



Falls City

Public School

**Parent-Child Center/**

**Falls City Early**

**Learning Center**

**2024-2025**

**Parent Handbook**

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Parent-Child Center/Falls City Early Learning Center Fee Scale

The fees for PCC for the 2024-2025 school year are as follows:

Your August and September fees will be billed on September 1. Each month's fees will be billed on the first and payable by the 15th of each month. Any questions about fees should be directed to the office.

**Children Eligible for No Charge Preschool  
from 8a.m.-12pm., 8am-11am OR 11:45 a.m.-3:15 p.m. ONLY**

- \*Four years old
- \*Child of teen parent
- \* Premature at birth
- \*Developmental delays
- \* In-Home Falls City Sixpence Student
- \* Head Start Approved

**PRIORITIES (accepted first until March 6th)**

- \* 4 year olds
- \* Developmental Delay
- \* Student/Family Need

**Preschool Care:**

		<b>Free 4 yr. olds &amp; no charge exceptions</b>
Preschool Only-8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	\$7.00/day	Free
Afternoon Preschool/Lunch 11:45-3:15	\$7.00/day	Free
Preschool and Lunch-8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	\$9.00/day + lunch	Free+ lunch
School Day Care-8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.	\$16.00/day + lunch	\$7.00/day+lunch
All Day Care-7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	\$23.00/day + lunch	\$11.00/day+lunch

**Before and After School Care:**

7:30 a.m. + After School till 4:15	\$3.00/day
7:30 a.m. + After School till 5:30	\$6.00/day

**After School Care:**

Part Time 3:15 p.m.-4:15 p.m.	\$2.50/day
Full Time 3:15 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	\$5.00/day

**Reduced Fees for Free or Reduced Lunch Children:  
(Pertains to preschool children only)**

		<b>Free 4 yr. olds &amp; no charge exceptions</b>
Preschool Only-8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	\$5.00/day	Free
Preschool and Lunch-8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	\$7.00/day + lunch	Free+ lunch
School Day Care-8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.	\$13.00/day + lunch	\$6.00/day + lunch
All Day Care-7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	\$18.00/day + lunch	\$10.00/day lunch

*Any other extra hours over your contracted time will be billed the following month at \$2.50/hour.*

- \*Children must be three or four by July 31 to attend.
- \*Children will **not** be taken on a drop-in basis.
- \*Four year old's must be 4 by July 31 to receive free preschool.
- \*Enrollment must be for two or more days.
- \*It is encouraged that your children be potty trained.

\*All children will be served a morning and/or afternoon snack based on their schedule. School lunch will be offered for a fee (unless approved for free and reduced meals) to those who select that option.

Please note that you will be billed according to your contracted hours. Any days missed due to illnesses, appointments, etc. will still be charged (prolonged exceptions may apply). This is to ensure that your child's spot with PCC is reserved. Also, due to state attendance records, there will be **NO** special arrangements made to the above times.

## Preschool Care Routines

All sections of preschool will have the following activities throughout their session:

- Free Play
- Snacks
- Restroom
- Small Groups
- Circle/Group Time
- Library
- Outdoor/Gross Motor Play
- Lunch (if selected on the application)
- Brush Teeth

## Afternoon Care Routines

Children who stay at school for the afternoon care portion (12pm-3:15):

- Free Play
- Outdoor/Gross Motor Play
- Nap/Rest Time
- Snacks

## After School Care Routines

For all students, Preschool -2<sup>nd</sup> Grade who stay after school (3:15-5:30):

- Snacks
- Outdoor/Gross Motor Play
- Free Play
- Crafts

## Special Services Provided

Children that attend PCC will be evaluated according to their needs. Appropriate services will then be provided if available.

### Questions?

Refer to our website: [www.fctigers.org](http://www.fctigers.org)

Select "Early Childhood Program" under "Schools & Other"

AND

Select "Early Childhood Handbook" under "Students"

If you have any questions regarding these policies contact:

Stacey Vitosh, Director  
2500 Chase Street Falls  
City, NE 68355

Phone: 402-245-3005  
Email: [svitosh@fallscityps.org](mailto:svitosh@fallscityps.org)

If you have any further questions, concerns or comments regarding the services or policies provided at PCC, please contact:

Shelly Leyden, Principal

Phone: 402-245-2712  
OR  
402-245-4067  
Email: [sleyden@fallscityps.org](mailto:sleyden@fallscityps.org)

Parent-Child Center  
Falls City Early Learning Center Drop  
Off/Pick Up Procedures 2024-2025

Parent-Child Center (PCC) will not be issuing key fobs to parents. A staff member will be located at the PCC steps to help them into the building where other staff will help them get settled. We will take care of clocking your child into care.

You may use the PCC entrance for the times below:

7:30am - 8:15am

10:50am - 11:00am

11:50am - 12:00pm

3:00pm-3:15pm

**If you need to drop off/pick up outside of the times above you must go to the main entrance.**

Your responsibilities are as follows:

- ▶ Use the PCC entrance during the times above.
- ▶ Follow your scheduled drop off/pick up times according to your child's application.
- ▶ Use the drive up outside of PCC
- ▶ DO NOT PARK ON THE NORTH SIDE OF 26TH ST.
- ▶ Walk your child up to the PCC steps.
- ▶ Watch your child enter the building safely before you leave.
- ▶ OR walk your child into their classroom.

# ARRIVAL

On Arrival to School:

1. Follow Drop Off Procedures (pg. 6)
2. Follow your child's assigned schedule. Refrain from bringing your child too early as our staff are placed according to your assigned schedules on the applications.
3. Staff will clock your child in.
4. Notify teacher of any changes for the day.

# DEPARTUR E

On Leaving School:

1. Follow Pick Up Procedures (pg. 6)
2. Follow your child's assigned schedule. Our staff are placed according to your assigned schedules on the applications. Time recorded over your scheduled pick-up time will result in a fee.
3. Notify the teacher of your arrival.
4. Ensure your child has all of their belongings (including papers from their mailbox).
5. Staff will clock your child out.

## Separation Problems

If your child clings and has trouble leaving your side when you arrive at school, it is important for you to make an effort to leave as quickly and quietly as possible. This helps your child adjust. There may be a few occasional tears, but these quickly subside. Staying for long periods in the first few weeks of school may only prolong the problem. Please let your child have a chance to adjust, make new friends, and meet our staff. Then come back for a visit after the time of adjustment is over.

## Parent Contact Info. and Schedules

It is important for us to know your contact information and work schedules so we may contact you in case of emergency. If any changes occur, please let us know.

### Fee Requirements

Fees are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. With your signature on the "Receipt of Services and Policies" and the "Billing Contract" you have agreed to this condition upon enrollment of your child. We are operating on fees and some district support, so we ask your cooperation. If the fees are not received according to the agreement, your child will not be able to attend PCC until payment is made. If fees are repeatedly late, your child will be excluded from our program.

Please note: PCC does close promptly at 5:30pm. If your child attends the after school portion and is not picked up on or before 5:30pm additional fees may occur.

We do accept Child Care Subsidy through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. If your income is 185% of the federal poverty level, please complete an application with ACCESSNebraska <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/ACCESS-Nebraska-Printable-Applications.aspx> or call 1-800-383- 7352.

### Fees and Credits Due to Absences

A flat monthly fee will be assessed to each family, according to contracted hours, at the beginning of each month. If care exceeds that amount, billing will include these hours the following month. If your child is absent due to illness or other reasons, you will still be held responsible for the fees on those days. Prolonged exceptions may apply at the discretion of the administration.

If there are any days that PCC is forced to close the entire day due to weather, power outage, school sicknesses, etc. your bill will be credited the following month for these days **with the exception of late starts and early releases due to weather.**

### School Calendar

Our center **will** operate according to the regular Falls City Public school calendar. Significant dates will be shared with families at the beginning of the year. Reminders will go home at the beginning of every month of any days that we will not be in operation. If PCC's days or hours have to change due to trainings, etc. you will be notified in advance.

## Home Visits

PCC offers two home visits a year for all families involved in the program. Home visits offer a safe, comfortable, and conducive environment for parents to feel free to express any issues or concerns about their child's education.

Two to three weeks prior to the scheduled day, parents will be allowed to sign up for this visit. The teacher will send a reminder note home with the child in advance to the visit.

## Responsible Parties for Release and Emergency

If any person other than noted in your child's application comes to pick up your child, PCC will NOT be able to release the student to that person. If you will have multiple individuals responsible for picking up your child, please list their names, addresses and phone numbers on an additional piece of SIGNED paper to be placed in your child's file.

## Nature Walks

PCC will occasionally take a nature walk in the neighborhood around North School. By signing that you received our handbook you are giving PCC permission to leave the school grounds with your child for these nature walks.

## In Case of Illness

If your child is not well, and cannot attend school, please call us at 402-245-3005 or the North School office at 402-245-2712 as soon as possible in the morning. School policy states that your child should be fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT medication before returning to school. Contagious viruses travel quietly through our schools. For the welfare of your child and others, please be courteous and keep your child home if they are ill. If you have any questions, the school nurse is available at 402-245-2712 to advise you.

## Communicable Diseases

If there is a report of a communicable disease at PCC, you will be notified through Class Dojo and/or our schools all call system. All preschool families, regardless of attendance on the day of the incident, will be notified.

Communicable Diseases include, but are not limited to the following:

Chicken Pox	Fifth's	Head Lice	RSV	Influenza	Pink Eye
Disease	COVID	Scabies	Rotavirus	Ringworm	Pin Worm

## Head Lice

When children are together in a group situation, they may occasionally be exposed to head lice. We are very careful to monitor this problem on an ongoing basis and have had few problems. If you should detect head lice, please call immediately. We keep these calls confidential. Your child then needs to be treated and free of live lice before returning to school. We will then check every child and watch for reappearing problems.

## Pets

Pets may come to visit PCC under the supervision of a parent. Visiting animals must have documentation of appropriate vaccinations, if appropriate, and be suitable for contact with children. Staff will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behaviors. Animals that pose a threat to an allergic PCC child will be excluded. No reptiles will be admitted, because of the risk of salmonella.

## Birthdays

Birthdays will be recognized at PCC. We would like to celebrate that special day on which your child was born. If you would like to send treats to school, please let us know. We will follow the school policy of only pre-packaged snacks.

## Library

Your child will be allowed to choose a library book from the North School library. This will begin after Labor Day. Children who attend PCC 5 days a week will go to the library twice a week if they return their library book from the time before. Children who attend PCC 2 or 3 days a week will go to the library once a week if they return their boot. We ask that you store the book in a safe place and talk about the care of books at home. Reading stories with your child is a great way to assure his/her success in school. We have a wonderful public library that offers children's story hours also. We encourage you to take advantage of all forms of literacy building.

## Show and Share

Show and Share or Show and Tell will be planned at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

## - • - • - • - • - POLICIES - • - • - • - • -

Dear Parents:

Our lunch time is an important part of your child's school day. Children socialize, learn table manners, and also experiment with the taste of new foods.

To help prepare your child for kindergarten, we recommend the school lunches. They are nutritiously sound and affordable. Also, your child will have a chance to try new foods served.

Occasionally, parents may wish to send a lunch from home. In order to help you plan for this, a copy of the food pyramid can be found in the handbook. We recommend foods from these groups so your child's sack lunch will be nutritiously sound.

If your child will be bringing their own lunch, please let be sure to let the teacher know.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Parent-Child Center

Falls City Early Learning Center

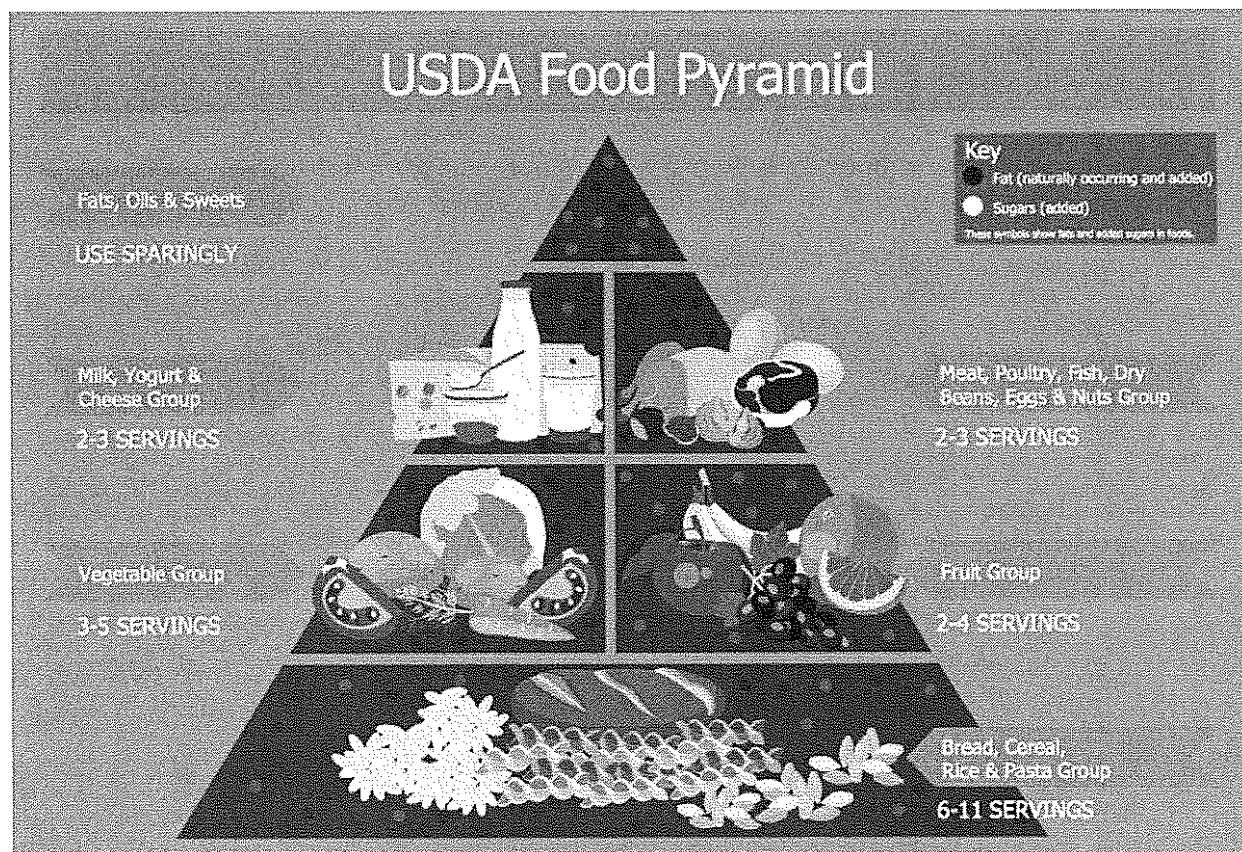
### **Nutritional Policy for Three Year-Olds:**

PCC staff will not offer children younger than four years these foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots.

We ask that parents sending a lunch to school also follow these guidelines to prevent the danger of choking while at school.

### **Nutritional Policy for Children under Ave Years of Age:**

PCC will offer 1% white milk only to children in our care; NO chocolate milk will be served. Children who stay for school lunch will not receive the sweet portion of the menu: cinnamon rolls, cookie, pudding, cake, brownie, etc. This is a CACFP (Center for Adult and Child Food Program) guideline to help prevent childhood obesity.



## Attendance Policy

Maintaining regular attendance is a kindergarten readiness skill. Preschool is often your child's first experience with school, so we want them to build a sense of respect for the school and their education. Important social-emotional skills as well as language, literacy, and numerical development are critical during these early years. By supporting regular attendance, you are setting an example for your child's education.

Therefore, PCC will be monitoring your child's attendance to ensure that the preschool spot being held is used to its full potential.

- If your child is absent 10 consecutive unexcused days of preschool, he/she will be dismissed from PCC and their spot will be filled by someone on our waiting list.
- A letter will be sent to the current address on file.
- You will be responsible for the preschool payment up until the time your child is dismissed.

## Behavior Policy

Student safety is one of our main concerns at PCC. It is important that our students display appropriate behaviors in order to make their time here as beneficial as possible, both for themselves and those around them.

Any aggressive behavior that threatens the safety of the students or staff will not be tolerated. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Biting
- \* Hitting
- \* Kicking
- \* Throwing

When a child is harmed, we will follow the steps below.

For the victim:

- The caring attention is focused on the victim
- Staff **will** document the incident
- Both families **will** be notified

For the aggressor:

- The child is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as "Stop, that is not okay".
- The child is not allowed to return to the same play and is talked to on a level that the child can understand.
- The child is redirected to other play
- We will monitor and record the incidents.

### **If any aggressive behavior occurs 3 or more times:**

A meeting will take place with the family of the aggressor and school officials to review the documentation and discuss strategies at school and home.

If, after meeting with the family, the aggression continues at school the team will decide upon a course of action below based on the severity of the behavior.

1. Scheduled visits with school counselor. We may identify particular triggers for the behavior. Understanding why a child reacts aggressively is key to beating the problem. Using this information will inform possible intervention strategies.
2. Altered days and/or hours to your child's original schedule.
3. Removal from the program.

## Our Goals

PCC/Falls City Early Learning Center provides quality early childhood and parent education to the people of Falls City with flexible scheduling and fees. We are a unification of Falls City Public Schools, Parent-Child Center and SENCA Head Start.

Growth in numbers of participants shows our community that there is both a need and continued support for care and education of children and families. Continuity of staff and consistency of care are a focus of our program. Over the years, care has expanded from 3-year-olds to care and education for families of kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

In an effort to care for all families, we work with Health and Human Services and special education to provide care to children with special needs and those with limited resources.

Parent education involves parent meetings, monthly newsletters, parent and educational materials, and doily parent contact. Evaluation of student progress is accomplished through observation and work sampling on a quarterly basis.

PCC/Falls City Early Learning Center is a link between children, parents and the public schools in providing a smooth transition to the primary years.

Making both parents and children feel comfortable, nurtured, and able to grow to their fullest potential in the environment created by our program is our primary goal.

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## A Letter to Families About Dramatic Play

Dear Families,

Dramatic play is one of the ways children gain a better understanding of their experiences. In dramatic play, children take on different roles, act out real or imaginary situations, use props to make believe, and work together. They learn to cooperate with others, solve problems, and control their own behavior—all of which are important skills for school *success*. When children pretend, they recall experiences and agree on how to re-create them. To play the role of a doctor, for example, they have to remember what a doctor does, what tools a doctor uses, how a doctor examines a patient, and what a doctor might say.

Every day, I play games like peek-a-boo with the babies and encourage them to imitate simple actions. I make believe with toddlers and twos as they play with dolls, push cars along the floor, or pretend to be a cat. I observe the preschool children to see what interests them, and

I provide simple props related to topics they are talking about. Sometimes I join in their play without taking over. We all enjoy the plays and puppet shows our school-age children plan and put on for us.

Because dramatic play can take place anywhere and at any time, you probably already encourage this type of play at home. The simple imitation games you play with your baby while changing a diaper or during bath time are two examples. Soon your child learns to pretend to be a noisy puppy, a mommy or daddy caring for a baby, or a firefighter putting out a fire. Dramatic play becomes much more complex as your child gains more experience and develops skills to pretend.

Here are some ways to support your child's dramatic play:

Talk about real-life experiences as they take place. On a trip to the grocery store, post office, or clinic, talk about what is happening. Explain what people are doing, their jobs, and the names of tools and other objects they use. This helps your child understand and recall those experiences in pretend play.

Provide props that inspire pretend play. Dolls, doll blankets, a cradle, telephones, pots, pans, plastic dishes, and safe tools will encourage your child to explore social roles. Other useful props include people and animal figurines; transportation toys such as cars, trucks, and boats; and various ride-on toys.

Make believe with your child. This is one of the best ways to encourage your child to pretend. You can also encourage pretend play by asking questions; providing dress-up clothes and work-related props such as firefighter hats, work gloves, and a toy stethoscope; and taking on a role yourself.

Encourage your school-age child's imaginative play. Your child might enjoy creating plays and acting them out or using puppets to retell a story.

Sincerely,

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## A Letter to Families About Stories and Books

Dear Families,

Reading is essential for school success. It's also a wonderful source of enjoyment. Reading to children every day is one of the best ways to interest children in books, and it can be among the most treasured times you have together.

I have a large collection of books for the children, and we go to the library regularly for story time and to find more books. I encourage the children to look at books whenever they want, and we read together at least once a day. Sometimes I choose a story to read to the children. At other times, I let them pick their favorites.

Reading aloud encourages children to love books, introduces new ideas, and helps children learn how to handle problems. As children listen to me read and look at the pictures and text, their own reading skills begin to develop.

We look at the pictures together, and I ask them questions like these: "Can you find where the caterpillar is now?" or "What is that silly dog doing?"

I point out the pictures to infants and tell them what objects are called.

I ask the older children, "What do you think will happen next?" or "Why do you think she's smiling?" Questions like that help them understand the story and learn about story structure.

I let all the children help me tell the story by repeating words or phrases they remember from previous readings. Sometimes rhymes and refrains also help them predict the text as we read together.

I encourage children to look at books, listen to recorded stories, retell stories, and scribble and write throughout the day. Sometimes children dictate stories to me.

Read and tell stories to your child every day. Reading aloud together and telling stories lets your child know how much you value these activities, and their enjoyment of books encourages them to learn to read. Here are some more things you can do with your child.

Encourage your child to talk about the stories you read.

Offer prompts such as "I wonder what will happen next?" or "I wonder why..."

Try to relate the story to something in your child's life: "That dog looks just like Grandpa's."

Let your child experiment with paper and pencils, pens, or markers.

Take your child to the library for story time and to check out books.

Let's share information. I can tell you the titles of the books your child enjoys here, and you can tell me your child's favorite story or nursery rhyme so I can read or recite it, too. If you record your child's favorite story or nursery rhyme, I can play it during the day, especially if you speak a language at home that I don't speak.

Sincerely,

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## A Letter to Families About Technology

Dear Families,

I am delighted to have technology in my program to use with children aged 3 and older. As I'm sure you are aware, technology can be an amazing learning tool when used appropriately. I want to work closely with you to ensure that your child's technology experiences are positive. I need to know how long you'd like your child to use the technology at one sitting and what types of software and Internet sites your child may use.

These are my goals for children's technology use:

- being comfortable with technology
- developing reading and writing skills
- learning math skills and understanding math concepts
- expressing themselves creatively
- learning to solve problems and find information

I encourage children to work in pairs. This helps them learn from each other and supports their social skills. While children are working with technology, I ask them questions to help them think about what they're doing. For example, I might ask,

"Why did you choose this program?"

"How can you send a copy of your painting to your grandparents?"

"What would you like to do with the printouts you made today?"

By interacting with the children, I encourage their development and learning and help them prepare for a future in which they will need to know how to work with technology.

You may or may not have a computer, tablet, or smartphone at home. It is certainly not necessary for you to have one for your child to benefit from using the technology at my family child

care program. If you do have a home computer, tablet, or smartphone and would like to know more about using it with your child, please ask. I will be glad to assist you, including sharing information about appropriate programs, applications, and Web sites.

By working together as a team, we can help your child have positive, meaningful experiences with technology.

Sincerely,

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## A Letter to Families About Block Play

Dear Families,

The hardwood unit blocks you see in our classroom are among our most valuable learning materials. They come in proportional sizes and various shapes. When children build with blocks, they begin to understand math concepts. For example, they learn about volume when they find the number of blocks that fill a certain space. They compare the heights of their buildings and learn about geometric shapes (triangles, squares, and rectangles). When they lift, shove, stack, and move blocks, they explore weight and size. Each time they use blocks, children make decisions about how to build structures and solve construction problems.

Children often use blocks to represent the world around them, perhaps a road, a house, or a zoo. As they work together, they learn to cooperate and begin to understand friendship. To promote language development and expand children's play, encourage them to talk about what they are doing. Here are examples of what you might say and ask:

*"I see that you made a tall apartment building. How do people get to their floors?" "Where do people park their cars when they come to the shopping center?"*

*"Would you like to make a sign for your building?"*

These questions and comments make children more aware of what they are doing and encourage them to try new ideas.

### What You Can Do at Home

You can encourage your child to learn through block play by taking an interest in what he or she does at our program. Please spend time in our Block area to see your child building with and caring for blocks. When you take a walk in your neighborhood, point out roads and interesting buildings. You may want to purchase table blocks, colored wooden cube blocks, or cardboard brick blocks to have at home. You can also make a set out of milk cartons, which come in different sizes. Store them in shoe boxes or plastic tubs and put a picture and word label on the container so your child knows where the materials belong.

Identify a place where your child can build and play with blocks safely. Props such as clothespins, small plastic animals, and cars and trucks will extend your child's play and inspire new ideas. The settings your child creates can also be used for pretend play.

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## A Letter to Families About Creating With Art

Dear Families,

Art is an important part of my program. I provide children with a variety of art experiences every day. Drawing, painting, pasting, molding, and constructing are enjoyable, and they provide very important opportunities for learning. As they explore art materials, children express their ideas and feelings, improve their eye-hand coordination, learn to name colors and describe textures, and feel proud of their creative efforts.

While children are engaged in art activities, I talk with them about what they are doing. I ask questions that encourage them to think about their ideas, express their feelings, and experiment with the tools and materials.

The children and I are primarily interested in creative processes. I support your child's confidence by saying such things as "Tell me about your picture," instead of asking something like "Is that a house?" Think how a child would feel if his picture weren't one of a house!

Children love to bring their artwork home to share with you. Take time to talk with your child about his or her art. Comment on the colors and the different lines, shapes, and patterns. Here are some questions you might ask your child:

How did you get the pieces of crepe paper to stick to the construction paper? How did you decide what colors to use in your painting?

What do you like best about your sculpture?

Where should we hang your mobile so that we can all enjoy it?

You can also help your child appreciate other artwork. When you look at books together, talk about the illustrations with your child. Discuss the art in your home, too.

Your child can explore art in almost any room. You might designate a kitchen or living room drawer as an art drawer, or you might use a bookshelf or sturdy cardboard box. Include crayons; water-based markers; paper; a pair of child-sized, blunt-edged scissors; glue; and a container with a variety of collage materials. Children don't need coloring books. With their own imaginations and your support, their artistic talents will flourish.

Sincerely,

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## Letter to Families about Mathematics

Dear Families,

Have you noticed how often your child uses math? One of the first words many children learn to communicate is "more." When sharing materials, does your child notice when somebody else has "more" or when one of his or her toys is taken away? Perhaps your child enjoys stacking blocks to make a tall tower, notices patterns in stories and can predict what will come next, or comments on how big your hand is next to his or her hand. These are just a few ways that children demonstrate their fascination with mathematics.

Research shows that to prepare children for academic success in elementary school, preschool mathematics should emphasize numbers and operations, geometry, measurement, and patterns.

### What You Can Do at Home

Help your child practice numbers and operations by counting everything! Support his or her understanding of one object per number by touching each item as you say the corresponding number.

Here are some other strategies for supporting numbers and operations:

Include counting books in your daily reading with your child. Together, count the pictured objects to see if they match the written number (numeral) on the page. As you read, hide some of the pictured objects with your hand and ask your child to decide how many objects are hidden.

- Ask your child to help set the table for a meal by putting a napkin or a plate for each place, or ask him or her how many more cups, forks, etc. he or she will need for everyone to have enough.
- Ask your child to use his or her fingers to make 5 (for example, 2 fingers on one hand, 3 fingers on the other hand). You can also ask your child to talk about the number 10 in a similar way (for example, 3 fingers with rings and 7 fingers without rings, or 2 thumbs and 8 other fingers).

Provide your child with engaging geometry experiences by encouraging your child to work puzzles. As he or she works, use mathematical words like *turn*, *slide* or *flip* to help him or her decide where to place the pieces. Create your own puzzle by cutting a sheet of paper or a colorful wall calendar page into pieces for your child to reconstruct. Consider these additional ideas on supporting geometry at home:

- Encourage your child to build towers with blocks, empty cardboard boxes, or plastic containers. Talk about which objects work best for stacking and which do not.
- Use geometric language to describe common objects. For example, you could say, "A cylinder is like a can. A sphere is like a ball, and a square is like the side of this box."

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## A Letter to Families About Discovery

Dear Families,

Young children are born scientists. They are curious about the world around them and have many questions. They ask, "Where did the puddle go? What do worms eat? How can I make my truck go faster? Do fish go to sleep?"

In my family child care program, I encourage all of the children to explore and investigate to find answers to their questions about the physical and natural world. Infants learn by using all of their senses. They want to know how things look, feel, taste, smell, and sound. Toddlers and twos experiment, trying to discover how things work, what things do, and what they can make happen. Preschool and school-age children observe, experiment, measure, solve problems, take things apart, and investigate living and nonliving things.

With appropriate support, children do what scientists do: ask questions, plan and conduct investigations, gather information, construct an explanation, and communicate findings. They learn important concepts as they study plants, animals, magnets, light, shadows, rainbows, the human body, how things move and change, and more. They learn how to solve problems together and how to communicate with others. When children are very interested in a topic, we spend a lot of time investigating it.

You don't need to be an expert to help your child learn about science. Science is all around us, from making bubbles in the bathtub to boiling water on the stove. Your own curiosity and your ability to ask questions will encourage children to make discoveries. Let your child know that you don't have all the answers but that you can find them together by observing, guessing, experimenting, looking things up, and conducting investigations. Get in the habit of wondering out loud: "I wonder how that ant can carry that big piece of food," or "I wonder why your shadow is sometimes small and sometimes big."

Your questions and statements support your child's scientific thinking skills. Here are some examples of prompts that extend your child's thinking:

"What do you think will happen if...?"

"I wonder why... "

"How do you think we can find out... ?"

Look for opportunities to promote your child's scientific thinking during everyday activities: playing with toys, taking a bath, helping to make dinner, or playing in the backyard. It's a good sign if your child is curious, wants to discover everything, asks lots of questions, and wants more answers!

Sincerely,

## A Letter to Families About Toys and Games

Dear Families,

Toys and games include puzzles; various table blocks; small construction materials such as small plastic building blocks; board games; and collections of objects (including shells, bottle caps, and buttons). When children use toys and games, they explore how things work, use their imaginations, strengthen and control the muscles in their hands, work cooperatively, solve problems, and learn content area concepts.

When children use toys and games in the classroom, we encourage them to talk about what they are doing. For example, we might say,

"Tell me about the design you made,"

"How did you get those rings to fit together?"

"Can you tell me how the block,; you picked out are the same?"

Such questions and comments help children develop thinking skills.

### What You Can Do at Home

You play an important role by selecting toys and games that are safe, interesting, and appropriate for your child. More importantly, research shows that the most creative children are those who have had adults involved in their play. Here are a few ways that you can be involved in your child's play with toys and games:

Observe. Watch as your child plays and notice his or her abilities and interests. Play.

Follow your child's lead and join his or her play.

Imagine. Keep in mind that there is more than one way to play with a toy. Be creative!

Enjoy. This isn't a time to drill your child or test what he or she knows. Just have fun being together, talking, and playing.

Good toys do not have to be expensive. You might collect various small objects such as buttons, seashells, rocks, and plastic bottle tops. Make suggestions, such as "Put all of the buttons that are the same color in a pile," or "Group all of the beads that are the same size." Encourage your child to tell you about the design he or she is making or to explain why things belong together.

Playing with *toys* and games at home promotes your child's development in many ways. We welcome you to help us in the classroom by playing in our Toys and Games area with the children. You can see for yourself how much your child is learning there.

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## A Letter to Families About Going Outdoors

Dear Families,

I take children outdoors every day, giving them an entirely different environment to explore. Outdoors they can stretch, breathe fresh air, bask in the sunshine (or the rain or snow), and enjoy the freedom of open space. They can run, jump, swing, climb, and use their large and small muscles. They marvel at the creatures they find, watch trees move in the wind, and collect seeds and leaves. I want to give the children opportunities to appreciate nature and wonder about their discoveries.

Unless the weather is extreme, we go outdoors several times a day. Sometimes we go for a neighborhood walk and talk about everything we see: a construction project, squirrels, perhaps someone delivering a package. We look for things to collect outdoors, such as leaves, seeds, and dandelions. We talk about weather changes and what animals do. During our time outdoors, the children can move freely and develop their large-muscle skills. Physical exercise and fresh air are essential to your child's health and well-being.

Here are some activities to try next time you go outdoors with your child. You probably do some of them already. Perhaps others are new ideas.

Enjoy nature. Talk about the breeze touching your child's cheeks. Roll down a grassy hill together. Plant a garden in your yard, in a window box, or in a wheelbarrow that you can move as the sun moves. Take a bucket on walks so your child can collect things such as feathers and leaves. Be sure that the items do not present a choking hazard.

Take a texture walk. Call your child's attention to natural materials and describe them. For example, you might point out *soft* sand, *rough* pinecones, and a *smooth* rock.

Invent games. Create a balancing path by laying a piece of rope on the ground to walk along. Play a game of catch. Set up a bowling game in which your child tries to knock down empty food boxes by rolling a beach ball.

Visit public playgrounds. Look for playgrounds with equipment appropriate for your child's age and skills. Playgrounds offer wonderful opportunities for children to test their developing skills and play with other children.

Encourage your school-age child to participate in outdoor activities. Try to arrange for your child to participate in sports. Take nature walks together and spend as much time as possible outdoors with your child.

Together, we can promote your child's health and well-being by providing outdoor time every day.

Sincerely,

# The Creative Curriculum

## 38 Objectives for Development & Learning

### Social-Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
  - a. Manages feelings
  - b. Follows limits and expectations
  - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
  - a. Forms relationships with adults
  - b. Responds to emotional cues
  - c. Interacts with peers
  - d. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
  - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
  - b. Solves social problems

### Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
  - a. Uses fingers and hands
  - b. Uses writing and drawing tools

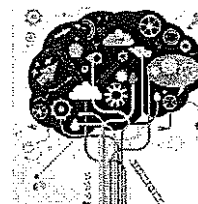


### Language

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
  - a. Comprehends language
  - b. Follows directions
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
  - a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
  - b. Speaks clearly
  - c. Uses conventional grammar
  - d. Tells about another time or place
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
  - a. Engages in conversations
  - b. Uses social rules of language

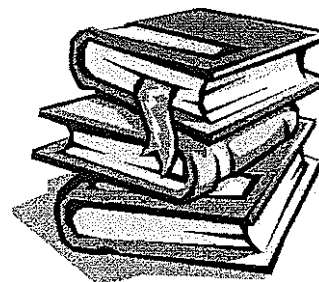
## Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
  - a. Attends and engages
  - b. Persists
  - c. Solves problems
  - d. Shows curiosity and motivation
  - e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
12. Remembers and connects experiences
  - a. Recognizes and recalls
  - b. Makes connections
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
  - a. Thinks symbolically
  - b. Engages in sociodramatic play



## Literacy

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
  - a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
  - b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
  - c. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
  - a. Identifies and names letters
  - b. Uses letter-sound knowledge
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
  - a. Uses and appreciates books
  - b. Uses print concepts
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
  - a. Interacts during read-alouds and book conversations
  - b. Uses emergent reading skills
  - c. Retells stories
19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
  - a. Writes name
  - b. Writes to convey meaning



## Mathematics

20. Uses number concepts and operations
  - a. Counts
  - b. Quantifies
  - c. Connects numerals with their quantities
21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
  - a. Understands spatial relationships
  - b. Understands shapes
- 22'. Compares and measures
23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

## **Science and Technology**

24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

## **Social Studies**

29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

## **The Arts**

33. Explores the visual arts
34. Explores musical concepts and expression
35. Explores dance and movement concepts
36. Explores drama through actions and language

## **English Language Acquisition**

37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English