



# **Downers Grove Park District**

## **Parent Manual *Early Childhood Programs* 2018**

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# Early Childhood Staff

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## **Downers Grove Park District**

### **Lincoln Learning Center**

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# Early Childhood Information

## **Philosophy**

Play, once considered to be the opposite of education, is now regarded by early childhood specialists as the extraordinary educational process by which preschool children become introduced to a world filled with new and exciting discoveries.

Play is a primary concern of the early childhood staff because it is the primary concern of the preschool child. Early childhood play has purpose and intent. This play is not random because the teachers have carefully planned the aspects that direct the play into a positive learning experience. Purposeful and productive play encourages children to express themselves freely, to communicate with others and to follow their natural instincts of discovery. Lincoln Learning Center Staff, committed to a philosophy of “learning through play,” are qualified to lead children through this exciting period of life.

## **Program Content**

The Lincoln Learning Center, guided by Illinois Department of Children and Family Services standards and Illinois Early Learning Standards offers a carefully planned program of activities designed to enrich specific developmental areas.

The “world around us” is explored through activities relating to the child’s physical and social environment, community and nature. Season changes and holiday activities are incorporated into various phases of the program. Kindergarten readiness activities are conducted in an atmosphere of play and include an exposure to letters, numbers, colors, shapes and fundamental concepts that prepare children for further learning such as identifying likenesses and differences.

Utilizing concepts from the Illinois Early Learning Standards to develop early childhood activities to promote development in these areas:

**Physical Development:** Activities in physical health support the child’s overall education and growth and promotes fine and gross motor skills, teaches good nutrition and hygiene.

**Social and emotional:** Social and emotional development helps children become caring, competent and confident individuals. Activities foster independence, encourage children to make friends, teach children to share and give them a strong sense of self.

**Fine Arts:** Creative art supports all areas of child development and fosters imagination and creativity. Through arts and crafts, singing, dancing and role-playing with their friends, children develop self-confidence, learn to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings in new and creative ways.

**Social Science:** Social science is about people and how they work and play together. In preschool, children learn how to get along with others and how others affect our lives, starting them on the path to being a good citizen.

**Science:** Science is the study of the world and how it works. By experimenting, making predictions, exploring, testing observations and investigating, children learn about the world.

**Mathematics:** Mathematics is the study of numbers, quantities, measurement and shapes and their relation to each other. When math is presented in a fun and creative way, children develop abstract reasoning skills, learn complex concepts and create solutions to real-life problems.

**Literacy:** Literacy begins by immersing children in an environment rich with language and reading. Children’s literacy skills are supported by activities that involve discriminating between sounds, identifying print, recognizing letters, developing a love of books, writing and appreciating the rhythm of language.

**Language Arts:** Language is the experience of speaking and listening. By engaging children in conversations, exposing them to new words, singing songs, discussing symbols and their meaning and encouraging expression of thoughts, feelings and opinions through words, children lay the foundation for later reading success.

## **Before Class Begins ...**

### **Early Childhood Orientation Night for Parents –**

2.5 yr old Students -----Monday, August 27, 2018 at 6:30pm  
New Students -----Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at 6:30pm  
Returning Students ----- Wednesday, August 29, 2018 at 6:30pm

An evening orientation session has been planned for the purpose of informing parents about preschool policies and general program procedures. Parents will have the opportunity to meet the classroom teachers and receive necessary information regarding preschool. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the Parent Orientation Night program.

**Please note: Parent Orientation Night is planned for adults only. Please do not bring your preschooler or siblings to this session. Children will have an opportunity to meet their teachers and visit their classroom on the first day of school.**

## **Age Requirements**

**Classes for 2.5-year-olds:** Children must turn 3 between September 2, 2018-March 1, 2019.

**Classes for 3-year-olds:** Children must be 3, but not yet 4 years of age by September 1, 2018.

**Classes for 4/5-year-olds:** Children must be 4 or 5, but not yet 6 years of age by September 1, 2018.

## **Early Childhood Forms**

### **Medical/Information/Emergency Forms**

All children enrolled in preschool must have completed forms on file. Please return all completed information to your teachers on the first day of school. Incomplete forms will be returned to you for further information/clarification.

### **Allergy Information**

The number of children being diagnosed with food allergies is increasing. It is our goal to provide the safest possible environment for all children in preschool. Please discuss your child's allergy with your teachers or call the Lincoln Learning Center Coordinator before the start of preschool to discuss this information in detail.

### **Class List Disclosure Policy**

A class list with children's and parent's names, email addresses and home phone numbers is distributed at the beginning of the school year. **If you do not wish to have your name, email address and phone number disclosed, please notify the park district in writing by the first day of school.** All personal information is confidential and will be released only to parents and other authorized professionals with consent of parent(s).

<p><b>Parents should have all completed forms returned to preschool on the first day of class. A child may not begin preschool without all completed forms on file.</b></p>
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## **Welcome to Lincoln Learning Center**

### **The First Day of Class**

Our first day of school begins with a 30-minute classroom visit. A parent must accompany the child on the first day. Children meet their teachers and explore their new classroom. The parent and child will leave together at the end of the meeting.

### **Early Childhood Parent Welcome Reception**

On the first full day of school, mom and dad can enjoy a 'meet and greet' with other parents at the welcome reception. Coffee and refreshments will be served. Information is available at Parent Orientation Night.

### **A Typical Day in Early Childhood Class**

The following information describes a typical day in a preschool class:

- **Together Time** (20 minutes): Greetings and song, finger plays planning time with children and Show & Tell time
- **Free Play** (30 minutes): Dress-up, manipulative toys, gym time, blocks, play dough
- **Art & Craft Time** (20 minutes): Art & Craft related to learning experiences, painting with brushes, sponges and other materials, cutting,
- **Clean Up** (10 minutes): Children share in the responsibility of putting away toys and supplies
- **Water Time** (15 minutes): Water is served
- **Large Motor Time:** (20 Minutes): Gym, outdoor play, playground, dancing in the Dance studio
- **Group Time** (15 minutes): Stories, talking time, singing games (mostly teacher-directed)

### **Arrival and Departure**

Please be punctual when arriving with and picking up your child. Parents are asked to arrive as close to their child's class time as possible. The time prior to class is used as preparation time for the teachers. Please wait in the hallway until the teachers come out to greet the children.

### **Daily Classroom Dismissal Procedure**

Each classroom follows a daily dismissal procedure which provides for the safety of our preschoolers. Please be prompt in picking up your child from preschool. Even a few short minutes without mom or dad can be frightening for your preschooler. Children are dismissed individually to their parent or designated pick-up person. Each parent/adult is required to sign the daily dismissal list posted outside the classroom indicating that they have picked up their child.

### **Late Arrival/Pick-Up Policy**

The teachers understand that late arrival sometimes cannot be avoided and are happy to make accommodations for your child in this event. Please try to contact your teachers should you know that you will be delayed.

In cases of lateness, the Lincoln Learning Center has instituted the following procedures:

- **After 10 minutes** past dismissal time, teachers will attempt to contact you via your home, business or cell phone.
- **After 15 minutes**, if you cannot be reached by phone, teachers will proceed to call your emergency numbers.

Parents consistently late in picking up their child will be assessed the following fees:

*Upon the third occurrence of a late pick-up (15 minutes or more after the end of the designated class time), parents will be charged \$5 for every 5 minutes late (or \$1 per minute). This fee will be reported to the registration office and will be added to your tuition payment.*

### **Curbside drop off & pick up Policy**

For the 2018-2019 school year, the Lincoln Learning Center is offering parents the option to drop-off and pick-up their child at school without having to come into the building. This service is 100% optional and if you choose not to participate, you will need to park in the Lincoln Center lot each day and walk your child to and from his/her classroom using the main entrance to the facility.

\*If you would like to participate in this service, please complete the registration form and submit to your teachers or the Lincoln Center registration office by Wednesday, September 19. The program will begin on Monday, October 1, 2018

\*If you do not want to participate in this service beginning in October, but decide later in the school year that you do want to participate, please complete the registration form and submit it to your teachers or the Lincoln Center registration office by the date listed below for the month that you want to begin.

\*Once registered for the curbside drop-off and pick-up service, you will receive a handout with specific instructions for participation, as well as a color-coded sign for your windshield.

**Note:** once you sign up for the service, you will remain on the drop-off and pick-up list until you withdraw at the registration office.

**Registration deadlines to begin the curbside drop-off and pick-up service**

<b><u>Registration Deadline</u></b>	<b><u>Start Date</u></b>
September 19, 2018	October 1, 2018
October 9, 2018	November 5, 2018
November 13, 2018	December 3, 2018
December 11, 2018	January 7, 2019
January 15, 2019	February 4, 2019
February 12, 2019	March 4, 2019
March 11, 2019	April 1, 2019

**Car Pools/Parking**

Children are not released to anyone other than his/her parents or an established car pool person unless the teacher is given specific permission by the parents. A note of explanation must be sent with your child in such a situation. Identification (driver’s license) will be requested before a child is released to anyone other than his/her parent(s) or established car pool person. In extreme cases, if the child’s teacher is not familiar with the parent(s) or established car pool, again, identification will be requested. Parents involved in car pools are required to sign the posted car pool list on a daily basis indicating they have picked up their “assigned” children.

Remember, Lincoln Center is a busy recreation center. **Please help us to remain safe and ready for any emergency situation and do not park in the fire lane or handicapped parking spaces.** Any vehicles parked illegally may be ticketed.

**As The School Year Starts**

**Separation Anxiety - What To Do?**

The first days of preschool can be difficult for some children. Although your child may cry when first coming to preschool, be assured that our staff is prepared for these situations and will make every effort to comfort your child. Our experience shows that most children will stop crying within minutes of parents’ departures and will quickly become involved in classroom activities. Please remember, as difficult as the first few days may be, you are doing the best thing for your child.

**Preschool Fashion – What to Wear?**

Please send your child dressed for play with comfortable, loose fitting clothing they can manage themselves. Gym shoes or play shoes should be worn every day. As there is

planned outdoor activity, children should come with adequate coat, hat and mittens or gloves. Please label all items with your child's name.

### **Bathroom Etiquette**

Children must be toilet trained with the ability to care for themselves. **Pull-ups or diapers may not be worn to preschool class.** Teachers escort children to and from the bathrooms and will assist a child when needed. **Tot school students MAY wear pull ups or diapers.**

### **UH-OH! Emergency Clothing**

Accidents can happen! Please supply your child with a clean change of clothing in their backpacks/tote bag.

### **School Bags For the Busy Child**

Tote bag/backpacks are helpful for carrying your child's belongings. Please make sure the bag is easily accessible for your child and has been labeled. We highly recommend an easy-open tote bag without buckles and zippers. Please check your child's tote bag/backpack daily for take home projects and letters.

### **Daily Juice Time-preschool only**

Sit-down juice time teaches manners, encourages socialization and allows time for children to relax and prepare for dismissal. Juice is provided by the Lincoln Learning Center.

### **“Early Childhood News” – Newsletters, Calendars and Classroom Bulletin Boards**

A newsletter is sent home monthly. This newsletter provides important communication about classroom activities and provides a monthly at-a-glance calendar. We suggest you keep and post your newsletter to review daily Show & Tell and upcoming monthly events. Special notices between newsletters may be posted on the classroom bulletin board or distributed with your child's take-home project. Please remember to check your classroom bulletin board or your child's backpack each day.

### **Dates-To-Remember Calendar**

The Lincoln Learning Center follows the Downers Grove Grade School District 58 school holidays with **exception** of winter break. The early childhood calendar will be available prior to the first day of class.

### **Happy Birthday!**

Birthdays are special occasions at school. Children are welcome to bring a take-home treat to share with their friends. Parents are also invited to class to read a story. If your child's birthday occurs when school is not in session please consult with your child's teacher to celebrate a half birthday.

### **It's Party Time**

Halloween, Valentine's and St. Patrick's Day are celebrated with games and special classroom activities.

The Preschool Holiday Program will be held in the auditorium right before the start of winter break. The children will sing on stage for family and friends. (Preschool classes only)

### **Special Activities – Music, Art and Games!**

The children take advantage of Lincoln Center's many facilities. The gymnasium and Constitution Park are used for large motor playtime which includes games, small and large group activities. Children learn about clay and the kiln in the ceramics room.

### **Exploring Our Community - Walking Field Trips-Preschool only**

Field trips to the Library, Fire Station and Every Day's A Sundae provide the children learning experiences outside of the classroom. **All Lincoln Learning Center groups will participate in walking trips except Tot-School.**

### **Class Pictures Smile!-Preschool only**

Children have individual and class pictures taken each fall. Flyers regarding packages and prices are distributed for this optional program.

### **Parent's Special Talents**

Children derive keen pleasure and pride when mom or dad visits preschool. Do you have some special knowledge or experience that you can share on the young child's level? Do you have special talents -- music, dance, art, drama or hobbies? Feel free to discuss any ideas with your child's teacher and perhaps you might be able to add to our program.

### **May I Observe?**

Parents are welcome to observe their child's early childhood class beginning in October. Please make arrangements by contacting the Lincoln Learning Center Coordinator to schedule an observation date. Please remember that preschool is a busy place, therefore your teacher may be unable to talk with you during your visit. Feel free to talk briefly after your visit or arrange a conference. Observation time is limited to 30 minutes.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences-Preschool Only**

One class session during the Winter/Spring session is set aside for parents who wish to schedule a conference with their child's teacher. The specific dates of the parent/teacher conferences will be announced after the first of the year.

If you wish to talk to your child's classroom teacher at any time, please email or call the Lincoln Learning Center at (630) 963-1300 and leave a message. They will gladly return your phone call.

### **Emergency Weather Class Cancellations**

If the school district cancels classes due to hazardous weather conditions, the park district does likewise. District 58 announces cancellation of classes on the website [www.dg58.org](http://www.dg58.org). Please note: Refunds will not be given for classes cancelled due to weather conditions.

# Health and Safety Information

## **Health and Safety Programs**

The safety, health and wellness of our children are very important to the Lincoln Learning Center staff. The Downers Grove Police and Fire Departments assist with special programs during the school year. Representatives come to the Center to speak to the preschool classes about fire safety and railroad safety.

## **Hearing and Vision-preschool only**

In the spring, the DuPage County Health Department visits to administer vision and hearing screening to our preschool age children. A separate fee is charged for the screenings to cover the cost assessed by the Health Department. Information regarding vision and hearing screenings is distributed prior to the test dates.

## **Fire/Tornado and Lock Down Drills**

For the safety of our children, all classrooms participate in fire and tornado drills throughout the year. Locks down drills are conducted with all Lincoln Center Staff.

## **Safety Inspections**

The Lincoln Center is inspected annually by the Downers Grove Fire Department.

## **Behavior Management in the Classroom**

When a child's behavior is inappropriate, teachers will re-direct the child to a different activity and talk about making better choices. In extreme instances, the child is given a time out from the group and is asked to sit quietly until ready to return to activities. . Parent involvement in the matter is important, we encourage the parents are to speak with their child at home about the behavior.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Downers Grove Park District and Lincoln Learning Center applies a caring, positive approach to discipline in the classroom. Rules are reviewed with children and the teachers are willing to work with parents to develop behavior modification programs as necessary.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

To ensure an enjoyable and safe program for all participants, the Park District has developed the following behavior code applicable to all District-wide programs:

Participants must:

1. Show respect to all participants and staff.
2. Refrain from using inappropriate language.
3. Refrain from causing bodily harm.
4. Show respect to equipment, supplies and facilities.

## **LINCOLN LEARNING CENTER CLASSROOM RULES**

General rules for each early childhood classroom have been developed to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for our children. Rules are posted and discussed at the beginning of each school year in a manner that is understandable for children. The following rules have been established and posted:

1. We sit quietly on the rug.
2. We wait for our friends at the table before we eat.
3. We share our toys.
4. We clean up our mess.
5. We take turns.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

When a child is uncooperative or misbehaves, the Districts policy is to take the child aside and explain that what (s)he is doing is inappropriate. In extreme cases, the child is given a time out from the group and asked to sit quietly until (s)he settles down and is able to return to the activity. The time out is not more than 5 minutes. Should the system of behavior management used be deemed ineffective, parents will be notified and asked to be involved in the process.

When deemed necessary for the benefit of the child, classroom environment and teacher, support may be requested from SEASPAR (South East Area Special Parks and Recreation) to assist in developing a behavior modification plan more suitable for the child. Parents will be notified and asked to participate in any special arrangements made by the Lincoln Learning Center.

## **PROGRAM DISMISSAL POLICY**

Every attempt is made to meet each child's individual needs. However, if a child shows an inability to benefit from the Early Childhood program after all areas of guidance have been exhausted, or if a child's presence is detrimental to the classroom environment, the child will be withdrawn from the Early Childhood program. Upon withdrawal from the program, the Lincoln Learning Center Coordinator and Early Childhood staff will assist the child's parents with referrals to other agencies.

## **A Healthy Classroom is a Happy Classroom**

Please assist us in making our classrooms as healthy as possible. For the protection of all children and staff, we are unable to accept a child in the classroom who appears ill.

Please use your best judgment along with the following guidelines to determine if your child is well enough to attend school:

- Children should be free of an elevated temperature for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child returns to school too soon, their resistance is lowered, they are more susceptible to germs and they can also expose other children to their germs.
- If nasal discharge is green or yellow in color, is it usually symptomatic of an infectious process please keep them home.
- Children should be free of diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

- A rash may be the first sign of an upcoming childhood illness, such as chicken pox. Please do not send your child to school until your doctor has said it is safe to do so.
- Children should not return to school until 24 hours after vomiting has stopped.

If your child’s health is in question, Learning Center Coordinator will make the final determination if a child may stay in school.

**General Information**

- Please report changes of address or telephone numbers to the park district registration desk promptly.
- Unless requested, please do not send your child to school with toys, food, money or toy weapons.
- The park district is not responsible for lost or broken items.

**Class Schedule**

**2.5 year-old Class**

Monday & Wednesday-----9:00-11:00 am  
 Tuesday & Thursday-----9:00-11:00 am & 11:30 am-1:30 pm

**3 year-old Class**

Monday & Wednesday-----8:45 am- 11:15 am  
 Tuesday & Thursday-----8:45 am - 11:15 am & 12:00 - 2:30 pm  
 Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday-----8:45 am - 11:15 am

**4/5year-old Class**

Monday, Wednesday & Friday-----8:45 am- 11:15 am  
 Tuesday & Thursday-----8:45 am- 11:15 am  
 Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday-----8:45 am- 11:15 am & 12:00 - 2:30 pm  
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday-----12:00-2:30pm

**Cancellation Policy**

The Lincoln Learning Center reserves the right to cancel classes due to low enrollment. The Lincoln Learning Center will make every attempt to place children in other classes should this occur.

**Wait List Policy**

To ensure accurate wait lists, once a child is registered in a preschool class, he/she will not be placed on a waiting list for another preschool class

## Tuition/Payment Schedule – 2018/2019

### 2.5-Year Olds

#### **Resident Tuition:**

Mon/Wed	\$870
Tues/Thurs	\$905

#### **Nonresident Tuition:**

Mon/Wed	\$1,306
Tues/Thurs	\$1,373

### 3-Year Olds

#### **Resident Tuition:**

Tues/Thurs	\$1,246
Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$1,736
Mon/Wed	\$1,181

#### **Nonresident Tuition:**

Tues/Thurs	\$1,870
Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$2,605
Mon/Wed	\$1,772

### 4/5- Year Olds

#### **Resident Tuition:**

Tues/Thurs	\$1,246
Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$1,736
Mon/Wed/Fri	\$1,665
Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$2,135

#### **Nonresident Tuition:**

Tues/Thurs	\$ 1,870
Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$ 2,605
Mon/Wed/Fri	\$ 2,522
Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$3,173

#### **Tuition Payment Dates**

The registration deposit is applied to the first installment. All tuition payments are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following months September, October, November, December, January, February, March whether or not preschool is in session on these days. A \$5 late fee will be assessed for payments received after the due date listed above. All declined tuition needs to be paid within 14 business days of the draft date or the student will not be allowed to attend Preschool.

#### **Refund Policy**

A tuition refund will only be granted if the program is cancelled by the Park District or a written physician's note is presented for withdrawal from the program. Application for a refund must be made in person at the Registration Office during business hours.