



Parent Handbook 2018-19

Philosophy

Welcome to Where Learning Begins!

Creative Play and Nature Play Preschool believe play-based learning creates the most well-rounded learners for life because it encompasses all aspects of your child's development. Early play connects the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional skills necessary for success in school and in life.

Our curriculum is aligned to the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards and is built on traditional activities and early concepts of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). Elements of the nature curriculum Growing Up Wild is woven into all of our classrooms. We also utilize Michael Heggerty's Ed.D. Phonemic Awareness curriculum.

While utilizing all of the above, Nature Play's curriculum is built with an emphasis on environmental education. Students learn to embrace natural surroundings, and to investigate the world around them. Conservation is an integral part of this curriculum. Students will go outside every day, year-round unless the weather is inclement or the temperature drops below 28 degrees.

We take pride in being your community-based preschool, and enjoy working with each child individually. **Creative Play Preschool** is housed at Eola Community Center and Prisco Community Center, while **Nature Play Preschool** is housed at Red Oak Nature Center and Blackberry Farm. Blackberry Farm not only utilizes the natural environment of the 54 acre park, but also incorporates hands-on activities with the resident farm animals.

Preparing for Preschool

Forms

Please make sure all of the following information sheets have been completed and returned to preschool:

- ✓ Physical and Immunization Form
- ✓ Information Form
- ✓ Contingency Pick-Up Form

For Your Child's Safety

Please notify us immediately of any change in your address, home or work phone numbers or place of employment.

Payment Information

Registration Fee (non-refundable and due at registration): \$75

Tuition payment options:

1. Pay in monthly installments via electronic funds transfer or credit card. Financial information will be required for the payment deduction from your bank account or credit card on the designated payment date. EFT payments will be processed on the 15th of the month (or the following business day), beginning in September.
2. Pay in full for the entire school year at the time of registration.

School Calendar

A school calendar will be provided on orientation day, which will take place during the week of September 3, 2018. More information will be provided in August.

Child Care Expense Statements

Our preschool is not a child care program, but depending on your circumstances, the cost of the program may qualify for a tax deduction. If you and your tax advisor decide you can use this, the Tax ID Number is 36-6001059.

Receipts can be issued upon request as well as a Statement of Account that includes all registrations and payments to the Fox Valley Park District for a given period of time. A Tax ID Letter is available. The Fox Valley Park District is not responsible or liable for determining child care expenses.

Program Withdraw

To withdraw from the Preschool Program, we require that you provide written notice two-weeks in advance. Payments will be stopped or refunded with the exception of the non-refundable registration fee of \$75.

Guidelines and Procedures

Arrivals

Please do not park in the fire lane or the handicapped accessible parking spaces! Parents, please park in a designated parking space and walk your child in. We ask that you arrive 5 minutes before class time and make sure your child has gone to the restroom before class starts.

Each day you bring your child to preschool, you will need to sign in when you arrive and sign out when you pick up your child. When you sign your child in, please write the name of the person who is picking up your child. That person will sign them out.

Also, please provide a phone number that you can be reached at during class.

Child Release Procedure

Please provide a list of authorized people (other than the child's parents or guardians) that you are allowing to pick up your child. We will not dismiss your child to an unauthorized person or someone not indicated on the attendance sheet. You may add people to your list at any time. In emergencies, if the designated person is unable to pick up your child from school, the parent or guardian may call us to release the child to someone else who is on the list. A handwritten note from the parent or guardian is also acceptable if there are changes. Please note: The persons you authorize to pick up your child will be asked to show identification the first time they pick up your child.

Late Pick Up

It is important to be on time to pick up your child. If you are going to be late, please call your site's front desk as soon as possible. Parents will be required to pay a late pick-up fee of \$5 if the parent is 10 minutes late. If the parent is more than 10 minutes late, the fee is \$1 per minute thereafter. This late fee is per family, not per child. The fee can be added to your account or may be paid upon time of pick-up. If a parent is later than 15 minutes and has not called, the supervisor will begin to contact the child's emergency contacts. This policy also applies to labs.

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that the school has current contact information for their emergency contacts at all times. Emergency contact information must be on the child's enrollment form and emergency card. If a parent is late, our staff will diligently call all phone numbers for parents and emergency contacts. If we are unable to reach any contacts, we will have to notify the police department. Our teachers will maintain a positive, caring atmosphere for the child during this time and ensure that the child is comfortable and safe. Our teachers will only discuss the issue with a parent or emergency contact, never with the child.

Parent-Instructor Communication

Communication between parents and instructors is very important. The instructors try to maintain close communication with parents throughout the school year with calendars and blog entries. At any time, you may schedule an appointment to meet with your child's instructor to discuss specific needs of your child.

Book Bags

Please send your child to school each day with a full size backpack or open tote bag with handles. It is important to check your child's school bag each day for notes from the teacher as well as any books or artwork your child may have worked on in class. **Please send an extra pair of clothing to be kept in the bookbag.**

Assessments

Assessments are done throughout the school year. Teachers are available to speak with you throughout the year to discuss your child's progress and address any concerns or questions that you may have.

Classroom Size

Our programs operate with an instructor-to-student ratio of 1:10 or less. Our goal is to accommodate as many children as possible, but still provide a quality experience.

The Park District reserves the right to set and/or re-adjust minimum and maximum program attendance per site throughout the school year in order to maintain the safety, structure and integrity of the program as a whole.

Special Needs

If your child has any special medical, physical, psychological and/or emotional needs, please list them in detail on your registration form. Lack of information may interrupt the Park District's ability to accommodate the needs of your child promptly. The Fox Valley Park District is not responsible for any injuries, complications, damages or losses due to withheld information. All participants must be toilet-trained and are responsible for all of their own toileting needs.

Illnesses and Absentee Reporting Procedures

A call is not necessary on a scheduled day off of school or a single absence. If your child will not be attending for an extended period, please call your site's front desk. Please refer to your school calendar for a list of days off.

Healthy Kids Guidelines

- If a child is running a fever (99.9 or above) or appears sick, we request that they be picked up as soon as possible. The Fox Valley Park District policy is that a child be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to the program.
- We also ask that you be considerate of other children and staff and keep your child home if they show signs of illness.
- Paramedics (9-1-1) will be called to handle serious injuries. If your child needs emergency medical care, we will accompany them and a parent/guardian must meet us at the medical facility as immediately as possible.

Notification of Medical Attention

The Fox Valley Park District continually strives to create a safe—as well as fun—environment for your child to be in. However, at times the occasional accident may occur. Below is our procedure regarding notifying parents/guardians of any such incidents.

Minor Injury / Illness:

- We will only administer simple basic first aid such as a band aide and/or ice pack as necessary according to staff training.
- You will be notified when you arrive to pick up your child.

Injury / Illness Requiring More Attention:

In addition to the steps above...

- We will attempt to contact you or your emergency contacts in the event you are unreachable.

More Serious Injury / Illness:

In addition to the steps above...

- Program Supervisors also will be contacted.
- Your child may need to be picked up as soon as possible.
- Emergency transportation may be arranged as deemed necessary.

In addition, we will attempt to contact you immediately at any time upon your child's request.

Insurance

As with all Fox Valley Park District programs, the Preschool Program does not provide insurance coverage for participants. Parents should check their individual insurance policy for coverage.

Tornado and Fire Safety

Preschool teachers incorporate fire and tornado safety training into their curriculum early in the school year, and practice fire and tornado drills at regular intervals throughout the year so that children will know exactly what to do and where to go should an emergency arise.

Severe Weather and Closings

Weather-related school closings for Preschool follow the school district guidelines. If the school district is closed due to weather then the preschool will also be closed. Preschool does not make up weather-related days off.

Preschool sites and their corresponding school districts are as follows:

- Prisco & Blackberry Farm: Aurora School District #129
- Eola: Indian Prairie School District #204
- Red Oak: District #131

Text and Email Alerts

Sign up to receive TEXT and EMAIL alerts about Creative Play Preschool. Alerts will provide you with reminders about scheduled days off and weather-related closings. You may opt out at any time. It's super easy! Here's how:

1. Go to RAINOUTLINE.COM
2. Type **Fox Valley Park District** in the search box
3. Click **Fox Valley Park District**
4. Click **Creative Play Preschool Eola, Creative Play Preschool Prisco, Nature Play Preschool Red Oak or Nature Play Preschool Blackberry**
5. Click **Email & Text Alerts** (on left side of page)
6. Follow instructions to sign up to receive alerts
7. Choose to receive alerts through **Email, Text or Both**

Once you're finished registering you're set to go!

Restroom Procedures

Students in the 2s class do not need to be potty-trained, but instructors will not change diapers or pull-ups. **All other students must be fully potty-trained.**

Your child may use the restroom at any time during the school day. Please encourage your child to tell the instructor if they need to use the restroom. The instructor will not accompany your child into the restroom; they will, however, stand outside the door. Instructors do not wipe bottoms; this is a skill that you need to work on at home. If your child needs assistance with buttons, snaps,

zippers and belts, the instructor will be happy to assist them. Please send a complete change of clothing (pants, shirt, underpants, and socks) in a Ziploc bag. This is necessary in case of accidents. The preschool program requires that a child must be toilet trained to participate. Diapers, Pull-ups and rubber pants will not be allowed.

Discipline Guidelines

Discipline is the ongoing process of helping children to develop inner controls and assume responsibility for their own actions. We accomplish this by setting, explaining and consistently enforcing clear and understandable rules, limits and consequences prior to and as part of any disciplinary action. As much as possible in carrying out discipline, teachers will use firm positive statements or redirection of behavior. If necessary, to help a child gain control, the teacher may remove him or her from the activity or group. Children will have reasonable opportunity to resolve their own conflicts and to have input in the resolving of conflicts.

Although discipline problems of preschool rarely warrants it, the Fox Valley Park District reserves the right to exclude from the program any child whose behavior seriously disrupts the program or is a danger to him/herself or others. When a child has a pattern of unacceptable behavior, the staff will work with the parents on a plan for helping the child to develop self-control and acceptable behavior. We may use the resources of Fox Valley Special Recreation Association (FVSRA) for assistance in observing and suggesting methods of dealing with the child. Parents will be notified before someone from FVSRA is called in to observe their child. If it becomes necessary to exclude the child, we will make every effort to assist the parents in locating an appropriate program to meet their child's needs.

Supplies

A supply list will be emailed to you over the summer for the upcoming school year. During the year we may need additional supplies and will send a note home asking for specific items. Thank you for your continued support.

Clothing for Creative Play

Children should wear comfortable clothes to play and create arts and crafts. School day clothing choices should include:

- Clothing that can get dirty. Playing and learning can be messy!
- Clothes that your child can easily handle in the washroom.
- Tennis shoes, athletic shoes or other rubber-soled shoes for safety in their participation in physical activities.
- Weather-appropriate clothing for playing outdoors. If it is above 28 degrees, children may go out to the playground.

Clothing for Nature Play

Please clearly label your child's backpack and send a complete change of clothing in a labeled zip locked bag and keep in your child's backpack every day. Children must wear comfortable and appropriate clothing, that they can easily take on and off themselves. Dress children in layers to accommodate for changing temperatures during the day. Please make sure that your child is dressed to go outside every day.

Please adhere to the following guidelines when preparing for the day:

- Athletic-style shoes with closed toes for safety (no sandals, flip-flops or crocs, please).
- If it is sunny – apply sunscreen before class
- If it is buggy – apply insect repellent before class
- If it is raining – please send your child in rain gear (boots, pants and jacket). No umbrellas, please.
- If it is snowing – please send hats, easy-on mittens, snow pants and snow boots

Weather

Since your child's safety is our priority during class, we will not explore the outdoors during a thunderstorm with lightning, bitterly cold days or on extremely windy days when branches might fall from trees. If there is a light rain, we will stay close to the building or indoors depending upon the co-teacher's discretion.

Cold Weather Guidelines

The co-teachers at Nature Play Preschool will decide before each class as to whether or not the children will be engaging in outdoor activities that day. Teachers base their decisions off of wind chill, temperature and sunlight. Due to incorrect weather forecasts or weather changes that may occur during a class allowing us to play outside later in class, we advise that you dress your child for the weather as specified on this page of the handbook.

If temperatures fall below 28 degrees or "feels like below 28 degrees" we will stay inside. If the temperature is above 28 degrees, or "feels like" 28 degrees, the children will go outside to explore for shortened periods of time between 10-25 minutes. When the temperature is above 32 degrees the children will be able to spend longer periods of time in the outdoors.

In keeping with our educational philosophy, we take time to explore in the outdoors, anywhere from 30-45 minutes. Our goal is to inspire children to go outside because they enjoy it!

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are important days in your child's life. As a parent, you have options when it's your child's turn to celebrate his/her birthday. For birthday celebrations, you may bring in a special, store bought snack, but please remember that it must be peanut/nut-free. We do have children with life threatening allergies, so please refer to the approved snack list if sending in food.

You may also send in goodie bags for each child with non-food items that will go home with the children at the end of the day. Ideas of items include pencils, temporary tattoos, stickers, small party favors or bubbles.

Snacks

A healthy diet is important for a child's growth and development. Creative Play Preschool feels that it is important to model what we teach by providing only safe and healthy snacks for our students.

We have provided a list of snacks that you may bring for snack time. Please note changes may be made to accommodate individual student needs. Please be aware of appropriate portion size for preschoolers.

Parents will be assigned a day to bring in snacks for your child's class. On this day, parents need only to bring in a snack. Please do not provide juice. Water will be provided. If your assigned day is a hardship for you, please discuss with your child's teacher.

Snack Suggestions

- Vegetable sticks/slices with low-fat dressing or yogurt dip
- Sliced fruit, dried fruit, fruit salad or applesauce
- Frozen fruit pops
- Cereal: Cheerios (plain), Rice Chex, Wheat Chex, Corn Chex, Kix
- Lean meats
- Pretzels
- Goldfish crackers
- Animal crackers

- Teddy Grahams
- Honey Maid graham crackers
- Popcorn (plain; no cheese or caramel)
- Fig Newtons
- Wheat Thins (plain), Triscuits (plain) or Ritz crackers (plain)
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa or low-fat dip
- Mini-bagels with whipped light cream cheese
- Low-fat flavored yogurt or low-fat pudding cups
- Low-fat milk and milk products (string cheese, single-serving cottage cheese, cheese cubes)

All snacks should be peanut-/tree nut-free (they cannot be manufactured on shared equipment or in shared facility), and must be store bought.

Field Trips

Field trips will be taken throughout the year. **Parents will have advance notice of scheduled field trips and will be required to provide transportation to and from the field trip destination.**

Parents need to stay and participate in most field trips. Should you not want your child to attend a particular field trip, you may keep him/her home on the day of the field trip. There will be no refund given if you choose to keep your child home from a field trip.

Contact Information

Eola Community Center

555 S. Eola Road • Aurora, IL 60504
630-851-8990

Prisco Community Center

150 W. Illinois Ave. • Aurora, IL 60506
630-859-8606

Red Oak Nature Center

2343 S. River St. • Batavia, IL 60510
630-897-0818

Blackberry Farm

100 S. Barnes Road • Aurora, IL 60506
630-892-1550

Preschool Program Coordinator:

Deedee Buscher
dbuscher@fvpd.net / 630-851-8990

Manager of Blackberry Farm and Early Childhood Education:

Sandie Gilmer
sgilmer@fvpd.net / 630-892-1550