

West Central Early Learning Project



2022-23 Handbook

West Central Early Learning Project

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District Website: www.wc235.k12.il.us

Superintendent

Stacey Day

Superintendent's Secretary

Jaime Shultz

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Mallory Nelson

Speech-Language Pathologist

Miranda Gullberg

Pre-Kindergarten Staff

Classroom Teachers

Classroom Assistants

Jessica Burrell

Taylor Perry

Allison Harden

Jena Goff

Janel Young

Ellen Olson

Prenatal to 3 Family Educator/Supervisor

Amy Gipe

Prenatal to 3 Family Educator

Renata Conway

Assistant Early Childhood Director

Emily Henry

WELCOME

The Early Learning Project welcomes you to the West Central School District. We are very pleased that you have chosen to enroll your child in our program. We are looking forward to being an important part of your child's preschool years.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with important information about our Early Learning Project and the policies and procedures that will affect you and your child.

Our Mission...

The Early Learning Project's initiative is to create a consistent program for preschool age children within Henderson, Knox, Mercer, and Warren Counties. The vision of the Early Learning Project is to enhance the opportunities for all children to succeed in school. Through this outreach project it is our goal to not only enhance the early childhood curriculum but to create a community of early childhood providers through various partnerships.

Early Learning Project Believes...

That families, schools, and communities should unite as one in the education of our children.

In developmentally age appropriate experiences that focused on social emotional, language and pre-literacy skills.

Individual needs must always be met.

That all children have the opportunity to participate in authentic learning experiences that enhance their innate love of learning.

The Early Learning Project

The Early Learning Project is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education PreSchool For All Grant and PreSchool for All Expansion Grant written by Henderson, Knox, Mercer, and Warren Counties Regional Office of Education. The program focuses on helping children between the ages of 3 and 5 years develop literacy, math, and social emotional skills. Children are enrolled based on developmental screenings held annually.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

Every child will need a copy of his or her **certified birth certificate**, a physical examination, an updated immunization record, dental exam, proof of income, and a signed parent contract. The physical exam must be performed by a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy, or a physician's assistant or nurse practitioner working under a medical doctor. **A PHYSICAL COMPLETED BY A CHIROPRACTOR WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Any student entering the school from out of state must have a physical completed in the year prior to entry.

Children entering preschool for the first time must show proof of having at least one lead level drawn. This can be a level drawn anytime in the past, as long as there is a record that a normal level has been established. However, please remember that upon entering kindergarten, a second level will need to be drawn at least one year from the initial test.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Parents are their child's first teacher! Therefore, parent/guardian involvement is a vital component of a successful Preschool program. There are a variety of ways parents/guardians can participate in the Preschool program. Family nights, field trips, parent nights, parent/teacher conferences, parent advisory board, and volunteering in the classroom are just a few ways to be involved. When you enroll your child in the Preschool program you agree to participate in the program. At times, you may observe your child or participate in activities. Weekly time arrangements can be set up if any parent would like to help in the Preschool classroom on a regular basis. Classroom activities will be shared on a regular basis using the Seesaw platform.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to notify your child's teacher of custodial matters. This includes the sharing of information with non-custodial parents, restraining orders that affect your children, and any other legal matters relative to your child and school. We must have a copy of the agreement on file in our office. Any questions about this will be directed to Jaime Shultz.

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

The building principal directs the use of volunteers within his or her building. Volunteers may come from all backgrounds and age groups. The main qualification is for the individual to have a desire to give his or her time and talent to enrich student learning opportunities and the school community. All persons wishing to serve as a volunteer in the district will be subject to a criminal background check. A volunteer form will need to be filled out on an annual basis. A person who is a "sex offender," as defined by the Sex Offender Registration Act, or a "violent offender against youth," as defined by the Child Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registration Act, is prohibited from being a resource person or volunteer.

SCHOOL DAYS

School officially begins at 8:30 a.m. each morning. Students are expected to be in their classrooms at this time. Students may be dropped off at the Biggsville campus no earlier than 7:50 a.m. Any student arriving after 8:30 a.m. or leaving before 3:10 p.m. must be signed in or out in the Office by a parent or guardian. School is officially dismissed at 3:10 p.m. Students are expected to be on a bus or to be picked up at this time.

ILLNESS

If your child has a fever of 100.4 or higher, diarrhea, or a contagious disease (including head lice and chicken pox) he/she must be kept at home until he/she is no longer contagious and has been **SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS**. Parents **must inform the Office (627-2339) when a child is being kept home due to an illness**. Students who become ill or injured at school will be given first aid. Parents will be contacted immediately. It is your responsibility to see that the office has current phone numbers for yourself and your emergency contacts. In case the parents cannot be contacted, the school will use the name of the "emergency contact" on the emergency form. If no one can be reached, in extreme emergencies, we will contact other health personnel.

HEAD LICE POLICY

The policy of our school requires students with a communicable disease such as head lice to be excluded from school. The school will observe the following procedures regarding head lice:

1. Parents are required to notify the school if they suspect their child has head lice.
2. Infested students will be sent home following notification of the parent or guardian.
3. The school will provide written instructions to parent or guardian regarding appropriate treatment for the infestation. Parents are strongly encouraged to have students treated and back in school in one (1) day. After two (2) days students can be considered truant.
4. A student excluded because of head lice will be permitted to return to school only when the parent or guardian brings the student to school to be checked by the school nurse or Building Principal and the child is determined to be free of the head lice and eggs (nits). Infested children are prohibited from riding the bus to school to be checked for head lice, but must be brought to school by parents or family members. Upon return to school, students will be rechecked. If any nits or lice are noted in the hair, students will not be readmitted to school.

Parents are encouraged to bring the box or label of lice shampoo used when students return to school. We appreciate your cooperation with the above procedure.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

Vision and Hearing screenings are required annually on all children in special education, children new to the district, and teacher/parent referrals. Hearing screening is also required beginning at age 3 in all licensed daycare/preschool programs. Once a child begins school, hearing screening is required at grades K, 1, 2 and 3.

SAFETY

A number of procedures are followed for the safety of all children and staff. **Visitors MUST enter through the main entrance and check in at the office before proceeding to a classroom**. Visitors will be identified by wearing a visitor's badge. When you leave the building please sign out in the office. No admittance will be allowed through any door. We practice fire, tornado, and lockdown drills to educate our children and staff about emergency procedures. Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom and in various locations throughout the building.

STRANGER DANGER/ABUSE

Students will receive instruction and tips to avoid situations which could lead to child abduction. Students may also receive instruction on child abuse or inappropriate touching. Please contact Kathy Lafary if you have any questions. A written request may be made by a parent/guardian requesting that their child be excluded from such instruction.

SUPPLIES

Preschool students will need a LARGE book-bag (one that a folder easily fits in); gym shoes (Velcro or slip-on), a blanket for nap time. A complete set of extra clothes (a shirt, pants, underwear and socks) need to be kept in your child's locker. **When dirty clothes are sent home, please promptly send another extra set.** If your child isn't potty trained, you will need to send pull-ups and wipes. Contact your child's teacher if you need assistance obtaining any of these items. **REMEMBER TO CHECK YOUR CHILD'S BOOK-BAG EVERY DAY!!**

FOOD ALLERGIES

If a student has a dangerous or life threatening food allergy their parent or guardian is responsible to notify the school office in writing prior to the first day of school or as soon as the student has been diagnosed.

PLAYGROUND

We play outside everyday, weather permitting, as long as the heat index isn't above 90 degrees or a wind chill isn't below 25 degrees, so please dress your child accordingly (boots, warm coat, long pants, hats and mittens). Our playground is designed for children to develop their gross motor skills. Playground rules have been created with the safety of every child in mind. Our playground is inspected on a regular basis. Students are supervised by staff members while using the playground. The playground is closed when school is not in session.

NAPTME

The children will have rest/nap time every afternoon. This will be anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half long. A blanket, and/or soft toys are permitted at nap time to make your child comfortable. At this age children need a down time to rest their bodies and their minds.

SNACK TIME

The Preschool children will be offered a nutritious snack every afternoon. This break is not only important for their growing bodies, but it is also an opportunity to practice social skills. Table manners are discussed and practiced. Children will be served white milk during snack. Birthdays can be celebrated with a special treat, please contact your child's teacher with any questions.

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE/POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SYSTEM (PBIS)

Children are learning important social skills at this age level that will determine future concepts such as right versus wrong. There will be a period of adjustment for students to learn what type of behavior is acceptable at school. However, it is very important that your child learn what is expected of him/her while at school. The following school rules address general behavior expectations for our students.

Elementary School HEAT Expectations

- Have Respect
- Empathy and Be Caring
- Act Responsibly
- Together be Safe

Conscious Discipline will be used to teach children appropriate ways to manage their emotions and express their wants and needs. Classrooms are designed with a Safe Space where children can go to practice calming techniques. Additional information about Conscious Discipline will be offered at Parent Nights.

West Central Elementary uses a behavioral program called PBIS which stands for Positive Behavior Intervention System. Through the use of cool tools, teachers are able to instruct the students on how to behave properly in a variety of settings. PBIS stresses positive reinforcement by recognizing students for their positive behavior. By setting forth clear social and behavioral expectations, West Central is able to create an environment in which all students can be successful.

Information regarding your child's classroom experiences will be shared on Seesaw. Teachers will contact parents when a student's behavior is concerning. Please communicate with your child's teacher when you have any questions. Parents are encouraged to send notes in homework folders, use Seesaw, email, or call their child's teacher to ask questions and share concerns.

MANDATED REPORTERS

Staff members are mandated by the State of Illinois to report to the Child Abuse Hotline whenever there is a reasonable suspicion that a student has been abused or neglected. This call may be caused by bruises or burns on a student, or statements that a student may make to a member of the staff. Failure of a staff member to report a possible child abuse situation can lead to legal charges being filed against that member of the staff.

SEX OFFENDER NOTIFICATION

We are now required to distribute information on where to find information on child sex offenders residing in the district. This information can be found on the Illinois State Police Website. Go to the ISP homepage and then follow the directions on the right side of the page. This is the current web address: www.isp.state.il.us/sor.

SEX OFFENDER NOTIFICATION LAW

State law prohibits a convicted child sex offender from being present on school property when children under the age of 18 are present, except for in the following circumstances as they relate to the individual's child(ren):

- *To attend a conference at the school with school personnel to discuss the progress of their child.
- *To participate in a conference in which evaluation and placement decisions may be made with respect to their child's special educational services.
- *To attend conferences to discuss issues concerning their child such as retention or promotion.

In all other cases, convicted child sex offenders are prohibited from being present on school property unless they obtain written permission from the superintendent or school board. Anytime that a convicted child sex offender is present on school property-including the three reasons above-he/she is responsible for notifying the principal's office upon arrival on school property and upon departure from school property. It is the responsibility of the convicted child sex offender to remain under the direct supervision of a school official at all times he/she is in the presence or vicinity of children.

A violation of this law is a Class 4 felony.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

The Pre-Kindergarten class operates on the same schedule as the rest of the school district with the exception of non attendance days (see below). There will be a variety of holidays and other occasions, which will cause

school to be canceled. You will receive a monthly calendar that will show any changes in the schedule. Information about current events can also be found on the District website (<http://www.wc235.k12.il.us/>).

NON ATTENDANCE DAYS

West Central partners with ROE #33 to coordinate funding sources for our early childhood program. During the 2022-2023 school year, all staff members associated with the preschool program will be required to attend professional development sessions. In order to allow each team member a chance to participate, the pre-kindergarten students will not attend school on the following days: September 14, October 5, January 25, and May 3. All other students (K-12th grade) in the district will attend school on these days.

Children in Preschool are encouraged to take part in hands-on activities. When dressing your child for school, be aware that hands-on can be messy from time to time. Therefore casual, comfortable, washable clothes are best.

There are several activities planned for your child at Preschool. There is NO need for children to bring toys to school. Teachers can not be responsible for such personal possessions.

All parents are URGED to attend PTC meetings this fall. Anyone who is interested in helping their school and their children are welcome and encouraged to participate. Do not wait for a special invitation. Watch the school calendar for meeting dates.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

Parents As Teachers (PAT) is an international early childhood parent education and family support program serving families throughout birth until their child enters Kindergarten. The program is designed to enhance child development through parent education. The mission of Parents As Teachers is to provide the information, support, and encouragement parents need to help their children develop optimally during the early years. West Central Parents As Teachers program provides personal play-dates, developmental screenings, and Toddler Time. A bi-monthly newsletter is sent to all families with young children in our school district. We encourage you to participate in some or all of the Parents As Teachers sponsored events. For more information about Parents As Teachers please contact Amy Gipe agipe@roe33.net or Renata Conway rconway@roe33.net.