



LITTLE MIAMI LOCAL SCHOOLS



Parent and Student Preschool Handbook 2023-2024

Welcome

Little Miami Local Schools Preschool Program is designed to meet the diverse needs of all children. We offer an integrated program developed to educate children with disabilities as well as their typically developing peers.

Preschool Special Needs Philosophy

The Little Miami Local School District believes that all children can learn. We value high quality learning environments and will work toward effective ongoing relationships with the children and families in our school district. We recognize that communication is a critical foundation of our program. We will work collaboratively to ensure the children of Little Miami Local Schools are at their optimal level of performance as they enter kindergarten.

Preschool Program

We currently offer ten preschool sessions, five in the morning and five in the afternoon. Home address and attendance boundaries dictate what session your child will be in. Preschool is in session Tuesday through Friday and follows Little Miami Local Schools' academic calendar for all holidays. All classes will be in session on scheduled 90 minute delays as well as non-scheduled 90 minute delays due to inclement weather. Both the morning and afternoon sessions will be on a modified schedule during such delays.

Curriculum

Defined by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), “A curriculum is a written set of materials that provides an integrated framework to guide adults who make decisions about experiences provided for children and includes the following:

- Theoretical, philosophical and/or research basis to guide the approach to nurturing and facilitating children’s development;
- Goals and objectives for children’s learning and development that the curriculum seeks to foster;
- Experiences that support diverse learners and facilitate each child’s progress toward the expressed goals and objectives (including features of the physical environment, scheduling, specific experiences and adult-child interactions);
- A process through which adults plan and implement experiences to facilitate each child’s progress toward the goals and objectives, including avenues for collaboration with families and members of the larger community to guide decisions made about children’s experiences;
- A means to assure that the environment, activities and interactions children experience are appropriate for individual children by collecting ongoing information that is used to gauge how each child is making progress toward the curriculum’s stated goals and objectives for children’s development and learning, and to plan experiences that facilitate individual children’s growth and development”.

Our curriculum aligns to Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards. It is an organized framework that includes all developmental domains, guides appropriate learning experiences, day-to-day interactions, supports active learning for all children, and includes: content, goals, processes, and practices. Our curriculum, consists of Learning Without Tears for handwriting and letters and Frog Street for all domains (literacy, math, science, motor, STEAM, and social-emotional development.

Staff

All Preschool teachers are licensed/certified by the Ohio Department of Education in the areas of Special Education and Early Childhood Education. Our support staff receives training in Pediatric First Aid, CPR, Communicable Diseases, and other related areas. The related services staff holds degrees/certifications in their respective areas and must maintain a minimal level of ongoing training to continue their certification. Additionally, we offer itinerant services for children that need a different level of support.

Eligibility of Preschool Program

Little Miami Local Schools operates our preschool program following the guidelines of the Ohio Department of Education. Referrals to our preschool program for children with special needs come from parents and agencies working with children residing in the Little Miami Local School District. Determination of the preschool child's eligibility is a team decision. Typically developing children enroll in our program as tuition paying peers. Children may be eligible for special education services through center-based preschool services or itinerant services.

Related Services

A variety of related services are available to the children we serve based upon their individual needs as identified by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). These services can include, but are not limited to; speech/language therapy/consultation, occupational therapy/consultation, physical therapy/consultation and nursing. Additionally, children on IEPs are eligible for transportation if noted on the IEP.

A student may be referred for a specific related service evaluation upon request from the teacher, the parent, member of the IEP team or related service staff member. There are three basic models of related services delivery: direct, monitoring and consultative. The type of delivery model is determined by the IEP team and the intervention needs of the student. It is our practice that related services should be incorporated within the goals for each student in appropriate natural settings. As part of this comprehensive program, therapists may also consult with the teachers/support staff working with your child. In addition, physical therapists may also consult with your family physician during the assessment process.

Communication and Involvement

Communication between preschool and home is an important link and building block for learning with your child. During the school year, parent conferences will be scheduled to discuss your child's progress. Additionally, periodic updates/progress reports will be given by the teacher to gauge ongoing learning and development. Staff may also keep you informed by class newsletters, notes, telephone calls and/or student notebooks.

Copies of inspection reports of the Preschool Program can be obtained through the Preschool Director. For children with special needs, IEP meetings will be scheduled annually and can also be scheduled at the request of the parent to review and revise the IEP. Parent participation is critical in the IEP development as you are your child's first teacher.

Significant incidences of behavior or needed medical attention will be documented on the Department of Education Division of Early Childhood Education Incident Report form.

Emergencies

For emergencies, please contact the preschool. Your child's classroom will also have a contact number for you to reach. **It is vital that we have alternate telephone contacts on file in case we cannot reach you. Please notify your teacher and our office if any phone numbers change. Emergency medical forms must be completed and returned before any programming can begin.**

Visitors

Parents are encouraged to visit our classroom. Please contact the Preschool Director to make an appointment for a visit.

Sign in/Sign out Procedure

Parents and guardians who provide daily transportation need to make arrangements with the classroom teacher for site procedures. When students are picked up or dropped off for other reasons, such as a doctor or dental appointments, please make sure to notify the teacher. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN WITHOUT SPECIFIC WRITTEN CONSENT.

Dress Code

The preschool program encourages comfort and independence. Preschool classrooms engage in projects involving many different types of materials. Therefore, we encourage parents to outfit their children in comfortable clothing that is easily washed and changed. It is important for parents to provide a seasonally-appropriate change of clothing for your child. Additional underwear should be sent along with diapers. We do not provide diapers and, if applicable, the parent or guardian is required to maintain an adequate supply at school.

Resolution of Conflicts

If you have concerns about our program, we would like to offer the following procedure for resolution. First, approach your child's teacher and/or specialist to resolve the concern to your satisfaction. If you are unable to resolve the concern, please contact Preschool Director, Erin Losey, at 899-5275.

Parents may request information regarding licensing, inspection reports, or program guidelines through ODE as well or make a complaint. You can email: odels.licensing@education.ohio.gov

Program Cancellation/Emergency Closings or Delays

If preschool is cancelled due to inclement weather or other emergencies, it will be announced on local radio, TV stations, and our website. Please do not bring your child to school during inclement weather without verifying classes are being held in the building. On a scheduled or non-scheduled (due to weather) 90-minute delay, both sessions will operate on a modified schedule. The Little Miami Local Schools' academic calendar for the 2022-2023 school year can be accessed at www.littlemiamischools.com. School closings are made at the discretion of Little Miami Local Schools and are not under the control of the preschool staff. **Full fees for tuition students will be assessed on a continuous basis and will not be adjusted for calamity days.** Please remember, Little Miami closes schools in consideration of student safety across the entire district.

Birthday/Holiday Celebrations

During the school year, there may be opportunities for you to send special non-food items in to celebrate your child's special day or holiday.

Field Trips

Our program does not participate in any field trips.

Parties

Little Miami elementary buildings have two parties a year. Our preschool parties take place around Halloween and Valentine's Day. Due to limited parking, there will be a sign-up for volunteers. We ask that no siblings attend class parties due to licensing regulations.

Snacks

Children in the program will be provided a small, healthy snack and drink. The children will be encouraged to try different foods. Please alert the staff about food allergies immediately and we can provide substitutions. Snacks from home are not permitted.

Reporting Changes

Please report any changes in telephone number, contact information, drop off/pick up, etc., to the teacher and to the Little Miami Registrar. **A change of address will require proof of residency through the Little Miami Registrar's office.**

Transportation

Special transportation is a related service that must be documented on your child's IEP and changes to this service are addressed through the IEP process. Transportation is not provided to tuition paying students.

Confidentiality

Our preschool program follows procedures consistent with the Family Education Right and Privacy Acts (FERPA) of 1975. Records and files are available only to staff directly involved with your child, direct district personnel and others as permitted by the law. All other access requires written parental permission. If you wish to review your child's records, please contact the Special Education Office to arrange a time. You may review and receive copies of any reports maintained.

Attendance

Attendance is important in preschool programming to ensure safety and provide consistency of learning and development of skills. **Parents or guardian must call and notify the preschool of an absence.** Parents of an AM preschool student must call no later than 8:45AM and parents of a PM preschool student must call no later than 12:45 PM. When the call is made, simply tell the secretary the name of your child, reason for the absence, and the teacher's name. If no call is received, the secretary will place a call to you to confirm the absence of your child. Please also let your child's teacher know via email or phone call.

Photographs

Your child's photo and/or art work may be used in materials published by Little Miami Local Schools Preschool Program and/or by its staff members or employees for submission for publication to local newspapers or for use in classroom projects. If you do not wish to give consent to these publications, you may sign that permission is not granted on the Little Miami Local Schools Preschool Information Form.

Class Roster

A class roster will be developed to include the child's name, address, and birth date. Parents must give permission for their child to be included in the roster. Rosters will be available per parent request.

Cumulative Records

Student registration files are kept in each classroom. The office also creates a cumulative file that is housed in the main office, and follows the child through all grades.

Child Abuse Policy

Ohio State law requires school personnel to report any unusual injuries or marks that could be a result of abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. We do this without judging or making accusations in order to protect your child, you, and staff who are responsible for the child's safety. The investigating authorities prefer to call parents directly for further follow-up. Should an accident occur that might raise questions or concerns, please contact the teacher before your child arrives at school.

Discipline

It is our primary goal that each child feels good about him or herself and has a good learning experience with peers and adults. Children require direction and guidance as they grow into adulthood. We believe this direction and guidance must be provided in a positive manner and should promote healthy learning and self confidence. With that in mind, we will adhere to the following guidelines:

- a. Children will be spoken to positively.
- b. Limits will be established so each child knows what is expected.
- c. The environment will be designed to give the child room to grow and learn acceptable behavior.
- d. Parents are an important part of their child's team and will be consulted if a decision is made related to ongoing disciplinary intervention.
- e. Staff will serve as positive role models.
- f. No corporal punishment will be used.

Our policy for behavior management and discipline, in accordance with the State of Ohio Preschool Guidelines, is as follows:

- A. A preschool staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline
- B. The center shall have a written discipline policy describing the center's philosophy of discipline and the specific methods of discipline used.
This written policy shall be on file at the center for review. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are to be used at all times and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation and praise for appropriate behavior.
- C. The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:
 1. There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking or biting.
 2. No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
 3. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.

4. No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, box or similar cubicle.
 5. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
 6. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep or for toileting accidents.
 7. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
 8. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
 9. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability. The child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
 10. The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.
- D. The parent of a child enrolled in a center shall receive the center's written discipline policy.
- E. All preschool staff members shall receive a copy of the center's discipline policy for review upon employment.

Discipline Policy

As early childhood educators, we understand that all behaviors, positive and negative, have a purpose. Students exhibiting inappropriate behaviors are usually trying to avoid something (i.e. an activity such as circle time) or to obtain something (i.e. a toy or attention from a peer or teacher). It is important to our teaching staff that we determine the reason for a child's behavior so that we can teach an appropriate replacement skill to help the child get his/her desired result.

Preschool staff use a variety of age-appropriate, research-based behavior intervention strategies including:

- Maintaining realistic expectations of children.
- Providing clear and simple limits.
- Preventive practices (visuals, warnings, wait chair, fidgets, etc.).
- Modeling appropriate behaviors.
- Positive redirection.
- Teaching of replacement skills.
- Providing logical and natural consequences for children's actions.
- Removing children from the situation until individual has calmed down

Preschool teaching staff strive to maintain consistent and open communication with families regarding the progress of their students. You may be notified of minor behavioral incidents in the following ways: email, telephone, written communication or in person. An incident report is required for more serious situations*. In this case, you will be asked to come in and discuss the

incident with your child's teacher and the Preschool Director. The connection between home and school is very important, and children must understand that we are all communicating and working together.

During the conference following an incident report, the team will discuss behaviors they have been observing and develop a 4-week plan of specific supports that will be implemented. The preschool staff will use an ABC (Antecedent - Behavior - Consequence) chart to track behaviors they observe during this timeframe. At the conclusion of 4 weeks, the team will reconvene to review data, discuss trends, and possibly develop a Crisis Plan if necessary.

This Crisis Plan will be developed as a team to ensure safety for the student, peers, and staff. Conversations about a potential Preschool Referral for Special Education may also take place if the team suspects a disability that requires specially designed instruction.

**Incident reports are completed when there is aggression towards staff or a peer that indicates visible harm to the body (e.g. red marks, bruises, breaks to the skin)*

Immunization

Immunization of all students must be in compliance with Ohio Revised Code. Written evidence of immunization must be presented prior to the start of school. Failure to do so is cause for exclusion from school per the Ohio Department of Health until presented. If for any reason you object to immunizations, please request an exemption form from us which you may complete and return.

Medical Needs

The Ohio Department of Education requires all enrollees to obtain an annual physical medical examination indicating the child is free and clear of any communicable disease. Immunizations must be up to date. If your child has already had a physical within the last year, your pediatrician must fill in the Little Miami medical form including immunizations, and return to the Preschool.

The Ohio Department of Education is requesting the blood work section of the physical form be completed in order to ensure all children have had a comprehensive screening.

Children will be sent home or not allowed to attend preschool class upon evidence of:

1. **Fever of 100 degrees or above**, auxiliary method
2. **Diarrhea**
3. **Impetigo or any skin rash** that has not been identified in writing or by phone call to the class by a physician
4. **Vomiting** for any reason
5. **Colored or foul smelling discharge** (nose, eyes, wounds, etc.)

6. **Severe coughing** (causing child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound)
7. **Difficult or rapid breathing**
8. **Yellowish eyes or skin**
9. **Conjunctivitis or "Pink eye"** (yellowish discharge from and/or red itchy eyes)
10. **Evidence of lice (live or nits) or other parasitic infestation**
11. **Strep throat**
12. **Excessive fatigue** (child sleeps during activities and had normal sleep the previous night)
13. **Chicken Pox**
14. **Influenza**
15. **Other conditions considered a risk to self or others**

If a child is at school when one or more of these symptoms are displayed, the child will be sent to the office to await parent arrival. Children may return to class when the child is visibly free from communicable disease and that returning to the program presents no risk to the child or to others. In addition, the child must be fever free without fever reducing medicine **for 24 hours**. When a child returns from an absence, he or she may be required to bring a doctor's note, especially when the illness or incident may pose a risk of infection to other students or further risk to the child. A doctor's release is required whenever surgery or significant injury occurs so that the program can be aware of any special needs affecting the child's participation. If a child is placed on medication, the Medication Administration Procedure Consent form must be completed.

Management of Communicable Disease

(A) A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as he/she enters a group. A "person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease" means any person trained in prevention, recognition and management of communicable diseases as required by paragraph (D) of Rule 3301-37-07 of the Administrative Code.

(B) The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

(1) The program shall notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition immediately when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

(2) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be isolated immediately and discharged to his parent or guardian:

- (a) Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period);
- (b) Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
- (c) Difficult or rapid breathing;
- (d) Yellowish skin or eyes;
- (e) Conjunctivitis;
- (f) Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, taken by the auxiliary method, when in combination

with other signs of illness;

(g) Untreated infected skin patch(es);

(h) Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool;

(i) Stiff neck; or

(j) Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation.

(3) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be isolated immediately from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time during the day shall be determined by the director and the parent or guardian.

The child, while isolated at the program, shall be watched carefully for symptoms listed in paragraph (B)(2) of this rule as well as the following:

(a) Unusual spots or rashes;

(b) Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing;

(c) Elevated temperature; or

(d) Vomiting.

(4) Programs shall follow the Ohio Department of Health Child Day Care Communicable Disease Chart for appropriate management of suspected illnesses (see Appendix A).

(5) A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:

(a) Cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool program;

(b) Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised;

(c) Made comfortable and provided with a cot. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent or, if soiled with blood, feces, vomit or other body fluids, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent;

(d) Observed carefully for worsening condition; and

(e) Discharged to parent, guardian or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

(C) Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease.

The policy shall include, at a minimum:

(1) The program's means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in hand-washing and disinfection procedures;

(2) Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting such child;

(3) Procedures for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to a communicable disease;

(4) Procedures regarding the care of a mildly ill child. "Mildly ill child" means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this rule or a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this rule; and

(5) Procedures for notifying all parents of enrolled children when children are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox or lice.

Transition

The school district staff will provide transition services for students transitioning to kindergarten. Visits to the class, conferences, and meeting with parents are all vital to a successful transition from preschool to school-age programming.

Important Information

- Every child needs a change of clothes; include socks and shoes if possible. **Label everything** and place in a large plastic bag (zip lock works best), which is kept in child's school bag. Change the clothes seasonally.
- Send in additional diapers (at least two per day) and wipes as needed for your child.
- The teacher will send out a supply list for the classroom.
- Please don't send students to school with toys from home

What You Can Do For School

In order for your family to receive maximum benefits from your experience in the Little Miami School District Preschool Program, we have compiled a list of suggestions for you as parents.

You should:

- Read newsletters and memos
- Empty your child's school bag on a daily basis for important notices that need immediate attention
- Attend parent conferences
- Meet financial obligations on time (tuition paying students may be removed from the program if payment is not made on time)
- There are many ways to participate in your child's classroom:
 - Schedule visits to the classroom
 - Help prepare classroom materials from home
 - Inform teacher of any talents or special connections, interest or hobbies

It is our ethical practice to ensure confidentiality of records, test scores and general information pertaining to individual children and their families. In accordance with this we ask that neither teachers nor parents discuss the abilities or disabilities of the children enrolled in the program. Our school district is a smoke-free environment, which means that smoking is not permitted on school grounds or in any building. This policy also extends to all school activities such as field day.

Typical Peer Enrollment

- Families must reside within the Little Miami School District
- A child must be 3 years of age on or before August 1st to enroll in the pre-k classroom.
- A child must be toilet trained- this means wearing underwear to school and being able to communicate bathroom needs to an adult. A child needs to take care of all of their toileting needs from start to finish.
 1. Parents may register their child, who meets the above criteria, for preschool during the enrollment period. If your child doesn't meet the above criteria, their spot may be released from the program.

Enrollment

Current preschool students will have the option to re-enroll. Enrollment information for the 2024-2025 school year will be available during the month of January. A lottery system will be conducted for placement in the preschool classroom. Each enrollment form will be designated by a number to be used for the lottery. The lottery will place children into available preschool openings and then on a waiting list in the order that the numbers are chosen. Parents will be notified by email regarding placement. Upon acceptance into the preschool program, the following forms must be completed prior to the first day of school:

1. Little Miami Enrollment Form
3. Original birth certificate
4. Proof of residence
5. Affidavit
6. Physical

Waiting List Policy

After the open enrollment period, parents have the choice to add their child to a waiting list when all openings in the preschool classroom are filled. It is the parents' responsibility to enroll their child for preschool.

Tuition and Payment Schedule

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| Annual registration fee for ALL students | \$75 non-refundable |
| Monthly Tuition | \$340 |

Tuition is not allowed to be sent via student's backpack. Tuition payments can be made via mail, cash or check in person at the preschool office, PaySchools, or direct payment set up through your bank.

Payment is due the first of every month. **Please note that a late fee of \$25 will be charged if payments are received after the fifth of the month.** It is the responsibility of the guardian to make this payment on time. After one late fee is charged, the next late payment will result in withdrawal from the program.

Title IX Coordinator: Pamela Coates

No person in the Little Miami Local School District, shall, on the ground of race, color, creed, age, sex, national origin, disability, or handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity, all as in accordance with and as limited by the provisions of applicable law.

Homeless Local Liaison: Marla Timmerman (mtimmerman@lmsdoh.org) 513-899-2264

Foster Care Local Liaison: Marla Timmerman (mtimmerman@lmsdoh.org) 513-899-2264

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact: Erin Losey, Preschool Director, at 513-899-5200.