



FORT DODGE

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

Sites Including: Early Childhood Center, Dodger Preschool, Community Christian, Little Lambs, St. Edmond, Childcare Discovery

**RESOURCES FOR ALL FDCSD EARLY CHILDHOOD
PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FAMILIES**

Fort Dodge Community Schools

Mission:

The mission of the Fort Dodge Community School District is to provide quality learning experiences and build relationships that develop productive citizens ready for their futures.

Vision:

The Fort Dodge Community School District is an innovative school community that exceeds expectations, builds meaningful relationships and creates the foundation for all learners to excel.

Core Beliefs:

Respect: Acknowledging the worth of someone or something; while showing appreciation and tolerance for the differences in viewpoints, personalities and perspectives of others

Integrity: Quality of being honest, having and acting on strong moral principles to help establish the complete person, our action matches our words and values

Empathy: Actively recognize, validate and connect ourselves to the feelings and experiences of others

Leadership: Leadership is a choice to guide, motivate and inspire others in a positive manner

Goals:

1. All students will perform at or above grade level
2. Achievement gaps among all students groups will be eliminated
3. All students will graduate ready for college, career and life in a globally competitive economy
4. All schools will meet or exceed state accountability standards, and the district will meet federal standards and exceed state standards
5. Every child feels he/she has a safe, meaningful relationship with an adult in the school system who they can go to for guidance and support

Non Discrimination Statement It is the policy of Fort Dodge Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. If you have questions or grievances related to this policy, please contact Aaron Davidson, Executive Director Educational Services, 515-576-1161, adavidson@fdschools.org, located at Central Administration Office, 109 North 25th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, or contact the Office for Civil Rights Midwestern Division for U. S. Department of Education Office, John C. Kluczynski Federal Building 230 S. Dearborn St., 37th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604 (Alternate for Section 504 is Branwyn Greathouse, Director of Special Education/Special Needs, 515-574-5675, bgreathouse@fdschools.org, Central Administration Office, 109 North 25th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501). Affirmative Action Compliance Coordinator The District's Compliance Coordinator for Affirmative Action is Kimberly Whitmore, Director of Human Resources, 515-576-1161, kwhitmore@fdschools.org, 109 North 25th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. Physical/Sexual Abuse Reporting The District's Designated Investigators of Physical/Sexual Abuse of Students by School Employees Roger Porter, Director of School Safety and Security, 515-574-5731, rporter@fdschools.org, located at Fort Dodge Middle School, 800 North 32nd Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. The alternate is Branwyn Greathouse, Director of Special Education/Special Needs, 515-574-5675, bgreathouse@fdschools.org, Central Administration Office, 109 North 25th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. Harassment Complaints and Allegations The District's Officers for Harassment Complaints and Allegations Roger Porter, Director of School Safety and Security, 515-574-5731, rporter@fdschools.org, located at Fort Dodge Middle School, 800 North 32nd Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. Sex Discrimination and Harassment (Title IX) The District's Coordinator for Sex Discrimination and Harassment is Roger Porter, Director of School Safety and Security, 515-574-5731, rporter@fdschools.org, located at Fort Dodge Middle School, 800 North 32nd Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. The Deputy Coordinator is Kimberly Whitmore, Director of Human Resources, kwhitmore@fdschools.org, located at Central Administration Office, 109 North 25th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501. Rev. 7/2023

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Statewide Voluntary Preschool Participating Sites

Early Childhood Center

104 South 17th Street

Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515-574-5740 (School)

515-576-1161 (District Office)

St. Edmond

2321 6th Ave N, Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515-955-5850

Little Lambs

1436 21st Ave N, Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515-573-3174

Dodger Preschool

1611 Williams Drive, Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515-955-6060

Community Christian

2406 9 1/2 Ave S, Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515-573-3011

Welcome to the Fort Dodge Early Childhood Preschool Program (IQPPS 10.1)

Our program's goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including typically developing children and children with disabilities. Our preschools provide a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for children to take part in planned, active learning experiences guided by Creative Curriculum. Our preschool programs have adopted the [Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards](#) (IQPPS), administered by the Iowa Department of Education, and use the Iowa Early Learning Standards which provides developmental expectations for preschool-aged children. Before working with children, staff members are given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of program operation.

Educational Non-Discrimination Statement

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If provisions of this handbook conflict with those of board policy, the terms of the board policy shall govern. FDCSD

General Program Information

Enrollment

Eligibility Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP)

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year for the four year-old program . Pre-registration will begin in the Winter of the year prior. SWVPP is funded through the Iowa Department of Education. Registration information are available at:

Community Preschools Offering Children must be four years old on or before Sept. 15. Tuition will be paid through Statewide Voluntary Preschool. The following locations are private preschools which operate independently yet coordinate with the Fort Dodge Community Schools to provide consistent and comparable programming. All programs meet the requirements set forth by the Iowa Department of Education for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program.

- **St. Edmonds** • **Little Lambs** • **Dodger Preschool** • **Community Chirstian** • **Childcare Discovery**

Hours

Early Childhood Center

Fort Dodge Community School District Central Office
109 North 25th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-576-1161

St. Edmonds

2321 6th Ave N, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-955-5850

Little Lambs

1436 21st Ave N, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-573-3174

Dodger Preschool

1611 Williams Drive, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-955-6060

Community Christian

2406 9 1/2 Ave S, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-573-3011

Childcare Discovery

1405 N 32nd St, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-576-6771

Health Records (IQPPS 5.1)

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Class Ratio (IQPPS 10.4)

The maximum class size is 20 children in each session based on square footage of the current locations. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained at all times to encourage adult -child interactions and promote activity among children. This ratio will be maintained during all hours of operation including indoor time, outdoor time, and during transportation and field trips. .

Inclusion (IQPPS 9.10)

Our preschool programs provide for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs, through a variety of center options. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff members are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children, and their families. Our preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

Program Options and Fees

Early Childhood Center

104 South 17th Street

515-574-5740

Nicole Ahrens

Four-Year-Old Program

Children must be four by Sept. 15

Days: Monday-Friday

Hours: 8:00-2:45

Cost: Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)

St. Edmond's Little Gael Preschool

2321 6th Ave N

515-955-5850

Tabitha Acree

Four-Year-Old Program

Children must be four by Sept. 15

Days: Monday- Friday

Hours: am 7:55-10:55 pm 11:45-2:45

Cost: Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)

Little Lambs

1436 21st Ave N

515-573-3174

Joan Arndt

Four-Year-Old Program

Children must be four by Sept. 15

Days: Monday-Friday

Hours: 12:00-3:00

Cost: Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)

Dodger Preschool

1611 Williams Drive

515-955-6060

Kayla Takatsuka

Four-Year-Old Program

Children must be four by Sept. 15

Days: Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Hours: am 8:00-11:20 pm 12:00-3:30

Cost: Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)

Community Christian

2406 9 1/2 Ave S

515-573-3011

Stephanie Coble-Day

Four-Year-Old Program

Children must be four by Sept. 15

Days: Monday-Friday

Hours: am 8:00-11:00 pm 12:00-3:00

Cost: Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)

Childcare Discovery

1405 N 32nd St

515-576-6771

Kylee Myott

Four-Year-Old Program
Children must be four by Sept. 15
Days: Monday-Friday
Hours: am 8:00-11:00 pm 12:00-3:00
Cost: Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)

Who Works In Preschool? (IQPPS 10.2, 6.3,6.4,10.10)

Administrator/Director

The Preschool Programs Administrator supervises Fort Dodge Preschool classrooms and coordinates continuity between the classrooms to meet quality standards. The director meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The preschool directors in Community Partner Preschools are designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool programs.

Teachers

Teachers are licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and hold both an Early Childhood Endorsement and/or Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement.

Teacher Assistants

Teacher assistants in each classroom carry out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistants have specialized training in early childhood education and the individual needs of the staffed students.

School Nurse/Child Care Nurse Consultant

The Early Childhood center Preschools have access to an on-site school nurse. The community preschools have access to a child care nurse consultant. The school nurse or center director maintains health records that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The nurse or director also updates student health records and attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. The nurse or nurse consultant is available for parent consultations when necessary. She is available for parent consultation when necessary.

Support Staff

Prairie Lakes AEA cooperates with FDCSD and Community Partner classrooms to support early childhood programming. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others.

Staff participates in joint and collaborative events with other community programs and service agencies throughout the year. They are encouraged and given the opportunity to participate in community or statewide early childhood affiliations.

Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning opportunities are formal and informal. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day: small group and large group, self-initiated learning, creative expression, early literacy and math experiences, and fine and gross motor activities. Play is planned for each day.

Monthly newsletters will be sent home by the teacher. Each teacher maintains their own communication log system for individual students' families. Early Childhood Center teachers will log communication in the PLP tab.

Curriculum (IQPPS 1.7, 2.1-2.3)

Our preschool programs use [The Creative Curriculum](#) as its framework. The Creative Curriculum is a research-based preschool curriculum that focuses on four main developmental areas: social and emotional development, physical development, cognitive development, and language development. A family's culture and the child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important part of the child's growth and development. The curriculum goals and objectives will guide teachers' planning and instruction based on the [Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) assessment tool and/or other research-based assessment tools.

Each day, the children will have an opportunity to self-select where they might like to play and work. Here is a list of some of our centers and some typical activities:

- **Art:** Students may choose a variety of art materials to create works of art.
- **Blocks:** Students can build with different types of blocks and also engage in imaginary play with play people, dinosaurs, animals, etc.
- **Dramatic Play:** Students may role-play and pretend with props and settings, as well as utilize social skills
- **Library:** Students have an opportunity to enjoy a variety of books independently or with peers.
- **Science:** Children will explore their world with a variety of science materials.
- **Sensory:** Students can develop their senses and cognitive development through play in a sensory table. (Items may include: water, sand, snow, pasta, rice.) Materials are rotated on a regular basis to sustain interest and maintain cleanliness.
- **Technology:** Students will have learning opportunities using various media and technology.
- **Toys and Games:** Children will develop cognitive skills, such as counting, problem-solving, categorizing, and matching, as well as play games with rules through a variety of toys, learning materials, and games.
- **Writing:** Students have access to a variety of writing utensils and materials.

Assessment

Children may be assessed in any of the following ways:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD
- Ongoing observations help to ensure a child's progress during daily activities.
- The Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (PELI) are given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to monitor the growth of early literacy skills.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and may include assessments and child work samples that are collected on an ongoing basis.
- Information shared by parents/families

The assessment information from the above is used to help guide instruction based on the children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan individualized and effective instruction.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Family/Teacher Conferences in the fall

and spring. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time. If the observation and/or assessment data indicates a need for further assessments or screening, the teacher can assist the family through the process. The preschool team, along with the parents/families, and Prairie Lakes AEA staff will come together to discuss concerns and create an action plan. Likewise, if a parent or family member has a concern about the progress of their child they are encouraged to share those concerns with the teacher. Parents and teachers can then work together toward making an action plan.

Supervision

Our preschool staff will be responsible for making sure all indoor/outdoor environments are safe for children. No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Children will be supervised primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (such as those who can use the toilet independently). Staff will make every reasonable effort to protect the children in their care from hazards. Each preschool classroom provides at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child.

Child Guidance and Discipline

Teaching staff will use positive guidance, redirection, and pre-planning with all children in the classroom. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent, clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Using appropriate language for the child, discipline will be explained before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behavior

The teaching staff in our preschools is highly trained in behavior management. Aggressive physical behavior toward children or staff is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive in order to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. Teachers will communicate with parents about their child's behavior, and seek their input. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff and parents with support from AEA consultants problem solve to determine the most effective strategies for the student to successfully participate. All teachers and assistants will be trained in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention strategies. Nonviolent Crisis Intervention focuses on prevention strategies equipping staff to safely diffuse behaviors at the earliest possible stages. Our district Tiger Cubs classrooms are equipped to support children on Individual Behavior Plans.

Permissible Methods of Discipline

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting), staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Expulsion/Suspension

Preschool and administrative staff will provide alternatives to expulsion and suspension so they are infrequent or unnecessary. Expulsion and suspension will only be used as a last resort when a serious safety concern cannot be eliminated with reasonable modifications.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

- Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children, nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
- Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
- Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.

- Withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Snacks/Foods and Nutrition

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy and request a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed and social atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form. Snack is also an excellent time for language modeling.

Children are offered one snack during the preschool session. Our preschools serve a wide variety of nutritious snacks, and encourage children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered. Snacks need to be commercially packaged. Breakfast and lunch are provided for children who attend a full day program. Special diets are followed with physician's orders. Menus are sent home each month, posted at the center, and kept on file for review.

Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach, and foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served. All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

For every child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program with an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and a specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. When any child with a disability has special feeding needs, the program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and will provide parents with that information.

High-risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served.

Our preschool staff will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. An appropriate snack is offered to all children.

If children are refusing to eat or try foods below is a list of some options recommended by Iowa Child Health Specialty Clinic:

- Allow the child to lick the food.
- Allow the child to put the food to their lips.
- Allow the child to touch the food with a utensil or finger and touch to their lip or tongue.
- Allow the child to smell the food.

Outside Play and Learning

We have daily opportunities for 15-30 minutes of outdoor play as the weather permits. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active together. Parents are informed of appropriate outerwear and encouraged to provide those items. Staff will ensure that children are appropriately dressed for outdoor play. Sunscreen and/or insect repellent may be applied at school with written parent permission. The outdoor play equipment is age and developmentally appropriate, is fenced to avoid hazards, and arranged so staff can easily supervise children. A playground safety checklist is completed and on file. In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather or other conditions), children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

Water Activity

When a water play table is present in the classroom for the children to stand and play with their hands in the water, the following procedures will be followed. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water play. Children are not allowed to drink the water in the water table. When the activity is complete, the water table is drained, sanitized and refilled with fresh water before a new group of

children come to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers, as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound during such water activities.

Objects From Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an “attachment” item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside their backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Weapons Policy

Please reference WDMCS district discipline policy [503.01](#), located in the legal notifications section of this handbook.

Communication and Parent Involvement

Communication with Families

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or email. All teachers use Seesaw for two way family communication. Through MyTeachingStrategies™ Family, teachers communicate about the child’s experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child’s development and well being. photos, notes, and daily reports with families. Families are also able to share information with teachers through the portal, allowing for two way communication between school and home. In addition to using MyTeachingStrategies™ Family, teachers will also communicate via email, in person, notes, and phone calls. Parents are encouraged to communicate in a way that is best for the family.

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will check in at the elementary school or director’s office. The preschool staff wants parents to feel confident that their child is being well cared for and is receiving a quality experience at school. Parents are always encouraged to address concerns with the child’s teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from the Building Administrator or Preschool Programs Administrator.

Arrival and Departure of Children

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them. All Parents are required to walk their preschoolers in and sign them in upon arrival and dismissal.

FDCSD welcomes visitors to its school buildings. However, since school is a place of work and learning, there are certain expectations that must be met. Parents/guardians who wish to visit their child’s classroom must arrange such visits in advance with the classroom teacher. They may not disrupt or interfere with the class in progress, or discuss individual concerns when students are present.

All visitors to the school shall enter the building through the front door and check in at the office to pick up a visitor badge. All visitors must have approval to be in a designated area. Failure of a visitor to follow these expectations, or other regulations established by the building principal or Preschool Administrator, may result in removal of the visitor from school grounds and/or contact with law enforcement, as appropriate.

Transportation

If your child is eligible for and uses district transportation, teaching staff will go to each bus as it arrives to greet and assist the student off the bus. At dismissal, teaching staff will accompany each student to the bus and assist the student onto the bus. All students will be in an appropriate harness, seat belt, or restraint system. Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher or elementary school secretary.

Preschool students are expected to arrive and depart from their preschool site at the designated beginning and ending times for their classroom. Children should be secured in appropriate safety car seats when arriving and

departing from the preschool.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. FDCSD buses may be used for these field trips in preschools that are in District buildings. Parents will be informed of each field trip, and must sign a consent form before each trip. Adult family members are invited to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios.

During the field trip, all children will wear identifying information that gives the program name and phone number. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes in the FDCSD preschool programs are expected to be in school for the full session. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat necessary information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call your child's attendance center when your child will be absent, with the reason for an absence. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the school secretary/teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

According to [Iowa Code § 299.1A\(2\) \(2013\)](#), "A child who has reached the age of four by September 15 and who is enrolled in the statewide preschool program under chapter 256C shall be considered to be of compulsory attendance age unless the parent or guardian of the child submits written notice to the school district implementing the program of the parent's or guardian's intent to remove the child from enrollment in the preschool program." The preschool director/principal and Preschool Administrator reserve the right to review attendance of students.

Ethics, Confidentiality, and Children's Records

Staff members follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. The preschool staff members will refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent.

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Family Involvement

We encourage families to be involved in their child's education. Teachers use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication, as well as any information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds that they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year for all Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program students. Family/Teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters for all students. At least one Family Night is held during the year. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences, or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

The preschool invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways and welcomes other ideas as well.

- Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities.
- Keep the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child and allow the teacher

- to be more responsive to your child's needs.
- Attend family meetings.
- Return all forms and questionnaires promptly.
- Attend Family/Teacher conferences in the fall and spring semesters.
- Take time to read the family bulletin board.
- Check your child's backpack each day.
- Participate in field trip activities.
- Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or items from trips you have taken.
- Share any of your family's cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
- Help with special events.
- Read all the material sent home with your child.
- Come to play!

It is the policy of Fort Dodge Community Schools, not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or physical disability in its education programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI or VIII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency and to families with children with disabilities. This will include providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent possible, in a language the family understands.

In our preschools, we believe that families should be supported in making decisions about the services that their child may need. Each district and community preschool program supports families so that they may best advocate for their child. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child, whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Preschool staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will also provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

Family as Stakeholders (IQPPS 10.15)

Not only do we encourage families to be involved in their child's education, but we also invite families to assist in decision making about our Preschool programming. There will be a survey that goes out to all families in the spring to help evaluate our Preschool program and to help get feedback to better our PK program.

Health and Safety

Health

Our preschool programs are committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow the guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Health and Immunization Certificates

Within six weeks of a child beginning in the program, health records that document the dates of service must be submitted that shows the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

Prairie Lakes AEA will conduct its annual Hearing Conservation Program during the school year. Students in the following grades will receive a hearing screening: Preschool-2nd grade and then again in 5th grade. Students who do not pass this screening may receive individual hearing tests by the Prairie Lakes AEA Audiologist. Parents will be notified about the results of the hearing test only if their child does not pass the test. This is a screening process only and does not identify all hearing or ear problems. If your child has had hearing or ear problems recently, please send this information to the school nurse for the Audiologist to review. If you do not want your child to participate in this screening program and follow-up assessments by the Prairie Lakes AEA Audiologist, please notify the school. If there are any questions about the hearing testing program in our school, please contact the school nurse.

Health and Safety Records

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. The school nurse or center director maintains student health records that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records, the child's parent or legal guardian, and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency.
- Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results.
- Current emergency contact information for each child that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year.
- Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child.
- Instructions for any of the child's special health needs, such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).
- Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergies, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems and other chronic conditions); conditions that require regular medication or technology support.
- Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implements a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions. Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.

- All staff members are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff members are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff complete "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the previous 24 hours, they will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.

- fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eye with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- unexplained rash

The center's established policy for an ill child's return:

- fever free for 24 hours
- chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- vomiting/diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably, if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group, or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other persons authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that the preschool has current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person, and your child's pediatrician. A staff member (who is familiar with the student) will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian, or designated person arrives. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then they will be kept in an appropriate area where new individuals will not be exposed.

Reporting Communicable Diseases

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of a communicable disease occur.

Medication Policies and Procedures

Policy: The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

Procedure: The school nurse coordinates and/or administers medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian and health provider has given written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional, on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medication, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the

original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name; the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medication, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medication will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

Cleaning and Sanitization

Classroom areas will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated will be removed immediately and disinfected prior to using again. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using an acceptable and safe disinfectant. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers, such as gloves, and proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47 of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Non Toxic substances will be used whenever possible.

Hand Washing Practices

Frequent hand washing is key in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day.
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants).
- after handling body fluids e.g., blowing or wiping a nose; coughing on a hand; or any touching of mucus, ● blood, or vomit.
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., ● meat, eggs, poultry).
- before and after playing in water that is shared by two or more people.

- after handling pets or visiting animals.

Diapering Procedures

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. The teacher and/or director will work with the family to develop a toileting plan for a child who is not toilet trained before school begins. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines that are set forth by the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

- Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area (which has an elevated surface). Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 5:
 - Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
 - Staff will check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every two hours. • Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
 - Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
 - Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.
 - Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching the staff that change diapers.

Safety

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is located in every preschool classroom. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. The first aid kit is appropriately and fully equipped according to the nurse's guidance. Following each use of the first aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The first aid kit will be inspected monthly. The kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Fire Safety

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents

Our preschool programs have written Emergency Plans for all children, as well as printed plans for emergency health procedures. These documents follow district procedures and include the following:

- emergency phone numbers
- fire procedures
- severe weather
- bomb threats
- physical threats/armed intruder
- evacuations
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures — FDCSD buildings
- accidental Injury or Illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations
- school crisis team members and a checklist — FDCSD buildings
- list of CPR/First Aid experienced persons in each building

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, the teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap

and water, and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. The school nurse or parent/caregiver is immediately consulted for more significant events or illness. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an "Injury and Illness" form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a telephone that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the fire department, police department, hospitals, and poison control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers, and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport, will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Inclement Weather and Cancellation Due to Weather

For Students in Community Centers

Center Directors will provide you with information regarding cancellations and dismissals.

Late Starts, Early Dismissals (NAEYC 9.C.15, 10.D.06, 10.D.07)

We follow the Fort Dodge Community School District's calendar. In case of school cancellation, the closing will be announced on the radio and area TV stations. Please listen to:

Radio Stations: KWMT, KKEZ, KXFT, KZLB, KIAQ, KVFD, KTLB, KQWC

TV Stations: WHO, KCCI & WOI

Messenger's Social Media Page

FCSD Facebook and Twitter

www.fdschools.org

If your child attends a Community Partner Preschool

Please contact the director of that preschool for their policy regarding delays and cancellations.

Pets/Service Animals

Student safety and the cleanliness of the building are put at risk when animals accompany their owners for a drop-in visit at school. Other than a few exceptions, pets are not allowed in FDCSD buildings. In keeping with state and federal law, FDCSD recognizes there may be a need for employees or students to use or have access to qualified service animals. Students who have a need for a service animal which is defined by law as "animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities," are welcome to consult with their building administrator.

Smoke Free Facility

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, FDCSD buildings and grounds are smoke-free. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children. At community preschools, the facility and outdoor play areas are smoke-free and no smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

Child Protection Policies

The health, well-being, and protection of every child is of the utmost importance. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program (who has direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children) must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

Mandatory Reporting

FDCSD strongly supports Chapter 232 of the Iowa Code and requires that all employees who are mandatory reporters under this Chapter be familiar with the requirements therein.

The Code of Iowa requires mandatory reporters to report to the Department of Human Services all instances of suspected child abuse involving students. The law further states that any person required to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly fails to do so, or who knowingly interferes with the making of such a report in violation of section 232.70, is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure or interference.

The Code provides immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, to anyone participating in good faith in the

making of a report or in the judicial proceedings that may result from the report.

Volunteers

As mentioned earlier, there are many ways family members can volunteer in the preschool programs. Please contact your child's teacher or the main office or your center director for more information.

Staff

Our preschool programs are in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our programs follow requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. Student/teacher ratios may be different at each site based on the continuum of services provided.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

The preschool staff will be provided space and time away from children during the day. When staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided with 15 minutes or more of break time. In addition, preschool staff may request temporary relief if they are unable to perform their duties.

All teaching staff continuously develop and strengthen their skills by participating in a wide range of staff development opportunities. In addition, teaching assistants receive training specific to early childhood on an on-going basis throughout the school year.

Special Section — Fort Dodge Community Schools District Wide Handbook