

# Early Childhood Education

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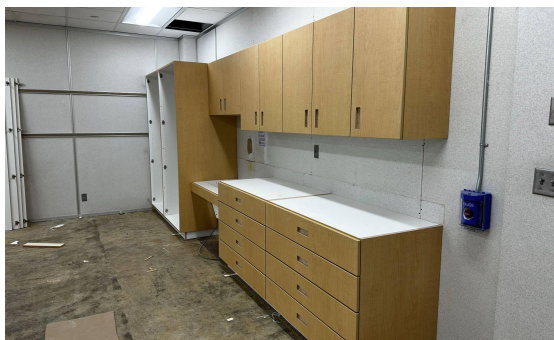
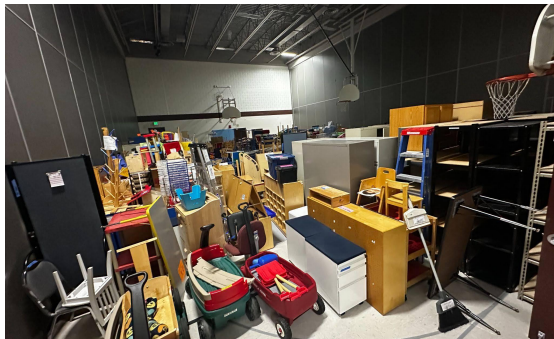
**September 22, 2026**



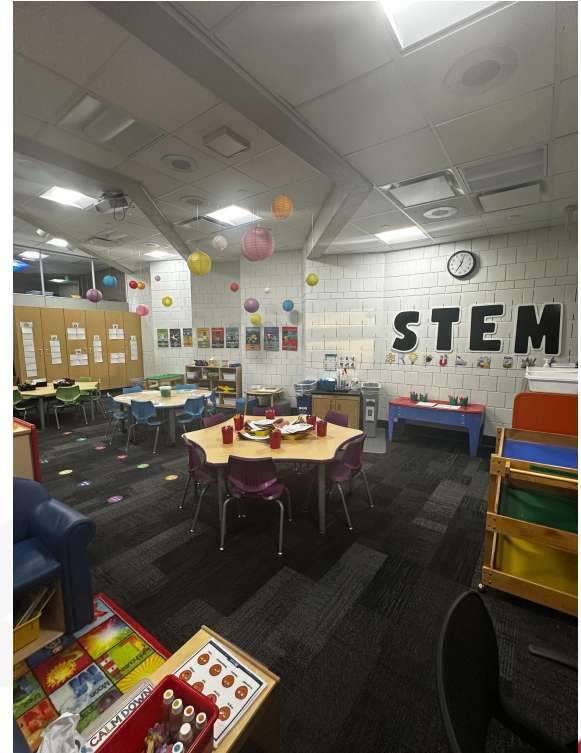
# **Early Childhood at Crystal Lake Education Center - (Est. 2012)**

Early Childhood Video

# Summer Construction



# Refreshed Spaces



# Early Childhood Programs Include:



**Small Wonders Preschool**



**Early Childhood Special Education**



**Early Childhood Family Education**



**Wonder Zone Childcare**



**Early Childhood Screening**



# Early Childhood Screening



## Free Developmental Screening

Supports early identification of any health or developmental concerns



## Year-Round Availability

Screening appointments are available throughout the entire year



## Kindergarten Focus

Currently screening incoming kindergarten students not yet screened

# 740

**Children Screened**  
2025/26 School Year Total



# Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)



## Unique to Minnesota

ECFE strengthens families with young children through education and support.



## Parent-Child Interaction & Education

Provides Parent-Child interaction activities and parent education for families with children birth to age 6.



# Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Enrollment

## Current Enrollment (Fall/Winter)

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Children | 251 |
| Parents  | 281 |
| Waitlist | 21  |

## 2025-26 (full year total enrollment)

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Children | 375 |
| Parents  | 428 |
| Waitlist | 44  |



# Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)



## Free & Individualized Services

Available for children birth-5 who meet MN state criteria



## Highly Qualified Staff

Licensed specialists and educators provide specialized services



## Generates Program Funding

ECSE enrolled students generate some state educational funding



## Open Enrollment Acceptance

Required to accept open enrollment students meeting criteria



## District Transportation

Busing is provided within district boundaries



# Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Enrollment & Evaluation

## Current ECSE Enrollment

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Age 3-5                   | 153        |
| Age birth - 3             | 89         |
| Students outside district | 28         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>270</b> |

## Current Status of ECSE Evaluations (July 1 start)

|               | To be scheduled | In process | Completed |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| Age 3-5       | 16              | 25         | 13        |
| Age birth - 3 | 19              | 8          | 30        |

## School Year 2025-26 ECSE Evaluations

|               | Referrals | Evaluations completed | Qualified for services |
|---------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Age 3-5       | 261       | 105                   | 96                     |
| Age birth - 3 | 199       | 156                   | 145                    |



# Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program Challenges

## Inclusive Setting Space

### Limited Spots in General Education Settings

- Need access to more ½ day preschool spots
- Community demand is for Full-Day preschool
- Must find placements for all students qualifying for services or open enrolling
- Many solutions being considered

## Physical Space

### Limited Space at CLEC

- Classroom spaces
- Therapeutic & sensory/calming spaces
- Furniture, equipment, materials - cost

## Staffing

### Current Openings:

- 6 ECSE Paraprofessional openings
- 2 Upcoming LTS ECSE Teacher openings

# Small Wonders Preschool

## 4/4 Star Rating

Highest Parent Aware Rating awarded for exceptional early childhood education quality.

## Variety & STEM

A rich variety of class offerings featuring integrated hands-on STEM learning experiences.

## ECSE Collaboration

Strong partnership and collaboration with Early Childhood Special Education.

## Scholarships Available

Financial support for families via School Readiness and Pathway I and II scholarship programs.



Parent  
Aware 

# Small Wonders Preschool Enrollment

## Current Enrollment

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 3 year olds           | 149        |
| 4 year olds           | 290        |
| Small Wonders at Home | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>441</b> |
| Waitlist              | 15         |



\* Enrollment opens in December for the following school year

\* Academy classes are in highest demand (M - F, 9:00 - 3:00)

# Small Wonders Preschool Program Challenges

## Budget Pressures

### Key Contributing Factors:

- Per statute, requirement to hire licensed lead teachers in public pre-K by July 2028
- Small Wonders teachers moved to EML contract with increased salaries
- Increased insurance rates
- MN Paid Family Medical Leave

\* Potential need for cross-subsidy from the general fund

## Budget Model

### Fee-based Structure

#### Revenue Sources:

- Tuition (including Summer)
- ECSE Spots & School Readiness
- Pathways Scholarships

#### Largest Expenditures:

- Salaries
- Health Insurance
- District Chargebacks

## Addressing Issues

### Action Strategies:

- Increased Tuition for FY27
- Reducing Expenditures  
Focusing on supplies & operations
- Staying Competitive  
Benchmarking area preschools

# Small Wonders Preschool Budget Overview

## Revenue

**\$2,291,497**

### REVENUE SOURCES

Tuition, School Readiness, ECSE

|          |                    |
|----------|--------------------|
| Salaries | <b>\$1,490,237</b> |
|----------|--------------------|

|          |                  |
|----------|------------------|
| Benefits | <b>\$786,066</b> |
|----------|------------------|

|                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Materials, Supplies & Equipment | <b>\$63,858</b> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|

|                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| District Chargebacks | <b>\$51,334</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------|

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total Expenses</b> | <b>\$2,391,495</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|

# Wonder Zone Childcare



**Fee for Service**  
Program



**Hours**  
6:30 a.m. to 6:00  
p.m.



**Priority Given**  
Students in Small  
Wonders or ECSE

## Current Enrollment

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| 3 year olds  | 12        |
| 4 year olds  | 42        |
| 5 year olds  | 10        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>64</b> |
| Waitlist     | 3         |

*\*Summer 2026 Enrollment - 47 Students*



# Total Early Childhood Enrollment

## Current Enrollment

CLEC Facilities

STUDENTS

**962**

ADULTS

**281**

**Total: 1,243**

## Projected Enrollment

By May, 2027

STUDENTS

**1,132**

ADULTS

**434**

**Total: 1,566**





# Continuous Improvement



# Early Childhood Framework

Indicators of Progress & Learning Targets

Ready Children • Ready Families • Ready Schools

PLCs – Data Driven – Multi-Tiered System of Supports

## Kindergarten Alignment & Focus

- Diversity
- Equity
- Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Family Engagement & Partnership

## Learning Domains

- Approaches to Learning
- The Arts
- Language, Literacy & Comm.
- Mathematics
- Physical & Movement Dev.
- Scientific Thinking
- Social & Emotional Dev.
- Social Systems

## Approaches to Learning

- Curiosity and Inquisitiveness
- Attentiveness
- Imagination
- Processing & Using Information
- Play Based Scenarios
- Strengths-Based Play

## Instructional Approach

Explicit, multi-sensory, and developmentally appropriate instruction that is play-based and supports the whole child.



**Equitable Access**



**Active Learning**



**Play & Play  
Scenarios**



**Exploration**



**Emotional  
Regulation**



**Language Rich  
Interactions**

# Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPS)



## Revised Early Childhood Standards

Updated benchmarks for early development and learning



## 3 Year Review Process

Structured evaluation cycle to maintain alignment



## Learning Continuum

Increasingly complex learning for children from birth to kindergarten entrance



## Full Implementation by 2028

Target timeline for complete system adoption



# Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Reboot



## Aligning with Elementary

Planning PD in collaboration with elementary



## Focus on Collaborative Teams

Building highly functional and supportive team structures



## Collective Commitment

Staff re-establishing mutual dedication within PLCs



## Early Childhood Math Focus

Targeted goal focused on foundational Math Concepts



## Time & PD Commitment

Dedicated upcoming schedule for PLC & Professional Development



# Technology and Early Childhood



## **COVID-19 Pandemic Context**

Heavily used during and right after COVID 19 pandemic



## **Parent & Research Feedback**

Listened to feedback from parents as well as research



## **Minimal Screen Time**

Screen time - have devices but only use them minimally



## **Teacher Supervision**

Only used under direct supervision of a teacher



## **Hands-On Educational Play**

Provide hands-on and learning through educational play



# Future Growth/Needs



## Pre-K – 12 Integration

Continuing to establish that we are a Pre-K - 12 district



## Community Growth

Accommodating for continued community growth



## Inclusive Settings

Meeting needs of students with IEPs in inclusive settings



## 2nd Early Childhood Center

Continue to express need for 2nd Early Childhood Center (especially south)



## Educator Workforce

Growing the field of early childhood educators



## Census & Enrollment Data

Dedicated staff member to collect census data for funding & forecasting



# Off to a Great Start!

