

Eau Claire Area School District

Prairie Ridge

Early Learning School



**Family
Handbook**

3031 Epiphany Ln
Eau Claire, WI 54703
715-852-3600

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Contact Information

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3031 Epiphany Lane
Eau Claire, WI 54703
Main Phone Number 715-852-3600
FAX : 715-852-3604

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ECASD Central Office			715-852-3000
Student Transit			715-839-5116
District Website	Staff Directory	ECASD	
Early Learning Website	Early Learning	ecasdearlylearning.ecasd.us	



WELCOME to the ECASD Early Learning Program!

Thank you for enrolling your child in our program and for trusting us to provide high-quality educational experiences for your preschool child.

The Eau Claire Area School District Early Learning Program promotes a balanced approach to preschool that combines academic learning and social emotional development. Recent research tells us the knowledge that children bring into kindergarten predicts achievement throughout their school career.

Our positive and dedicated staff will work to make sure that you and your child have a valuable and enjoyable first school experience. I encourage you to get in touch with me, either by [email](#) or by phone at 715-852-3600, if you have any feedback to share. Your voice is important to this program. Thanks for sharing your precious children with us!

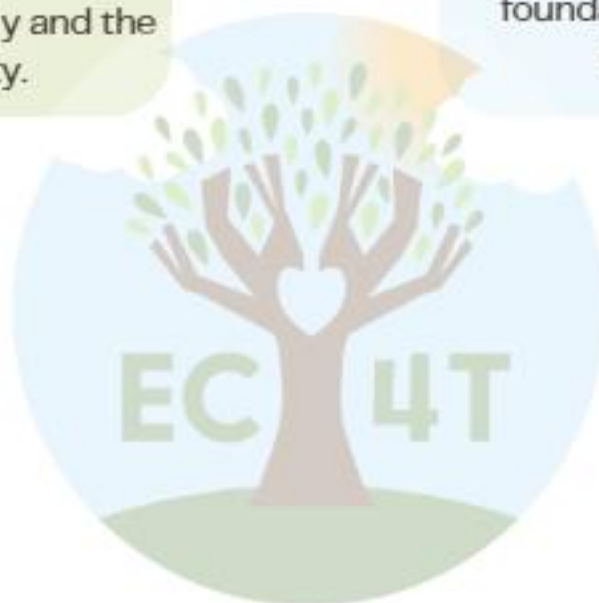
Laurie Haus
Early Learning Principal

Mission Statement

To support each child's development and ensure learning that will positively impact their family and the community.

Vision Statement

We nurture young minds in partnership with the community to establish a foundation for lifelong learning.



Collective Commitments: We will...

Implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum that integrates play-based learning to support each child's development.

Use data intentionally to inform and guide our instruction.

Provide equitable access to meaningful learning experiences for each student.

Prioritize inclusive education practices.

Build strong foundations in literacy and math to prepare for future lifelong learning.

Teach problem-solving and emotional regulation skills to nurture confident, independent learners.

Collaborate consistently as professional teams to strengthen student outcomes.

Honor and seek to understand the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of our students and their families.

Partner with families as equal experts—honoring their unique strengths and working together to support each child's growth.

Key Policies

Absences

If your child is absent from school, it is important that you do the following:

- Call the attendance line at 715-852-3600 and leave a message.
- Call Student Transit at 715-839-5116, let them know your child will not be riding the bus.
- Let us know how long your child will be out of school.

Safe (Expected) Behaviors

At Early Learning level staff teach expected school behaviors and support students in correcting unexpected behaviors. This helps us better understand how to support students/provide relevant interventions and promote expected and positive behaviors at school.

Unsafe (Unexpected) Behaviors

Unsafe behaviors are **physical aggression** and **leaving without permission**. **Physical aggression** is defined as *hurting self, others, or property*. **Leaving without permission** is defined as *running away, leaving the classroom, or leaving designated learning space*. When an unsafe behavior occurs, staff will re-teach expectations and document in the Early Learning Behavior Information Form (BIF). At the end of the week, classroom teachers will send BIFs to their instructional coach to input data. Communication home after unsafe behaviors occurs is expected on the same day.

Behavior	Definition	Example
Physical Aggression	Physical contact where injury may occur to self, others, or property	• Hitting • Kicking • Biting • Scratching • Pinching • Throwing
Leaving without Permission	Student is not transitioning or with the group, or following agreed upon plan	• Running away • Leaving classroom • Leaving designated learning space

Birthday Invitations and Treats

Please do not send birthday party invitations or treats with your child to Prairie Ridge, staff are not allowed to distribute them. Classrooms honor birthdays in a simple and consistent way unless you request the teacher not to mention your child's birthday.

Celebrations

Celebrations are a major component of how our school community positively reinforces expected behaviors. Behavior goals and the celebrations attached to them can be schoolwide, classroom specific, small group, or individual. Schoolwide and classroom specific are considered Tier 1 and small group and individual are

considered Tier 2. Program wide celebrations are used to reinforce positive behaviors and highlight monthly character traits

Change of Information

Please contact the school office (715-852-3600) if there are any of the following changes:

- Telephone Number
- Child Care Provider
- Emergency Contacts (change of person or telephone number)
- Bussing pick up or drop off address

Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter Status

Anyone who works with children such as teachers, assistant teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, and childcare workers are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Confidentiality

The Early Learning Program respects your privacy. The information that is in your child and family's file is not shared with anyone outside of ECASD without your written permission. As a parent, you always have the right to read, review, and request revision of the information in your file. To review any of our records concerning your child, submit a request in writing to the Early Learning Director. The administrator will respond to your request within 30 days. If your child is enrolled in the Head Start program, your child's records will be reviewed by staff from Western Dairyland Head Start, the grantee to ECASD.

Controlled Substances

The possession or use of any controlled substance such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc., on school property, school buses, or at any school-related event is prohibited.

Crisis Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an evacuation that requires us to leave school property, we have a designated location near the school. If there is an emergency that requires us to leave the school grounds, families will be contacted with details needed to collect their student.

Custodial/Non-Custodial Parents

It is the intent of the Board of Education to promote the best interests of each student enrolled in its schools in partnership with both parents of each student. Consistent with this intent, it shall be the policy of the district to maintain strict neutrality between parents who are involved in an action affecting the family, unless otherwise directed by Court Order. The district shall, upon request, provide information regarding each student's progress to custodial and non-custodial parents unless directed by a Court Order on file at the school not to do so.

Diversity in the Early Learning Program

The Early Learning Program is committed to serving children with any needs, abilities, and backgrounds. We welcome diversity and provide programming that will support diverse abilities, cultures, and families. Interpreters are available to support families who speak Hmong and Spanish. We can also help find resources to provide interpreting and translating for other languages. If you need assistance call:

Bilingual Assistance Line:

Para ayuda en espanol llama	715-852-3684
Xav Tau Hmoob Pab hu	715-852-3642

Drills

The safety of our students is the top priority at Prairie Ridge. The State of Wisconsin and the Eau Claire School District requires us to complete several different emergency drills during the school year. Evacuation (fire), secure, lockdown, holds, and shelter/severe weather drills occur throughout the school year.

Emergency Closings

School closings due to inclement weather are announced via a school message and over local radio and television stations beginning at 6:00 a.m. or when the decision is made.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, every effort will be made to contact the family at home or at work as soon as possible. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts listed will be called. The facts of the emergency will be given and the family or contact person will determine if a doctor is needed. In the event of an extreme emergency, an ambulance will be called. Prairie Ridge has a medical response team that is called upon when an emergency occurs at school.

Items to be Sent to School/What to Wear to School

Your child will need the following items at school:

1. Backpack
2. Water Bottle
3. Extra set of clothing (to stay at school)

It is important to send your child to school wearing comfortable play clothes and shoes. Your child will be participating in an active schedule and may get dirty. Avoid clothing with complicated belts, overalls, suspenders, and straps; they are hard for children to use by themselves. Please avoid sending your child to school in flip flops, or high heeled shoes as children will be running and playing outside daily. Please check your child's backpack daily for notes & projects.

Outdoor Play

Students will go outside for a minimum of 30 minutes for outdoor/large motor play every day unless it is raining or the temperature is below zero degrees. Please send your child to school with appropriate clothes for the weather. Warm winter coats, hats, boots, snow pants, and mittens are essential for outdoor play in the winter.

Holidays

The ECASD Early Learning Program does not celebrate holidays.

Student Photos/Video

Staff occasionally take photos of families and children participating in classroom activities and in family events sponsored by the Early Learning Program. Parents have the right to prohibit photos of their child to appear in a website or publication within or outside of the school. The district's language on this issue is as follows: pictures may be published on school/school district websites unless a signed ECASD Opt Out form is turned in or filled out on Infinite Campus. Last names will not be used to identify students. First names may be used for identification. If you prefer not to have your or your child's picture published, please ask for and sign an ECASD Opt Out form and turn it in to the office. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you give us permission to allow your child to be in photos or videos at school. Please be considerate when you are taking photos or videos at school and be sure to only capture your child.

Contacting Teachers

Please refrain from contacting teachers by phone when school is in session. In case of an emergency or to pass along an important message, please call the school office: 715-852-3600.

Volunteers

If you wish to volunteer, please contact your child's teacher, the administrative assistant or the family services coordinator. Staff will communicate about the next steps to volunteer. There is a background check process in place.

Weapons Policy

No one shall possess a weapon on school property, school buses, or at any school related event. Any object which could be used to cause bodily injury or property damage and which has no school related purpose will be considered a weapon.

Educational Services

Developmental Screening Process-Head Start Students Only

A developmental screening is completed for each child enrolled in Head Start within 45 calendar days after the child begins the Early Learning Program. This screening combines information from the family and teachers. The developmental screening includes information on the child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills. The purpose of this screening process is to identify children who could benefit from special services. Developmental screening is one part of the total screening process that also includes vision & hearing screening, physical exam, nutrition assessment, and dental exam. For information on developmental screenings please contact your child's teacher.

Home Visits-Head Start Students Only

Your child's teacher will arrange two home visits. Additional home visits will be provided by family services staff as requested by the family. The purpose of the home visit is to get to know your family and set and support the goals for your child.

Family Conferences

Your child's teacher will contact you to arrange two family conferences. Conferences give you an opportunity to review examples of your child's work, learn more about daily activities and ask questions to your child's teacher. Child progress and observations will also be discussed.

Early Learning Assessments

The Early Learning Program has developed essential outcomes which identify student knowledge or ability in the following areas: Health and Development, Social and Emotional, Literacy, Math and Language development, Cognition and General knowledge, and Approaches to Learning. Screening assessments and observation assessments are used to measure growth in these areas. The information helps teachers plan for instruction and report progress. There will be two progress reports (January and June) shared with you.

Special Education

When children have identified special needs and require special services to access their education, one or more of the following may be provided: Special Education teacher, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, audiology or vision services.

How Can I Learn More About Special Education Services for My Child?

The ECASD is committed to assisting families when they have questions or concerns regarding a child's development. Please feel free to talk with your child's teacher if you have questions about your child's development.

Mental Health Services

School Based Mental Health

Our Social-Emotional curriculums offer learning that is designed to help children feel good about themselves, learn to get along well with others, and solve conflicts with words. Mental health means thinking healthy about oneself and having healthy relationships with others. The Early Learning Program supports the emotional well-being of all children. Please speak with your child's teacher or the School Social Worker if you have questions regarding your child's social-emotional development and/or behavior. Some issues you may want to discuss include:

- Impact of family stress and changes
- Sibling rivalry
- Discipline strategies
- Worry/fears
- Self-esteem
- Frustration/anger
- Domestic violence
- Substance abuse

Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS)

PBIS is a system set up to help children improve their behavior, social skills, and learning skills. There are many benefits of PBIS: safer learning environments, children with challenging behavior receive the support they need, and by reducing challenging behavior, more time is available for teaching and learning. Children are taught how to be safe in each area of the building so they can meet behavior expectations. All children are a part of PBIS. Staff model, teach, re-teach, and encourage positive behavior.

The following Behavior Expectations are taught:

1. We are Safe
2. We are Helpful
3. We are Ready

How Can Families Support Positive Behavior?

- Encourage your child to do their best.
- Practice routines (bedtime, meals, getting ready in the morning).
- Set limits and follow through consistently.
- Celebrate and reinforce your child's efforts at school.
- Be involved in school activities and events.
- Send the message that school is important.

Health and Nutrition Services

Hearing and Vision Screenings

Every child has a hearing and vision screening during the first 45 days of each school year. If the screening shows cause for concern, the school will notify you. If you need assistance in scheduling an appointment with an ophthalmologist or audiologist, please contact the school.

Illness and Sick Child Guidelines

Although we encourage and expect regular attendance, to maintain the good health of all our students, please refrain from sending your child to school if they are sick. This will reduce the overall number of illnesses among the students. If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms at school, a parent/guardian/emergency contact will be notified to come and pick up the student:

- Fever-Temperature of 100.4° or more
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Persistent coughing
- Draining or spreading rash

If your child has or is experiencing any of the above symptoms in the last 24 hours, please keep your child home from school. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact the school nurse for further directions. The school nurse can be contacted by calling the Prairie Ridge office at 715-852-3600.

Immunizations

The Board of Education requires that all students be properly immunized pursuant to the Wisconsin Statutes and regulations of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). State law requires all public and private school students to present written evidence of immunization against certain diseases within 30 days of admission. These requirements can only be waived if a properly signed health, religious or personal conviction waiver is filed with the school. If you have questions regarding immunizations or about immunization clinic times and dates, contact the Eau Claire City/County Health Department at 715-839-4718.

Insurance

Student insurance plans are available for purchase. If you are interested in learning more about student insurance plans or receiving an application, please contact the Early Learning Office at 715-852-3600.

Medication

The state Medical Examining Board has issued guidelines for schools concerning the administration of medication by school personnel. Appropriate forms are available in the school office. The following requirements must be met before school personnel can legally administer medication:

1. The medication form must be completed & signed by a parent or legal guardian.
2. The medication form must be completed & signed by the child's physician.
3. The medication must be delivered to school by the parent or guardian.
4. The medication must be properly labeled from the pharmacy.

Medications Administered in School Setting-Family Information

If your child needs assistance with taking medications in the school setting, it is very important that accurate, consistent, and complete information be provided on both the Physician Order for Medication Administration form and the medication. Parents are ultimately responsible for providing an accurate and complete form from the doctor, and the proper medication clearly labeled from the pharmacist/doctor.

School Nurse

We have a nurse consultant available to assist with designing and implementing plans for students with critical health needs. The nurse consultant splits her time between several schools and is available by appointment. If you'd like to meet with the nurse, call 715-852-3600.

Sleep Recommendations

3-11 months old	14-15 hours of sleep
1-3 years old	12-14 hours of sleep
3-6 years old	10-12 hours of sleep
7-12 years old	10-11 hours of sleep

Children who are not getting enough sleep may experience:

Inattention, hyperactivity, impulsiveness, aggression, moodiness, irritability, frustration, silliness, difficulty making decisions, and a decrease in creativity and school performance.

What can families do to help promote good sleep habits?

- Establish a set bedtime based on your child's age and recommended hours of sleep.
- Establish bedtime routines. Do the same routine at the same time every night.
- Eliminate or restrict caffeine from their diet.
- No screen time (TV, tablet, video games, computer, etc.) at least 1 hour before bed and do not allow screen time in the bedroom while trying to sleep.
- Keep voices low and gentle during this time.

Snacks and Meals

Every child enrolled at Prairie Ridge receives a meal at no cost because we have a grant through the USDA. Students in the AM session will be served breakfast and a snack. Students in the PM session will be served lunch and a snack. Nutrition is an important part of the curriculum. New foods are introduced to children on a regular basis. Children and staff eat together at small tables. Teachers use this time of the day to teach and give children time to practice language skills, table manners, and self-help skills. Children are not allowed to bring their own food items. If your child has a special diet, you will be asked to complete a food modification form, signed by your child's doctor.

Family Engagement

Families play a major role in influencing their child's success in school. The Early Learning Program encourages families to be involved in their children's education. Listed below are several ways families may participate in their children's educational experience:

Family Events and Trainings

Check out the monthly parent newsletter, "Connections". It contains all the information you need to participate in the family events and training offered!

Monthly Newsletter

Family Services

The Early Learning Program offers assistance to families in a variety of ways. Family Services Facilitators are available to assist families as needs arise and are able to provide emergency assistance, crisis intervention, direct assistance and referrals to other service agencies. Family Services Facilitators are also available to provide resources in the areas of literacy, employment, and continuing education. Prairie Ridge has a food pantry and clothing closet, all families enrolled in ECASD Early Learning are welcome to access these free and confidential resources. If you would like to schedule an appointment to use the food pantry or clothing closet, or to speak to a Family Services Facilitator, please call 715-852-3600.

Partnership Agreements

If your child is enrolled in Head Start, you will complete a form regarding your family's status called the Family Partnership Agreement. Goal setting is a part of the agreement that speaks to your wishes and dreams for your family/self. Family Services Facilitators will assist you in achieving your goals by finding the resources necessary to assist your family.

Recruitment for Head Start

ECASD Early Learning Head Start is a delegate of Western Dairyland. Head Start has a long tradition of delivering comprehensive and high-quality services designed to foster healthy development for low-income children. Head Start agencies provide a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; and parent engagement. In addition, the entire range of Head Start services is responsive and appropriate to each child and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage. All Head Start programs must adhere to Performance Standards which define the services Head Start programs are to provide to the children and families they serve. They are designed to ensure Head Start goals and objectives are implemented successfully, the Head Start philosophy continues to thrive, and all grantee/delegate agencies maintain the highest possible quality of Head Start services.

If know someone interested in applying for Head Start, please call the Early Learning Office.

715-852-3600



Head Start Parent Leadership Opportunities

Parent Committee

The Parent Committee is comprised of all parents of children who are currently enrolled in Head Start.

Parent Committee members:

- *Advise staff in developing and implementing local program activities and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families
- *Communicate with the Policy Committee

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is the local governing body for the Eau Claire Area School District (ECASD) Head Start program. It is made up of a representative group of Head Start parents & community representatives. At least 50% or more of the group must be composed of parents who have a child currently enrolled in Head Start.

Parents on Policy Committee are elected to the following positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Recorder. The Policy Committee works in collaboration with the Head Start Program Coordinator to govern the Head Start program through what is called shared governance. At Policy Committee meetings representatives review, provide input, and vote on matters such as:

- *Personnel reports
- *Financial reports
- *Changes in programming procedures
- *Grant application approval
- *Ongoing monitoring results
- *School Readiness data

The Policy Committee is responsible for the direction of the ECASD Head Start program.

The local Policy Committee elects and sends representatives to the agency-wide Policy Council.

If you are interested in joining this, contact our Head Start Coordinator at 715-852-3600.

Policy Council

Western Dairyland is the grantee agency for the ECASD Head Start program. ECASD Head Start is considered a delegate agency. Five parent representatives from ECASD's Policy Committee can serve on Policy Council. The purpose of Policy Council is to provide a formal means for parents to be involved in Western Dairyland Head Start/Early Head Start program planning and decision making. Policy Council meetings are held monthly at the Western Dairyland office in Independence.

The Policy Council works in collaboration with the Head Start Program Coordinator to govern the Head Start/Early Head Start program through what is called shared governance. At Policy Council meetings, representatives review, share input, and vote on matters such as:

- *Personnel reports (including serving on committees to interview new staff)
- *Financial reports
- *Changes in programming policies
- *Grant application approval

Policy Council is responsible for the direction for the Western Dairyland Head Start program.

If you are interested in joining this, contact our Head Start Coordinator at 715-852-3600.

Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for children who attend Prairie Ridge. Student enrollment is limited to children in the ECASD Head Start Program, and those children who require bussing to attend EC4T (4-year-old kindergarten).

Backpack Bus Tags

Backpack bus tags will be added to the straps of your child's backpack when they start school. Please do not remove these tags, they each have a special meaning:



The clear tag states child information: child's name, bus name, and teacher's name.



The yellow tag informs staff that the child needs extra supervision with bussing.



The blue tag lets staff know if the child starts after orientation and is new to school.

Riding the Bus

1. Please be outside waiting for the bus when it arrives and escort your child to the bus.
2. A school staff member will meet the bus when it arrives at school and will help your child get off the bus and get to the classroom.
3. An authorized adult must meet the bus when child is dropped off from school, otherwise they will not drop off your child. Authorized adults must show a photo ID.
4. BESI seats are provided by Student Transit and are designed to keep your child securely seated while riding the bus. A BESI seat is a built-in booster seat. All students in this age group are required by law to be secured in these seats.
5. Each bus has two adults, one driver and one bus monitor. The bus monitor helps children off the bus, on the bus, and they help the children stay safe.
6. If your child will not be riding the bus to school, **please call Student Transit at 715-839-5116 AND call the attendance line at 715-852-3600.**

Additional Bussing Information

The Eau Claire School District & Student Transit Company work together to make sure your child is transported safely to and from school. Student Transit will not drop off preschool children at their home or childcare setting unless a pre-authorized person is present. Pre-authorized people are listed on the Early Learning Procedure and Child Release Authorization form. If this form needs to be updated, then please communicate with a Prairie Ridge staff member to make the updates/changes. If there is not a pre-authorized person present when the bus arrives, Student Transit personnel will work with the Early Learning Principal to make every reasonable effort to contact the emergency phone numbers provided. We ask that you provide at least two local emergency phone numbers. If Student Transit personnel are unable to contact an emergency contact, they will work with the Law Enforcement and County DHS workers to be sure your child is safe.

If you or a pre-authorized adult picks up your child from Prairie Ridge, a similar procedure will be followed. If no one comes to pick up your child, school personnel will make every attempt to contact you and/or your emergency numbers. After a reasonable period, the Eau Claire Police Department will be called to determine the next steps to keep your child safe. Our goal is to ensure the safety of your child in case no one is available to pick up your child after school. Prairie Ridge does not offer after school care; therefore, all students must be picked up by 11:55am or 4:15pm.



Bus Rules



Waiting for the Bus

1.

Keep food and toys at home.



Keep food and toys at home.

2.

Stay close to adult.



Stay close to an adult.

3.

Wait for bus to stop.



Stay back!
Wait for the bus to stop.

Getting On and Off the Bus

1.



Stay out of the danger zone. Walk on the yellow line at Prairie Ridge.

2.



Hold on to the handrail.

Bus Riding Rules

1.



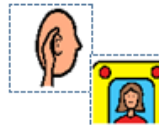
Sit down & stay buckled-up.

2.



Use an inside voice.

3.



Listen to the driver or bus helper.

4.



Be kind.

Pedestrian Safety

Teach your children:

- Do not cross the street alone if you're younger than 10 years old.
- Stop at the curb before crossing the street.
- Walk, don't run, across the street.
- Cross at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing.
- Walk facing traffic.
- Make sure drivers see you before crossing in front of them.
- Do not play in driveways, streets, parking lots or unfenced yards by the street.
- Wear white clothing or reflectors when walking at night.
- Cross at least 10 feet in front of a school bus.



Proud Program Sponsor



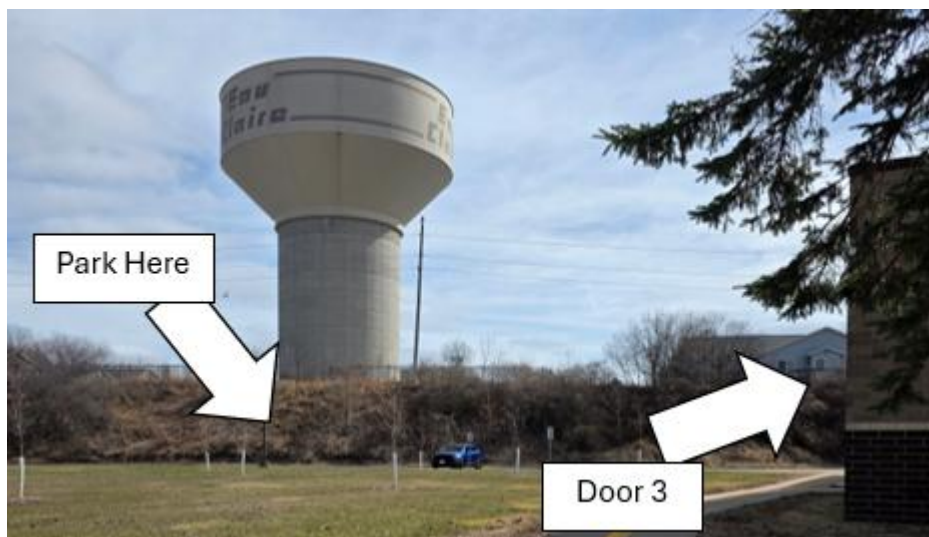
Drop Off & Pick-Up Procedures

Family Drop Off 8:25 (AM session) or 12:45 (PM session)

Door 3

After you enter the Prairie Ridge driveway, turn left and proceed through the parking lot. There is parking to your right. Please park and walk with your child to door 3 (under the water tower).

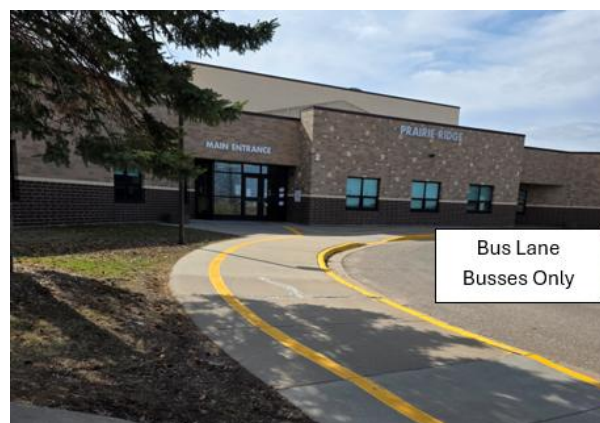
At door 3 a staff member will greet you and walk your child to class.



Family Pick-Up: 11:55 (AM session) or 4:15 (PM session)

Door 3

After you enter the Prairie Ridge driveway, turn left and proceed through the parking lot. There is parking to your right. Bring your ID and wait outside door 3. Staff will check your ID, verify with your Release Authorization form, then sign out/dismiss your child.



Note:

*When dropping off please remind children to use walking feet and stay on the yellow line.

*Vehicles are not allowed in the bus lane.

*The end of the session is very busy. If you need to change pick-up or bussing directions, please call the office by 11 for AM session or 3 for PM session at 715-852-3600.

*If you are dropping off or picking up a student from school during the school day, use the doorbell located at Door 2 (under the Main Entrance sign), identify yourself, and state the reason for your visit. You will be asked to wait for a staff member to assist you.