

**T.O.P.S.
Early Childhood Learning
Oakland, NJ**

~Grow with Us~

Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027 School Year





T.O.P.S Early Childhood Learning
117 C Franklin Avenue
Oakland, New Jersey
201-337-4442

Grow with Us

Ms. Jennifer M. Zimmerle, Director

Dear T.O.P.S. Families,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 School Year! We look forward to partnering with you to provide an outstanding educational experience for your child(ren). Each new year is a fresh start that presents an opportunity for fun, new challenges, successes, and achievement both in and out of the classroom. At T.O.P.S., our teachers and support staff are excited to warmly welcome our children to school each September, after carefully planning and designing special programs and schedules. To that end, we support the whole child as a school community; both academically and socially-emotionally.

T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning promotes a safe and positive learning environment. Our facilities have been updated to meet the needs of our students and faculty. We believe that every child will succeed, especially when they are engaged in their own community.

We look forward to working collaboratively with everyone in our school community to ensure that each child at T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning receives an excellent education while developing him/herself socially and emotionally. The staff and I are here to assist if you have any questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact me at any time. We are excited to embark upon this school year alongside you in the best interest of our preschool children!

Sincerely,

Jennifer M. Zimmerle

Jennifer M. Zimmerle, Director



T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning School Hours

ARRIVAL

AM Preschool:	8:50 AM
Full Day Preschool:	8:50 AM
PM Preschool:	12:40 PM

Please do not bring your child(ren) to school prior to 8:40 AM, as there is no adult supervision before that time.

STUDENT DROP-OFF

When dropping off your child(ren), please adhere to the following guidelines in the best interest of safety.

- Slowly enter the parking lot and drive your vehicle to the main entrance of T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning building.
- T.O.P.S. staff will assist getting students into the building and to their classrooms.
- Please do not pass a stopped vehicle or cut others in the traffic line.
- If you are having difficulty getting your child out of the vehicle, please let a staff member know and we will be happy to assist.
- If someone is not familiar with the procedure of dropping off your child(ren), please share this information with that person.
- Please be patient while buses and other parents/guardians are dropping off their children.

DISMISSAL

AM Preschool:	11:10 AM
Full Day Preschool:	3:00 PM
PM Preschool:	3:00 PM

STUDENT PICK UP

Please adhere to the following procedures at student dismissal regardless of weather conditions:

- Slowly enter the parking lot and drive your vehicle to the main entrance of T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning building.
- T.O.P.S. staff will escort your children out to the bus or parent.
- If someone other than a parent or guardian will be picking up your child, please send a written notice with the date and the name of the individual authorized to pick up your child. The authorized individual must present a valid photo ID at the time of pickup.

DELAYED SCHOOL OPENING

If a delayed opening or emergency closing is announced, a reverse Realtime 911 message will be disseminated to notify parents. Transportation companies will be notified and adjust their schedules accordingly. Any changes to the regular schedule due to inclement weather or any other unanticipated reasons will also be posted on the district's website.

AM / PM Preschool:	12:40 AM to 3:00 PM
Full Day Preschool:	10:20 AM to 3:00 PM

MINIMUM DAY

AM / PM Preschool:	8:50 AM to 11:10 AM
Full Day Preschool:	8:50 AM to 12:50 PM

Please Note: No lunch is served on minimum days, but students may bring a lunch or snack to school.



T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning Staff Directory

Name	Phone Number	Email
Ms. Jennifer M. Zimmerle Director	201-337-4442 Extension 9	zimmerle@oaklandschoolnj.org
Ms. Anne-Marie Kennedy Secretary	201-337-4442 Extension 8	kennedy@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Ms. Nadja Madon, RN Nurse	201-337-4442 Extension 5	madon@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Officer Jose Ocasio School Resource Officer	201-337-4442 Extension 8	
Ms. Alison Bianchi LDT-C/Case Manager	201-337-4442 Extension 4	bianchi@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Ms. Jody Diaz AM/PM Preschool Teacher	201-337-4442 Extension 8	diaz@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Ms. Sylvia Ripps Full Day Preschool Teacher	201-337-4442 Extension 8	rippls@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Ms. Alexa Mottola Occupational Therapy	201-337-4442 Extension 8	mottola@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Ms. Alissa Brandl Speech/Language Therapist	201-337-4442 Extension 8	brandl@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Mr. Michael Serey Physical Therapy	201-337-4442 Extension 8	serey@oaklandschoolsnj.org
Ms. Tina Stokes BCBA	201-337-4442 Extension 8	stokes@oaklandschoolsnj.org

T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning

Philosophy and Curriculum

T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning is a child-focused learning program that believes that children learn best through active exploration and hands-on experiences within a language-rich environment that promotes and enhances children's communication and language development.

T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning utilizes high-quality, state approved, Creative Curriculum. The program empowers children to be confident, creative, and caring learners through play-based, hands-on investigations. It is a research-based approach that incorporates language, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and technology throughout the day. Students will receive related services, modifications, accommodations, and support as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan.





T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning

Health Office

T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning has a full-time nurse on staff. Ms. Nadja Madon, RN is here to provide first aid and a variety of health-related services. Periodic height, weight, vision, and hearing screenings are held. Please contact Ms. Madon if your child requires medication during school hours. The following form needs to be completed by the doctor and parent for medication to be administered: <https://www.oaklandschoolsnj.org/nurses-documents/over-the-counter-prescription>

In the event your child will be absent from school, please notify the school nurse, Ms. Madon, at 201-337-4442 extension 5 or email her at madon@oaklandschoolsnj.org



The Oakland K-8 Public Schools Transportation Specialist is Ms. Heather Fisher.

If your child will not be taking the school bus on a specific date, please email your child's teacher, Ms. Jennifer Zimmerle, and Ms. Heather Fisher.

Email Addresses

Ms. Jody Diaz: diaz@oaklandschoolsnj.org

Ms. Syliva Ripps: rippls@oaklandschoolsnj.org

Ms. Heather Fisher fisher@oaklandschoolsnj.org

Ms. Jennifer Zimmerle zimmerle@oaklandschoolsnj.org



T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning

SNACK

Students may bring in a healthy snack to enjoy during the designated time for their grade level. Candy or other sweets are not acceptable as regular snacks.

LUNCH

Pomptonian Food Services will continue to offer lunch to the full-day students in the building. For a list of elementary school lunch options and prices, please navigate to www.oaklandschoolsnj.org. Then, click the “Parents” menu at the top of the page, select “Food Services,” and then select “Price Lists.” Of course, students may also bring lunch from home. Please email Meredith from Pomptonian at foodservice@oaklandschoolsnj.org with your child’s lunch order no later than 9:00 AM. Please include your child’s name and the location T.O.P.S. Payment can be made via Payschools or cash/check made out to Oakland Board of Education

BIRTHDAYS

You may send in refreshments on your child’s birthday. Because snacks and birthday treats are consumed in the classrooms, we ask that you kindly refrain from sending in any items that contain nuts or nut-based products. Please check with the classroom teacher or school nurse regarding other food allergies prior to sending in birthday treats. To eliminate any doubt about the safety of food-related birthday treats, you may also send in non-food items such as pencils, stickers or a donation to the class library. All summer birthdays are celebrated in June.

EXTRA SET OF CLOTHING

Please send an extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) in a labeled Ziploc bag that can be kept in the classroom in case of an accident or spill. If your child is still in diapers, please send in extra pull-ups and wipes. If possible, please send in pull-ups with velcro closures for ease of changing.

DISTRICT EVENTS

The annual Book Fair and Holiday Gift Shop are scheduled during the school year. Students will be transported to an elementary school to participate in these programs. Permission slips will go home prior to the events.

HALLOWEEN

Students will participate in a Halloween Fall Fest. Parents are asked to send your child dressed in their costumes the day of the parade.

PICTURE DAY

In the fall of every school year, student portraits are taken. Notices will be sent home to inform families of the date and the various packages available for purchase. A picture retake day is typically scheduled later in the year.

SPIRIT DAYS

Generally, one day or more per month is designated as a school spirit day. These special days provide students and staff members with an opportunity to show their support for and pride in our learning community. Keep an eye on the monthly calendar, and encourage your child(ren) to catch the spirit by participating!



T.O.P.S. Early Childhood Learning

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

This adult-only evening will provide you an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and to review important information. This is a great time to meet other parents and staff members. More information will be sent home in the beginning of September.

PARENT PORTAL

The Parent Portal can be used to view school information, along with current information related to your child's educational experience. To access the portal, simply navigate to the District home page (www.oaklandschoolsnj.org) and click on the "Parent Portal" link on the right menu bar.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are held each fall. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child(ren)'s education by attending these important conferences. Sign Up Genius will be utilized to schedule your conference. Further information will be provided as we approach conferences.