

Medina County Schools' Educational Service Center

The Growing Tree Preschool



Parent Handbook

Medina County Schools' Educational Service Center

124 W. Washington St.

Medina, Ohio 44256



Medina County Educational Service Center Mission Statement

The Medina County Schools' Educational Service Center will be the leader in providing services and products that promote excellence in education.

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Introduction to the Integrated Preschool Program

The Medina County Educational Service Center preschool is licensed by the State of Ohio, Division of Early Learning and School Readiness. The current license is posted outside the classroom. The preschool was established in 2009 in response to state and federal legislation and research in support of early intervention for improved educational outcomes. The child-teacher ratio is at least 2 adults to 12 children, with a maximum of 16 children. Children with suspected delays in one or more of the development areas (i.e. receptive and/or expressive communication skills, hearing abilities, gross and fine motor functioning, social-emotional/behavioral functioning, vision abilities, cognitive functioning, adaptive abilities) will be referred for a multi-factored evaluation through the home district for the preschool student to determine eligibility for placement as a preschooler with a disability as defined in the Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools Serving Children with Disabilities (Chapter 3301-51 Ohio Administrative Code) and the Rules for Preschool Programs (Chapter 3301-37 Ohio Administrative Code).

The laws and rules are available at the Medina County Educational Service Center's main office, Special Education Initiatives Department. The Preschool's licensing record including compliance reports are available upon request. The most current report is hanging on the wall with the license.

Program Philosophy and Curriculum Goals

The philosophy of the Medina County Educational Service Center preschool is based on meeting the individual, developmental needs of all children with and without special needs. The developmental preschool seeks to provide an environment that encourages all children to explore, ask questions and learn things that he/she needs and wants to know about their world. As a developmental preschool, a basic ingredient to educational success is a positive self-image. Multi-cultural, non-biased experiences, appropriate materials and equipment are provided to meet the needs of a diverse population of young children. Adults model behavior based on respect for others. Individual needs are met so that children feel safe and secure. The preschool staff and administration recognize parents as the primary teacher of their children and strive to work in partnership with families to promote the optimal development of all and strive to work in partnership with families to promote the optimal development of all children in attendance. Parent involvement in the program is emphasized as essential to the generalization of skills and abilities of children with their home, preschool and community.

Our preschool program follows the Ohio Department of Education Early Learning content Standards in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. The curriculum provides a balance of child-centered and teacher facilitated activities that encourage children to investigate, manipulate and experiment as they construct their own knowledge. Teachers, in partnership with families guide, expand, and stimulate children through that process of growth and development. The preschool curriculum provides the foundation for future academic success by building upon previous knowledge and skills; aligning with the Ohio Early Learning Content Standards; and by providing individualized and integrated approaches to assessment, curriculum and instruction. The curriculum addresses key areas of child development including aesthetic and artistic development, emotional and social development, intellectual development, physical development and well being development of responsibility.

Governing Board

Parents and residents are cordially invited to attend school board meetings. The Medina Educational Service Center Governing Board meets the fourth Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. with the meetings held at the Medina Educational Service Center. Changes in times or locations will be advertised on the website. The Medina Educational Service Center, in compliance with the "Sunshine Law," conducts all business at a public meeting. Personal matters are dealt with in executive session if necessary.

Meet the Governing Board!

Visit the Medina County Schools' Educational Service Center's website for additional information on our board meetings.

www.medina-esc.org

	Dan Shumaker, President
	Kent Patterson, Vice President
	Amanda Armstrong, Legislative Liaison
	Jan Good
	Janice Vance

Administrative Team

Superintendent

Will Koran

Treasurer

Michelle McNeely

Director of Special Education Initiatives

N'ecole Ast

Secretary for Special Education Initiatives

Linda Gehring

**Medina Educational Service Center
124 W. Washington St.
Medina, OH 44256**

330-723-6393

Preschool Team

Principal

Mrs. Cindy Grice

Preschool Teacher

Mrs. Christina Combs

Paraprofessional

Mrs. Michelle Brenner

**Ralph E. Waite Elementary School
4765 Cobblestone Park Drive
Medina, OH 44256**

330-636-4501

Admission Requirements

The preschool is open to all children whose parents reside within Medina County who will be age 3 by July 31 of the current school year. Per Board policy, a student whose parents reside outside of Medina County may be considered for enrollment in the preschool under the district's Open Enrollment policy providing space availability. Contact the Medina County Educational Service Center at (330) 723-6393 to obtain a copy of the policy and procedures.

All new students must present a Certificate of Live Birth upon enrollment. (This can be obtained by contacting the Office of Vital Statistics in the county of the child's birth). No new students will be enrolled after March 1 except students qualifying for preschool special education services per state and federal regulations.

In accordance with state law, all children must have immunization for polio, D.P.T., measles, mumps, and HIB. Parents must provide evidence of required immunizations upon enrollment. Newly admitted children must be examined by a licensed physician. This examination must be completed by August 30 of the current year.

Returning children need not be re-examined if they have been seen by a physician within the past school year. However, a new medical form needs to be completed, signed, and dated by the physician and on file in the school office on a yearly basis.

It is assumed that enrollment is for a complete school year. If you should need to withdraw your child before the end of the school year, we request that you notify us as soon as you know the last date your child will be attending, and complete a withdraw form. Your deposit will not be refunded.

Attendance

It is important for you to establish good routines and patterns for your preschooler. Your child is expected to attend each day that she/he is scheduled. If your child will be absent for any reason, please notify the school office at (330) 636-4500. The days in session follow the Medina City Schools calendar, in conjunction with activities at the Ralph E. Waite Elementary.

Classes

All classes are multi-aged groupings by 3, 4, and 5 year olds. The morning session is from 8:50 am to 11:25 am. The afternoon session is from 12:50 pm to 3:25 pm.

Typically developing children may attend four days per week, Monday through Thursday, either the AM or PM session depending on availability.

Preschoolers determined eligible for special education services will be provided services as identified within an IEP (Individualized Educational Program) during the Board adopted school year are required by state and federal law. Preschoolers with a disability may be served itinerantly in their homes and other public and private preschool program, or within the district's special needs integrated preschool program. Students with IEPs may attend the integrated preschool up to four full days per week.

Daily Schedule

Our preschool program follows the Ohio Department of Education Early Learning content Standards in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

Learning Centers: free choice play, writing, science, quiet area (manipulatives and books), water/sand play, blocks and carpentry, music, and dramatic play.

Large muscle activities: to develop balance and coordination are provided daily and includes outdoor play (weather permitting) or indoor play such as bean bag games, dancing, and gross motor activities designed to improve direction following.

Small group activities: focus on academic readiness skills.

Circle Time: includes stories and listening games, singing, dancing, dramatic play and finger plays.

Snack time: children are provided with a daily snack. In addition, we ask parents to provide a nutritious snack for the class on a rotating basis. Families are asked to provide storable snacks at the beginning of the school year. Families can also send in “fresh” snacks if desired by arranging with the teacher. Children who celebrate their birthday during the school year will have an opportunity to bring in a special snack. Birthday treats should be kept simple. For children with food allergies, parents are requested to provide a snack and beverage appropriate for their child.

Dress

Children should dress for play and frequent messy art projects. Tennis shoes are most appropriate. Girls should avoid fancy, patent leather shoes, which are slippery and dangerous. When purchasing boots and winter coats, keep in mind that your child will be encouraged to dress him/herself. Avoid clothing that would be too difficult for the average preschooler to handle. Daily outdoor activity is part of our schedule. Please dress your child accordingly. Please send in an extra set of clothing in case of an “accident”. All clothing should be put in a Ziploc bag and marked clearly with your child’s name. In addition, all outdoor clothing (boots, hats, mittens, coats) should be marked with your child’s name.

Field Trips

A field trip may be taken to further your child’s preschool experience. Parents will be informed about the upcoming trips through newsletters. Field trips will be scheduled on Mondays when students are not regularly scheduled in class. Parents and children attending will be asked to meet at the field trip destination. Field trips are optional educational experiences not required.

Health/Illness

Your child will be exposed to many new people this year and may have more than his/her usual number of colds and respiratory illnesses. Please keep your child at home if he/she is not feeling well or if you suspect a communicable disease. Our preschool staff has training in the recognition and prevention of communicable diseases as well as first aid training. Symptoms of a communicable disease include; diarrhea and/or vomiting, severe coughing or rapid breathing, yellowish skin or eyes, conjunctivitis, temperature of 100 degree F*, skin rash, stiff neck, evidence of lice infestation, dark urine, gray or white stool, untreated infected skin patches. A communicable disease chart is posted in the school nurse's office for the teachers to consult.

When identified, an ill child will be immediately isolated in the sick area of the school office. A cot, pillow, and blanket will be available for the child. An adult will be within sight and hearing of the child. No child is ever left alone or unsupervised.

The school will immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child who is observed with the above symptoms. If the parent is unavailable, the school will contact the person parent has designated on the Emergency Medical Form. A child may return to school when he no longer shows any symptoms of illness and is able to participate in indoor and outdoor activities.

If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, a note will be sent home with your child containing information indicating that there is a confirmed case of a communicable disease, in addition to some brief information about that particular disease.

You will be notified by phone by the teacher if your child has experienced an injury at school.

Only office personnel will administer medication if a Medication Form has been completed and signed by the child's physician. Parents need to inform teachers of any food allergies their child might have. All students and staff will wash their hands with soap and water after using the restroom and before snack time.

If a child requires emergency medical or dental care during school hours, the school will have the child transported by an Emergency Medical Team to the nearest hospital if consent has previously been given by the parent on the Emergency Medical Authorization Form.

Healthy Snacks

Each day a snack is served in preschool. We hope that this list will offer helpful, nutritious suggestions as we try to develop positive attitudes towards good foods with our children. Please allow your child the opportunity to share in the decision-making by having your child participate in the shopping and/or preparation of the class snack. It is an important part of our daily routine at preschool.

Suggestions

Fruit	Trail Mix	Jell-O
Raw Vegetables	Pretzels	Pudding
Applesauce	Honey Grahams	Animal Crackers
Ritz crackers	Raisins or Dried Fruit	Popcorn

Please do not send pop or candy as a treat. Selecting snacks that are low in sugar is our goal. Fun fruits and fruit roll-ups are not considered nutritional. If your snack requires utensils, please provide as classroom supplies are limited. When necessary a safe snack list will be provided for students with allergies.

Inclement Weather

If Medina City Schools are closed due to inclement weather, the preschool is also closed. If conditions are threatening, it may become necessary to cancel classes. You will be notified of school closing or school emergencies via the news. You will also be notified by a phone system here that will place a call to your telephone at home and give you information about school closings or emergencies. For closing or events that occur during the day your cell phone will also be called. It is vital that we always have a current phone number for you so that this information can be passed to you. If you have a change in your contact information, please be sure to share with your child's teacher.

As in the past, closing and emergency information will still be made available through local television or radio stations.

We respectfully request that you please refrain from calling the school.

Positive Behavior Support

It is the policy of the Medina County Educational Service Center that positive behavioral support shall be the intervention to assist preschoolers in developing age-appropriate social behavior and self control. The child will be given alternatives and consequences for behavior and be guided to make a positive choice. Staff will demonstrate consistent positive behavior support in dealing with children. Some methods of positive behavioral support will be:

- Daily Schedule: post, with visual pictures, maintain, and review the daily schedule.
- Limit Setting: state clear behavior expectations before starting a new activity and throughout the preschool day.
- Positive reinforcement: praising appropriate behavior.
- Redirection: provide verbal and/or visual redirection to alternative activities in another area when a child has to wait to use a toy.
- Model appropriate behavior: verbally and/or physically demonstrating appropriate ways to behave (e.g., share or ask someone for a toy; turn taking; showing compassion for another).
- Interpret behavior: talking to child about an incident to help the child understand his feeling and behavior, and other ways of resolving conflicts.

When using the above methods of positive behavior support, we find that "time-out" is rarely needed. It is important for teachers to be aware of minor arguments, but it is not always necessary to intervene. As the children develop, they will learn to solve conflicts and resolve the problem.

The State of Ohio mandates that we state clearly in writing to you that:

1. A preschool staff member in charge of a child or group of children shall be responsible for their discipline.
2. All preschool staff members shall receive a copy of the Medina County Schools' Educational Service Center's discipline policy for review upon employment.

3. The Medina County Schools' Educational Service Center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:
 - a. There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
 - b. No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
 - c. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as a protective hug, so that the child may regain control.
 - d. No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubical.
 - e. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or their abuse.
 - f. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep or for toileting accidents.
 - g. Techniques shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
 - h. Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well ventilated space.
 - i. The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool.

Discipline (As Outlined in Preschool Licensing Rules 3301-37-10)

One of the goals in working with young children is to help them feel comfortable with themselves and others. In order to do this, a child must learn self control and responsibility. We strive to guide children to more mature and socially acceptable behaviors. There are many ways that we help the child recognize alternative and consequences which affect themselves and others. We DO NOT use cruel or harsh punishments such as spanking, pinching or shaking. Nor do we withhold food, rest or toilet use. Children will not be disciplined for failure to eat, failure to sleep or for toileting accidents. As adults interested in developing self confidence in children, we do not use techniques that humiliate, shame or frighten children. Some of the ways we DO guide children to more appropriate behavior include:

1. We practice preventive discipline by recognizing the age level characteristics and the needs of individual children as we plan the learning environment to meet these needs including:
 - Providing many choices of play equipment and activities.
 - Viewing the health and safety of the children as a primary concern at all times.
 - Attempting to clearly define limits and consistently and fairly maintain them.
 - Allowing children time and opportunities to solve problems for themselves.
 - Stating suggestions or directions in a positive manner.
 - Providing outlets for expressing feelings or tension.
 - Reward positive behaviors we want to see continue.
 - Warning children before transitions occur.
2. In dealing with ongoing classroom conflicts we guide children by:
 - Reinforcing other children while ignoring the child's inappropriate behavior.
 - Pointing out natural or logical consequences.
 - Redirecting children to other activity or play area.

3. The following method is used if preventive and less intrusive discipline measures are not working:
 - a. Remind the child of the specific rule he/she needs to follow:
 - “Remember, we share”
 - “We take care of our things”
 - “Remember we play safely”
 - “Remember we use inside voices”
 - “Remember we keep our hands and feet to ourselves”
 - b. The child may be removed from the current activity but kept in an adult’s presence.
 - c. Acknowledge child’s feelings and restate rule involved with rationale.
 - d. In some cases, it may be necessary for the child to sit in the room away from the group activities to provide time to restore appropriate behavior and reflect.
 - e. Help child return to the group and reflect.
 - f. No discipline shall be delegated to another child. (ORC 3301-37-10)
 - g. No physical restraint shall be used to confine a child by any means other than hold a child for a short period of time, such as a protective hug so the child may regain control. (ORC 3301-37-10)
 - h. No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, box or similar cubicle. (ORC 3301-37-10)
 - i. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, and derogatory remarks about himself, his family or other verbal abuse. (ORC 3301-37-10)

Parent Involvement, Visitation and Communication

We encourage parents to take an active part in the preschool program through classroom participation and field trips. Any parent of a child enrolled in the program shall be permitted unlimited access to the school during its hours of operation. Upon entering the premises, the parent shall report to the school office and follow the sign-in procedure.

Children’s developmental progress shall be reviewed and reported to parents at established intervals. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year to discuss your child’s progress and needs. Conferences are held on the same days Medina City Schools hold their conferences. These conferences are an essential part of our program and parents are encouraged to attend. In addition, children with special needs will have an annual review of the I.E.P. (Individualized Educational Program) to review progress on goals and to develop new goals pertinent to the child. Reviews will be held at least once annually and will involve professionals (teachers, speech therapist, psychologist, etc.) working with your child

Monthly newsletters and calendars will be sent home to keep you up to date on our activities. We ask that you check your child’s book bag daily for important notes and information. Daily communication notes will be sent home to parents/guardians regarding your child’s day.

Parents who have questions, comments or concerns related to the preschool should use the following procedures:

1. Discuss the matter with the child’s classroom teacher
2. Discuss the matter with Mrs. N’ecole Ast, Director of Special Needs Initiatives (330) 723-6393, ext. 116
3. Discuss the matter with the State of Ohio Department of Early Learning and School Readiness (614) 466-0224 or to the Departments Ombudsperson at (877) 644-6388.

Parent Roster

A roster of names and telephone numbers of parents or guardians of children attending your child' class is available upon request.

Safety Policy

1. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised.
2. No child shall be released to anyone other than the parent or guardian unless notification has been received.
3. Access to working phone is available at all times.
4. Fire drills will be held monthly. Tornado drills will be held as scheduled by the district.
5. A posted fire/tornado emergency plan is available in the preschool classroom.
6. For field trips, each child will have written permission signed and dated by the parent, wear identification tag containing name, school, school's address, and phone number. A First Aid Kit and person trained in First Aid will be available on field trips, as well as Emergency Medical Forms.
7. At least one person trained in First Aid will be available at all times.
8. A parent shall be informed by phone or by written incident report of any accident of a child.
9. Teachers will notify the Medina County Job and Family Services and Building Administrator if there is a suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
10. Swimming and water activities are not part of this program.

Staff

All preschool teachers are certified by the Ohio Department of Education with a Specialty in Early Childhood Special Education. The preschool paraprofessionals have met the standards for Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals under the No Child Left Behind Act and Ohio Department of Education.

Supplies

All children should have a large, easily opened book bag for take home papers. Each student will be asked to contribute further supplies for classroom use at the beginning of the school year. Personal toys and money should not be brought to school unless requested.

Transportation

Transportation for students with disabilities will be determined by the individual student's school district.

Tuition

Preschool services for students with disabilities are provided at no cost to the family per state and federal law. Preschoolers without disabilities may attend four half days per week.

There will be a non-refundable one time registration fee of \$30.00 required with registration forms.

Tuition for the 2012/2013 school year will be a total of \$1,440.00. This will be paid in 9 payments of \$160.00 a month starting September 1, 2012 with the last payment on May 1, 2013. Multiple children discount will be as follows: Two children at \$2,160.00 (\$240.00 per month) and three children at \$2,880.00 (\$320.00 per month). Families can chose to pay the total tuition up front to the monthly payment program.

Payment is to be made directly to the Medina County Educational Service Center Special Education office either in person or by mail. Please direct any questions or concerns that you may have to the N'ecole Ast, Director of Special Needs Initiatives at the Medina County Schools' Educational Service Center.

Accounts that are overdue may jeopardize the continued participation of your child in the preschool program. It is our hope to avoid this situation. Please communicate any difficulties to the director.