

Cary Park District
Preschool
Parent Handbook
2011-2012 School Year



1180 Silver Lake Road
Cary, IL 60013

Preschool Teacher line 847-516-4073
Preschool Director line 847-639-7448



255 Briargate Road
Cary, IL 60013
847-639-6100
www.carypark.com

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Preschool guidelines may be developed throughout the school year.
You will be notified in writing of any such additions or modifications.

Preschool Calendar

September

6/7- First day of school
21/22- Picture Day

October

7- NO SCHOOL- Dist. 26 Teacher Institute Day
10- NO SCHOOL- Columbus Day
20/21- Parent Day

November

21-25- NO SCHOOL- Dist. 26 Conferences/Thanksgiving Break

December

15/16- Holiday Program
19-30- NO SCHOOL- Winter Break

January

2- Preschool Resumes
16- NO SCHOOL- Martin Luther King Day
19- **Preschool in-house registration for 2012-2013**
30- **Resident open registration for 2012-2013**

February

3- Family Night
13- **Non-resident open registration for 2012-2013**
16/17- NO SCHOOL- Dist. 26 Conferences
20- NO SCHOOL- Presidents Day

March

16- All Preschool Field Trip- Raue Center
26-30- NO SCHOOL- Spring Break

April

2- Preschool Resumes
6- NO SCHOOL-Dist. 26 Non-Attendance Day

May

21/22- Last day of Preschool and End of the Year Celebration
23- All Preschool Picnic
24- Rain date for All Preschool Picnic

*This is a tentative calendar. Monthly calendars will contain up-to-date information.

Welcome...

...to the 2011-2012 Cary Park District Preschool. This handbook was prepared to answer many of your questions about our program. Please keep it handy as a reference throughout the school year.

Our Philosophy

To create a positive, sensitive and responsive environment to help children feel valued and grow with each learning experience. Through developmentally appropriate activities, we foster physical, emotional, social and cognitive growth while promoting a lifetime love for learning.

Our Teachers

Cary Park District's nurturing and experienced teachers provide a safe, caring and consistent environment for young children. Our teachers are qualified in early childhood development and attend conferences, seminars and workshops to keep current with issues in early childhood education, health and safety.

Our Program Goals

- Promote a child's sense of individual worth and belonging as a part of a group and community.
- Provide opportunities to learn and grow through exploration and play.
- Explore small group activities for specific skills.
- Provide opportunities to experiment and problem solve.
- Create a language rich environment through circle time, reading, books and conversation.
- Promote awareness of the larger community with guest speakers such as firefighters, dentists, etc.
- Establish communication between parents through progress reports, conferences, daily information board and conversations.
- Follow the guidelines set by Cary Community Consolidated School District 26 for Kindergarten readiness skills.

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Enrollment Requirements

Every child in attendance must be toilet-trained. We realize that minor accidents do happen; however, if there is a continual problem, the child's readiness for our program will be reassessed. Please dress your child in clothes that are easily removed for toileting needs, e.g., avoid overalls, belts, etc.

The following are required at time of registration or prior to the start of school:

- A copy of each child's birth certificate upon registration.
- A completed emergency card, child information sheet, photo release and waiver, permission to print home information, preschool waiver and discipline guidelines.
- A completed Health Immunization Form, including up-to-date immunizations and a current (six month) TB test. A lead screening is also recommended.***

***Health Immunization Forms are due by October 15, 2011.

Please update all information as changes may occur throughout the school year.

PLEASE SEND A BACKPACK/SCHOOL BAG WITH YOUR CHILD EACH DAY TO CARRY HOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND HIS/HER WONDERFUL CREATIONS!

Parent Involvement

Staff is very excited about being a part of your child's early childhood experience. We want to involve you as much as possible. Monthly calendars, Kite Tales and Teacher Tales will be sent home highlighting themes and activities that will happen in your child's class. We encourage you to continue your child's learning at home by discussing these topics.

Our parent helper program encourages parent involvement. This program is strictly a volunteer opportunity and is not required. Parents may wish to come and simply observe, help with group time, or assist with other daily activities. We do require that arrangements be made for siblings. If your child is experiencing separation anxiety, you may consider waiting until later in the year to volunteer. Your presence early in the program may cause confusion for your child.

Preschool Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign below acknowledging that you have read the Cary Park District Preschool Parent Handbook for the 2011-2012 school year and that you understand all Preschool guidelines. Remove this page from your Parent Handbook and return it to Preschool Staff.

If you have questions regarding any Preschool guidelines please feel free to contact the Preschool Director, Nancy Herbster at 847-639-7448.

*Preschool guidelines may be changed or developed throughout the school year. You will be notified in writing of any such additions or modifications.

Child(ren)'s Name(s)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Name Printed

Date

Tuition

Tuition is based on the entire nine-month school year and divided into nine equal payments for your convenience. Each family will receive a booklet with a payment coupon for each month's tuition. Payments are due by the 15th of each month with the first payment due August 15 for September's monthly tuition. Payments received after 10:00 pm on the 20th of any month will be assessed a \$15.00 late fee. Any account that is in arrears will result in the withdrawal of the child/ren from the Preschool program. Registration for additional Park District programs will not be accepted if you carry a balance on your family account.

Mail or drop off tuition payments to: Cary Park District
Attn: Billing Department
255 Briargate Road
Cary, IL 60013

Payment, excluding cash, may also be placed in the drop box located at the curb in front of the Cary Park District Community Center. If payment is cash, please drop off this payment to the Cary Park District front desk and receive a receipt for validation. The Cary Park District is not responsible for any cash payment that is mailed, dropped off in the drop box, or not validated by a receipt.

Families will receive a discounted Preschool rate if they have more than one child currently enrolled in the Preschool program during the same school year. Full tuition will be charged for the first child whose tuition is greater or equal to other sibling's tuition. Each additional child will receive a tuition discount of 15%. This discount does not apply to combined enrollments in other programs.

Tuition reimbursement will not be given for student illness, family vacations, holidays, emergency school closings, suspensions, or other circumstances that would cause a child to miss school.

Your canceled checks will serve as your receipt. End of year statements will be available upon request.

QUESTIONS ABOUT BILLING, PAYMENTS OR WITHDRAWAL REQUESTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO JAN AT (847) 639-6100, ext. 108, 8 AM-4:30 PM, MONDAY-FRIDAY.

Parent Communication

During arrival and departure, there is an ongoing opportunity for communication between parents and staff. Please feel free to discuss briefly your child's day with his/her teacher. Keep in mind, however, that teachers have additional responsibilities during these times. If you feel the need to set up a conference or observation, please contact the Preschool Director, Nancy Herbster, at (847) 639-7448 and she will be happy to make arrangements.

Conferences will be scheduled in November to review your child's progress throughout the first part of the school year and an end of the year progress report will be sent home.

School Adjustment

Children can take awhile to adjust to new environments. Please be aware that, for some children, hesitation for the first few weeks is normal. Take a few moments to help your child transition from home to school, e.g., helping him/her hang up his/her coat, greeting other children, etc., in order to ease this transition. Please utilize monthly calendars and talk with your child about what will be happening at school each day. Reassure your child that he/she will have fun at school with new friends and that you will return to pick him/her up at the end of school. At this point, it is best to say goodbye and leave the room. Lingering can make your child believe that you are going to stay on a regular basis. Leaving without saying goodbye or "sneaking" out is not recommended. Your child is left to wonder where you went and may then view the teacher as the "bad guy". When you say goodbye, the teacher can assist by helping your child find an activity or a friend. Before you know it, the "adjustment" is over and your child will be asking to come to school every day!

Arrival and Departure

To enable teachers class preparation time, school doors will remain locked prior to the start of the Preschool day. Teachers will unlock the south Preschool door at 8:55 AM for morning classes and 12:25 PM for afternoon classes to welcome in students. Parents must bring their child into the classroom and sign in each day. Upon arrival, children will be required to wash their hands before beginning their day.

For children's safety, school doors will remain locked during regular class time. At 11:20 AM and 2:50 PM, doors will be unlocked. If, for any reason, you need to enter the building during class time, please ring the doorbell on the south Preschool door.

Arrival and Departure (Continued)

Children must be signed out of Preschool each day by an authorized individual. Parents/guardians listed on the child's emergency card are considered authorized for pick-up unless documented otherwise on the child's emergency card. Legal documentation may be required if a parent/guardian is excluded from pick-up.

A parent/guardian must complete a 'Release of Preschool Child' form, for anyone other than a parent/guardian, and return it to Preschool staff to authorize additional individuals to pick up his/her child. A child will not be released to an unauthorized individual. In the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached and a completed 'Release of Preschool Child' form has not been submitted to Preschool staff, contacts listed on a child's emergency card will be called to pick up the child. Staff will ask to see a photo ID of an unidentified person picking up a child. The "Release of Preschool Child" form can be found at www.carypark.com.

If staff has not been contacted by a parent/guardian by 11:40 AM or 3:10 PM:

- Staff will attempt to reach the parent/guardian by phone.
- If unable to reach a parent/guardian, staff will call authorized individuals listed on the child's emergency card to pick the child up.
- In the event parents are unobtainable and authorized individuals are not able to pick the child up, the police will be notified.

Please keep in mind - promptness in dropping off and picking up is appreciated and will help your child feel more comfortable about school.

Late Pick-Up Fee

A late pick-up occurs when a child is picked up after 11:30 AM or 3:00 PM. We realize that unforeseen circumstances may lead to a late pick-up. The parent/guardian or authorized individual doing pick-up will sign an acknowledgment form without late charges assessed for the first late pick-up. In the event of additional late pick-ups, the parent/guardian or authorized individual will be asked to sign an acknowledgment form and an invoice for associated late charges will be mailed. Consistent lateness will result in being dropped from the program. Late charges are as follows: \$5.00 for the first five minutes and an additional \$1.00 per minute until the child is picked up. Time is confirmed according to the clock located in the classroom at the Preschool.

Behavior

Preschool participants are expected to always exhibit appropriate behavior. As with any large group of children, rules of discipline must be enforced by Cary Park District Staff. A caring and positive approach will be taken regarding behavior management and discipline. We hope to help children develop self-control and responsibility for their actions. Instructors will be firm and consistent in their approach and will establish simple, understandable rules:

We do not hurt ourselves.

We do not hurt others.

We do not hurt things around us.

Children will be encouraged to "use their words" to resolve conflicts or they may be redirected to alternate activities. If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents will be asked to meet with the child's teachers and Preschool Director. If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, consistently disruptive or dangerous, the child may be removed from the program.

*The Cary Park District reserves the right to dismiss a child from the Preschool program at any time.

Website Information

Visit the Cary Park District Preschool section of the Park District website, www.carypark.com. There you will find information on the Preschool, a copy of the Parent Handbook and required forms. Also is an online Bulletin Board that will contain Preschool newsletters and calendars, messages from the Preschool Director, and helpful information for parents. The 'Weather Update' section of the website will contain information on school closings.

While you are there sign up for the Cary Park District online newsletter. This newsletter contains information on all the latest happenings at the Park District, including early childhood and family programming.

From the website you may also access Rapid Reg-a real time online registration system. You may register for recreation programs and purchase or renew pool passes and fitness memberships all from the comfort of your home.

Medication

Medical History, including current medications should be listed on the Preschool Emergency Card. The Child Information Sheet provides the opportunity for a parent/guardian to note any special accommodation including medication needs of a participant. Medication will not be administered during Preschool by staff. If special accommodations are medication related, please contact the Preschool Director at (847) 639-7448 prior to the beginning of the program.

Special Needs

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the Preschool Director at time of registration if his/her child needs special accommodations in order to be successful in the Preschool program, i.e., behavior plans, specialized equipment, etc. The Cary Park District does work closely with NISRA (Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association) to ensure a smooth inclusion.

ADA

The Cary Park District complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The Park District will make reasonable accommodations in recreation programs to enable participation by an individual with a disability who meets essential eligibility requirements for that program. If you have questions regarding the Park District's ADA policy, or believe you have been unfairly discriminated against in the provision of programs, services or activities of the Cary Park District, please call Dan Jones, Director of Operations at (847) 639-6100.

Photographs

Pictures or videos may occasionally be taken of Preschool participants and family members. These pictures are used for historical and marketing purposes and will remain the property of the Cary Park District. Please complete the Photo Release and Waiver form indicating whether or not your child may have his/her picture taken.

School Closing

For information on school cancellations, listen to your radio (105.5 FM), call the Cary Park District information line at 847-639-6200 after 6:00 AM, or log on to Cary Park District's website at www.carypark.com. Information on school closings will be in the 'Weather Update' section of the website. The Cary Park District Preschool follows Cary Community Consolidated School District 26 decisions on school closings due to weather conditions. Therefore, if District 26 schools are cancelled, so is the Cary Park District Preschool.

Clothing

We work with many different types of materials and have a wide assortment of activities, so please dress your child in clothing that will not be ruined by spills or accidents. Loose, comfortable clothing is also more conducive to good active play participation and toileting needs. *Gym shoes or rubber-soled shoes are recommended for your child's safety.* Other shoes may be dangerous on outside equipment or tile floors. In case of an emergency please provide a complete change of clothes in a labeled plastic bag inside your child's backpack.

Outside time is built into Preschool's curriculum. Make sure your child is prepared with snow pants, boots, mittens, hat, etc. We encourage independence in dressing to go outside. Boots should be easily slipped on and must be taken off at the coat hooks. When there is snow, children without snow pants will be asked to stay on the sidewalk. We will go outside if the temperature, including wind chill, is 30 degrees or warmer.

Personal Belongings

We ask that children leave their toys and personal items at home other than those related to school. Parents will be informed of exceptions as themed programming is planned. There will also be "Show & Tell" days where specific items may be brought from home. These days will be indicated on your monthly calendars. Please use good judgment when helping your child choose an item...no toy weapons or sharp, breakable objects.

Lost & Found

Label your child's belongings including: backpacks, mittens, hats, etc. A lost and found container will be located at the Preschool entrance. Items not claimed will be donated or discarded periodically. Preschool staff is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen items.

Field Trips/Guest Visitors

Field trips and guest visitors are planned to extend your child's learning experiences, enhancing their understanding of their environment, their community, themselves and the world around them. Field trips and guest visitors are related to the different themes and offer opportunities for hands-on discovery and exploration. Guest visitors will include: Fire fighters, a dentist, an eye doctor, Cary Area Public Library, and McHenry County Conservation District. If you have a special talent or are a local "professional" who would be interested in sharing your skills with children, please let staff know. One all-preschool field trip is planned and additional field trips are planned for children in the 4 year old and Junior 5's programs. Parent involvement is appreciated. These trips are meticulously planned to ensure the safety of all children. Information regarding all off-site programming and special activities will be sent home to inform parents of the upcoming events.

The Art Experience

We look at art as a "hands-on" experience, focusing on the *process not the product*. Many children's early art creations may not look as they "should" to adults, but, please remember, a lot of time and creativity were used. Commend your child on the colors and materials he/she chose. Ask how the project was made. We want to encourage creativity and increase exposure to a variety of materials.

Snacks

Snack time has been included in our program as a time for children to socialize either in small groups or all together. Snacks and beverages are supplied by the Park District and distributed daily to students. For the safety of all, our snacks will be peanut free.

Celebrating Birthdays

Birthday recognition is important. For the safety of all we ask that you do not bring in birthday snacks. Instead, we encourage you to donate the gift of a book to commemorate your child's special day. We will inscribe the book with your child's name and the date given to the school. It will become part of our permanent classroom library to be enjoyed for many years to come.

Please do not pass out birthday invitations (unless you are inviting the entire class) in school or ask staff to do so. Even at age three, children are aware of who is and who isn't being invited and we want to avoid any hurt feelings.

Safety

Safety is very important to us, but accidents do happen. Our staff is trained to handle basic first aid situations.

Minor: In the event of a minor injury such as scrapes, bumps, etc, a child will be given TLC and basic first aid as needed. Parents will be notified upon pick-up.

Major: In the event of a major injury such as a major bump (specifically to the head), need for stitches, or any injury that would require more than basic first aid, a parent will be contacted immediately to enable him/her to get the child medical attention as he/she deems necessary.

Emergency: In the event of any urgent medical situation, paramedics and parents will be contacted immediately. The parent/guardian signature on the emergency card allows us to obtain emergency medical attention in the parent's absence.

Absent and/or Sick Children

If your child is ill or will not be attending Preschool on any given day, please call the Preschool Teacher Line, (847) 516-4073, to notify staff. If a child has been home due to illness, he/she must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to Preschool.

Preschool staff has the authority to refuse entry to any child who shows signs of illness. For the protection of all children, your child should be kept home if he/she shows any of the following symptoms: fever, vomiting, excessive coughing, discharge from the eyes, ears, or nose, diarrhea, or rash.

If a child has been exposed to a contagious disease and symptoms appear, he/she should be kept home and the condition reported immediately to the Preschool Director. A doctor's note may be required to return to the program.