



Lincoln Learning Center

PARENT MANUAL



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WELCOME

Welcome to the Downers Grove Park District's Lincoln Learning Center! Your child is about to embark on a school year filled with learning, fun play, and room to grow. Preschool allows children to reach milestones while participating in rewarding experiences in small and large group settings.

The parent manual is designed to provide an overview of our policies and procedures. You will be able to access this manual as well as the weekly classroom schedules at www.dgparks.org. Please read all information carefully and thoroughly.

PRESCHOOL GENERAL INFORMATION

Philosophy

We hope that this will be an enriching experience for you and your child. Our program encourages children 2 - 5 years old to learn as they play, share experiences with other children, and grow in a stimulating environment.

The Preschool Staff engages daily and at regular staff meetings to plan activities that meet the needs and interests of children on an individual and group basis. The planning and methods used in the classrooms are based on the thesis that children learn academic concepts through doing; children need concrete experience to which they can relate new ideas and abstractions. We want to build vocabulary, images of numbers, shape, form, and other cognitive abilities through learning, not memorization. One way of accomplishing this is to involve children with these concepts in several diverse, interrelated, concrete experiences throughout the day rather than by specific time assigned to counting, singing, the alphabet, and the like.

Social, emotional, and physical skills are best promoted through activities that allow for the child's direct and active participation. One of the best ways young children actively explore and discover new things about others and the world around them is through play. Play serves many developmental purposes. As an activity of intense concentration and involvement, play is a time for problem-solving, sorting out and organizing new ideas.

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. The staff also plans activities children are encouraged to try and participate in daily. A typical schedule involves periods of mostly indoor activities with some outdoor activities if weather permits.

Program Content

Physical Development: Activities in physical health support the child's overall growth while promoting fine and gross motor skills, 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 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 good 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 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 the expression of thoughts, feelings, and opinions through words, children lay the foundation for later reading success.

Preschool Times/Ages

<u>Name</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Time/Days</u>
2 yr old Class	2-3 yrs	MW 9:00am-11:00am TTh 9:00am-10:30am TTh 11:00am-1:00pm
3 yr old Class	3-4 yrs	MW 8:45am-11:15am TTh 8:45am-11:15am TWTh 8:45am-11:15am
4/5 yr old Class	4-5 yrs	MW 8:45am-11:15am TTh 8:45am-11:15am TWTh 8:45am-11:15am
3/4/5 yr old Class RC	3-5 yrs	TWTh 8:45am-11:15am
Monday Add On	4/5 yrs	Mon. 8:45am-11:15am

A Typical Day in Early Childhood Class

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

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

COMMUNICATION

Please call or text the preschool cellphone if you need to contact the supervisor or staff to inform them of an early/late pick-up or absence. Email Anna Fontanetta for questions that do not need an immediate response. For all other communication, call or text the preschool cellphone. Call the Registration Desk for urgent messages, and the staff will contact your child's teacher.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Registration Desk	630-960-7500	REGI_STAFF@dgparks.org
Supervisor, Anna Fontanetta	630-960-4491	afontanetta@dgparks.org
Preschool Cellphone	630-991-8738	

PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION POLICY

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

To register, each participant must:

- Complete and sign proper registration and emergency 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 register and turn in **ALL** forms no later than the first day of preschool
- **Registrations received after this point will only be considered pending availability.**

WITHDRAWALS/CANCELATIONS

Cancellation/refund requests must be made using the Refund Request form on the website. Tuition will be pro-rated based on the student's last day of attendance.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION/EMERGENCY FORM

The Downers Grove Park District will utilize ePACT for all information/emergency forms. ePACT will replace the need to fill out info forms multiple times and ensures we have the most up-to-date and accurate contact and medical information that can be accessed easily. This ensures better preparedness for all members of the organization. Parents will be able to go into their ePACT account at any time and update information.

An email will be sent to parents with a link to complete your child's participant information/emergency form. There will be NO paper forms available to complete, all child information MUST be submitted through ePACT before the first day of preschool.

CUSTODY ORDERS

To honor specific custody orders and/or orders of protection, it is the responsibility of the parent to upload a copy 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.

WHAT TO BRING TO PRESCHOOL

Clothing

A preschooler's day is filled with activities that allow them to explore art materials to stimulate creativity, as well as outdoor activities for large motor skill development. Clothing choices should be practical as children may get messy throughout the preschool day.

- Choose comfortable, loose fitting clothing that your child can get on and off easily. This helps make trips to the bathroom easy for children
 - Closed toe gym shoes are required
- Send an extra set of clothes in your child's backpack daily in case of spills or accidents

All children must be completely potty trained except for participants in the 2 yr old program. Participants in the 2 yr old class are allowed to wear pull-ups to class. **Preschool staff does NOT change wet or soiled pull-ups or diapers.**

Parents/guardians must be available to change their child in the event this happens.

What to bring daily (please clearly label all belongings with your student's name)

- Backpack
- Change of clothes
- Filled Water Bottle

Special Occasions

The Downers Grove Park District follows a nut-free program when supplying special party treats and for parent-provided treats for special occasions.

Parents may choose to send a treat to their preschool classroom in celebration of their child's birthday. When choosing a special treat please try to purchase allergy free snacks or non-food items. Stickers, books or coloring books are always a hit with the kids. Some parents have donated a book to the class that be read over and over for several years.

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

- All items must be in the original, unopened package.
- 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.

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

Finally, we will review all information as we receive it regarding other food allergies (i.e. dairy, wheat, eggs, etc.) in specific classrooms. In this case, individual class treat lists will be altered to reflect these allergies. You will be notified if additional changes are made for your particular classroom.

PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Arrival and Dismissal

- Lincoln Center:
 - Parents will park in the Lincoln Center parking lot and bring their students to their classroom.

- A preschool staff will sign your preschooler in and out of preschool each day.
- The pick-up procedure is the same as the drop-off procedure
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- Recreation Center:
 - Parents will park in the Recreation Center parking lot and bring their students to their classroom.
 - A preschool staff will sign your preschooler in and out of preschool each day.
 - The pick-up procedure is the same as the drop-off procedure

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, online or in person at any of our facilities, within two days. If you are going to be late, a courtesy call would be greatly appreciated although it will not exempt you from the late fee.

CLEANING PROCEDURES

All classrooms will be cleaned before and after preschool, as well throughout the day. Any shared activity equipment will be cleaned before and after each rotation.

ABSENCES AND ILLNESSES

Absences

If child(ren) are ill and are not going to be attending preschool please call or email to report your child(ren) absent. If your child has a contagious illness such as COVID-19, Hand, Foot and Mouth, strep, flu, lice, or pink eye, you will need to report this as soon as possible to the Recreation Supervisor.

A Doctor's note may be required before returning to school depending on the illness.

Illness

Children should remain 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 at Preschool

- If a child becomes ill while at school, the child will be isolated with a staff person until a designated adult arrives to pick up.
- A designated pick up person MUST arrive within one hour of the initial call to parents.
- The child will need to remain home and follows our illness policy below.

What do I 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 school.
- 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 school.
- If your child has any symptoms listed above and you have a known exposure to COVID-19, we recommend that you have your child tested for COVID-19. If the test result is negative, your child can return to school when symptom and fever free for 24 hours. If your child tests positive, please inform the Recreation Supervisor and follow the procedures for “What do I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19.”
- If your child is tested for COVID-19 or any other contagious illness, your student needs to remain home pending the test results.

What do I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

- Please contact the Recreation Supervisor as soon as possible.
- The child must remain home for at least 5 full days from the onset of symptoms and must be symptom/fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication in order to return as early as the 6th full day. The child must then wear a well-fitted mask over the mouth and nose at all times while at school through day 10. If your child cannot wear a mask consistently and properly while at school, they will be required to complete a full 10-day quarantine instead of a full 5 day quarantine. Day 0 is the first day of symptoms. Loss of taste or smell is not included in “symptom free” as those symptoms can persist well after the contagious period.
- If the individual is asymptomatic, they must remain home for at least 5 full days from the day they were tested as long as they remain asymptomatic. Day 0 is the day of the test. The child must wear a well-fitted mask over the mouth and nose at all times while at school through day 10. If your child cannot wear a mask consistently and properly while at school, they will be required to complete a full 10-day quarantine instead of a full 5 day quarantine. If your child becomes symptomatic after testing positive, the 5-day isolation period starts over and Day 0 is the first day of symptoms.

What do I do if someone living in my household (other than my Preschool student) has a confirmed COVID-19 case?

- Your child can still attend school as long as they remain symptom free, but must wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days from the last known contact with the COVID-19 positive individual. The mask is required as a precaution in case the student develops symptoms in order to limit future close contacts.
- If your child becomes symptomatic, they must remain home and follow the illness policy stated above.

Parent Communication regarding contagious illnesses

- If we are notified of a contagious illness in your child’s Preschool class (COVID-19, Hand, Foot and Mouth, Strep Throat, Flu, Pink Eye, Lice, etc.), and we identify your child as a close contact, you will be notified via email as quickly as possible.
- As of the start of the school year, students are not required to quarantine if identified as a close contact. If a child becomes symptomatic, please keep your child home and follow the illness policy.
- There may be times during the school year that staff requires students to wear a mask for a short period of time while at Preschool due to varying circumstances and varying levels of community spread of illnesses (due to COVID-19 positive cases, etc.). Parents will be notified during the illness communication if a mask is required for a period of time (5 days, 10 days, etc.).

Please note:

- **While we do not anticipate cancelling classes due to COVID-19 exposure, there may be situations throughout the year that require the Park District to cancel a class for a short period of time due to quarantine purposes or staffing challenges.**

- **Any illness policy in this manual may be modified at any time depending on changes in the State of Illinois health mitigations or due to the current community health situation. Any changes to the illness policy will be emailed to parents.**

MEDICATION

Preschoolers requiring any type of medication must have a signed medication consent form on file. These forms are available upon request. Medication cannot be administered without the consent form. If your child is taking medication, the medication must be in its original container with the child’s full name on the label and the correct dosage enclosed. The supervisor must give the medication and instructions upon the child’s arrival at preschool. All medication is kept in a safe and secure location.

Transfer/Possession of Medication

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

Allergies

Children with severe allergies, such as allergies to bee stings, peanut products, dairy, etc., may be at risk of a serious allergic reaction while participating in a Park District program due to contact with the allergen. The Downers Grove Park District cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, but with your cooperation, we can create a safer environment and be better prepared to handle emergencies. The Park District will make reasonable, feasible, and practical accommodations to allow children with life-threatening allergies to participate in our programs. If your child has a life-threatening allergy, we will need that noted in ePACT. If an allergy action plan is in place, please upload that into ePACT along with the medication dispensing form (if applicable).

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

All preschool 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.

PRESCHOOL EMERGENCY/URGENT PROCEDURE

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. If an individual child is injured in the program, we will take the necessary emergency steps and contact you as soon as possible. However, 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 that may arise from the child’s participation in the program.

In the event of an urgent/emergency situation where preschool 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.

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:

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

The Downers Grove Park District reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a child from the program if the staff determines that the program can no longer meet the needs of the child, if the child is a physical threat to him/herself or others, or if the child's behavior consistently impedes the normal daily functions of the group

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE

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:

- We sit quietly on the rug.
- We wait for our friends at the table before we eat.
- We share our toys.
- We clean up our mess.
- We take turns.

Behavior Management

When a child is uncooperative or misbehaves, the District's 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 to 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 will be made to meet each child's individual needs. However, 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, the child will be withdrawn from the preschool program. Upon withdrawal from the program, the Recreation Supervisor and Preschool staff will assist the child's parents with referrals to other agencies.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The Downers Grove Park District believes in the right to an excellent recreational experience for all individuals from all backgrounds and ability levels.

If your child has any special medical, physical, psychological, or emotional needs, or receives any special services, please list them in detail in your participant information forms.

If your child needs an inclusion aide from the South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation, please contact Anna Fontanetta so that we can submit a request immediately. SEASPAR requires at least three weeks' advance notice in order to secure assistance. Aides will be secured for you at no cost.

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.

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.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Preschool 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 Downers Grove Park District tax identification number is 36-6161023. If you should need a receipt, please contact the Park District at 630-960-7500.

EMERGENCY CANCELLATIONS

When Park District declares that facilities and programs are closed due to weather or loss of power or water, the Lincoln Learning Center Preschool will also be closed. A notification will be sent out via the ePACT and will also be posted on www.dgparcs.org and the Park District Facebook page. You will not receive an email if the Preschool program is closed due to weather. The school year will not be extended due to emergency cancelations.