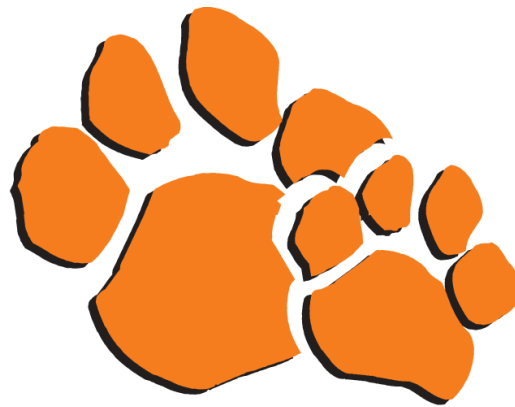


Princeton Early Childhood

Parent Handbook







PRINCETON

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Core Values



 706 1st Street
Princeton, MN 55371
 763-389-4789
 763-389-7250
 isd477.org

Just Playing

When I am building in the block room,
Please don't say, "I'm just playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
About balance and shapes.

When I'm getting all dressed up,
Setting the table, caring for the babies,
Don't get the idea I'm "just playing".
I may be a mother or a father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint,
Or standing at the easel, or molding and shaping clay,
Please don't let me hear you say, "He's just playing"
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm expressing myself and being creative,
I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair
"Reading to an imaginary audience,
Please don't laugh and think I'm, "just playing"
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs,
Or packing my pockets with choice things I find,
Don't pass it off as "just playing".
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a scientist someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle,
Or, "plaything" at my school,
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "play"
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.
I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods,
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is just "play"
For, you see, I'm learning as I play
I'm learning how my body works.
I may be a doctor, nurse or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today,
And I say "I played",
Please don't misunderstand me
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to be successful in work.
I'm preparing for tomorrow.
Today, I'm a child and my work is play.

Contact Information

Early Childhood Administration

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Teachers

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Marlene Marohn:	marlene.marohn@isd477.org
Hanna Beck :	hanna.beck@isd477.org

You can report an absence electronically on our district website under Hand in Hand Preschool or call 763.389.6198

Procedures in the staff handbook are subject to change. Such changes will be communicated from the director/coordinator. In the case of a discrepancy between this handbook and other information, such as the student handbook or district policy or other communications, governing priority is as follows:

1. State and Federal Law
2. District Policy
3. Contract Language
4. District & administrative directives (i.e. needed to comply with MDE/MDH guidelines)
5. Student Handbook
6. Registration Guide
7. Staff Handbook

It is the responsibility of all employees to review this handbook thoroughly and abide by all district policies, procedures, and guidelines, regardless of whether they are included in or referenced in this handbook. District policies are available on the district website at <https://www.isd477.org/>.



Please like [Princeton Early Childhood](#), Princeton Community Education and Princeton Public Schools on facebook. We post upcoming events and reminders often and it is a great way to stay connected to the schools. Last minute changes and information is usually posted here first.

Early Childhood Programs

Hand in Hand Preschool

Our Hand in Hand Preschool program offers a high-quality, play-based learning experience for children ages 3 to 5. The program helps children build the academic and social-emotional skills they need for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Through engaging activities in literacy, math, art, music, dramatic play, physical development, and problem-solving, children grow in confidence and independence. Classrooms are led by licensed early childhood teachers using curriculum and assessment tools approved by the State of Minnesota.

We offer a variety of classes:

- Some require children to be 3 or 4 years old by September 1 of the enrolling school year.
- A few are available for children turning 3 during the school year—these students may begin attending once they turn three.

The Hand in Hand Preschool program runs September through May in a warm, caring environment.

For more information or to inquire about mid-year enrollment, please contact Stefanie Middendorf at the Princeton Early Childhood office.

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

Princeton Early Childhood offers Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)—a welcoming and supportive program for all Minnesota families with children from birth to kindergarten entry. Offered through Minnesota public schools, ECFE is grounded in the belief that parents are their child's first and most important teachers.

The program focuses on strengthening families by helping caregivers create the best possible environment for their child's learning and development. ECFE provides opportunities for parents and children to learn and grow together through classes, activities, and parent discussion groups. The program is funded through a combination of state aid, local levy, and participant fees.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

Children grow and develop at their own pace, but sometimes families have concerns about areas such as speech, play, learning, behavior, or social interaction. If you have questions about your child's development, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) is here to help.

We can observe your child in a comfortable home setting and provide support and answers. If needed, your child may qualify for free services through the ECSE program. To start the referral process, visit HelpMeGrowMN.org or call 1-866-693-4769.

What does Preschool look like at Princeton Public Schools?

Curriculum

At Hand in Hand preschool our curriculum aligns with kindergarten and the Minnesota Early Childhood State Standards or "Indicators of Progress." The following programs are used for teaching and assessment:

- Conscious Discipline
- Creative Curriculum
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness
- Second Step Social/Emotional curriculum

Assessment

We are proud to be using a state approved online assessment tool called, "Teaching Strategies Gold" and "Fastbridge" for all children four years of age by September 1st. This is within state standards and will give us a clear picture of an individual child's growth. You will see the assessment results at each of your two preschool parent conferences.

Policies and Procedures for all Programs in Early Childhood

Drop-off and Pick-up for Preschool

Please be on time when dropping off and picking up your child. It can be upsetting for children when they are the last to leave or when other students have already been picked up. Please review the current drop-off and pick up procedures in the Parent Orientation.

If you're running late, please call us at 763-389-6198.

For safety, sign-in and sign-out is required each day.

If you are late more than once, your child will be brought to the Community Education office to wait for 10 minutes. After that, they may be taken to Tiger Club childcare, and you will be charged the current Tiger Club rate.

Tuition Payments

Preschool - Tuition is paid monthly through Eleyo on our district website. Monthly invoices are emailed, and payment is due by the 1st of each month.

ECFE- Tuition will be based on income. Choose the category based on your annual gross income. The information you provide will be treated confidentially. All families are welcome at ECFE. We break up the tuition into two payments for each session. You will be charged a fee at registration and again in the second half of the session.

Illness & Accidents

Emergency forms must be completed upon enrollment and updated as needed.

Please notify staff if your child will be absent for any reason.

Your child should stay home if:

- They've had a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting in the past 24 hours.
- They show signs of a contagious illness (e.g., pink eye, chickenpox).

If a medical emergency occurs while your child is in our care, staff will take necessary action and contact you as soon as possible. Any medical costs will be the responsibility of the family.

If your child has severe allergies, medications, or a medical condition, please:

- **Indicate this on the Emergency Information Form (via Skyward Family Access).**
- **Verbally inform the teacher.**
- **Call the district nurse, Nicole Wyganowski at 763-389-6195, to develop a medical plan.**

We are a nut-aware building. Please do not send any items containing peanuts or tree nuts or those processed in facilities that handle nuts.

Due to latex allergies, only non-latex gloves, balloons, and bandages are used.

Lice: Children with live lice or increasing numbers of nits should stay home. Lice are considered an inconvenience, not an illness.

Immunizations

Minnesota law requires proof of immunizations or a legal exemption for children in preschool. Please ensure we have records for:

- **DTaP**
- **Varicella**
- **MMR**
- **Hepatitis A & B**
- **Polio**
- **Hib**
- **Pneumococcal (ages 2–24 months)**

Dressing for School

Label all outdoor clothing. Dress your child in comfortable play clothes suitable for messy activities and outdoor play. We go outside daily, even in cold weather (above 0° windchill).

Footwear: Tennis shoes are best. Avoid cowboy boots, sandals, or dress shoes, which may be unsafe during active play.

Emergency Closings

Please ensure your contact information is up to date in Skyward Family Access.

In the event of weather-related closures or delays:

- You'll be notified via Skylert, local TV/radio stations, the district website, and Facebook.
- If there is a late start, all 8:00 AM classes are canceled.
- Full-day classes will begin late.
- Classes starting after 10:00 AM will run as usual.
- For early releases, children must be picked up at the designated time.

Behavior & Discipline

We follow Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), promoting "TIGER PRIDE":

- I will respect myself
- I will respect others
- I will respect property
- I will respect my community

We use positive strategies such as redirection, problem-solving, and gentle guidance. We treat all behaviors as teachable moments.

If unsafe or persistent behaviors occur, parents will be notified.

Tiger Team

Our trained team supports children who are overwhelmed or at risk of hurting themselves or others. They may take students to a calm space to regulate and return when they are ready.

Snacks

Each child will take turns bringing a healthy snack for the class. Please follow these guidelines:

- Snacks must be store-bought and unopened (no homemade items).
- Whole fruits or vegetables are strongly encouraged.
- We will wash and cut produce here—leave it in original packaging.
- Check labels carefully. We are peanut/nut aware (including products processed in nut-handling facilities).

- Bring enough for the entire class.

If a snack doesn't meet guidelines, it will be sent home.

Other Important Information

Lunch:

Children in full-day classes or Tiger Club will be offered hot lunch in the school cafeteria.

Child Abuse Reporting:

All preschool staff are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by Minnesota law.

Personal Items:

Please leave toys and personal items at home unless otherwise arranged with your child's teacher.

Conference for Preschool:

Held twice per year. One-day programs include child-attended conferences during class time. Please make every effort to attend.

Toileting:

Children should be self-toileting or working toward it. We understand accidents can happen and are prepared for that.

Family Changes:

If there are any unusual circumstances at home (e.g., illness, travel, loss), let us know. It helps us support your child.

Early Childhood Screening:

Children must complete Early Childhood Screening within 45 days of starting preschool. Call 763-389-6168 or schedule online on Eleyo under Screening.

Birthdays:

To support healthy habits, we do not allow birthday treats. Teachers will celebrate birthdays in special, non-food ways and will provide details.

Photos & Media:

Photos may be taken during school and posted in newsletters, district publications, or social media. If you do not want your child's photo used, please give your request in writing to your child's teacher or office.

School Calendar:

You can find the preschool calendar at the bottom of the Community Education page on the district website.

Bussing and Transportation for Preschool

Student Transportation Expectations and Consequences

Our goal is to provide safe transportation and a positive experience for all students. Transportation to and from school by bus is a privilege, not a right. This privilege can be suspended or terminated. Students are expected to follow the same behavior expectations while riding school buses, or at the bus stop, as those on school property, at school activities, functions, or events. All school rules are in effect while a student is riding the bus or at the bus stop. Consequences for inappropriate behavior on the school bus and at the bus stop will be reported to, and handled by, school administration or designee. Illegal conduct will be reported to law enforcement.

School Bus and Bus Stop Expectations -

The district school bus expectations will be posted on every bus and reviewed with students at each school. Students who violate expectations on school transportation or at designated bus stops will receive a bus referral, and consequences will follow. Consequences are progressive and may include suspension of bus privileges.

- Arrive at your bus stop five minutes prior to scheduled pick up time.
- Wait for bus driver's signal. Cross 10 feet in front of bus.
- Get on and off only at designated stop or school.
- Respect the bus driver and monitors by following directions.
- Respect other students and their personal belongings.
- Use respectful language and appropriate voice level.
- Stay seated in assigned area or seat at all times.
- Keep all parts of your body, and all possessions, inside of the bus.
- Eating or drinking are allowed at the discretion of the bus driver.
- Keep the bus clean and litter-free. Throwing of any items on the bus is prohibited and unsafe.
- Large items are not allowed on the bus without permission from the driver.
- Respect the school bus and equipment. Student will be responsible for cost of damages to property. Bus riding privileges may be withheld until an acceptable plan of restitution is made.
- Physical contact on the bus is unsafe and unacceptable. This includes pushing, hitting, kicking, horseplay, intimidation, and fighting.
- The use and/or possession of illegal substances, or related items, is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to the use or possession of alcohol, drugs and drug paraphernalia, lighters, tobacco, vaping or e-cigarettes products, weapons or look-alike weapons.

Students who do not follow the bus stop and/or bus expectations may lose their bus riding privileges for a period of time. Students are still required to attend school when they are suspended from school transportation. Parent(s) are then responsible for transportation to and from school. Transportation by school bus is a privilege, not a right, for an eligible student. (Minnesota Statutes, Sec. 4 (123.801).

Guidelines and Consequences for Not Following Bus/Bus Stop Expectations

We expect all students to follow the expectations on school transportation and display positive and safe behaviors. Consequences are progressive and may include suspension of bus privileges. Consequences for school bus and/or bus stop misconduct will apply to field trips, activities, and regular or late routes. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extra-curricular events (field trips, competitions, and activities) will be at the sole discretion of the school district. Parents or guardians will be notified of any bus suspension or loss of riding privileges and are responsible for the student's transportation during the suspension. Consequences for the school bus and bus stop will be reported to and handled by school administration or designee.

Minor Incidents: Disrespectful behavior, minor physical contact or horseplay, taking personal items from others, name calling, not following directions, littering, excessive noise level, leaving seat, inappropriate language or gestures, inappropriate use of cell phone or technology, arguing, disobedience towards driver or monitor, other incidents reported and deemed inappropriate.

Major Incidents: Major physical aggression (fighting, kicking, punching, etc), profanity and abusive language directed at driver, monitor, or another student, sexual or racial language, damage or theft of property, intimidating or threatening behavior, insubordination toward driver or monitor, possession or use of illegal substances or related items (tobacco, drugs, e-cigs, weapons), throwing items out of the bus, throwing items at other students.

Early Childhood, Primary and Intermediate Elementary: Response to Bus Referrals				
	1st Incident	2nd Incident	3rd Incident	4+ Incident
Minors	Education, parent contact, written warning	Education, parent contact, up to 1 day bus suspension and/or a) restitution b) meeting with driver c) assigned seat	Education, parent contact, up to 3 day bus suspension and/or a) restitution b) meeting with driver c) assigned seat d) in-school consequences	Education, up to 5 day bus suspension and a parent meeting, possible loss of bus service and/or a) restitution b) meeting with driver c) assigned seat d) in-school consequences
Majors	Education, parent contact, written warning and in-school consequence, or 1 day suspension and/or a) restitution b) assigned seat	Education, parent contact, up to a 3 day bus suspension and/or a)restitution b) assigned seat c) meeting with driver, d) in-school consequences	Education, up to a 5 day bus suspension and a parent meeting and/or a) restitution b) assigned seat c) meeting with driver, d) in-school consequences	Education, up to a 7 day bus suspension and a parent meeting, possible loss of bus service and/or a) restitution b) assigned seat c) meeting with driver, d) in-school consequences

Education may include: Re-teaching bus expectations, counselor referral, conference with student, individual plan, role playing, reading replacement behavior stories, apology, etc.

What does Early Childhood Family Education look like at Princeton Public Schools?

What to Expect in an ECFE Class

Welcome & Gathering Time

Families are warmly welcomed into a thoughtfully arranged classroom with different play areas designed to spark curiosity and exploration. We understand that mornings with young children can be unpredictable, so the first portion of class is a relaxed time for parent-child play as families arrive. This helps ease transitions and allows children to settle in at their own pace.

Circle Time

Led by the teacher, Circle Time includes songs, stories, greetings, fingerplays, and simple learning activities that promote listening and communication skills. We know that sitting for structured activities can be challenging for some children. If needed, teachers and caregivers will work together to support each child's comfort and success during this time.

Free Play & Learning Centers

Play is at the heart of how young children learn. During Free Play, children and parents explore a variety of engaging learning centers that change throughout the year to offer fresh experiences

and challenges. Each center supports different areas of development, encouraging both discovery and skill-building:

- **Sensory Center:** Children explore materials such as water, sand, rice, or cotton balls to develop fine motor skills, observation, and a sense of cause and effect through hands-on learning.
- **Literacy Center:** A cozy space for parents and children to enjoy books together, practice early literacy skills, and explore letters, storytelling, and print awareness.
- **Art Center:** With supplies like paint, glue, paper, playdough, and collage materials, children express creativity while building motor skills and hand-eye coordination.
- **Dramatic Play Center:** Pretend play with dress-up clothes, dolls, play kitchens, and themed props fosters imagination, communication, social interaction, and role-play.
- **Building Center:** Materials such as blocks, Magna-Tiles, and manipulatives encourage creativity, spatial awareness, problem-solving, and fine motor development.

Each activity is designed to support both academic growth and social-emotional development, all while allowing children and families to learn and play together in a supportive environment.

Parent-Child Interaction Time

In ECFE, parents and children attend class together. Each session includes time for shared parent-child activities followed by time for parent education. During interaction time, you and your child will explore developmentally appropriate activities focused on early literacy, language development, and math readiness.

Because parents are a child's first and most important teachers, these shared experiences are designed to strengthen your relationship and provide meaningful opportunities for connection and learning.

To help you make the most of this special time together, keep these tips in mind:

- Relax and enjoy the moment—this time is meant to be fun and engaging.
- Follow your child's lead—start with the activities that interest them most.
- Go at your child's pace—encourage exploration, but don't rush.
- Include others—model kindness and social skills by engaging with other families.
- Talk about what's happening—use simple language to build vocabulary and understanding.
- Get on their level—sit or kneel to connect with your child eye-to-eye.
- Encourage and support—praise effort and offer reassurance.

- Be flexible—if an activity is full, help your child find another and come back later. Learning to wait is a valuable skill.
- Put phones away—be fully present during this special time.
- Keep adult conversation brief—your child needs your attention. If you notice your child is seeking you, or you’ve been talking with another adult for a while, it’s a great time to refocus.

Parent Education

The parent education portion of class is designed to support and empower you in your parenting journey. Led by a licensed parent educator, discussions focus on topics such as child development, behavior, routines, parenting strategies, and family relationships. You’ll have the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences, and connect with other parents in a welcoming, supportive environment.

Types of Parent Education Time:

- **Non-Separating Classes:** Parents remain in the classroom during discussion. While you participate in the conversation, teachers and staff engage children in activities and support their exploration.
- **Separating Classes:** Parents say a brief goodbye and transition to the parent education room. This time apart allows children to develop confidence and independence while parents focus on learning and connection.
- **Gradual Separation:** For some classes, separation starts small and increases over time, giving children (and parents) the chance to adjust comfortably and successfully.

Parent Education Group Guidelines

Parenting brings both joy and challenges, and this group is a place where you can share openly, listen, and support one another. To help create a safe and respectful space for everyone, please keep the following in mind:

- There’s no one “right” way to parent. Let’s respect different perspectives and avoid judgment.
- Please silence your cell phone and avoid using it during class unless it’s an emergency.
- Feel free to carry forward the ideas discussed, but please keep personal details and names private.
- The more you engage, the more meaningful this experience will be—for you and for others.

- Let's give each speaker our full attention. Side conversations can be distracting and may prevent others from feeling heard.
- When parent time ends, it's important that everyone returns to the classroom together. Seeing some parents return before others can be unsettling for children.

Thank you for helping make this a supportive and respectful space for all families.

Sibling Care

Sibling care is available for most ECFE classes for an additional fee, due at the time of registration. Space is limited. This care is designed to provide a safe, nurturing environment for children ages 3 months to 6 years while parents attend class. Licensed paraprofessionals staff the sibling care room.

Parents are welcome to keep babies under 3 months of age with them during class. Once your baby turns 3 months, we ask that they be enrolled in sibling care so you can fully engage with your enrolled child.

Sibling Care Guidelines

To help ensure a smooth experience for you and your child, please follow these guidelines:

- All children should arrive with a clean diaper and/or having used the restroom. If a diaper change is needed during class, parents will be asked to assist.
- Please feed your child before class. You may send a bottle or small snack—make sure everything is clearly labeled with your child's name.
- Bring any comfort items your child may need, such as a blanket or pacifier. Be sure all personal items are labeled.
- If your child is having difficulty adjusting or separating, we may ask you to return to comfort them.
- Please pick up your child promptly after class. Children may feel anxious if they see other children being picked up before them.
- The sibling care room opens five minutes before class begins. Please allow staff time to prepare the space beforehand.
- Children showing any symptoms of illness, as outlined in our "Illness Policy," will not be able to stay in sibling care.