



FOREST AREA
Community Schools



**Michigan Department of Educational
Great Start Readiness Program**

Forest Area Community Schools Great Start Readiness Program Parent Handbook



2019-2020

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Introductory Information

GSRP Overview

The Forest Area Great Start Readiness Program is a school readiness preschool funded through a grant from the Michigan Department of Education. We are a high quality preschool for children who turn 4 on or before September 1st. This program is committed to providing quality and developmentally appropriate experiences for young children with a strong emphasis on parent involvement. This handbook is designed as a reference for you. Program information will be explained in depth with you at your first home visit.

Mission

The Forest Area Great Start Readiness Program provides engaging, fun, and developmentally appropriate preschool educational opportunities for qualifying students to further their educational, social, and emotional growth in an attempt to prepare them for the educational opportunities that lie ahead.

Philosophy

The Forest Area Great Start Readiness Preschool philosophy is based on a strong belief that children are individuals. This belief is exemplified in all activities planned for children in the classroom. Children will be given the opportunity to explore their environment, make sense of it, learn from it, and enjoy it. By making their own discoveries, they will genuinely learn and feel a sense of accomplishment. Learning experiences should be fun and meet individual needs through mutual involvement of parents, children, and staff. We further believe that a child's parent(s) are the strongest influence in the life of their child. It is because of this influence that parents must be considered a vital part of the program and be included in their child's education. Each person enters this program at different developmental levels that must be built upon through program activities. Long-term research points out that quality preschool is good for children; however, those programs with a strong parent component make greater long-term gains in children.



Enrollment Information

Admission

The FAS Preschool is funded through a grant from the Michigan Department of Education and is free of charge for those who qualify. Children enrolled in the FAS Preschool grant program must meet one out of the seven “at risk” factors as determined by the Michigan Department of Education. Further prioritizing ensures those most in need are served. Those not enrolled are placed on a waiting list. Vacancies are filled within two weeks of their occurrence. Children eligible to participate in the program must be at least 4, but less than 5 years of age as of September 1 of the year in which the program is offered. Families with risk factors, whose income is above GSRP guidelines, may still be eligible for the program. These families will be asked to pay tuition based on a sliding scale fee.

Recruitment

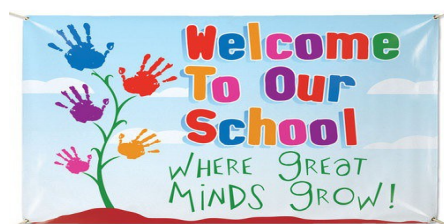
Open enrollment will start in the spring of each year, and run through the summer. Appointments are made available after school or Fridays. Applications that are received will be carefully reviewed and documentation supporting risk factors will be gathered. All information submitted is confidential. Parents will be notified by letter if their child has qualified for GSRP. If more families apply for GSRP than slots are awarded, those children with the greatest need based on the qualifying risk factors will be admitted first.

Referral Policy

GSRP legislation requires specific collaboration when a child is income-eligible for Head Start. An eligible child must be referred to Head Start. Once aware of eligibility, Head Start will contact you to describe the services available. GSRP enrollment is deferred while the referral to Head Start is completed.

Schedule of Operations

When your child is enrolled in the Forest Area Great Start Readiness Preschool he/she will have the opportunity to come to school four days a week. Classes meet for a full day program that follows the elementary school schedule. Normal class days are Monday through Thursday of each week. School starts at 8:05 a.m. and ends at 3:05 p.m. Days that Forest Area Public Schools dismiss for half days, the dismissal time is 11:45 a.m. If you need childcare before or after school, there is an Early Learning latchkey program available. Please call the school for more information. The current school calendar will be included in this handbook.



Arrival / Pick Up

Arrival: Parents have two options when dropping their child off in the morning. They may say goodbye to their child in the cafeteria and leave them with Mrs. Leonard and Mrs. Schaefer on the stage, or they may wait with their child and walk them to the classrooms. If a parent chooses to walk their child to the classroom, please stop at the office to get a preschool pass. This assures the safety of our students and families. This is also a good time to talk to the staff about how your child is feeling. **Pick UP:** All children must be signed out when they are picked up. Children will be released only to parents or persons authorized by parents and listed on the Child Information Card. If you intend for someone not listed on the information card to pick up your child, notify the staff in writing. In emergencies, you may call the site. ID will be required at pick up. If a parent, by court order, is not allowed to pick up his or her child, a copy of the Court Order must be provided and the child may be released only according to the court order on file. If the court order is not on file, either parent may pick up the child regardless of what the other parent has communicated.

Attendance / Withdrawal

Regular attendance is a requirement of GSRP in order to maintain your child's placement within the classroom. As parents, valuing your child's education early on is a very important impression that will impact them for years to come in their success in school. The program expectation is that your child attends all class sessions throughout the week. We feel strongly that consistency is important for young children and regular attendance is an integral piece to building a child's self-confidence, language, peer relationships, independence, creativity, trust, problem solving, and cognitive skills. We are happy to offer assistance to help resolve issues that may stand in the way of your child's attendance. If your child is absent, or has a planned absence, please call the school office.

A parent may voluntarily withdraw their child from the program. When possible, a two week-notice of withdrawal from the program is required.

Confidentiality

Forest Area Preschool is very sensitive to the fact that information concerning you, your child, and your family is private and personal. Trust and confidentiality are essential to building trusting relationships. We are committed to maintaining your privacy and protecting your personal information. Forest Area Preschool will not disclose information except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of the individuals and families we serve. Classroom Volunteers are expected to follow the same confidentiality agreements.



Curriculum, Screening, and Assessment

Curriculum

Our program follows the Creative Curriculum framework for developmentally appropriate learning practices. This is a research based preschool curriculum, to create an environment that supports learning through play in a variety of interest centers. This curriculum is used to develop appropriate small group activities to enhance child growth in the classroom.

Our program also uses a Supplemental Comprehensive Curriculum by The Core Knowledge Foundation, Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA). This is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum designed to be engaging and appropriate for pre-kindergarten students. This program provides excellent preparation for children who will be entering a Kindergarten classroom implementing the Core Knowledge Language Arts Kindergarten curriculum. The literacy skills, vocabulary, and content knowledge developed in CKLA PreK are explicitly designed to provide a foundation for the skills and content taught in CKLA Kindergarten classrooms.

- Developmentally Appropriate Activities
- Content-Rich Instructions
- Language-Focused Curriculum
- Emergent Literacy Skill Instructions



Handwriting Without Tears

Research supports the active teaching of handwriting. Recent findings demonstrate that writing by hand improves creative writing skills and fine motor skills. To teach our students how to write their letters and numbers, we use the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum. HWT is an award winning curriculum that features hands-on movement, interactive play, lively music, and child-friendly teaching strategies to help young learners get ready for kindergarten.

Screening Tool

During our first home visit students will be assessed with the ESI-R developmental screening tool. ESI-R is designed to be a brief developmental screening tool that enables programs to quickly address any possible learning blocks, such as developmental delays, learning problems, or lack of school preparedness. This screening tool assesses student's capabilities in the areas of visual motor/adaptive, language, and cognitive development.

Teaching Strategies GOLD

Progress is observed and documented in the following developmental and academic content areas: Cognitive, Language, Social/Emotional, Physical, Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, Arts, and Music, three times each year with Teaching Strategies GOLD. Teaching Strategies GOLD is based on research-based objectives that include predictors of school success and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, state early learning guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. Most of my assessments are through Teaching Strategies GOLD. These assessments will be used in informing parents about their child's progress during home visits and parent teacher conferences.

Program Evaluation

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System is an observation tool that focuses on the effectiveness of classroom interactions among teachers and children, because it is these daily interactions that promote children's social and cognitive development. The CLASS describes three broad domains of effective teacher-child interactions: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Within each of the three domains, there are multiple dimensions that each focus on a different aspect of teacher-child interactions. An Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) works with the program on a monthly basis and completes the assessment every year in the spring. Results from this assessment are then used by the teaching teams to complete classroom Quality Improvement Plans.



Notice of Program Measurement

Forest Area Preschool is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers, etc.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law. Questions? Contact: mde-gsrp@michigan.gov , 517-373-8483, or write to, Office of Great Start, 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909

* Provided to parents upon enrollment.

Grievance Policy

If a parent has a concern about their child, the classroom, or the program, the concern should be discussed with the teaching team. If a solution is not agreed upon, the parents should contact the building principal or agency director. The Early Childhood Specialist and/or the Early Childhood Director can become involved if concerns are not met satisfactorily.

Inclusion

Exclusion Policy

Children are not excluded or expelled because of the need for additional developmental, medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and / or apprehensions.

Cultural Competence

At Forest Area Schools we respect families' diverse cultural practices. Developmentally appropriate practices for young children are informed by knowledge of their social and cultural contexts. It is part of our planned curriculum to incorporate the home cultures and languages of the children in our preschool classroom, including the use of familiar music, materials, practices, and customs. We believe this will create positive and meaningful early learning experiences for all our children.

Special Needs

If your child has special needs of any kind, the teaching staff will assist you to ensure that those needs are being met. Appropriate referrals to other agencies will be made as needed with parent approval. Plans for children with special needs will be developed on an as-needed basis.

Classroom Information

Daily Schedule



- 8:00-8:20** **Arrival**-Sign in Folders, Check Jobs, Read Books, Writing Table, Puzzles
- 8:20-8:35** **Jump Start Program/Music and Movement**- movement, oral motor, letter sounds, taste
- 8:35-9:05** **Breakfast/Wash Hands**-Family style meals support children doing things for themselves (serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, and wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.
- 9:05-9:15** **Transition**- Journals.
- 9:15-9:30** **Morning Meeting**- Job review: Calendar, Weather, Sentence scribe, etc.-All adults and children participate in activities planned around student's interests, developmental levels, music and movement, cooperative play and projects; and events meaningful to children.
- 9:30-9:45** **Small Group Time**- An adult-initiated learning experience based on student's interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials, and talk about what they are doing.
- 9:45-9:50** **Planning Time** - Children indicate their plans to adults in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Adults use a range of strategies to support student's planning (props, area signs, tape recorders, singing, planning individually, in pairs, in small groups).
- 9:50-10:50** **Work Time/Centers**- Student's hour of uninterrupted Choice Time- Children always initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Center Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage student's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.
- 10:50-10:55** **Cleanup Time**- Children and adults clean up together keeping the spirit of play and problem solving alive. Children make many choices during clean up. Adults accept student's level of involvement and skill while supporting their learning.
- 10:55-11:05** **Recall** – Gathered in small group settings, children choose Center Time experiences to reflect on, talk about, and exhibit. Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow student's lead and encourage children to share (individual props such as puppets, telephones or periscopes, group games using a hula hoop, ball or spinner, re-enacting, drawing, showing and describing a structure or painting).

- 11:05-11:55** **Outside/Gym** - Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment, much as they do during Work Time indoors. Adults supervise children for safety and join in their outdoor play, supporting their initiatives, and problem solving.
- 11:55-12:15** **Story Time/Bathroom break**- Children will listen to stories and focus on vocabulary, comprehension and higher order thinking skills.
- 12:15-12:45** **Lunch** - Family style meals support children doing things for themselves (serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, and wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.
- 12:45-1:00** **Bathroom and Books**- Students will quietly read books on their own and take turns using the bathroom.
- 1:00-2:00** **Quiet/Resting Time**-Resting is a time for sleeping or quiet, solitary, on-your-own-cot play. Rest Time plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each child. Quiet play could include books, soft music, baby dolls, or fine motor manipulative.
- 2:00-2:30** **Wake/Bathroom/Snack/Pack Up**-As children wake up, adults and children work together to put away cots and set up for snack. Children are encouraged to clean their own snack space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.
- 2:30-2:50** **Circle Time/Movement/Daily Review**-Science and Social Studies.
- 2:50** **Dismissal**



Meals

Each student will have the opportunity to eat breakfast, lunch, and a snack each day, free of charge. Meals are funded through the grant and are at no charge to our families. Menus and substitutions will be posted in the classroom, and on the parent board, in the hallway, and sent home every month. Families are required by the Michigan Department of Education to fill out a Free or Reduced Meal Application, even though all meals are free of charge. All GSRP meals/snacks will be delivered family-style, supporting children to do things for themselves, such as:

- preparing snack or mealtime by assisting with washing and setting tables, bringing food to the table, and choosing where they will sit;
- using child-sized furniture and materials so that children easily serve themselves, pour their own beverages, and pass food items to others;
- choosing whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat;
- assisting in clean-up by clearing their places at the table, disposing of their leftovers, washing the table, and pushing in their own chairs.

Adults in the classroom sit at the table, eat the same foods children do, and participate in child initiated conversation. Due to new GSRP guidelines, we are required to request that parents not send a cold lunch to school with their child. Unless there is a documented allergy, children need to eat the food that is provided through the GSRP program. Children with special dietary needs will receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's need.

Rest Time

Children are required to rest quietly on their cots from approximately 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. We help children self soothe and rest with quiet music and back rubs. They may get up and begin play at 2:00 pm if they have not fallen asleep. State licensing requires every child to rest or sleep for a period of time before being offered the choice to get up or to have the choice to continue to sleep. State licensing also requires each child to have his or her own rest items to help reduce the spread of contagious illnesses. Parents are welcome, but not required, to send in one small, soft, soundless animal and small blanket. Every item must be labeled with the child's name. Each child will have their own containers to store their blankets and stuffed animals. Blankets and stuffed animals will be sent home every few weeks to be washed.



Toys

We ask that your child leave toys at home. "Special" toys brought to school sometimes end up going home with other children. If your child brings something to school to share with the class, please label it with your child's name so we are sure to get it back to you.

Field Trips

Field trips may be planned throughout the year as a part of the curriculum. Field trips during the school day can provide excellent learning experiences for your children. Field trips will either be paid for through the GSRP grant or PTO, but is free of charge to our students. Notices with all information will be sent out before a field trip is taken. The preschool policy on field trips is as follows:

- A permission slip signed by a parent/guardian is required for each field trip.
- The staff to child ratio must be maintained at all times and children will be actively supervised for the entire field trip.
- All field trips for every class will be on a District School Bus, unless the destination is within a safe walking distance.

Birthday Celebrations

We love to celebrate birthdays. Families are welcome, but not required to bring a treat in for your child. Please let me know in advance if you plan on bringing in a treat for your child to share with the class. We will celebrate your child's birthday during our snack time around 2:15pm, after rest. However, in order to not hurt any child's feelings in our classroom, please do not distribute party invitations in our classroom unless every child in our classroom is invited to the party. This ensures that children in our class will not be placed in an uncomfortable situation or get their feelings hurt.

Weather Related Closings

If the Forest Area Community Schools are closed due to weather conditions, then our program will be closed. When school is to be called off for storm days, the radio stations to listen to are: WCCW, WTCM, WLDR, WKLT, and WKJF; the television stations to listen to are: 7&4, 9&10 and 29. Listen **carefully** to the directions given. Special instructions and "definitions" will be described in a school-wide newsletter sent to all community members. We have a system from Honeywell called Instant Alert. Messages and alerts will be sent to homes by telephone, cell phone, and email.



What to Wear to School

Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is washable, warm, and sturdy. Don't forget that we will go outside everyday (unless it rains or it is too cold) and children should have hats, gloves and boots that are suitable for outdoors. Have them wear warm clothing during winter months. Remember to put your child's name on all the clothing he/she wears to school. It is very easy to forget what pair of snow pants or mittens belong to which child when there are 16 children getting ready to go home.

Child Health and Safety

Child Health Policy

A green Health Appraisal form containing an immunization record and documentation of a physical exam signed by a physician must be on file with Forest Area Preschool. The green Health Appraisal form, and immunization record, must be on file on the first day of school.

It is the policy of Forest Area Preschool to notify the parents as soon as possible when changes in the child's health are observed. This will allow parents to give additional input on a child's condition and be involved in decision making regarding the child's care. Indicators of change in a child's health are:

- Fever of or over 100 degrees
- Diarrhea or constant cough
- Vomiting
- Unknown skin rash, as these are often symptoms of communicable disease
- Irritability, lethargy, persistent crying that is not typical for the child
- Difficulty breathing

Parents should notify their child's teacher if their child in care has been diagnosed with a communicable and infectious disease. A health alert will be posted, and notes will be sent home. The Director will also report to the County Health Department if necessary.

Staff and volunteers will also abide by the above guidelines. Sick days are allowed to help prevent the spread of illness.

Attendance and Illness

Of course we want your child to have the full benefits of our program. We would like our students to attend as often as possible, however, under certain circumstances, it would probably be better to keep your child at home.

Please keep your child at home if:

- He/She has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period
- He/She has a heavy nasal discharge
- He/She has a constant cough
- He/She is fussy, cranky, and generally not him/herself
- He/She has symptoms of a communicable disease (for example: sniffles, red eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, or fever). If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, the school should be notified so that the incubation period can be discussed, and it can be determined on what dates, if any, he/she should stay home.

Our school policy regarding head lice requires a child to be louse and nit free. If you believe that your child has lice, please keep him/her out of school until treated and notify your child's teacher.

Medication Policy

If it should be necessary for the school or staff to give your child, doctor prescribed medicine at school, please follow these instructions:

- Complete the Medication Authorization Form (available from the school)
- Do not let your child carry the medicine; all medication will be locked up in the school office.

Parent/guardian must bring the medicine to school, in its original container, with the physician's order indicating what the medicine is for, how often it must be taken, the amount to be taken, and the number of days it is to be taken.

Child Incident / Accident Care Plan

For minor injuries such as small cuts, bruises or abrasions:

- Student will be given immediate first aid care by the preschool staff in accordance with their first aid training. Parents will be notified in writing or by phone.

For more serious injuries such as open skin wounds, bloody noses or bumps to the head:

- The parent will be notified by phone call/text/email, and a written injury report received at pick up.

For major emergencies such as seizure or unconsciousness;

- 911 will be called from the nearest phone. The parent will be notified immediately. The Serious Accident/Illness Emergency Plan will be followed. A copy of this can be obtained from the Great Start Readiness staff.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency plans are posted on the parent wall outside of the classroom and inside the classroom in accordance with licensing regulations. In case of an emergency parents will be notified by phone. In case of an emergency and there are no phones or internet, parents will meet their child in the appropriate classroom. If we need to evacuate the building due to a real fire we will, take State Street to Boyd Street and go to the Township Hall/Fire Department on Morgan Street and wait for bussing. If we have no phones or internet and we need to evacuate the building due to a bomb threat, we will meet at the Fife Lake Baptist Church.

Parent Notification Plan

When the center observes changes in a child's health, a child experiences accidents, injuries, or incidents, or when a child is too ill to remain in the group:

- Notification will occur at pick up time for minor injuries, incidents such as a minor scrape on the knee may only require staff to apply first aid, complete incident report, and notify parent at pick up time verbally and provide written injury report.
- Notification will occur immediately via telephone call to parent for serious injuries/incidents. If unable to reach parent the emergency contact person will be contacted immediately for more serious injuries, illnesses, or incidents such as but not limited to head injuries of any kind, injuries requiring medical attention, allergic reactions/rashes, seizures, asthma attacks, unconscious child, fever, vomiting child, or incidents involving lost children, physical discipline of a child by a staff member/volunteer, alleged sexual contact between children or between a child and staff/volunteer...etc.

Health Care Plan

Daily Assessment of Student's Health

- Student's general health will be assessed upon arrival daily. If a child shows any sign of illness, he/she will be evaluated further and staff will determine if a parent needs to be called. Minor illnesses will be reported on the daily communication logs.

Children and Staff Hand Washing

- Hand-washing has long been established as one of the most important things we can do to prevent the spread of illness.

In our preschool, hand washing recommendations for workers are as follows:

- Upon arrival at school/center.
- Before and after setting up snacks/food for student consumption.
- Before and after helping student use the bathroom.
- After handling items soiled with body fluids such as blood, drool, urine, stool, or discharge from nose or eyes.
- After handling an ill child.
- After using the bathroom or taking care of other personal needs (i.e, nose wiping), and eating.

In our preschool, hand-washing recommendations for students are as follows:

- Upon arrival in the morning.
- After using the bathroom.
- Before and after eating food.
- After they have touched a child who may be sick or who has handled soiled items.
- After blowing/wiping their nose.

Recommendation method for hand-washing is as follows:

- Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm water and soap.
- Wash between fingers and back of hands and wrists.
- Rinse hands well under running water and dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel.
- Turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands. This helps prevent acquiring new germs on already clean hands.

Handling Student's Bodily Fluids

- In preschool, universal precautions shall be observed in order to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM). Gloves will be worn for all tasks that may cause exposure to blood or OPIM shall be considered infectious regardless of the perceived status of

the source individual.

- After removing gloves, preschool workers will wash their hands as recommended in our hand-washing policy.

Cleaning and Sanitizing of all Equipment, Toys, and Surfaces

- Tabletops will be washed before and after food is served and as they become soiled.
- Toys will be washed when they come in contact with a child's mouth or saliva.
- Equipment will be washed weekly or as needed. Process for sanitation:

There shall be a 3 Step Process for Sanitation

1. Clean with soap and water
2. Rinse thoroughly
3. Spray with sanitizer.

Process for sanitation while on field trips:

- Bleach wipes will be used while on field trips and out of the proximity of running water

Controlling Infection, Including Universal Precautions

- In order to prevent the transmission of HIV (Aids), Hepatitis B and other blood borne pathogens, Forest Area Community Schools will use universal precautions. Universal precautions are defined as: Guidelines designed to protect workers with occupational exposure to blood borne pathogens. Medical examination does not always identify all person infected with HIV or Hepatitis B, or other blood borne pathogens, therefore, Forest Area Community Schools will consider all blood and body fluids infectious and will follow the following universal precautions as pertaining to school environments when coming into contact with blood or bodily fluids:

Gloves will be worn for contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, or open wounds, and for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Approved latex or vinyl gloves should be worn. Gloves are never to be washed and reused.

1. Hands and other skin areas must be washed thoroughly if contact with blood or body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
2. Saliva is not considered by the Center for Disease Control to transmit HIV but it is a body fluid and mouth-to-mask ventilation devices will be available for resuscitation and shall be used by trained personnel.
3. Designated First Aid caregivers shall be required to attend or review video material on the following yearly:
 - a) Universal precautions
 - b) HIV/HBV infections/transmissions
 - c) Handling of infectious waste

Child Protection Policy

Michigan's Child Protection law requires that child care staff members, as well as other professionals who come into regular contact with children and families, must report suspected child abuse or neglect (mandated reporters) to the hot-line **phone number (855)-444-3911**. Staff are trained in child management techniques and program discipline policy and the requirements of the law when abuse or neglect is suspected, the staff cannot “look the other way” and hope the problem will go away.

It is an unfortunate fact that child abuse also takes place in child care settings. Our programs have taken precautions so that we feel confident such a tragedy would not occur in our classroom. Those precautions include:

- Open Door policy—Parents and others are encouraged to visit whenever they can
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the classroom activities
- Careful hiring of staff; complete reference checks; careful, thorough training; close supervision
- All staff are checked through the DHS Central Registry, which lists perpetrators of child abuse and/or neglect, and all staff and volunteers sign clearance statements that they have not been convicted of any offense other than a minor traffic violation. This is performed biannually.
- All staff are checked through the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT). This is performed biannually.
- Two paid staff are always in the classroom, and are always present when a volunteer is in the classroom with children

It is important to give the necessary information you would need to make a complaint or initiate an investigation of one of our centers, or any child care operation, should you feel the need to do so. All child care and preschool programs in Michigan are licensed by the State. The people who license the centers are known as Child Care Licensing Consultants. They are also the ones who investigate allegations of abuse in child care and preschool centers. If you ever feel that an investigation into an incident is warranted, the Child Care Licensing Consultants are the appropriate people to call. The hot-line phone number is **(855)-444-3911**.

Pest Management Program (Licensing R 400.8380)

The classroom and school grounds shall be maintained in a clean and safe condition and shall not pose a threat to the health or safety of children, staff or families.

Advance notice of pesticide applications will be given to parents in September, if applicable. We will send a letter to the families homes and/or make a phone call.

pesticides will not be used in classrooms, unless the room will be unoccupied for a least 4 hours.

Health Related Resources

The following is a list of resources available for preschool staff and parents who have questions concerning health related topics:

Michigan Department of Public Health

www.michigan.gov.mde

(989) 373-7247

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov

Michigan Childhood Immunization Registry

www.MICR.ORG

(888) 243-6652

Licensing Notebook

This center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigations reports and all related corrective action plans. This notebook is available to all parents for review during regular business hours. Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the last 2 years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare .

Classroom Management

Classroom Rules

At preschool we have rules to keep everyone safe and happy. Please read these rules to your child; help them to obey them and to understand why it is important to follow them.

- I can walk in our classroom. We save running for outdoors.
- I can be kind to others. We share, but we ask first.
- I can talk softly inside our school. We save loud voices and sounds for outdoors.
- I can keep my hands, feet and objects to myself! We treat others with respect.
- I can listen and follow directions. We try to wait our turn in class!

Playground Rules

- Please sit on the swings. No standing on swings or laying on your stomach. Please do not jump out of the moving swings.
- Please be careful to walk way around moving swings.
- Always use the ladders to use the slide. Please do not run or climb up the slide. Always go down the slides on your bottom.

Staff shall use positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. Our goal is to establish a climate where the children feel safe, help one another, and see themselves as part of a group. We will work at building positive relationships through cooperating, and problem solving. The following methods are used when managing our students:

- Adults treat conflict situations with children matter of factly
- Adults defuse the conflict situation before moving into problem-solving
 1. Approach child calmly and stop any hurtful actions.

- 2. Acknowledge child's feelings.
- Adults involve children in identifying the problem
 1. Gather information from the children (what happened, what upset the children)
 2. Restate the problem.
- Adults involve children in the process of finding and choosing a solution for a problem
 1. Ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together.
 2. Be prepared to give follow-up support when children act on their decisions.

Staff shall be prohibited from using the following as a means of punishment:

- Inflicting a form of corporal punishment.
- Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming or threatening a child.
- Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle
parents may not use discipline that conflicts with this policy while on the school premises.

Employee and Volunteer Requirements

Staff and Volunteering Screening (Licensing R.400.8125)

All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times. They must be of responsible character and suitable to meet the needs of children.

Staff are required to obtain:

- 24 hours of professional development annually.
- CPR and First Aid training every two years.
- Training in blood borne pathogens annually.

Staff and volunteers must sign and date at the time of hiring or before volunteering a written statement indicating all of the following:

- The individual is aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law
- The individual has been informed of the center's policies on child abuse and neglect.
- The individual knows that all staff and volunteers are required by law to immediately report abuse and neglect to children's protective services (mandated reporters).

Volunteers can **not** have unsupervised contact with children when any of the following apply:

- they have been convicted of a listed offense, as defined in section 2 of the sex offenders registration act, 1994 PA 295, MCL 28.722
- they have been convicted of child abuse or child neglect
- they have been convicted of a felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within the 10 years immediately preceding the date of offering to volunteer at the center.

Staff shall not be present in the center until there is documentation from the department of human

services on file at the center that he or she has not been named in a central registry case as a perpetrator of child abuse or child neglect.

Staff shall not be present in the classroom until an internet criminal history check can be completed. Documentation shall be updated every 2 years.



Volunteers

If a parent wishes to volunteer in our preschool program, for any reason, including seasonal parties, they must complete a screening through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. A screening form will be included with the information packet needed to be filled out before your child starts school. A screening form will always be available at the office if needed.

For safety purposes, any non-school personnel, including parents, must report to the office upon arrival at the school. If you have a scheduled appointment with a staff member or are volunteering in the school, you are required to sign in and get a name tag or a visitor's badge.

More information on how parents can volunteer in their child's classroom will come out at the beginning of the year. There will be a sign up sheet that includes how often you would like to volunteer and what you would like to do in our classroom.

Parent Involvement and Partnership

Parent Involvement

Your child's positive attitude and feelings regarding school and learning are being formed at this time. Your involvement and excitement about preschool rubs off on them. Use every chance to support them and extend their learning experiences at home. Get involved at school. We want and need you! Volunteers are welcome each day the children are at school. If your work schedule prevents you from coming to school, or if your family has a unique need, work with your child's teacher to find special ways you can be a part of your child's school experience.

What YOU Can Do For the Program

As parents you may wonder what you could possibly do to help a teacher. We want you to know you are our most valuable resource and we really need you. Below is just a partial list of the things you might be able to do for us:

- Sharing special interests, food, hobbies.
- Serving as the third member of the classroom staff as the "special teacher" helping children in the classroom.

- Donate time from home doing simple projects that you can complete at home and then return to school with your child.
- Chaperoning on field trips.

What the Parent Gives to the Classroom

- The parent gives their child a feeling that school is a family affair. School is important!
- The parent gives the children in the classroom an opportunity to get to know many friendly adults.
- The parent gives the teacher a better understanding of their child.
- The parent gives assistance and comfort to children in the classroom when they are the “special teacher” of the day.

What the Parent Receives in Return

- The parent receives an understanding of their child through interaction with other children.
- The parent receives an understanding of how children grow and learn.
- The parent receives an understanding of how important the connection between school and home is in the education of their child.
- The parent receives information about community resources and facilities.

Family Contacts

Twice during the year, we will schedule a home visit with your family. The goal of home visits is to better meet the needs of your child and family. In promoting a partnership between parents and teachers, home visits provide a time to share the interests of your child and family, information about the program, and how the program can best serve the needs of each family. Two parent teacher conferences will be conducted with you to further discuss your child's developmental progress.

Parent Advisory Committee

PAC meetings are held twice per year, in fall and spring. Parents in attendance will have the opportunity to provide feedback about our GSRP preschool program. Parent input and suggestions for our GSRP program is very important to the future planning and improvements of our program.

Data Analysis

Our preschool program participates in monthly Multi-Tiered System of Supports (**MTSS**) meeting. This is a process that uses data-based problem-solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention for students who are in need of additional supports within the classroom.

- If a parent or teacher has concerns about a child's academic, behavior, or social progress at any time throughout the year, this child may be brought up at MTSS in order to put in place helpful interventions. Parent permission is required to bring up your child at these meetings. **Student names are kept confidential.**

School Readiness Advisory Committee

Due to the rural nature of the 5 county region, this committee consists of multiple collaborative efforts of existing groups including: Great Start Collaborative, 5toOne Parent groups, Great Start Parent Coalition, Great Start Readiness Program Parent Advisory Committees, Great Start to Quality Northwest Resource Center and continuous opportunities for feedback using technology. The School Readiness Advisory Committee meets as needed for special issues not currently addressed within existing structures.

Great Start Collaborative

Every county in Michigan is part of a Great Start Collaborative. Every Collaborative includes parents, service providers, partners and stakeholders who contribute their time and expertise to help make sure children receive the best care and education we can provide.

- Locally the Great Start Collaborative Traverse Bay consists of: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties.

Great Start Parent Coalition

A volunteer group of parents *working to ensure that all families have access to information, programs and services in their communities.*

If you would like to be involved in any of these committees, please contact TBAISD Early Childhood Office at 231-922-6437 or find us at www.facebook.com/greatstartparents

Parenting Education Opportunities

Opportunities for parenting education will be highlighted in bi-weekly newsletters, displayed on the parent boards or distributed through your child's mailbox. Education opportunities may include: speakers, playgroups, parenting articles, seminars and special community events.

