



Ann Arbor Preschool and Family Center Parent Handbook

Welcome to the Ann Arbor Preschool and Family Center (AAPFC) where we believe a solid partnership with families and early intervention is the key to success for children. AAPFC houses the following programs: General Education (Tuition Pre-School, Head Start, and Great Start Readiness Program) Special Education (Early Childhood Developmentally Delayed and Early On) Programs for all (First Steps Washtenaw.) We look forward to making this a very special year for you and your child.

During the first few weeks of school our staff will get to know the children and informally assess their development skills and interests. We will make every effort to help each child feel comfortable about coming to preschool while enjoying the activities, which we provide.

We know, especially if this is your first school experience, you will have many questions. In this handbook we hope to have anticipated some of your concerns and answered some of your more general questions. Please read this handbook and keep it in a convenient spot for future reference. Also look for newsletters and/or notes sent home in your child's backpack or school bag. These correspondences contain specific information concerning school, upcoming events, and important reminders.

Philosophy

The Ann Arbor Preschool and Family Center has developed a philosophy based on theories and research in early childhood education. Inherent in this philosophy is our dedication to ensuring a program that celebrates diversity by supporting and respecting cultural, racial, and religious differences. Parent participation at all levels is encouraged and valued, as a strong parent-school relationship is crucial to our success.

We Believe Children Learn Best:**Therefore We Provide:**

❖ In small class sizes	✓ Small class sizes with low child/teacher ratios
❖ When given opportunities to work individually, in small groups, and in large groups	✓ Individual attention along with small and large group activities
❖ If they acquire knowledge at their own rate	✓ A program with an emphasis on individual learning styles
❖ When they are actively involved by using all their senses, manipulating and experimenting with a variety of materials and situations	✓ Opportunities to create, manipulate, and explore in a sensory rich environment
❖ Through play to translate experience into understanding, by exploring, observing, imitating and practicing	✓ A flexible schedule that allows time for to play, explore, observe, imitate, and practice
❖ When they feel physically and emotionally safe and secure	✓ A safe, trusting and nurturing environment with positive role models and consistency of educated and trained teachers
❖ When all areas of development are viewed as equally important and interrelated	✓ Curriculum that includes experiences to enrich and enhance cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical and creative development
❖ When they feel a sense of achievement and self-worth	✓ Developmentally appropriate curriculum with built in successes and challenges
❖ When engaged in self initiated as well as teacher directed activities and experiences	✓ A balance of child-initiated and teacher- directed activities

❖ When teachers use language to enhance critical thinking, communication and problem solving, and teach a English as a second language	✓ An emphasis on language development to enhance problem solving and critical thinking skills, and English as a second language
❖ In a literacy and numeracy rich environment	✓ Curriculum that enhances reading and math skills
❖ When children have time to interact socially with peers	✓ An environment sensitive to learners who are developing social skills

Parent Involvement



A child’s success in school is greatest when parents and school form a cooperative team with common goals. The partnership we foster between home and school in the preschool programs provides for greater continuity and coordination in your child’s learning. The more school and family communicate the more appropriate and individualized the education plan will be for your child.

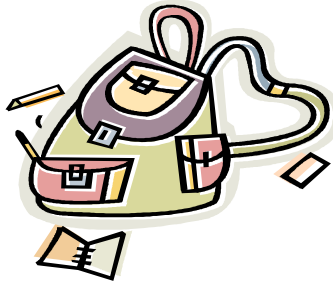
Although parent participation is mandatory for Head Start and Michigan School Readiness Programs, parents in all programs are welcome and encouraged to be involved in whatever way they can.

Some ways you may choose to participate are by:

- Attending parent/ teacher conferences
- Hosting a home visit
- Volunteering to help with special classroom projects
- Volunteering to spend time in the classroom
- Helping with field trips
- Preparing and sharing foods and celebrations that honor your family heritage
- Preparing materials for the classroom teachers

- Sharing special interests or hobbies with the children
- Telephoning other parents with important information or requests
- Acting as an interpreter for non-English speaking families
- Helping to plan special events
- Helping to recruit other parent volunteers

Communication



After the first few weeks of school you will receive a general classroom schedule detailing our basic routines. You will also receive a variety of forms such as classroom newsletters, curriculum updates, monthly calendars, and occasional notes.

It would be helpful if you would send us notes about anything special or unusual happening at home. This would include fun, exciting things your child enjoyed such as special trips, shopping, visitors, presents, special meals or holidays, or even things that might make your child upset or fussy, such as lack of sleep, doctor's visits, or changes in his/her environment. This will give us topics to talk about with your child and help us to know what to expect.

When your child comes home from school plan to spend some time talking about what he/she did at school. Try to ask specific questions for example: "Did you read a story today?" "Did you paint today?" It is a way to make a connection between home and school and a way to help your child with language, memory, sequencing etc.

Remember to check your child's backpack or school bag daily

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The goal of the Tuition Preschool program is for each child to develop a sense of respect for themselves and others. We strive to create an environment that encourages children to make positive choices, to enter and exit peer groups with increasing skill and satisfaction, and to learn to live in a respectful and cooperative manner.

We do not think of discipline as punishment. Inner discipline is the goal and is the result of an evolving process occurring within the child. Through appropriate adult/child interaction, anticipatory guidance, well-established guidelines for appropriate behavior, and active listening to children's responses, staff gets to know each child and what additional limits and adjustment are necessary. Over a period of time it is expected that children will internalize the concept of self-control, and will acquire measures of inner discipline. When a problem arises, steps toward reaching these goals will include:

1. Staff will work with the child, discussing the problem, suggesting and supporting behavior changes, explaining and redirecting.
2. If a pattern of negative behavior persists, the staff will talk with the parent (s) in order to obtain assistance and suggestions for developing effective approaches with the child. A behavior plan may also be initiated.
3. If all reasonable approaches are exhausted, the pattern of negative behaviors continues, and/or the child's actions are a threat to the well-being and safety of other children and/or staff, parents may be asked to remove a child from the program. Behaviors that may warrant removal from the program include physical violence or the threat of physical violence, biting, persistent bullying or swearing, consistent disregard of staff direction and guidance, verbal harassment of peers or staff.
4. Parents can seek to re-enroll a permanently suspended child once the negative behavior stops. In order to re-enroll, a meeting with the parent and school staff (if appropriate) will be held, and the child may be allowed to return on a probationary basis.

Our staff adheres to the guidelines of the State of Michigan for Child Care Centers and the Ann Arbor Public Schools Fair Treatment Policy. Physical punishment, humiliation, or intimidating actions are not permitted in the childcare program.

Phone Numbers

Please keep these numbers where you can find them easily. You may need these in an emergency to cancel transportation or to call if your child will be absent for the day.

Thurston Elementary School 994-1970

Principal: Patricia Manley
Ann Gooding-Geidner & Kirsten Devine –
Preschool Classroom: 997-1243
Child Care Coordinator: Vickie Malcolm –
Rec&Ed 994-2300 ext. 53255

Allen Elementary School 971-5901

Principal: Joan Fitzgibbon
Mary Knisley and Jessica Cruz - Preschool Classroom: 997-1240
Child Care Coordinator: Robin Schultz-Purves - Rec&Ed 994-2300 ext.53208

Community Education & Recreation (Rec&Ed) 994-2300

Director: Sara Aeschbach



School Bags/ Backpacks

Each child should bring a school bag or backpack to class every day. It should be large enough to accommodate school notes and newsletters and well as the BIG creations made by the children. Please remember to label the bag on the outside with your child's name.



Emergency Information

Parents are responsible for updating the Child Information Card when ever there is a change in phone numbers, address, etc. This is one of the most important documents we have about your child. Please be sure to keep this information current.

Pick Up and Drop Off

Transportation to and from the tuition preschool program is the responsibility of parents. Please park in the designated parking spaces in the parking lot. Please help us reinforce safe practices by following these procedures:

- Do not allow children to open car doors
- Do not allow children to run in the parking lot unattended
- Bring your child directly to the classroom
- Pick your child up from the classroom or building door at dismissal



Hours of Operation

The Tuition Preschool program opens at 8:30 a.m. and operates until 4:30 p.m. Children attending the morning program are picked up by 12:30 after lunch, and children attending the afternoon program arrive at 1:30. We would like to have children present during those times. Please drop off and pick up your child on time and avoid late pick-up fees.

Attendance

Your child's regular attendance at school promotes his/her educational and social growth. If your child is ill and cannot benefit from school, or may spread the illness to others, please keep him/her home. If it is necessary for your child to be absent, please call your child's program with reason for the absence and the anticipated date of return.



Clothing

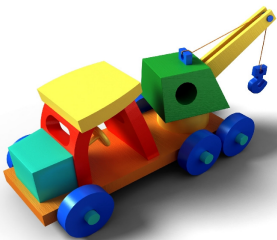


Please dress your children in clothing suitable for both active play and messy play.

Although smocks are used this does not guarantee that clothing will not get soiled with paint, water or dirt. Access to active and messy play is important to a child's development; therefore, we provide a variety of these activities every day.

Remember we go outside everyday, weather permitting, so please dress your child accordingly. Please label, label, label, boots, snow pants, hats, mittens etc. Also remove any hood strings as they can catch on playground equipment and choke children.

It is a good idea to send an extra set of clothing every day. This includes underwear, socks, pants and shirt. Even if your child is fully toilet trained, children sometimes get wet during water play, art activities, snack, or outside play. If the extra set is sent home daily please replace it on your child's next day of school.



Toys From Home

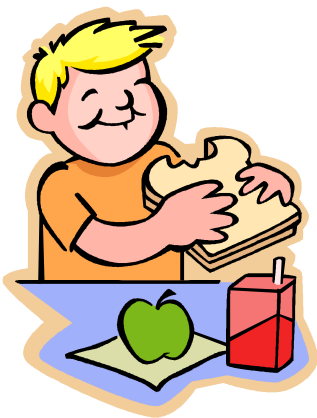
Please do not send your child to school with toys from home. We cannot be responsible for loss or damage.

School Closing

Weather conditions may require school closing or changing school schedules. These decisions are made after an early inspection of road conditions and school facilities as well as current or forecasted weather conditions. Closings are posted on the Ann Arbor Public Schools website on the homepage.

Our preschool families are included in the AAPS school messenger system, which notifies parents of school closings or any school emergencies. You will receive automated phone calls and/or email messages according to your preferences.

When schools are closed or schedules and/or bus routes are changed, information is sent immediately to the major radio and television stations. Tune in to:
WAAM 1600AM WTKA 1050AM WQKL 107.1FM WUOM 91.7FM
WEMU 89.1FM WNRS 1290AM WJR 760AM CATV channel 10
And local television stations 2,4 and 7. The district also uses a messaging system, so that parents can be contacted directly by phone, email or text message. Information about this system is available from your child's teacher.



Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks

Your child will be served a family style nutritious, kid-friendly hot lunch if he/she attends school in the mornings or full days. Nutritious snacks are served both morning and afternoon. The cost of snacks and lunch are included in your monthly tuition fees, so there is no need to order lunch. In keeping with the spirit of Ann Arbor Public School's Wellness Policy, we are asking parents not to send snacks to commemorate birthdays or special events. Experts are finding that these "special treats"

have become so frequent in our children's lives, that they are receiving too many calories with low-nutrient density. Talk with your child's teacher about some alternative ideas for birthday acknowledgements.

If your child has any food allergies or food restrictions, please personally inform your child's teacher so he/she may be aware for your child's dietary needs for snack, cooking projects, etc. Please write this down on the emergency information cards as well.

Child Illness Policy

Common Cold

The immune system of a preschool child is not fully developed; therefore, he/she may contract a common cold quite frequently. A child who has a simple cold may attend school if he/she feels well enough to participate in all daily activities **including outdoor play**. However, if there is excessive nasal discharge or a severe cough, it is recommended the child stay at home.

Your child should stay at home if he/she does not feel well enough to participate in all group activities both inside and outdoors.

The following is a list of specific communicable diseases or illness symptoms that exclude a child from attending school

Disease/illness symptoms	When child may return
Fever 100 degrees or above	Fever free for 24 hours without a fever reducing medication
Vomiting	24 hours symptom free
Diarrhea (giardia, salmonella, shingella, viral)	When stools are formed and symptom free for 24 hours
Nasal Discharge (yellow or green mucous)	Discharge is not thick yellow or green and/or if the child has been on antibiotic for 24 hours
Chicken Pox	After all skin lesions have dried
Mumps	After swelling is gone (~9day)
Strep Throat	After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment
Measles or German Measles	Not earlier than 4 days after onset of rash
Pink Eye or Conjunctivitis (Bacterial, viral or allergic)	When eyes are mucus free or on medication for 24 hours
Hepatitis A	With physician's clearance
Impetigo	With physician clearance, after medication for 24 hours and infected parts covered
Ringworm or Pin Worms	After 24 hours of physician prescribed treatment and kept covered
Lice	After treatment with a medicated shampoo.
Scabies	After 24 hours of physician prescribed treatment
Unidentified Rash	With physician's clearance
Meningitis	With physician's clearance
Influenza	With physician's clearance or fever free without

	fever reducing medication for 24 hours
Roseola	After rash clears
Hand, Foot and Mouth	When lesions heal and drooling ceases
Croup	After free of viral infection and child is no longer having difficulty breathing

Medication

We will not give the first dose of any medication

We do not give over the counter medicine

If it is necessary for your child to take medication while attending our programs the following applies:

1. All medication **must** be in the original pharmaceutical container with the Doctor's name and child's name and prescribed dosage.
2. A medication permission slip **must** be filled out and signed by the parent stating the name of the medication and the time and amount of medication to be administered.

Please do not give your child any medicine (this includes aspirin, Tylenol, throat lozenges etc.) to take on his/her own.

Tuition Preschool 2011-12 Calendar

September: _____
 Tuesday 6 First day for children

November: _____
 Tuesday 1 No School for K-12 or Preschool. Professional Development for staff

December: _____
 Wed/Thu/Fri 23-25 No school or preschool. Thanksgiving Break

Thursday 22 Winter vacation begins at end of day

January: _____
 Monday 9 School resumes

Monday 16 No school or Preschool. Martin Luther King Day

February: _____
 Wednesday 15 No school for K-12 or Preschool. Professional Development for staff.

Friday 17 Mid-Winter vacation begins at the end of the day

Monday 27 School & Preschool resume

March: _____
 Monday 5 No school for Elementary or Preschool. Teacher work day.

Friday 30 Spring Vacation begins at the end of the day

April: _____
 Monday 9 School & Preschool resume

May: _____
 Monday 28 No school or Preschool. Memorial Day.

June: _____
 Friday 15 Last day of school. Half day (A.M. only) for Elementary & Preschool

Enrollment

Enrollment and registration are completed through the Community Education and Recreation office at 1515 S.7th St. and can be handled by mail. All of our forms are available on our website at:

www.aareced.aaps.k12.mi.us/reced.home/childcare

The following is required to complete registration for the program:

- \$45 application fee per child
- Application/schedule form
- Consent Form
- Child Information Record
- Payment of the first month's fees
- Child Placement Contact
- Confidential Questionnaire
- Proof of Immunizations according to chart provided
- Document signed by a licensed physician or his or her designee that a physical evaluation has been made within the preceding 1 year, with activity restrictions noted

Fees are based on the schedule for which you registered your child. The cost for the number of program days for the year has been divided into equal monthly payments, so that the monthly fee is the same regardless of the number of program days that month. No credits or deductions will be made for sick days, vacation days, field trips, snow days or other emergencies resulting in school closings.

A two-week written notice is required to withdraw your child from the program. If you do not give a two-week written notice to a Community Education Secretary, you will be charged until the written notice is received in the Community Education and Recreation office.

Our billing software automatically invoices to the first person listed on the application for preschool fees. Please call the Community Education and Recreation Office if your invoice should be mailed to another address.

Field Trips

As part of the consent form, all parents sign a general permission for their children to participate in any field trip. This allows the child to be taken on walking field trips. Preschool staff will let parents know, in writing, of any preplanned field trips. Besides written notification, which often includes a request for a parent's signature, an announcement of the field trip will be posted on the Parent's Bulletin Board at the classroom site.

On occasion, parents will be asked to contribute a small fee for special activities such as bowling, roller-skating and pizza parties.

Staff Background Checks

The Ann Arbor Public Schools conducts an ICHAT (Michigan State Police) and Accurant (private company) systems background check on all applicants and volunteers. Staff are fingerprinted for both Michigan State and FBI background checks. Volunteers include parents who work with children in unsupervised settings (those with more than incidental contact where a staff person is not present). The Director of Community Education & Recreation and program administrators shall ensure that all childcare volunteers have appropriate experience for their placement; receive necessary training/information; and are placed under the direct supervision of a district employee. A volunteer's service may be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the Superintendent or Director of Rec & Ed. For more information on the AAPS background check procedures, contact your Community Education Coordinator.

Reporting to Protective Services

The Ann Arbor Public Schools District is mandated by Michigan law, Act No. 238, governing all schools and child care programs to report any suspected abuse or neglect of children in their care.

Fees

- 1) Fees for the upcoming month are due on or before the 15th day of the preceding month of the program (e.g. payment for October is due September 15th). The Community Education Child Care office will make every effort to send invoices by the first of each month. However, it is the responsibility of the designated person to pay the monthly expense on time. Payments received after the 15th will incur an automatic \$15.00 late fee per family.
- 2) Fees must be mailed or delivered to the Community Education and Recreation Office, or paid via automatic charge to a credit card. Staffs at the school buildings are **not permitted** to collect fees. Payments may be left 24 hrs. a day in the locked “drop box” located between the glass doors at the Community Education & Recreation Office. Please place your payment in an envelope and mark “Child Care” and school name.
- 3) Fees may be paid by credit card (VISA or MasterCard), cash, money order, or check. To use VISA or MasterCard a credit card form must be completed and signed. An automatic monthly charge to your credit card may be established. Checks and money orders should be made payable to **Ann Arbor Public Schools**. On each check and money order, write your child’s name and school.
- 4) Families using dependant care reimbursement may either submit a claim form for the Coordinator to sign and return or you may request a copy of your ledger, which documents your payment history. A yearly statement for tax purposes will be mailed to families at the end of the calendar year upon request.
- 5) The Ann Arbor Public Schools Federal Tax Identification number **(38-6004028)** is printed on your invoices and receipts.
- 6) If there are insufficient funds on a payment by check or a credit card is denied, the client will be notified and be required to make the payment at the

Community Education Office with cash or money order. A \$20.00 processing fee will be charged. Chronic offenders will be required to make all payments with cash or money order.

- 7) **The fee for late pick-up is \$5.00 up to 5 minutes and \$3.00 per minute for each minute thereafter.** If the parent has not called or the staff has not been able to reach anyone at an emergency number by 6:30 PM, department administrators will be called to handle the situation. The deciding clock regarding time is the clock in the classroom. The staff person will issue a late form to the parent. A copy of the late charges will also be forwarded to the Community Education and Recreation Office and the fee will be added to your next bill. The Preschool Program reserves the right to terminate any chronic offenders.
- 8) Requests for refunds and/or late fee waivers must be made in writing and submitted to the Child Care office. A \$10 processing fee will be charged for all refunds.
- 9) Parent fees support the Tuition Preschool Program. Fees are budgeted for salary and benefits for pre-school staff, secretaries, administration, overhead costs, snacks, supplies, equipment, and activity materials.
- 10) Families who have a financial problem and **cannot make a fee payment must contact a Community Education Coordinator immediately.** Whenever possible, a payment plan will be established. However, if a family fails to make a scheduled payment, their child will be **DISENROLLED**.
- 11) All fees are due prior to receiving childcare services. If a monthly payment is not paid, the children in that family will be disenrolled on the 1st day of the month for which the payment was missed.
- 12) June fees must be paid by **May 15th** or your child will be disenrolled immediately. Call the Community Education office if you plan to drop the month of June.

Sign In/Sign Out Procedures

Before school, a parent/guardian must accompany the child(ren) to the classroom, sign the child in, noting the time on the attendance sheet form, and sign with a legal signature (i.e. not “mom or “sister”). The parent/guardian should greet the staff person so she/he knows that your child has arrived. Parents should not allow children to enter the buildings unescorted due to unforeseen circumstances such as the room being locked or staff running late to work. The Preschool staff cannot be held responsible for children who are not signed in by a parent or guardian.

After school, the parent/guardian should sign the child out, noting the time, and sign with a legal signature. Please let a staff person know that the child is leaving.

Parents are responsible for notifying preschool staff of their child(ren)’s schedule changes and absences, including calling in for sick days.

Parents are responsible for notifying the Community Education office in writing of desired schedule changes or withdrawal. Schedule change requests or withdrawals cannot be processed at the site and are not official until the Community Education and Recreation Child Care office has been notified.

Parents should read the bulletin board at least once a week to note the curriculum plans for that week, any planned field trips, program needs, and the weekly menus. This information will help you keep in touch with the program and your child’s activities, and provide opportunities for conversation and sharing between you, your child, and the staff.

The safety of your child is our first priority, therefore, if the person picking up your child appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or unable to drive safely, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Child care staff will offer to call a taxi or another driver.
- If the person insists on driving with your child, the staff person will call 911 to report the concern and provide information to ensure the child gets home safely.

A person picking up your child will be asked to show identification before your child is released to them, unless the person is known to the staff and is approved by you to pick up your child.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident or emergency, pre-school staff will follow these procedures:

1. Administer first aid or CPR to the child
2. Call for professional assistance (911, police, etc.)
3. Contact the parent/guardian
4. Get assistance from the school office and school nurse

If the parent/guardian does not reach the school before the ambulance arrives, a staff person will ride with the child to the hospital. The parent/guardian will be asked to meet the ambulance at the hospital. An incident report will be completed within 24 hours of the accident.

In the event that the school must be evacuated, children are bused to an alternate site – Allen’s evacuation site is St. Francis Church at 22150 Frieze and Thurston’s evacuation site is the Plymouth Mall at 2616 Nixon Rd.

Special Needs

1. The Tuition Preschool Program will provide reasonable accommodations without discrimination regarding a child’s special needs or impairments. It is expected that the child’s parent or guardian shall communicate the nature of the child’s special needs or impairment and any particular information regarding the child’s care, on the Child Information form and **PRIOR** to the child’s first day in the program.

3. The AAPS Discipline Policy applies to all children in pre-school as well as all students.

4. Due process rights of students with special needs and their parents under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 will be enforced. Parents who feel their child’s rights have been violated may appeal using the following process:

1. Meeting with the Preschool classroom staff, principal and/or Community Education Coordinator to discuss and correct the problem. Additional resource people may be consulted for assistance if necessary.

2. A written appeal to, and if necessary, a meeting with, the chairperson of the Ann Arbor Public Schools Section 504 committee.

Asbestos Policy
CONTAINING BUILDING MATERIALS PER 40 CFR PART 763
OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The building operated by the Ann Arbor Public Schools may have asbestos containing building materials present in them. Each facility has on file, in the main office area, a copy of the approved Asbestos hazard Emergency Response Act (A.H.E.R.A.), management plan for your review.

Ann Arbor Public School District designated persons, who are responsible for asbestos issues, are Projects Crew Chief and Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds. They can be contacted at:

2555 S. State Street,
Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (734) 994-2263 or (734) 994-2264

