

North Iowa Community School Preschool

Program Policies and Procedures



Location:
North Iowa Community School District
Little Bison Childcare Center
111 3rd Ave. NW
Buffalo Center, Iowa 50424
(641) 562-2525

North Iowa Mission Statement:

LINKING STUDENTS WITH SUCCESS

North Iowa Preschool Mission:

The mission of North Iowa Preschool is to help children learn to develop a sense of personal worth, security, a feeling of self-control, creativity, responsibility, interest and joy in learning. We will also help them learn the value of sharing, the enjoyment of being curious and more about the world around them through guided exploration. We believe all children can learn, and we seek to make each student a lifelong learner capable of becoming a self-respecting, contributing member of society.

Preschool - 4th Grade School Philosophy of Education:

We believe:

- Student learning is the most important element of our society.
- Students learn best in a safe and caring environment.
- Innovative learning activities and various teaching strategies enhance learning.
- Respect for diversity develops tolerance within the school and our society.
- Effective learning produces life-long skills.
- Leaders never lose sight of best practice.
- Teaching the importance of citizenship benefits the school and the community.
- Productive discipline incorporates control, consistency, and care.
- Memorable and enjoyable activities foster learning.
- School, home, and community cooperation facilitates and reinforces learning.

Goals for Children:

- Children will show competence in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language development skills, the arts, math, and literacy.
- Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.

Goals for Families:

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
- Families will advocate for their children.

Eligibility

Children must be three years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year to attend three year old preschool. To be eligible for the 4 year old preschool program, children must be 4 years of age on/or prior to September 15th of the current school year.

Fees

There is no cost for the 4 year old preschool program.

Cost for 3 year old preschool is \$40/month. Early Childhood North Central Iowa may provide tuition assistance to qualifying 3 year olds. Tuition is due the first school day of each calendar month.

Preschool meal fees are as follows: Breakfast (optional) - \$1.50 Meal accounts are not allowed to go to a negative balance. Parents may pay with a check or deposit funds into their family lunch account using the district homepage. In accordance with our district's Wellness Policy the menu will reflect more of an emphasis on whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

Arrival and Departure of Children (IQPPS Standard 10.9)

A.M. Preschoolers

May be dropped off anytime after 8:15 a.m. Students riding the bus to school will arrive between 8:00- 8:20 a.m. School staff will be waiting as students arrive. Preschoolers must be properly supervised by an adult once they get to school and cannot wait in the classroom alone. Thus, they may not be dropped off prior to 8:15. (Note: An older sibling does not qualify as appropriate adult supervision.) The morning preschool session ends at 11:30. School staff will escort preschoolers to the bus. Parents can pick up at the preschool classroom.

P.M Preschoolers

May be dropped off anytime after 12:15 p.m. Students riding the bus to school will arrive between 12:00- 12:15 p.m. School staff will escort preschool students from the bus to the classroom when they arrive. Preschoolers must be properly supervised by an adult once they get to school and cannot wait in the classroom alone. School staff will escort preschoolers to the bus at the end of the day. Parents can pick up at the preschool classroom.

***If there is a change to the pick up time/routine for you child, you as a parent are responsible for notifying the teacher with a note.

Busing

If your child rides the bus to school, staff will meet the students inside the elementary doors and escort them to the preschool room. At dismissal time, staff will walk students to each bus to make sure that everyone is in the appropriate place. If you have to make any changes to your busing schedule, you must call the elementary office so that everyone is informed of the changes.

General Information (IQPPS Standard 10.4)

A staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions, promote activity among children, and to ensure the safety of all students. The maximum class size is 20 children. Some classrooms may serve fewer students, based on the square footage of the location.

Inclusion

The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements (ADA). This program serves all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. The staff are aware of the unique needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans.

Daily Activities

Activities your child may participate in during the school day include:

- ❖ Group times, including large and small group learning opportunities
- ❖ Choice time
- ❖ Music and movement
- ❖ Math and literacy activities
- ❖ Outdoor/gross motor opportunities
- ❖ Story Time/Literacy Groups

Curriculum

The preschool program uses Creative Curriculum, a research and evidence based comprehensive curriculum designed for three to five-year-olds. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways- through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening and storytelling. Parental input on child learning and progress is an integral part of the curriculum.

Assessment

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- ❖ “Teaching Strategies Gold” – State Assessment used by all State Funded Preschools.
- ❖ Creative Curriculum Developmental Checklist completed three times per year.
- ❖ Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child’s progress during daily activities.
 - ❖ Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include assessments, rubrics and child work samples collected on an ongoing basis.
 - ❖ Families are asked to contribute information about their child’s progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a more complete picture of a child’s growth and development.

The information above is used in the following ways:

- ❖ Arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated
- ❖ Identifying children’s needs and interests
- ❖ Describing the developmental progress and learning of children
- ❖ Improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment
- ❖ Planning program improvement
- ❖ Communicating with families

Assessment information is shared with families two times per year during conferences and through written reports. The preschool teacher will communicate monthly with families regarding activities and observations of children. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

Program Standards

The North Iowa Community School District implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards for Preschool.

Meals/Foods and Nutrition

Children attending our 4 year old preschool will be served breakfast (a.m. students only). Children will have clean, sanitary drinking water available to them throughout the school day.

Based on the recommendations supplied by their health care provider, meal plans will be developed and followed for children with food allergies or special health care needs. Children with food allergies will be protected from any contact with problematic foods. High risk foods (choking hazards) will not be served.

Foods that come from home for sharing among children are either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

Outdoor Play and Learning

There are daily opportunities for students to play outdoor as weather permits. This time will allow children to get exercise and develop their large motor skills. When we are not able to be outside due to weather, children will be given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activity.

Large motor activities/ recess takes place outside, weather permitting. We ask that you dress your child accordingly. For cold weather, hats, coats, mittens, boots and snow pants will be needed. Please label all the items with your child's name. For warmer days, dressing your child lightly is just as important. There are areas on our playground that allow children to be in shade during this time. Children are able to wear hats for sun protection, and we encourage you to apply sunscreen to your child prior to sending them to school. In order to keep your child safe on the playground equipment.

Clothing

Children participate in a variety of activities and creative play throughout the school day, and we want families to be aware that spills or stains may occur on clothing. Please keep this in mind as you dress your child for school each day, and if necessary, supply an extra change of clothes in case of a spill or mess.

Bathroom Learning

It is recommended that your child practice age appropriate bathroom skills and be potty trained, unless a disability is present. We understand that they might have an occasional accident. Thus, we encourage parents to supply an extra change of clothing (underwear, pants, shirt). The staff will follow diapering/ pull-up guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Staff follows strict guidelines regarding the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Confidential information about any particular child will only be shared with early childhood professionals and family members who work directly with the child.

Student Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information are confidential. Only persons who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access their child's records during regular office hours.

Family Involvement

North Iowa Preschool encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year for students enrolled in the 4 year old program. Preschool staff communicates with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities. Family teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring, as well as when either party requests. At least one family night will be held during the school year. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences, or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

When face-to-face contact is not possible, staff rely on notes home, emails, school messaging system, phone calls and newsletters as alternative means to establish and maintain open communication. Ideas for families to be involved in the school experience:

- ❖ Share information about your child's interests and abilities
- ❖ Attend family conferences in the fall and spring
- ❖ Check your child's backpack each day
- ❖ Participate in field trips
- ❖ Share your talents with your child's class
- ❖ Come to play
- ❖ Help with special events

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential part of a high quality early childhood program. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If you have a concern or issue that is unresolved by your child's teacher, please contact the elementary principal.

Home Visits

Home visits are made prior to the start of school for students enrolled in our 4 year old program. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher develop goals for your child and understand what concerns you have for your child.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The preschool program will have formal conferences in the fall and spring. During conferences, the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together, you will make a plan and set goals for your child to continue on the path of growth and development.

Family Night

Family night will be held at least once per school year. Family nights are an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities.

Health and Immunization Certificates

The Iowa Immunization Law requires that all children entering school be adequately immunized against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, and rubella. If a child is overdue for any immunizations, parents must provide documentation of a scheduled appointment as soon as possible, except where parents are using religious exemption for health services.

Health and Safety Records (IQPPS Standards 10.8)

Health and safety information will be collected from families and maintained in a file in the school office. These health and safety records include:

- ❖ Current health insurance information required for emergency treatment
- ❖ Current health examination results including immunizations
- ❖ Current emergency contact information
- ❖ Names of authorized individuals to have access to health information
- ❖ Instructions for any special health needs such as allergies or chronic illnesses
- ❖ Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical conditions
- ❖ Supporting evidence for under-immunization

General Health and Safety Information (IQPPS Standard 10.5)

- ❖ All staff must be alert to the health needs of each child
- ❖ Staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children
- ❖ Staff follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions
- ❖ Staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures
- ❖ Staff complete blood borne pathogens training yearly
- ❖ At least one staff member will possess a certificate of completion of pediatric first-aid training and CPR and is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR will always be present.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (IQPPS Standard 10.6)

Staff is required by law to report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services. Certified teaching staff is required to “recertify” with the state in the area of “Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse.” All reports are confidential.

Reporting Communicable Diseases

Staff will provide families with information in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable diseases to which their child has been exposed. It will include signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of exposure, and control measures being implemented at the program. The school district has arrangements with local health authorities and obtains advice from those agencies when outbreaks of communicable diseases occur.

Medication Policies and Procedures

Medications brought to school need to be in the prescription container or for over-the-counter medications, in the original labeled container with the student’s name written on the container. The parent or guardian must sign a request to have this prescribed medication dispensed to their child according to the written directions of the prescribing physician or as written on the container. Medication permission slips are valid for the current school year or as stated on the permission form. Medications must be taken to the school nurse to be administered by the school nurse during the school day.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms overnight, they will not be admitted the next day for the safety of the other children:

- ❖ fever of 100 degrees or higher
- ❖ vomiting
- ❖ diarrhea
- ❖ pink eye with drainage
- ❖ cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

Children should remain home until these symptoms have subsided for 24 hours, and if needed, they have been taking antibiotics for 24 hours.

If a child is observed to have any signs of illness while attending the program, parents will be informed immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please keep current emergency numbers on file with the office. In the meantime, your child will be provided with a place to rest, away from other children until they are picked up.

Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health

Preschool staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insects, pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in the manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children.

Cleaning and Sanitization

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Table in the QPPS manual. A checklist will be posted in the classroom to document that the staff is following the proper cleaning routines. Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are contaminated will be removed and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be sanitized using disinfectant approved by the district that is safe for child contact. Machine washable cloth toys that are contaminated will be laundered before another use. (QPPS Standard 5.24) Facilities will be cleaned when children are not present if the cleaning requires hazardous chemicals.

Hand Washing Practices

Frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of disease. Teachers will show children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is located in all preschool rooms. Following each use of items in the kit, it will be inspected and missing or used items will be replaced. The kit will be inspected monthly. A first aid kit is also located in the outdoor playground shed. A kit is taken along on field trips or outings away from the site.

Fire Safety

A fully working fire extinguisher and carbon monoxide detector are installed in each classroom and are tagged and serviced annually. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

Medical Emergencies and Accident Notification (IQPPS Standard 10.10)

Each classroom has an Emergency Contact Information binder that includes:

- ❖ emergency sign out sheets
- ❖ class lists
- ❖ contact information for each child

Procedures for safety situations are outlined in a binder available for viewing in the school office. In the event that your child receives a minor injury during their day, first aid will be applied as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated with an ice pack. Significant injuries will be documented.

Inclement Weather

In the event of bad weather, the district will make decisions on late starts, early dismissals, or school cancellations. Please tune to area radio and news stations for that information. If the district delays school 2 hours due to inclement weather, morning preschool classes will be CANCELLED. Afternoon preschool classes will be in session, following their normal schedule 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Because of the high number of contacts that need to be made at these times, please refrain from calling the school and pay close attention to the area stations. You can also sign up on the school website for delay and cancellation to be sent as a text message or email using the School Notification System - JMC. You can receive either an e-mail or a cell phone text message alert about all delays and cancellations by signing up on JMC. Your first step would be to stop by the building office and sign-up.

Building Locked

All doors are open for students and parents to enter the buildings at the beginning of the day. The doors will remain open until 8:30. After 8:30 all doors are locked for the safety of our students and staff. There is a camera and buzzer that will be used to allow access to the building. Once in the building, parents and visitors are asked to check in at the office and obtain a visitor's pass before going to any classroom or other parts of the building.

Contact Information

We look forward to the beginning of the school year, and are excited to get to know your child and family. Feel free to contact Mrs. Bohl with questions or concerns as the year progresses. Thank you!

bohl@northiowa.org

641-562-2525

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of the North Iowa Community School not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the school district Equity Coordinator, Keri Bergeson, Principal, 111 3rd Ave NW, Buffalo Center, Iowa, 641-562-2525, bergesonk@northiowa.org. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the region VII Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800, Milwaukee, WI, 53203-2292, (414) 291-1111, or the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available upon request from the superintendent's office.