



**early childhood**

Chandler Unified School District

# Preschool Parent Handbook

Early Childhood Programs  
500 W. Galveston Rd  
Chandler, AZ 85225  
(480) 224-3719



Dedicated to Excellence

# Preschool Parent Handbook

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# PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Our goal as early childhood educators is to provide a strong foundation that will help all children become lifelong learners. We believe that children learn through experience and discovery. Our goal is to prepare children to enter kindergarten with a healthy self-concept and a positive attitude toward school and learning. We accomplish this by offering developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to develop social, emotional, physical and cognitive abilities. We understand that every child is unique, so we organize our preschool program to allow children to initiate activities to grow from personal interest and intentions. Our preschool students learn through exploration with hands-on developmentally appropriate activities and materials. We facilitate active learning by providing resources, and planning experiences in an environment in which all children can learn.

## PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### A. Early Learning Standards

The curriculum is aligned to the Arizona Early Learning Standards, which have been developed for children 3-5 years of age. The standards help us to provide quality learning experiences and cover a wide range of skill development. Since every child is a unique individual and learns at his/her own readiness level, the standards allow each child to progress through each developmental skill as they become ready. The standards support each child to learn through positive relationships with teachers and peers and to learn through child-initiated, child-directed and teacher supported play. The standards are categorized into 7 different skill areas.

- 1) **Social Emotional-** Children develop self-awareness by recognizing and expressing feelings, learning to positively interact and cooperate with others, being responsible and respectful for self and others by using self-control, approaching learning with curiosity, creativity, and confidence and by problem solving.
- 2) **Language and Literacy-** Children develop oral language skills by speaking and listening. They develop pre-reading skills from the sounds and rhythms of spoken language, letter knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehending stories. They develop pre-writing skills by writing letters, words, and their name.
- 3) **Mathematics-** Children develop math skills by learning numbers, counting, patterning, graphing, measuring, and by solving problems.

- 4) **Science**- Children learn science skills by observing, asking questions, making predictions, experimenting, making conclusions and communicating answers to each other.
- 5) **Social Studies**- Children learn about their environment around them, such as home, school, their community, and they learn about different places and people and how those environments compare and contrast to their own.
- 6) **Physical Development, Health and Safety**- Children develop gross motor skills by doing vigorous activities inside and outside the classroom such as dancing, running, hopping, skipping and playing ball. Children develop fine motor skills inside and outside the classroom by drawing, painting, cutting, lacing, singing and writing. Children learn healthy habits and good hygiene. They also learn about safety and how to prevent injuries.
- 7) **Fine Arts**- Children use their imagination, creativity, and the five senses to create artwork, music and movement, and imaginary play. By doing this, children develop independence, self-esteem and self-expression.

## **B. Curriculum**

The DLM Early Childhood Express is the curriculum program that is the curriculum program implemented in each of our Community, Priority, and Title I classrooms. The DLM Early Childhood Express is a holistic, child-centered program that nurtures each child by offering carefully selected and carefully sequenced learning experiences. It provides a wealth of materials and ideas to foster the social emotional, intellectual, and physical development of children. At the same time, it nurtures the natural curiosity and sense of self that can serve as the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

The DLM Early Childhood Express is focused on helping children see the patterns in what they are learning. It builds an understanding of how newly taught material resembles what children already know. Circle Time at the beginning and end of each day, helps children focus on the learning process, reflect on new concepts, and make important connections. Lessons also provide opportunities for children to practice what they have learned.

Our DLM Early Childhood Express curriculum is designed to build a child's healthy self-concept and positive attitude toward school and learning. Children develop concrete skills through experiences with music, art, storytelling, and teacher directed lessons. In addition to skills development, the curriculum emphasizes practice and reflection.

All of our preschool classes are taught by certified teachers, and staffed with a teaching assistant. Class sizes are limited to 20 students with a 1:10 adult to child ratio. Priority Preschool classrooms have additional support staff members

## **C. Program Descriptions**

### **Core Knowledge** (Pre K)

Core Knowledge Preschool is a full day preschool program specifically designed to provide 4 – 5 year old children with a solid foundation needed for later learning in kindergarten and beyond. The Core Knowledge Preschool program is based on scientific research about how young children learn, as well as research into the best preschool practices around the world.

The Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence identifies skill and knowledge competencies in all areas – Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Language Development, and Knowledge Acquisition & Cognitive Development. This program provides everyone – teachers, parents, and children with a clear vision of the learning experiences and expectations.

### **Reggio Inspired** (Pre K)

The Reggio Inspired preschool program is a full day program for 4-5 year old children which focuses on the educational importance of community and free inquiry as its primary values. The Reggio preschool program provides learning opportunities all in relationship to the children’s hands-on project approach while reinforcing and teaching math skills, problem-solving, and literacy skills.

The Reggio Inspired preschool approach to teaching young children puts the natural development of children as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment at the center of its philosophy. Parents are a vital component to the Reggio philosophy and are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children. The teacher is considered a co-learner and collaborator with the child and not just an instructor. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate the child’s learning by planning activities and lessons based on the child’s interests, asking questions to further understanding, and actively engaging in the activities alongside the child.

### **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math** (Pre K)

The STEM Pre-K program is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment where your child can explore, create and integrate knowledge across the disciplines of **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**. This program encourages children to think in a more connected and holistic way. Our mission is to care for the emotional, cognitive, social and physical health of your child while simultaneously allowing, encouraging and orchestrating their creativity in a quality learning environment.

The research is quite clear that the best practice in early childhood education is to break away from passive instruction and allow for more play and investigation, and this kind of learning early in life builds skills and interests that serve children throughout their school years, and later in life. According to Lilian G. Katz, the best practice for early education is to allow students to be active, engaged, and take initiative in their own learning. Long-term research also indicates that being allowed opportunities to take initiative in your own learning is not only good for STEM learning, but for overall long-term academic success.

## **Kindercademy** (Pre K)

Kindercademy is a preschool program that nurtures each child by providing learning experiences that foster social, physical, emotional, cognitive, and language development in a caring and exciting environment. This program emphasizes teaching foundational skills that will help prepare your child for a successful transition into kindergarten. The Houghton Mifflin Pre-K curriculum emphasizes reading readiness, language, writing, and math. In addition, students are provided extracurricular opportunities such as music, library, and computer lab.

## **Priority Preschool**

Priority Preschool provides special education services, for children ages 3 to 5 (not of kindergarten age as of September first deadline). Special services to help children reach their developmental milestones include speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Individual educational programming in the cognitive, language, motor, self-help, and social emotional areas are also designed to meet individual needs of each child.

To be eligible as a preschool special education student, the child must have a comprehensive evaluation and meet eligibility guidelines as a child with a disability. Typically, the child is referred to our school district by an outside agency, medical provider or the parent. The screening determines if a child has a potential disability (meeting state and federal criteria for special education) that requires further evaluation. If so, a full evaluation will be done to determine whether the child is eligible for placement in one of several programs including Priority Preschool. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed by the school district team and parents to meet the child's needs. There is no charge for the PPS program for eligible children to attend.

## **Preschool & Title I Preschool Programs**

Children develop concrete skills through experiences with music, art, storytelling, and teacher-directed lessons. In addition to skills development, the curriculum emphasizes practice and reflection. Tuition based classes are offered as a two, three, or five day weekly programs, and provides a variety of options for families. Preschool sessions are 2.5 to 3 hours long, and are offered in the morning or afternoon.

The Title I preschool programs are funded through Federal and State funds, and are free to Chandler residents who live within the designated school boundaries. Children develop concrete skills through experiences with music, art, storytelling, and teacher-directed lessons that, in addition to skills development emphasize practice and reflection. Preschool sessions are 3 hours long 5 days a week, and offered in the morning and afternoon. Full day programs are available at several sites.

## **D. Portfolios**

A portfolio is a collection of work that is kept on file for each preschooler throughout the school year. The portfolio has writing samples, cutting samples, art projects, and other samples of the child's work. Portfolios are shared with parents during conferences to demonstrate the growth each child has achieved in certain skill areas. The portfolios are given to the families at the end of the school year.

## **E. Progress Monitoring**

The Teaching Strategies GOLD is an observational tool that monitors performance and progress. This assessment allows us to assess the children in different classroom activities by observing and recording the preschoolers at work and at play. This assessment is a way for teachers to evaluate and/or assess readiness for kindergarten. This information indicates how your child is progressing in the program, and how we can better provide support that will help them develop the skills needed to be successful in Kindergarten. A report will be given two times a year, during conferences.

## **F. Communication**

To ensure a successful preschool experience, it is important to have good communication between school and home. Newsletters are sent home to help keep parents keep informed about their child's program as well as special events that are planned throughout the school year. We encourage parents to also visit the school's website to view information that is posted on the preschool teacher's webpage.

Parents are welcome to volunteer in classrooms, as well as participate in special celebrations throughout the year. Your child's teacher will provide you with more information on how you can become a parent volunteer.

- **Meet the Teacher-** Parents and preschoolers will have the opportunity to visit the classroom before school is in session. This event helps to ensure a smooth transition on the first day of school.
- **Classroom Visits-** We encourage parents to observe and volunteer in the classroom. This also provides the teacher with help and support as the students learn, play, clean up or transition between activities. Talk to your child's teacher about specific volunteer schedules.
- **Preschool Orientation/Curriculum Night-** Information about your child's preschool program and curriculum is shared at this event. This is an opportunity to learn more about our school and your child's classroom.

## **G. Conferences**

### **Community & Title I Preschool Programs**

Parent-teacher conferences take place two times during the school year. The conferences provide us an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and work together to help them be successful. Parent-Teacher conferences give parents the chance to ask questions about their child's progress, and discuss any concerns they may have. Parent-Teacher conferences will be in August and May.

### **Priority Preschool**

Priority preschool families meet during IEP meetings and receive quarterly progress notes. If families would like additional time to meet with the teacher they may request a conference.

## **Daily Schedule**

Preschool will provide your child with a variety of activities. Teachers implement a program that is a balance between whole group, small group and individual learning opportunities; indoor and outdoor play; as well as child-centered and teacher directed activities. Each classroom offers the following activities in their daily schedule:

- Arrival time
- Table top
- Snack
- Circle time (large group activities, story time, and music)
- Center time (individual work in class learning areas)
- Clean up
- Music & Movement
- Outdoor play
- Closing

## **Program Services**

### **A. Health Screenings**

During the year, health personnel will assess the children with hearing and vision screenings to ensure that students do not have a problem with their hearing or vision. If there are concerns, parents or guardians will be notified so the child can be taken for a follow-up visit with their physician.

## **B. Parent Education**

Chandler Unified School District offers families, through the Chandler Care Center, a wide variety of services for families. These services include health care, dental care, GED classes and ESL classes. The Chandler Care Center is located on the North East corner of the Galveston Elementary School Campus. For more information, call 480-812-7900.

## **C. Screening and Referral Process**

A Pre-Kindergarten screening tool is used to assess children's abilities within the first 45 days of attendance which reviews: vision, hearing, communication, social/emotional/behavioral, sensory, motor and adaptive skills. If there are developmental concerns the teacher will provide the parents with contact information to the Hancock Preschool Assessment Center where a screening will be conducted to determine if your child has a potential disability that requires further evaluation. If you have any questions regarding the screening process please (480)883-5916.

# **School Policies**

## **A. Attendance**

Please make sure that your child attends school regularly unless they are ill. If your child is going to be absent, please call the school office to report the absence. It is important for your child to attend school regularly, so they can be successful in school and gain the necessary readiness skills for kindergarten. If your child does not attend on a regular basis, your child will be withdrawn from the program to allow another student to attend, who is on a waiting list. Daily sign-in and sign-out notebooks are located in each Preschool classroom. Each child attending our preschools should be signed in and out by a responsible adult that is noted on the emergency card each day. Any changes in the emergency card are to be submitted in writing. In case of an emergency, parents may give verbal authorization so an adult other than those on file are able to drop off or pick up their child. Anyone other than the parent that is picking up a child is to show proper identification before the child is released.

- **Reporting absences-** Please call the attendance clerk at your school if your child is going to be absent for the day. If you do not report your child's absence, the absence will be indicated as unexcused. When a child is absent for more than 10 consecutive days, and the absences are not reported, your child's unexcused absences will result in being withdrawn from the program.
- **Daily arrival-** Please make sure your child arrives to school on time daily. There is no adult supervision before or after school hours.

- **Dismissal time**- Please make sure to be on time to pick up your child at the end of the school day. In case of an emergency, please contact the office to notify the teacher of any delays.
- **Late Arrival**-If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will need to park by the office and check in at the office before coming to the classroom. Do not leave any child unattended in the car, and watch all children at all times while on campus.

## **B. Discipline**

Your child will be complimented for positive behaviors. Teacher's expectations will match and respect all children's developing capabilities. We believe discipline problems can be avoided by focusing on adequate behavior and directing children's energy and curiosity toward healthy, positive interactions. Your child's teacher will notify you if your child has continuing behavior problems so that we can help your child have a more successful experience the following day.

A parent who has concerns about difficulties that their child is experiencing, should initially speak with the classroom teacher. Arrangements will be made to provide time for the teacher to meet with a parent, and a translator will be provided if necessary. A plan of action will be developed and implemented. If further support is necessary to resolve the concern, the principal will meet with the parents to offer further support and assistance.

## **C. Health and Safety**

- **First Aid Kits** – First Aid kits are available in each preschool classroom for administering first aid if necessary. In addition, staff is required to have a kit available at all times during any outdoor activity time.
- **Emergency procedures**- If a minor injury occurs, your child will be taken to the health office for treatment. The parent will be notified at the time of dismissal or a note will be sent home. In case of a serious injury, first aid will be administered. Parents will be notified immediately to pick up child for further care. If a parent cannot be located, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.
- **Medications**- CUSD policies will be followed if the student needs to take a prescribed medication. Medications can only be administered by the school health assistant or nurse.
- **Illness**- Please keep your child home when they have a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat or any other contagious infection. Child needs to be symptom free for 24 hours before they may return to school.

- **Insurance-** Chandler Unified School District provides property and casualty liability coverage for each of our preschool classrooms.
- **Backpacks-** We recommend that each child brings a standard size backpack to school to help keep them organized. Please pack an extra pair of clothes in the backpack to use in case there is an accident and a clean change of clothes is needed. It is important for parents to check backpacks daily for important information from the teacher or school administrators.
- **Personal Belongings-** It is important that children do not bring the following items to school: gum, snacks, toys or personal items from home. Items that are valuable or breakable may become lost in the classroom. Toy weapons are not allowed on campus at any time.
- **Hygiene-** To keep all of our children healthy, students are required to wash their hands on arrival, before and after snack time, after recess, and after water play. Hand washing prevents the spread of germs, and becomes a lifelong habit. We appreciate your help in reinforcing this routine at home as well.

## **D. Dress Code**

Simple play clothes are appropriate for preschool. Children interact with paints, markers, glitter, and glue, and there may be spills at snack time. Children also are running, jumping, and climbing during free play time. Good supportive shoes should be worn on a daily basis. Most playgrounds are covered with wood chips that can injure children's feet if sandals are worn. Socks and tennis shoes are always the best footwear for preschoolers.

# Family Participation & Activities

For children to be successful, parents and teachers need to work together as a team. You are your child's first teacher and we value and appreciate your participation, suggestions, and support. Please contact us at any time if you have any questions or need our assistance. We look forward to a great school year!

Below are some suggested activities parents can do at home with their child to help reinforce the skills that are introduced at school.

- 1) READ to your child at least once a day and have your child retell the story to you.
- 2) As you are driving in the car, shopping, or around your home, look for the letter of the week. Also have your child try to read signs on the road or in the stores.
- 3) Practice counting with your child.
- 4) Practice colors and shapes with your child.
- 5) Help your child practice writing his/her name.
- 6) Allow your child to do small, simple chores at home. It makes them feel important and gives them a sense of responsibility.
- 7) Have your child tell you about their day and what they have learned in school.



**WELCOME TO PRESCHOOL!**

**Chandler Unified School District #80  
Preschool & Pre K Student Calendar  
2015-2016**

<p><b><u>July 20</u></b> First Day of School</p> <p><b><u>August 26</u> **</b> No School -Preschool Conferences</p> <p><b><u>September 7</u></b> No School - Labor Day Holiday</p> <p><b><u>September 28 - October 9</u></b> No School - Fall Intersession</p> <p><b><u>October 12-13</u></b> No School – Teacher Inservice/Workday</p> <p><b><u>November 11</u></b> No School - Veterans Day Holiday</p> <p><b><u>November 26 - 27</u></b> No School – Thanksgiving Holidays</p> <p><b><u>December 18</u></b> No School – Teacher Inservice/Workday</p> <p><b><u>December 21- January 1</u></b> No School - Winter Intersession</p>	<p><b><u>January 4</u></b> No School – Teacher Inservice/Workday</p> <p><b><u>January 18</u></b> No School - Martin Luther King Day</p> <p><b><u>February 15</u></b> No School – President’s Day</p> <p><b><u>March 7– March 18</u></b> No School - Spring Intersession</p> <p><b><u>March 21</u></b> No School – Teacher Inservice/Workday</p> <p><b><u>March 25</u></b> No School – Spring Holiday</p> <p><b><u>May 11</u> **</b> No School—Preschool Conferences</p> <p><b><u>May 24</u></b> Last day of school</p>
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\*\* Priority Preschool classes follow their regular schedules on designated conference dates as indicated on the calendar above.

