Van Wert
Early Childhood Center
Education • Innovation • Tradition



LITTLE COUGAR CUBS

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS

PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

1120 Buckeye Drive ◆ Van Wert, Ohio 45891 ◆ P: (419) 238-0384 ◆ F: (419) 238-2137

ecc.vwcs.net @VWECC @VWECC @VWECC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME - A Letter to Parents 3

RAPTOR VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM 3

VAN WERT PRESCHOOL STAFF 4

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS 5

- VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS VISION STATEMENT 5
- VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT 5
- VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS SLOGAN 5

OUR SCHOOL 6

- OUR PROGRAM 6
- OUR PURPOSE 6
- OUR PHILOSOPHY 6

LICENSING, STANDARDS, and CURRICULUM 7

- PROGRAM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS 7
- FAPE 7
- STEP UP TO QUALITY 7
- OHIO EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS 8
- THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM 8
- LITERACY COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK 8
- HEGGERTY PHONEMIC AWARENESS CURRICULUM 9
- MATH 9

ENROLLMENT 10

- ENROLLMENT INFORMATION 10
- REGISTRATION FEE/INFORMATION 10
- TUITION 10
- MULTIPLE BIRTHS 11
- TESTING 12
- TEAM MEMBERS 12
- CENTER BASED PRESCHOOL AND ITINERANT SERVICES 13
- IEP/ETR 13

TRANSITIONS 14
TRANSITION FROM EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES TO PRESCHOOL 14
TRANSITION FROM PRESCHOOL TO KINDERGARTEN 14
TRANSITION BETWEEN CLASSROOMS 15
EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR 15
WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES 15
DAILY PROGRAM 16
SCHEDULE 16
SCHOOL CAFETERIA POLICY 17
FIELD TRIPS 18
SCHOOL SUPPLIES 18
DELAYS AND CANCELLATIONS 18
TRANSPORTATION 18
ATTENDANCE, EARLY PICK-UP 18
CLOTHING 18
BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS 19
TOYS & POSSESSIONS FROM HOME 19
HEALTH AND HYGIENE 20
SAFETY OF CHILDREN 20
DISCIPLINE POLICY 21
MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE 22
REMOVAL OF SICK CHILD 23
MEDICATION AND SUPPLEMENTS 23
ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT 24
PARENTS 26
PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY 26
BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION 26
PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES 26
QUICK INFO PAGE 27

WELCOME - A Letter to Parents

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I would like to welcome you to the Van Wert Early Childhood Center. I am excited that your child will be joining us for their preschool experience.

Your child will be placed in one of our developmentally appropriate preschool classrooms. Our classrooms are fun, engaging places with a balance of child-directed and adult-directed learning activities. Preschool children learn best through play. Active learning occurs daily through play interactions in the following centers: Dramatic Play, Blocks, Math, Science, Art, Writing, Listening, Computer, Library, Sensory Table, and Manipulatives. They also will be challenged in adult-led Large Group Circle Time, Gross Motor Time in the Gym, and Table Time activities.

Your child's teacher is a highly qualified professional, who possesses a four year Bachelor's Degree in Education. Many of them hold a Master's Degree as well. They are all committed to providing the best possible learning experience to equip and prepare your child for kindergarten.

I view you, parents and caregivers, as the most important people in your child's life. Our goal is to work with you to develop your child's full potential. The preschool welcomes your visits, support, and participation in this endeavor.

This parent handbook contains important information for you to know about our program. I encourage you to carefully read this booklet, and to keep it on hand throughout the year. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher, or myself, with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lori Bittner, ECC Principal

419-238-0384

RAPTOR VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

To strengthen our campus safety program for students and faculty in all buildings, all visitors are now required to check in using the **Raptor Visitor Management System**. Upon arrival, visitors will be asked to present a form of identification, such as a Driver's License, which may be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian does not have a U.S. government-issued ID, school staff can manually enter a person's name using an alternative form of identification.

VAN WERT PRESCHOOL STAFF

(to contact by phone, call the ECC office @ 419-238-0384)

ADMINISTRATIVE

Mrs. Lori Bittner, Principal	l_bittner@vwcs.net

CLASSROOM TEACHERS and PARAPROFESSIONALS

Mrs. Becky Doctor	b_doctor@vwcs.net
Ms. Rachel Davis & Mrs. Tonya Sroufe	
Mrs. Alexa Post	a_post@vwcs.net
Mrs. Kaitlin Adam & Mrs. Taylor Semer	
Mrs. Erin Heaslip	e_heaslip@vwcs.net
Mrs. Devyn Anderson & Mrs. Kelly Parrish	
Mrs. Ashley Hockenberry	a_hockenberry@vwcs.net
Mrs. Kristen Conrad & Mrs. Janie Ross	
Miss Alyssa Weidman	a_weidman@vwcs.net
Mrs. Tamara Sharp & Mrs. Ashley Zappa	
Mrs. Danielle Hart	d_ray@vwcs.net
Mrs. Lindsay Bates & Mrs. Tasha Waltmire	

ITINERANT TEACHER

Ms. Judi Smith	j_smith@vwcs.net

SUPPORT STAFF

Mrs. Debbie Pollock, Secretary	d_pollock@vwcs.net
Mrs. Diana Morrow - Social Worker	d_morrow@vwcs.net
Mrs. Nikki Adams - ECC Special Education Coordinator	n_adams@vwcs.net
Mrs. Danae Leaser - Speech Therapist	d_leaser@vwcs.net
Mrs. Taylor Bendele - Occupational Therapist	t_bendele@vwcs.net
Miss Naomi Schlatter - COTA	n_schlatter@vwcs.net
Ms. Lisa Knoch - PTA	l_knoch@vwcs.net
Mrs. Bev Wisher - Physical Education Teacher	b_wisher@vwcs.net
Mrs. Natasha Kline - Nursing Staff	n_hunnicutt@vwcs.net
Mrs. Laura Eikenbary and Mrs. Toni Hauter - Cafeteria	l_eikenbary@vwcs.net
Mr. Jeff Dunlap and Ms. Nancy RIley - Custodial Services	

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS VISION STATEMENT

In partnership with our community, Van Wert City Schools will ensure that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to thrive in post-secondary education, careers, and civic life.

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

Van Wert City Schools will continue to be a source of Cougar Pride while providing each student a quality education through innovative methods and technology.

VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS SLOGAN

COUGAR PRIDE IN ALL WE DO

COUGARS

We are Caring and compassionate
We seek Opportunities to be innovative thinkers and learners.
We are United in a desire to be collaborative with one another and our community.
We take Great pride in the tradition and excellence of our schools.
We have an Attitude that values determination, persistence and hard work.
We are trustworthy, Respectful, and responsible students and Citizens.
WE ARE VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS!

OUR SCHOOL

OUR PROGRAM

Preschool Special Education is designed for children who have been identified with at least one delay in the developmental areas of: communication, fine motor, gross motor, personal/social/adaptive behavior, and/or cognitive learning. The intent of the preschool classroom is to allow the child to grow in the area of the delay and to maximize their educational potential by providing educational instruction and optimal preschool experiences. Moreover, addressing the needs of children at an early age increases their chances for success during kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school. Our program is set up to serve children with developmental delays and disabilities, and also to serve children who are typically developing. Our program is a center-based operation consisting of full days throughout the school year.

OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of our developmental preschool is to provide a comfortable, enriching environment for children age 3 through transition to kindergarten. In this environment, we respect each child's unique and individual qualities. We strive to nurture development toward the child's full potential with our educational program, direct instruction, enriching experiences, and developmentally appropriate activities.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

- Young children learn and construct knowledge through meaningful experiences. Learning is both individual and social, and takes place within a social/cultural context.
- Optimal development occurs in an environment where young children are encouraged to collaborate, discuss, analyze, and develop personal meaning through application of learning.
- Young children reach different levels of learning and development at different times. Learning in the early childhood years develops on a continuum.
- **PLAY** is an integral part of quality programs serving young children.
- Skills and concepts are developed and enhanced through child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities. Young children should be involved with the teacher in planning, implementing, and evaluating their learning experiences.
- Programs for young children must provide opportunities for individual activities and flexible groupings.
- The dignity, personal circumstances, and diversity of young children must be respected and affirmed.
- Families of young children are essential partners in the educational process.
- Developmentally appropriate assessment of learning is essential for planning and implementing appropriate curriculum, and celebrating young children's learning.
- Program practices for young children must reflect sound research on young children and learning.

LICENSING, STANDARDS, and CURRICULUM

PROGRAM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

The program is guided by written policies of Van Wert City Schools that are consistent with the Preschool Licensing Rules, 2022 Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools serving Children with Disabilities (Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3301-31) and Procedures for the Education of Children with Disabilities. A copy of the Operating Standards and Procedures is available for viewing at the Van Wert Early Childhood Center during regular business hours.

The staff at the Van Wert Early Childhood Center request that you contact them immediately if you have any questions or concerns. If after contacting the Van Wert Early Childhood Center, your questions and concerns have not been addressed, you may contact Preschool Program Licensing at 877-644-6338 for "Any concerns regarding the classroom environment, teacher qualifications, health and safety conditions, the number of children, care of the children, or similar matters … ". If your child has an IEP, and you have concerns regarding your parental rights or your child's program, you may call (toll free) 877-644-6338, and ask to speak with someone in Early Childhood.

FAPE

FAPE refers to Free and Appropriate Education for all children. This law is part of the Individuals with Disability Education Act. It states that the education for children who have documented disabilities must be free to them. This is why children on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) do not pay a monthly tuition fee for their preschool experience.

STEP UP TO QUALITY

Step Up To Quality is a quality rating system for the State of Ohio that recognizes and promotes early care and education programs that meet quality benchmarks over and above minimum state licensing standards. The steps are based on national research identifying the key benchmarks that lead to improved outcomes for children. These benchmarks include low child to staff ratios, classroom group size, accreditation, staff education, specialized training, improved workplace characteristics, and early childhood learning standards. We are assessed annually by a representative from ODE, specializing in Step Up To Quality. The Step Up To Quality standards are divided into four areas, or domains.

These domains are then divided up into subdomains, and the specific program standards for each subdomain is explained in each section. The four domains (with their subdomains) are:

<u>Learning and Development</u>
- Curriculum & Planning
- Child Screening & Assessment
- Interactions & Environments

<u>Staff Qualifications & Professional Development</u>
- Staff Education
- Professional Development

<u>Administrative & Leadership</u>
- Staff Supports
- Program Administration
- Staff Management

<u>Family & Community Partnerships</u>
- Transitions
- Communication & Engagement

OHIO EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards describe key concepts and skills that young children develop during the birth-to-five-year period. Their purpose is to support the development and well-being of young children, and to foster their learning. The standards promote the understanding of early learning and development, provide a comprehensive and coherent set of expectations for children's development and learning, and guide the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices with young children.

The standards present a continuum of learning and development from birth to age five in each of the domains. Because the infant/toddler years are marked by rapid developmental change, the standards are divided into three meaningful transitional periods: Infants (birth to around 8 months), Young Toddlers (6 to around 18 months), and Older Toddlers (16 to around 36 months). The standards during the preschool years describe those developmental skills and concepts children should know and be able to do at the end of their preschool experience. (From Ohio Department of Education)

The Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards are divided into the following developmental domains:

- Physical Development & Wellness
- Cognition Development
- Approaches To Learning
- Social Studies, Science, and Math
- Language and Literacy Development
- Social and Emotional Development
- Creative Development

The Standards assist teachers in focusing on early learning and development in order to support and strengthen the developmental outcomes of the children they serve. Teachers use the guidelines to help guide curriculum and learning activities, as well as to document for families what their children are learning and how we are laying the foundation for their future learning.

THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM

The Creative Curriculum is the Van Wert City Schools adopted curriculum for preschool which provides the foundation for, and enhances, our play-based, emergent school day. *The Creative Curriculum* has five basic components: a foundation of child development theories, the classroom learning environment, what children learn, the teacher's role, and parent's role.

For preschool-aged children, the Creative Curriculum applies these five components to 11 curriculum areas: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers, and Outdoors. (From The Creative Curriculum)

LITERACY COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

The *Literacy Collaborative Framework* is our literacy and reading framework for all students Preschool through Grade 5 in the Van Wert City School District. In preschool, your child will be engaged in literacy activities through the components of Interactive Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Interactive Writing, and Writing About Reading.

HEGGERTY PHONEMIC AWARENESS CURRICULUM

Phonemic Awareness is the basis for literacy and reading instruction. It is an auditory training process. It is the awareness of letters, the sounds that those letters make, and how those sounds are put together to make the words that we speak (and eventually write). The program we use to teach this concept to our children is the *Heggerty Phonemic Awareness*: *The Skills That They Need To Help Them Succeed!*.

MATH

The preschool program uses the Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards to help determine instruction in the area of early numeracy.

ENROLLMENT

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

All children must attend a required preschool screening prior to being accepted and placed in our preschool program. Preference is given to children who reside in the Van Wert City School District, but Open Enrollment is now available to families who choose our district's services. We screen in May and August each year to fill openings. We then have monthly screenings throughout the school year to fill any additional openings. After your child has attended an early childhood screening, results will indicate whether there is a need for further testing.

- If further testing is not necessary, your child may be a candidate to enroll as a typically developing peer in the preschool classroom. Students accepted as typically developing students in our program pay a nominal tuition fee for participating in the preschool program. State law requires that each classroom must include an equal number of typically developing peer role models and students identified with developmental delays.
- If further testing is needed, see the TESTING section on page 9.

REGISTRATION FEE/INFORMATION

All students will be charged a Preschool Fee. This fee is due at the beginning of the school year. Checks can be made to Van Wert City Schools. The fee is based on a sliding fee scale.

Parents must also complete an enrollment packet. This packet includes an Emergency Authorization, Release of Information and Roster Release, Transportation Request, Financial Paperwork, and Registration Paperwork. You must also send in a **copy** of the child's Immunization Record, Birth Certificate, and Proof of Residency (utility bill), as well as a copy of any Custody Paperwork. By state law, we must have a completed Emergency Authorization Form on file before your child's first day of school. Please complete the form in detail. In case of an emergency, the Emergency Authorization Form will be used to contact you.
Those children who have been identified as having a disability, by state law, are to have their eyes examined by an optometrist within 90 days of signing the initial Evaluation Team Report (ETR) form. The exam is solely a parent responsibility. Results are then sent to the Van Wert City Schools Special Education Office for record keeping.

TUITION

Students accepted as typically developing peers in our program pay a monthly fee for participating in the preschool program. Tuition payment is due on the first day of each month. ***Checks can be made out to Van Wert City Schools.***

TUITION COST: **There is a Sliding Fee Scale for all children. Please see Mrs. Bittner for details.**

Tuition must be paid whether your child attends class or not. If your child is sick and sent home, you still must pay for the day/month. **Your child's enrollment may be terminated if the account becomes 2 months delinquent.**

MULTIPLE BIRTHS

It is the policy of the Van Wert Early Childhood Center to separate multiples (twins, triplets, etc.) in different preschool and kindergarten classrooms. While this decision can be met with apprehension on the part of parents, the administration and staff believe this could be best for children based on the following research.

In a study by Tully, Moffitt, Caspi, Taylor, Kierman, and Andreou; 2003, it was determined that separated twins “performed better” on cognitive (reading and math) and social-emotional measures than those of twins who were in the same classroom.

Other research by the Twins Trust and the Multiple Births Foundation give some of the following as a benefit to separating twins or multiples.

- If one child is more able, either socially or academically, than the other, separation can reduce the risk of comparisons and competition between the two.
- Multiples may display less disruptive behavior when they are separated versus when they are together.
- Multiples may find it easier to mix in with, and relate to, other children when they are separated, instead of becoming too dependent on each other if not separated.
- Twins can often strive to be the same. Separation can reduce the risk of a more able twin underachieving, or a less able twin struggling to keep up.
- Separation can reduce the likelihood of identical twins using their similarity to entertain other children or confuse teachers, therefore avoiding distraction and disruption.
- With male/female twins, the female twin tends to develop faster, which can sometimes lead to “mothering”. Separation can reduce the possibility of this occurrence, which can also help prevent the male twin’s relationship with his peers from being harmed.
- Separation can reduce the tendency of twins to become hyper-focused on their twin’s actions, allowing them to focus and concentrate more on their own learning.

Twins and other multiple births need space to develop their own personalities, as well as their own cognitive and social-emotional skills. They also need to develop their own friendships and relationships.

As a parent, if you have concerns with our policy of separating multiples, please reach out directly to school administration for a conversation about your children’s placement.

TESTING

If further testing is recommended, parents/guardians will need to provide written permission for this process to begin. Possible developmental areas that may be assessed are:

- **motor skills -** movement and use of large and small muscles
- **cognitive skills -** reasoning and understanding concepts
- **language -** expressing and understanding what is said
- **adaptive -** interacting/adapting to various situations/persons
- **social/emotional -** relating to other children, adults, and surroundings

After the evaluation is complete, an Evaluation Team Report (ETR) meeting will be scheduled. All team members will be invited to this meeting. The team will then determine if the student meets the criteria to be eligible for developmental preschool and related services. The eligibility determinations set by the Ohio Department of Education are stated in A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education.

If the student does meet the eligibility determination, a written Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed for your child.

TEAM MEMBERS

Team members may include:

Parent:
The parent is viewed as the most important team member, and parental involvement in each step of the process is crucial for your child's success.

Preschool Teacher:
Your child's teacher is a qualified professional with a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Education. He/she must also possess an Early Education of the Handicapped certification. Teachers are trained to provide best practice in educational methods for facilitating learning for young children.

Paraprofessional:
The classroom paraprofessional/assistant helps in all areas of the program. Both teachers and assistants further their education through workshops, college courses, etc.

Speech Pathologists:
Speech therapy will be provided by a licensed Speech and Language Pathologist for children who have a delay in the language or articulation areas of development.

Occupational Therapists:
Occupational therapy provides services to children who have delays with fine motor (small muscle) skills, such as writing and cutting. A qualified C.O.T.A. (Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant) may also provide services to your child.

Physical Therapists:
Physical therapy provides services to children who have delays with gross motor (large muscle) skills, such as running, hopping, balancing, or jumping. A qualified P.T.A. (Physical Therapy Assistant) may also provide services to your child.

CENTER BASED PRESCHOOL AND ITINERANT SERVICES

Programming for your child might be accomplished in a center-based preschool or through itinerant services. Center-based preschool is located at the Van Wert City Schools Early Childhood Center providing developmental preschool programming. Itinerant services may be provided at other preschool locations, at daycare, or in the home.

Your child's schedule of attendance is determined by you and the school staff. To ensure developmental progress, regular attendance is important.

If your child attends the center-based preschool, they will be assigned to an appropriate classroom. Each classroom will have a licensed teacher and a classroom assistant who will be responsible for your child. In addition, your child may receive therapy services from a licensed occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech therapist, or other related service personnel.

Complete **confidentiality** of information about your child's program will be strictly maintained. Only your child's teacher and other certified staff involved in your child's program will have access to your child's file. No information will be released without your written permission.

IEP/ETR

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed and implemented according to federal and state regulations. Parental input, in regards to their child's program needs, is central to the IEP process. This plan will outline and specify the services your child will receive, as well as who will be providing these services.

This plan includes:

- a description of your child's strengths and needs (*present levels of performance*)
- annual goals and short-term instructional objectives
- criteria and evaluation procedures linked to short-term objectives
- statements of specific special education and related services that will be provided, and the extent to which your child will participate in regular education classes
- when these services will start (*initiation*), how long the services will last (*anticipated duration*) and the amount of services (*frequency*)

The IEP meeting should be held at a mutually agreed upon time and place. School districts are required to invite parents to attend this meeting. The school district must document all attempts to contact the child's parents. If parents choose not to attend, the IEP meeting may be conducted without them.

If the team agrees with the IEP, then these IEP services will be initiated for your child. If an IEP agreement is not reached, then you will be notified about your rights in resolving the issues. Your child's educational status (placement program) will not be changed without notifying you. Parental permission is voluntary and can be revoked at any time.

Your child's IEP must be reviewed at least annually. However, your child's IEP may be reviewed at any time during the school year at your request, or at the school district's request. It is important to understand that your signature on your child's IEP at an annual review is **not** required as a condition for the district to provide your child with a free appropriate public education.

TRANSITIONS

TRANSITION FROM EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES TO PRESCHOOL

Early Intervention services do not continue past three years of age. At three years of age, your local public school district is responsible for preschool educational services for children who qualify for special education.

Planning for transition starts at the child's IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) meeting. Your service coordinator, the early intervention teacher or therapists who currently provide services to your child, public school representative(s), and an advocate (if invited by parents) may be involved in the transition process. You and the professionals make up the multidisciplinary, multi-agency team that will work together to ensure a smooth transition for your child. A developmental evaluation and/or other assessments will be completed on your child. The various assessments and program reports will be discussed during the Transition Planning meeting. These assessments need to be done before your child's third birthday. Once these are completed, your service coordinator will discuss the results with you.

If your child is eligible for continued services, a meeting will be scheduled to review the results, and to develop an IEP to determine what services your child will need during preschool the next year. This meeting will take place during the month of your child's third birthday.

If your child is not eligible, your service coordinator will discuss recommendations and plans to complete the transition process. You will receive a written notice regarding closure of your child's case. If you disagree with this decision, your service coordinator can inform you about the appeal process.

TRANSITION FROM PRESCHOOL TO KINDERGARTEN

Children who are age appropriate for kindergarten will go through a transition process which includes an evaluation of all areas of qualification if they are currently on an IEP. Parents will be invited to participate in this process. There will also be activities planned by preschool and kindergarten staff to make the transition from the preschool wing to the kindergarten wing smooth and enjoyable for all children.

Van Wert City School District Policy for kindergarten entrance is Age 5 on or before August 1 of each year. Preschool children may remain in preschool as long as they do not turn 6 on or before December 1 of each year. If they do, they must go on to kindergarten.

TRANSITION BETWEEN CLASSROOMS

A child may also be moved to a different classroom for other reasons, such as ***developmental needs***, ***parent concerns***, or ***available openings in another classroom***. Parents will be notified if a change will be made, and the reason for the switch.

If a parent or teacher of a child in any of our classrooms sees developmental concerns, the testing procedure can begin. (*See TESTING section above*.) If the child has developmental delays, the IEP process will begin and the child may be transferred to a different preschool classroom. There may be a need for Itinerant services before that transfer can occur. If there are no developmental delays, the child will remain in their current classroom.

If a child is enrolled as a typically developing student in a special education classroom, and the parents or teacher have concerns about his/her development, the testing procedure can be started. If the child has a delay, they will qualify as a student with special needs. At this time, they may or may not be able to stay in the same classroom, depending upon available openings. If there is not a delay, the child will remain as a typically developing student in their present classroom.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

Extended school year services are special education and related services that are provided outside the adopted school year calendar. The child's educational team, which includes parents, may consider your child's need for extended school year services due to the interruption of instruction between school years. The provision of extended school year services is determined on an individual basis.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Please notify the school office if it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from preschool. If your child is presently served on an IEP, the school will schedule a time to meet with you. Prior Written Notice and the Procedural Safeguards information will be provided to the family. Also, the family will need to provide consent when they no longer wish to be served preschool special education services.

If you are moving to a different district of residence, the Van Wert Early Childhood Center will provide you with copies of all necessary paperwork in your child's file to provide to their new school district of residence. We will try to make the transition to your child's new school as smooth as possible for you and your child.

DAILY PROGRAM

SCHEDULE

The daily schedule is set to allow ample time for the children to participate in the various learning centers, eat snacks and lunch, use the restroom, explore the outdoors, and be part of a group of children working/playing together**.**

Times of Operation: 8:10-2:40

- **Drop Off:** Children will be dropped off by their parent or caregiver in the child's classroom. The drop off window is from **8:10 to 8:20.**
- **Pick Up:** Children will be brought to the lobby by their teacher for pick up by parents or caregivers. Pick up time is **2:40 to 2:50.**
- **Bus Riders:** Parents will be notified by their bus driver of approximate pick up and drop off times. A parent or caregiver must be VISIBLE for a child to be dropped off by the bus.
- **Free Play Time:** Time for creative, purposeful play is given each day. Children will be given the opportunity to plan their own play activities, and use realistic and play materials for learning opportunities.
- **Learning Center Time:** Children are free to choose a learning center activity, such as: role playing in the dramatic play center, experimenting in the science and nature center, working on puzzles in the manipulative center, painting in the creative art center, building in the block center, or experimenting with movement in the gross motor center.
- **Breakfast/Snack/Lunch Time:** Children learn self-help and social skills during breakfast, snack and lunch time. Breakfast and lunch menus will be sent home each month, and will be available on the website at **ecc.vwcs.net/Administration2/foodservice**.
    - Breakfast -- Breakfast is available to purchase on a daily basis. Cost is $1.75 per day. Free and Reduced prices (30¢) apply.
    - Snack -- Daily snacks are provided for all children each day. We do ask parents to provide snacks throughout the year.
    - Lunch -- Hot lunch is provided for purchase each day by Van Wert City Schools. Cost is $2.75 per day. Free and reduced prices (40¢) apply. Children may also choose to pack a lunch. Drinks can be brought or milk can be purchased daily for 50¢.
    - Special Considerations -- If the child requires formula for their nutrition, procedures shall be followed as provided in ORC 3301-37-09 D 1-7.

When money is sent in for lunches and/or milk, please be sure to secure it in an envelope or plastic baggie with the child's name and teacher's name on it.

- **Small Group Time:** Children join their teacher in their classroom for stories, language activities, music, math, science, and social studies lessons. Fine and gross motor activities are also part of this enjoyable time of the day.
- **Outdoor/Gym Time:** Outdoor/Gym (Gross Motor) time is planned daily so children can develop large muscle skills and express themselves freely. Staff will monitor weather conditions. Tennis shoes are needed daily. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. Students restricted from outdoor play will require a physician's note.
- **Nap/Rest Period:** The nap/rest period shall not exceed one hour in the daily schedule. A quiet space and personal mat will be provided for each child to use for rest or nap.
- **Restroom Time:** Restroom breaks are given throughout the day. Group breaks may be taken at the restrooms in the hallway or in classrooms. Individual classroom restrooms are available as needed.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA POLICY

Van Wert City Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which permits the school to offer free and reduced price meals to students who qualify.

Students may purchase their lunch at school, or bring their lunch with them; however, “FAST FOOD” lunches to school are prohibited.

Free or reduced price lunches are available to children who are determined eligible following the return of applications, which will be made available to all families at the beginning of the school year. Applications can also be found in the school office or on the school’s website. Applicants are responsible for meals until a free or reduced application is completed and approved.

The cafeteria uses a computerized debit system to purchase lunches.

Money can be deposited into the account whether the student is free, reduced, or a full-paying student. Money will only be deducted when the student uses the account. Checks should be made payable to Van Wert City Schools and the student’s name and/or ID# should be on the check. The student may use this account for meal or a la carte purchases.

This is a completely confidential system. All students access the system in the same manner regardless of whether they receive free, reduced, or full price meals. The computer will deduct a meal charge from the student’s account according to their pay status.

Van Wert City Schools provides breakfast daily in each of our buildings except when school is delayed.

OFFER vs. SERVE POLICY (This policy does not apply to Preschool or Kindergarten)

Offer vs. serve provision of the school lunch program means students are offered five food components each day from within the federally-required traditional lunch pattern. Van Wert City Schools offers this to students in grades 1-12. All students are encouraged to take all items offered, however, under offer vs. serve, students need only take a minimum of three of five components offered, one of which must be a fruit or vegetable. This allows students to refuse a food item they do not like, encourages freedom of choice, and helps eliminate waste.

All menus are subject to change.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

CHARGING POLICY

In grades Preschool - 5, a student may charge up to 5 lunches. Charge slips are sent home weekly. A phone call will also be placed to the parent/guardian to resolve the issue.

In grades 6-12, charges for lunch only (no a la carte) may not exceed $10.00. A phone call will also be placed to the parent/guardian to resolve this issue. During the last three weeks of the school year, there will be NO CHARGING allowed.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be planned by the school during the school year. Parents will be notified of each planned trip, and written permission will be necessary. Parental help may be requested for supervision of field trips.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

A yearly supply list will be provided by the preschool teacher.

DELAYS AND CANCELLATIONS

When inclement weather forces the DELAY or CLOSING of our program, an announcement on local radio/TV will be broadcast. UNSCHEDULED EARLY DISMISSAL information will also be broadcast. (TV -- Fort Wayne or Lima stations // Radio -- Van Wert, Defiance, and Fort Wayne stations)
Families can also register to receive a **text message** on their cell phone when there is a school weather concern. Go to: **https://www.vwcs.net/Content2/alerts-sign-up** and sign up on the link provided.

TRANSPORTATION

Busing is offered to all preschool children in the program. Pick-up and drop-off locations must be within the boundaries of the Van Wert City School district. You must request busing by completing the blue transportation form. If you wish to change your busing, it must be done in writing by filling out a new transportation form in the school office. Please allow a week for the change to take place.

ATTENDANCE, EARLY PICK-UP

Please call and notify the school **(419-238-0384)** if your child is going to be absent for any reason. A message can be left during nonschool hours. This is to let the school know that the child is safe with another adult.

If your child will be leaving school early, call or send in a note stating who will be picking up the child. Only an authorized adult may pick up a child either regularly or in an emergency. **The name of the person must be written on the "Policy Release Section on the Emergency Medical Form", on the "Policy for Release" form, or written authorization must be provided to the office.** No child will be released without previous notification.

CLOTHING

Children's clothing should be washable. In order to help your child master self-care tasks of dressing and toileting, clothes should be easy to put on and take off. Please mark your child's clothing if possible.

- As a safety precaution, flip flop shoes should not be worn.
- Tennis shoes should be worn or sent in **DAILY** due to use of the gym every day.
- **Shorts** are permitted to be worn August, September, October, April and May, weather permitting.
- Provide a complete change of clothing (including long pants, shirt, socks and underwear) to use during the school year in case of need. Please remember to update for growth/seasonal changes!
- Diapers/Pull ups: If your child is not yet toilet trained, please send diapers, pull-ups, and wet wipes with his/her name marked on the bag and container. Diapering protocol is in adherence to ORC 3301-37-12 Sections A, B, and C. Potty chairs are not used as each classroom has its own child size toilet.

BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Special treats can be brought to school for your child's birthday. Special days will be set aside to celebrate summer birthdays. Please check with your child's teacher for food allergies in the classroom before sending in a snack.

Suggested snacks include:

- Cookies
- Pre-wrapped snacks such as Little Debbie treats
- Fruit snacks
- Rice Krispy treats
- Ice cream treats or popsicles

Teachers will inform parents when special snacks are needed for holiday celebrations.

TOYS & POSSESSIONS FROM HOME

A child who is carrying and "protecting" ownership of his or her own toy is not available to use the classroom environment to its fullest. Therefore, toys should not be sent to school with preschool children, except for:

- show and tell
- transitional objects approved by the teachers

Toys excluded from preschool include:

- Violent toys, such as guns or other similar weapons, are not permitted.
- Spinner toys are prohibited.
- No electronic toys (iPads, tablets, cell phones, etc.) unless approved by the teacher/principal.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

SAFETY OF CHILDREN

We are very committed to the safety of all our children. The following safety procedures are in effect at all times:

1. No child is left alone or unsupervised at any time.
2. A telephone is located in the classroom and is available for use in the event of an emergency.
3. Fire drills are held monthly, and the preschool staff and students practice threatening weather drills. A record of these drills is kept in the school office.
4. Fire emergency and weather alert plans, including diagrams showing evacuation routes, are posted in the classrooms.
5. All preschool staff members are trained in CPR, First Aid, Communicable Disease, and Child Abuse. We are all mandated reporters should we suspect abuse and/or neglect.
6. If your child has a serious accident or becomes injured while at preschool, a staff member will administer First Aid while another staff member contacts the local rescue squad and you. Remaining staff members will care for the other children. If you cannot be reached, only the people listed as emergency contacts on your child's Emergency Medical Form will be notified. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital, if necessary.
7. In the event of a non-serious accident (superficial cuts, scrapes, bruises), staff will administer First Aid, if necessary, and alert you by phone, note, or verbally when you pick up your child.
8. When an accident or injury occurs, we will complete the incident report form provided by the school nurse. A copy of this form will be given to you and a copy will remain on file at the school for at least one year.
9. In accordance with Section SCHOOL POLICIES of Ohio Revised Code, all preschool staff are REQUIRED to report any suspicions of CHILD ABUSE or NEGLECT to the County Department Children's Services.
10. All staff members are aware of the safety rules for both indoor and outdoor activities, and the preschool and playground areas are surveyed continuously for possible safety hazards.
11. In the Winter Season, please remember to watch for slippery spots in the parking lot and driveway. Our dedicated staff does an excellent job of maintaining the grounds. However, we all know that conditions change often this time of year.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

As facilitators of learning, adults in the preschool program provide a warm, caring, and accepting environment for children. When the setting is accepting yet challenging, children are more apt to learn good behaviors, and develop good feelings about themselves and their accomplishments.

Some discipline ideas used by the staff are: encourage the child to explore materials and activities, redirect the child through verbal and physical reassurances, present choices to the child, and if other avenues have been tried and are unsuccessful, then a time out is used. **Physical punishment for problem behaviors is not used.** If behavior or discipline is an ongoing concern, then you and your child's teacher may develop a plan to address the issue.

Our center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

1. There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment, or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
2. No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
3. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
4. No child shall be placed in a locked room, or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
5. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
6. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
7. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
8. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
9. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability. The child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
10. The center shall not abuse or neglect children, and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.
11. All staff have been given a copy of the state law regarding Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS).

MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as he enters a group. A "person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease" means any person trained in prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases as required by paragraph (D) of rule 3301-37-07 of the Administrative Code.

The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

- The program shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.
- A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian:
    - Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a twenty-four-period);
    - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
    - Difficult or rapid breathing;
    - Yellowish skin or eyes;
    - Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain;
    - Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness;
    - Untreated infected skin patch(es);
    - Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
    - Stiff neck with an elevated temperature;
    - Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation;
    - Sore throat or difficulty swallowing; or
    - Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness.
- A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discarded immediately or at some other time during the day shall be determined by the director and the parent or guardian. The child, while isolated at the program, shall be carefully watched for symptoms listed in above paragraph of this rule as well as the following:
    - Unusual spots or rashes; or
    - Elevated temperature
- Programs shall follow the Ohio department of health's posted "communicable disease chart" for appropriate management of suspected illness.
- A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:
    - Cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool program;
    - Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised;
    - Made comfortable and provided with a cot/mat or crib for infants. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or, if soiled with blood,

feces, vomit, or other body fluids, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent;
- Observed carefully for worsening condition; and
- Discharged to parent, guardian, or person designed by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease. The policy shall include, at a minimum:

- The program's means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in hand-washing and disinfection procedures;
- Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting such child;
- Procedures for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to a communicable disease; and
- Procedures regarding the care of a mildly ill child. "Mildly ill child" means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified above of this rule of a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified above of this rule
- Procedures for notifying all parents of enrolled children when children are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox, or lice.

*****Communicable diseases and conditions, such as chicken pox, strep throat, conjunctivitis, lice, etc., should be reported to the school.*****

REMOVAL OF SICK CHILD

When a child becomes ill at school, he/she will be kept under constant supervision, usually in the nurse's office. Every attempt will be made to notify parents/caregivers immediately so the child can be picked up at the school.

In situations where there is a question, medical expertise from the building nurse or Health Department will be sought. The decision to contact you will be made by your child's teacher and administrative staff based on the medical advice that has been received.

MEDICATION AND SUPPLEMENTS

If at all possible, give medication to your child at home. However, if it needs to be given at school, a Prescription Authorization must be filled out prior to administering the medicine. A form is available upon request from the school nurse. This Prescription Authorization needs to include the name of the medication, the proper dosage, route to be given, the time, and the child's name in order to receive this medication. **This authorization must be signed by your doctor and you**. The medication **MUST** arrive at school in the original labeled container. Please give all medications to the bus driver/bus aide or your child's teacher.

If your child requires any food supplements or fluoride supplements, please try to give them to your child at home. However, if it needs to be given at school, please provide the school with the supplement in its original container.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

While in some instances that possession and use of electronic equipment or devices by a student at school may be appropriate, often the possession and use of such equipment or devices by students at school can have the effect of distracting, disrupting and/or intimidating others in the school environment and leading to opportunities for academic dishonesty and other disruptions of the educational process. Consequently, the Board of Education will supply any electronic equipment or devices necessary for participation in the educational program. Students shall not use or possess any electronic equipment or devices on school property or at any school-sponsored activity without the permission of the principal, the classroom teacher, bus driver or advisor/coach.

Examples of prohibited devices include, but are not limited to cameras (photographic and/or video), laptops, tablets (e.g., iPad-like devices), smartphones, e-readers (e.g., Kindle-like devices), personal digital assistants (PDAs), lasers, laser pens, or pointers, radios, “boom-boxes”, headphones, portable CD/MP3 players, portable TV’s, electronic games/toys, pagers/beepers, other paging devices or recording devices, or other devices with one- or two-way audio communication technology.

Students are prohibited from using electronic equipment or devices in a manner that may be physically harmful to another person (e.g. shining a laser in the eyes of another student). Further, at no time may any camera or other electronic equipment/device be utilized by a student in a way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed, or intimidated. See Policy 5517.01 - Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior. In particular, students are prohibited from using a camera or other electronic construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation/transgenter identity), age, disability, religion, or political beliefs; and (2) send, share, view or possess pictures, text messages, e-mails or other materials or a sexual nature (i.e., sexting) in electronic or any other form. Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, such actions will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Students are prohibited from using cameras and other electronic equipment/devices to capture, record or transmit test, information or any other information in manner constituting fraud, theft, or academic dishonesty. Similarly, students are prohibited from using cameras and other electronic equipment and devices to capture, record, or transmit the words (i.e. audio) and/or images (i.e. pictures/video) of any student, staff member or other person in the school or while attending a student-related activity, without express prior notice and explicit consent for the capture and/or recoding of such words or images. Using a camera or other electronic equipment/devices to capture, record or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without his/her consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted, unless authorized by the building principal. Camera and electronic equipment/devices are expressly banned from and may not be possessed, activated, or utilized at any time in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include but are not limited to locker rooms, shower facilities, restrooms, classrooms and any other areas where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes. The building principal has authority to make determinations as to other specific locations and

situations where possession of a camera or other equipment/device is absolutely prohibited.

Unauthorized electronic equipment and devices will be confiscated from the student by school personnel and disciplinary action taken.

Any electronic equipment/device confiscated by District staff will be marked in a removable manner with the student's name and held in a secure location in the building's central office until it is retrieved by the parent/guardian. Electronic equipment/devices in District custody will not be searched or otherwise tampered with unless school officials reasonably suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of the law or other school rules (e.g. a student is observed using a camera in a prohibited area). Any search will be conducted in accordance with Policy 5771 - Search and Seizure.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of any electronic equipment or devices they bring to school. The Board assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage or vandalism to electronic equipment and devices brought onto its property, or the unauthorized use of such devices.

PARENTS

PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

Our preschool becomes richer as our families become more involved. We encourage you to participate in your child's classroom. The following is a list of some of the many ways for parents to participate:

- Go on a field trip
- Volunteer to help with a family event
- Share an interest or talent with a classroom
- Attend a family event
- Read to your child's class
- Bring a special snack

There are many ways to be involved. See your child's teacher or someone in the office for more ideas!

Working together to support your child's development depends on clear and frequent communication.

- Check your child's backpack daily for any notes sent home by the teachers or staff.
- Parents are encouraged to sign up for a Class Dojo account with their child teacher to receive pictures and information throughout the year.
- A monthly newsletter will be sent home with each child that will give specific information about activities involving the entire preschool.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the program shall be permitted limited access to the school during its hours of operation to contact his child, evaluate the care provided by the program, the premises, or for other purposes approved by the director/principal. Upon entering the premises, the parent shall report to the school office. (ORC 3301.37.07E)

BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION

The ECC collects BoxTops for Education. Send them into your child's classroom anytime throughout the school year. Money from BoxTops has been used for special events or awards for the children. More information is sent home with children each year on online ways to participate.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Your child's teacher will give you the opportunity twice a year to schedule a parent conference:

- The November conference will be a traditional Parent/Teacher conference.
- In the Spring, you're invited to a KISS Day to visit your child's classroom and also a time to set up an additional conference if you so choose.

QUICK INFO PAGE

School Phone number: 419-238-0384

Principal: Mrs. Lori Bittner

Secretary: Mrs. Debbie Pollock

District Website: **vwcs.net**

→ Sign up for text alerts for delays, cancellations and other ECC information

Preschool Times of Operation: 8:10 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.

Drop off in the classroom: 8:10 a.m. - 8:20 a.m.

Pick up in the lobby: 2:40 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.

Food:

Lunch Price -- $2.75

Reduced price -- 40¢

Milk/Juice -- 50¢

Breakfast -- $1.75

Reduced price -- 30¢

Place money in an envelope or baggie with <u>your child's name and teacher's name</u> on the front.

Tuition:

→ There is a Sliding Fee Scale for all children.

→ Please see Mrs. Bittner for details.

→ All checks can be made out to: Van Wert City Schools