



2023-24 School Year **PARENT HANDBOOK**



Fox Valley
Park District
Where fun begins

foxvalleyparkdistrict.org

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.

The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence is utilized at all age levels, helping to address and prevent challenging behaviors at an early age. Fox Valley Park District is one of the first park districts in Illinois to include this in a preschool 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 25 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, Prisco Community Center and Vaughan Athletic 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.

***Creative and Nature Play Preschools are licensed exempt programs.**

PREPARING FOR PRESCHOOL

Information Forms

Please make sure your information has been completed on ePACT.

Fox Valley Park District utilizes ePACT to obtain all emergency contacts and necessary medical information for your preschool participant. Parents will receive an email from ePACT asking them to complete the needed information for each preschooler which will **need to be completed prior to drop off on the first day of the program.** ePACT details and instructions can be found at the back of the handbook.

For Your Child's Safety

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

Payment Information

Registration Fee (non-refundable and due at registration): \$100

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 and running through May. These nine equal payments is the tuition divided by nine. They do not reflect the exact cost for each month.

It is the customer's responsibility to notify the Park District of any changes in EFT information, including updated expiration dates of credit cards and/or changes in account numbers. **A \$25 service fee will be charged for any returned payment.** The fee must be paid with cash or money order within seven days of notification from the Park District.

Returned or declined payments that are not rectified within seven days of notification from the Park District will result in students being unable to attend until payment is made.

2. Pay in full for the entire school year at the time of registration.

Program Withdraw

To withdraw from the Preschool Program, we request 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 \$100.

Mandated Reporting

All staff who work for the Fox Valley Park District are mandated reporters and as such, are required by Illinois Law to report all suspected instances of abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Arrivals

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

Drop off at Blackberry Farm occurs in the circle drive. Pick-up differs depending on which class your child is in, as well as the time of year. More information will be provided on Orientation Day.

Timeliness

It is very important that your child is on time for class. We start our days promptly at 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Please speak with the preschool program supervisor if this will be an issue. Late arrivals can be very disruptive to the learning of all students.

Child Release Procedure

Please ensure that the Emergency Contact/Authorization Form on ePact is filled out completely. 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 ePACT account. If a parent is late, our staff will diligently call all phone numbers for parents and emergency contacts. 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 daily wrap-ups and weekly emails. At any time, you may schedule an appointment to meet with your child's instructor to discuss specific needs of your child.

Backpacks

Please send your child to school each day with a full size backpack or open tote bag with handles labeled with your child's name. 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 set of clothing to be kept in the backpack.

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.

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 may need to stay and participate in 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.

Special Needs

If your child has any special medical, physical, psychological and/or emotional needs, please list them in detail in ePACT. 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.

Illness & Absentee 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, email your child's teacher and let them know. Please refer to your school calendar for a list of days off.

- If a child becomes ill during the program, a parent will be notified to pick up the child as quickly as possible. The child must be fever, vomit and diarrhea-free for 24 hours before returning. If a child vomits, they must go home immediately. If a parent is unable to pick them up, emergency contacts will be called.
- Please be considerate of other children and staff and keep your child home if they show any signs of illness.
- In case of contagious disease, please notify Deedee Buscher (630-966-4546) or dbuscher@fvpd.net immediately.
- A child must receive appropriate treatment, depending on the condition, before returning to the program and may require a medical release from a physician.
- Paramedics (911) will be called to handle serious injuries. If a child needs emergency medical care, we will accompany them, and a parent/guardian must meet us at the medical facility immediately.

Medication

Strict policies are in place regarding the dispensing of medication to participants. These policies must be followed if a participant is required to receive medication while in the program. This includes restrictions for any over the counter medications (including cough drops and pain relievers) and any prescription medication. Parents are required to complete a Permission to Administer Medication Form for any and all medication to be administered to participants by the preschool staff or the participants themselves.

All medication must be in the original container with the prescription label that includes the patient's name, physician's name, pharmacy name, name of medication and complete dosage information. Each day the proper dosage should be sent in the original container.

The medication form must be uploaded to your child's ePACT account before the first day of preschool.

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, and no refund will be issued.

Preschool sites and their corresponding school districts are as follows:

- Vaughan, Prisco, Red Oak & Blackberry:
School District #129
- Eola: Indian Prairie School District #204

Text and Email Alerts

Sign up to receive TEXT and EMAIL alerts about Creative & Nature Play Preschool. Alerts will provide you with reminders about scheduled days off and weather-related closings and other important information. 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 Prisco, Creative Play VAC, 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! ePACT will also be used for communication.

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.**

Please be sure to take your child to the bathroom just prior to dropping off.

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.

Behavioral Expectations and Discipline Guidelines

Participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. The following guidelines have been developed to help make Park District programs safe and enjoyable for all.

Participants shall:

- A. Show respect to all other participants and staff, and take direction from staff.
- B. Refrain from using abusive or foul language.
- C. Refrain from causing bodily harm to self, other participants, or staff.
- D. Show respect to equipment, supplies, and facilities.

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 challenging behavior, the staff will work with the parents on a plan for helping the child to develop self-control and appropriate 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.

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 25 degrees, children may go outside.
- 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.

Clothing for Nature Play

In addition to the above, 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

Photo Disclaimer

All registrants and participants permit the taking of photographs and videos of themselves and their children during Park District activities for publication and use as the Park District deems appropriate.

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 teachers' discretion.

Cold Weather Guidelines

The 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 25 degrees or "feels like below 25 degrees" we will stay inside. If the temperature is above 25 degrees, or "feels like" 25 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!

Celebrations

Birthdays are important days in your child's life. You may send in goodie bags for each child with **non-food items** that will go home with each child at the end of the day. Ideas of items include pencils, stickers, small party favors or bubbles.

Our preschool classes celebrate many different holidays throughout the year. If you do not want your child to participate in particular holiday activities, please let your child's teacher know in advance.

Family Involvement

We encourage family members to take an active role in their child's learning. Families are welcome to plan time with their child's teacher to visit the classroom and read a story, volunteer their time, discuss a talent, or teach about a holiday or cultural tradition.



2023-24 School Year PRESCHOOL CALENDAR

Aug. 30	Back to School Night at Blackberry Farm
Week of Sept. 5	Orientation & First week of classes
Oct. 9	No School (Indigenous People Day)
Oct. 24	Special Event: Trunk or Treat Night at Blackberry Farm
Oct. 27	No School (Professional Development Day)
Nov. 10	No School (Veterans Day)
Nov. 22 - 24	No School (Thanksgiving Break)
Dec. 19	Special Event: Jim Gill Children's Concert at Prisco Community Center
Dec. 21 - Jan. 5	No School (Winter Break)
Jan. 15	No School (MLK's Birthday)
Jan. 16	No School Professional Development Day
Feb. 1-2	No School 4s & PreK (parent conferences) 2s & 3's classes still in session

Feb. 7	Special Event: Literacy Night at Prisco Community Center
Feb. 19	No School (Presidents' Day)
March 1	No School (Professional Development Day)
March 25-29	No School (Spring Break)
May 7	Special Event: Spring Fling/Miss Carole Children's Concert at Eola Community Center
May 16	Last day of classes and graduation: Tu/Th 3s at Eola, Prisco, Vaughan and Blackberry Farm; Red Oak 3s & Tu/W/Th 4s; PreK at all locations
May 17	Last day of classes and graduation: M/W/F 3s & 4s at Eola, Prisco, Vaughan, Blackberry Farm and Red Oak
May 20 & 21	Preschool End-of-Year picnic at Blackberry Farm

Calendar subject to change

Deedee Buscher
Preschool Program Supervisor
630-966-4546 • dbuscher@fvpd.net

Eola Community Center
555 S. Eola Road
630-851-8990

Prisco Community Center
150 W. Illinois Ave.
630-859-8606

Vaughan Athletic Center
2121 W. Indian Trail
630-907-9600

Red Oak Nature Center
2343 S. River St.
630-897-0818

Blackberry Farm
100 S. Barnes Road
630-892-1550

SPECIAL EVENT FAMILY NIGHTS

AT CREATIVE AND NATURE PLAY PRESCHOOL

2023-24

AUGUST 30

Back to School Night at Blackberry Farm

OCTOBER 24

Trunk or Treat at Blackberry Farm

DECEMBER 19

Jim Gill Winter Concert at Prisco Community Center

FEBRUARY 7

Literacy Night at Prisco Community Center

MAY 7

Spring Fling and Annual Preschool Art Fair at Eola Community Center
(dates are subject to change)

Preschool at the Fox Valley Park District isn't just for the children. We offer many different evening events that are open to the entire family. We want to connect with our families and build those special relationships through time outside the regular classroom environment. From Back to School Night at Blackberry Farm to Spring Fling at the Eola Community Center, we provide fun and engaging activities that will help families bond and build our school community. Many of the events include hands-on and movement filled activities that will show families how easy it is to interact with their children and continue to be their first teachers. According to Youth.gov, "research shows that parental or family engagement in a child's education can improve their test scores, attendance, social skills, relationships, behavior and how a child feels about school." Our job at Creative and Nature Play Preschool is to build the strongest foundation for students that will continue to help them grow through their formative years.

REGISTER TODAY AND JOIN OUR FAMILY!

WHEREFUNBEGINS.ORG

SECURELY SHARING HEALTH AND EMERGENCY INFO USING EPACT

What is ePACT ?

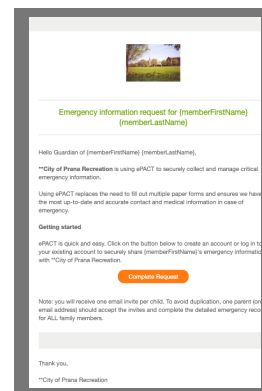
ePACT a secure online system designed to help organizations in your community support you and your family in any type of crisis.

ePACT is a tool that organizations like Park & Recreation Departments, YMCAs, sports associations, schools, daycares, employers and municipalities use to collect important emergency information that they used to collect via paper forms. It helps to make sure that the right data, is in the right hands at the right time.

Read more about ePACT's Privacy & Security Policies.

Receive a request

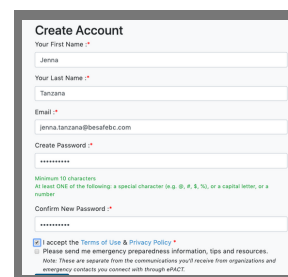
1. Your organization will send you a request for each child participating in their program for this year or season.
2. Click on Complete Request to get started.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Emergency information request for (memberFirstName) (memberLastName)". It includes a header image of a park, a greeting "Hello Guardian of (memberFirstName) (memberLastName).", and a paragraph explaining that the City of Prana Recreation is using ePACT to collect emergency information. It mentions that ePACT replaces the need for multiple paper forms and ensures the most up-to-date and accurate contact and medical information is collected. A "Get Started" button is visible. Below, it says "ePACT is quick and easy. Click on the button below to create an account or log in to your existing account to securely share (memberFirstName)'s emergency information with **City of Prana Recreation." and a "Complete Request" button. A note at the bottom states: "Note: you will receive one email invite per child. To avoid duplication, one parent per email address should accept the invite and complete the detailed emergency record for ALL family members." and "Thank you, **City of Prana Recreation".

Create an account

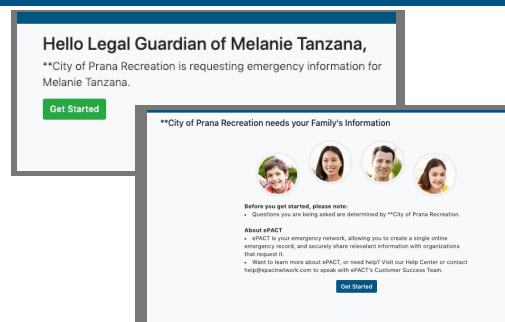
1. Add your name and choose a password that is at least 10 characters long and includes a number or special character.
2. Accept our Terms of Use and now you're ready to go!



The screenshot shows a "Create Account" form. It has fields for "Your First Name" (filled with "Jenna"), "Your Last Name" (filled with "Tanzana"), "Email" (filled with "jenna.tanzana@besafbc.com"), and "Create Password" (filled with "*****"). Below the password field is a note: "Minimum 10 characters. At least ONE of the following: a special character (e.g. @, #, %, or a capital letter, or a number)". There is a "Confirm New Password" field (filled with "*****"). At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled "I accept the Terms of Use & Privacy Policy" which is checked, and a link to "Please send me emergency preparedness information, tips and resources." Below this is a note: "Note: These are separate from the communications you'll receive from organizations and emergency contacts you connect with through ePACT." and a "Get Started" button.

Getting Started

1. Read the instructions carefully.
2. Click on Getting Started.



The screenshot shows a "Getting Started" page. It has a header "Hello Legal Guardian of Melanie Tanzana," and a sub-header "**City of Prana Recreation is requesting emergency information for Melanie Tanzana." Below this is a "Get Started" button. The main content area is titled "**City of Prana Recreation needs your Family's Information" and features four circular profile pictures of diverse people. Below the pictures is a section titled "Before you get started, please note:" with a bullet point: "Questions you are being asked are determined by **City of Prana Recreation." Below this is a section titled "About ePACT" with a bullet point: "ePACT is your emergency network, allowing you to create a single online emergency record, and securely share relevant information with organizations that request it." Below this is a bullet point: "Want to learn more about ePACT, or need help? Visit our Help Center or contact help@epactnetwork.com to speak with ePACT's Customer Success Team." and a "Get Started" button.

Follow the Steps

1. Answer questions on each step. Those with an * are required.
2. Ensure all the steps have a checkmark.

The screenshot shows a registration form with a list of steps on the right side, each with a green checkmark indicating completion. The steps are: Contact Info, Dependent's Details, Family Info, Emergency Contacts, Medical Info, Allergies & Dietary Requirements, Medications and Treatments, and History & Requirements. The main form area on the left shows fields for 'Relationship to Dependent', 'Mother', 'Emergency Phone #', and 'SMS' verification options.

Add Additional Documents

1. You can upload additional documents like immunization records, custody orders or one of your organization's custom sheets like Medication Administration forms.

The screenshot shows the 'Shared Files' section for 'City of Prana Recreation'. It lists two categories: 'Judicial or Custody order' and 'Allergy Plan'. Each category has a text area for uploading files and a 'No files added' message.

Add your initials and signature

1. Add your initials to each waiver (or agree by checkbox) and add your signature.
2. Click on the Share button to complete the process!

The screenshot shows the 'Last Step!' waiver form. It contains two waiver sections, each with a text area for initials and a 'JT' button. The first waiver section is for the user's acknowledgment of risks. The second waiver section is for the user's acknowledgment of the program's policy to notify parents in case of medical attention. Below the waivers is a section for the user's name, with a text area containing 'Jenna Tanzania' and a 'Share with City of Prana Recreation' button.

Success! Your organization can now see your info and you can expect an email confirmation!

For more information, or for assistance, please contact us at help@epactnetwork.com or 1.855.773.7228.

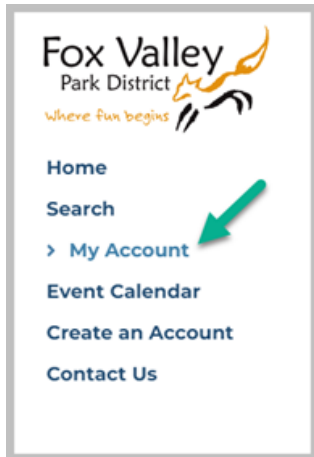
ePACT 
your emergency network

All rights reserved. January 2019

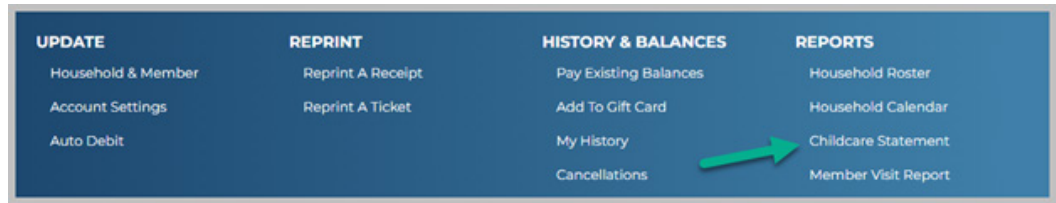
Tax Information

Childcare statements are now available through WebTrac. Login to your WebTrac account to print a copy of the statement for your tax purposes. See the steps below to navigate to and print your childcare statement:

Step 1. Login to WebTrac and select "My Account" from the menu.



Step 2. Under "Reports", click on "Childcare Statement".



Step 3. Choose the tax year and options to show totals each month and/or separate subtotals per child, if needed. Click "Submit".

Step 4. The program will then send a PDF statement to the email on file.

Tax Information

Fox Valley Park District's tax ID number is 36-6001059.



Deedee Buscher
Preschool Program Supervisor
630-966-4546 dbuscher@fvpd.net

Blackberry Farm
100 S. Barnes Rd
630-892-1550

**Eola Community
Center**
555 S. Eola Rd
630-851-8990

**Prisco Community
Center**
150 W. Illinois Ave.
630-859-8606

**Red Oak Nature
Center**
2343 S. River St
630-897-0818

**Vaughan Athletic
Center**
2121 W. Indian Trail
630-907-9600