



LORAIN CITY SCHOOLS

Preschool Parent Handbook



LCS preschool Program Vision

The vision of the Lorain City Schools preschool program is for all of Lorain's youngest students **to develop the academic and character skills necessary to have a successful and joyful experience in the years to come.**

To reach that vision, we place student learning at the center of everything we do, with a focus on the following four areas:

- Students engaging in **developmentally appropriate, intellectually stimulating** work.
- Students having regular opportunities to practice and develop their **social-emotional and problem-solving skills.**
- Students **shaping their learning environment.**
- Students being provided with an **integrated, cohesive** and **joyful** classroom experience.

LCS preschool Program Description

The Lorain City Schools preschool program provides free, high-quality early childhood education to young children in the city of Lorain. With classrooms located in each of our ten elementary schools, we aim to make preschool accessible to every family in Lorain, giving our preschool students an early start at their neighborhood school. Our staff are experienced, highly qualified, and passionate about early childhood education, and they continue to hone their craft through regular professional learning experiences and ongoing coaching.

We know that no two children learn exactly the same way, and our program is built to reflect and celebrate this reality. Our classrooms are integrated environments, where students of varying ages and developmental levels have the opportunity to interact and learn from each other. We also offer a variety of classroom models to meet students' needs, including Head Start Collaborative classrooms and a dual-language immersion program.

Curriculum

Our classrooms utilize **Creative Curriculum**, a research-based and widely celebrated preschool curriculum that promotes learning through exploration and investigation. This curriculum is designed to help teachers build developmentally appropriate and content-rich classrooms that meet the needs of all students, fostering confidence, creativity, and critical thinking along the way. The curriculum is fully aligned to the Ohio Early Learning Standards, and covers the domains of **social-emotional**

development, approaches toward learning, cognitive development and general knowledge, language and literacy development, and physical well-being and motor development. It is also aligned to the Head Start Performance Standards.

Inclusion Statement

Young children vary in their skills, knowledge, backgrounds, and abilities. Lorain City Schools' Preschool Program provides opportunities for all children to access, fully participate, and thrive in the classroom. Individualized learning plans and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals are used as part of effective teaching, individualizing, and creating inclusive environments that support positive outcomes for children and families.

Registration, Placement, and Licensing

REGISTRATION

To register, families can pick up a registration packet at any LCS school, Lorain Public Library branch, or the LCS Administration Center (2601 Pole Ave). Families must return the completed packet and necessary documentation to the LCS Administration Center to register their child for preschool. Once registered, children will be assigned to a classroom at their neighborhood school, or the closest school if their neighborhood school has no remaining spots. Families can also submit an intradistrict request.

TUITION

The LCS preschool program is tuition-free for all students.

PLACEMENT POLICY

A significant portion of our preschool funding comes from the Ohio Early Childhood Education grant. This grant requires that we place four-year-olds who meet specific income guidelines **before** placing any other students. See specific guidelines below.

- Families of children who will **not** turn 4 on or before October 1, 2020 **will not be allowed to register**. These families can sign up for our three-year-old waitlist at lorainschools.org/prek. **Please note: there will be an extremely limited number of placements available for 3-year-olds.** Three-year-olds on our waitlist will be placed in available spots beginning on October 1.
- Families of four-year-olds who do not meet the income guidelines for the Ohio ECE grant will be allowed to register, pending availability. These students will be placed in order of registration.

LICENSING

The LCS preschool program is licensed by and follows the policies of the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness (OELSR). OELSR conducts a minimum of two inspections a year to each building to be certain that programs meet or exceed the state requirements. The program license and current compliance report are posted by

each building's main office. Parents may request a copy of the current compliance report from the building principal.

Attendance & Transportation

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Daily attendance is critical for students to receive the full benefits of an early childhood education program, and it also ensures consistency in the daily routines of each classroom. Additionally, seats in our preschool program are in high demand, and when a child is chronically absent but remains enrolled in our program, it prevents a student on our waiting list from being placed in a classroom.

With these things in mind, all preschool families are expected to abide by the following attendance policy:

- 1) Students in our preschool program are expected to attend school **daily** and **on-time**.
- 2) When a student is absent, **the parent must call the school to report the reason for absence**. This policy is in place for the safety of our students.
- 3) In the case of habitual truancy, which is defined as a child being absent without a legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one month, or 72 or more hours in a school year, the following actions will be taken:
 - a. The parent will be notified of the habitual truancy via a letter from their child's teacher.
 - b. If the child does not attend school immediately after notification, the child's teacher will schedule an absence intervention conference with the parent, the

dean of student and family engagement, and the school attendance officer. At the conference, the team will create a plan to support the family in getting the child to school.

c. If the child continues to be absent, he or she may be discharged from the program.

ABSENCE INTERVENTION PROCEDURES

The following procedures are to be followed for all typical LCS preschool students:

Condition	Action
Student misses 38 hours of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive absence notification letter is mailed to parent
Student misses 72 hours of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absence Intervention Conference is scheduled with parent• School and parent identify barriers to attendance and determine potential solutions• Absence Intervention Plan is completed and signed by school and parent
Student misses 100 hours of school OR parent fails to attend Absence Intervention Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student may be discharged from preschool• Letter sent to parent stating that the student has been discharged from the program• Student's belongings are sent to main office for pickup

TRANSPORTATION

We are only able to provide transportation for students on IEPs. Families of students not on IEPs must provide their own transportation to and from school.

Health Policies & Services

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Families are required to complete the following paperwork:

Item	Due date
Emergency Medical Authorization Form (EMA)	Date of registration
Record of immunizations	Date of registration
Medical & dental statements	Within first 30 days of school

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

Parents are asked to keep children at home any day that they show signs of illness, such as:

- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Pink eye
- Temperature of 100F or more
- Unusually dark urine
- Untreated, infected skin patches
- Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infection
- Severe coughing
- Vomiting
- Stiffness in neck
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Unusual spots or rashes

- Gray or white stool

Any student suspected or reported to have a communicable disease is isolated from other children, made comfortable, and examined by a health professional. Upon the recommendation of the health professional, the student may be excluded from school. Readmission is dependent upon a decision and accompanying readmission slip by a physician or health professional. You must accompany your child to school in order to have them examined and cleared for readmission. If you are unable to do this, you must make arrangements with a family member, friend or neighbor to bring your child to the school (or to the closest school building) to be checked. These rules must be followed for the protection of all the children in our schools.

Parents are informed when a communicable disease occurs in their child's classroom or on the bus so that early signs or symptoms can be observed, and the appropriate preventive measures can be instituted.

ADMINISTERING MEDICINE TO STUDENTS

Many students are able to attend school regularly only through effective use of medication in the treatment of disabilities or illnesses that do not hinder the health or welfare of others. If possible, all medication should be given by the parent at home. If this is not possible, only employees who are licensed health professionals or who have completed a drug administration program will administer drugs to students. The health professional or principal will supervise the secure and proper storage and dispensation of medication. The medication must be received in the container in which it was dispensed, and written permission must be received from the parent of the student,

requesting that the health professional or principal comply with the physician's order. The health professional or principal must receive and retain a statement which complies with state law and is signed by the prescribing physician. The parent must submit a revised statement signed by the prescribing physician to the school if any information originally provided by the physician changes. Any employee who is authorized to administer a prescribed drug and who has a copy of the most recent physician order cannot be held liable in civil damages for administering or failing to administer the drug.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS

Per the Ohio Department of Health, preschool students are required to receive a vision and hearing screening annually for each year he/she is enrolled in preschool. Children who cannot be screened using the methods provided by the school will be referred for a comprehensive vision or hearing exam.

EMERGENCIES

If an emergency develops at school and your child is in need of immediate first aid, school personnel will take the appropriate preliminary steps. In addition, every attempt will be made to notify the parents or guardians. For this reason, it is critical for us to have current, working emergency telephone numbers at all times. **Please notify the building secretary at your child's building if your telephone number or other listed telephone numbers or addresses change.** If hospitalization is required, the child will be taken to the hospital via rescue squad at the family's expense. The principal or designated school personnel will accompany all children transported to the hospital.

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The schools provide the services of a health professional who is on duty in the clinic during specific hours of the day. The professional is on call for medical emergencies and other health needs.

MERCY SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CLINIC

The Mercy School-Based Health Clinic provides convenient access to healthcare right here in our school district. The resource is available for all Lorain City School District students regardless of the school they attend. Families must sign a consent form for students to access the health clinic (although a one-time verbal consent will be granted in case of any emergency). Students are transported to the clinic via shuttle, and are always accompanied by a preschool paraprofessional.

The Mercy School-Based Health Clinic provides the following services:

- o Immunizations and student flu shots
- o Physical exams
- o Vision and hearing screenings
- o Chronic disease management
- o Well child visits
- o Common concerns such as bumps, bruises, etc

Mercy will work with health insurance to cover services and will manage paperwork with families who do not have insurance.

Bilingual support is available to students and families who speak Spanish.

HEALTHCHEK

As your child's preschool provider, we are excited to share about Healthchek, Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program. It is a service package for babies, kids, and young adults younger than 21 who are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid. The purpose of Healthchek is to discover and treat health problems early. If a potential health problem is found, further diagnosis and treatment are covered by Medicaid. Healthcheck covers ten check-ups in the first two years of life and annual check-ups thereafter and offers a comprehensive physical examination that includes medical history, complete unclothed exam (with parent approval), developmental screening, vision screening, dental screening, hearing assessment, immunization assessment, lead screening, and other services as needed. If your children are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid, they can receive Healthchek services. If you are younger than 21 and are also on Ohio Medicaid, you can receive Healthchek services, too.

Safety

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

If schools are closed for emergency situations, the closing will be announced on local radio WEOL 233.5261 or WOBL 988.4886 as well as local television stations. It will also be posted on the Lorain City Schools website and communicated via text and robocall.

EMERGENCY DRILLS AND PRACTICES

As part of Lorain City Schools' commitment to the safety of all children, students in the preschool program will participate in all

drills and practices including fire drills, tornado drills, lockdowns and evacuations. If you have any questions regarding these procedures, please contact your child's school.

Assessments & Screenings

ASQ-3 SCREENING

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 will be administered to all preschool students at the beginning of the school year. This screening provides the teacher with valuable information about the child's developmental stage, and also can indicate potential developmental delays. The teacher and parent complete the screening together. If the screening indicates a potential delay, parents will be notified and the teacher will closely monitor the child's progress over a three-month period. If concerns are still present, the teacher will discuss options with the parent at the fall parent-teacher conference, which may include a referral for evaluation by the school psychologist.

EARLY LEARNING ASSESSMENT

To meet the requirements of the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, the Early Learning Assessment will be administered to all students a minimum of twice each year. Ohio's Early Learning Assessment (ELA) is a tool for preschool teachers to learn about the current level of each child's skills, knowledge and behaviors in the areas of Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics,

Science, Social Studies, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, and Fine Arts.

This assessment will require teachers to observe children during the natural course of the child's day. The ELA is a continuous process of knowing about the child's learning as the learning is happening throughout the year. Children will not complete test questions or provide test answers. The ELA is an ongoing process of observations performed by the teacher to gather information on how a child is developing over time. This process allows the teacher to form an understanding of the child's learning and development that will assist them in planning future learning opportunities. Teachers will share the results of the ELA with families and provide suggestions on activities families can do at home to continue to support children's growth and development.

Family Engagement

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Three parent-teacher conferences will occur throughout the year. The purpose of these conferences is for the teacher to share updates about your child's progress and development, to collaborate with you on opportunities to support your child's learning at home, and to answer any questions you might have. Check with your child's teacher about conference dates. If you would like to have an additional conference at any time, you can schedule one with your child's teacher.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Children learn better when their families are an active part of their education, and we welcome and encourage you to get involved in whatever way you can! You are welcome to visit your child's classroom, and there are opportunities for parents to get involved in each of our elementary schools. In addition to volunteer opportunities in your child's classroom and school, we're also offering Family University sessions over the course of the year to support families on a variety of subjects.

PARENT ROSTER INFORMATION

The Ohio Department of Education licensing regulations require preschool programs to provide classroom and program rosters to families upon request. Information on the roster includes children's names, addresses and phone numbers. **Families have the right to ask that their child's information not be included in the roster, and are provided the opportunity to do so in their preschool application.** Rosters will only be provided to parents or guardians of the children enrolled in the preschool program.

Clothing & Toileting

CLOTHING

When choosing clothes for your child to wear to school, consider the following:

- 1) Would you mind if your child's clothes came home stained with mud, paint, markers, or food? If so, you may want to put a different outfit on your child.
- 2) Rubber-soled shoes, such as gym shoes, can prevent unnecessary injuries. Students are not to wear sandals or flip-flops. Socks must be worn.
- 3) Many toileting accidents can be avoided if children wear clothing that can be unbuckled, unbuttoned, or pulled off without a struggle.
- 4) Dress your child appropriately for the weather. Classes may play outside, weather permitting.

In addition, please provide a **complete change of clothes**, including socks and underwear, in case of an accident. Label each piece with your child's first and last name for easy identification and to reduce the risk of an item becoming lost. This change of clothing can be kept in your child's backpack and sent home daily upon parent request.

TOILETING

NOTE: This policy does not apply to students on IEPs or with specific medical plans in place.

All children must have mastered toileting before attending our preschool program. Toilet mastery can be defined as the control over one's bladder and bowels. Children must know how to change themselves in case of a toileting accident. If your child has an accident by means of a bowel movement, you may receive a call to come and change your child. Excessive

accidents (more than once a week) may require evaluation by the staff and could result in your child's exclusion from the program.

Field Trips

Your child may have an opportunity to attend various field trips during the school year. School law mandates that any student participating in an educational activity away from school must have the written consent and signature of his/her parent prior to their involvement—we cannot accept permission given over the phone. If we do not have a permission slip for your child, he or she will not be able to attend the field trip.

Teacher-Child Interaction Policy

Our preschool teachers provide a warm, caring and inclusive environment for all children. Our teachers support the development of executive function and self-regulation skills by setting clear expectations and providing behavior supports. They also model identifying, labeling, and discussing emotions, and they foster students' social-emotional and problem-solving skills.

Discipline strategies will be developmentally appropriate and will include redirections, praise for positive behavior, discuss the impact of the child's actions, and a temporary separation of the child from a problem situation. Adult-child interactions shall be purposeful, positive and respectful at all times. Children shall be positioned for success by having expectations clearly demonstrated and thoroughly explained. When further clarification or assistance is needed, it shall be offered and individualized to allow each child success. Positive reinforcement

shall be used to shape behaviors, and correction and redirection shall always be done in a manner that protects the child's dignity. Discipline techniques shall never humiliate, shame, or frighten a child. No staff member shall ever use profane language, threats, derogatory remarks, or other forms of verbal abuse.

If a child should need to be separated from a problem situation, the separation will be supervised, brief in duration and appropriate for the child's age and developmental ability. The child will be separated to a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member. No child shall ever be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area.

If physical intervention is necessary it shall begin with the mildest form (a hand gently placed on the child's shoulder, for example) and increase incrementally and only as necessary to the strongest intervention needed to maintain a safe environment. The strongest intervention utilized would be to briefly restrain the child in a protective hug in order to allow them to regain control. Preschool staff shall never strike or shake a child. There shall be no use of corporal punishment. Instead, preschool staff shall model kindness, gentleness, and patience in all their interactions with students.

Discipline shall not be imposed upon a child for failure to eat, rest or for toileting accidents. In addition, discipline strategies shall never include the withholding of meals, rest, or toilet use.

Children in the preschool program shall not be abused or neglected while under the care of the center. In addition, the preschool staff is expected to be vigilant in protecting children

and are mandated reporters when faced with evidence of possible abuse or neglect.

Parents are the child's first teacher and are valued as partners with the preschool staff in all matters, including discipline. Home-school communication will be frequent and ongoing. In addition, teachers will communicate with the home specifically about a child's behavior whenever the frequency or severity of the behavior is greater than expected for that particular child based upon his/her individual goals and developmental ability. By working together, the staff and parent can help each student develop patterns of positive behavior.

Head Start Collaborative Classrooms

Lorain City Schools proudly partners with Lorain County Head Start. Eight of our classrooms are Head Start Collaborative classrooms. These classrooms are still staffed by a LCS-employed lead teacher, but also benefit from the support from a Head Start instructional assistant and a Head Start family service worker. In order to meet federal Head Start regulations and standards, families whose children in these classrooms will need to complete additional paperwork, which will be provided when you register your child for preschool.

SUTQ Teacher Workdays

Throughout the year, teachers are provided with a number of SUTQ Teacher Workdays. These days are provided to our teachers to ensure that they are prepared as possible to provide an excellent preschool experience for their students. **Students**

should not report to school on these days. See the 2020-2021 preschool Calendar for more details.

Signature

By signing this form, I verify that I have read, understood, and agreed to the policies and procedures of the Lorain City Schools preschool program.

Name Child

Signature Parent

Date

Preschool parent Handbook Addendum 2020-2021

Due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19, several sections of our preschool parent handbook have been modified temporarily for the 2020-2021 school year. These modifications will remain in place until further notice. Certain portions of this handbook are not applicable during remote learning. This guidance may change in which case updates will be communicated to families.

Also, please note: Start and End times for preschool have been adjusted slightly. (only applicable when we return to in-person learning) Preschool in Early buildings begins at 8:45 and Late start buildings begin at 9:25.

Amended Sections:

Registration

Registration is initiated online at this time. There are registrars available at the Lorain City Schools Administration building during select times. Please see the Lorain City Schools website for more information.

Placement

At this time, our services have changed to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and families. We are providing online/remote services in alignment with the Lorain City Schools' Open with Care plan. Our transitions through phases I, II and III of the Open with Care plan will align with K-12 for the district.

Attendance Policy

Your participation in online learning is very important to us! If you're having trouble, please reach out for help. You can contact your child's teacher, school building office staff, or the LCS Help Line at 440-830-HELP. Our attendance policy will follow the Open with Care plan.

Transportation

At this time, there is no need for transportation. As we move to phase II or III of the Open with Care plan, we will update families district wide regarding plans and policies around transportation.

Field Trips

Our collaboration with University Circle's Early Learning Initiative will remain in place. They are providing us with some links and virtual supports for us to share during online learning. We look forward to a time when it is safe for us to resume our field trips. However, for the foreseeable future, field trips are on hold.

Parent Signature

Teachers will document when they've reviewed this document with families remotely. Signatures will not be required at this time.