

***Morris Area Community Education***

# ***Pre-K Parent Handbook***



***Updated: 6/11/25***



# ***Contact Information***

## **Morris Area ECCE/Pre-K Coordinator**

***Michele Hickman***    320-585-2237  
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## **Pre-K Lead Teachers**

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## **Spanish Language & Cultural Liaison**

***Citlalli Ibanez***    320-585-2230  
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## **MACE Director**

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## **MACE Office Manager**

***Brooke Viss***    320-585-2228  
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## **Youth Programs & Tiger Cubz Coordinator**

***Cody Hickman***    320-585-2231  
chickman@morris.k12.mn.us

## **Transportation Contacts**

***Morris Area Schools Bus Garage***    320-589-3932  
***Morris City Transit***    320-589-1000

## **Pre-Kindergarten Registration**

Registration opens in April for the next school year. When registering for a class, please use September 1 to determine the appropriate class for your child's age eligibility.

## **Registration Checklist**

- Immunization records
- Copy of Birth certificate
- Update credit card information for convenient automatic payment plan

## **Early Childhood Screening**

Early Childhood Screening is a requirement for Pre-Kindergarten participation. The screening is scheduled through Morris Area Community Education. Early Childhood Screening only needs to be completed once. If your child has already had it done by another agency or a family physician, please forward the screening results to our program. If you need your child screened, appointments can be made by calling Diane Strobel at 320-585-2237.

## **Four Star Parent Aware Rating**

Morris Area Pre-K Program is a Four Star rated program. To earn this top rating, a program must demonstrate the following:

- Conducts ongoing assessment of student's progress
- Continually adapts lesson plans and goals to meet individual needs
- Regularly updates parents on child's progress
- Has staff trained on children's developmental disabilities
- Communicates across cultures
- Provides staff with annual professional development on relevant early childhood topics



## **Pre-K Program Curriculums & Assessment**

- ***Creative Curriculum*** is a balanced approach of all social-emotional and academic areas. We focus on personalized learning for your child. Lessons are designed around your child's skills to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.
- ***Second Step*** is a social-emotional learning program that empowers preschoolers to build social and emotional skills to improve relationship success.
- ***Fundations*** lays the groundwork for reading, spelling, and handwriting success through structured literacy. Lessons encourage and improve students' emerging understanding of the alphabet, letter-sound associations, and letter formation.
- ***Heggerty*** curriculum provides quick simple rhymes to teach daily phonemic awareness lessons.
- ***Teaching Strategies GOLD*** is an observation-based assessment tool that we use to assess our students. Teachers will continuously monitor and support every child's development. Constant interaction with the children allows teachers to appropriately assess their skills and developmental levels, as well as their interests and needs.

## **Tiger Cubz: Pre-Kindergarten After-school Child Care Program**

Students currently enrolled in Morris Area Community Education Pre-Kindergarten Programming and Kindergarten eligible in the following school year are welcome to enroll in Tiger Cubz.

- Tiger Cubz Hours & Pricing:
  - After School Care - 3:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. - \$5.75 per day
  - Early Dismissal Days – 12:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. - \$11.50 per day
- Registration Required:
  1. Student Information Form completed
  2. Parent Information Handbook
  3. Complete Tiger Cubz monthly calendar & fees paid
- Tiger Cubz is not in session during the planned school holidays and other no school days. Tiger Cubz will not be held on weather-related early dismissal days or when school is canceled.

## **Tuition**

Monthly tuition payments are due the first day of the month. Billing policies are as follows and are the guardian's responsibility to be paid on time:

- The tuition total for the year is divided into 9 equal payments over the school year.
- Monthly payments are automatically withdrawn from a credit or checking account on the 1st of each month.
- Any changes to the child's schedule, including withdrawal from the program, must be given 10 business days prior to when the change is needed. If notice is not given, two weeks of tuition will be charged to the account. A \$50 processing fee is charged to all cancellations. Please call or email if you need to cancel your child's enrollment.
- No refunds are given for emergency or weather closings or for days missed due to illness or vacation.
- Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Waiting lists are kept throughout the school year.

## **Tuition Assistance**

Financial assistance and scholarships are available to qualifying families. Scholarship options include Child Care Aware Pathway I, MDE Pathway II, and MACE local scholarships.

- Apply for scholarships as soon as you know you would like to attend programming to ensure funds are available.
- Applications are available at the Community Education Office or on web page.
- Families may be asked to provide proof of income. All information provided is confidential.

## **Conferences**

Conferences will be held two times per year between the teacher(s) and parent of each child enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten classes.

- Fall Conferences will be held the first week of September to fill out necessary paperwork, have the students meet their teacher one on one, and talk about the year ahead.
- Spring Conferences will be held in the final month of school to discuss the child's progress by sharing assessment data and samples of each child's work.

## **School Bus**

Pre-K students are allowed to ride the Morris Area school bus with these provisions.

- Parent contacts bus garage at **(320) 589-3932** or [busgarage@morris.k12.mn.us](mailto:busgarage@morris.k12.mn.us) to make arrangements
- Pre-K student must have a designated sibling or bus buddy currently in grades 1st -12th
- Pre-K students must abide by all Morris Area rules
- Parent informs all teachers involved of plans and any changes that occur throughout the year

## **Morris Transit**

The Morris Transit is also available for transportation to and from school.

- Parent contacts Morris Transit at **(320) 589-1000** to make arrangements
- It is the parents' responsibility to contact the Morris Transit with any changes, including daily absences, that occur throughout the year
- Pre-K staff will help students with arrival and departure on the transit each day.

## **Arrival & Pick Up Procedures**

We need your help to keep the children and the school building safe. EVERY child's safety is important to us. It is a high priority to ensure that all adults enter and exit the school in a safe, organized way.

Entering the Building:

- Push the Community Ed button in foyer for entrance
- Sign in at the Community Ed office and get a visitor badge

Exiting the Building:

- Return badge and sign out at the Community Ed office

Drop Off - 8:00am to 8:15am/12:00pm to 12:15pm:

- Parents/Caregivers drop off at entrance
- Pre-K/Community Ed staff escort students to their class

Pick Up - 11:10am to 11:20am/3:10pm to 3:20pm:

- Pre-K/Community Ed staff escort students to entrance
- Parents/Caregivers pick up at entrance

### **Additional Pick Up Information**

- Parents/Caregivers park in the parking lot and walk up to the door to pick up the children.
- Vehicles in the drive-up area should not be left unattended.
- Pre-K staff cannot leave other students to escort children to individual vehicles.
- Students that go home on the bus with a sibling or with a bus buddy will be pick up in the Pre-K Pods.
- Students who attend Tiger Cubz will be escorted to Pod A for afterschool care.

### **Parent Communication**

Classroom teachers communicate about your child's growth, classroom events, and updates through:

- Email
- Phone calls
- Teacher Webpage – Play Plans, Schedule, Pictures
- Weekly Newsletter

Make sure to check your email and child's backpack daily for paper communication, resources, or art created by your child.

### **Morris Area School/Community Ed Website**

Our District website, [www.morris.k12.mn.us](http://www.morris.k12.mn.us), has information about Morris Area Schools and Community Education. Information available online includes general information, supply lists, calendars, newsletters, etc. Pre-K teacher webpages can be found by going to the Pre-K link or locating your child's teacher in the staff directory.

### **Instant Alert Notifications**

Morris Area Schools uses JMC as our Instant Alert system.

- Families are automatically signed up to receive alerts
- Make sure that we have the correct email address and phone numbers for us to use.

### **Update of Emergency Information**

Enrollment information must be kept current.

Parents need to update information on their enrollment contract at any time regarding:

- Parent(s)/guardian home address and phone numbers.
- Persons authorized to pick up the child at the location.
- Persons to contact in a medical emergency if parent cannot be reached.

## **Lunch**

- School lunch will be free for all student's Pre-K-12 for the school year
- Full day students will eat lunch at 10:50 a.m. each day
- Students can choose the school's lunch options or bring a packed lunch from home



## **Snacks**

- All snacks must be store bought and fully sealed when brought to school.
- We encourage a reusable water bottle for your child each day.
- Families will take turns bringing a healthy snack to share. Some snack examples include: Cheese, fruit, yogurt, pretzels, crackers, cereal, vegetables, and raisins.
- Additional snack restrictions may be determined by classroom allergies. Parents will be notified if there are classroom specific restrictions.

## **Backpacks**

- All children need a full-sized backpack every day.
- Are needed for papers, projects, water bottle, extra clothes, and outdoor gear
- Check and empty your child's backpack on a regular basis



## **Belongings from Home**

- Toys brought from home could get damaged or lost.
- Items from home should be limited to something that pertains to a unit of study or a special security object.
- All items brought from home must be labeled.

## **Dress**

- Dress your child in play clothes appropriate for Pre-K experiences
- Child's shoes should have non-skid soles and fit appropriately
- Shoes with Velcro or slip on shoes are helpful for independence
- Send an extra set of clothes
- Dress for the weather – Pre-K students go outside everyday unless the weather prevents it
- For winter weather children need to have all the following:

***Snow Pants***



***Boots***



***Coat***



***Hat***



***Gloves***



## **Early Dismissal, Late Start, School Closing**

- 2 hours late, all morning Pre K and ECFE parent/child classes are cancelled. Full day Pre K classes will start at 10:00am and end at the regular time.
- School closed, all Pre K and ECFE parent/child classes are cancelled – Pre-K classes will participate in 5 E-Learning days in conjunction with K-12 students.
- Changes in the typical school schedule will be communicated through instant alert, web pages, and Facebook.
- Your child's lead teacher is your contact person for E-learning days.



## **When to Keep Your Child Home**

Your child must stay home if he/she/they,

- Has a fever of 100 or more. Your child should stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without medication.
- Has vomited or had diarrhea. Your child should stay home for 24 hours after the last episode without medication.
- Has any unexplained rash.

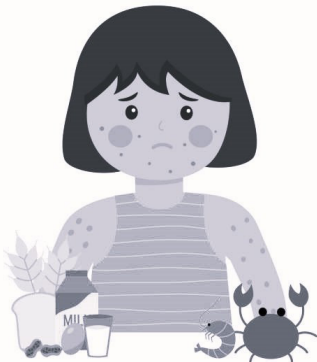
Check with your family physician before sending your child to school and notify classroom staff.

- Severe coughing or breathing trouble
- If a child becomes ill while at school the child will be brought to the health room. Parents/guardians will be notified if the student needs to be picked up. Pick your child up as soon as possible.



## **Allergies & Health Concerns**

- Let your child's teacher know about any allergies or health concerns
- Prior to your child's start date parents/caregiver must complete a health plan with the health office.
- The plan will include a description of your child's allergies or health conditions. triggers. medication needs, and procedures for staff to follow in the case of a reaction.
- Classroom staff will receive a copy of the plan and any necessary additional training or information from health room staff before your child starts.



## **Medications**

Prescription and over-the-counter medications will only be given to children while at school with a medical order from a doctor, and a signed authorization from the parent or guardian.

- Medications must be kept in their original container and be properly and legibly labeled with the child's first and last name and current prescription information.
- Medications will not be given after the expiration date.
- Medication will be given in private.
- Any unused medication will be returned to the child's parent or legal guardian.



## **Toileting Skills**

Children enrolled in the Pre-K program are expected to use the toilet independently at school.

- Staff may help with buttons or zippers but are not able to assist students in actual toileting.
- Send an extra set of clothes in a labeled bag (including shirt, pants, socks, and underwear)
- Children with special needs on an IEP may be exempt from this policy

## **Safety Drills**

- Fire, tornado, shelter-in-place, and lock down drill are practiced with the children during the school year.
- Drills are carried out in a positive manner keeping in mind the potential anxieties children may have during these practices.
- Talk to your child's teacher if you have any questions about safety drills in Pre-Kindergarten.



## **Behavior/Guidance Procedures**

The safety of self and others is our highest priority.

- Staff exercise strategies that use positive reinforcement, encouragement, offering of choices, redirection, limit settings and joint problem solving.
- Conscious Discipline Support Strategies are used in the classroom to help the child understand limits in the classroom and to help the child learn how to self-regulate.
- Second Step strategies are used to teach social emotional learning allowing children to respect themselves and others and to cultivate respect in the school environment.
- Behavior support plans may be created to support a child's success in the program with parent/guardian cooperation.
- Basic rules are: Be kind. Be safe. Be responsible. Listen.

## **Procedures for Student Behavior**

- When a child's behavior is challenging and does not seem to be responding to the staff's interventions and guidance, parents/guardians will be notified with a phone call and/or an incident report.
- For a second incident call or report, the ECFE/SR coordinator will arrange a parental conference to discuss strategies and consequences.
- For a third incident call or report, the family may be asked to adjust the student's school schedule in some way. This may include picking up the student at an earlier time or attending fewer days of school.

## **Process of Addressing a Concern**

For concerns you would like to be addressed. Please use the following protocol:

- Contact the person directly in charge of the area of concern. Ex. The classroom teacher. If the concern is with a para-educator, contact the classroom teacher.
- If the concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, contact the supervisor of the person directly in charge. Ex. Early Childhood Coordinator
- If the concern is still not addressed to your satisfaction, contact the next person in the chain of command. Ex. Community Ed Director

### **Child Custody**

If applicable, legal child custody documents, defining custody and visitation rights, must be submitted to the lead teacher or Early Childhood Coordinator at the start of the school year and when adjustments occur.

### **Photos and Video**

We take many photos and videos in classrooms and special events. These photos are used as part of our curriculum and classroom management. Other photos and videos are used in promotional literature or on our program's web page and Facebook page. If for any reason you are not comfortable having your child's photo taken in class for these purposes, please let a staff member know so we can offer you an opt-out form.

### **Field Trips**

Early childhood classes go on field trips to places around the community or short distances from Morris Area Schools throughout the school year.

- Parents will always be informed about where and when field trips occur.
- A signed permission slip is required for off-site field trips.
- Field trip buses are provided by Morris Area Schools or the Morris Transit.
- Parents may be invited to help chaperone field trips.
- Parents attending field trips as chaperones must pass a background check prior to the field trip. Please ask your child's lead teacher or the Early Childhood Coordinator to get the link for obtaining a background check if you would like to chaperone. Parents are responsible for the background check fee. This fee can be paid online when processing the background check. The background check is good through students duration of elementary school.

### **Holidays & Celebrations**

- Families often have holidays and celebrations that are important to them. Classes will celebrate many of the traditional secular holidays as a fun way to enhance the curriculum.
- Sharing any concerns your family may have about what is to be included in these days allows us to adapt activities to work for all our students. Talk to your child's lead teacher to share information and traditions about personal family celebrations.



***Morris Area Community Education (MACE)  
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District or on Instagram at Morrisareatigers***

