

Lockport Township Park District

THE LEARNING STEP PRE-SCHOOL



The Learning Step Preschool

Parent Handbook – 2026/27 School Year

We commit to provide a secure environment that ensures opportunities for fun, warmth, exploration, and discovery. The program strives to nurture and encourage these qualities in its students by providing an atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth and development of the child as a whole, in order to prepare them for their daily elementary school years to come.

Dear Parents,

Your child is off to school, beginning a journey of growing and learning that will last a lifetime. For some, this is their first experience in an organized preschool setting, and you have eagerly waited for this day! We have, too! We feel that these first steps in education at the Lockport Township Park District-Learning Step Preschool are very important to the well-being and success of your child. Thank you for entrusting your children to our care. We look forward to the great year ahead!

LOCATION OF PRESCHOOL FACILITIES

Dellwood Park Community Center
1811 S. Lawrence Avenue, Lockport – **815-838-1183**
3s: 2/3 Day Orange Room- 815-660-6418
4s: 2/3 Day Purple Room- 815-660-6419
4s: 5 Day Blue Room- 815-660-6420
Enrichment: 815-386-2380

For more information please contact:

Heather Kuncis, Preschool/Youth Program Supervisor
Phone: 815-838-1183 extension 220
Email: hkuncis@lockportpark.org

CURRICULUM

We base our daily activities on the Illinois Early Childhood Learning and Development Standards, utilizing the Get Set for School Curriculum that is flexible, hands-on, and sensory based. It offers a full pre-writing program and materials that build critical early math and literacy skills.

Our staff provides a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that are selected to emphasize concrete experiential learning:

- Socially – by fostering rewarding relationships with children and adults.
- Physically – by encouraging use of large and small muscles and exploring the relationship between them and the things in their environment.
- Intellectually – by providing opportunities for inquiry, exploration, discovery and stimulation of language and by nurturing a child's natural curiosity.
- Emotionally – by providing a gradual transition from home to school; meeting each child and parent with trust; helping them learn to interact with their peers and help establish his/her image of themselves as a worthwhile person.

Each child has their own pattern of growth; we strive to give each child a variety of experiences to help them learn. We believe and value each child's uniqueness. The staff will meet each child at his/her own level; where warmth and wisdom are evident in qualified adult leadership.

CALENDAR YEAR

The program is a 35-week program beginning the day after Labor Day. The following holidays are observed:

Columbus Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving (3 days)
Winter Break (2 weeks)
Martin Luther King's Birthday

President's Day
Spring Break (1 week)

COMMUNICATION

A monthly newsletter will be available which will list the weekly curriculum activities for each classroom. You can find this on the preschool page of our website: www.lockportpark.org.

Click “Preschool” located in the Quick Link Box on the home page. Once you are on the Learning Step Preschool Page – scroll down to Monthly Calendar.

Each classroom will communicate through Class Dojo. Invitations to Class Dojo are sent out mid August. You will be able to sign up using any iOS device, Android device, Kindle Fire, or computer to connect.

Our staff is always available to help with any questions or concerns that you may have. If you need more than a few minutes of time to talk with the teacher, we ask that you call/message and set up a time that would be mutually convenient for you and the teachers. Kindly please allow up to 24 hours for teachers to respond to your inquiries. Please note: Teachers will respond to messages during school hours only.

The teachers will perform a formal evaluation in February/March, and will send a progress form home.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

You will drop off and pick up your child at the preschool entrance with your child’s teachers. Please walk your child up to the door where one of the teachers will meet you to check your child in. The other teacher will escort your child to designated area until everyone arrives. Once all students are present they will walk to their classroom with their teachers. At the end of class, the teachers will walk to children to the door. Parents will sign out their children with their teacher, and the children will be dismissed one at a time after being signed out.

***PLEASE NOTE: Blue Room Parents** – please do not arrive any earlier than 9:10AM for the morning class, and 12:40PM for the afternoon class.

****Parents dropping/picking up their child from Enrichment** will do so at the main entrance to DPCC.

ENRICHMENT

This program is designed to extend the school day while providing fun and engaging activities and social experiences. It is also available as a stand-alone program to provide age appropriate experiences for children aged 3-5. The students enrolled in the Preschool Program & Enrichment will be escorted by staff between the programs. **All children enrolled in Enrichment should bring a lunch(nut free) to school.** Please send items that your child is likely to eat, in packages that your child can open with little assistance. (Items should be ready to eat and should not require heating in a microwave. Your child will also need a filled insulated water bottle that is spill proof. Please do not send disposable water bottles as they are difficult to refill and spill easily.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

The Preschool Staff should be informed of any special physical or medical conditions of the students to better enable them to provide a quality learning experience.

Keep your child at home if they are exhibiting any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Swollen or reddened eye and or discharge from eyes
- Yellow or green nasal discharge and/or profuse clear discharge
- Earache
- Skin rashes or sores

If your child develops any of the above symptoms or is in any other way sick in the opinion of the teacher, you will be called to pick up your child. Also, parents should report any communicable diseases, such as, measles, chicken pox, or mumps or highly contagious illnesses, such as Covid-19, Flu or Strep Throat to their child's teacher. **Children that are infected with a communicable disease or highly contagious illness will need to remain symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

*If your child has any allergies please let your teacher know. If the teacher might need to dispense medication such as an inhaler or an Epi Pen, there will be additional forms for the parent to fill out giving consent and directions.

ABSENCES

If your child will be absent, please call the direct line of your child's class, or message your child's teacher on Class Dojo before class begins. Teachers will give this number to parents at the beginning of the school year. It will also be listed on September's Newsletter on the Preschool Link on lockportpark.org

SNOW POLICY

A message will be sent out on Class Dojo if we have a weather emergency and close school.

Also, if the Lockport Grade Schools and High School are closed due to inclement weather, our classes will also be canceled as well.

Drinks

Your child should bring a filled "spill proof" water bottle with them to school – no glass or disposable plastic bottles. Please send **ONLY WATER** in the bottle and label it with your child's name.

No snacks or food will be served in the preschool classrooms

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We enjoy celebrating birthdays in our classrooms. Parents are welcome to send in treat bags to celebrate their child's birthday with their class. These items will be sent home with the children and will not be consumed at school. All food items sent in should be store bought and pre-packaged.

DRESS

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and gym shoes/closed toed shoes to Preschool. **Please no flip flops, slides or crocs**, as children trip easily on the playground and in the gym when wearing these. Daily activities include interactive and sometimes messy play, and the children should feel comfortable and enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothing. Please have your children "Dress for the Mess".

SUPPLY LIST

A supply list is emailed and a hard copy is mailed home to all parents along with a parent information letter, and the school calendar. These items are sent out in early August. The list will also be posted on the Preschool Link of our website, lockportpark.org.

BEHAVIOR

For most student's preschool is their first experience in a school setting. We have established the following classroom rules to help students adjust to the school and classroom experience.

- Be kind to others
- Keep hands and feet to yourself/ Use nice hands
- Always using walking feet inside
- Listen to the teachers
- Use inside voices
- Be nice to our toys and supplies
- Help clean up
- Have fun

CONSTRUCTIVE GUIDANCE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Acceptable behavior is encouraged by giving positive verbal rewards. This reinforces a child's good feeling about his/her behavior and serves as an example to the other children to act in such a way as to receive praise.

We will incorporate the following guidelines to develop self-discipline and self-regulation in each child.

- When speaking with a child use a calm, quiet and confident tone of voice. Speak with the child as his/her eye level.
- Give clear, simple, positive directions
- Encourage and compliment appropriate behavior using "I-Messages"
- Role-model appropriate behavior
- Encourage use of words to express feelings
- Give positive suggestions and alternatives
- Redirect child to another activity
- Help child problem-solve solutions to conflict
- Enter in to play with the children to reinforce appropriate behavior
- If necessary, remove child from a situation to help that child to practice self-regulation

If behavior problems persist, the parent will be asked to attend a conference with the staff to discuss ways of motivating the child to behave in an acceptable manor. It may be suggested that the child be involved in a behavior modification program, with the parent having the option of being involved in the process. Continued problems may result in the suspension of the child from the program.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

A child coming to class for the first time may feel some separation anxiety. It has been our experience that children usually calm quickly when parents are calm and positive at drop off. Our advice is to leave your child with a smile and a kiss, tell them you will return and leave. Be sympathetic of the tears that may come, but be firm.

To calm your fears, if your child cries due to being separated from you, you may leave assured that you are doing the best thing you can by sending them to class-as hard as it may seem. Be assured that we are prepared for these situations and will comfort your child.

RESTROOM POLICY

All Preschool participants must be toilet trained prior to the beginning of the school year. A completely toilet trained child is one that:

- Wears regular underpants (not pull-ups, diapers or training pants)
- Knows when he/she needs to use the restroom without prompting
- Knows how to take care of toileting procedures himself/herself, including wiping self
- Does not have regular toileting accidents during the school day
- In addition, any child who is in attendance and has three accidents in a one-week period will be considered to be non-toilet trained

Children will be encouraged to use the restroom at least once per class, or as needed, and encouraged to wash their hands properly. The staff **will not** be assisting with personal hygiene. We do know that children will have occasional accidents, and we are fully prepared to deal with those incidents.

We ask that each child keep in his/her school bag one set of spare clothes. This should include shirt, pants, underwear and socks. Please be sure that these clothes are for the correct season.

In the event a child has a restroom accident, they shall be given their extra clothes out of their backpack to change themselves into. Parents will be informed of the accident so that a more thorough cleaning can be done after pick-up. Please have your child practice wiping before dropping off on the first day.

The staff of Learning Step Preschool appreciates your trust in us to help your child to Learn, Play and Grow this year! Looking forward to a great school year!

“You’re off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your way!”
-Dr. Seuss, “Oh the Places You’ll Go”

