge. Ask your child questions about the books you read. They will write their name and other words they know. Please read to your child at home as that is an important factor for your child's success in school and building a love of reading.

Lunch- Lunch is free for all preschoolers. **Please continue to fill out the application for free/reduced lunches as they help with funding for our school.** You can access it on the website or contact the office or teacher.

-M-

Math- Your child will learn various math concepts and skills such as numbers, shapes, colors, sorting, and patterns through hands-on activities and vocabulary.

Mandated Reporters- Teachers, paraprofessionals and other school staff are considered "mandated reporters." This means that if we suspect that child has been abused or neglected in any way, we are required by law to report this to the appropriate authorities.

Money- Any money sent to school should be in an envelope marked with its purpose and placed into your child's take home folder.

Music- Your child will have many opportunities to explore music such as using instruments, dancing, and singing. Don't be afraid to practice at home! 😊

-N-

Nap/Rest Time- Your child may bring a small blanket or stuffed toy with them for rest time. Personal toys, other than those used for nap time, have been a bit of a problem in the past. Children fight over them, they get lost, or they get broken. To avoid any problems or hurt feelings, we ask that you keep your toys at home. If they must bring one for comfort, we ask that it is kept in their backpack or in their locker.

Newsletter- A newsletter will be sent home each month. It will contain information about our thematic units, classroom activities, announcements, and upcoming school events.

Notes- Look for notes from the office and from me to come home in your child's folder.

Nurse- We have a school nurse. She will tend to minor scratches and scrapes, as well as sudden illnesses. For more serious injuries, she will contact you. Please be sure to send in any change of contact numbers in case she needs to get in touch with you.

-O-

Open House- Open House is at the beginning of the school year before school starts. This is a great time for us to get to know you and your child! Look for a summer letter in the mail regarding this night.

Outdoor Play- Your child will have outside time daily, weather permitting. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

-P-

Parent Aware- Our preschool programs are 4-Star Parent Aware Rated. This means that our classrooms include licensed teachers and best practices to help prepare for children for kindergarten. To learn more, please visit www.parentaware.org.

Parent Engagement- When your child was born, he/she did not come with a handbook, and every age and stage brings new joys and challenges. **You are your child's first and most important teacher.** There is growing recognition that being a parent is demanding and difficult work that requires learning new skills focusing on your child's needs. This learning can be supported by family, friends, and the community. Research has shown that early childhood programs that involve parents are more effective than programs focusing on children only. Involving families in the school experience early on encourages parents to play an active role in their child's learning, which is key to success as your child progresses into elementary and high school.

The purpose of parental involvement is to: Promote a positive relationships between home, school, and community, Increase support of parents and increase confidence in their role as parents, Give parents the opportunity to see how their child reacts and interacts in a school setting, Promote understanding of realistic expectations for their child's development and behavior, and allow parents and staff to interact about the child and their progress in the program.

Parent Engagement Hours Needed:

School Readiness: 5 hours volunteer time in the classroom and/or attend ECCE classes.

Three's Preschool: Complete 3 hours of volunteer time and/or attend ECFE classes.

There are many ways parents can be involved. You can attend ECFE classes with your child. You can also volunteer in the classroom. If you choose this option, please inform the teachers ahead of time when you will be coming so they can plan accordingly. You can get your hours by volunteering in the classroom (parties, field trips, any time), attending conferences, open houses, or ECFE classes.

Parties- We will have various parties throughout the year. A parent or other family member is encouraged to attend as again, promotes parental involvement and the children love to have their families at school seeing what they do.

Photos- Throughout the year, we will take photographs of the children. Photos may be posted on my webpage or our Facebook page. Please complete the permission form and return it.

Play- "When children learn through play, the information is here to stay!" Research shows that play-based preschools are more effective than academic-based preschools.

Potty Training- If your child is still learning how to use the bathroom, we will closely work with you as the parents on a plan. Consistency is key when potty training. We will help your child if he/she has an accident or needs help in the bathroom. Please send extra clothing and underwear/pull-ups.

-Q-

Questions- Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's education. We will make every effort to meet with you and discuss your concerns.

-R-

Rules- Our classrooms have four basic rules: Walking feet, Inside Voices, Gentle Hands and Feet, and Say Nice Things. We follow along with the Viking Valor school discipline plan. Your child may be given a ticket if he/she is caught following a rule. Giving attention to positive behavior is a great reinforcement!

Read- Read to your child daily and let your children see you reading. It only takes 15 minutes each day to build a successful reader! We will read books each day in school too. Your child has the opportunity to check out books in the library. Please return a library borrowing permission slip to your teacher.

Restrooms- We have frequent breaks throughout the day, but your child is allowed to use the restroom when needed. Unfortunately, accidents will happen. We ask that you send a change of clothes to be left at school (labeled).

-S-

Safety- Your child's safety is our top priority. We take every precaution when your child is in our care. Please send a note with your child or call the school if he/she is to go home a different way. We will not change the routine on the word of a child. Let's be safe! Your child will participate in frequent safety drills throughout the year such as fire, tornado, & lockdown. We will practice the procedures before our first drill so that your child will be prepared. It is also a great teaching and learning moment so please talk with your child especially if they have fears surrounding them.

Scholarships- Scholarships for tuition are available for preschool if you qualify. Please let me know if you need more information or would like an application. Applications are available in the summer.

School Supplies- A school supply list will be sent out in the summer before school starts. You can bring your supplies on Open House Night or drop them off in the office before the first day of school.

Screen Time- we limit screen time throughout the day. Sometimes, we use the smartboard or IPADS for lessons. We do educational videos or fun movies for special occasions during rest time. Monitoring and limiting screen time at home also promotes healthy development in children's learning.

Snacks- We do have a daily snack with water. I will assign snack helpers to bring a snack when we run low to replenish our supply. We really appreciate it! Please send healthy snacks (**store bought only, peanut-free**) including fruit snacks/roll-ups, crackers, muffins, cereal, popcorn, raisins, apples, etc. We can have "sweet treats" on special occasions or parties.

Spring Concert (Mighty Vikes 4's only)- At the end of the year, we will have a Spring Concert to celebrate the growth your child has made this school year by singing songs, sharing photos, and socializing with friends we made.

Star of the Week- Throughout the year, each child will be chosen as the "Star of the Week." A form will be sent home with all of the information before your child's special week. Please return all of the items.

-T-

Tax Credit- Depending on income levels, parents may be eligible for a tax credit or subtraction on your Minnesota tax return for preschool; go to www.taxes.state.mn.us for more information or consult your tax professional.

Teachers- Mrs. Melinda Stiklestad (Coordinator & Classroom Teacher) and Mrs. Caitlyn Sonnenburg (Classroom Teacher). There is also an assistant in each classroom.

Transportation- Children participating in a preschool program have the opportunity to ride the bus to and from school. Please fill out the transportation sheet accordingly and return with accurate information.

*****IMPORTANT:** If your child's transportation arrangements change (E.g. a different person is picking them up, they are to go to Grandma's instead of home, bus change, they are not to ride the bus) please provide **TWO** ways of communication to me such as writing a note **and** calling the office or my phone. We need two forms of communication because a note may become lost or misplaced. Thank you!!

Tuition- Tuition payments are due at the beginning of each month. You can bring the money to your teacher or send it in a marked envelope with your child. There is also an option to pay online. You will receive information on how to set it up. If you need financial assistance, scholarships are available if you qualify. Just ask your teacher or contact Tara in the district office for an application. There may be missed days of school due to weather, holiday breaks, and state tournaments and these events will not affect your tuition amount. We figure in these days off as well as e-learning days when setting our tuition amounts for the year.

***A Tuition Parent Agreement Form must be signed and on file.**

-U-

Understanding- Please contact your teacher if you have any questions or concerns any time and we will do our best to get back to you as soon as possible.

-V-

Viking Valor- Is our school wide motto for having honor, showing respect and meeting high expectations. We do also hand out Viking Valor tickets to children that show viking valor. We pick a student of the week showing viking valor and their name will be put into a jar to win prizes at our ceremonies the end of each month. (4's participate only)

Visitors- We encourage visitors/volunteers in our classroom. If you or a grandparent/family member are planning to visit, the parent must let the teacher know days in advance and sign in at the office. All staff parents are welcome, but please keep in mind that this is a learning environment. You may eat lunch only with your child on or near their birthday. If you would like to volunteer and help with activities in the classroom, please let the teacher know ahead of time. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding.

-W-

Weather- Please watch for reports about the weather in case of school closings or early dismissals. You can find information on www.marshallradio.net or news channels.

Website- Our school website with more preschool information is located on the district home page: www.minneotaschools.org

Wish List- We may include a wish list section on the newsletter or webpage about things we may need in the classroom. We appreciate any help or donations!!!

-X-

eXtra Special- Preschoolers learn that they are eXtra special and unique. They will have opportunities to describe how they are alike as well as different from others. They will be able to share their culture and learn about different cultures within the class.

-Y-

Year Book- At the end of the year, the students will create a Preschool Memory Book. It's a special way for our students to remember all of our learning adventures.

-Z-

ZZZZ's- Your child should get plenty of rest each night. It is so important for your child to be alert and ready to learn each morning. Thanks for all of your help and support! ☺