

Preschool Family Handbook 2026-2027

Crest Memorial School Preschool Program



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WILDWOOD CREST SCHOOL DISTRICT
9100 PACIFIC AVENUE
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PHONE: (609)729-3760 FAX: (609)522-2047
David J. Del Conte, Jr., Superintendent

Preschool Families,

Welcome to the Crest Memorial School Preschool Program! We are excited for you and your child to join the CMS family.

This handbook is designed to ensure that our parents have a rewarding experience working with the staff in our program. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information regarding the program's policies and procedures mandated by the State of N.J. and the Wildwood Crest School District.

We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Daily communication is vital. **Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children in a warm, safe and developmentally appropriate environment and to ensure that parents are valued and respected.**

We encourage parents to use this handbook as a tool to follow the policies and procedures outlined. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program.

Respectfully,

David J. Del Conte, Jr.

Superintendent

Wildwood Crest School District



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Mission

The mission of our Crest Memorial School's Preschool Program is to serve the children and families by facilitating and sustaining collaboration while ensuring success for all children; to provide a model program responsive to the changing needs and diverse population; and to enable children to grow independently in a safe and learning environment.

Vision

The fundamental purpose of our Crest Memorial School's Preschool Program is to ensure that all students receive a high quality education through engaging experiences with partnerships between school, home, and community stakeholders.

To introduce the beginning stages of the learning process to the children while intertwining and helping their developmental social and communication stepping stones to unfold. To provide a supportive and fun classroom environment. To help the children make new friends and discover new interests.

Program Philosophy

The Creative Curriculum provides the foundation for academic learning. It is the preparation children need before they learn highly abstract symbols such as letters and numbers. Children will experience growth and learning in their social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development, and families will feel supported and nurtured in their child rearing efforts.

Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children. The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Therefore, our curriculum surrounds learning through play.



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Health Screening & Medical Documentation Policy

Grow N.J. Kids 1.5.1

Health and Nutrition

The goal of school health services is to strengthen and facilitate the educational process by improving and protecting the health status of our children. According to the "School Health Services Guidelines" developed by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2001, the health and intellectual development of children are inextricably related. Therefore, current immunizations help reduce absences due to illness; screening for vision and hearing problems remove potential obstacles to learning.

School Nurse Health Screening

Nurses who work with preschool children and their families provide the following services:

- Conduct health screenings (vision, hearing, height, and weight) at the beginning of the school year
- Monitor and follow up on individual child health records
- Document and communicate with staff and parents about allergies or other health issues
- Assist parents in locating appropriate medical and health resources, as needed
- Provide health-related training to staff, parents and/or children.

Parent provided the school nurse with the child's immunizations records and physical form. *Failure to complete this requirement on time and accurately will place your child on the program's waiting list.*

Flu shot receipt

After Dec. 30, the parent will be required to provide flu shot records within 15 days. *Failure to complete this requirement on time and accurately will place your child on the program's waiting list.*

(If you wish for your child to be exempt, you must fill out and return the Flu Shot Exemption Form on the following page)

I read and understand this policy and I agree to the terms written above.

Parent/Legal Guardian (Print)

Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher's Name

All parents are given this form at Orientation, and digital copy is available on the school website. A copy is kept in the child's digital folder.



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Preschool Flu Shot Exemption Form 2026-27

Date: _____

I wish for my child _____ to be exempt from the
state-mandated flu shot for all preschoolers for the 2026-27 school year for the
following reason*:

**Note: Students can only be exempt for religious or medical reasons*

Parent/Legal Guardian (Print)

Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher's Name

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Healthy and Safe Environment Policy

Grow N.J. Kids 1.5.1

Personal Belongings/ Nap Time Requirements

1. Labeled Book Bag

The items listed below are required for your child to have. It is best to keep these materials in a special place at home to ensure that they are easy to find and returned to school each day.

- Book bag (large enough to hold a folder)
- A folder and communication notebook will be provided.

2. Change of Clothes

Please send a change of clothes and underwear in a small Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. If your child wears pull-ups, diapers, and/or uses wipes, it is your responsibility to provide and label them. They will only be used for your child. Please remember to replace the change of clothes each time your child needs them.

3. Nap Time

Please send in a sheet/blanket. They must be able to fit inside of the large zip lock bag provided. It must be labeled with your child's name. Set of sheets will be sent home to be washed and they must be returned on Mondays.

Safety Procedure

Parents must abide by the following school district guidelines:

- Drop off and pick up locations will be provided to parents at orientation.
- Parents must fill out an emergency and custody form at the beginning of the school year and indicate the name of the person(s) in charge of pickup and drop-off. If any information changes throughout the year, the parents must fill out a new updated form each time.

If parents choose to send their older children to pick-up their young siblings; parents must bring a signed letter to the building administrator and teacher.



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Hand-Washing Procedure: Please teach this proper hand-washing procedure at home.

Hands should be washed upon arrival, after outside play, after toileting/diapering, after engaging in messy play activities, after coming into contact with bodily fluids, before meals and sometimes after meals if finger foods were served.

These are the steps for proper hand-washing:

- 1) Moisten hands with warm water and use liquid soap. (No antibacterial soaps)
- 2) Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds
(Sing the verse of "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat" 2 times).
- 3) Rinse hands free of soap under running water.
- 4) Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel or air dry with a blower.
- 5) Turn off water faucet with a paper towel and throw away the used paper towel into a hands-free trash container.

I read and understand this policy and I agree to the terms written above.

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Parent Signature

Date

Teacher's Name

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Food Policy and Dietary Restrictions Procedures

Grow N.J. Kids 1.3.3

Healthy Menus/Allergies or Dietary Restrictions

Preschool menus follow the guidelines of “Best Practices for Healthy Eating by Nemour Health and Prevention Services” Handbook. Families’ dietary restrictions due to religious beliefs, personal beliefs, cultural customs, and health issues are respected. Download the Nutrislice App to access the menus.

Students will be eating in the classroom and/or outside eating areas. Teachers will sanitize and disinfect tables before serving food.

Information regarding food allergies/ dietary restrictions should be presented in writing to the child’s teacher by the 1st day of school. Staff will make sure to make the appropriate substitutions.

When packing lunch for your children, please take into account the following requirements as per the Department of Education. **Please see Appendix A: USDA Guidelines for Food**

The following items are not allowed in our preschool classrooms as breakfast or lunch replacement: chips, candy, fruit snacks, sodas, fast food restaurant meals.



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Screen and Physical Activity Policy

Grow N.J. Kids 1.2.2

Screen Time Policy

As children get older, too much screen time can get in the way of reading, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family, and can also increase their risk for being overweight or obese.

In order to improve the health of the children in our care, we follow the American Academy of Pediatrics' Recommendations on Screen Time:

- Children under 2 should have no screen time.
- Children age 3-5 should not exceed 2 hours of screen time per day.

Physical Activity

Children should exercise at least two hours per day indoors or outdoors. In our program, students have 60 minutes of outdoor time to engage in rigorous gross motor activities. Gross motor is a mandatory component of the curriculum. Any exclusion from gross motor requires a doctor's note.

Tips for Parents....

- Limit TV viewing, smart phone and video game use.
- Track screen time with a scheduling sheet.
- Avoid watching TV while eating.



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Potty Training Policy

Grow N.J. Kids 3.4.2

Dear Parents,

Our mission is to help and assist parents and children as they transition into the school community. As we work to ensure that your child has a safe and fun learning experience in Preschool this school year, it is crucial to inform teachers of any changes regarding newly acquired allergies, any sickness, and/or potty-training progress. Please let this letter serve as a reminder of the following preschool procedures and policies:

1. It is the parent's responsibility to make teachers aware of the child's potty training progress and of the techniques done at home as well as providing teachers with a change of clothes, pull ups and wipes.
2. Everything you send for your child must be labeled with their names in a ziplock bag.
3. If you are transitioning your child from wearing pull-ups to underwear, we encourage you to send in writing what techniques you are trying at home so we can provide the necessary support within the school day.

We are here to support our parents. Any information given to teachers regarding your child must be in writing and dated so we can keep all information in your child's file in order to update progress. Please sign the bottom of this letter acknowledging you've received this potty training notification.

I, _____ have read this letter and I agree to communicate the progress of my child with his/her teacher if needed.

I, _____ will implement the potty training techniques at home in partnership with preschool staff in order to work towards independent toileting skills if needed. I agree to attend meetings with preschool staff.

- ☐ My child is able to use the bathroom independently.
- ☐ My child is in the potty training process and working towards using the bathroom independently.
- ☐ My child has not begun the potty training process.

Parent/Legal Guardian (Print)

Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher's Name

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Parental Involvement

Grow N.J. Kids 3.5.1

District-Wide Parental Involvement Events

Preschool Orientation: August 27, 2026

Back to School Night: September 24, 2026

Parent Conferences (November 18, 19, 20, 2026): Preschool Teachers will have the opportunity to meet and provide parents information regarding Early Childhood Education assessments and students' progress towards meeting learning goals in person meetings.

End of Study/ Holiday Celebrations: Focuses on what the children have learned throughout the study

Cougar University: Parents are invited to join focused group sessions geared towards specific parental skills and/or to reinforce program policies.

Newsletters/ Remind: Weekly newsletters (Launch Points)/ Daily Remind texts:

- Upcoming school events and meetings
- District related-information
- Information regarding the curriculum
- Upcoming community events for families
- Home-school connections
- Diversity/multicultural activities



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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT CONTRACT 2023-2024

Grow N.J. Kids 3.5.1

Parent/Guardian Agreement:

I want my child to succeed. Therefore, I will encourage him/her by doing the following:

- Believe that my child can learn
- Show respect and support for my child, the staff, and the school
- See that my child attends school regularly and on time
- Support the school in its effort to maintain proper discipline
- Read with my child at least 3 times per week
- Make sure that my child gets enough sleep each night
- Attend Preschool Orientation (Aug. 27th) and Back to School (Sept. 24th)
- Attend at least **ONE** parental involvement workshop or activity
- Join the teacher's communication app (Remind) to receive classroom information
- Read monthly class newsletter
- **Follow all Preschool Policies presented in this Parent Handbook and keep me up-to-date with program information**

Parent/Legal Guardian (Print)

Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher's Name

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Attendance Policy

Wildwood Crest School District is committed to continuously improving student achievement and encourages all students to attend school on a regular basis. The process of education requires instruction that is based on skill building, class participation, learning experiences, and study.

Attendance is an essential component of a student's academic success and chronic absences can have a negative impact on a student's achievement. The State of NJ defines a chronically absent student as one who is not present for ten percent (10%) of the school year for any reason, including absences due to medical circumstances.

There are two types of absences recognized by the State of NJ, State-Excused Absences and Unexcused Absences. The State of NJ recognizes only the following types of State-Excused Absences 1) Religious Observances/Holidays 2) Bring Your Child To Work Day 3) participation in observance of Veteran's' Day or Board of Elections membership activities 4) closure of busing district leaving students without transportation to receiving district or 5) any other rule issued by the Department of Education Commissioner. The State of NJ considers every other absence, which is not due to one of the reasons above, to be an unexcused absence. The Wildwood Crest School District divides Unexcused Absences into two categories.

- **Verified-Unexcused Absences:** Absences for reasons such as illness, doctor's appointment, court dates, etc. Require proper documentation within 10 days in order to be considered an Verified-Unexcused Absence (e.g. doctor's note, note from parent, etc.).
- **Unverified-Unexcused Absences:** All other absences (e.g. vacation, etc.) and any other absence that lacks supporting documentation within 10 days.

Attendance Protocol

Consecutive Absenteeism:

1. Teacher will make a phone call and document contact for a student who is absent 3 consecutive days with no contact.
2. Teacher will email CPIS for a student who is absent 5 consecutive days with no contact, CPIS will then reach out to the parent and document contact.
3. CPIS will contact the Preschool Administrator if no contact is met and a home visit will be conducted within the 7th consecutive day of unverified absence.

Chronic Absenteeism:

1. Parent/guardian will receive a letter and contact from the attendance officer and Preschool Team.
2. If attendance does not improve, parent/guardian will be scheduled for a formal meeting with the Preschool Team.



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Discipline Policy and Agreement

Grow NJ Kids 2.4.5

The Preschool Program follows the District School Policy and Procedures Protocol as follows:

1. **Informational Daily Contact and Documentation:** For less serious classroom discipline issues (disrespect for others, interfering with the learning of others, being unsafe) the classroom teacher would apply normal classroom management strategies. Parents/ caregivers may receive a written notification penned within the communication log (Remind/ email), receive a phone call or be asked to come in for a conference (no later than 24 hours).
2. **Formal Disciplinary Contact and Documentation:** When a classroom teacher has concerns regarding issues or ongoing/serious classroom discipline issues relating to a student (physical contact or defiance); the classroom teacher will share problems with their Preschool Administrator and PIRT Team and contact the parents and have a formal meeting to determine Social Emotional Positive Behavior Supports to prevent challenging behaviors. Teachers will continue to inform parents/guardians of a student's progress using a communication log (Dojo) and complete an initial child plan form. Teacher will keep an agenda with notes from meeting with parents. *Parents/guardians will receive the disciplinary letter at the initial meeting with the teacher.* The letter will be placed in the students' folder for future reference (pg. 13).
3. **PIRT Process:** For ongoing classroom discipline concerns (longer than a benchmark period) or serious classroom discipline issues (physical contact with staff and other classmates), the classroom teacher should discuss the problems with their Preschool Administrator and PIRT Team. A meeting will be scheduled with the Preschool Administrator and PIRT Team to provide support for both families and teachers in creating the child's behavioral plan. Parents/guardians will be provided written notification informing them of meeting time and date.



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Discipline Policy and Agreement (continued)
Grow NJ Kids 2.4.5

It is important that each student and faculty member have a safe environment where they are free to learn. In order to sustain that environment, it is imperative to have well-established criteria for student discipline. Students need to know that they are held accountable for their actions. We strive to keep students and their families informed about the policies and procedures that promote a positive educational experience.

Our objectives are fair and without delay, consistently enforce our rules. The following information may be helpful to you:

- Students must show respect for other students and staff
- Students must respect school and classroom property
- Students must obey rules in the classroom and school
- Students must keep the classroom safe by resolving conflicts in positive, non-violent manner

In order to help your child better understand our school's expectations, we (Teacher and parent), agree to follow the following plan:

Teacher	Parent
List things teacher will be responsible for: 1. Follow through with classroom strategies. 2. Provide daily/weekly updates to the parents. 3. Update Initial Child Behavior Plan weekly with PIRT members.	List things parents will be responsible for: 1. Reinforce rules above at home. 2. Provide daily/weekly updates to the teacher. 3. Document and monitor child's behavior at home.

I have read the Crest Memorial School's Disciplinary Policy. I will discuss the behavior expectations for the Preschool program with my child and agree to comply with the discipline policies and procedures of the Wildwood Crest Board of Education.

Parent/Legal Guardian (Print)

Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher's Name

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Creative Curriculum/Schedule

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool

Our supportive curriculum offers developmentally appropriate support for active learning and promoting children's progress in all areas. This research-based and research-proven curriculum has a variety of resources that will assist every early childhood program in creating a high-quality learning environment. Through utilizing discovery and exploration as a way of learning, The Creative Curriculum for Preschool enables children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills.

Sample Schedule

The daily schedule establishes the consistency that helps young children predict the sequence of events and thus to feel more secure and more in control of events. In addition, a schedule helps children begin to understand time concepts as they anticipate what comes first in the day, second, next, and last (The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 6th Edition, Vol. 1, Pg.77).

Components of Day	Time
Morning Routine/Breakfast	25 min.
Large Group	20 min.
Choice Time	65 min.
Gross Motor	35 min.
Small Group/Limited Choice	20-45 min.
Read Aloud	10-15 min.
Lunch	30 min.
Nap	60 min.
Read Aloud	10-15 min.
Gross Motor	25 min.
Snack	15 min.
Closing Large Group	10 min.
Dismissal	10 - 15 min.



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Teaching Strategies GOLD Student Portfolio

Teaching Strategies Student Portfolio Documentation

Teachers will upload pictures and anecdotal notes to monitor student growth over time.

Teachers will utilize students' individualized information to design lesson plans to target groups based on their readiness levels.

Students' information will be used to create summary and aggregated data reports per building, per classroom and district-wide.

Teaching Strategies GOLD Development and Learning Reports

For the Fall Benchmark period, parents will meet during parent-teacher conferences to receive the first student development and learning report. (teachers keep signed original, parents keep a copy). For the Winter benchmark, teachers will send home the student development and learning report; and for the Spring benchmark, parents will receive the final student development and learning report in June.

Preschool Benchmark Cycles are:

Fall Benchmark: end of November.

Winter Benchmark: end of February.

Spring Benchmark: end of May.

Teaching Strategies GOLD Individual Student Report

This report is kept in each child's student portfolio at the end of each benchmark period.



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ESI-3 Protocol and Policy

Grow NJ Kids 1.3.6

What is the ESI-3?

The Early Screening Inventory (ESI-3) is an individually administered screening instrument. The screening is completed by the teacher within the first 45 days of school (no sooner than 15 school days) for children ages 3 through 5 years of age and takes approximately 15-20 minutes to administer.

What is the purpose of the ESI-3?

The ESI-3 helps to identify children who may need to be further evaluated to determine if they have a possible learning concern that may place them at risk.

What does the ESI-3 measure?

The instrument surveys the child's ability to acquire skills rather than their current skill and performance level.

Visual-Motor/Adaptive (block building, drawing and copying forms) Language and Cognition (verbal expression and memory) Gross Motor (jumping, hopping and other physical coordination tasks)

How is the ESI-3 scored?

To determine a child's screening level, chronological age is first calculated. Based on these results the appropriate ESI-3 version is administered.

The ESI-3 contains 25 items. For each item, a child can receive a score ranging between 0-3 points. Subscales are not scored; only the total score is used when interpreting results.

The ESI-3 yields three scores: Refer, Rescreen and OK. These scores are interpreted differently, depending on the age group.

Screening Process:

✓ Determine child's home language (Home Language Survey) *NOTE: This screening **must** be administered in the child's home language. Contact your Preschool Coordinator if a translator is needed or there is a question regarding a child's home language.

- ❖ Notify parents of screening. (*Parent notification and consent collected at time of registration*)
- ❖ Calculate the child's chronological age.
- ❖ Find your location and prepare your materials. Invite the child to play some games together; follow the script on the score sheet
- ❖ Use the score sheet as the child responds to each item by circling the correct number of points, "Pass", "Fail" or "Refuse" indicators.
- ❖ Teachers update the ESI-3 spreadsheet with correct information (date of entry, home language, birth date, etc.)
- ❖ Teachers screen children using correct ESI-3 Form
- ❖ Teachers will rescreen children using correct ESI-3 Form, as needed
- ❖ Teachers send ESI-3 results to parents as soon as the screening is completed. PIRT coaches will hold meetings with parents/guardians of children who scored "Refer" or "Double Rescreen"



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Appendix A: USDA Guidelines for Food

United States Department of Agriculture

Serving School Meals to Preschoolers

Preschool meals served through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (NSLP and SBP) are designed to meet the nutritional needs of young children. Children receive meals that follow the preschool meal pattern if they are a student in the preschool grade level. There are two age groups under the preschool meal pattern: children 1 through 2 years old (1-2 years), and children 3 through 5 years old (3-5 years). Types of milk and minimum serving sizes for some food components are different for the two age groups. By following the preschool meal pattern, your school can help young children eat the types and amounts of foods that best support their growth and development.

Breakfast		Lunch	
	1-2 years	3-5 years	
 Milk	½ cup (4 oz.)	¾ cup (6 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.) ¾ cup (6 oz.)
 Fruits	¼ cup	½ cup	⅛ cup ¼ cup
 Vegetables			⅛ cup ¼ cup <i>Optional: A second, different vegetable may be served in place of fruit at lunch.</i>
 Grains	½ oz. eq.	½ oz. eq.	½ oz. eq. ½ oz. eq.
 Meats/Meat Alternates	<i>Optional: Meats/meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component up to 3 times per week at breakfast. Minimum serving size for both age groups is ½ oz. eq.</i>		1 oz. eq. 1½ oz. eq.

*Serving sizes are minimums.
 Operators may offer larger portions.
 Oz = Ounces; Oz. eq. = Ounce equivalent.*



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**Differences Between the Preschool and the Kindergarten
Through 5th Grade (K-5) Meal Patterns at Breakfast**

	Preschool	Grades K-5
 Milk	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 year olds: ½ cup (4 oz.) required daily. ✓ For 3-5 year olds: ¾ cup (6 oz.) required daily. Types: ✓ For 1 year olds: Unflavored whole milk only. ✓ For 2-5 year olds: Unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk only.* • Not required to offer different options of fluid milk.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ 1 cup (8 oz.) required daily (5 cups required weekly). Types: ✓ Unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk. • Must offer at least two different options of fluid milk (e.g., low-fat and fat-free milk). • If offering flavored milk, must also offer unflavored milk.
 Fruits	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 year olds: ¼ cup of fruits, vegetables, or a combination of both required daily. ✓ For 3-5 year olds: ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or a combination of both required daily. • May serve fruits, vegetables, or combination of both to meet the combined vegetables/fruit component. • No vegetable subgroup requirements. • May serve 100% juice once per day. If juice is served at breakfast, it cannot be served at lunch.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ 1 cup of fruit required daily (5 cups required weekly). • Only fruits are required at breakfast. • Vegetables may replace fruits (see "Vegetables" below). • 100% juice can be offered to meet up to half the amount of fruit or vegetable offerings in a week (no daily limit).
 Vegetables		Minimum Serving Size: ✓ Optional at breakfast. • Vegetables may be offered in place of fruit. Starchy vegetables can be served at any time during the week, provided at least 2 cups of vegetables from the following subgroups are offered during that same week: • Dark Green • Red/Orange • Beans and Peas (Legumes) • Other. • 100% juice can be offered to meet up to half the amount of fruit or vegetable offerings in a week (no daily limit).
 Grains	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 and 3-5 year olds: ½ oz. eq. required daily. • One of the grain components offered during the day must be whole grain-rich. • Enriched grains may be served at breakfast if whole grain-rich items are served at lunch.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ 1 oz. eq. required daily (7-10 oz. eq. required weekly). • At least half the grains offered each week must be whole grain-rich.
 Meats/Meat Alternates	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ Optional at breakfast. ✓ For 1-2 and 3-5 year olds: Can serve ½ oz. eq. in place of grains up to 3 times per week. • When substituting the meat/meat alternate at breakfast, it must be substituted for the entire grains component. May not count a combination of grains and meats/meat alternates toward the grains component.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ Optional at breakfast. • Can substitute 1 oz. eq. meats/meat alternates for 1 oz. eq. grains after 1 oz. eq. minimum grains requirement is offered (permitted daily). • Grains and meats/meat alternates can be combined and count toward the grains component in a reimbursable breakfast.
 Grain-Based Desserts	• May not credit toward the grains component. • Sweet crackers (e.g., graham and animal crackers) are allowable and count toward the grains component.	• Can serve grain-based desserts denoted by superscript 4 or 5 in Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs** at breakfast for some or all days in a week. • Examples of allowable grain-based desserts at breakfast include sweet crackers, doughnuts, cereal bars, sweet rolls, and toaster pastries. • Items listed in Exhibit A with a superscript 3, such as cookies, cake, dessert pies, and cobbler, do not contribute toward grain requirements at breakfast. • Average daily calories for a 5-day school week must meet minimum and maximum values.

* Unflavored whole milk and unflavored reduced-fat (2%) milk may be served to children between the ages of 24 and 25 months to help with the transition from whole milk to fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

** Available at: <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>



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Differences Between Preschool and K-5 Meal Patterns at Lunch

	Preschool	Grades K-5
 Milk	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 year olds: ½ cup (4 oz.) required daily. ✓ For 3-5 year olds: ¾ cup (6 oz.) required daily. Types: ✓ For 1 year olds: Unflavored whole milk only. ✓ For 2-5 year olds: Unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk only.* • Not required to offer different options of fluid milk.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ 1 cup (8 oz.) required daily (5 cups required weekly). Types: ✓ Unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk. • Must offer at least two different options of fluid milk (e.g., low-fat and fat-free milk). • If offering flavored milk, must also offer unflavored milk.
 Fruits	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 year olds: ½ cup required daily. ✓ For 3-5 year olds: ¾ cup required daily. • A second, different vegetable may be served in place of fruit. • May serve 100% juice once per day. If juice is served at breakfast, it cannot be served at lunch.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ ½ cup required daily (2½ cups required weekly). • A second vegetable cannot be offered in place of fruit. • 100% juice can be offered to meet up to half the amount of fruit or vegetable offerings in a week (no daily limit).
 Vegetables	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 year olds: ½ cup required daily. ✓ For 3-5 year olds: ¾ cup required daily. • No vegetable subgroup requirements. • A second, different vegetable can be served in place of fruit. • May serve 100% juice once per day. If juice is served at breakfast, it cannot be served at lunch.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ ¾ cup required daily (3¾ cups required weekly). • Weekly vegetable subgroup requirements: • Dark green: ½ cup • Red/Orange: ¾ cup • Beans and Peas (Legumes): ½ cup • Starchy: ½ cup • Other: ½ cup. • 100% juice can be offered to meet up to half the amount of fruit or vegetable offerings in a week (no daily limit).
 Grains	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 and 3-5 year olds: ½ oz. eq. required daily. • One of the grain components must be whole grain-rich every day. • Enriched grains may be served at lunch if whole grain-rich items are served at breakfast.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ 1 oz. eq. required daily (8-9 oz. eq. required weekly). • At least half the grains offered each week must be whole grain-rich.
 Meats/Meat Alternates	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ For 1-2 year olds: 1 oz. eq. required daily. ✓ For 3-5 year olds: 1½ oz. eq. required daily.	Minimum Serving Size: ✓ 1 oz. eq. required daily (8-10 oz. eq. required weekly).
 Grain-Based Desserts	• May not credit toward the grains component. • Sweet crackers (e.g. graham and animal crackers) are allowable and can count toward the grains component (with no weekly limit).	• May credit up to 2 oz. eq. of grain-based desserts (denoted by superscript 3, 4 or 5 in Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs**) toward the grains component each week. • Sweet crackers count toward the weekly limit for crediting no more than 2 oz. eq. of grain-based desserts toward the grains component each week.
Additional Considerations About the Preschool and K-5 Meal Patterns		
Sugar Limits	• Cereals: 6 grams (g) or less per dry oz. • Yogurt: 23 grams (g) or less per 6 oz.	• No sugar limits on specific foods; average daily calories for a 5-day school week must meet minimum and maximum values.
Fat Limits	• No deep-fat frying onsite (including at central kitchens).	• Deep-fat frying onsite is allowed, but average percent of calories from saturated fat must be <10% of total calories. Food products and ingredients must contain zero grams of trans fats (less than 0.5 g) per serving.
Sodium	• No limit on sodium.	• Weekly limits on sodium.
Offer Versus Serve (OVS)	• Only allowed when preschool students are co-mingled with older children (see page 4 for more information on co-mingling). • Students must select at least three food items; one item must be at least a ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables.	• Allowed. • Students must select at least three food items; one item must be at least a ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables.
Family Style Meal Service	• Students must select at least a ¾ cup of vegetables, fruit, or both if offered the preschool meal pattern. • If students are co-mingled and being offered the K-5 meal pattern, each student must select at least a ½ cup of vegetables, fruits, or both. • Minimum serving size of each item or component must be offered to each student over the course of the meal.	• Students must select at least a ½ cup of vegetables, fruits, or both. • Minimum serving size of each item or component must be offered to each student over the course of the meal.



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Meal Service When Preschoolers and Students in Older Grades Are Served Meals Together

Sometimes, schools must serve meals to a variety of grades at the same time. This is usually due to operational constraints, such as time and space. This practice is called "co-mingling."

Co-mingling occurs when:

- Preschool students and students from older grade groups (such as kindergarten through 5th grade, kindergarten through 8th grade, or kindergarten through 12th grade) are served meals in the same place at the same time;
- It's hard to tell the preschool students from older students; and
- It would be operationally difficult to serve different foods or different amounts of foods during the combined meal service.

When the above conditions are met, schools may offer the meal pattern of the older grades, such as kindergarten through 5th grade (K-5), to preschool students.

Four Reasons To Avoid Co-Mingled Meal Service

1. Serving preschoolers separately from older students may allow for closer supervision of the younger children, thereby allowing staff to better assist students with food packaging and monitor mealtime behaviors that may increase the risk of choking.
2. A separate family style meal service allows preschool children to serve themselves, which can help children develop independence and build self-confidence.
3. Younger children may feel distracted or overwhelmed by older children, which may affect the amount that they eat within the provided mealtime.
4. The preschool meal pattern provides the amounts and types of foods at meals that most younger children need for healthy growth and development.



How Schools Can Avoid Co-Mingled Meal Service

- Serve "Breakfast in the Classroom" or "Grab & Go Breakfast" (look for shelf-stable options and easy-to-prepare items, and use mobile service carts and/or thermal bags for easy transport).
- Stagger meal service times for both preschoolers and older students.
- Only offer food items that meet meal patterns for preschool and older students, such as unflavored milk, creditable grain items, cereals and yogurts that meet sugar limits, and a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Try It Out! Use the information in this worksheet to answer the questions below.

- a. Tommy is a 4½ year old who attends kindergarten at your school. Should you offer Tommy the preschool meal pattern or the K-5 meal pattern?
- b. Amy is a preschooler who eats with kindergarten and first grade students at breakfast. At lunch, her preschool class eats in the cafeteria an hour before the older students.
1) What meal pattern should you serve Amy at breakfast? 2) What meal pattern should you serve Amy at lunch?
- c. Mr. Smith's 3-year-old preschool class eats lunch in his classroom every day. For lunch today, you want to serve fat-free chocolate milk, applesauce, roasted squash, and a turkey sandwich on whole grain-rich bread. Does this meal meet the preschool meal pattern? Why or why not?

Answer Key
a. You must offer Tommy the K-5 meal pattern. Meals are offered based on the grade level, not age, of the child.
b. 1) At breakfast, you may offer Amy the preschool or K-5 meal pattern. 2) At lunch, Amy must be offered the preschool meal pattern.
c. This lunch does not meet the preschool meal pattern. Flavored fat-free milk is only allowed for students in grades K-5, or for preschool students who are co-mingled with the older students and served the meal pattern for older students.



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Appendix C: Home Language Survey
Preschool Parent/Guardian Home Language Survey
Grow NJ Kid 2.2.3

Parent/Guardian; First and Last Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

School's Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Please complete the following survey:

1. What language does your child speak fluently at home?
2. What is the dominant language spoken at home by adults?
3. How often do you read to your child in your native language?
4. How often do you read to your child in English?
5. What activities do you do at home with your child to support literacy?
6. What activities do you do at home with your child to support mathematics?
7. What activities do you do at home with your child to support their independence?

All parents are given this form at Orientation, and digital copy is available on the school website. A copy is kept in the child's digital folder.