



2024-25 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 require that you provide written notice two-weeks in advance to the preschool program supervisor. 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 lunch pals and 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. Diapers, Pull-ups and rubber pants will not be allowed.**

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.

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.

Behavior management 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 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.



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