

**NEWARK CITY SCHOOLS**  
**LITTLE LEARNERS PRESCHOOL**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Positive experiences in early childhood create a foundation upon which children can build as they grow toward the fulfillment of their potential. Every child deserves early experiences that are filled with love, joy, dignity, exploration, play and discovery within a nurturing environment that is developmentally appropriate.

Children should be valued, secure and competent as contributing members in their environment. Their feelings should be validated, as they learn socially appropriate ways of expressing and channeling their emotion.

We believe in fostering trust, autonomy, competence, and initiative in order to empower children to move toward independence.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

- ✓ Provide an early childhood experience that is developmentally appropriate in nature, including adaptive, aesthetic, cognitive, communication, sensory-motor, and social emotional domains.
- ✓ Select and use materials that are developmentally appropriate, designed to meet the needs of preschoolers with disabilities, and ensure the child's success in his/her first school experience.
- ✓ Provide curriculum that is age, interest, and exceptionality appropriate, and designed to promote active, organized learning as well as independence and positive character traits.
- ✓ Provide inclusionary experiences for preschool children with disabilities by enrolling typically developing youngsters as peer role models.
- ✓ Value the parents as partners in the child's preschool experience through active participation, education, and shared decision making.

**LITTLE LEARNERS PROGRAMS**

The Little Learners Preschool classrooms are located at 1440 Granville Rd., Newark, OH 43055. Each Little Learners classroom serves up to 8 preschoolers with disabilities and 7 typically developing peers. A variety of options are available. Most classrooms are half day programs and run Monday-Thursday with a morning session from 8:45-11:30 and an afternoon session from 12:45-3:30. There are also full day classrooms that run Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday from 8:45-3:30. Itinerant services are available to students attending preschool in community settings or requiring services in the home.

**ELIGIBILITY FOR PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

The Newark City Schools provides preschool services to children three to five years of age that are demonstrating significant developmental disabilities. There is an annual \$25.00 fee for students with disabilities.

All children are screened prior to enrolling in the preschool program. Children with suspected disabilities may be referred for and receive a multifaceted evaluation. Evaluations are completed by Newark City Schools staff and will include a parent interview, multiple observations in different settings, standardized/norm referenced assessments and criterion referenced assessments. To qualify, children must demonstrate a significant delay in one or more developmental areas such as communication, hearing, vision, cognition, social emotional functioning, or adaptive behavior (self-help). Once the evaluation team determines that a child is eligible, the team will develop an individual education plan (IEP) for the child. The team then determines the appropriate special education and related services required for the student to progress. Parents are involved in every step of the evaluation planning process. Initial placement requires parent permission.

### **TYPICALLY DEVELOPING PEERS – TUITION**

Typical peers are screened, and if determined eligible, are selected for each class by the preschool teachers and related service personnel (therapists), and/or program administrators. Typical candidates must demonstrate developmentally appropriate skills in communication, motor, cognition, social-emotional development and adaptive behavior. Peers are then selected based on the needs of each particular class to achieve a balance of skill levels, gender and age. All typical peers must be toilet trained and their parents are required to transport to and from programming.

Tuition of \$15 per week (\$540 per school year) is charged for classroom supplies, crafts, snacks, and other consumable items used in the preschool classroom. Tuition may be paid at the beginning of the school year or by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. Students will be released from the program for non-payment.

Referrals for typical peers can be made to each preschool teacher or by calling the Special Education Department at 740-670-7025.

Note: Not all children screened to be a typically developing peer will be selected into the program.

### **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS/ENROLLMENT**

ALL students enrolling in Little Learners classes must follow Newark City Schools registration guidelines. Parents are required to provide the following information before attending class:

- ✓ Birth certificate
- ✓ Immunization records
- ✓ Proof of residency (lease, utility bill, etc)
- ✓ Child custody paperwork (if applicable)
- ✓ Physical examination by a physician or other approved medical personnel within 30 days of enrollment, and once annually.

All forms included in the preschool folder including the emergency medical authorization, health information, home language survey, etc., must be completed and submitted to the school/class at the time of enrollment.

## **ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE REPORTING**

Students benefit most from preschool programming when they participate on each scheduled day. Acceptable reasons for absences include personal illness, medical/dental appointments and family emergencies.

If your child cannot attend school you are required to contact the school office to report the absence, 740-670-7180.

On the day following the absence, please send an absence note or physician's statement indicating the reason for the absence. In the event of a planned absence please contact the teacher/send a note before the absence indicating the dates your child will be absent. Excessive absences will result in a referral to the district's attendance officer.

Should you need to pick up your child before the end of the day, please send a note to the teacher or call the school office. Parents must report to the school office upon arriving at the school to pick up the child. Your child will ONLY be released to you or persons that you have authorized to do so. Identification may be required.

## **SCHOOL CALENDAR/CANCELLATIONS**

A Newark City Schools calendar is included in your enrollment packet.

If the Newark City Schools are canceled due to bad weather or other calamity, Little Learners classes are also canceled for that day. For cancellation information you may check the following resources:

- ✓ Newark City Schools Website @ [www.newarkcityschools.org](http://www.newarkcityschools.org)
- ✓ Newark City Schools Television - Channel 19
- ✓ Newark Advocate Website @ [www.newarkadvocate.com](http://www.newarkadvocate.com)
- ✓ Radio Stations: WCLT AM, T-100 FM, WHTH 790 or WNKO 101.7 FM

Parents will also be notified through ***PARENT SQUARE***, a phone/text notification system. Please update your contact information (phone, e-mail address, cell phone) with the school secretary to assure that you will receive these important notifications in a timely manner.

## **LATE START**

Should Newark City Schools call for a 2 hour delay due to weather or other circumstances, Little Learners Preschool will also follow a 2 hour delay.

Preschoolers in morning only classes will arrive two hours late and be dismissed one hour later than normal. Preschoolers in afternoon only classes will start one hour later and be dismissed at the regularly scheduled dismissal time.

HALF DAY	AM	10:45 - 12:30
	PM	1:45 - 3:30

FULL DAY	10:45-3:30
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## **HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Communication between parents and school staff is essential to the progress of the child. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher when there are issues or concerns. This may be done by phone, email or appointment. Each child will have a HOME/SCHOOL folder that will be sent home on a daily basis. Please use the folder to communicate with your child's teacher by responding to teacher comments or providing information regarding your child's activities.

IEP progress reports will be sent home by preschool teachers and therapists at the end of each grading period (9 weeks). Typical peers will receive report cards at the end of the first semester (January) and at the end of the school year (May). In addition, benchmark assessment information will be shared with parents in the fall, winter and spring either in written form, during parent teacher-conferences, or at annual review meetings.

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled at least twice each school year. Each building staff determines the dates and times for these conferences. Conference dates vary by building. Parents will be notified of these dates.

Teachers are also available (in person or via phone) immediately following dismissal. Each teacher also has a school email account and will communicate with you via electronic mail. Staff email addresses are located in the back of this handbook.

## **DRESSING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL**

Please send your preschooler to school dressed in comfortable, clean, weather-appropriate clothing and shoes. Flip-flops are not permitted. Play clothes that are washable are best. Send a spare set of clothing in your child's book bag in case of accidents or spills. If your child is not toilet trained, send extra pull-ups, diapers or underwear. Label jackets, book bags and other items that might get lost with your child's name.

## **ILLNESS/INJURY AT SCHOOL**

A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be isolated immediately and sent home with the parent or guardian as soon as possible:

- ✓ Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a 24 hour period);
- ✓ Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
- ✓ Difficult or rapid breathing;
- ✓ Yellowish skin or eyes;
- ✓ Redness of the eyes or eyelid, thick or purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain;
- ✓ Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, taken by auxiliary method when in combination with other sign or symptom of illness;
- ✓ Untreated infected skin patch(es);
- ✓ Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
- ✓ Stiff neck with an elevated temperature;
- ✓ Evidence of untreated lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation.
- ✓ Sore throat or difficulty swallowing; or
- ✓ Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other signs of symptoms of illness

A child isolated due to a suspected communicable disease shall be made comfortable and provided with a cot. All linens/blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cot will be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent or, if soiled with blood, feces, vomit, or other body fluids, the cot shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected.

The child in isolation shall be watched carefully by school health or preschool staff.

The parents of a child experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but not any of the symptoms listed above, or a child not feeling well enough to participate in preschool activities, will be contacted by health/preschool staff to determine if the child should remain in school.

First aid will be provided for minor problems and documented in the health record for each child. In case of severe injury, medical treatment will be given, parents contacted, and the child will be transported to the preferred hospital as listed on the emergency medication form.

Injury/Incident reports will be completed for each incident which requires more than basic first aid and will also be placed in the child's health record.

Parents will be notified in writing within 2 school days when students are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, or chicken pox.

Board Policy for Management of Communicable Disease – Preschool is available online at [www.newarkcityschools.org](http://www.newarkcityschools.org)

### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION DURING SCHOOL**

Medications (prescription or over-the-counter) can only be given at school with medical authorization. If your child needs medication during the school day you **MUST** have your child's physician complete the medicine administration form available in the school clinic. For safety reasons parents must bring the medication to school (do not send in the child's book bag). Medications must be kept at school in the original container, and are secured in locked storage cabinets in the school health clinic. Any medication will be administered in the appropriate dosage at the designated time indicated on the form completed by the physician or medical professional. The school health aide or other school personnel trained in medication administration will be responsible for the administration, as well as maintaining the medication log in the child's health record. These records are made available to parents upon request.

Board Policy regarding the Use of Medications is available for viewing online: [www.newarkcityschools.org](http://www.newarkcityschools.org)

### **CURRICULUM**

The Little Learners Preschool uses *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool-Guided Edition* which aligns with the *Early Learning Content Standards* published by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. The curriculum supports learning in the content areas of literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science as well as the development of cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical domains.

## **RELATED SERVICES**

Speech/language therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists and other related service personnel provide services to students per the individualized education plan. Whenever possible, therapy services are provided in the preschool classroom. All related service personnel are available for consultation or questions regarding the services and your child's progress.

Please contact your child's teacher or the Preschool (740-670-7180) if you wish to speak with your child's related service provider.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

One goal of early childhood programming is to teach preschoolers to display respect, fairness, kindness, good citizenship, responsibility, caring and trustworthiness. There are times when it becomes necessary to utilize behavior management strategies and techniques. Behavior management provides a "teachable moment" for the teacher and/or other preschool staff and an opportunity for the child to learn appropriate behavior. Through the use of reflection, redirection, verbal and non-verbal cues, loss of privilege, modeling, role playing, separation from problem situations, teacher guidance and other developmentally appropriate strategies, the child can learn expected or replacement behaviors and hopefully, exhibit those behaviors in the future.

Discipline shall be the responsibility of the preschool staff and shall be guided by the following principles:

- (1) There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- (2) No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- (3) No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- (4) No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle.
- (5) No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
- (6) Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- (7) Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- (8) Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use, and food shall not be used as a reward for behavior.
- (9) Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- (10) The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.
- (11) A staff member who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected is to immediately notify the public children's services agency and a serious incident report is to be completed and submitted to the department in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Revised Code

Board Policy regarding Preschool Behavior Management/Discipline is available for viewing on the district website at [www.newarkcityschools.org](http://www.newarkcityschools.org)

## **CLASSROOM VISITS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Parents and guardians are invited to visit their child's classroom at any time after the school day has started. As a courtesy to the teacher, let staff know a day in advance in case of special events or schedules. Each visitor must sign-in at the school office and receive a visitor's badge. Visits will be limited to 30 minutes in length.

Volunteers are welcome in the Little Learners Preschool classroom. Volunteers must have BCI fingerprinting and background check done at the Roosevelt Building, 621 Mount Vernon Road prior to volunteering. Volunteers must also sign a non-guilty/non-conviction statement.

## **FOOD SERVICE/SNACKS**

Lunch is served to students attending full day programming. Meals served at school will be of a quantity and quality to supplement food served at home so that the daily nutritional needs of the child according to standards set forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture are met. Current menus shall be posted in the preschool classroom and will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Lunch menus are also available on the school website [www.newarkcityschools.org](http://www.newarkcityschools.org). Free and reduced lunch prices are available to qualifying families. Lunches are only served to preschoolers attending full day classes.

Half-day classes will be served a healthy snack daily. Weekly menus and daily choices will be posted in each classroom.

If your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions, please note them on the school health form and inform your child's preschool teacher prior to the start of school so substitute foods from the same basic food groups can be provided. Your physician will want to note allergies on the physical form as well.

## **TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN**

Students turning 5 prior to September 30 of each school year are eligible to transition to kindergarten. If a child continues to be eligible for special education services, a school-age individualized education plan will be written outlining the special education and related services needed to permit your child to access and progress in the general education curriculum.

## **PROGRAM OPERATIONS, SERVICE AND POLICES**

Each Little Learners classroom is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness. Classrooms are inspected by consultants from OELSR on an annual basis. Parents may obtain copies of these inspection reports by contacting the Preschool directly. Licenses and inspection reports are also posted in each classroom.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The preschool staff will develop cumulative record folders for each child at the beginning of the school year that will include student name, date of birth, address, home phone number, emergency numbers, and other important information. Individualized education plans, evaluation team reports, progress data, and benchmark data will also be kept in the folder. Medical records will be maintained in the school health clinic. As information changes, the child's record will be updated.

## **CHILD FIND NOTIFICATION**

If you have or know of a child who may have a disability, contact The Little Learners Preschool at 740-670-7180. This applies to children who are educated at home or attend private schools, as well as those who are homeless or wards of the state, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Stakeholders with concerns or complaints regarding preschool special education programming/services should contact Special Education at 740-670-7025. Every attempt will be made to address your concerns at the building and district level. Parents may also contact the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children Ombudsman at 1-877-644-6338.

## **LITTLE LEARNERS PRESCHOOL DIRECTORY**

### **PRESCHOOL BUILDING STAFF**

Jennifer McMahon, Preschool Coordinator  
Kara Carson, Secretary  
Sarah Bocker, School Psychologist

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### **PRESCHOOL TEACHERS**

Kelleen Bodle, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Kim Gorius-Zies, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Deanna Lear, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Stephanie Long, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
McKelle Metzger, Preschool Intervention Teacher/Itinerant  
Amy Prazer, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Lisa Rose-Morales, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Brianna Stewart, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Amy Todd, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Emily Wallace, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Justin Woodford, Preschool Intervention Teacher  
Tricia Zellar, Preschool Intervention Teacher

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### **PRESCHOOL RELATED SERVICE PERSONNEL**

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Erin Smith, Speech/Language Pathologist  
Lauren Riggelman, Speech/Language Pathologist

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