



SIDNEY C. HUNTINGTON SCHOOL EARLY CHILDHOOD

PARENT HANDBOOK - AGES 3-5

2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

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INTRODUCTION

This Galena City School District, Sidney C. Huntington School early childhood handbook is intended for children ages 3–5 and their families. It outlines our programs, expectations, policies and procedures to provide an engaging, safe, culturally and developmentally appropriate learning environment. Our early childhood programs are aligned to best practices, and utilize research-based curriculum.

Local program contact information:

- Program site: Sidney C. Huntington School
- School Phone Number: 907-318-6608
- Programs
 - + Preschool (3's)
 - + Pre-K (4's)

WELCOME LETTER

Welcome! We are excited your family is joining our early childhood community. Preschool and Pre-K is a time for children to build confidence, develop friendships, grow independence, and learn through play and exploration. Thank you for trusting your child with us!

We look forward to partnering with you throughout the year. We believe parents know their child best, and our shared partnership in your child's learning will help them grow and flourish in our early childhood programs, and set them up for success as they transition to our elementary school.

- Our Preschool 3-year-old program is a whole-child, play-based program focused on integrated learning across social-emotional, physical, cognitive, math, and language developmentally appropriate domains.
- Our Pre-K 4-year-old program is a standards aligned program built for kindergarten readiness. This program remains play-based, and in addition to the integrated whole-child learning carried over from our Preschool program, we introduce focused daily experiences specifically for literacy and math skill development to ensure school readiness.

ENROLLMENT & ELIGIBILITY

We welcome all students eligible by the policies outlined below. Enrollment begins in the spring for the following year, and continues throughout the school year. Families complete required enrollment and/or re-enrollment annually through our PowerSchool [Parent Portal](#). Proof of age and required immunizations or appropriate exemption documentation will be needed to fully enroll your child.

Children are eligible if they are age 3, 4, or 5.

- Students age 3 by September 1st are eligible for our Preschool (3's) program.
- Students age 4 by September 1st are eligible for our Pre-K (4's) program.
- Students age 5 by September 1st are eligible for our Kindergarten program.

Toileting Independence: Children entering our Preschool (3's) program need to be fully immersed in potty training, and out of diapers during the day. We do know children this age may have accidents, and we will include routine toileting to help them gain full independence.

Children entering our PreK (4's) program must be toilet trained, which means they can use the bathroom on their own. They must be able to:

- Use the toilet independently
- Wipe after using the toilet
- Wash their hands
- Stay dry (no frequent/daily) accidents

ATTENDANCE

Attendance matters. Coming to school every day helps your child learn and feel confident. Our programs are designed to build skills step by step - so each day your child is here, they grow stronger in skills that get them ready for Kindergarten and beyond. Being at school regularly helps students feel calm, confident, and ready to learn. When children miss too many days, it can be harder for them to keep up and feel like part of our learning community.

We know that sometimes children get sick or families have emergencies or travel. Please call the front office at 907-318-6608 to let us know if your child will be out. We are here to support you and your child!

Preschool and Pre-K are both full-day programs. School begins at 8:30 AM and ends at 3:48 PM.

TRANSPORTATION

We understand families are busy and may need help getting their child to school. Bus transportation to and from school is provided for enrolled Preschool and Pre-K students for those families who need transportation support.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

- Families will receive route, pickup/drop-off times, and any bus stop information from Sidney C. Huntington staff prior to the first day of school.
- A responsible adult must ensure the child is safely released to/from the bus at their designated pick-up and drop-off stop.
- If a child cannot be safely released at drop-off, the student will return safely to school where staff will provide supervision until a parent/guardian can be reached to pick-up their child.

DAILY ARRIVAL AND RELEASE

NON-BUS OR PARENT/GUARDIAN TRANSPORT

- A responsible adult must accompany the child at drop-off and pick-up when families transport directly. Responsible older siblings may also pick-up and drop-off students as long as teachers and the front office are aware of this arrangement.
- Children may only be released to parents/guardians or adults listed as authorized pick-up contacts; photo ID may be required for unfamiliar adults.
- Please notify Sidney C. Huntington School front office at 907-318-6608 if your child will be absent, late, or picked up early.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and safety practices are designed to keep children safe, reduce spread of illness, and support learning readiness.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Alaska requires children in schools and child care settings to meet immunization requirements unless medically or religiously exempt. Families must provide records or exemption documentation and keep them current.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

Children should stay home when symptoms prevent participation or when symptoms suggest a risk of spreading infection (e.g., fever, vomiting more than twice in 24 hours, diarrhea with accidents, draining sores that can't be covered, or worsening respiratory symptoms). Children may return when symptoms improve and they can participate.

Please notify Sidney C. Huntington School front office at 907-318-6608 if your child will be absent due to illness.

MEDICATION

Staff may administer medication only with a completed authorization form and only if medication is provided in the original container with clear directions. Medications must be handed directly to staff; do not send medication in backpacks.

ALLERGIES/MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Families must report allergies and medical conditions at enrollment and update changes promptly. Action plans (e.g., EpiPen) should be provided as needed.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The program practices safety drills (e.g., fire, lockdown) and maintains emergency contact information. In an emergency, staff will follow emergency procedures and contact families as soon as possible.

NUTRITION

Sidney C. Huntington School provides breakfast and lunch for students at no cost to families. If families send food from home, we encourage nutritious options and ask that families follow any classroom allergy restrictions. Snacks will also be provided as needed, and families are welcome to contribute snacks to our class.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Purpose & Goals

Our early childhood programs are designed to help young children grow, learn and feel excited about school. We focus on creating a safe, welcome and fun environment where every child is included and supported. Children learn best through play, hands-on experiences, working with others, and building strong relationships. Our goal is to help every child feel confident, curious, and ready for the next step in their learning journey.

Our Preschool and Pre-K programs support whole-child development aligned with Alaska [Early Learning Guidelines](#) across five domains:

- Physical well-being, health, and motor development
- Social and emotional development
- Approaches to learning
- Cognition and general knowledge
- Communication, language, and literacy

In addition, our Preschool program introduces, and our Pre-K program meets, the Alaska Science of Reading Act, which requires Preschool Science of Reading components to be integrated into daily activities. These components include:

1. Oral Language
2. Phonological awareness
3. Print Knowledge

Physical Space

Our Preschool and Pre-K classrooms are built for our youngest learners. The spaces are bright, open, language rich, and use developmentally appropriate furniture to provide small spaces (centers) for play-based learning. We have areas for messy water or art play, dress up areas, fine motor areas, block areas, calming areas, and areas to practice their literacy and math skills to read, write and count.

Center areas rotate content to keep student engagement high, and to reflect current units of study and investigations. All classroom areas are accessible for all students, of any ability. Bathrooms are located inside the classrooms for privacy and appropriate supervision.

Classroom Ratios

Our staffing ratios follow best practice guidelines for preschoolers (ages 3–4), which state the minimum ratio is 1 caregiver for 10 children. We do not restrict our enrollment as a public school and will adjust classroom sizes and staffing to appropriately meet these guidelines and what is best for student learning.

Daily Schedule

Preschool and Pre-K are both full day programs, 8:30 AM – 3:48 PM. The daily schedule includes a balance of:

- **Arrival routines and morning meeting** (self-help skill building, calendar, Denaakk'e practice)
- **Learning centers / choice time**
- **Small-group instruction** (literacy, math, fine motor, language development)
- **Large group** – Cultural knowledge instruction, movement, phonemic awareness
- **Outdoor play** (weather permitting), indoor play, and gross-motor activities
- **Meals/snack** (students interact with older peers and adults during meal times to gain social and language skills)
- **Quiet time/rest**
- **Transitions** include the use of developmentally appropriate songs, chants, and movement
- **Closing circle and dismissal** – dismissal includes practice of self-help skills, responsibility, and anticipation of the next day's schedule and activities

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
8:00-8:30AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30-9:00AM	Large Group	Large Group	Large Group	Large Group	Large Group
9:00-9:10AM	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud
9:10-9:28AM	Finch/Kickstart	Finch/Kickstart	Finch/Kickstart	Finch/Kickstart	Finch/Kickstart
9:28-9:58AM	Literacy (20m) Small Group (10m)	PE	Literacy (20m) Small Group (10m)	PE	PE
9:58-10:25AM	PE	Art	Choice Time	Literacy (20m) Small Group (10m)	Literacy (20m) Small Group (10m)
10:25-10:58AM	Math	Math	Music	Math	Math
10:58-11:35AM	Lunch & Recess	Lunch & Recess	Lunch & Recess	Lunch & Recess	Lunch & Recess
11:35AM-12:10PM	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time
12:10-12:50PM	Outdoor/Recess	Outdoor/Recess	Outdoor/Recess	Outdoor/Recess	Outdoor/Recess
12:50-1:05PM	Al's Pals	Small Group	Small Group	Al's Pals	Small Group
1:05-1:15PM	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud
1:16-1:46PM	Denaakk'e	Literacy (20m) Choice Time (15m)	Snacks (20m) Choice Time (15m)	Denaakk'e	Choice Time
1:46-2:16PM	Small Group Choice Time	Small Group Choice Time	PE 1:49-2:19PM	Small Group Choice Time	Art
2:16-2:40PM	Snack Time	Snack Time	Math 2:20-2:50PM	Snack Time	Snack Time
2:40-3:40PM	Choice Time	Choice Time	Math 2:20-2:50PM	Choice Time	Choice Time
2:16-2:40PM	Snack Time	Snack Time	Round Up 2:50-3:00	Snack Time	Snack Time
2:16-2:40PM	Round Up	Round Up	—	Round Up	Round Up

Curriculum

Our curriculum is play-based and intentional, using developmentally appropriate practice. Teachers plan experiences that build language, early literacy, early math, science exploration, creative arts, movement, language development, phonemic awareness, and social-emotional skills. The curriculum aligns with Alaska Early Learning Guidelines and uses ongoing observation to individualize learning for each child.

Families are encouraged to review and look through the curriculums we use by attending Open House prior to school start-up in the fall, or by request at any time. Please see below all of the resources we use to support student learning.

CURRICULUM FOCUS AND ALIGNMENT

Creative Curriculum (by Teaching Strategies) for Preschool:

- This is a **whole-child, play-based** framework. It focuses on project-based investigations where learning is integrated across social-emotional, physical, cognitive, math, and language domains.

Creative Curriculum (by Teaching Strategies) for Pre-K:

- This is a **standards-aligned program** specifically for the year before kindergarten. While it remains play-based, it introduces **focused daily experiences** specifically for literacy and mathematics to ensure school readiness.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND SCIENCE OF READING

Creative Curriculum (by Teaching Strategies) for Preschool:

- This focuses more on oral language, print knowledge, and general language development through play and discovery.

Creative Curriculum (by Teaching Strategies) for Pre-K:

- This features explicit instruction supported by the Science of Reading (SOR). It includes daily focused activities for phonological and phonemic awareness.

Kickstart Literacy (Science of Reading Supplemental Curriculum by Teaching Strategies):

- Play and Science of Reading based lessons on phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary. We use this layered into our large and small group literacy instruction, alongside and integrated with our core lessons.

Finch Literacy Screener (Science of Reading game-based assessment and screener):

- An assessment to gauge language development, provide appropriate interventions for emerging literacy challenges, and collect data for student literacy growth

MATHEMATICS “EVERY DAY”

Creative Curriculum (by Teaching Strategies) Math for Preschool:

- Math is typically integrated into “Interest Areas” and “Discovery” rather than being a separate, daily focused block.

Creative Curriculum (by Teaching Strategies) Math for Pre-K:

- Includes structured, intentional daily math experiences (categorizing, graphing, and data collection) that are more robust than the general preschool units.

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE:

We fully support dual languages in our programs. We currently instruct our students in the local language, Denaakk’e, as their second language. In our programs. We do this through:

- Students attend a Denaakk’e classroom 30 minutes, two days per week, with a local Koyukon Athabaskan teacher
- Inside the daily classroom, regular education teachers instruct in Denaakk’e as part of daily routines in the following ways:
 - + Using visuals, repetition, and daily practice
 - + We label the classroom, and have visuals posted with descriptions in both languages
 - + We encourage children to use both languages in their play, daily routines, or as we see wildlife out our windows

ASSESSMENT

Developmental Screeners

We want to help every child grow and learn. One way we do this is using a simple tool called the [Ages & Stages](#) Questionnaire, or ASQ. This is a developmental screening, conducted two times per year: fall and spring. This tool helps us learn more about how your child is doing with milestones, such as talking, moving, playing, and solving problems, and the results can give families fun ways to support learning at home. Screening is completed by families who sign a consent, and results are recorded for tracking student developmental growth over time. Parents can take the ASQ screener home, or attend our voluntary school event to get our support to complete the screener.

If your child's results suggest a concern, staff may recommend further screening, classroom support, or referral for further evaluation. All students are re-screened in the spring.

This screener, the ASQ, is administered within the first 45 days of the school year, or the first 45 days of a student's attendance (or accepts results conducted by another program). School staff is trained to support the ASQ administration, data collection, and results interpretation.

The results of this screener are not used to exclude children from participation nor enrollment in our programs. Results are not used to diagnose any developmental delays, but may be an indicator that further evaluation may be needed.

If the student or family speaks a language other than English, program staff will utilize an interpreter as necessary to support sufficient and accurate screening.

In addition, in our early learning programs, no assessment data will be used to rank or compare students. Development in young children happens at different rates, and we will only be using our assessment to watch and track individual student growth over time.

Developmental Assessments

Teaching Strategies GOLD is a research-based formative assessment conducted two times per year: fall and spring. This tool uses observations from across the school year to track your child's development in areas like talking, thinking, moving, and getting along with others. Teachers collect observation notes, work samples, and photos over time and use GOLD objectives to summarize progress during checkpoint windows. Results inform instruction and are shared with families.

Results are shared and discussed with families, and we will talk through what they mean for your child. These check-ins help us understand what your child is doing well and where they might need more support. Again, results are not used to exclude children from participation nor enrollment in our programs. Results are not used to diagnose any developmental delays, but may be an indicator that further evaluation may be needed.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Positive Guidance

We believe that children learn best when they feel safe, respected and supported. We know young children are still learning to manage their feelings and behavior. We use positive behavior guidance to teach children how to make good choices, solve problems, and play well with others. Staff model respectful communication, set clear and consistent limits, and teach children how to express feelings, solve problems, and repair harm.

We promote a child's ability to make good choices by:

- Proactively setting and teaching clear routines, rules and expectations
- Modeling kind and respectful behavior throughout the school building
- Using gentle reminders and forced choices when needed
- Helping children understand how their actions affect others
- Praising positive behaviors to help them grow

We also use [Al's Pals](#) by Creative Curriculum to help support our Social Emotional learning in both our Preschool and Pre-K classrooms. This curriculum supports helping young children make healthy decisions, resolve conflicts, manage their feelings and build friendships.

Discipline

We know young children are still learning to manage their feelings and behavior. Most behaviors are addressed through calm conversations, guidance, and teaching problem-solving skills. However, if a child shows serious or unsafe behavior – biting, hitting, or repeated aggression – toward others, our team will work closely with families and any needed specialists to create an individualized support plan. This may include extra check-ins or help from specialists.

We use PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), which allows us to use our entire team, including counselors, Student Support Services staff, families, teachers, and other related service providers to ensure we have the data, systems, and individualized approaches our students need and deserve. We can convene a meeting at any time to support our youngest students.

Our practices and policies do not include suspension of students for behavior, unless as a last resort, and only when the behavior puts the safety of the child or others at risk. If suspension is necessary, we will partner with you to create a plan for your child to return to full participation feeling welcomed, safe, and ready to succeed. We do not use physical activity as a reward or punishment. No child will be unenrolled due to behavior, except in cases described in school board policy.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Home Visits

Family engagement is essential. We will engage in home visits upon request by a family.

Communication

Families can expect regular communication about classroom learning, events, and their child's progress. Communication tools may include phone calls, newsletters, text and emails, paper notices, and conversations at drop-off/pick-up. We send a weekly SMORE newsletter each Friday to keep families informed of school and community opportunities and events for students and families.

Family-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held at least two times per year (fall and spring) to share progress, discuss goals, and review assessment information. Most importantly, we want to hear from you - because you know your child best, and your insights help us support their learning. You can celebrate successes with us, talk about challenges, and ask questions.

Additional meetings are available as needed, and may be requested at any time. Parent-Teacher conferences are noted on our school calendar, accessed [at this link](#).

Volunteer Opportunity

Families are welcome to volunteer, share cultural knowledge, read with children, help with projects, or assist on approved field trips, consistent with district visitor/volunteer policies and background check requirements. Watch for opportunities in our weekly communications. Our volunteer policy is outlined in [BP/AR 1250](#).

Feedback

Families may be invited to complete surveys or provide feedback throughout the year. Feedback helps the program improve services and strengthen family partnerships.

If you have questions or concerns, we are available at any time to support you. You can call or email the front office or the school principal and we will connect with you as soon as possible.

SERVICES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Dual-Language Learners

We believe speaking multiple languages is something to celebrate! We support children who are learning English and another language by valuing home language, using culturally and linguistically responsive practices, and partnering with families. We will ensure screening and assessment practices are appropriate for the child's language and culture, and will use qualified interpreters as necessary.

We already support dual languages in our programs. We currently instruct our students in the local language, Denaakk'e, as their second language. In our programs, we do this through:

- Using visuals, repetition, and daily practice
- We label the classroom, and have visuals posted with descriptions in both languages
- We encourage children to use both languages in their play, daily routines, or as we see wildlife out our windows

Support for Students with Disabilities

If your child has a disability, or if concerns come up during a developmental screening such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), staff will talk with you about the next steps and support. Support may include adjustments to instruction, additional adult support, or consultation with a specialist.

Assessment results also help us know when a referral for additional evaluations (educational or medical) may be helpful. The school will explain the process and involve you in each step. Families are essential members of the decision-making team.

Preschool children ages 3–5 who qualify for special education services under IDEA receive supports through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The district also has Child Find responsibilities to identify and evaluate children who may need services. Families can request evaluations and participate in all decisions.

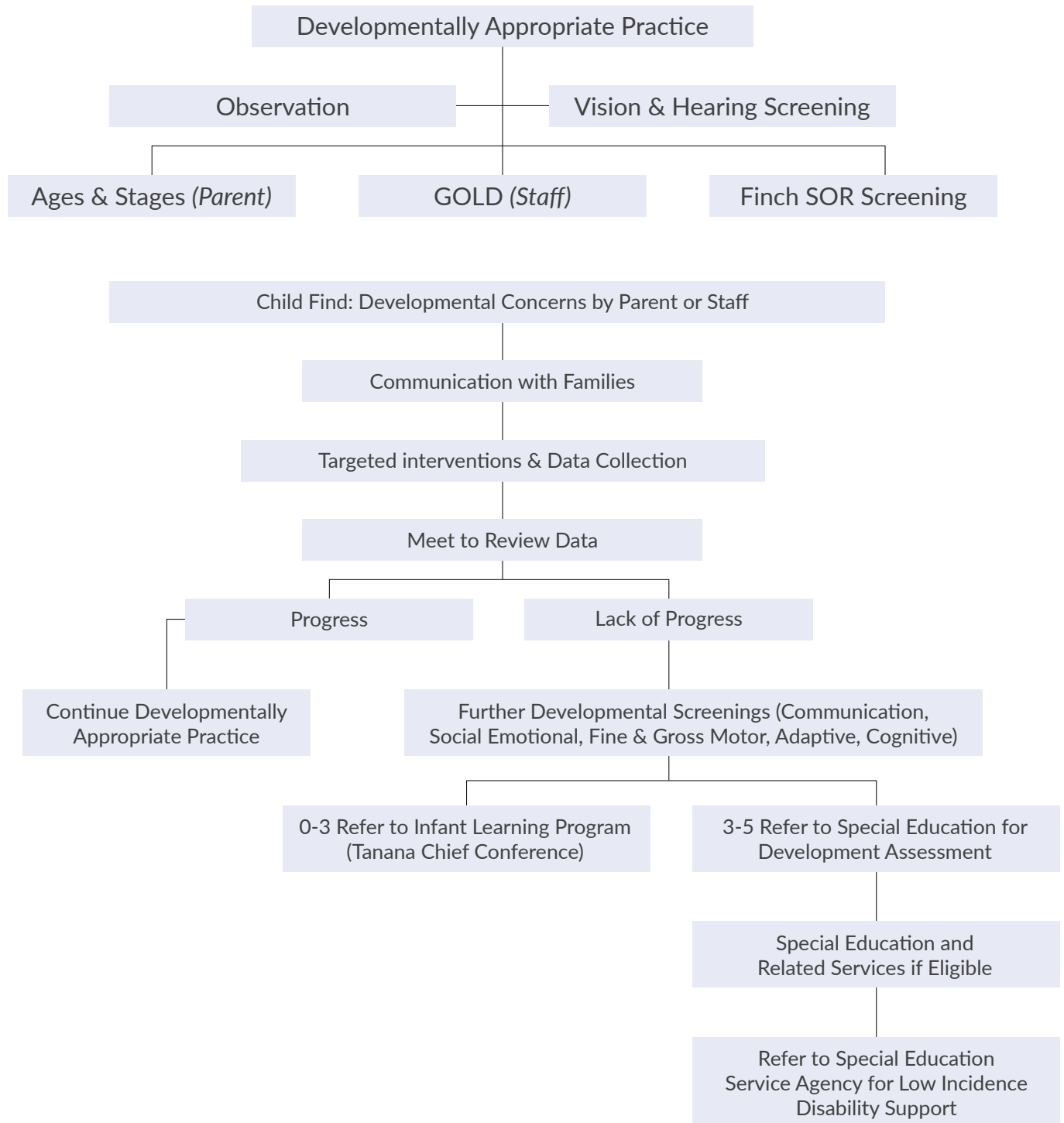
KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

We support a smooth transition to kindergarten through our partnership between our Kindergarten teacher, Early Learning teachers, and our families. Our small school size is a strength in that we know our students and families well!

Each spring, we will have our Pre-K students join our Kindergarteners for a day. For families, we offer an Open House for all of our programs prior to school start-up each fall. As a small school, we know our students well, and we will ensure this transition is a smooth and seamless one for students and families.

APPENDICES

Galena City School District (GCSD) Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Early Childhood Programs



APPENDICES

ASQ Consent Form

AGES & STAGES QUESTIONNAIRE

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 is a screening tool that asks questions about your child's overall and social emotional development. The areas that are questioned and observed will include: Communication, Physical Ability (Fine and Gross Motor Skills), Problem Solving, and Personal-Social skills.

The questionnaire will help identify areas of your child's strengths as well as areas that may need additional support. All information is protected and confidential. Information is entered into a database and is securely protected.

You as a parent will answer the questions about your child. Principal Stringer will score the screeners, and results will be shared with you as soon as possible.

I have read the above information and consent to conducting this screening with my child and sharing the information with the Galena City School District.

☐ Yes, I will participate in the ASQ screening.

☐ No, I do not wish to participate at this time in the ASQ screening.

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date



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