



MACCRA Y Preschool Handbook

*All MACCRA Y Preschool Programs are 4-star rated

*Utilize established curriculum and assessment tools

*Certified teachers in all classes



Board Approved: February 11, 2019



Contact Information:

Anytime you have a question or concern, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.

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If your child will be absent for any reason, please call the classroom teacher or the elementary secretary.

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About our Preschool Programs

MACCRAY preschool is a program for children 3 to 5 years of age who are not yet enrolled in Kindergarten. The goal of our preschool program is to provide children with a fun and enriched preschool experience that will assist parents with the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development of their child. Our preschool programs offer fun and meaningful experiences for the children through music, literacy, writing, math, science, technology, as well as fine and gross motor activities. We continue to implement **Creative Curriculum for Preschool** into the classrooms, along with the **Teaching Strategies Gold** to assess student progress throughout the school year. Because play is a young child's "work", play and many other hands-on experiences are an important part of your child's day. During play with other students, children learn problem solving skills, sharing, creativity, imagination, development of relationships, and much more. We offer a fun, safe, and caring learning environment that seeks to meet the needs of every child, filling their days with endless learning opportunities.

Our daily routines consist of circle times with books, songs, calendar, number sense, and letter recognition. Centers, free play, small group and individual instruction along with whole group instruction, and large motor activities, both in the classroom and gym, are also part of the learning experience. All instruction and learning experiences are developmentally appropriate and based on the **Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPS)**, which are the state standards for learning, growth, and development in 3 to 5 year olds.

Our programs are overseen by the Elementary Principal, Community Ed Director, and the Early Childhood Coordinator. Our classrooms are equipped with fully licensed early childhood professionals as lead teachers and experienced classroom assistants to support the teachers. All preschool programs will maintain at least a 1:10 adult to child ratio according to state law. Additional paraprofessionals may be involved in the classroom as special circumstances dictate.

Child Eligibility

- 4-Year-Old Classes: children must be four years old by September 1 of the current school year.
- 3-Year-Old Classes: children must be three years old by September 1 of the current school year.

Child with Special Needs

The preschool program works closely with the MACCRAY Special Education Department. As part of the MACCRAY School District's commitment to providing the best education for all students, and in keeping with the special education laws of the State of Minnesota and federal government, the Early Childhood Program ensures that children with special needs have the opportunity to interact with his or her same age peers on a regular basis. This process frequently involves giving children who participate in a special education preschool program the opportunity to go into a general education preschool classroom for both social and academic learning experiences. The benefit of this type of programming is significant for all students.

Children with special needs learn best from their peers through role modeling of appropriate social and behavioral skills. Typically, developing children have a unique opportunity to act as a mentor to their peers and learn compassion, tolerance and patience by working with children with developmental delays.

Programming & Fees

A \$50.00 registration fee and completed registration forms are required to hold a spot for your child in the preschool program. This is a non-refundable fee that is due upon registration. Our registration form with the latest class options and fees can be found on the school's website www.maccray.k12.mn.us under the district tab (and then early learning) on the top of the webpage.

Tuition and Make-up Days

Preschool payments are based on tuition averaged out over the 9 months of the school year, so even though the number of classes or days may vary slightly each month, the fee will remain constant. The fees are only a portion of what it costs to educate each child in our program. Sick days, vacation days, and family days will not be refunded. School days that are canceled due to weather will be made up according to the school make-up schedule. If a make-up day occurs after our scheduled last day of school, it will not be made up in preschool. We will keep families informed of these dates as they arise.

Delinquent Accounts

All preschool accounts will be billed monthly due the 15th of the month. We bill one month ahead so there will be no payments in June, after school is out. If an account is two months delinquent, a family financial meeting will be scheduled to develop a payment plan and your child will be reduced from 4 full days to 2 full days until your account is current. If the family does not follow the agreed upon payment plan, a delinquency letter will be sent notifying the family that the account will be sent to collections. If special circumstances arise, please call and speak to Heather Shamla, (320-847-2154), about making payments or applying for the **Early Learning Scholarship**. We wish to help each and every family maintain their account and remain a part of our preschool program.

Early Learning Scholarships

Scholarship funds are available through the Parent Aware Rating System and the Minnesota Department of Education.

All MACCRAY Preschool Programs have a **4 star rating** with the Parent Aware Rating Scale. Scholarships may only be used at programs which are rated through Parent Aware. Another qualifier is family income. Your family must have an income equal to or less than 185 percent of federal poverty level income in the current calendar year. If you qualify, your scholarship can pay up to 100% of your child's tuition for up to 12 months. Information and applications will be available each July for the upcoming

school year. Applications are available on the district website www.maccray.k12.mn.us under the preschool tab at the top or by calling Heather Shamla at 320-967-4282.

Scholarships through the Minnesota Department of Education are called School Readiness Scholarships. A sliding fee scale is in place for tuition reduction for those that qualify based on income. If you are unable to pay for some reason or qualify under one of the following categories, your child may be eligible for a School Readiness Scholarship: qualify for free and reduced lunch, is an English language learner, is homeless, has an individualized education plan (IEP), is identified through early childhood health and developmental screening as having a potential risk factor that may influence learning, or is defined as at risk by the school district.

Transportation

Transportation is available before and after school by Palmer Bus Service. Please contact Palmer Bus Service at 320-847-3109 if you would like to utilize busing. If changes need to be made to your regular transportation, a note/email and phone call needs to be made to the teacher or elementary secretary. If you leave a voicemail or send an email, please confirm that the teacher or secretary has received your message.

Arrival and Dismissal

School building hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Students may be dropped off beginning at 7:35 AM and picked up at 3:30 PM. If you will be dropping your child off or picking them up outside of the regular school start and end times, you will need to stop at the elementary office to sign them in or out. Only persons listed as those who may drop-off and pick-up will be allowed to do so unless we are otherwise informed by a legal guardian.

Behavior Guidance and Discipline Policy

A positive environment will be fostered and parent-teacher communication will help to encourage positive behaviors and correct negative ones. The teachers will use respect, praise, and encouragement as they interact with the students. Desired behaviors will be modeled and emphasized and negative behaviors will be redirected with positive guidance. Children will be encouraged to work through problems independently as well as with teacher guidance. In order for children to learn, they must feel safe and secure. Developmentally, all preschool aged children are in the process of learning self-regulation and prosocial behavior. As individuals, all children are at different stages of this social-emotional development.

Our discipline procedures will consist of the following strategies:

- Encouraging children to use their words when having a disagreement with another child. Facilitating children in their attempts to settle their own disputes.
- Redirecting behavior when this seems potentially effective.
- Separating a child from the group.
- Discussion with the children individually about his/her behavior.
- Making parents aware of disciplinary concerns (Incident Report).

Disruptive behavior distracts from the full benefit of the preschool program and will result in consequences. The following behaviors are considered disruptive:

- Inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self.
- Disrespects people and materials provided in the program.
- Consistently disobeys the rules of the classroom.
- Verbally threatens other students and/or staff.
- Uses verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children.

Discipline Procedures for disruptive behavior

1. Disruptive behavior will be addressed in an incident report. This will be completed to document any inappropriate behaviors that directly impact other children, staff members, or the group as a whole. This report will be shared with the parent and will explain the behavior, how the behavior has

affected others, and will also explain how the situation was resolved. The incident report will be placed in the child's folder to be taken home, signed, and returned the next day to the teacher (Phone calls and emails may also be made to contact the parents).

2. If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents will be asked to meet with the child's teacher and Early Childhood Coordinator or Elementary Principal.
3. The staff may recommend another classroom or program placement as a more appropriate environment for the child. *This will be determined by administration.

Teachers recognize that all children develop social and emotional strengths at different rates depending on the child's current life conditions, possible issues that may have occurred prior to preschool, and a child's overall developmental level. They work with children individually to help them change their behavior. Improvements often come very slowly with children sometimes regressing to old behavior patterns. Teachers are interested in changing behavior and not punishing children for poor behavior. It is the desire of the Early Childhood Center staff to provide a safe learning environment. Dismissal from the program is a last resort.

Clothing and Items from Home

Please send your child to school in clothes-for-learning. We encourage independence in putting on and removing articles of clothing. Comfortable and practical clothing and shoes are advised. Outdoor play is a regular part of the preschool routine, so please send children appropriately dressed for the weather. Please also keep in mind that your child will be working with a variety of materials, some of which may be messy, so wash and wear items are best. It is advised that you print your child's name on any items that may be removed at school (sweaters, hats, mittens, boots, scarves, etc.).

Please provide an extra set of clothing, including socks and underpants labeled on the tag in permanent marker with your child's name or initials, to be kept in your child's cubby. Accidents and spills happen: we want to be prepared.

Toilet Trained

It is a requirement for all children to be toilet trained and self-sufficient in all bathrooming needs to start Preschool. A child is toilet trained when he/she can make known his/her need to use the bathroom and can perform basic hygiene needs independently. We recognize that children who are newly toilet-trained will occasionally have accidents. We ask that all children have a change of clothes in case of an accident. For liability reasons, if a child has an accident, the teaching staff will supervise and give any verbal instructions required in order for the child to clean up himself/herself. Sometimes even children who normally do not have a problem may have wet pants on occasion. If you have concerns about your child regarding toilet training, please talk to the teacher. Exceptions will be made for children with special needs who are not yet potty trained.

Accidents or Illness

The nurse's office in each building is equipped to handle minor injuries requiring first aid. If the nurse's office is not open, assistance can be sought from the building's administrative office. If a student experiences a more serious medical emergency at school, 911 will be called and/or a parent/guardian will be contacted depending on the situation.

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his/her child has a communicable or contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

Students with certain communicable diseases will not be excluded from attending school in their usual daily attendance settings as long as their health permits and their attendance does not create a significant risk of transmitting the illness to other students or school district employees. The school district will determine on a case-by-case basis

whether a contagious student's attendance creates a significant risk of transmitting the illness to others.

If a child has a fever of 100.5 (axillary) degrees F or more, vomited, or had diarrhea, he/she will be sent home and should stay at home for 24 hours after returning to normal. If your child has any rash, check with your family physician before sending the child to school. If your child has strep throat, ear infection, or impetigo, the child should stay home until he/she has been on antibiotic for 24 hours. If the child has head lice, please report it to the school immediately. The child may return to school after being treated with medicated shampoo. If you have any questions regarding the above information or your child's illness, please call the school nurse or your family physician.

Students who are ill and need to go home will remain in the Health Office until parents pick them up and sign them out of the building. When students are returning to school from a doctor's appointment, etc., they are to sign in at the elementary office.

Students with diagnosed chronic conditions (i.e. diabetes, asthma, seizures, heart conditions) must provide the school nurse with a physician's summary of the condition and any special instructions, such as limitations related to school activities (i.e. physical education, music, recess) so a health care plan can be made if needed.

Inclement Weather

When school closes all preschool classes close. Make-up dates will follow the K-12 calendar unless the make-up date occurs after our preschool programming year ends.

On late start days, we will start at 10:00 and breakfast will not be provided, but lunch will be provided. In the event that a snowstorm arises during the day requiring school to be dismissed early, an attempt will be made to allow buses to leave soon enough to enable them to make their normal routes.

If this is not feasible, children will stay at the homes designated as their snow home on their emergency cards. All emergency announcements will be made with a phone call, text, or email notification (whichever method is preferred on Infinite Campus).

Announcements can also be found on Q102 Operation Snow Desk. The announcements will include the closing of school due to inclement weather, blocked or impassable roads, or failure at school building causing shut-down.

Rest Time

All preschoolers will have an afternoon rest time. The rooms will be darkened and quiet music will be played to help the children have a relaxing rest. This allows for their young bodies to have both a physical and mental break and sleep for those that still take a nap. Children who do not fall asleep within 30 minutes will be allowed to read books or play quietly. Please send a small blanket with your child for rest time.

Field Trips

The preschool classes may participate in a couple of field trips throughout the school year. Some may be in-school activities, such as concerts and shows. Some field trips may be off-campus trips with the class to local attractions and community places. These will be planned by the teachers and families will be notified with a note and permission slip. Busses will be used for all off-campus trips.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a very special event for each child in Preschool. We will be celebrating each child's birthday as close to the date as possible. If your child has a summer birthday, we will celebrate it on your child's half birthday or at the end of the school year. On the day your child is celebrating his or her birthday, you are welcome to send a birthday treat if you wish. We ask that you comply with school policies and send store bought treats only.

Book Orders

Book orders will be sent home periodically. There is absolutely no obligation to purchase any of these books. However, it is an opportunity to purchase good children's literature at a relatively inexpensive price. This also provides you, as a parent, a resource of books to use to take time and read to your child. Please use the online classroom code from your child's teacher to order or make checks payable to Scholastic.

Money

Money sent to school for any reason should be in an envelope marked with the child's name and purpose for which it is intended.