



D51 Preschool Parent Handbook

The Mesa County Valley School District 51 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program serves children who turn 3 or 4 years of age on or before August 31st of each school year. The district preschool programs serve children placed through the Universal Preschool Colorado Program and children identified with special education needs. The preschool program offers part time programs consisting of morning and afternoon classes and full day programs offering 7 ½ hrs per day (M-Th only). Individual preschools beginning and end times are based on the elementary school start time. Children attend 4 or 5 days a week. The program follows the district elementary school calendar.

ECE provides a nurturing and safe environment with appropriate activities for each child's level of learning. Staff development, teacher planning and preparation are also important to support the quality of your child's preschool experience and to support our staff as lifelong learners. The daily routine includes: small group teacher-lead activities, child-choice time with teachers supporting the child's play, group circle times for music, movement social-emotional learning, snack and outdoor time. In addition, full day programs will include breakfast, lunch, and rest time. Videos and computer programs that are developmentally appropriate may be used on a very limited basis and must be related to the curriculum. The schedule follows a predictable sequence to provide a variety of learning situations for each child and to create an environment where children know what to expect. Teachers are clear and consistent about rules and limits so children are safe and considerate to others. Parents are encouraged to participate in the program through family involvement activities and parent teacher conferences. ECE will provide an interpreter and/or translator upon request.

D51 Early Childhood Program Policies & Procedures

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected and is based on the belief that success in school is closely related to attendance. Parents are the primary source for developing an attitude of responsibility and reliability. The District encourages parents to work in partnership with school officials to help students establish and maintain regular attendance.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child for any reason they will notify the classroom teacher and ECE Office. A two week withdrawal notice is requested.

ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE

The staff will greet the children each day. An adult (16 years or older) must accompany their child into the classroom using hand to hand delivery, and sign the child in. Arrival and departure times must be noted on the sign-in sheet. When picking up your child, please be prompt and sign them out. If you are more than 15 minutes late, your child will be waiting in the school office, per our policy- see below.

Children sometimes become upset and confused if they are not picked up at the time the other children are leaving. Please avoid this upsetting experience by being on time.

If a child is not picked up on time:

- Parent/guardian will be called and/or an emergency contact
- Children will be kept for 15 minutes in the preschool classroom
- After 15 minutes, the child will then go to the school office
- If the child is not picked up in 30 minutes, the appropriate public safety office will be called

If your child will not be at school or will be tardy:

- Notify the preschool staff of tardy/absence and reason
- If someone other than those named on the emergency information will be picking up your child:
 - Notify the school
 - Identification will be checked
 - Unauthorized individuals will not be allowed to pick up a child

If an unauthorized individual makes an attempt to pick up a child:

- All attempts will be made at contacting the parent/guardian

If these attempts fail, emergency procedures will follow:

- Early Childhood Department and School Administration will be called
- Appropriate public safety office may be contacted

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Children have a cubby for their belongings and information. Please check it regularly. Please write your child's name on all personal belongings. Children should not bring money, valuables, technology or toys to school.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation of children to and from school is the responsibility of the parents. Problem solving will occur between the staff and family if transportation is an issue.

Family outings are planned as part of the preschool learning experience. Parents are required to transport their own child to and from the outing. Parents are responsible for supervision of their child/children at the family outing. In case a family forgets the scheduled outing, teachers will post the information with the location and time on the classroom door and inform the front office.

Transportation for children with an Individualized Education Program may be available if the family demonstrates a need. Any accommodations indicated in the child's Individualized Educational Program will be implemented as described. The family case manager and transportation coordinator will ensure any accommodations are in place.

For children without an Individualized Education Program, parents may request transportation if they demonstrate a need. Transportation is only available **if there is an existing route and if there is availability on the bus**. Approval will be determined by Student Transportation of America. Paperwork will be provided and explained upon request.

If a child is transported on a school bus, staff will pick them up from the bus stop and sign the child in.

WEATHER

During excessively hot weather, an indoor cooler will maintain appropriate temperature inside the classroom. Appropriate dress for changing weather is a necessity since children go outside to play **every day, even in winter**. Typically, children go outside when the air temperature is above 20 degrees. During inclement weather, such as extreme heat or heavy rain, alternative indoor activities will be provided or outside time may be reduced.

For **Sun Protection**: Sunscreen in its original container must be applied to the child by staff 30 minutes prior to going outside. Parents will be notified in writing of the type of sunscreen the preschool will use. If another brand is desired, it must be provided by the parent/guardian, in its original container and labeled with the child's first and last name. Written authorization for sunscreen application will be obtained from the child's parent/guardian during online registration. Children over 4 years of age may apply sunscreen to themselves under the direct supervision of a staff member.

SNACKS

Parents are asked to provide a nutritious snack on a rotational basis. This snack shall consist only of foods that are prepackaged and prepared from commercial sources. It must be shelf-stable and be sealed. An approved list of snacks will be posted in the classroom. The teachers will provide a snack sign-up or a snack menu. If your child has a specific diet or allergy, please let us know in writing and you may be asked to supply your child's specific dietary snack. Water will be provided with snacks. Due to licensing requirements, teachers must complete and post the snack menu two weeks in advance for review. **Homemade snacks are not accepted. Cookies, cupcakes or high-sugar treats are for special occasions only and MUST be store bought.**

VISITORS

All visitors to our preschools are required to report to the school office when entering and show proper identification while stating their reason for being at the school. Visitors will be given a name tag and are required to sign in the school office and classroom. If the visitor is unfamiliar to staff, identification will be requested.

SAFETY

Preschool staff will know where children are at all times. Staff will count children during key times during the day to ensure that all are present. Care is especially taken at the beginning, during and after outside time, and at the end of the day. Teachers will check to make sure all children are signed out when they leave at the end of the day. Person to person supervision will occur at drop-off and pick-up. Preschool staff will always uphold a 10:1 student/teacher ratio per classroom. Preschool will practice primary caregiving and each child will be cared for by the same adults, as staffing allows, to promote formation of a strong emotional bond.

Preschool staff regularly monitor toys, equipment and furniture for safety, including potential product recalls. Items will be replaced when necessary.

If a child is separated from the group, one staff member will remain with the rest of the group of children, while another staff member will check outside and inside. If the child is not found, the school office will be called to help search. If the child cannot be found, 911 and the parents will be called. A lost child report will be completed and a copy will be sent to the Division Early Care and Learning and local Licensing Specialist.

At the close of each day, after all the children have been picked up or have left on the bus, the premises (outdoors and indoors) will be checked by the staff.

For safety reasons, volunteers, students or parent helpers MAY NOT be alone (without teacher supervision) under any circumstances with children.

The teacher or any other staff, who has reasonable cause, must by law report to the local Child Protection Agency any suspicion of child abuse, neglect, or endangerment of which they become aware. The telephone number is 970-242-1211 or 911.

Parents or others who wish to file a complaint concerning a suspected licensing violation may do so at the following address or call 800-799-5876 or 303-866-5958.

Division of Early Care and Learning
Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman Street- 1st Floor
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714

HEALTH

In order to safeguard the health of all the children to the best of our ability, we ask that you comply with the following rules. **Please do not send your child to school if** he/she displays any one of the following symptoms:

- Red and inflamed throat
- Rash on arms, chest, back, or neck (if you know the cause of the rash is harmless, please send a note from your healthcare provider.)
- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit with behavior change or other illness. Students must be at home for at least 24 hours or one full day AFTER a fever is gone **without** the use of fever reducing medicine (eg: Tylenol, Motrin, or Advil) before they can return to school
- Uncontrolled coughing or difficulty breathing.
- Red, inflamed or itchy eye(s) with discharge AND your child is not able to keep hands away from eyes.
- Vomiting or Diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
- Unusual irritability, lack of appetite, or extreme sleepiness.

If a child arrives at school displaying or develops any of the above symptoms, we will need to excuse him/her from the class in order to protect the other children. You will be contacted to pick up your child as soon as possible. Please watch your child for signs of a communicable disease, (for example, chicken pox) especially if you know he/she has been exposed. Should your child develop a communicable disease, please notify the preschool so we will take care to notify families about

exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Department of Public Health.

If your child requires medication (prescription or non-prescription) while at school, it is **REQUIRED** by state law that it is in the original container. A school district medication form must be signed by parent/guardian and the child's health care provider with prescriptive authority along with specific instructions. Medication will be dispensed by the School Nurse, Health Assistant or other delegated individual. Medication will be stored in a locked location in the school's Health Office or in the preschool classroom. Each classroom has a safety plan specific to their students. School District 51 recognizes that many students are being diagnosed with potentially life-threatening food allergies. To address this issue and meet state law requirements concerning the management of food allergies and anaphylaxis among students, the Board of Education sets forth policy JLCDA, Students with Food Allergies. The district encourages parents to keep a supply of the prescribed medication used to treat the food allergy/anaphylaxis at school, unless the student has an approved treatment plan to carry the medication with him/her and can self-administer the medication. Any food allergy/anaphylaxis health care plan must be developed in conjunction with the school's Registered Nurse.

Children **do not** need to be toilet trained for preschool. Parents will supply diapers/pull-ups and wipes and a change of clothes. Staff will use a disinfected changing table and all other sanitary precautions while diapering.

IMMUNIZATIONS

- All preschoolers enrolled in the District must follow the Colorado immunization policy.
- No student shall attend any school in the district unless the student has presented to the school:
 - an up-to-date certificate of immunization: or
 - a certificate of Medical Exemption which is an exemption for students who have a medical condition that prevents them from receiving one or more School-requires vaccines, or
 - A certificate of nonmedical exemption which is an exemption based on religious belief whose teachings are opposed to immunizations or a personal belief that is opposed to Immunizations, or
 - a statement signed by one parent or guardian that the parent or child has a personal belief that is opposed to immunizations (personal exemption).

Non-Medical Exemption Process: If you choose not to vaccinate your child for non-medical reasons, you must complete and submit paperwork to the school when vaccines are due by age or every year whichever comes first. Non-medical exemptions paperwork can be completed in one the of the following two ways:

1. Submit the certificate you receive after completing an online class about immunizations.
2. Your child's healthcare provider willingly signs a non-medical exception for you child. Link:

[Nonmedical Exemption](#)

Medical Exemption Process: If your child cannot receive one or more vaccinations due to medical reasons, the following medical exemption form must be completed and signed by a medical provider (MD, DO, APN, or PA). Link: [Medical Exemption](#)

For further information or forms in other languages please visit the [Colorado Dept. of Public Health](#)

Teachers will keep a sign posted indicating some preschool students may not have immunizations.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

The school district audiologist schedules hearing screening for each preschool classroom and provides follow-up with families for preschoolers with hearing concerns. The local Lions Club provides a vision screening for all preschool classrooms. Parents will be notified if there is a concern.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

We will take all complaints of illness or injury seriously. We will reassure your child and remain calm during an emergency. If it is a serious injury or illness, we will call 911 (paramedics) first, then parents, and the child's physician if necessary, unless specified in a health care plan.

Emergencies must be taken care of in this order:

- Breathing has top priority. Then CPR. Call 911 if breathing or circulation has stopped.
- Stopping any bleeding has the next priority.
- Treat for shock after A. and B. have been stabilized.
- Do not move the child if there is a possible injury to the back or neck.

A complete incident report will be given to the parent and also kept in the school files. If a physician needs to be seen, an accident/illness report will be completed and a copy will be sent to the Division of Early Care and Learning and local Licensing Specialist. If a parent or guardian cannot be contacted, other numbers on the emergency card will be called. As a last resort, the police will be called to help locate the parents.

In order to provide continuity of care, each situation will be reviewed and the district will practice the following policy: If a school goes into shelter-in-place or lockdown for any reason, information will be posted to www.d51schools.org. At first, the information might not have many details, so please be patient with us as we collect accurate information about the situation. We strive to inform families as soon as possible, but we also know that initial details are often incorrect. Please also check the official websites and social media pages of local law enforcement for details on a specific incident.

Parents may opt in to the D51 text messaging system by texting YES to 67587.

In the case of an active shooter or a person with a weapon on school grounds, the following procedures will be followed according to the district's policies:

1. Determine if a LOCKDOWN or other action is necessary
2. Notify site administrator, school principal or SRO.
3. Call 9-1-1.
4. Call the Director/Site Leaders offices, the Director/Site Leader will notify the Safety & Security.
5. Use extreme caution and DO NOT confront the suspect.
6. Secure the area if a firearm is found.

Lockdown - All exterior and interior doors are locked. Students and staff are directed to turn off the lights, hide, and make as little noise as possible until first responders arrive and release the building from lockdown. Lockdowns occur when there is a potential threat inside, outside, or near the building.

Shelter-in-Place - all exterior doors are locked, and there is limited movement inside the building, but activities continue. Shelter-in-Places are precautionary measures and usually occur when the school is informed of a situation that will likely not pose a risk of harm or injury to students or staff.

Reunification - when students are reunited with parents after an incident or evacuation. The process ensures all students are accounted for and safely returned to their parents or a trusted guardian. Reunifications take place either at the school or a pre-designated alternate site.

1. Parents will be notified of the reunification location via call, text, or email. Information will also be posted on the website, and D51 social media pages.
2. Upon arrival, parents will be directed to a single entry point where they will need to show a photo I.D. and fill out an information form. Only one parent or guardian should go to the reunification site.
3. Once inside, the parent or guardian will be instructed to wait in a designated area while their information is confirmed.
4. After the information has been verified, school staff will escort the student to the parent or guardian.

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of developing and implementing a written plan for communicating with the media and public in the event of a crisis. The superintendent is directed to develop and implement a crisis communications plan.

Our staff will practice good housekeeping and be alert to any potential fire hazards. Each staff member shall be familiar with all exits from the building, the use and location of fire extinguishers, and manual pull box alarm systems. Fire exit drills shall be held with sufficient frequency to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedure. During drills, emphasis shall be placed upon orderly evacuation under proper discipline; no running or horseplay shall be permitted.

In case of a fire, all children shall leave from the building by lining up at the door that has been practiced in the fire drill exit with staff. A staff member shall check the building and bathrooms etc. for any remaining occupants. Each individual school has a safety plan in place for individual children's needs that would need to be addressed in any emergency situation.

A headcount of staff and children shall be taken from the street or alternate location. The fire department (911) will be called from a location other than the school building once the building has been evacuated.

In case of a tornado, the children and staff will remain in-doors in either the "quiet area" or the restroom; whichever one does not have windows. They will remain together in a group. When possible, 911 will be called.

In case a Flash Flood Watch or warning has been issued: Be prepared to move out at a moment's notice. Act quickly to save those in your charge. Use the fire drill evacuation plan and evacuate away

from the flood source and to a designated spot. Do not attempt to cross a flowing stream on foot where water is above your knees. Monitor the Emergency Alert Stations or National Weather Stations.

GUIDANCE

Children will be kept safe from physical, social and emotional harm. Guidance practices are developmentally appropriate and foster mutual respect. Logical and natural consequences, choices, and redirection will be used to promote prosocial skills of problem solving and decision-making. Language used by the staff is responsive and will be firm and kind. Children will not be denied food or be isolated from others as punishment. Preschool staff do not use time outs and children cannot be suspended or expelled from preschool.

The Early Childhood Department uses Promoting Social & Emotional Competence strategies. These strategies include:

- Building relationships with children and their families
- Focusing on prevention
- Defining expectations
- Teaching social problem solving
- Providing accommodations and additional support for individual children

It is the philosophy of the Early Childhood Department to teach positive, prosocial strategies to all preschoolers. Our procedures are consistent with the preschool's philosophy and policy and include documentation of the steps taken to understand and respond to challenging behavior.

SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

The Early Childhood Department offers a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) which can include:

- Individualized social and emotional intervention supports for children who need them.
- A team-based approach to ensure that teachers, parents and other specialists determine actions needed to promote consistent support for the child across all settings.
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant or other specialist as needed.

DISTRICT HANDBOOK

Each family and student in District 51 can access the School District Handbook and Calendar at the district website: www.d51schools.org. Please refer to this for District-wide policies.

Please read the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment Immunization letter on the following page.

UPK POLICIES

1. Healthy Development & Child Screenings

To support your child's healthy development, our program offers and supports voluntary developmental screening services. Please speak to your child's classroom teacher for information on obtaining any of the following:

- **Developmental or Health Screenings**
- **Vision, Hearing, or Dental Screenings**
- **Social-emotional, Cognitive, or Language Screenings**
- **Mental Health or Special Education Referrals**
- **Translation Services**

2. Family and Community Engagement

We believe you are your child's first and most important teacher. Our program is committed to partnering with you in the following ways:

- **Language Support:** We provide opportunities to utilize interpreters or other language resources as needed to ensure clear communication.
- **Cultural Sharing:** We invite and encourage you to share your home's cultural and social practices within our classroom community.
- **Goal Setting:** We will partner with you to set individual learning and development goals for your child.
- **Program Decision-Making:** We offer opportunities for families and community partners to engage in our program's operational decision-making processes.
- **Transitions:** We will actively involve you in your child's transitions between classrooms or when moving to a new school.
- **Feedback:** We value your perspective and provide opportunities for you to give feedback on the quality of program-family and program-staff interactions.

3. Annual CDEC Family Survey

Each spring, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) conducts an annual family survey. You will be notified of the opportunity to participate and share your experiences regarding your meaningful and culturally appropriate involvement in our program, as well as the healthy development supports provided.