

# INTERBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Glenolden, Norwood, Prospect Park, and Tinicum*



## Family Handbook 2024-2025

Inspiring, guiding, and engaging our young Bucs as they develop academic, social, and emotional skills to be successful in kindergarten and life.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Welcome to the Interboro Early Learning Academy! This will be an exciting year filled with new learning experiences and wonderful events for you and your child. This handbook provides important information about the many facets of pre-kindergarten life. It is intended as a guide for each parent/guardian to use as they support their child's participation in the Interboro School District's Early Learning Academy program. In addition, there is a comprehensive Interboro School District Handbook (K-12) available on the district website (<https://www.interborosd.org/>).

The vision of the Interboro Early Learning Academy program ensures:

- All Pre-K students will receive a high quality, standards-based curriculum that promotes critical thinking skills and high expectations
- All Pre-K educators will utilize research-based instructional practices to ensure maximum success for all students
- As confident learners, all Pre-K students will demonstrate creativity, think critically, and problem solve
- All Pre-K students and staff will thrive in a safe and caring environment that fosters confidence and promotes academic, social, and emotional growth

Children benefit both academically and socially when parents/guardians and school staff work closely together. Your participation in all Pre-K activities during the coming year is invited and encouraged. Thank you for all that you do to support, motivate, and inspire your child.

Sincerely,

*Bernadette C. Reiley*

Bernadette C. Reiley

Superintendent of Schools

*Valerie Eckman*

Dr. Valerie Eckman

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

## THE INTERBORO EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY

The Interboro Early Learning Academy provides a high-quality early childhood program. The nurturing child-centered environment promotes physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. The pre-kindergarten staff provide planned learning activities appropriate to the age and development of each child.

The classrooms are arranged to promote all areas of development through a variety of centers, including drama, play, art, music, science, mathematics, storytelling, block building, table toys, writing, speaking, and listening.

The pre-kindergarten curriculum focuses on readiness skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics aligned with the early learning standards. This curriculum utilizes standards-based materials that have been researched and provided by the District's Office of Curriculum and Instruction.

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's learning program by reviewing daily work, communicating with the teachers and support staff and attending parent evenings such as Back to School Night and literacy and math events.

The Interboro Early Learning Academy partners with the Delaware County Intermediate Unit's Early Intervention and the District's Kindergarten Academy program to provide a smooth transition into kindergarten.

## INTERBORO EARLY LEARNING & KINDERGARTEN ACADEMY STAFF

### Administration

Brad Kohlhepp, Principal  
(610) 957-5401 ext. 7247

Nicole Nolan, Assistant Principal  
(610) 957-5401 ext. 7249

### Early Learning Academy Staff Teacher/Assistant Team

Robyn Redfern	Nancy Smith
Emily Harkness	Kristen Sanders
LisaAnn Brennan	Anne Marie Thomas
Cara Murray	Bernadette Sargent

### Rotating Paraprofessionals

Tori Vadino  
Dana Kerr

### Specialists/Support

Julie Hasson, School Nurse (M-W)  
Gina Costalas, School Nurse (Th-F)  
(610) 957-5401 ext. 7113

Christine Bryan, School Counselor  
(610) 957-5401 ext. 7114

Leslie Sinclair, Language Acquisition Specialist

### Kindergarten Academy Office Staff

Adriane Clemson, Principal's Secretary  
(610) 957-5401 ext. 7239

Diana Conlin, Attendance Secretary  
(610) 957-5401 ext. 7276

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**MISSION STATEMENT OF THE INTERBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Interboro School District provides a challenging and supportive learning environment for all students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally while becoming college and career ready citizens within a global community.

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

Development in young children is a continuous process. Because pre-kindergarten children are at different stages in their growth and development, they differ in their ability to perform certain tasks. It is important to recognize where the child is in his/her stage of development in order to individualize instruction. Even if two children are exactly the same age, they might be quite different in their rates of development. Consideration needs to be given in all areas -- physical, social/emotional, aesthetic, and cognitive. Because each child is viewed as an individual, different from every other child in a variety of ways, pre-kindergarten instruction is carefully organized to provide for different developmental levels of children.

## EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS CURRICULUM

Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood are used to: (1) Inform professionals about curriculum and assessment; (2) Guide the selection of instructional materials and the design of interactions/goal setting; (3) Inform families of appropriate expectations for children; (4) Provide a common framework for community-based birth–grade 3 alignment work.

Standards are focused in the following key learning areas:

- Approaches to Learning through Play – Constructing, Organizing, and Applying Knowledge
- Language and Literacy Development – English Language Arts
- Mathematical Thinking and Expression – Exploring, Processing, and Problem-Solving
- Scientific Thinking and Technology – Exploring, Scientific Inquiry, and Discovery
- Social Studies Thinking – Connecting to Communities
- Creative Thinking and Expression – Communicating through the Arts
- Health, Wellness, and Physical Development – Learning About my Body
- Social and Emotional Development – Student Interpersonal Skills
- Partnerships for Learning – Families, Early Care and Education Programs, and Communities

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

High-quality early care and education programs offer learning opportunities that have a significant impact on the success of all children. A warm, responsive relationship with a highly trained teaching staff is foundational. It is expected that teachers will intentionally integrate developmental knowledge with the attitudes, skills, and



concepts children need to make progress socially and academically. High-quality early care and education programs maintain high developmentally achievable expectations for all children using clear performance standards with a continuous cycle of assessment understood and used by staff, children, and families.

1. High-quality early care and education programs have a significant impact on children's future successes.
2. All children can learn and deserve high expectations that are age, individually, and culturally appropriate.
3. Young children learn best when they are able to construct knowledge through meaningful play, active exploration of the environment, and thoughtfully planned activities.
4. The learning environment for young children should stimulate and engage their curiosity of the world around them and meet their physical and emotional needs so that they feel safe and secure.
5. Language and early literacy development must be supported and integrated throughout all aspects of early care and education programs.
6. Children's learning development and opportunities are supported when their teachers are trained in early childhood development and education, including professional training and ongoing professional development, and are intentional in their relationships and work with children and families.
7. Early care and education programs must address the individual needs of a diverse population of children, e.g., children with special needs, children from diverse cultural backgrounds, children from all socio-economic groups.
8. Early care and education programs are defined by a set of comprehensive standards that maximize a child's growth and development across cognitive and non-cognitive domains.
9. There must be a system of research-based assessments that documents children's growth and development in relationship to a defined set of standards and is used to inform instruction.
10. Children's learning is enhanced when families, schools, and communities work together.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Get Set for School readiness curriculum uses a developmental approach based on the most relevant research about how young children learn best:

- Believes that every child can achieve
- Uses engaging materials that make learning fun
- Breaks difficult concepts into simple tasks

### What and How We Teach

Pre-K is a time of rapid growth and development. It is a year of preparation for kindergarten and for future success in school and in life. To achieve, children need to be imaginative, independent, and actively involved in their own learning.

#### Imaginative

Children learn naturally through everyday experiences with people, places, and things. They are born imitators and scientists who thrive on active, hands-on interaction with the physical world. They learn through play and through physical and sensory experiences.

We want children to be imaginative explorers and believe that teachers and parents support curiosity by what they place in a child's environment. Children play with what is there. Including fun, engaging materials throughout the learning space affects how children feel, what they do, and how they learn. Get Set for School materials accommodate both teacher-directed and student-initiated playful learning, because we know that sparking the imagination leads to a lifelong love of learning.

#### Independent

We support capable children by how we teach. Much of what Pre-K students learn is incidental—whatever is around them, what they hear and see. We deliberately build familiarity and competency with the music albums that we play for them, the words that we use, and the way in which we use materials and teach lessons.

We also know that children should learn explicitly. Basic readiness skills should be taught systematically. It is not up to children to decide how to read, write, and count. We teach them the way we read and write from top to bottom and left to right. We teach them how to hold a crayon and how to write letters. We teach them key skills to advance their competency and success—so they develop the skills to be independent as they enter school.

Teachers need support to foster independence in children. Our materials provide flexibility for the teacher and offer activities in a developmental sequence. Ensuring mastery of one skill before introducing another builds the competence and confidence children need for independent problem solving.



## Involved

Pre-K is social and challenging. Four-year-olds are new to being involved with and caring about others, sharing, waiting a turn, and following the teacher. Some children in every group have personal challenges with these skills.

We use music to encourage inclusive participation and development of social skills alongside important physical skills, language, and early readiness skills. We also promote group play and accessibility so children of different abilities can participate and learn with and from each other. We believe that children who are involved with each other are better able to focus their attention to follow the teacher actively.

Our materials also encourage family involvement to continue learning activities at home. Many activities have take-home components to encourage children to form connections between learning in school and home situations.

### Meeting Individual Needs

#### Skill modeling in different size groups

We know that teacher demonstration and student imitation is essential to Pre-K learning. Throughout the curriculum, children learn on their own as well as with adult demonstration. Activities are structured in whole class, small group, and individually to maximize teaching and learning.

### Support English Language Learners

Every lesson in our teacher's guides supports English language learners. Most lessons emphasize hands-on learning with music and/ or movement—elements we know are essential for Pre-K brain development. Other lessons include images associated with the spoken word to foster the language to literacy connection. All of our lessons begin at the introductory level, assuming and requiring no prior knowledge.

### Engaging and Child Center Themes

As the year progresses, themes in this early-learning program broaden, and children begin to understand more about the world around them.

Get Set for School addresses each of the learning areas children need to get ready for kindergarten! Each area includes sub-domains so every child can achieve an even deeper level of learning and understanding – and be kindergarten ready!

36 weeks of instruction is divided into 6 content themes.

**Unit 1: Get Set for School**

**Unit 2: My Body**

**Unit 3: Community & Play**

**Unit 4: Earth**

**Unit 5: Machines**

**Unit 6 Animals**

The six-week instructional units give young learners the time they need to practice each new concept, supporting all learning styles and addressing Pre-K's special social-emotional needs.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY**

### **Positive Behavior Instruction Support Program (PBIS)**

The PBIS program is a behavior management program, which encourages the students to demonstrate positive behaviors during the school day and beyond. School-wide expectations have been established that we feel the ELA/KA students can work toward achieving. Our goals for the children are: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe in the following areas: Classroom, Cafeteria, Lavatories, Hallways, Playground/Recess, and on the Bus. The program is instructional in nature, beginning with classroom lessons, modeling, and consistent expectations. As the year progresses, staff members will reinforce positive behaviors by presenting students with K Coins. These small reward tokens are visible reminders to the children that they are making good choices. If a student does not meet the behavioral expectations there are appropriate consequences based on the level of the behavior (ranging from a verbal reminder, time out, or meeting with principal/parents).

### **Discipline and Early Learners**

Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable activity and setting clear limits. Children are provided with many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperation and respect for the feelings of others. Instructors encourage and facilitate the development of these positive social skills at all times. Children are praised for their smallest accomplishments and encouraged to feel increasingly competent and in control of themselves. The schedule and the classroom environment will be arranged to meet the individual needs of children. There will be a variety of activities, materials and equipment to help minimize conflict. Children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use discipline techniques that include:

- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior
- Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children solve problems
- Patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed
- Independently allowing them to explore and learn through their environment
- Allow children time to work through their emotions in a quiet space.

### **Suspension and Expulsion and Early Learners**

Interboro School District focuses on fostering social emotional development and responding to challenging behaviors by incorporating positive discipline practices before ever considering expulsion or suspension from early childhood.

In an effort to prevent expulsion and suspension of children, Interboro School District adopts the following, in policy and practice and in a consistent and non-discriminatory manner:

- Use developmentally appropriate practices that provide for stimulating and interactive learning environments, diversity, age-appropriate expectations, small group activities, teachable moments and knowledge of research-based evidence and best practices in child development, early learning and education.
- Invest in professional development, training and education to ensure educators have the competencies to support children's social and emotional health.
  - Develop and implement classroom schedules that meet the needs of the children.
  - Adapt learning environments to promote health social interactions with others.
  - Develop healthy and nurturing relationships with children.
  - Develop strong partnerships and relationships with parents.
  - Develop and implement classroom expectations that are developmentally appropriate, clear and consistent.
  - Provide family engagement opportunities.
  - Ensure fairness and equity.

Prior to the expulsion of any child from this program, Interboro School District administrators will follow these guidelines:

- Identify and engage mental and behavioral health consultants and community resources after obtaining parent permission.
- Reduce the number of days or amount of time in care for a specified amount of time.
- Conference with parents to discuss positive behavior interventions and development of goals.
- Document efforts to prevent and reduce expulsion.
- Provide reasonable accommodations.

Interboro School District limits expulsion, suspension, or other exclusionary discipline; and these exclusionary measures are used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. Interboro School District administrators will assist the family in accessing services and an alternative placement when an extraordinary case arises.

Interboro School District's discipline policies comply with Federal civil rights laws. Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional, such as an early childhood mental health consultant, have been exhausted – and it is unanimously determined by the family, teacher, program, and other service providers that another setting is more appropriate for the well-being of the child in question – all parties, including the receiving program, will work together to develop a seamless transition plan and use that plan to implement a smooth transition.

## EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00 - 9:10 - Arrival

9:10 - 9:30 – Breakfast/Pledges/Begin Morning Meeting

9:30 - 9:40 – Bathroom Break

9:40 -10:00 - Morning Meeting/ Number Corner

10:00 - 10:20 - Morning Recess

10:20 - 11: 20 - Centers

11:20 - 11: 40 - Heggerty (Phonemic Awareness)

11:40 - 12:00 - Second Step (Social Emotional)

12:00 -12:15 - Brain Break

12:15 - 12:40 - Lunch

12:40 - 12:55 - Story Time/Quiet Time

12:55 - 1:25 - Music/PE/STEM

1:25 - 1:55 - Centers

1:55 - 2:25 - Recess

2:25 - 2:40 - Snack

2:40 – 3:00 – End of Day Activity/Pack - Up

3:05 - Dismissal

## ASSESSMENTS

1. **ASQ-3** (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month to 5 ½ years. Its success lies in its parent-centric approach and inherent ease-of-use—a combination that has made it the most widely used developmental screener across the globe. Evidence shows that the earlier development is assessed—the greater the chance a child has to reach his or her potential.
2. Interboro's PKC staff utilizes **Cognitive Toybox** to track students' growth throughout the school year. Progress is shared with families at pre-determined points during the school year.
  - a. Weekly **5-minute game-based assessments** to help educators understand what students know.



- b. Teachers also conduct weekly **observational assessments** to monitor developmentally appropriate skills and behaviors throughout the school year.

Classroom Rules, Routines and Materials

Matt Peters

Emerging to 3

Emerging to 4

Emerging to 5

By 5

Can Matt independently follow classroom rules and routines, including signals to transition from one activity to another?

No

Yes

## ATTENDANCE

Once your child is enrolled in the Interboro Early Learning Academy, daily attendance is required. This program is building the foundation for your child's school career and every day is important. The Early Learning Academy strictly adheres to the District's Attendance /Tardiness policy. Consistent contact is made to parents/ guardians to keep you informed of the days and minutes your child has been late or absent. Parent meetings to address chronic attendance concerns and students will be disenrolled after 10 unexcused absences (following PA PreK Counts/Keys Guidelines).

### Reporting Absences:

When your child is going to be absent from school, please report it via the website here OR call the school at 610-957-5401. If no call is received, the school will contact the student's parent or guardian by phone. This is a safety check for the children. When your child returns to school, you must complete and return an absent note. This should state your child's name, teacher, date of absence(s), and reason. Prolonged absences (3 or more days) will require a doctor's note.

### Lateness:

If your child is late for school (9:10 a.m.), an adult must sign him/her in at the front office. Parents are not permitted to drop off their child without signing them in at the main office. Frequent lateness to school disrupts the schedule and routine of the day, not only for your child, but also his/her peers. Please help your child get the most out of their school day by arriving on time. If your child is going to be late due to a doctor's appointment, please provide a note from the doctor's office so your child will be excused from the lateness. Cumulative lateness of 90 minutes or more is considered chronic.

- A student will be considered absent if they are not present when attendance is taken by the teacher upon arrival.

### Absence and Lateness Reporting and Recording:

It is very important in setting life patterns both in school, and eventually on the job, that proper attention is paid to promptness. It is extremely important that students attend their classes on a regular basis and start their day off on a positive note. Students are expected to be dropped off by 9:10 AM. Students late to school must report directly to the school office and sign-in.

### **The following conditions constitute reasonable causes for lateness to school:**

1. If your child is going to be late due to any of the reasons below click [HERE](#) to report it.
2. Illness with doctor's note.
3. Required court attendance (note/documentation as proof).
4. Family/Educational trips (to be determined by the principal).

## Parental Notification of Absence and Lateness Consequences:

### Lateness:

- 30 cumulative minutes or 5 days late – Courtesy Letter
- 60 cumulative minutes or 10 days late – Warning Letter
- 90 cumulative minutes or 15 days late – Parent conference with building administrator or truancy officer to establish Interboro SD Truancy Elimination Plan\*.
- 120 cumulative minutes or 20 days late – Consideration for disenrollment from program

*\*Truancy Elimination Plan* – A plan developed by the school that provides steps to improve student attendance at school. This plan is presented to parents/ guardians for input. This plan may include but is not limited to recommendations to an out of district agency or district court.

## Parental Notification of Absence and Lateness Consequences:

### Absences:

It is expected that parents will notify the school of a student absence. If a school is not notified that a student will be absent, the district will call to ensure that your child is in the care of a parent/guardian.

- 1st unexcused absence – reminder of Attendance Policy
- 5 days absent – courtesy letter/family meeting
- 8 days absent – all future absences will require a doctor's note
- 10 days absent –parent conference with school administration and disenrollment from program (following PA PreK Counts/Keys Guidance)

***Parents are encouraged to contact the building principal if there are extenuating circumstances that directly affect your child's attendance.***

*Vacation Excusal* - Students/Parent must request a vacation form 2 weeks prior to absent dates for review and approval by Principal and teachers. Please note that vacation days are counted as a part of total student absences.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Inclement weather may cause the school to have a delayed opening. The school district automated messaging system will be used to inform families of late openings or school closings due to inclement weather or other emergency events.

Please inform the school office of changes in phone numbers, so that you receive these important calls.

**\*In the event of a 2-hour delay, Pre-K will begin at 10:30AM NOT 11:00 AM.**

It is also important that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Rain and snow gear is essential. To alleviate the frustration with boots, we suggest the following: If the boots fit but the shoes do not slide, cover the shoes with plastic bags and then slide them into the boots. If the shoes do not fit inside the boots then you may want to have your child carry their sneakers in a plastic bag or in their backpack.

Decisions regarding outdoor gross motor time are made on a daily basis based on temperature, precipitation, and playground conditions. Please have your child prepared each day with appropriate outerwear.

## KEEP SCHOOL OFFICIALS INFORMED

Call the school office or send a note with your child if:

1. You are going to move.
2. Your telephone number is changed.
3. There is a change in the emergency number.
4. Your child is absent for three (3) consecutive days.
5. Your child has a communicable disease.





## FIELD TRIPS

The Interboro Early Learning Academy may offer a variety of field trips that all students attend each school year.

The classroom teacher organizes field trips. Permission slips and information about the trip, date/times, and chaperoning is provided in advance of the scheduled trips. Chaperones for field trips are arranged with the teachers. Anyone chaperoning trips or events must have Volunteer Clearances on file prior to the trip.

A few field trip reminders...

- It is strongly suggested that only parents or guardians attend field trips. If a parent or guardian is not available to attend, and a parent/guardian would like a close relative (21 years of age or older) to attend with his/her child, it must be approved by the principal.
- Field Trip chaperones must have the required clearances on file prior to the trip.
  - See the school districts Human Resources site for the link to Clearances.
- PA State background check (Act 34) \*
- FBI Criminal (Act 114) – Required if you have not lived in PA for the past 10 consecutive years.
- Childline (Act 151)\*
  - \*No fee to obtain these volunteer clearances.

Children are NOT PERMITTED to leave a field trip for any reason. All students and chaperones must return to school on the bus. All students must stay in school until the end of the day when returning from a class trip. Students are not permitted to be signed out early.

## IMPORTANT DRESS REQUIREMENTS

FOOTWEAR: Pre-K Students must wear SNEAKERS only.

## BATHROOM ACCIDENTS/CHANGE OF CLOTHES

A change of clothes is required for each child (pants, top, underwear) in case of a bathroom accident, school yard or lunchroom mishap. Please label these clothes items and secure in a large Ziploc bag. They will be kept in the classroom and returned at the end of the year if not used. **\*If your child is given a change of clothes from the nurse, please return them the next day\***

## DROP OFF/PICK-UP

### Drop Off

Walkers/Car Riders will enter through the side door on 10th Avenue. Our doors open at 9:00 am. Doors will close promptly at 9:10 am. Any student arriving after 9:10 is considered late and must be walked into the administration building through the front doors and will be buzzed into the KA office staff to sign in and walk your child to the main office to be signed in. Once your child is signed in office staff will ensure that each child gets to his/her classroom.

- **Park and Walk:** If your child needs assistance exiting the car, you will need to park (short term) on surrounding streets and walk child to the side door. Please do not block driveways or turning lanes. Comply with the crossing guard's directions. Cross your child safely to the side door.
- **Car Loop: (Patience Required\*)**
  - Forms curbside on right lane of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue
  - Enter Car Loop. Stay to right (close to curb).
  - Student **must be able to exit car independently.**
  - **Parents must stay in their car.**
- **Children exit from the right side of the car only.**
  - Pull up to curb to discharge your child to a staff member.
  - Merge safely into traffic.
  - **Doors must close promptly at 9:10.**
  - Late arrivals must be signed in at the main office.

### Departure

Walkers and car riders will depart from one of two exits AS ASSIGNED (10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Main Door (Redfern & Harkness) or 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Door by the Playground (Murray & Brennan). Dismissal for Pre-K begins at 3:05. Please park on neighboring streets and walk to the door. You may park (short term) in a single line in the car loop. **Do not park in the crosswalks or X boxes.** **You must wait outside the doors for your child.** Staff members will dismiss each child as the children are lined up in the hallways close to the doors. The Dismissal ID tag must be shown for your child to be released. No child will be released without a dismissal tag. This is for your child's safety. Proof of identification will be required in the school office before any student is dismissed without a Dismissal ID tag.

**\*\*\* PLEASE do not park in the staff lot on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave as these spots are assigned to staff.**

## MEDICAL

### General School Nursing Services/Information

#### **Injury/Illness**

Illnesses and accidents occurring at home are not the school's responsibility and should be referred to your family physician. When a student becomes ill or injured during school hours, per school procedure:

- For students in PreK, contact will be made with the parent/guardian or authorized emergency contact who is required to pick up and sign out the child or make arrangements for them to be picked up.

#### **Healthy Habits to Stay Well and Prevent Spreading Germs**

- WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN with soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth to help prevent the spread of viruses.
- Do not share food, utensils, beverages, or anything that might be contaminated with germs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home when sick, especially with flu-like symptoms of fever and cough. Stay home for at least 24 hours after being fever-free without using fever-reducing medicine.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or elbow instead of your hands if you do not have a tissue.
- Clean surfaces that may be contaminated with germs using household disinfectant cleaners.
- Recommend a flu vaccine every year to help prevent seasonal flu.
- Recommend you receive a COVID -19 vaccine if eligible



## Communicable Diseases

The Board authorizes that students who have been diagnosed by a physician or are suspected of having a disease by the school nurse shall be excluded from school for the period indicated by regulations of the Department of Health for certain specified diseases and infectious conditions.

[ **Interboro School Board Policy 203** ]

## **Emergency Information Policy**

Each year, parents/guardians are required to complete an Emergency Information Card. The information on this card is used to contact parents/guardians in case of emergency or illness. It is also used to note medical conditions and give permission for certain medications to be administered (Tylenol, Tums, etc.).

*Please note: the information that parents/guardians provide on this card does not automatically update the information in the Home Access Center (HAC) Account. Parents/guardians must log on to their HAC account to make any changes to their email address or phone number. To make changes to a mailing address, parents/guardians must contact the Administration Building and provide verification of residency. If you need additional help with this, please contact your school office.*

[Link for updating the HAC](#)

## **Mandated Health Screenings, Exams, and Immunizations**

A qualified school physician conducts a comprehensive health examination for all children in kindergarten, grade six, and grade eleven including all new registrants, each year.

A qualified dentist examines children in kindergarten, grade three, and grade seven. including all new registrants, each year.

A private health and/or dental examination conducted at the parents'/guardians' request and expense shall be accepted in lieu of the school examination. The district shall accept reports of privately conducted physical and dental examinations completed within one (1) year prior to a student's entry into the grade where an exam is required.

The school nurse or medical technician will administer to each student at intervals established by the state, vision screenings, hearing screenings, scoliosis, and height and weight measurements. Height and weight measurements shall be used to calculate the student's weight-for-height ratio (B.M.I.- Body Mass Index).

Where it appears to school health officials or teachers that a student deviates from normal growth and development, or where school examinations reveal conditions requiring health or dental care, the parent/guardian will be informed; and a recommendation will be made that the parent/guardian consult a private physician or dentist. The parent/guardian must report to the school the action taken after such notification.

Parents/Guardians of students who will receive physical and dental examinations or screenings will be notified. The notice will include the date and location of the examination or screening and notice that the parent/guardian may attend or may have the examination or screening conducted privately at the parent's/guardian's expense. Such a statement may also include notification that the student may

be exempted from such examination or screening if it is contrary to the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs. [**Interboro School Board Policy 209**]

### **Dental Program - SMILES Program**

With this in-school program, dental care is usually at no cost to you. All insurance is accepted including Medicaid and CHIP. A low-cost self-pay option is available for those without insurance. Appointments will be during the school day and parents do not have to be present. Online forms or the paperwork sent home to your student needs to be completed approximately two weeks before the date of the visit.

Our in-school dental program saves you time and provides a safe and comfortable place for your child to receive gentle dental care from licensed local professionals. Dental care includes a complete dental exam, x-rays, cleaning, fluoride, and sealants when necessary, and in some cases, restorative care such as fillings.

Help keep your child healthy, in school and learning.

### **Required Immunizations**

It is vital that all children receive recommended vaccinations on time and get caught up if they are behind as a result of the pandemic. Routine vaccination prevents illnesses that lead to unnecessary medical visits, additional outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, hospitalizations, and further strain on schools, families, and health care systems.

All students must be compliant with current vaccine requirements on the first day of school or have a written and signed plan from your physician for completion if not medically appropriate at this time.

If your child participates in a virtual setting throughout the school, their immunizations must remain up to date for them to participate in any in person activities or events (for example: dances, sports, clubs, proms, graduation, etc.)

A certificate of immunization (showing the dates the child was immunized) must be maintained as part of the health record for each student, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

### **Children entering the Early Learning Academy need the following vaccines:**

- 3 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis
- 3 doses of polio
- 1 dose of measles, mumps, rubella\*\*\*
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity

## Guidelines for the Administration of Medication During School Hours

The Interboro School District recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for the health of their children. Although the district strongly recommends that medication be given in the home, it realizes that the health of some children requires that they receive medication in school.

Parents should confer with the child's physician to arrange medication time intervals to avoid school hours whenever possible. When medication absolutely must be given during school hours, certain procedures must be followed.

*Please Note: These Guidelines apply to both PRESCRIPTION and NON-PRESCRIPTION Medications.*

Guidelines:

1. The parent and the child's physician/licensed health care provider must complete the Interboro School District [Medication Form](#). Any change in dosage or medication must be accompanied by a physician's note.
2. Any medication to be given during school hours must be delivered directly to the school nurse, the school principal, or his or her designee by the parent or a responsible adult. The medication must be brought to school in the original pharmaceutical dispensed and properly labeled container. Prescription and non-prescription medication will be kept in a locked container in the nurse's office.
3. **Medication may NOT be carried by students during the school day or during school sponsored activities unless it is categorized as an Emergency Medication** as described in the next section— "Student Self-Administration of Emergency Medications."
4. A medication log will be kept for any child receiving medication during school hours.

### **Student Self-Administration of Emergency Medications**

*(such as: Epinephrine Autoinjectors, Asthma Inhalers, Insulin)*

The Board shall permit students in district schools to possess asthma inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors and to self-administer the prescribed medication in compliance with state law and Board policy [ **Interboro School Board Policy 210.1** ].

Definitions:

- *Asthma inhaler* shall mean a prescribed device used for self-administration of short-acting, metered doses of prescribed medication to treat an acute asthma attack.
- *Epinephrine auto-injector* shall mean a prescribed disposable drug delivery system designed for the self-administration of epinephrine to provide rapid first aid for persons suffering the effects of anaphylaxis.

- *Self-administration* shall mean a student's use of medication in accordance with a prescription or written instructions from a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

**Guidelines:**

Before a student may possess or use an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector in the school setting, the Board shall require the following:

1. A written request from the parent/guardian that the school complies with the order of the licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant.
2. A written statement from the parent/guardian acknowledging that the school is not responsible for ensuring the medication is taken and relieving the district and its employees of responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the prescribed medication.
3. A written statement from a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant that states:
  - a. Name of the drug.
  - b. Prescribed dosage.
  - c. Time medication is to be taken.
  - d. Length of time medication is prescribed.
  - e. Diagnosis or reason medication is needed, unless confidential.
  - f. Potential serious reaction or side effects of medication.
  - g. Emergency response.
  - h. If a child is qualified and able to self-administer the medication.

**Medical Assistive Devices:** Medical Assistive devices such as crutches, walkers, canes, etc. must be prescribed by a physician and provided by the family/student.

**Elevator Access:** Students who are unable to use the stairs should report to the main office with a doctor's note. Depending on Elevator availability, students will be given directions on access.

**Restroom Availability:** Individual restrooms are located in the nurse's office and other areas designated in each building for use by any student desiring a greater amount of privacy than the public restrooms afford. Administrative approval is required. Please contact your child's school nurse if needed.



## Concussion Management

The Interboro School Board recognizes the importance of ensuring that students diagnosed with concussions have proper care for Returning to Learn and to Play. This policy has been developed to provide guidance for prevention, detection and treatment of concussions sustained by students while participating in school and activities. [[Interboro School Board Policy 123.1](#)]

**Return to Learn Process:** The Return to Learn (RTL) process is the method for reintroducing students who have sustained a concussion back into the classroom setting.

1. The students do not need to be 100% symptom free when Returning to Learn (RTL) as long as symptoms are tolerable and manageable.
2. If the symptoms prevent the student from concentrating on mental activity for even up to ten (10) minutes at a time, rest is required.
3. The guardians and school should decide together the level of academic adjustment needed at school depending upon the type and severity of the symptoms present and the times of day when the student feels better or worse. Ultimately, the guardian and the doctor will determine when the student returns to class.

## **Academic Adjustments**

1. Depending on the severity of the concussion, the student may receive academic adjustments based on their diagnosis from a doctor.
2. Another type of adjustment is cutting back the amount of work for the student both in-class work and at-home homework.

To learn more about the Return to Learn Concussion process, please review the [Interboro School District Return to Learn Concussion Protocol](#).

If the student is still receiving academic adjustments of any kind due to the presence of any symptoms, they cannot be considered symptom-free. Therefore, a successful Return to Learn (RTL) is necessary before approval for Return to Play (RTP). Please review the Interboro School District Athletic Handbook to learn more about Return to Play.

**Accident Insurance:** A group student accident program is offered at the beginning of each year. Parents will receive information about the program through your child. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse. You can access the application and acquire more information [HERE](#).

## When to Keep a Sick Child Home from School

Please keep the school office up to date with current phone numbers so you or an alternate contact can be reached if your child becomes ill or injured at school. This information can also be updated in the HAC.

The following information may help you decide when to keep your child at home. "Child" refers to all school-aged children including adolescents. This information does not take the place of consulting a medical provider. See below for "When to contact a medical provider."

<b>Differences Between Common Colds and the Flu</b>			
<b>COMMON COLD</b> The common cold is a contagious upper respiratory infection caused by cold viruses. It is the most frequent childhood illness. Symptoms can last 7 to 14 days. A child with no fever, mild symptoms and otherwise feeling well may be fine at school.		<b>FLU (INFLUENZA)</b> The flu is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and can cause mild to severe illness. A person with influenza can be contagious up to one week after symptoms appear. Children are one of the biggest sources for spreading the flu. To help decrease the spread of regular seasonal flu and novel H1N1 flu:	
<b><u>WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:</u></b> A child with heavy cold symptoms such as deep or uncontrollable coughing or significant lack of energy belongs at home even without a fever. See additional information on fever, sore throat, and influenza.		<b><u>WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:</u></b> <b>A child with flu-like illness (fever and cough) must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.</b> A fever is defined as a temperature of 100°F or higher. If symptoms occur while at school, the student must be picked up as soon as possible to go home. Contact a medical provider with severe symptoms, if the ill person is pregnant or has a chronic medical condition that could make them vulnerable to influenza complications.	
<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Usually come on gradually</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Usually come on quickly</b>
<b>Fever</b>	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102°F in infants and small children	<b>Fever</b>	Typically, as high as 102°F, but can rise to 104°F and usually lasts 3 to 4 days
<b>Cough</b>	Mild, hacking cough	<b>Cough</b>	Often, can be severe
<b>Headache</b>	Rare	<b>Headache</b>	Sudden onset, can be severe
<b>Muscle aches</b>	Mild	<b>Muscle aches</b>	Usual, can be severe

<b>Tiredness/ weakness</b>	<b>Mild</b>	<b>Tiredness/ weakness</b>	<b>Can last 2 or more weeks</b>
<b>Extreme exhaustion</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Extreme exhaustion</b>	<b>Sudden onset, can be severe</b>
<b>Vomiting/diarrhea</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Vomiting/diarrhea</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
<b>Runny Nose</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Runny Nose</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
<b>Sneezing</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sneezing</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
<b>Sore Throat</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sore Throat</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>

**COUGH:** A mild hacking cough often starts after the first few days of a common cold. A child with mild symptoms, no fever and otherwise feeling well may be fine at school.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child with deep or uncontrollable coughing belongs at home even without a fever. **A child with a cough and fever must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever reducing medicine.**

#### **DIARRHEA/VOMITING:**

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Vomiting due to illness/unknown cause, based on school nurse's assessment/recommendation, must remain home for 24 hours symptom free without use of medication.

**EARACHE:** Consult a medical provider for earaches. Ear infections may require medical treatment.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child should stay at home until pain free.

**FEVER:** Fevers are a common symptom of viral and bacterial infection. Children are likely to be contagious to others when they have a fever. If there is no thermometer, feel their skin with your hand - if it is much warmer than usual, they probably have a fever. Please do not give your child fever reducing medicine and then send them to school. The medicine will wear off, the fever will probably return, and you would need to pick them up anyway.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Any child with a fever of 100F or higher should not attend school and should not return until they have been fever-free for 24 hours. A child with flu-like illnesses (fever and a cough) must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

**FREQUENT SYMPTOMS:** Sometimes children pretend or exaggerate illness in order to stay home. However, frequent complaints of tummy aches, headaches and other symptoms may be a physical sign that a child is feeling emotionally stressed, a common experience even in children. Consult a medical provider to evaluate symptoms. Stress-based complaints cause some children to unnecessarily miss a great deal of school. It is important to check often with your children about how things are going. Share concerns with school staff so they can provide support for you and your child to help make attending school a positive experience.

**HEADACHES:** A child whose only complaint is a mild headache usually does not need to stay home from school. Complaints of frequent or more severe headaches should be evaluated by a medical provider, including vision exams if needed.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child with a significant headache belongs at home until feeling better.

**PINK EYE (Conjunctivitis):** is a common infectious disease of one or both eyes caused by several types of bacteria and viruses. The eye typically appears very red and feels irritated. There may be drainage of mucus and pus or clear liquid. Prescription medication may be needed to treat a bacterial infection. Virus-caused pink eye will not need antibiotic treatment.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child with the above symptoms should be kept at home until evaluated by a medical provider and return to school with or without treatment depending on the diagnosis.

**RASHES:** A rash may be one of the first signs of a contagious childhood illness such as chickenpox. Rashes may cover the entire body or be in only one area and are most contagious in the early stages.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Do not send a child with a rash to school until a medical provider has said it is safe to do so – especially with additional symptoms like itching, fever or appearing ill.

**SORE THROAT:** A child with a mild sore throat, no fever and otherwise feeling well may be fine to attend school.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Keep a child at home and contact a medical provider for a severe sore throat and if white spots are seen in the back of the throat, with or without a fever.

**STREP THROAT:** A significantly sore throat could be strep throat, a contagious illness. Other symptoms may include fever, white spots in the back of the throat, headache and upset stomach. Untreated strep throat can lead to serious complications.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Keep your child home from school with the above symptoms and contact a medical provider. A child diagnosed with strep throat is no longer infectious and can return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started.

**STOMACH PAIN: WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Consult a medical provider and do not send a child to school with a stomachache that is persistent or severe enough to limit activity. If vomiting or diarrhea occurs, keep the child home until symptom free for 24 hours.

**TOOTHACHE:** For tooth pain, contact a dentist to have a child evaluated as soon as possible.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child with a significant toothache should not attend school until feeling better.

#### **WHEN TO CONTACT A MEDICAL PROVIDER:**

**Be sure to contact a medical provider any time there is concern about a child's health.**

• **In children, emergency warning signs for flu-like illness that need urgent medical attention include:**

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

**Other reasons to contact a medical provider include but are not exclusive to:**

- When a child looks or acts sick, with or without a fever
- Cold symptoms for longer than 10-14 days or getting sicker or if there is a fever after the first few days
- Chronic coughing; uncontrollable coughing; wheezing
- Rashes; eye drainage; earache; toothache

#### **Student Wellness**

The Interboro School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, promotion and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

**[Interboro School Board Policy 246]**

## Developmental Screening

### Required Screenings

- The Interboro Early Learning Academy must complete a developmental screening on all children within 45 calendar days of the child's first day in the classroom setting. (ASQ-3)
- Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts providers shall ensure all children have had the opportunity to receive the recommended vision, hearing, and health screenings
- To meet this requirement, programs will:
  - Communicate to families about the importance of early screening
  - Collect evidence from families regarding screenings that have occurred within 180 days of the recommended screening timeframe
    - Families must provide documentation of child's most recent physical and dental examinations by November 14th.
- In cases where screenings have not occurred, provide timely opportunities for enrolled children to have the opportunity for screening. These screenings may be conducted by the providers or an outside agency including a physician.
- Interboro School District will communicate with families about screening results and support follow up as needed.

## Wellness Policy

*Classroom Parties:* No more than 2 items that contain added sugar as the first ingredient will be served at any classroom party.

- NO Candy or soda
- Fresh fruit and vegetables will be offered as an alternative
- Milk, 100% juice, or water only

*Birthday Treats:* No Food or Treats for Birthdays, as per the new district wellness policy.

- We love to celebrate student birthdays at the Early Learning Academy. Our new wellness policy eliminates birthday treats (food/snacks/sweets) as part of this celebration.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Lost and Found

The Early Learning Academy is not responsible for items that are lost at school. To prevent this from happening:

- Do not send your child to school with ANYTHING VALUABLE (jewelry, lose money, etc....)
- CLEARLY LABEL everything that your child brings to school with permanent marker in large dark letters (backpacks, lunch boxes, sweaters, sweatshirts, jackets, etc.)
- If something is lost, check with your child's teacher and ask the school office if the missing item has been found

### Visitors

Anyone who visits our school needs to stop in the office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge. For your child's safety, it is important for us to know who is in the building at all times! If you would like to visit your child's classroom or volunteer, please make arrangements in advance with the classroom teacher.

### Volunteers

The Early Learning Academy encourages and welcomes volunteers to our school. The Interboro School District has a Volunteer policy which requires all volunteers/chaperones to have the following clearances.

These clearances are required for any school chaperone or volunteer. See the district's website (Human Resources Department for a quick link to Clearances).

- **PA State background check (Act 34)\***
- **FBI Criminal (Act 114) – Required if you have not lived in PA for the past 10 consecutive years.**
- **Childline (Act 151)\***

\*No fee to obtain these volunteer clearances.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

The district will invite families to participate in the process of school review and improvement through building surveys, task forces, and strategic planning meetings.

The district will provide to each school facility, technical assistance, and other supports as needed in planning and implementing parent activities.

The district will encourage family involvement by reaching out to parents and guardians through a variety of resources- workshops, family lending libraries, district and teacher web pages, newsletters, and social media.

The Interboro Early Learning Academy will convene an annual meeting and open house each year to inform parents about the PreK program and ways to be involved.

The Interboro Early Learning Academy teacher will be available for parent conferences in person or by telephone during the two regularly scheduled district conferences in the fall and spring. Additionally, the teacher and parents will meet on a needs basis throughout the year to discuss any problems or concerns.

PreK families shall be provided with timely information about the program, the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessments used to measure student progress, and the developmentally appropriate expectations. Families will also be involved in the transition from PreK to Kindergarten.

PreK parents and guardians shall have the right to participate in decisions relating to their children's education; the district shall respond to any suggestions made by parents as soon as possible.

A minimum of two, family events will be scheduled each year by the Interboro Early Learning Academy and school staff to assist parents in learning more effective ways of supporting and working with their children. The district may hold events virtually if family feedback indicates such forms of meetings are most convenient.

A PreK lending library shall be available for parent use during the school year. The district will survey and meet with parents to review and revise, if necessary, the PreK family engagement plan, assess the level of parent involvement, and address any barriers to parental participation.

## WHEN YOUR CHILD STARTS SCHOOL

The first day of school is a milestone in your child's life. Your understanding at this "turning point" is important to your child's future attitude toward school and to his or her growth and development. Experts in child development emphasize that you, the parent, can play an important role in starting your child off with the self-confidence needed throughout life. This self-confidence is built upon good feelings about parents, other adults at school, other children, and himself or herself as a worthwhile human being.

Here are some things for you to keep in mind...

- Recognize that the first day your child goes to school is an important event.
- Remember that learning to like school and liking to learn are closely related.
- Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect and answering all questions honestly.
- Convey a positive attitude about school.
- Make transportation plans clear to your child.
- Create a normal routine environment at home the first few days of school.
- Get to know your child's teacher.
- Attend scheduled meetings to be informed about your child's educational program.
- Plan your day so that you can spend time with your child.
- Help your child cope with occasional frustrations and disappointments at school.
- Avoid comparing your child's school experiences with how siblings or neighbors did when they began school.
- Your child should be well rested – 10 to 12 hours of sleep per night.
- Your child should be well nourished before he or she comes to school.
- Your child should be able to use the bathroom without assistance.
- Your child should be learning to button, zip, tie shoes, and buckle without assistance.



## EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

- **What is Early Intervention?** Early intervention (EI) in Pennsylvania consists of services and supports designed to help families with children who have developmental delays or disabilities. EI services can include information about how children develop, parent or caregiver education, family supports, and developmental and instructional therapies that assist in child development. Early intervention builds upon the natural learning that occurs in the first few years. It is a process that promotes collaboration among parents, service providers and others who are involved with the child.
- **Who is eligible?** Infants, toddlers, and preschool children who have special needs due to a developmental delay or disability are eligible to receive early intervention services.
- **Where do children and families receive supports and services?** Free services may be provided during the child's daily activities at home or in the community, at childcare centers, preschools, play groups and Head Start programs.
- **How do I find out more information?** Contact the DCIU Early Intervention intake: 610-938-2830 x6503 or complete the online intake form found at <https://www.dciu.org/Page/3391>.
- PA's Office of Child Development and Early Learning's **CONNECT**, is designed to link families with early intervention and special education services. CONNECT is a statewide resource and referral system. The line is staffed 7:30 am to 3:30 pm each business day. CONNECT services can be accessed at 1-800-692-7288.

*The Interboro Early Learning Academy coordinates with the Infant and Toddler, and the Preschool Early Intervention programs to ensure a smooth transition for children coming into our Pre-K program from the Infant and Toddler program and who may be receiving Preschool Early Intervention services. It is important for the Interboro School District to know what, if any, supportive services have been determined to be necessary for a child identified as having a developmental delay or disability and are available through the Early Intervention program. Interboro School District staff will coordinate services with the DCIU Early Intervention team to ensure that students are not missing significant portions of their PreK program to receive their Early Intervention services.*

### Reading to Young Children

Research Findings: The best way for parents to help their children become better readers is to read to them – even when they are very young. Children benefit most from reading aloud when they discuss stories, learn to identify letters and words, and talk about the meaning of words.

#### Getting ready for reading...Story Time

- Have a regular story time before or after dinner or before bed. It will help to calm your child.
- Look at the book together. Talk about where the cover is. Find the back of the book. Talk about where the story starts. This will introduce your child to the way the book functions.
- Look through the pictures with your child before reading the story. Can your child predict what the story will be about? This will help your child to use picture clues for reading comprehension.
- While reading, follow the words with your finger. This will help your child learn the left to right progression for reading and writing.
- Stop on one page of print and ask your child to locate letters or words. “Your name starts with B. Can you find any B’s on this page?”
- When you reach a dramatic point in the story, stop and ask your child to predict what will happen next.
- Read for enjoyment. After the story, ask, “How would you feel if that happened to you?” “Do you wish you could try that?”
- Try telling your child a story without pictures. He/she will learn to listen carefully without having pictures as clues. Ask your child to tell you a story. Write it down and read it back to him/her.

Continue story time after your child is in school. Young children love to be read to, and it is a great (quiet) time for parents and children to spend together.

### Speaking and Listening

Research Finding: A good foundation in speaking and listening helps children become better readers. Parents are their child’s first and most important teacher. Parents can do many things at home to help their child succeed in school. They do this by offering encouragement and support. The following information is provided to assist parents as they work with their young child.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD GROW IN MATH

Research Findings: Young children learn math naturally, through play and informal experiences.

### Math in the Kitchen

Young children will enjoy assisting mom and dad in the kitchen while learning math concepts as well!

Encourage your child to:

- Help set the table - He/she can learn spatial concepts if you draw the shapes of the plate, fork, etc. on an old placemat and have your child match the utensil to each shape.
- Talk about the sequence of the mealtime... First, we set the table. Then we eat. Last, we clean up. Add more steps as your child's understanding of sequence expands.
- Help to put away the dishes - Your child will learn to sort and classify. Forks go in one section, spoons in another, etc.
- Help to bake dessert -He/she will learn measuring concepts (cup, teaspoon) and will be introduced to fractions ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ).

Of course, the best part of learning math in the kitchen is the valuable time that you are spending with your young child! He/she will learn to count. "How many plates do we set out?"

## IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Child development specialists know the importance of play because children discover and learn about their world through play. Play also promotes the total development of the child and enhances self-esteem as children succeed in play. A child playing in the following ways is forming a solid foundation for a life of learning:

When I dress-up and pretend play with household items, I am:

- practicing understanding and master adult roles
- practicing math and language skills
- organizing and using ideas
- symbolically using materials in meaningful ways

When I am listening to or looking at books with others, I am:

- making friends with books
- learning that printed words have meaning
- learning about other people and places
- often interacting with an important adult to develop verbal and listening skills

When I am building with blocks, I am:

- using my imagination and creativity
- learning about height, width, depth, and length
- experiencing patterns, symmetry, and balance
- gaining feelings of competence
- learning to cooperate, share, plan, negotiate

When I notice and play with things in nature, I am:

- investigating the world around me
- developing my curiosity
- growing in my sensory awareness
- appreciating beauty and order in nature

When I am playing with play dough and modeling clay, I am:

- strengthening and developing my small muscles
- developing my sensory awareness
- being creative and imaginative

When I am playing with paints and watercolors, I am:

- being creative and imaginative
- experimenting with colors, lines, form, spatial relationships, and methods of applying paint
- expressing my feelings and moods

When I am throwing, climbing, riding, and doing other physical activities, I am:

- discovering how my body moves
- learning to feel good about my body and myself
- developing my large muscles and learning skills
- developing the habit of being physically active

When I am playing with sand or water, I am:

- learning about pouring, measuring, and comparing
- being given an opportunity to expand my sensory awareness
- talking with my friends and learning about them

When I am playing with writing materials such as paper, pens, pencils, etc., I am:

- learning that I can communicate with squiggles and written words
- strengthening and developing my small muscles
- using a variety of writing tools to convey my thoughts and feelings

When I am playing with puzzles, pegboards, sewing cards, and other hands-on toys, I am:

- strengthening and developing my small muscles
- making discoveries
- developing eye-hand coordination
- working on problem-solving skills

<http://www.pta.org/programs/education/build2.htm>

*(Adapted from materials developed by Ingeborg Teske and Judy Bartell, staff of the Early Childhood Education Center, Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois 60305; (708) 209-3099.)*

## **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL GROWTH**

Preschool years are very important. We want your child to be as ready as possible for kindergarten. This is not just about knowing letters and numbers. It is also about knowing how to learn and get along with others. In our pre-k counts program, social-emotional learning is embedded throughout the day in the various activities and play centers that the students participate in.

The Second-Step Program that is used in the elementary grades is introduced in our Pre-K program. The Second Step program teaches skills in the following four areas:

1. **Skills for Learning:** Children gain skills to help them be better learners, including how to focus their attention, listen carefully, and ask for help.
2. **Empathy:** Children learn to identify and understand their own and others' feelings. Children also learn how to show care for others.
3. **Emotion Management:** Children learn how to calm down when they have strong feelings, such as worry or anger.
4. **Friendship Skills and Problem Solving:** Children learn how to make and keep friends and to solve problems with others in a positive way.