

DISTRICT 876 COMMUNITY EDUCATION
KINDERGARTEN CONNECTION PRESCHOOL
BRIGHT BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL



A HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS
ANNANDALE-MAPLE LAKE COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 190
ANNANDALE, MN 55302
320-274-3058

MEET THE TEACHING STAFF

The quality of the staff is the most important determinant of program quality. All teachers are licensed educators. The staff has years of experience in early childhood and love what they do. Staff development is on-going each school year with district and state training. Feel free to ask questions of the teachers or Director of Community Education at any time.

Annandale Elementary

Bright Beginnings:

Preschool Teacher	Heather Wirth
Educational Assistant	Julie Thompson

Kindergarten Connection:

Preschool Teacher	Angel LeMieux
Educational Assistant	Shelly Burns

Preschool Teacher	Michelle Rassier
Educational Assistant	Barb Groth

Early Childhood Special Education Team:

EC Special Ed. Teacher	Kathryn Anglin
EC Special Ed. Teacher	Kiley Schmidt
Speech and Language Pathologist	Kari Dircks
Occupational Therapist	Laura Scheer



Welcome to the Annandale Community Preschool - 2016-2017 school year

A Community Education and Services Program of the Annandale Public Schools

We are very glad that you have enrolled your child in our School Readiness preschool program. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with this handbook. It contains information that will be useful to you throughout the school year. We are very proud that our preschool programs have received 4-star ratings, the highest rating possible in the state's Parent Aware Quality Rating System. We use state approved curriculum and assessments and are committed to providing the latest training for our teachers as well as providing daily routines and play spaces that help children learn. Be sure to check your child's bag for the latest information including newsletters and activities.

Again, we want to express our joy in having your child in our preschool and look forward to a year full of discovery, imagination, school readiness skills, and above all, new friends, smiles and laughter. Sincerely,

Your Preschool Teachers

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Annandale Community Preschool program is to provide a safe environment where young children of all abilities can grow and experience success, and their parents can be partners in learning.

We believe:

- Children learn through active, hands-on involvement with their environment.
- Children's learning is a cooperative effort by home, school and community.
- Children grow in self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-image through interactions with others.
- Children develop a positive attitude towards school and life-long learning opportunities by being encouraged to try new ideas, make choices, and use materials creatively.
- Parents bridge the worlds of home and school and are an integral part of the educational process.

PROGRAM GOALS

In the Annandale Community Preschool program we will intentionally help children to:

- develop a sense of trust and security that promotes self-esteem and cooperative play with peers; develop physical and emotional well-being;
- use their creativity and curiosity about the world to develop confidence and competence in their own abilities, as well as an appreciation for all people's abilities;
- acquire concepts and information which will help them think, reason, solve problems and make decisions to meet their needs;
- expand their communication skills to further thinking and learning.

CALENDAR & HOURS

The preschool program operates from August 31, 2016 through May 19, 2017 and generally follows the I.S.D. 876 school year. Please refer to your preschool calendar for these dates. The hours of preschool are as follows:

<u>Preschool Option</u>	<u>Mornings</u>	<u>Afternoons</u>
Bright Beginnings	8:00 - 10:30 a.m.	12:20- 2:50 p.m.
Kindergarten Connection	8:00- 10:30 a.m.	12:20- 2:50 p.m.

The Cardinal Kids Club program (an extended day service) is available to families from 6:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m. throughout the calendar year. To register for this program, please contact the coordinator, Christy Dougherty at (320) 274-3058 or email her at cdougherty@isd876.org

PLAYGROUNDS

Preschool classes at the Annandale Elementary school will use the age appropriate playground located on the side of the elementary school. They may also utilize the outside grassy area on the side of the building.

REQUIRED FORMS

We require the following forms for each child in order to attend preschool:

Emergency Information Parent Permissions Immunization (or waiver)

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment in the program is open to the public. Community Education & Services is committed to the policy that all persons have equal access to its programs and facilities. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis.

A waiting list is maintained for all classes that are full. When space is available, we notify parents in the order they were taken. A \$50 non-refundable registration fee is due when enrolling. This reserves your child's place in the preschool program. All children must be toilet trained (no "Pull Ups"). Children who turn age three before September 1st may begin preschool.

TUITION

Preschool is supported by tuition and state aid. It is very important that tuition be paid on time so financial obligations can be met. The tuition you have selected on your registration form is what you will be charged each month for the entire school year. ***Fees are due at the beginning of each month. If payment is not received by the 5th of each month a late fee of \$10.00 will be added to your account.** If fees are not paid or a payment plan has not been established within 2 weeks of payment due date then we reserve the right to remove your child from the program. If payment deadlines cannot be met, please contact the Community Education office immediately at 274-3058. American Express, MasterCard, Discover and VISA are also accepted. If you need to cancel out of the preschool program a 30 day written notice is required. If there is one month's tuition unpaid, a student will not be able to return to preschool the following month until it is paid in

full. The September's tuition paid at the time of registration is non-refundable after June 1, 2016. Next payment will be due on October 1, 2016.

Curriculum and Assessment

The preschool curriculum is play-based through exploration of units and themes. Concepts are taught through large and small groups as well as on an individual basis in Learning Centers. The materials and activities in the Learning Centers relate to the curriculum unit.

At the preschool age, children learn best by doing and by playing. Teachers encourage each child to use the materials according to his/her own level. The staff guide each child so that he/she may enjoy the learning experience and feel successful. Children are encouraged to explore and experiment with their own interests.

A balanced curriculum will include activities that promote cognitive, physical, sensory, social and emotional development. Lessons are planned to introduce children to basic learning concepts set forth by the Minnesota State Department of Education. The children will receive personalized learning as the teachers develop "themes" to engage and promote kindergarten readiness skills.

Through the use of themes, we will help children develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors that are essential to 21st century learning. We design environments that enhance and expand children's understanding of the world as they make their own choices for individual activities, as well as learn to participate in group learning situations.

Activities that promote kindergarten readiness skills are introduced and practiced through study exploration during the preschool year. Children's emerging literacy skills are developed through group learning and parent-child reading programs. New for the school year teachers will be using research-based state approved Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment program to record each child's developmental progress. They also collect samples of each child's work and classroom observations to share with parents at conference time.

The Annandale Preschool environment includes a variety of learning centers that include blocks, dramatic play, art, literature, small muscle activities such as cutting, matching, manipulatives, sequencing activities, science, sensory and scheduled large muscle activities. Social skills are fostered as children interact with their peers in a variety of situations and practice solving their own problems. This helps them to develop better relationships, self-directed learning and a healthy self-esteem. The teachers will encourage each child to use materials in the centers, realizing that each child experiences success at his or her own developmental level.

Our program is committed to multi-cultural, gender-fair and ability-sensitive education. We strive to create a program that reflects the lives of our children, families, staff, local community and the world. We celebrate and respect human differences and recognize the impact culture makes on all of us.

Safety

Parents dropping off and picking up children should park in the Annandale Elementary Parking Lot near the community education entrance. *Be sure to hold your child's hand* when crossing over any district parking lot to enter into the school building. Please cross at the cross walk looking before doing! Please do not allow your child to run ahead of you as the entrance and lot are a busy place! Also, discuss this safety procedure with your child so he/she will learn that it is important to hold your hand both coming to and going from preschool. I.S.D. 876 is a tobacco-free school district. This means smoking is not permitted anywhere on school district property. When entering the building for preschool please enter through the Community Education entrance not the front main office.

DEPARTURE TIME

When preschool class is over, your child will remain with the classroom teacher until you or an authorized person comes to pick him/her up. If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, a written or verbal notice is required in advance. For the security of your child, identification will be requested from anyone other than a parent. When talking to other parents at departure time, it may be easy to become distracted, so be sure to keep an eye on your children. Please do not allow your student to run around after departure time the hallways are busy with other students transitioning.

LATE PICK-UP FROM PRESCHOOL

In order to preserve the preparation and break time for our staff, parents are required to pick up their child no later than 10 minutes after the end of the preschool class each day. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, there will be a late fee due to the early childhood office when you pick up your child. The late fee schedule is as follows:

Up to 10 minutes.....no charge

10-15 minutes.....\$5

15-20 minutes.....\$10

25-30 minutes.....\$15

For every additional 5 minutes there will be an additional \$5.

**Please note tardiness may result in disenrollment. Please make a backup plan today to ensure your student is picked up on time.*

If an emergency occurs, and a parent cannot pick up their child, the parent should contact the Community Education office at 320.274.3058. Children can only be released to a non-parent when permission is given in **writing**. If custody/divorce arrangements are involved, please provide copies of legal documentation. Please have a backup plan ready in case of an emergency!

Separation

Entering a new environment requires a time of adjustment for children. When it is time to separate, your child may become anxious. Talk to one of the teachers about separation concerns and make a plan together. Some children may cry when left, especially the first few days, and we're prepared to support you and your child with this learning experience. Most children stop crying a few minutes after parents leave. If you would like a phone call after you leave, just let your teacher know. If your child is truly not doing well, the teacher will always call you.

Bus Transportation: Kindergarten Connection Students ONLY

School bus transportation is available through M & M Bus Service for an additional charge. **All requests for school bus transportation must be made when registering your child in preschool.** Families who contact the Bus Company will be referred to Community Education. If you choose busing, M & M Bus Service determines the session (morning or afternoon) depending on bus routes and space available.

To and From Cardinal Kids Club (extended day)

The Cardinal Kids Club staff will escort each child to the preschool classroom or sign in area when it is time to start his or her class. The preschool staff will escort each child back to Cardinal Kids Club after class dismisses.

Special Education Bus

The special education buses will drop off at the rear entrance of the school. They will remain there until a staff person comes to greet the children and assist them off the bus. Children are then escorted to their classroom. When preschool dismisses, the special education staff will escort the children to the preschool door and then out to the buses for the ride home.

ABSENCES

Please call your teacher if your child cannot attend a class session. You may also call the community education office.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL

Enrollment is expected for the entire school year. Parents must notify the Director of Community Education in writing **30 days** in advance if they plan to withdraw their child. This allows us to notify others of an opportunity to enroll in the program. If you withdraw from the program without giving 30 days' notice, one month's tuition is still required from the time notice is given.

CHILD ILLNESS

Please keep your child home if she/he has any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours: fever, diarrhea, severe nasal congestion, vomiting, enlarged glands, earache, sore throat, harsh cough, any undiagnosed rash, the contagious stage of any communicable disease, head lice, undiagnosed eye infections. Parents should notify the teacher if their child contracts a communicable disease and has exposed children at preschool. Staff will notify the parents of those children exposed.

Please notify us (within 24 hours if possible) if your child has a communicable disease (flu, chicken pox, head lice, mumps, whooping cough, strep throat etc.) and has exposed other children in the program. If this should occur, the information about the disease to which your child has been exposed will be sent home. Parents are responsible for keeping their emergency contact information up-to-date. Parents are requested to pick up their child within one hour of notification of illness.

ACCIDENTS

Please keep your emergency information up to date!

It is important to state that serious accidents very rarely occur, and services outlined below are merely a precautionary measure to provide maximum protection for the children and a procedure for parents and staff to follow.

If a child has an accident while at preschool, a staff person will attend to your child's needs and will have a written accident report for you when you pick up your child. If a serious accident occurs which might need medical attention, we will contact you immediately so you can take your child to a doctor or dentist, or use a back-up individual to do so.

In an emergency when immediate attention is needed, we will call 911 for assistance, and immediately contact you. At that point, the paramedic professionals will decide on a further course of action. You will be responsible for any medical expenses.

Allergies

Parents are required to connect with teachers about their student's allergies. If there are severe food allergies, a Food Allergy Action Plan signed by a doctor is required to be on file in the classroom and office along with an epi pen.

Abuse Reporting

Preschool staff members are required by state law to report any observance or suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of children to Child Protection Services or local police. This includes school district employees, parents, or other adults in contact with your child.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

All new school employees are required to submit to a Minnesota Criminal Background Check in order to screen staff members that work directly with your child at school. All staff will wear a name badge in the building as well. Volunteers are required to sign in at the office and receive a visitor's badge. Minnesota State law requires police departments to notify local residents when a convicted adult sexual offender moves into their jurisdiction. In the event that a school building receives such notification, this information will be relayed to the building users and kept on file in the school office. For further information contact the local police department.

FIRE OR TORNADO DRILLS/ LOCK-DOWNS

Each classroom has the escape routes posted inside the doorway and teachers are familiar with emergency procedures. A crisis management plan is also on file and five practice drills are required during the school year at all three sites.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

If Annandale Schools are closed due to severe weather, information will be broadcast on WCCO, KARE11, and KSTP.

There will be **NO** preschool if schools are **CLOSED**.

If schools are **2 hours late**, there will no morning preschool, but afternoon classes will meet.

If school is **called off in the middle of the day**, afternoon preschool class will not be held.

CONFERENCES

We value these opportunities to review together your child's developmental progress and to set continuing learning goals. Teachers will use the state approved Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment program which provides a research based standardized approach to gathering information on young children. At the conference, teachers will share with parents an assessment summary sheet, anecdotal records and samples of their child's work.

COMMUNICATIONS

We welcome your ideas and thoughts on making the preschool experience a successful one for you and your child. If you have concerns or questions that you would like to discuss with your child's teacher; we encourage you to make an appointment before or after class time. The teachers and the Director of Community Education are always open to meet with you. Parents may leave a message on their teacher's voice mail anytime, 24 hours a day, and receive a return call as soon as possible. We will also be communicating via email so please make sure your email addresses are current! Please check in our office

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

One of the unique features of the Annandale Community Preschool program is the many opportunities for parent involvement in their child's education. We believe that parents are children's first and most important teachers, and are our partners in preschool. As staff we welcome the opportunity for parents to be involved in preschool. The door is always open for you to drop in and visit at any time. We also greatly value your input and suggestions as to how we can improve. Please share your concerns with us.

Parental involvement is a component of preschool and is required by the State Department of Education for continued funding. This is consistent with program goals supporting and encouraging parents to be actively involved in their child's education, both at home and at school.

Each month in preschool, parents will be provided with a variety of opportunities to help meet this goal. Here is a list of some areas in which parents can be involved.

- Classroom - Parents are invited to become a daily part of the classroom environment. Volunteers in the classroom will assist with the daily routine activities as well as prepping materials.
- Advisory Council - Parents are encouraged to be a part of the Community Education Council. The council meets 4-5 times a year. The purpose of Advisory Council is to advise the Community Education (CE) Board in the administration of the program, and provide information on such issues as outreach, program development, and evaluation, class scheduling and other issues that arise.
- Conferences - Assessment of each child's progress is made throughout the year. The instructor looks for growth, not necessarily mastery of specific skills. Your classroom teacher will give you more information regarding conferences.

CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS

Please send a backpack or bag with your child each day that is big enough to hold a folder or large artwork. Each child has the use of a locker in which to store belongings while at preschool. Mark your child's name on any items she/he brings from home. Children are only allowed to bring toys or games from home if there is a designated sharing day. Toy guns or other toys of violence are *never allowed*.

CLOTHING

Your child should come to preschool in comfortable play clothes that could become stained with paint, grass, dirt, etc. Clothing that is easily managed by the children encourages self-help skills and independence. Many toilet accidents are prevented when children can unbutton and pull down pants without a struggle. If you wish, you can send an extra set of clothes and a plastic bag to keep in your child's back pack in case of potty accidents or other activities that might get your child's clothes wet. Please mark your child's name on his/her belongings.

NUTRITION & SNACK

Nutritional snacks are served at preschool each day. (Children should eat breakfast or lunch before coming to preschool.) Parents are requested to help out by bringing snacks for their child's classroom throughout the school year. Please bring up to 20 for the class, snacks must follow healthy guidelines and be commercially made. Due to peanut allergies of many children, please refrain from sending peanut butter or peanut products.

Skim milk or chocolate milk (or cold water for children with dairy intolerance) is served with every snack. In studies, children may participate in a snack preparation as a learning experience. Snack time provides an opportunity for your child to experience their senses, take turns, make choices, follow rules and help themselves. Hand-washing is an important part of snack preparation. Reminder if your child has special food needs because of allergies or other reasons please fill out an allergy action plan before starting preschool.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS –Parents are not expected to bring something in for students on their child's birthday. If you wish to send something, it needs to be a store bought item. Thank you for your support!

OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) offers classes for all parents and their children age's birth to kindergarten. This program focuses on enhancing parent-child relationships, while offering developmental information and parent education through discussion groups that build a network of support and friendship. ECFE also offers special family events and activities throughout the year. Check the Community Education catalog sent out three times a year to district residents or go on-line to www.anml.com for a listing of classes and events.

Early Childhood Developmental Screening is recommended for all children when they reach age three and is required for all preschool students within the first 90 days of enrollment. Its purpose is to affirm each child's development and identify any early needs for educational assistance. It is also a state requirement for kindergarten enrollment. This free screening involves a review of immunizations, vision, hearing growth and development. Your child plays a series of games and activities with the screener. All results are then summarized with parents. To schedule an appointment call the Community Education office 320.274.3058. If your child is on the school census, you may receive a call from the screening assistant to schedule an appointment.

Special Education Services provides programs for children who meet criteria for intervention programming. You may discuss your child's needs with the preschool teachers or directly with the Special Education staff if you feel your child may benefit and qualify for these services. See listing and phone numbers in this handbook.