



pennsylvania
PRE-K COUNTS

2025-2026

Coudersport Area School District

Pre-K Counts

**Program Information and Policy
Handbook**



Table of Contents

Pre K Counts Overview.....	Page 2
Staff Qualifications and Contact Information	Page 3
Curriculum Information.....	Page 4-5
Parent Connection.....	Pages 5-7
• Communication	
• Inclusion	
• Open House	
• Parent-Teacher Conferences	
• Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA)	
• Resources and Supports	
• Screenings	
• Setting Goals and Tracking Data	
• Volunteers	
Classroom and School Procedures	Pages 7-11
• Attendance Policy	
• Birthdays	
• Challenging Behaviors	
• Classroom Expectations	
• Clothing	
• Confidentiality	
• Emergency Closing	
• Meals, Nutrition, and Allergies	
• Outdoor Play	
• Special Occasions	
• Supplies	
• Transportation	
Transitioning into Pre-K	Page 11
Transitioning from Pre-K to Kindergarten.....	Page 12-13

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Overview

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, is bringing quality half-day and full-day pre-kindergarten to nearly 19,000 three- and four-year-olds in Pennsylvania.

What can I expect from a PA Pre-K Counts classroom?

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms will:

- have teachers with the education and expertise to teach young children
- use a curriculum that will help your child grow academically and socially
- regularly review your child’s progress and choose teaching and learning activities that are best for your child
- help you and your child adjust to Pre-Kindergarten and smoothly transition to Kindergarten
- offer a small class size (no more than 20 students per one teacher and one teacher assistant) so that your child has plenty of one-on-one time with the teacher
- operate 180 days a school year

Who is eligible for Pre-K in Coudersport?

- Children must be 4 years old by September 1st of the enrollment year
- Children may participate in the Pre-K program only for the year preceding their eligibility for Kindergarten
- Children must not turn 5 before July 1st
- Income eligibility is up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level

*** 2025 Federal Levels 300% of the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines**

Family Size	Annual	Monthly
1	\$ 46,950	\$3,913
2	\$63,450	\$5,288
3	\$79,950	\$6,663
4	\$96,450	\$8,038
5	\$112,950	\$9,413
6	\$129,450	\$10,788
7	\$145,950	\$12,163
8	\$162,450	\$13,538
Each Add'l over eight.	\$16,500	\$1,375

School District Staff

Position	Name	Contact Information
Superintendent	Drew Kyle	dkyle@coudyschools.net
Principal	Traci Budd	tbudd@coudyschools.net
Assistant Principal	Adam Lamber	alamber@coudyschools.net
Teacher	Denise Distrola	ddistrola@coudyschools.net
Teacher	Brigette Dubots	bdubots@coudyschools.net
Teacher	Jessi Gross	jgross@coudyschools.net
Teacher Assistant	Tiffany Gledhill	tgledhill@coudyschools.net
Teacher Assistant	Mollie Marzo	mmarzo@coudyschools.net
Teacher Assistant	Jessica Ruter	jruter@coudyschools.net
School Counselor	Lynette Howard	lhoward@coudyschools.net
School Nurse	Kelsey Cusatis	kcusatis@coudyschools.net
Principal's Secretary	Mia Gee	mgee@coudyschools.net
Attend. Secretary	Alyson Yerrick	ayerrick@coudyschools.net

Staff Qualifications

The teacher in our Pre-K classroom has a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood education and has a Pennsylvania Teaching certificate. Teacher Assistants are also required to achieve the status of "highly qualified" to maintain their positions. In addition, the teacher and assistant teacher are required to attend various trainings and professional development activities every year. Cross-training also occurs between Pre-K, Early Intervention (EI), and Head Start Staff. Technical assistance is also provided by the Pre-K Counts Coordinator, the EI Supervisor, and EITA (Early Intervention Technical Assistance).

Staff is also trained on Federal Laws and Regulations including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Our Staff also receives training in PA Laws and Regulations including the Pennsylvanian Early Interventions Service System Act 212 of 1990, Chapter 14, and Pre-K Counts Regulations.

Curriculum Information

Pre-K Counts classrooms use *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool*, which is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning. Our goal is to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool* allows children to master skills at their own pace. It enhances social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. It also uses steps that sequence the development of a child as an approach to learning. All lesson plans are aligned with **Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards**. The classroom is arranged in centers. A description of each center is listed below.

Art

This provides a creative outlet for kids to help express their emotions and ideas. Children can experience different textures and use different materials as they create their works of art. Fine motor skill development and improved hand-eye coordination are developed in this center.

Blocks

Block play enables children to improve their motor skills, practice problem-solving, and learn how to work with their classmates. It allows children to explore their creative side by building unique structures and communities with blocks, block people, and block animals while teaching children about basic engineering and architecture concepts.

Literacy

This is an area where children practice their reading, writing, and comprehension skills. This area helps children express their ideas, explore their interests, and learn about the world around them.

Technology

The Pre-K Classrooms are provided the opportunity to work in our Stem Lab with Mr. Daisley.

Dramatic Play

Dramatic play allows children to role-play as adults in everyday situations and explore a variety of careers. Dramatic play encourages creativity, self-expression, and knowledge of the community. It is also used to help teach children about other countries, cultures, and customs.

Sand and Water

Children can explore with sand and water and learn to share with others as they play in this learning center. This center broadens children's sensory play experiences and encourages creativity.

Nature and Science

This center brings the outdoors indoors and gives children opportunities to explore nature and science concepts.

Music and Movement

This encourages children to be physically active and provides opportunities to experiment with sound and music. A music and movement center can also promote self-expression, foster creativity, and help children relax.

Math and Manipulatives

Children can practice problem-solving skills and improve their hand-eye coordination, in this center. This center also fosters a positive attitude about math.

Parent Connection

Communication

Every child will have a folder in their book bag. Important notes from the teacher, calendars and newsletters will be sent home in the folder. Parents are encouraged to place any important paperwork or notes in their child's folder. Teachers assist children in emptying and filling their folder every day. Confidentiality of student information and situations is valued by all staff.

Inclusion

Pre-K Counts support the definition of inclusion provided in the joint position statement on early childhood inclusion from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood (DEC) as follows:

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his/her family, regardless of ability to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with or without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and support (2009).

Open House

A school-wide Elementary Open House is held every school year in August. We invite all Pre-K students and their families to come in and check out their classrooms and explore the rest of the school building.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parental involvement is the key to your child's educational success so we encourage you to attend parent-teacher conferences! Our school district schedules parent-teacher conferences every fall for all students and as needed throughout the year. Conferences are a wonderful time to look at progress, see samples of student's growth and set goals together. More information will come home about conferences in the fall.

Parent-Teacher-Student Association

The Coudersport Elementary School has a very active PTSA. The PTSA has an annual membership drive for families who have students attending the Coudersport Elementary School. Anyone interested in becoming a member of this important program should contact the elementary office at 274-8500.

Resources and Supports

Collaboration to include children in community settings is planned and intentional to meet the specific needs of the family and child. Parents and personnel from inclusive sites are invited to all IEP meetings. Ongoing support is provided to families and personnel in community settings. Early Intervention and Pre-K staff participate in the Local Interagency Coordinating Council meetings. These meetings include community stakeholders and parents. Community needs are assessed and this group plans activities to address the needs identified and coordinate existing services to reduce duplication of services. This group collaborates to increase early learning activities for all children in our area.

Screenings

Pre-K Counts classrooms will complete a developmental screening known as *Ages and Stages* (ASQ) and *Ages and Stages: Social-Emotional* (ASQ-SE). Input from parents is very important. We will either meet with you to fill out the screenings or send them home for you to complete. A permission slip will be sent home early in the school year so that IU9 Early Intervention can screen your child's speech and language development. Please contact your child's teacher at any time if you have any questions about these screenings or your child's development.

Setting Goals and Tracking Data

Parent input is included in setting goals for their children for the year. Ongoing communication occurs throughout the year regarding student progress. Teachers collect data and parental input is continually encouraged. Teacher and parent input is used by Pre-K Counts and EI Administrators to set long-term program goals.

Volunteers

We do welcome parent volunteers into our classrooms for special occasions (e.g., to showcase talents and/or careers) as arranged by the teachers. Whenever you need to visit the school, access us through the main front doors only. You must wait to be admitted, enter the main office, sign-in, and (on occasion) present identification to obtain a visitor's pass, which is to be worn at all times while in the building. Our school district has a policy that all volunteers must have their clearances in order to volunteer in our school building for the protection of all students. The process of obtaining clearances is fairly simple and free. To find out more, please contact your child's teacher or look at these websites:

Child Abuse Clearance	https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home
State Record Check	https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp
FBI Background Check	https://uenroll.identogo.com/

Classroom and School Procedures

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is vital to student success in school. The habits that our children develop today will follow them throughout the rest of their lives. We want to work with you and our littlest Falcons now to build those healthy attendance habits that will help your child succeed, not only today, but in the future..

Pre-K regulations define *Excused Absences* as follows: days that a student is prevented from attending for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons. These can be further defined as illness, family emergency, death of a family member, health or dental appointments, fire, natural disasters, or other extenuating circumstances deemed as excused by the program. All other absences are defined as *Unexcused Absences* and will be recorded as such.

If your child is absent for 3 consecutive days, excused and/or unexcused, the school nurse will contact you to learn the nature of the absences and to offer support, as appropriate.

If your child accumulates 5 consecutive days of absence, excused and/or unexcused, or accumulates 10 unexcused days of absence, the family and administration will meet to discuss the reason for the absences and will create a Student Attendance Improvement Plan..

Because the Pre-K Counts program receives funding from the state, there are attendance expectations that must be met in order to continue to receive that funding. If a child has 10 or more consecutive unexcused absences or more than 18 unexcused absences over the course of the school year, the child could be in jeopardy of being dismissed from the program.

It is also important that your child gets off to a good start each day by arriving at school on time and ready to learn. Please keep in mind that when 1 child arrives late, it disrupts the entire class..

Finally, we ask that you give us a courtesy call in the morning if your child is going to be out of school. A follow-up written excuse is also required in order for the absence to be recorded as excused..

Thank you for your cooperation and collaboration in developing a routine of good attendance for your child..

Birthdays

Birthdays are very important to young children! Our staff acknowledges each child's birthday and does their best to make your child feel special. If you would like to send in a special treat to celebrate, please speak with your child's teacher to make those arrangements.

Challenging Behaviors

In our Pre- K Counts program we strive to create a classroom environment in which all children are successful and challenging behaviors are minimized. All of our teachers and staff have been trained in Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) which is the way for our school to encourage positive behavior. With PBIS, we teach children about behavior, just as we would about other subjects like reading or math. The focus of PBIS is prevention, not punishment. Our teachers strive to create a nurturing classroom environment and build positive relationships with all children and their families. We work closely with families to address concerns or challenges in school or at home.

When challenging behaviors arise, our teachers and staff analyze the situation including looking at the classroom, patterns in behavior, and tailoring their responses to the needs of each child. In addition, our staff works closely with families to communicate their concerns, as well as brainstorm solutions. The teacher has a variety of resources within our school community to call upon when needed including administration and our school counselor. In addition, our program will help families connect with Early Intervention and other community resources when needed. Ultimately our goal is to provide a high quality introduction to school to all our students, and to communicate and work closely with families when situations arise. In turn, we ask that all families communicate with the classroom teacher any concerns they are having as they arise. Please keep in mind that we cannot share any specifics about other children with you, and we take the confidentiality of all children very seriously. If you would like additional information about outside resources, our school's procedures, or ways you can help your child succeed at school, from home, please contact your child's classroom teacher or administration at any time.

Classroom Expectations

The parent-home connection is very important, especially when it comes to reinforcing good behavior. Our classroom behavioral expectations are listed below and your child's teacher will refer to these rules and consequences throughout the day. More information about classroom rules will be given to you at the beginning of the school year!

1. Be Safe
2. Be Respectful
3. Be Responsible
4. Be Kind

Clothing

Preschoolers spend their days moving, creating and discovering! Often this means playing on the floor, exploring, and making a mess. Play clothes that are easily washed, and sneakers are encouraged.

Confidentiality

All information obtained from families enrolled in the Pre-K Counts Program will be kept in confidence. No information regarding your child or family will be released to another agency or individual without the written consent of the parent or guardian.

Emergency Closing

Our district works to ensure the safety of all of our students and staff. On occasion this requires us to open late, close early, or close for the entire day, depending upon the severity of the weather. Information on school closings, delayed openings or early dismissals due to weather and/or other emergencies will be announced via the following sources:

1. Our district utilizes the automated emergency text/email notification system, Alert Solutions. This information is pulled from our student management system.
2. The school district will have special messages listed on the website and/or our Facebook page.

In the event of a 2 hour delay, your child will receive lunch at school.

In the event of a cancellation, we will be making up the day later in the year. Information on makeup days will be sent home in your child's folder.

Meals, Nutrition and Allergies

All students enrolled in the Pre-K Counts classrooms are provided with breakfast, lunch, and snacks every day free of charge. Meals are offered at a set time in our school building. Your child will be given nutritious choices every day and a meal calendar will be sent home every month to inform you of these choices.

Meal/snack time is a great time to practice self-help, communication and social skills. Our staff works hard to help your children learn meal time routines, try new things, serve themselves, and share with others. They also learn to help with preparation and clean up.

Outdoor Play

We try to play outside whenever possible, so please dress your children for the weather. If it is not raining and the temperature is above 32° F and below 90° F, you can expect that we are going outside to play that day!

Special Occasions

Holidays such as Christmas, Halloween, and Valentine's Day may be celebrated at school. However, we realize that not all families are comfortable having their children participate in these holidays. Please let your teacher know if your cultural beliefs conflict with these holiday celebrations, and arrangements can be made that respect your family's culture and beliefs.

If your child has allergies, is on a restricted diet, or has medical needs, please let your child's teacher (and the school nurse) know as soon as possible. In addition, if you have any questions or concerns about dietary or nutritional policies, please let us know.

Supplies

Families may supply children with a book bag large enough to hold a small binder, if desired. In addition, an emergency change of clothes and a blanket is requested at the beginning of the school year. These items will be stored in the classroom and children's lockers throughout the year. We also ask that anything you send into the classroom be labeled with your child's name. All other supplies will be provided by the school.

Transportation

When dropping your child off at school, please park in "Visitor" parking if you plan to come into the building with your child. If you choose to enter the building, you will need to stop in the office to obtain a visitor pass. The main doors open at 7:30 am. The students must wait in their designated area until they are permitted to go to their classrooms. Please speak with your child's teacher for more information.

When picking up your child from school before dismissal, please send in a morning note with your child, park in the parking lot, and come into the main office. If your child is not already in the office, the secretary will call the classroom and have your child come up. If someone other than yourself is going to pick up your child, make sure that person is listed in our student management system. This is done when you complete your child's demographic information during enrollment. Also, the individual picking up your child should be aware that they may be asked to present photo identification and be required to sign into the building.

If your child rides the bus, s/he will be placed in the bus lines according to the information that the main office has received prior to the beginning of the year. If any changes need to be made, you must contact the main office. **Consistency is key in making sure your child gets home safely from school. Please attempt to keep your child's transportation as consistent as possible.**

Transitioning into Pre-K Counts Classroom

Preparing your child for school

If possible, please send your child to school with the following items:

- a backpack for transporting important papers to and from school, preferably one that can hold a binder and everything your child needs to bring to and from school on a daily basis
- a spare set of clothes (shirts, underwear, pants, socks, etc..) in case of spills or accidents. If your child has an accident, please be sure to send another set of clothes for them
- weather appropriate outfits so they are prepared for each day activity

To assist in your child's learning please attempt to do the following items:

- read stories aloud several times a week
- sing the alphabet song together
- practice counting skills throughout the day
- immerse them in as much conversation that you can

Registration

Our school's Pre-K registration will be an open enrollment process. Once fall classroom selections are made, parents will be notified of their acceptance via a phone call from the main office and/or a letter indicating acceptance. Any additional qualifying children will be placed on a waiting list. Children on the waiting list will be contacted as spaces become available throughout the year.

Upon enrollment all parents are asked to provide:

- Proof of Residency
- Birth certificate or other form of age verification showing your child is 4 years old by September 1,**** of that school year.
- Immunization record
- Proof of Income: Check stub, Copy of income tax form, etc...
- PA Pre-K Counts Enrollment Form
- Zero Income Declaration Letter if Applicable
- Physical exam and dental form
- Complete Coudersport Elementary School Enrollment Packet

Transitioning out of Pre-K Counts Classroom into Kindergarten

Classroom Visits

Pre-K Counts children have the advantage of being in the building where they will attend Kindergarten. They have already met the Principal, Support Staff, and Specials Teachers. The Pre-K Counts teachers will often coordinate a visit to the Kindergarten classrooms in the spring so that the children can meet those teachers and see where the classrooms are in the building. They may even stay for story time or centers so that they can explore their future classrooms.

Registration for Kindergarten

Our school district holds Kindergarten Registration in the early spring of the school year. Parents will be given a set time to come to school to register. Kindergarten registration information can be found in the local newspaper, on the radio station, on the school website and on our Facebook page. Upon enrollment, all parents are asked to provide the following information:

- Birth certificate showing that the child is 5 years old by September 1,
- Proof of residence
- Immunization record
- School district registration form
- Physical exam and dental form needs completed prior to the beginning of the school year.

Screenings

Families who have registered their child for Kindergarten will be asked to bring him/her for a screening day. This day is intended to help the Kindergarten teachers have a better understanding of your child's strengths, needs and special interests. Screening information will be shared with you along with other materials to help make the transition to Kindergarten a smooth and positive experience. You will also be given the opportunity to ask staff questions at the screening.

Transition Meetings

Transition meetings are held for all children who participate in Pre-K Counts programs and receive Early Intervention Services. If your child receives Early Intervention Services, meetings are set up before the end of February.

STUDENT & PARENT PLEDGE

This PreK handbook contains valuable information for you and your child regarding the rules and procedures of the Coudersport Area Elementary School. It is the hope of the administration that you will read and discuss the handbook with your child; We appreciate the time that you have taken to review the handbook and acknowledge these items. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the office or administration by phone or email.

