



Lincoln Learning Center

PARENT MANUAL



Table of Contents

Welcome	4
Program Overview	4
Philosophy/Curriculum	4
A Typical Day	5
Classroom Size	5
Preschool Location.....	5
Preschool Dates	5
Picture Day	6
Visitors/Field Trips	6
Special Events.....	6
Culture and Inclusivity.....	6
Holidays in the Classroom.....	6
Special Occasion Treats & Snacks	6
Birthdays and Celebrations.....	7
Extension and Enrichment Programs.....	7
Preschool Plus	7
Communication	8
Email/Phone.....	8
Remind App.....	8
Newsletters.....	8
Parent-Teacher Conferences	8
ePACT - Participant information/Emergency forms	8
Allergies	9
Medication	9
Arrival and Dismissal	9
Curbside Drop-Off & Pick-Up	10
What to Wear/Bring	10
Personal Items.....	11
Potty Training, Bathroom independence & Bathroom Accidents	11
Behavior Guidelines	12
Code of Conduct.....	12
Expectations.....	12
Management.....	12
Separation Anxiety.....	13
Developmental Screenings	14
Program Dismissal Policy	15
Absences and Illness	15
Absences	15
Illness	15
Child ill while in class.....	16
What to do if my child is not feeling well or showing illness symptoms?	16

Emergency/Urgent Procedures 16
 Medical Emergencies 16
 Emergency Cancellations 16
 General Safety..... 17
Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse..... 17
Payment and Registration Policy 17
 Payment Options 17
 Financial Assistance Program..... 18
 Priority Enrollment..... 18
Confidentiality 18
Tax Information..... 18

WELCOME

Welcome to the Downers Grove Park District's Lincoln Learning Center! This parent manual is designed to provide an overview of our policies and procedures. You will be able to access this manual as well as monthly classroom calendars and other important information at www.dgparks.org/lincoln-learning-center. Please read all information presented in this manual carefully and thoroughly. Information in this parent manual is subject to change; parents will be notified of any changes.

We're looking forward to an amazing school year!

Anna Fontanetta
Recreation Supervisor of Early Childhood and Cultural Arts
630-960-4491
Afontanetta@dgparks.org

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Philosophy/Curriculum

Your child is about to embark on a school year filled with learning, play, discovery, and exploration! We look forward to guiding our students on a journey to reach milestones, connect with classmates, and develop confidence in themselves.

Preschool staff engage with each other daily and at regular staff meetings to plan activities that meet the needs and interests of their students both as a group and as individuals. The planning and methods used in the classrooms are based on the knowledge that children learn academic concepts through doing; children need concrete experience to which they can relate new ideas and abstractions. Our goal is to build vocabulary, recognition of numbers, letters and forms, and other cognitive abilities through hands-on activities, play and exploration, not solely through rote memorization. Social, emotional, and physical skills are also promoted through activities that allow for the child's direct and active participation.

How do we do this? One of the best ways for young children to actively explore and discover new things about others and the world around them is through play! Play serves many developmental purposes: an activity of intense concentration and involvement, play is a time for problem-solving, emotional and social development, and organizing new ideas and concepts. To create such an atmosphere, the teachers offer many activities and materials at any time, and the child is free to choose among the options. Children can become involved with block building, art materials, music, books, dramatic playing, cooking, and more. Staff also plan activities designed to explore specific concepts that children are encouraged to participate in.

Guided by Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Standards and Illinois Early Learning Standards, activities are chosen to promote development in the following areas:

Physical Development: Activities in physical health support the child's overall growth while promoting fine and gross motor skills, balanced nutrition, and hygiene.

Social and Emotional Development: 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 and 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 their lives, starting them on the path to being caring citizens.

Science: Science is the study of the world and how it works. Children learn about the world by experimenting, making predictions, exploring, testing, and investigating.

Mathematics: Mathematics studies 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 with an environment rich in 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 the expression of thoughts, feelings, and opinions through words, children lay the foundation for later reading success.

A Typical Day

A typical day in a preschool class includes:

- **Together Time:** Greetings and song, finger plays, planning time with children
- **Free Play:** Dress-up, manipulative toys, blocks, play dough
- **Art:** Process art and/or craft related to current theme or topic
- **Clean Up:** Children share the responsibility of putting away toys and supplies
- **Large Motor Time:** Gym time, outdoor play, playground time
- **Group Time:** Stories, talking time, singing, games (mostly primary teacher-directed)

We do not have a snack break, though occasionally a special treat will be served. Parents are always notified prior to eating something during class.

Classroom Size

Each classroom has an assigned Lead Teacher and Teacher’s Aide. In addition, classrooms may receive extra assistance from our floating staff. Class size maximums are as follows:

2-Year-Old classes: 14 students

3-Year-Old classes: 18 students

4/5-Year-Old classes: 18 students

Our goal is to accommodate as many children as possible while still providing a quality experience for all students. The Park District reserves the right to set or readjust minimum and maximum program attendance per site throughout the school year in order to maintain the safety, structure, and integrity of the program as a whole.

Preschool Location

All Preschool classes take place at the Lincoln Center:

935 Maple Ave

Downers Grove, IL 60515

Specific classroom information is included in the Teacher/Room Assignments sent out in July/August prior to the school year beginning.

Preschool Dates

Preschool begins on the Tuesday/Wednesday following Labor Day in September and ends mid-May. Preschool holidays generally follow the same schedule as District 58, minus Teacher Institute days. Days off and other important dates are published yearly in the “Dates to Remember” document, which is sent to parents at the start of the school year and posted online at dgparks.org/lincoln-learning-center-parent-resources.

Picture Day

For 3- and 4/5-year-old students, school portraits will be taken in October. For 2-year-old students, portraits will be taken in February. Individual portraits will be available for purchase, as well as a composite class photo. The purchase of pictures is optional; there is no upfront cost for having your child's picture taken. During Picture Days, staff will also coordinate sibling photos for children in different classes, if desired. Additional information and reminders will be sent prior to Picture Day.

Visitors/Field Trips

We will have special visitors and programs come to the preschoolers several times a year! This could include the Downers Grove Police and Fire Departments, a pediatric dentist, or a visitor from the Downers Grove Public Library.

The 3- & 4/5-year-old programs will also have the opportunity for a few walking field trips throughout the year (weather permitting) – classes might walk to a nearby park/playground, the library or the post office. Parent volunteers/chaperones are welcome to accompany us on walking field trips; sign-up information is sent throughout the school year.

Special Events

Families are invited to Preschool for several events throughout the year. Additional information is sent prior, but such events may include:

October – Costume Parades for all age groups

December – Holiday Programs for all age groups

April/May -- Family Celebration for 3-year-old classes

May – Graduation Ceremony for 4/5-year-old classes

Culture and Inclusivity

The Downers Grove Park District is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion across all public spaces, places, facilities and programs that the department manages. Through the use of education, communication, and empathy, we seek to create a Park District that welcomes and values our differences to consistently strive for a better organization and community.

In the preschool program, these values are reflected in age- and developmentally appropriate lessons, games, toys, and stories. We discuss fairness and equity with students, model peaceful conflict resolution, and incorporate toys, dolls, children's books and other materials that provide representation of our students and their families, as well as our larger global community.

Holidays in the Classroom

Our approach to celebrating and learning about holidays in the classroom is always evolving and centered on secular exploration of the cultures that make up our immediate neighborhoods and surroundings, as well as our larger global community.

Families are encouraged to share their own traditions and celebrations as well as any concerns, thoughts or suggestions related to celebrating holidays in the classroom. If a parent does not want their child to participate in a holiday celebration, they may contact the supervisor to express their concerns and/or choose to keep their child home for the day.

Special Occasion Treats & Snacks

The preschool day does not include a snack break, so parents should not send their child with a snack/lunch unless otherwise directed (e.g. the child is attending Preschool Plus directly after their preschool class).

Special foods/snacks may be provided throughout the school year as part of classroom celebrations or themed curriculums. Parents will be notified of such events in advance.

To reduce the risk of cross-contamination for children with severe contact allergies, we kindly request that food items not be eaten in the hallway.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Parents may choose to send a treat to their preschool classroom in celebration of their child's birthday. When choosing a special treat, please purchase snacks free from common allergens or non-food items. Stickers, books, or coloring books are always a hit. Some parents have donated a book to the class that can be read over and over for several years. If your child's birthday falls outside of the preschool calendar, please talk with their teacher to set aside a special day to celebrate.

Should you choose to bring a food-based treat to share with your child's classmates, note the following guidelines:

- All items must be in the original, unopened package. Homemade food items are not allowed.
- Items must be tree nut and peanut free.
- Treats can be placed on a table outside the classroom near the end of your child's class. You are welcome to direct classmates to the table; however, please do not hand the treats directly to the children.
- Parents, it is your discretion on whether you will take a treat home with you or if you feel the treat is safe for your child.
- You are not required to bring treats to school or take treats home with you.

A classroom-safe list of suggestions can be requested from your child's teacher and will be posted at dgparks.org/lincoln-learning-center after the start of the school year. We will review all information we receive regarding other food allergies (i.e. dairy, wheat, eggs, etc.) in specific classrooms. In this case, individual class treat lists may be altered to reflect these allergies. You will be notified if additional changes are made for your child's classroom.

Extension and Enrichment Programs

A variety of additional programs are offered throughout the school year to supplement your child's learning or extend their school day. Lincoln Learning Center staff escort children to extension and enrichment programs that take place after their regular preschool day.

General information can be found below, but specific dates, times, fees, etc. will be published in the Park District's Fall Program Guide (classes running September-December) and the Winter-Spring Program Guide (classes running January-May). Families will have the opportunity to enroll in classes during the appropriate registration period for that season.

Preschool Plus

Preschoolers stay after their regular class for lunch & additional learning and play. Offered Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, 11:30am-1:30pm, for 4/5-year-old students and 3-year-old students. Enroll in just one day or multiple days. Class is exclusive to children enrolled in 3- or 4/5-year-old preschool.

Ready, Set, Kindergarten

This class focuses on kindergarten-readiness skills like number sense, sight words, and phonics. Meets Mondays, 11:30am-12:30pm. Class is exclusive to children enrolled in 4/5-year-old preschool.

Reading, Math, and Science Enrichment Classes

Reading, Math, and Science Enrichment Classes are open to all of-age participants, not just Lincoln Learning Center students. These classes take place after the regular preschool day and provide additional focus in specific subject areas. 4-5-year-olds may choose from Reading, Math or Science. Classes generally run 11:30am-12:15pm on the following days:

Reading (ages 4-5): Mondays

Math (ages 4-5): Wednesdays

Science (ages 4-5): Thursdays

COMMUNICATION

Email/Phone

Please email Anna Fontanetta for questions that do not need an immediate response. For urgent messages, call the main Park District number and the staff will contact your child's teacher (example: you unexpectedly need to pick up your child early).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Main Park District Number	630-960-7500	REGI_STAFF@dgparks.org
Supervisor, Anna Fontanetta	630-960-4491	afontanetta@dgparks.org

Remind App

We will be using the Remind App to send pictures, updates and other communication to classes and parents. You can message your child's teacher directly through Remind, and you can choose to receive Remind messages via email or text. More information will be sent at the beginning of the school year.

Newsletters

A monthly newsletter & calendar will be sent home for each classroom. This newsletter provides communication about classroom activities, visitors or trips, and provides a monthly at-a-glance calendar.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Several days at the end of February/early March are set aside for parents who wish to schedule a conference with their child's teacher. A sign-up sheet with specific dates and times will be sent out in advance.

If you wish to talk to your child's classroom teacher at any time, please contact the program supervisor, or email your child's teacher directly. Staff are always more than happy to meet with parents in person or via phone to discuss progress or concerns.

Class List Disclosure Policy

A class list with children's and parent's names and email addresses 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 program supervisor by September 20.**

EPACT - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION/EMERGENCY FORMS

The Downers Grove Park District utilizes ePACT to securely collect and manage student information and emergency forms. Additional information is sent in mid-July regarding completing or reconfirming your child's forms.

New Families:

In mid-July, new families will receive an email invitation from the ePACT Network (member.support@epactnetwork.com) to create an account and complete their child's electronic emergency forms.

- The invitation will be sent to the *primary email address* on your household account.
- **When setting up your ePACT account, you *must* use the same email address the invitation was sent to.** Using a different email address will prevent us from accessing your child's information, and the process will need to be repeated.

Returning Families:

In mid-July, families who have previously used ePACT (for summer camp, preschool, winter/spring break camps, etc.) will receive an email asking them to review and reconfirm their child's information.

- Any forms that have not been updated in the past 9 months must go through the reconfirmation process to ensure all information is current.
- This process is quick—your previously submitted information will auto-fill, and you’ll simply update any changes and re-accept the waivers.

Important Notes for All Families:

- All forms must be completed and submitted prior to your child's first day of preschool in order for them to attend.
- Parents may log into their ePACT account at any time to update or edit their child's information.
- Emails from ePACT will come from: member.support@epactnetwork.com.
- The subject line will include: Downers Grove Park District - Early Childhood Programs.
- For helpful info and step-by-step guides, visit dgparks.org/lincoln-learning-center-parent-resources and scroll down to “ePACT Guides.”
- At this time, we do not plan to use the QR code feature for checking students in/out, but it is still essential that you list all authorized pick-up persons on your child's form.

Custody Orders

To honor specific custody orders and/or orders of protection, it is the responsibility of the parent to upload a copy of the custody order and/or order of protection into ePACT. The document must be signed by the court with the legal seal present, date effective, and ending date if applicable.

ALLERGIES

The Downers Grove Park District is dedicated and committed to providing a safe environment for all children. Please note any allergies on the participant information forms in ePACT. Please contact the Recreation Supervisor to discuss your child’s personal needs, if any. We will be happy to work with you to provide reasonable accommodation that will make your child’s experience a safe one.

MEDICATION

Participants requiring any type of medication must have a signed medication consent form on file. These forms are available in ePACT. Medication cannot be administered without the consent form. If your child is taking medication, the medication must be unexpired, in its original container with the child’s full name on the label and the correct dosage enclosed. Medication and instructions must be given to the site director/staff upon the child’s arrival at the program. All medication is kept in a safe and secure location.

Transfer/Possession of Medication

Transfer/possession of all medications provided to staff must be signed in on the first day of attendance and signed out on the final day of attendance. This is to help ensure all medications such as EpiPens, inhalers, etc. are properly returned in a safe and timely manner.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival:

- Parents will park in the Lincoln Center parking lot and bring their student to their classroom.
- Hallway doors will open approximately 10 minutes prior to the start of class. Classroom doors will open approximately 5 minutes prior to the start of class. Preschool staff will take attendance each day.

Dismissal:

- Hallway doors will open approximately 10 minutes prior to the end of class. Classroom doors will remain closed until staff are ready to start the dismissal process.
- Staff will dismiss students individually to their parent/guardian or other authorized pick-up person. ALL authorized pick-up persons must be listed in ePACT as such. **Teachers and staff reserve the right to ask anyone picking up a child for a photo ID at any time.**
- If someone attempts to pick up a child and they are not listed as an authorized pick-up person, staff will contact the parents/guardians before releasing the student.

Curbside Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Curbside drop-off & pick-up service is offered only to those enrolled in a 3- or 4/5-year-old class. Curbside drop-off & pick-up starts in October; there is no curbside offered for the month of September. For more information, or if you would like to participate, please see the Curbside Information and Enrollment form at dgparks.org/lincoln-learning-center.

Late Pick-up Fee

A \$20 flat fee plus a \$1 a minute late will be implemented when a child is picked up late. The fee must be paid within two days, either online or in person at any of our facilities. If you are going to be late, a courtesy call is greatly appreciated, although it will not exempt you from the late fee.

WHAT TO WEAR/BRING

What to Wear

- **Closed toe/gym shoes are required.** Sandals, flip-flops, dress-up shoes, etc. are not permitted.
- Choose comfortable, loose-fitting clothing that your child can play in and get on/off easily. This helps keep children comfortable throughout a variety of activities and makes using the bathroom easier throughout the day.
- Avoid complicated buckles, straps, snaps, and buttons.
- Choose clothing that can get wet, muddy, stained, etc. Preschool can be messy at times!
- **Please pay attention to the weather** – weather and temperatures can be unpredictable; it never hurts to send a light jacket or sweater.

What to Bring

- Backpack – large enough to fit a standard folder.
- Extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks and underwear, in case of spills or accidents.
- Refillable water bottle.
- If wearing snow or rain boots when arriving at school, please bring a pair of gym shoes with you to change into.
- You may send a hat or sunglasses during warmer weather.
- Send adequate coats/jackets/mittens/etc. during cooler weather.
- Please note that we are not permitted to apply sunscreen to participants; if you would like to send sunscreen with your child in the event we go outside, we recommend a sunscreen stick as a great way to apply sunscreen to cheeks and noses.

Note: Children have a hard time recognizing their own jackets or remembering what they brought with them. Labeling these items helps make sure everything gets back to its rightful owner at the end of the day.

Personal Items

We understand a personal comfort item like a stuffed animal can help ease separation anxiety and do permit such items to be brought into the classroom if needed, on a temporary basis. Occasionally, teachers may ask for items to be brought for Show and Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher in these cases and Show and Tell will be communicated on the monthly class calendars.

Downers Grove Park District and its staff are not responsible for any lost, damaged or stolen items, including but not limited to backpacks, toys, cash and electronics. Staff may restrict or withhold inappropriate items or items that pose a safety risk. Staff also reserve the right to ask at any time for items, including comfort items, to be left at home.

POTTY TRAINING, BATHROOM INDEPENDENCE & BATHROOM ACCIDENTS

Water and bathroom breaks are taken throughout the day as needed, and children are always encouraged to ask to use the restroom or have a drink of water whenever needed.

3- and 4/5-year-old Preschool Students

Participants in 3- and 4/5-year-old programs must be fully bathroom independent and require no assistance from staff for any toileting needs. Bathroom independence includes the ability of a child to do all the following:

1. Recognize the urge to use the bathroom.
2. Clearly communicate to any staff member present that they need to go potty. They must be able to say the words "I have to go (potty/pee/poop)".
3. Pull down their pants and underwear and get them back up without assistance.
4. Wipe themselves after using the toilet, including after a bowel movement.
5. Get on and off the potty by themselves. Toilets in the preschool wings and the first floor of the Lincoln Center are of an appropriate size/height, and additional step stools are available if needed.

Staff will monitor restroom usage and assist with hand washing, provide verbal coaching, etc.

2-year-old Preschool Students

Training pants/diapers are allowed for students in the 2-year-old program. Parents/guardians or other trusted adults listed in ePACT must be available to change or pick up their child in the event they soil their diaper/pull-up.

If you are in the process of potty training, please note staff are not to be expected to adhere to a child's training schedule (i.e. staff cannot leave the classroom every 20 minutes to have your child try to potty). Participants are not permitted to bring in portable toilets or toilet seat reducers; appropriately sized toilets are available for preschool use.

All Students/Bathroom Accidents

Staff are not permitted to change diapers/training pants or assist with direct toileting needs (undressing, wiping, placing on toilet, etc.).

We understand that accidents happen, so we ask parents to send an extra pair of clothes (including socks and underwear) with their child each day. **In the event of an accident, parents may be called** if the clean-up requires more involvement than just assisting with changing clothes.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Code of Conduct

Participants, parents, and guardians are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. The following standards have been established for the benefit of our programs as a whole. The safety, structure, and integrity of the program will take priority over those of any one individual. Behavior guidelines are not limited to, but are based on, the following overall rules and apply to all participants. The term “participant” will henceforth be used to represent children, parents, and guardians.

1. Participants must show respect to all other participants, staff, property, equipment, and facilities.
2. Participants must follow the directive of staff and all program-specific rules.
3. Participants may not harass, bully or intimidate through the use of words, foul language, gestures, body language, phones, texting or other devices, social media, or menacing behavior.
4. Participants must refrain from threatening or causing physical harm to other participants and staff.
5. Participants may not place themselves or others in dangerous situations through their actions or behavior.
6. Participants may not possess weapons, devices that may be used as a weapon, or illegal substances.
7. Participants may not demonstrate any sexual suggestiveness or sexual activity.
8. Parents/guardians may not instruct their children to disregard staff directions or to respond physically with violent or threatening behavior or language.
9. Parents/guardians may not direct, discipline, or instruct children other than their own.
10. Staff reserve the right to dismiss, suspend or ban any individual who represents a risk or danger from program premises (including buildings, parking lots, playgrounds, and surrounding areas).
11. Participants must keep track of their belongings. Staff is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged belongings including backpacks, glasses, towels, toys, cell phones, spending money, etc.

Bullying, verbal and physical abuse, threats, and disrespect will not be tolerated. Participants will be held accountable for their actions in compliance with the DGPD Code of Conduct. All threats or threatening behavior will be taken seriously and may be reported to the authorities. Participants using threats of death, violence or suicide will be immediately suspended.

Expectations

It is the goal of the program to provide each child with an environment that is safe, nurturing, and enjoyable. To meet this goal, the staff will help all children exhibit qualities and characteristics that lead to a positive environment. Participants will be expected to treat the other children, staff, facilities, and materials with respect, through their words and actions. The children are encouraged to show trustworthiness by being honest and doing the right thing. They are asked to be kind, caring, and fair to themselves, others, and their environment.

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 and reviewed often throughout the year. Classroom rules will revolve around the following basic standards:

- We listen to the teachers
- We share toys and take turns
- We help clean up
- We play safely

Management

A positive and supportive approach will be used in regard to behavior management. Staff focus will be on using preventative and supportive management techniques and age-appropriate rules & expectations. Should the need arise, redirection and consequences specific to each situation will be used to help calm and support the participant. Discipline

will never be used to intimidate participants. Parents will be informed by staff of any behavior concerns or if behaviors escalate beyond what is developmentally appropriate.

When deemed necessary for the benefit of the child, classroom environment and teacher, support may be requested from SEASPAR (South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation - see "Inclusion Services/Disabilities" below) 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.

Parents are to refrain from speaking with other children regarding behavioral issues. Please bring all concerns regarding conduct and behavior to the staff. Only Downers Grove Park District staff are permitted to manage participant conduct and behavior.

Separation Anxiety

It is common for children to experience separation anxiety at the beginning of the school year, especially if this is your child's first time in a preschool setting. We want preschool to be a fun place where your child feels safe and secure, and our staff strive to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Most children are able to calm down quickly through songs, toys, and redirection.

For children who are still showing signs of stress and anxiety after attempts at redirection, a parent/guardian may be contacted for assistance or early pick-up. You are encouraged to discuss any concerns with us so that we can work together to develop strategies to ensure a smooth transition for your child. We reserve the right to remove students from the program if their anxiety and distress is disruptive to the overall program, and/or potentially harmful/damaging to the child or others and does not show signs of improving within the first 1-2 months of school.

Here are a few tips for things you can do to help with anxious feelings:

- Keep your goodbye short and sweet. Create a "see you later" ritual/routine at home together and start practicing prior to the start of school.
- Be prepared to drop off at the doorway, not inside the classroom. Having a child's parent enter the room can upset the dynamic of the other children and can make your departure even more difficult.
- Model confidence & positivity - smile, stand straight, use a cheerful voice!
- Establish & stick to a morning routine - calm, organized mornings help set a positive foundation for the day.
- Read stories together about going to school and being away from family. Some suggestions: *The Kissing Hand*, *Llama Llama Misses Mama*.
- Sending your child with a transitional object (stuffy/lovey) for the first day or two can help. Note: we will need to phase these items out within the first 1-2 months of school. Pacifiers and digital toys/tablets are not allowed.
- Make and communicate your plans for after school: "After school, I will pick you up, and we will go home and eat lunch". Knowing what comes after school can help reinforce the concept that you are coming back at the end of class.
- If you would like to stick around nearby to make sure your child adjusts, that is OK – just note that for security purposes, parents must wait in another area of the building, not the Preschool wings.

INCLUSION SERVICES/DISABILITIES

The Downers Grove Park District believes in the right to an excellent recreational experience for all individuals from all backgrounds and ability levels. Downers Grove Park District is a member of the South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation (SEASPAR), a special recreation association that enriches lives through recreation and inclusion services.

If your child has any medical, physical, psychological, or emotional needs; receives special services; or requires accommodations, please be sure to:

- List these details thoroughly in your participant information forms, AND
- Contact the Recreation Supervisor for your child's program to discuss how we can best support them.

If your child may need inclusion services from SEASPAR, please contact the Recreation Supervisor so that we can submit a request immediately. SEASPAR requires at least three weeks' advance notice to secure assistance. Aides/assistance provided by SEASPAR is done so at no cost to the family/participant.

Lack of information will adversely affect the Park District's ability to accommodate the needs of your child. Problems resulting from withheld information may necessitate the participant's suspension from the program until appropriate accommodations can be made for a more successful experience. All participants will be held to the same code of conduct and behavior policies unless otherwise discussed.

Developmental Screenings

Educators and childcare providers have a responsibility to monitor a child's development. If a staff member has concerns about your child's development, these concerns will be presented in a supportive and respectful manner. Staff may refer families to discuss concerns with their child's pediatrician, recommend that the family reach out to Early Intervention services, or refer families to their local school district for developmental screening. Screenings may also be offered during the school year for an additional cost, through local Speech-Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy providers.

Developmental screenings are a helpful tool for any and all children to better understand how to support them. We want to make sure all children receive the tools and support they need to thrive, and we recognize that we cannot always provide those tools and support within our program. If you have any questions about the types of support and guidance available to you in our area, please reach out.

Downers Grove Park District Essential Eligibility Requirements for Preschool

Reasonable accommodation can be made in certain circumstances to assist a participant in meeting the essential eligibility requirements detailed below. If your participant is in need of accommodation, please reach out to the Recreation Supervisor.

Age Requirements

- Participants must be age appropriate for the program they are enrolled in.

Participant Behavior Requirements

- Participants are expected to display appropriate behavior at all times.
 - Show respect to all participants, staff, and nature
 - Be pleasant to others and refrain from using foul/inappropriate language
 - Refrain from putting themselves and others in danger
 - Use equipment, supplies, and facilities as instructed
 - Always wear shoes and proper clothing
 - Stay with the group
 - Exhibit appropriate behavior that does not impede the flow of the program day
 - Participants must comply with the established behavior code of conduct and be devoid of behavior necessitating physical intervention.

Personal Needs

- Is able to manage all personal hygiene such as hand washing with minimal physical assistance or with verbal assistance
- Is able to change clothes with minimal physical assistance or with verbal assistance
- **Please see Potty Training, Bathroom independence & Bathroom Accidents Policy**

Motor Needs

- Is able to walk on own or with assistance of a mechanical device
- Is able to perform gross motor functions and fine motor functions with reasonable guidance

PROGRAM DISMISSAL POLICY

Every reasonable attempt will be made to meet each child's individual needs. However, the Downers Grove Park District reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a child from the program if a child shows an inability to benefit from the preschool program after all areas of guidance have been exhausted, or if a child's presence is detrimental to the classroom environment or the child is a physical threat to him/herself or others. Upon dismissal, the Recreation Supervisor and Preschool staff will assist the child's parents with referrals to other agencies.

The following behaviors are unacceptable and may result in removal from the program, and may include immediate pick up from the program:

1. Harming oneself, such as, but not limited to:
 - Leaving the program boundaries without permission
 - Leaving the designated group without permission
 - Failing to follow verbal instructions meant to ensure safety

2. Harming others, such as, but not limited to:
 - Fighting
 - Throwing objects at or near others
 - Bringing or using weapons (real or fake), i.e., knives, glass, sharp objects, etc.
 - Hitting, biting, spitting, or kicking others
 - Verbally abusing others, i.e., name-calling, taunting, etc.
 - Verbally or non-verbally showing disrespect
 - Physically or verbally assaulting a staff member

3. Property damage, such as, but not limited to:
 - Vandalism
 - Tantrums resulting in damage to property or materials
 - NOTE: The child's family is responsible for all damages

ABSENCES AND ILLNESS

Absences

Please notify us if your child will be out for a week or longer. You do not need to report a singular absence unless your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness such as, but not limited to: COVID-19, Hand, Foot & Mouth, chicken pox, strep, flu, lice, or pink eye. If we are notified of a contagious illness/condition in your child's class, and the individual attended class while possibly contagious, you will be notified as quickly as possible.

Illness

Children must be kept home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Sore throat
- Nausea/ vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Congestion/runny nose
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

- Unusual Fatigue
- Body aches
- Rash
- Discharge from eyes or ears
- Red/crusty eyes

Child ill while in class

- If a child becomes ill while in class, staff will begin contacting parents/guardians and emergency contacts until they are able to reach someone.
- A designated pick-up person must arrive within 45 minutes of the initial call to pick up their child.
- The child will need to remain home and follow our illness policy below.

What to do if my child is not feeling well or showing illness symptoms?

- If your child has any symptoms listed above, your child should remain home from the program.
- Your child must be symptom free and fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication or until a doctor indicates that your child can return to the program.

EMERGENCY/URGENT PROCEDURES

Evacuation procedures for each program have been established in the event of a major emergency that would require removing children from the site. Additionally, plans have been developed for tornado procedures. Fire/evacuation drills are practiced by the students and teachers – advance notice is given to families prior to drills.

If an individual child is injured in the program, we will take the necessary emergency steps and contact you as soon as possible. Should the injury be more severe, we will call 911 without hesitation. The parent/guardian also authorizes the Park District and its employees to consent to medical treatment. By registering your child for the program, you are releasing the Downers Grove Park District from all liability which may arise from the child’s participation in the program.

Medical Emergencies

All staff are CPR and First Aid certified. In the event of a serious injury that requires more than basic first aid, the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff calls EMS
2. Parent or Guardian is contacted (or listed emergency contact)
3. If necessary, paramedics will transport the injured child to the nearest hospital, accompanied by a staff member.

Guardians are responsible for any emergency medical charges. Park District Employees are not allowed to transport injured parties in Park District or in personal vehicles.

Emergency Cancellations

When the Park District declares that facilities and programs are closed due to weather or loss of power or water, or if School District 58 declares a snow day/remote learning day, Lincoln Learning Center Preschool will also be closed. For two or fewer snow days, classes will not be made up, and refunds will not be given. If there are more than 2 snow days in a school year, the year may be extended, or appropriate refunds will be provided.

In the event of an emergency closure/cancellation, notification will be sent out via ePACT and Remind and an announcement will be posted on www.dgparks.org and the Park District Facebook page.

In the event of an urgent/emergency situation where drop off may be delayed or early pick up may be required, staff will first send out an Emergency Message through ePACT. Depending on the situation, emails and phone calls may follow the ePACT message.

General Safety

- Preschool classrooms are located on their own secured floors. Cameras are used to monitor the hallways and areas around the classrooms.
- The hallway doors to the preschool floors are locked outside of drop-off or pick-up times. Individual classroom doors remain locked at all times.
- Drop-off and pick-up procedures have been developed to ensure only persons approved by the parent/guardian are allowed to remove the child from preschool.
- All staff are background checked and certified in CPR/AED & First Aid.
- Staff receive annual or biannual training in handling active threat scenarios, as well as tornado/severe weather training and training in evacuation procedures.

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

All Downers Grove Park District staff are considered mandated reporters by the State of Illinois and are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Downers Grove Park District will work with DCFS and families, as appropriate, to ensure the health and safety of children in the program. When a report is made, Downers Grove Park District will continue to work with and support the child and family. The report will be treated confidentially.

PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION POLICY

It is our goal to safely accommodate as many families as possible. The Downers Grove Park District reserves the right to adjust locations based on availability of space, staff and enrollment in order to maintain the safety, structure and integrity of the program as a whole.

All registrations are based on program availability, proper completion of registration, payment status or history, and the Park District's ability to meet any special needs the participant may have.

To be considered fully registered, each household/participant must:

- Complete and sign proper registration and waiver forms for each child.
- Pay all outstanding fees due to any Park District programs and remain in good financial standing with the Downers Grove Park District.
- Must complete all emergency forms in ePACT prior to the first day of school.

Payment Options

A payment option and agreement form will be distributed to parents in July, prior to the school year beginning. Tuition payments may be made in full, or you may enroll in monthly installments.

Monthly Payment Plan: If choosing this option, you will pay the tuition in 8 equal monthly payments, August-April. The automatic payments will be made on a monthly basis on the 15th of each month. If the 15th of the month falls on a Saturday or Sunday, billing will be processed on the following Monday.

The first payment will be deducted on August 15, and subsequent payments will occur on the same date each month through April 15. Please note that there will be no preschool installment billing in December. A credit card is required.

Pay in Full: Your total tuition will be processed in one payment within 72 hours of submitting the Tuition Form. A credit card is required.

Declined Payments: A \$5 fee (per class, per child enrolled) will be incurred due to an unsuccessful transaction. You are responsible for any fees, penalties, or charges incurred due to unsuccessful transactions resulting from incorrect payment information, cancelled bank cards, expired expiration dates, or insufficient funds in your account. It is your

responsibility to update or change the credit card or expiration date used to process automatic payments prior to the 15th of the month.

Missed/Late Payments: In the event an automatic payment is unsuccessful, payment must be made within two weeks of the billing date for the installment amount owed plus any applicable fees. If payment is not received within two weeks, your child will be suspended from class. If the payment is not received prior to the next installment, your child will be permanently removed from the program. If your child is permanently removed from the program, you are still responsible for the outstanding balance and will not be allowed to register for future programs and events until your account is in good standing.

Withdrawals/Transfers

If you choose to withdraw your child from the preschool program, you must submit a Withdrawal Request Form, located at dgparks.org. If student is enrolled in monthly billing, any tuition already paid will not be pro-rated; they are welcome to attend until the next bill is drafted. If paid in full, tuition will be pro-rated based on the monthly billing cycle. Any applicable refunds are subject to a \$5 service fee. The Registration Fee is non-refundable.

Requests to transfer to a different class will only be honored in the event there is space available in the desired class. Students cannot “trade places” with one another. Transfer of a currently enrolled student does not supersede waitlists; if a waitlist exists for the desired class, the transfer request will not be granted.

Financial Assistance Program

In an effort to provide recreation, health and wellness opportunities to all residents, including those who are experiencing financial hardships, the Downers Grove Park District has established a Financial Assistance Program. Participants must reside within the boundaries of the Downers Grove Park District to be eligible. For eligibility requirements or to donate to the Financial Assistance Program, please visit dgparks.org/financial-assistance-program.

Priority Enrollment

All families with students enrolled in the current preschool year will be eligible to enroll their student or sibling(s) in a priority lottery process for the following year of preschool. If you withdraw mid-year, you are no longer eligible to enroll in the priority lottery. If your child attended a previous year of preschool, but is not enrolled in the current year, you are not eligible to enroll in the priority lottery. Lottery enrollment typically takes place in mid-January with class results sent by the end of the month. After the lottery process is complete, remaining spots will open to new families on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional information is sent to current families in early January.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff will maintain confidentiality and respect family privacy, refraining from the disclosure of confidential information. Disclosure of children’s records beyond family members, program personnel and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require parental/guardian consent. However, in cases of abuse or neglect, it is permissible to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals who may be able to act in the child’s interest.

TAX INFORMATION

The Lincoln Learning Center Program is considered childcare and as such may be eligible to be claimed on tax returns. The Downers Grove Park District’s tax identification number is 36-6161023. If you need a receipt, follow the directions below or contact Registration at 630-960-7500:

- Log in to the Registration portal with your Username/Password
- Click MY ACCOUNT in the top right corner
- Under “Reports & Receipts”, click “Childcare Statement”