



Eagle County Schools Early Childhood Program Handbook

Early Childhood Vision:

**To provide the tools and resources to children, families and staff,
so they become thinkers and doers, ensuring everyone
reaches their highest potential.**

Welcome to our school! Our staff encourages your ideas, suggestions, and participation in your child's Early Childhood Education program. We are committed to promoting all areas of growth, and development, building self-esteem and a love of learning in children.

This handbook is provided as a guide to our program and to support a healthy and satisfying experience for you and your child. We want the time your child spends with us to be a cooperative effort between family, child, and staff, and one that will be a positive step in your child's educational experience. This handbook will be helpful in answering questions that may arise concerning our program. We ask that you keep it handy after reading the following pages carefully. If you have any questions, please contact one of your child's teachers or your Preschool Director listed on the front page of this document.

Who We Are

The Eagle County Schools Preschool Program values small class size, low teacher-child ratios, individualized program planning and collaborative partnerships with families. We believe that each child is a unique and priceless gift entrusted to our care. We respect, value, and accept all children in our program as we guide and support their learning experiences.

Who Attends Our Preschool

The Eagle County Schools Early Childhood (ECE) program values diversity and we are proud that our program includes children ages 3-5 years, from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, including children with varying levels of developmental abilities. We are required to use the school district age cut-off dates for the children we serve, this means children must be at least three years old by October 1st unless they are receiving special education services. Through support from Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program, Colorado Department of Education and Eagle County Schools, we are able to offer a high quality program to all children based on availability.

Any parent who has concerns about their child's development can access a free screening program by calling Child Find at 970-328-3750. Child Find provides screenings in vision, hearing, speech and language, and motor development for any child in Eagle County.

Some children qualify to participate in the program through the Eagle County Schools Head Start and/or Colorado Preschool Program. If you would like more information about these programs please call the Early Childhood Office at 970-328-3942. Information is also available on the Eagle County Schools website, www.eagleschools.net.

Parents may enroll their children during the school year calendar for half day, full day, or extended day basis but know priority enrollment is given for full-day full-time enrollment. Unfortunately, our capacity is limited so we are not able to serve all families that may want to enroll.

A waitlist is maintained based on day application is submitted and priority will be given in the following order:

- Children of ECS employees who attend five full days
- Children who attend five full days
- Due to the limited capacity, Preschool Plus will consider prior school year attendance when prioritizing enrollment

Program Description

The Eagle County Schools Preschool Program uses the ECS Rigorous Curriculum, the Creative Curriculum and the Early Childhood Developmental Guidelines to develop their curriculum and assure the Colorado State Standards are fully incorporated into the program.

Other programs such as Read, Play and Learn, Zoophonics, Incredible Years and Estrellita may be used as supplementary materials. The program uses developmentally appropriate, language-rich, literacy-based activities to support and extend the themes through activities that address all areas of a child’s development: physical, emotional, social, linguistic, and cognitive.

Purpose and Philosophy:

We believe that children learn best through play, so our learning environment offers a variety of activities, materials, and experiences to promote each child’s learning and development. We strive to create a balance between a child’s self-initiated spontaneous learning and teacher-planned, structured activities and projects.

We provide opportunities for children to engage in hands-on, active learning that is intellectually engaging, socially relevant, and personally meaningful to children. A balance of rest and active movement is included in the daily schedule. All activities are designed to foster self-esteem, self-control and independence.

An assessment of individual children’s development and learning is essential and is used to adapt curriculum, teaching, communication with families and to evaluate our program’s effectiveness. We assess children three times a year using Teaching Strategies GOLD, to track children’s progress and development. We work in collaborative partnerships with families to achieve shared goals for their children.

Discipline

The Eagle County Schools Preschool Program believes that helping young children acquire self-discipline, self-confidence and social skills is an important part of the Early Childhood curriculum. We intentionally teach acceptable behavior and provide real opportunities for children to work collaboratively and build important social skills, such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking with others to solve problems. Teachers use positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging acceptable behavior, redirecting children to more acceptable activities, grouping children, setting clear limits and intervening to enforce consequences for unacceptable, harmful behavior.

If a child does not respond to these positive guidance techniques, we would then schedule a conference with the parents to develop a plan on how to better support the child’s social and emotional development. When a situation occurs that makes a child’s needs difficult

for staff and parents to adequately address, the family will be given information on how to access our Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist. We believe that every child is unique and respect each child's developing capabilities. Our goal is to offer an environment of encouragement and genuine respect where children are able to develop confidence and a sense of competence.

Parent/Teacher Communication

The Eagle County Schools Preschool Program values open and frequent communication with parents. Parents are always welcome in the classroom!

A newsletter is sent home every month to keep families informed of what is being covered in school. All communication is sent in both English and Spanish. A welcome home visit will be scheduled with you early in the program year.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the fall and in the spring and your child's end of the year progress will be shared during the spring home visit. We love sharing information with you about your child's day. However, arrival and departure times are usually not the best times for extended parent-teacher conferences. Please feel free to request a conference when we need to have a longer discussion.

What is going on in the total life of a child can affect his/her preschool experience. Please keep preschool staff informed of changes that may be taking place in your child's life, as that could impact the child at school.

Enrollment/Withdrawal Procedures

The Early Childhood Program follows the Eagle County Schools enrollment policy, and children will attend the preschool determined by their home residence whenever possible.

Upon acceptance into the program families will be notified by an ECS staff member. Each family will complete an online pre-registration process, which can be accessed at <http://www.eagleschools.net>. An appointment with the early childhood registrar will need to be scheduled to finalize the enrollment process. Each family **must** bring the child's birth certificate, immunization record and proof of residency to the appointment.

Unfortunately, no child can attend without this information. Please note: Parents seeking non-medical immunization exemptions must submit a non-medical exemption form, available at www.colorado.gov/vaccineexemption. Children with an exemption may be kept out of childcare during a disease outbreak.

A recent well child health examination/physical must be submitted within 30 days. If this is not submitted within this time frame, the program has the right to deny attendance of their child until the physical is submitted. A dental examination must be submitted within 90 days.

The program can meet the needs of almost all children and if there are challenges, the program would work with the family to address unsafe behaviors and behavior guidance plans would be developed with families as part of this process. However, we do reserve the right to disenroll a child or family when the safety and well-being of other children or staff are at risk. The only other time we would disenroll a child would be if there is a

delinquency of payments. In all situations, we would provide at least a two week notice any time a child is asked to leave the program and require the same notice if families plan to withdraw their child and/or change their schedule.

The Early Childhood Program follows the Eagle County Schools variance policy, and children will attend the preschool determined by their home residence whenever possible.

Hours of Operation

The Preschool Program hours of operation are listed on the front page of this document. The preschool follows the school district calendar and is open on the days that the school district is in session. This calendar is given at the beginning of the school year. If you need additional copies you can find the calendar on the Eagle County Schools website. (www.eagleschools.net)

There is some availability to enroll in Extended Day or Preschool Plus programming. Extended Day will operate after school hours each day during the school year calendar. Due to high demand all children enrolled, as Extended Day will need to commit to a schedule of 4 or 5 days per week for the entire school year. Preschool Plus operates during some of our school breaks as well as summer. A two-week (14 days) written notice is required for schedule changes or withdrawal for all the programs. You can contact Jody Ejnes, Operations Coordinator at 970-328-3947 with any questions in regard to Extended Day or Preschool Plus.

Children may not be dropped off before the start time listed, because there is no supervision before that time. Children must be picked up by their scheduled pick-up time, or late pick-up fees of \$1.00 for each minute (starting at five minutes past the end time listed) will be charged. This charge applies for the half-day program as well as extended day and Preschool Plus.

If a child is not picked up by 30 minutes past their scheduled pick-up time, and parents or emergency contacts cannot be reached, staff is required to contact the Police Department for assistance.

During hours of operation we have an open door policy. Families are always welcome and encouraged to stop by the preschool to visit, ask questions or help in the classroom.

Sample Daily Schedule: Each program will provide a schedule to families at the start of the school year. The following is a sample of a typical daily schedule.

AM: A balance of child selected, teacher directed activities, lunch, brushing teeth, independent reading and outdoor time.

PM: Nap/Rest Time, a balance of Teacher directed and child selected activities snack and additional outdoor exploration for extended day.

There are special events offered at the elementary schools that the preschool may attend. Short instructional videos are included in the program; however children will receive no

more than 30 minutes of screen time per week. There is no television use without prior permission from families and only for special occasions.

Children will spend one hour each day in outdoor play. Please have your child dressed appropriately.

Fees

Tuition is \$46 per extended day, \$36.00 per full day, and \$26.00 per half day. Parents are charged monthly in advance for every day that their child is scheduled to attend. We are not able to offer vacation or sick days so we can provide our staff a consistent work schedule, except during the Preschool Plus Summer Program. **Payment is required prior to attendance and is due on the first day for the current month.** We send out statements as a courtesy, but know tuition is due on the first of the month even if there is a delay in getting your statement. All checks are to be made payable to Eagle County Schools.

2018-2019 Fee Schedule

Preschool Schedule	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days
1/2 day	\$26	\$52	\$78	\$104	\$130
Full Day	\$36	\$72	\$108	\$144	\$180
Extended Day	\$46	\$92	\$138	\$184	\$230
+ Full Day	\$10	\$20	\$30	\$40	\$50
+ Extended Day	\$20	\$40	\$60	\$80	\$100
Summer PS+	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$200	\$250

If tuition payment is not received by the 10th day of the month, we will begin to assess a \$10/day charge on business days only (Monday through Friday), and this assessment will not exceed 10 business days or \$100. If payment is not received by the 10th business day, the child can no longer attend preschool.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

All children are to be escorted directly to and from the classroom. If a child is dropped off while the class is out of the building for a special event or field trip, the child will stay with the office and/or health staff until program staff is available to accept the child. The child will be signed in at the front office.

Each child must be picked up by an adult (18+) authorized by the parent or guardian. Please be sure the school is always provided with an up-to-date list of persons permitted to pick up your child. Children are only released to people for whom the preschool has written authorization. **Teachers will not release children to anyone else.** Proper identification must be shown for an authorized person to pick up a child.

Families must sign children in and out each day. A sign in and out sheet will be posted by each classroom and includes a parent/guardian signature and time of day. Any visitors to the classroom must also sign in and out on a separate form provided. Throughout the day,

the children will be counted frequently to make sure all children are still present. In addition, the sign-in and out forms provide a name-to-face system the program uses anytime leaving or entering the classroom to ensure all children are accounted for at all times. At the end of the day, staff will check that all children have been signed out and do a visual sweep and check all classrooms to ensure that all children have gone home.

If the program has a reasonable belief that the authorized individual is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and the authorized individual leaves with the child and is operating a motor vehicle, then the program must immediately report such to police or social services. If the program has a reasonable belief that the authorized individual is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and the authorized individual leaves with the child, but is not operating a motor vehicle, the program must still immediately call law enforcement and/or social services if the program reasonably believes that the child's health, life, or well-being is endangered.

If inclement weather prevents children from leaving school, staff will remain with the children until it is safe to transport them home.

Your child's class may go on walking field trips with parent permission. Parents will be notified in advance. Please call ahead if you will be late so that we can arrange for you to bring your child to the event or make other arrangements.

Snacks and Lunch

All meals are served in the classrooms and we implement family style to help teach children important self-help skills and provide a social time to build relationships with teachers and between children.

Lunch: The Eagle County Schools Preschool Program offers families a choice of bringing a sack lunch or buying a hot lunch from the cafeteria. Sack lunches should be clearly labeled. Please see the healthy lunch flyer for nutritious ideas for sack lunches. If we see that a child's lunch brought from home does not meet required nutritional needs, we will offer supplemental food in the areas lacking adequate nutrition and then set up a meeting with families to review nutritional expectations we are required to follow. Hot lunches are ordered each morning. You may send in payment for hot lunches daily or pay by the week or month. Payment can also be made online at www.schoolcafe.com. All checks should be payable to Eagle County Schools. Please check at your school for current lunch and milk prices. Lunch is available at a reduced price or at no cost for those children who qualify.

Snacks for Preschool: The Eagle County Schools Preschool Program provides a nutritious breakfast each morning and snacks each morning and afternoon. A menu of snacks can be found posted in the classrooms.

To accommodate children with food allergies, there may be some food items that are restricted from being served or brought to the center.

Illness

It is important to all of our families and staff that our classroom environment is a healthy one. WE REQUEST THAT YOU DO NOT BRING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF S/HE IS SHOWING SIGNS OF ILLNESS (this includes fever, diarrhea, and vomiting). PLEASE DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD TYLENOL OR OTHER MEDICATION AND SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL. Only children well enough to participate fully in our program should be brought to school. We have NO provisions for a child to remain inside during outside playtime.

Deciding whether to keep your child at home or when to send a child home from preschool can be difficult. This causes changes in plans and makes life complicated, especially for working parents. The best way to be prepared for these unavoidable sick days is to plan ahead. Find out your employer's sick leave policies if you work during the day. If it is difficult for you to take time away from work, you may need to find an alternative caregiver for your child when s/he is too sick to be at preschool.

If your child becomes ill while at preschool, s/he will be made comfortable and separated from other children if appropriate and you will be contacted right away. If we are unable to reach you, we will begin contacting names on the emergency contact list. We ask that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, children be picked up within one hour of notification.

KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF YOUR CHILD SHOWS THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS WITHIN THE LAST 24 HOURS:

- Fever – If your child had a fever the night before, 100.5 or higher, s/he should stay home the next day.
- Vomiting – If your child vomits during the night, s/he should stay home for rest and a liquid or soft diet.
- Contagious illness (Impetigo, ringworm, etc.) – These must be properly treated and proven non-contagious before a child can return to school.
- Diarrhea – A child should not come to school with liquid stools.
- Coughs and Runny Noses – Your child may come to school as long as there is no fever or persistent cough.

RULE OF THUMB:

KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD IS TOO SICK TO PLAY OUTSIDE FOR 60 MINUTES in any weather OR if s/he has any condition that requires one-on-one care OR if your child's illness prevents him/her from participating in the usual program routine.

Children need to be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to the program. Sooner or later all children get sick. Please contact the preschool when your child is ill and describe the problem. If a specific diagnosis is made, such as Strep Throat, Chicken Pox, etc., please let us know so other families can be alerted, but be assured we keep the names of sick children confidential.

LICE: Head lice are a common community problem. Head lice are not dangerous, they do not transmit disease, but they do spread easily. Head lice often infest people with good hygiene and grooming habits. If your child has live lice, you will be contacted, the child can stay until the end of the day and may return after treatment has begun. Children with live lice will be asked to receive treatment above but those with nits (eggs) are not excluded.

Medications

If your child is taking an antibiotic, please do not send him/her to school until s/he has been taking the medication for 24 hours.

State law requires that all medications administered at school must have a doctor's note, including over-the-counter medications. Prescriptions will be stored in locations inaccessible to children, and will be administered by trained and delegated personnel.

Over-the-counter products, such as Tylenol, aspirin, cough syrup, etc. provided by the parents may be administered at school ONLY with written permission from the parents and a note from the physician, which includes directions for administering the medication. Any preventative rash cream (for children in diapers) may be sent to school and applied with parental written consent as long as the child does not have open wounds or broken skin. Please clearly label any diaper rash cream for your child.

Child Accident/Emergency

If your child has a minor injury at school, an incident report will be completed and parent will be notified at the end of the day. In emergency situations, a parent will be contacted immediately. If we are unable to reach you, we will begin contacting your identified emergency contacts. It is vital for the preschool to have correct information in case of emergency.

We will call 911 to seek medical attention in the event that a child needs emergency medical attention for a serious injury, if the situation can escalate if they are not treated immediately and/or it is life threatening situation. Families will be notified immediately under these circumstances.

PLEASE KEEP YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATED! WE MUST HAVE CURRENT TELEPHONE NUMBERS WHERE YOU CAN BE REACHED AT ALL TIMES! If we cannot reach a parent/guardian or your emergency contact, we will contact the necessary emergency personnel. Please notify us with alternate phone contacts if you plan to be away from your usual phone number for the day

Personal Belongings/Clothing

Children should come prepared with a change of clothes in case of an accident. Please send an extra set of clothes with your child each day or feel free to leave a set at school. All clothing should be labeled with the child's first and last name for easy identification.

We will make every effort to ensure that your child's belongings are not lost while at school. However, we recommend that special toys or valuables (money) stay at home. The school will not be liable for any lost items.

Your child will play hard at school. S/he will be involved in craft projects and They will get dirty. For this reason we ask that you send your child in washable, comfortable play clothes.

In the winter, all children need snow pants, boots, a warm coat, hat and mittens or gloves. Please send your child to school with appropriate clothing for our ever-changing mountain weather. We will play outside every day!

Sun Protection:

The center must apply sunscreen, have the parent or guardian apply sunscreen, or use another form of parent- or guardian-approved sun protection for children prior to children going outside. Sunscreen must be reapplied as directed by the product label. It is always a good idea to send your child to school with sunscreen already applied. If you send in your own sunscreen, please clearly label it with your child's first and last name.

Toileting and Diapering

Some children start preschool without being fully toilet trained. We are happy to work with you and your child through this transition. Children are encouraged to use bathrooms in each classroom, but are not "pushed" to use the bathroom unless they demonstrate that they are ready.

Please send adequate changes of clothing and diapers on a daily basis. For those children still in diapers or Pull-ups, please send several (5) diapers daily, wipes, and two changes of clothing, all clearly labeled. Many parents bring enough supplies to keep at school to last for several weeks.

For children who are beginning to wear underpants, accidents will happen! Five or six changes of clothes may be necessary if your child attends all day. Diapers or Pull-ups may be needed during naptime. Please send in the necessary supplies so that we can help your child stay comfortable at school.

Photographs

We often take pictures of children engaged in play and learning throughout the school year. These will be used in the classroom, for school projects and shared at parent-teacher conferences. You will frequently see your child's pictures posted in the classroom. Please indicate during online enrollment if you do not want your child's picture included in classroom displays.

Transportation/Field Trips

We will not regularly transport children. Most field trips will be walking field trips. Written permission is needed for a child to go on a field trip. All field trips are supervised by our staff, and we ensure that proper ratios are maintained. We may ask for volunteers to help us keep lower ratios while on the walking field trip.

Emergency and Weather Procedures

Your child will participate in regular emergency drills for evacuation, lockdown, shelter in place and lockout. In the event of an actual emergency or school closure, you will be able to receive information, including information regarding reunification with your child, from one of the following methods:

- Eagle County Schools website www.eagleschools.net on the Urgent Board
- Phone calls from your child's teacher or school secretary/registrar
- Automated call system through School Messenger
- Email and/or letter from the Superintendent's office.
- Reverse 911
- Local radio stations
- www.ecalert.org
- In the case that after school activities are cancelled due to inclement weather or an actual emergency, **Extended Day programming will also be cancelled.** All children will need to be picked up no later than the end of their regular school day.

Eagle County Schools maintains a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan. This plan is available upon request. All emergency plans include name to face attendance to assure all children and staff are accounted for.

Inclement Weather:

Each classroom is provided the Child Care Weather Watch resource provided by Colorado Department of Health and Human Services and the program follows the recommendations set forth in the document. The programs assure children received adequate gross motor activity on a daily basis, be it indoors or outside. If inclement weather prevents children from leaving school, staff will remain with the children until it is safe to transport them home.

Lockdown: A lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside of the school building. Lockdown uses classroom security to protect students and staff from threat. The Lockdown Protocol demands locking individual classroom doors or other access points, moving room occupants out of line of sight of the corridor windows and having room occupants maintain silence. No indication of occupancy will be revealed until first responders open the door.

Lockout: A lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building. The Lockout Protocol demands bringing students into the main building and locking all outside access points. Where possible, classroom activities would continue uninterrupted.

Evacuate: Evacuate is called when there is a need to move students from one location to another. The Evacuate Protocol demands students and staff move in an orderly fashion. Students are instructed to form a single file line and leave the building through pre-designated evacuation routes to pre-designated safety locations.

Shelter: Shelter is called when the need for personal protection is necessary. Situations that require the implementation of the Shelter Protocol include tornados, earthquakes, floods, and hazardous material exposure. Actions may include "Drop, Cover and Hold" and "Seal". In addition, students may be asked to maintain silence.

As a parent, your responsibility is to assure your contact information is always up to date, review evacuation routes and emergency exits at your child’s school, and keep school phone numbers accessible.

OFF SITE EVACUATION LOCATIONS

SITE	PLAN A: OFF-SITE EVACUATION LOCATION	PLAN B: OFF-SITE EVACUATION LOCATION
Red Hill Elementary	Gypsum Creek Middle School	Gypsum Recreation Center
June Creek Elementary School	Berry Creek Middle School	Battle Mountain High School; Plan C: WECMRD Field House
Brush Creek Elementary School	Capitol Movie Theater	
Eagle Valley Elementary School	Eagle Fire Station on 3 rd Street	
Avon Elementary	Avon Recreation Center	
Red Sandstone Elementary	Westwind Parking Garage	Vail Mountain School Gymnasium
Homestake Peak School	ECS Bus Barn	Eagle-Vail Pavilion
Gypsum Elementary School	Eagle Valley High School	Gypsum Recreation Center Plan C: Gypsum Library Plan D: Ridley’s Grocery
Edwards Elementary School	Eagle County Paramedic Service	

Classroom teachers will verify attendance throughout the day to ensure that all children are accounted for. Children will have a name-to-face head count taken whenever they exit or enter the classroom. While we have several systems in place to properly supervise children at all times, parents will be notified immediately if a child should become lost, and we will immediately call 911. If parents are unavailable, staff will reach individuals listed as the emergency contacts on the enrollment paperwork.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All child-care staff is legally required to report any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect to the State or County Department of Human Services immediately. Our philosophy is to act in the best interest of the child, to be as supportive and non-threatening as possible to the family in the program.

Parents are responsible for reporting to the classroom teacher, Family Services Coordinator or Preschool Director any inappropriate behavior or action toward children by staff. The Child Abuse number is (970) 328-7720.

Reporting Complaints

Families who have concerns regarding a teacher or other staff member should set up a time to meet directly with that person to discuss the issue. If the family is not satisfied with the result of that discussion, they should speak to the person’s supervisor. The Preschool Director supervises all on-site staff and any concerns regarding Preschool Directors should be taken to the Director of Early Childhood programs for Eagle County Schools, Shelley Smith, at 328-3958.

Should a family feel that it is necessary to file a complaint concerning suspected licensing violations or child abuse, those concerns must be directed to the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Please contact: Department of Human Services
 1575 Sherman Street
 Denver, CO 80203
 1-800-799-5876

Family Participation

Parents are encouraged to visit the preschool and actively participate in their child's preschool experience. Our open door policy welcomes and encourages parents to call or visit anytime. It is helpful to let the preschool staff know ahead of time when possible. All visitors to the school are required to stop in the main office to sign in and receive a nametag prior to entering the classroom.

We hope that you will participate in your child's program in a variety of ways, such as:

- Reading to the children and doing storytelling activities
- Recording our stories on audiotape
- Assisting with classroom projects or organization
- Collecting donations for the classroom: classroom materials, dress-up clothing, special items for projects, etc.
- Assisting with walking field trips
- Helping to organize special events or celebrations
- Making games, signs, learning center activities
- Doing special indoor or outdoor activities with the children
- Helping to provide supervision during playground or learning center times
- Participating with classroom fundraising activities
- Attending parent meetings, workshops and support groups.

These are a few ideas of how you can volunteer and contribute to your child's care and educational experience. Please let us know of any unique talents that you would like to offer or share with our preschool program. The most successful early childhood programs have strong parent involvement and family support. We always welcome your input!

We are glad that you enrolled your child in the Eagle County Schools Preschool Program and we are pleased to provide children and families a quality preschool experience. It is our goal that we are a support to you and your family. Please do not hesitate to call upon us with any questions or concerns. Your participation is always welcome!