



PRE-K GUIDE BOOK

2023-2024



PCSSD PRE-K PROGRAM

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PCSSD Pre-K MISSION

Welcome to the Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Prekindergarten program. We are committed to providing the very best learning experiences in a safe and caring environment. The Pre-K Program is designed to meet the developmental needs of each child using a wide range of age-appropriate and multi-cultural materials and experiences. This includes the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of children. Our program is designed to create a love of learning and to prepare students for success in kindergarten. Since parents play a key role in the development of their children, parental involvement will be essential to the PCSSD Pre-Kindergarten program.

The PCSSD Prekindergarten program operates under the regulations of the Department of Human Services (DHS), Arkansas Better Chance (ABC), and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Each classroom is licensed and monitored by DHS and ABC. This program adheres to Pulaski County Special School District Policies, ABC Rules and Regulations, and DHS Minimum Licensing Requirements.

OBJECTIVES

The Pre-Kindergarten Program will strive to develop:

1. A safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate learning environment
2. Independent, successful learners
3. A strong home/school relationship
4. A respect for diversity
5. A positive self-concept, social skills, and interdependence in students
6. Language skills, both listening and speaking
7. Fine motor and Large motor coordination
8. A supportive Kindergarten transition process

ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE Pre-K (ABC)

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program was created in 1991 to offer high-quality early education services to children birth to five years old exhibiting developmental and socioeconomic risk factors. In 2003, the Arkansas General Assembly made a **commitment to expand early childhood education funding by \$100 million to serve low-income** three and four-year-old children with high-quality pre-K services. This expansion, known as Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS), has become the state prekindergarten program. ABC operates as a grant program. Participating providers must renew ABC grants annually.

<https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/arkansas-better-chance-program-abc>

Act 1132 of 1997 established the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education within the Arkansas Department of Human Services. The purpose of the Division is to enhance the coordination of child care and early childhood education programs within the state. This coordination ensures a seamless delivery of service to low-income families and those who are moving from welfare to work.

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/divisions-shared-services/child-care-early-childhood-education/>

The Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards provide a set of common expectations for what children typically know, understand, and are able to do at different ages in early childhood. The standards are research-based; culturally and linguistically appropriate; comprehensive, and are written with the understanding that children reach developmental milestones at different times. The standards are to be used to assist in developing age-appropriate learning goals for children, to support the developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment, and to outline a progression of development and learning that supports success in school and in life.

https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201201142946_AR_Early_Learning_Standards_2016.pdf

CHILD ELIGIBILITY for ABC Pre-K

4.01 The ABC Program serves educationally deprived children, ages birth through 5 years, excluding a kindergarten program. The Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program serves children ages 3 and 4 years from families with gross income not exceeding 200% of the FPL. Programs wishing to enroll a kindergarten-eligible child must obtain a written waiver from DCCECE before enrolling the child in ABC. Parents must also complete a kindergarten waiver process through the local school district.

4.02 To be eligible, children shall reside within the boundaries of an Arkansas school district. Programs may accept children outside of their local area if they have exhausted local recruiting efforts and have unfilled ABC slots.

4.03 Eligible children for the ABC program shall have at least one of the following characteristics:

- Family with gross income not exceeding 200% of FPL
- Has a demonstrable developmental delay as identified through screening
- Parents without a high school diploma or GED

- Eligible for services under IDEA
- Low birth weight (below 5 pounds, 9 ounces)
- Income eligible for Title I programs
- Parent is under 18 years of age at the child's birth
- Limited English Proficiency
- Immediate family member has a history of substance abuse/addiction
- Parent has a history of abuse or neglect Or is a victim of abuse or neglect

4.04 Eligible children for the ABC for School Success program must meet the following qualifications: -Must be three or four years old by ADE cutoff date. -A program is available in the area where the child resides and there is available space for the child to attend. -Gross family income 200% of FPL

4.05 To enroll an eligible child, the child's parent or guardian shall furnish documentation of eligibility and other required information, including household income and household member information. A list of all acceptable documentation will be published annually by DCCECE. Children of parents or guardians refusing to furnish required information shall be deemed ineligible for participation. Programs are responsible for verifying eligibility before the child attends and shall maintain copies of eligibility documentation in the child's record.

4.06 A copy of the child's birth certificate or hospital record listing a date of birth is required. If official documentation of date of birth is unavailable, the ABC program shall follow the guidelines of the local district in such instances.

4.07 In determining income eligibility, programs shall use a family's gross income from employment plus any unemployment compensation. Documentation of income eligibility must be present in each child's record. If pay stubs are used to document eligibility, recent documents (dated within 30 days) shall be used. DCCECE shall publish a list of acceptable documentation annually. If a three-year-old child has been qualified for ABCSS, that child shall remain eligible for two years.

4.08 Families claiming no earned income (full-time students or unemployed) shall produce a signed and notarized statement to that effect, which shall be maintained in the child record.

4.09 Parents or guardians shown to have submitted a falsified document shall be subject to repayment of funds to DCCECE and referral for prosecution.

4.10 Agencies shown to have enrolled ineligible children or children with no documentation of eligibility shall be required to repay the funds expended on behalf of the child to DHS.

4.11 An age-eligible child who falls into one of the following categories shall be exempt from family income requirements:

- Foster child
- Child with an incarcerated parent
- Child in the custody of/living with a family member other than mother or father
- Child with immediate family member arrested for or convicted of drug-related offenses
- Child with a parent activated for overseas military duty

APPLICATION and ENROLLMENT

Applications for the PCSSD Prekindergarten program are accepted without regard to race, religion, color, sex, or national origin. Applications and required documentation must be submitted to a PCSSD school with a Pre-K Program or online through the PreK application site during open enrollment. Applications will not be considered until the application is complete with ALL supporting items from the checklist. The checklist can be found on the PCSSD PreK application site. The annual registration period ("Open Enrollment") occurs at a designated time for the upcoming school year. Acceptance of the paperwork and application is not a guarantee of acceptance to the PCSSD ABC Pre-K program. Families MUST qualify based on Arkansas Better Chance Grant requirements. Please know that 4-year-old students and PCSSD residents take priority. With that being said, if other classrooms/sites across the district are not full after school starts, we may place qualified 3-year-olds or non-residents in those rooms to fill the slots.

Age Requirements Arkansas Act 462 (2007) stipulates the age(s) for school attendance.

The age requirements are as follows:

Children must be 4 (four) on or before August 1 in order to apply for the four-year-old program. Children must be 3 (three) on or before August 1 in order to apply for the three-year-old program. Any child who is 5 (five) on or before August 1 is eligible for kindergarten and is ineligible to enroll in pre-kindergarten.

INITIAL REGISTRATION REQUIRED DOCUMENTS/CHECKLIST

Families must complete the initial application for PreK. The application includes:

1. Eligibility checklist
2. PCSSD Registration Form ➔ or online/electronic application
3. ABC PreK Application
4. Home Language Survey
5. Student Health Form
6. Student's Birth Certificate
7. Student's Social Security Card
8. Student's Up-to-Date Immunization Record or DHS approved Wavier
9. Proof of Address
10. Proof of Income
11. ABC Well Child Pre-Screening/Medical History
12. Completed PCSSD PreK Well Child Exam Form w/ Hearing, Vision, Height, & Weight (EPSDT) - *Completed by Doctor*
13. Legal Documents (if applicable)
14. Documentation of Special Services: OT, PT, Speech, etc. (if applicable)
15. Free/Reduced Lunch Form (Can be completed online at <https://frapps.horizonsolana.com/welcome>)

Only completed (ALL above documents) applications/files are accepted and considered for school placement. Each application is reviewed and approved through the Arkansas Better Chance grant approval process. If additional information or documentation not on the checklist is needed, we will contact you by email.

Students will be excluded from the program/school building if there is not an Up-to-Date Shot/Immunization Record and Well-Child Exam.

Please Note: Children of parents/guardians refusing to furnish required information or falsifying information will be deemed ineligible for participation (ABC Regulation 4.05).

Eligible students with **completed** applications are placed on a list based on the date the application was completed with ALL required documents and your school preferences. Families are notified by email of the school assignment, waiting list status, or ineligibility. There are limited PreK slots available based on ABC grant funding. Students will be placed based on the COMPLETED application date, eligibility, **and** availability. **If your address or contact information changes, it is important to update your information with the school and PreK Department at PCSSD Central Office.**

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

Students who do not attend their assigned school within the first eight (8) days of school will have their seat re-assigned to a student on the waiting list.

The Pre-K school day is from 7:25-2:35. Arrival begins at **7:25 a.m.** The tardy bell will ring at **7:45 a.m.** Children arriving after 7:45 a.m. are to be signed in by a parent in the office. A tardy slip **MUST** be brought to class. For safety reasons, the children may not walk alone to class. You will walk your child to an assigned staff member and sign them in each morning. Class ends at 2:35 p.m. All students are to be picked up at **2:35 p.m.** If your child needs to leave school during the day (before 2:35), he/she must be signed out through the office. We ask that no child be checked out after 2:00. Teachers must have a check-out slip from the office to release your child.

Depending on the school site, arrival and dismissal times **may be adjusted due to school building logistics**. Each school will send out addendums if times, routines, or procedures have changed regarding arrival and dismissal at that site. Sites may have alternate locations for PreK arrival and drop-off to reduce traffic and contact; such as, classroom doors that are open to the outside or back entrances. No student shall enter the building or stay at the PreK Program with a temperature of 101 (or above). The student will not be able to return until they have been fever free for 24 hours without medication.

Your child is only allowed a combined total of 10 tardies, early checkouts, late pick-ups, and/or absences **per semester**. If your child is tardy (arrives after 7:45), checks out (before 2:35), picked up after 2:45, and/or absent more than 10 times per semester, **your child may be DISMISSED from the PCSSD Pre-K program.** (Tardy and early check-out times may vary between sites) Doctor excused absences or tardies will not count towards the combined total of 10.

If your child arrives at school after 10:00 AM, a doctor's note should be provided during check-in. PreK students eat lunch early in order to have enough time for rest. When students arrive late, it is not only confusing for the incoming student but also distracting for the other students in the classroom.

Pulaski County Special School District policy requires that students who are absent for 10 (ten) consecutive school days without contact with the school are automatically dropped.

Please Note: Extended leave may not be approved, and a child's seat cannot be held. In the case of extended leave, the student may lose their Pre-K seat.

AUTHORIZED PERSONS/SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT

By law, authorized adults must bring children to assigned Pre K staff to sign them in and pick them up/sign them out each day. The sign-in/sign-out sheets are required by DHS and used to ensure each child's safety and verify attendance. Families who refuse to sign in/out as required may result in the child's dismissal from the program. Teachers are not allowed to sign children in or out. **CHILDREN WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE SCHOOL WITH AN AUTHORIZED PERSON(S).**

A parent/guardian may authorize additional adults to pick up prekindergarten students by notifying the school office in writing. Authorization by phone is not permitted in order to ensure children's safety. If a staff member does not recognize the adult picking up the child, PCSSD Staff will ask for a picture ID to verify names and identification with the authorized "pick up list".

It is important that any custody arrangements and legal guardianships are on file with the school office.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The Pulaski County Special School District does not provide transportation for prekindergarten students. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to transport the child to and from school at the designated times each day. Prekindergarten students are **NOT** allowed to ride the school bus. Children must be picked up on time or arrangements must be made for childcare.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH/SNACK

Your child is required to be served breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack as part of the ABC Pre-K school day as per ABC Pre-K guidelines. The afternoon snack is provided each day at no cost. You will need to **complete a school lunch form ASAP** to see if your child qualifies for free meals. DHS **does** require that we have a FREE and Reduced Meal application on file for every child. Please complete your application and return it to your child's teacher within two days of enrolling your child in our program.

We are under strict health and nutrition guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If your child gets a breakfast and/or lunch tray from the cafeteria, be assured they are being offered healthy options. For those Pre-K students who bring breakfast or lunch from home, **it MUST** also meet the **same** guidelines. The PCSSD Pre-K program is also under the Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers. **This licensing requires that we serve breakfast and/or lunch to students who do not have a breakfast/lunch that meets the U.S.D.A. requirements.** Therefore, your child will be given a school breakfast and/or lunch if needed or if the meal from home does not meet the requirements.

Here are the minimum requirements by the U.S.D.A. and Department of Human Services that funds our Pre-K program:

Breakfast:

6 fl. oz of unflavored milk
½ cup of fruit
½ slice of bread OR
1/3 cup of cereal

Lunch:

6 fl. oz of unflavored milk
1 ½ oz meat (protein)
½ slice of bread (grains)
¼ cup fruit
¼ cup vegetable

Milk will be provided for all students at breakfast and lunch at no cost to the parent. **Please do not send drinks or sugary items in your child's meals from home.**

All children will eat breakfast, lunch, and snack as a class. Snacks will be provided free in the classroom.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

In accordance with regulations, emergency drills for fire, tornado, and active shooters are held as required. These drills help children learn emergency procedures. Each school maintains a formal emergency plan and has all required safety equipment.

REST TIME

A quiet, rest period is scheduled each day in accordance with regulations. Children are not required to sleep, but use this quiet time to relax and prepare for the rest of the day. We ask that students do not disrupt the rest time of their classmates. PCSSD provides a sanitized mat or cot and sheets for each child. This is part of DHS guidelines and must be followed. The sheets and covers will be washed once a week. Please **do not** allow your child to bring pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals from home.

TOYS

Do not allow your child to bring toys or other objects to school. We cannot be responsible for any toys brought to school. This includes DVDs and books.

PARTIES

There will be three classroom parties throughout the school year. Parents will be contacted in advance by teachers of the specific dates and about ways in which they may help. All items donated will be on a voluntary basis and must be **store-bought**.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are canceled until further notice due to transportation protocols. The school and teacher may set up events, speakers, and activities that come to the school (bringing the field trip to the students).

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

PCSSD strongly believes that the purpose of school is for learning. Any visitation to the classroom shall be allowed only with the prior approval/permission of the school principal, and all visitors must first register at the office. All visitors must be issued a visitor's pass.

Parents/guardians/persons standing in loco parentis and other community members interested in the school are welcome and are required to register at the principal's office upon entering the building for directions and assistance regarding the nature of the visit.

Parental involvement is stressed in the Pre-K program. There are many different opportunities for you to virtually and in-person visit the school for parent activities. These might include activities such as open house, parent/teacher conferences, parent book readings, classroom parties, Grandparent's Day, field day, family nights, transition day, and end-of-year celebrations.

Studies have shown that students with involved parents are more successful in school. The students have better grades, attendance, and social skills to help them adapt well to school. We encourage you to become involved as much as possible during this time in your child's education.

Parental input is very important to our program. Your input might be requested through the following: parent meetings, surveys, individual parent conferences, or by utilizing the suggestion box outside each PreK school site.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Two conferences will be scheduled during the school year. Additional conferences can be scheduled when the need arises. Every effort will be made to schedule a convenient time.

If parents have questions or concerns, please use these steps:

1. Contact the classroom teacher to discuss the question or concern.
2. If questions or concerns remain, please contact the building principal.
3. If, after working with the principal and teacher, the concern is unresolved, please contact the PCSSD Pre K Department at (501) 234-2065. We will attempt to assist you.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION PLAN

Community involvement is also an important component of the pre-k program. We want our students to be aware of their community. Our students may be visited virtually or in person by the police department, fire department, library, and other local agencies.

Pulaski County Special School District is in partnership with several other early childhood agencies. Meetings are held with collaborating agencies. These agencies include Little Rock School District, North Little Rock School District, Head Start, and PCSSD Early Childhood Special Education Services. PCSSD collaborates with private providers and Head Start to ensure parents are notified of options for Pre-K.

CLOTHING

Pre-Kindergarten students are not required to follow a uniform policy. Your child will feel much better if he/she is dressed in clothing that can be managed with little or no help. Pants with an **elastic waist** are preferred. The following dress is not allowed: tank tops, spaghetti straps, short-shorts, sagging clothing, tee-shirts with inappropriate wording or pictures, etc.

Children should have their names on extra clothes, coats, caps, jackets, sweaters, and gloves. **An extra complete change of clothes should be kept at school** (this is the only school supply you are required to provide). Please place your child's change of clothes in a large Ziploc bag and **label** it with your child's name. Children have accidents!! They fall down in the mud, spill paint, splash water, and sometimes do not make it to the bathroom in time. We make every effort not to bother parents at work when this happens, however, we must have a change of clothes for your child in the event of an accident. Please make sure your child always has an extra set of clothes (including underwear and socks) in his/her cubby. If not, we will have to call you to bring a change of clothes for your child.

Fresh air and exercise are an important part of every child's day and are important for good health. Please dress your child in the **appropriate clothing for the weather and season**. All children **are required to go outside every day**. We will be going outside for a total of one or more hour/s each day (weather permitting). This is a DHS requirement. Tennis shoes or closed-toe shoes that offer protection for the feet and allow children to run and play in comfort **are required**. **No flip-flops or sandals**. Dress your child comfortably in clothes that you do not mind getting dirty.

SUNSCREEN

Pre-K students are required to play outside for one hour per day (weather permitting). Students should be protected from overexposure to the sun. Sunscreen should be applied by the parent at home as needed. In the best interest of the students, we are asking each parent to apply sunscreen and/or bug spray to your child at home. Due to the allergies and sensitivities of each student, it is best for parents to do this at home before they come to school.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

As knowledge and resources have evolved during the Pandemic, the response to COVID-19 has been modified to balance the educational and physical well-being in public schools. Isolation is still appropriate for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 or for those who are symptomatic.

POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

- Email: covidcontact@pcssd.org
- If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, he/she must isolate for at least five (5) days.
- On day six (6), he/she may return to school if:
 - no symptoms or symptoms are resolving; and
 - no fever for 48 hours (without medication).
- After five (5) days of isolation, it is strongly recommended that he/she continue to wear a mask around others through the 10th day from testing positive.

Parent/Teacher Expectations:

- Due to COVID-19 and safety protocols, visitors will be limited to entering our campuses and facilities.
- Parents and visitors must have an appointment scheduled through the school's main office to enter the school building.
- Children and adults with a temperature of 101 or above are not permitted to enter the school building.
- Temperature checks may be taken on children in the classroom randomly throughout the day.
- If a student is diagnosed with COVID-19, has COVID -19 symptoms, or had close contact with a positive case, the parent/guardian should inform the principal and school nurse.
- PCSDD will adhere to the most current guidance regarding the release from isolation when an individual has tested positive for COVID-19.

ILLNESS

Our primary concern is for the good health of all the children.

Keep your child home if your child:

1. Has a fever of 100.4 or higher or has had one during the previous 48-hour period. Your child **must be fever-free for 24 hours**, without the use of fever-reducing medication.
2. Has a symptom of a possible communicable disease.
3. Had diarrhea and/or vomiting in the last 24 hours.

A child should not be brought to school until he/she is able to participate in regular activities. **If your child is too sick to go outside, he/she is too sick to be attending school.** In the event a child does become ill at school, the parents will be notified immediately. You will be expected to come get your child as quickly as possible.

The following guidelines are set forth by the Arkansas Department of Human Services and must be followed by pre-k centers.

1. No child or staff shall be admitted who has a contagious or infectious disease.
2. The parent or legal guardian shall be notified as soon as possible when a child has any symptom that requires exclusion from the facility. The child shall be separated from other children and closely monitored until the parent arrives to pick the child up.
3. The caregiver shall determine if the illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, results in a greater need for care than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children, or poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.

The caregiver shall temporarily exclude the child from child care if the child has:

- a. Sudden change in behavior, such as:
 - lethargy or lack of responsiveness
 - unexplained irritability or persistent crying

- difficult breathing
- a quickly-spreading rash
- b. Fever over 101 degrees/oral, 100/axillary (or equivalent method) in a child who also has pain, behavior changes, or other symptoms of illness
- c. Diarrhea, defined as watery/runny stools if frequency exceeds 2 or more stools above normal for that child, and is not related to a change in diet or medication (Exclusion from child care is required if diarrhea is causing soiled clothing in toilet-trained children.)
- d. Blood or mucus in stools (unless caused by hard stools)
- e. Vomiting illness (2 or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours)
- f. Abdominal pain which lasts more than 2 hours
- g. Mouth sores with drooling
- h. Rash with fever or behavior change
- i. Conjunctivitis or "pink eye" – with white, yellow, or green eye discharge and red ("bloodshot") eyes, exclude only if child has:
 - fever,
 - eye pain
 - redness and/or swelling of the skin around the eyes, or
 - if more than one child in the program has symptoms
- j. Pediculosis (live head lice), until after the first treatment
- k. Active tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- l. Impetigo, until treatment has been started
- m. Strep throat, until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started
- n. Chickenpox, until all lesions have crusted (usually 6 days after the rash appears)
- o. Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash
- p. Pertussis (whooping cough); until 5 days of antibiotic treatment
- q. Mumps, until 5 days after onset of gland swelling
- r. Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
- s. Hepatitis A, until 1 week after onset of illness or as directed by the health department
- t. COVID -19 positive

4. Any child who is injured shall have immediate attention. Parents shall be notified of all injuries. Injuries that require the attention of medical personnel shall be reported to the parent immediately and to the Licensing Unit within one business day.

5. Parents or guardians of all children shall be notified of contagious illness as soon as possible as directed by the AR Department of Health.

6. Medication shall be given to children only with signed parental permission which includes date, type, drug name, time and dosage, length of time to give medication, and what the medication is being given for. It shall be in the original container with a child resistant cap, not have an expired date and be labeled with the child's name. (Aspirin substitutes, such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen, may be provided by the facility if parental permission has been granted. These medications shall be in the original container.) Staff shall not dispense medications in dosages that exceed the recommendations stated on the medication bottle.

7. Children with special health care needs (ex. asthma, seizures, diabetes, etc.) who require

scheduled daily medications or medications to be given on an emergent basis (Benadryl, EpiPen, rescue asthma medication, etc.) shall have a care plan. Care plans shall have clearly stated parameters, directions, and symptoms for giving the medications. Care plans shall be updated as needed, but at least yearly.

MEDICATIONS

Any medication given at school must be prescribed by a doctor. Medication shall be given to children only with signed parental permission (through the nurse's office) which includes date, type, drug name, time and dosage, length of time to give medication, and what the medication is being given for. Medication must be in the original container with a child-resistant cap and labeled with the child's name and dosage, and not have an expiration date. Staff shall not dispense medications in dosages that exceed the recommendations stated on the medication bottle. No medication to be given three (3) times daily or less will be administered at school unless a physician's statement specifically directs the medication to be given at a certain time. Only prescription medicine will be administered to children with written permission and a directive from the parent. **NO** verbal orders via the phone will be accepted.

If your child must be given medicine at school, please contact the school nurse to schedule an appointment to complete a consent form and check-in medication. Please notify your child's teacher if your child is receiving any kind of medicine at home. This will help in determining possible causes for changes in behavior, as well as, keeping a close eye on your child for possible adverse reactions.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND PHYSICALS

Up-to-date immunizations are required by Arkansas Law and by the Arkansas Department of Health for all children who attend public school. Documentation must be on file in the office. Your child will **NOT** be allowed to attend without up-to-date immunizations or a doctor approved catch-up schedule. A well-child exam, hearing, and vision screening must be completed within 45 calendar days of the first day of school. Failure to present proof of the Well-Child Exam **WILL** result in **dismissal** from the program.

CHANGES IN PERSONAL INFORMATION

To ensure that you may be reached in case of an emergency, keep all personal information up to date. Please notify the teacher **AND** office staff immediately of any change in telephone or cell phone numbers, email addresses, home address, change of work employment, or work number, or any change that involves the well-being of your child. If there is any **change in the people approved to pick up your student, we must be notified in writing or in person ASAP.**

FOLDERS

Each child will have a VIP (very important papers) folder that will be sent home every day. Inside the folder will be any notes that are important for you to read. Please read these, fill out if necessary, and return them inside the folder. If you have any notes for the teacher, place the note in the folder. If your child is absent from school, please write a **separate** parent note for the office. We are required to send these notes to the office to be kept on file. Your child will receive an **unexcused** absence if a Doctor's note is not sent. There will be a communication sheet sent home each day. Please take time to review it and sign it each day. The folder is our daily communication with you.

TRANSITION PLAN

Our pre-k program helps to prepare your child for kindergarten. You will be given a Kindergarten Readiness Calendar and Checklist at your first parent/teacher conference in the fall. You may use this calendar as a tool for activities to do at home with your child.

https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/Getting_Ready_for_Kindergarten_Calendar._Print_Version_-1.pdf

At your parent/teacher conference, you will be given a Kindergarten Readiness Checklist which indicates the skills your child has mastered and those your child may need to practice. Your child's teacher will also discuss kindergarten expectations.

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/wp-content/uploads/Kindergarten-Readiness-for-Parents.pdf>

Parents will be encouraged to register early for kindergarten, and the school will contact you about details regarding transition events and activities. (Pre-K students must go to the school they are legally zoned to for kindergarten unless they have obtained a permit from the PCSSD District Office.)

In the spring, we will host a Kindergarten Transition Program if permitted during the pandemic. You will learn how to register your child for kindergarten, play games with your child, and receive a list of required kindergarten supplies.

VIRTUAL LEARNING PLAN

In an event that school closes due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, all PCSSD Preschool classrooms will transition to AMI packets and virtual learning. To help students and families prepare for this transition, parents will receive access to an online communication/virtual learning platform called Seesaw For Schools and a Chromebook. This tool will be used to share classroom news and events, extend learning outside of the classroom, and keep our school family connected. Students will also have access to these virtual learning materials in the classroom so that they will be familiar with this digital resource if the school changes to virtual. If your child does not have access to a digital device, one may be checked out and assigned to you. This device must be returned at the end of the school year in working condition. In addition to the virtual learning platform, students may be provided with a paper packet of learning materials to help prepare them for Kindergarten. These materials will be distributed shortly after school begins. Please keep these items in a safe place and do not use the paper materials until you are instructed to do so by your child's teacher. If you lose your child's paper packet, you will be provided with a digital copy that you can print at your discretion.

REQUIRED SCREENINGS

ABC REGULATION 15.01-15.10

DCCECE and ADE shall work cooperatively to ensure that the assessments are conducted as required by Act 49 of 2003. Children in the ABC program shall be assessed annually to provide an indication of each child's progress towards school readiness. The current assessment instrument is Work Sampling for the center-based programs. Programs also use the Brigance Screening as the developmental screening tool.

The assessment shall address a child's strengths, progress, and needs and shall serve as a central part of an effective early childhood program. The Brigance assessment instrument selected by DCCECE and ADE shall be used for children enrolled in an ABC program.

All ABC agencies are expected to fully cooperate and participate in the longitudinal study and any other research designated by the Legislature.

Within forty-five (45) days of entering an ABC program, a child shall receive a routine annual developmental screening to determine individual needs. The program agency shall be responsible for completing the developmental screening. The purpose of screening is to identify developmental delays and/or educational deficiencies. Children so identified shall be referred to the Special Education Cooperative of their zoned residence.

The program may either use qualified ABC staff who are trained to administer the screening or may contract the screenings to a local cooperative or other qualified assessors. Documentation of the decision (pass, fail, refer, rescreen within 30 days), including referral when appropriate, must be maintained in the individual child's record.

The developmental screening **must** include, at a minimum, the following areas: vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and developmental milestones.

Within 45 days of the first day of attendance, every child shall receive an age-appropriate health screening, which includes a hearing and vision test. Programs shall work in partnership with parents to obtain health screening information. Health/well-child screenings should be completed every 2 years while the child is in the ABC program. However, parents should be encouraged to obtain the screening annually. A licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner must administer the screening. Hearing and vision screening are an integral part of the health screening and must be completed using an alternate source if not completed during the health screening.

On or before the first day of attendance, parents or guardians shall provide proof that their child is current on all required immunizations or is on an acceptable "catch-up" schedule. A waiver from this requirement may be granted from the Arkansas Department of Health under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-702. If the parents obtain a waiver from the AR Department of Health, documentation must be kept in the child's record.

These screenings and enrollment data are required to be entered into COPA, and the observational assessment data is required to be put in the Work Sampling System.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Special Education is administered through PCSSD Early Childhood Special Education or other zoned Special Education co-ops. PCSSD Early Childhood Special Education is an active partner with our ABC program to assist children with special needs. These services usually come about because of a referral made after a developmental screening is administered.

All students are **required by ABC to be administered a developmental screening** using the Brigance. If the screening indicates a possible need for additional screening and/or evaluation, the child will be referred to their residentially zoned special education co-op. Students residentially zoned for Pulaski County Special School District will be referred to PCSSD Early Childhood Special Education Department, but if the student is NOT zoned for PCSSD, the child will receive the services from their zoned cooperative.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

We use Conscious Discipline, a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices.

Our goal as pre-k educators is to provide an environment that will allow your child the opportunity to reach their maximum potential by learning through play. Conscious Discipline® is built on the premise of developing discipline *within* children rather than applying discipline to them.

The Conscious Discipline process applies equally to parents, child caregivers, educators, and patient caregivers. It can be pictured as a pyramid with four stages: **Understand the brain states (the base of the pyramid), learn your seven powers as adults, discover new ways to connect members of your family, classroom, or team, and use the seven skills of discipline to respond to events in new ways.** <http://www.getmecc.com/Conscious-Discipline.html>

It is essential that we work together to promote a structured environment that will encourage learning. Occasionally a behavior problem may occur that disrupts this environment. We want to work with you in every way possible to make your child's educational experience a success.

Discipline is individualized and consistent for each child; it shall be appropriate to the child's level of understanding and be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. Staff will offer guidance to a child needing redirection. With the help of a staff member, children will be offered appropriate choices so that in their developmental years they may determine what is right and wrong. If a child continues to have behavior problems, separating the child for "cool down" or a break may be necessary to resolve the difficulty. The period of time should equal the child's age, i.e. four years of age should be four minutes. Parent/Teacher conferences may be needed to determine if other circumstances are contributing to the situation. Teachers may contact the PCSSD Early Childhood Services department and the Pre-K director to help develop a behavior plan for the child if the behavior is consistent and becomes overly disruptive. Students may be referred for Special Education for social-emotional issues. If the behavior causes a safety concern for the child, his/her peers, or the PreK staff, a DHS Behavioral Help request may be submitted to behaviorhelponline.org. At which time, DHS will send out consultants to support and help the teacher by observing and suggesting behavior management and instructional strategies.

CLASSROOM INTERVENTION

PREVENTION

-Trying to keep the inappropriate behavior from happening in the first place

RE-DIRECTION

-Encouraging another activity, role-playing appropriate behavior

CONFERENCE WITH CHILD

-Speaking with the child and/or parent about the behavior

COOL DOWN

-Using age appropriate time-out in the classroom and **always supervised**

CONFERENCE WITH PARENT

-Phone, virtual, or face-to-face conference will be held to discuss behavioral concerns and possible solutions.

BUILDING LEVEL INTERVENTION

-A meeting will be held between the Pre-K director, building principal, the child's teacher, and the child's parent or guardian and possibly an Early Childhood Special Education representative to discuss interventions.

PCSSD EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL ED. EARLY INTERVENTION

-Collaboration with PCSSD Early Childhood Special Ed. staff for possible referral for services may occur. Failure of the parents to attend referral conferences or progress conferences may result in dismissal from the pre-k program. Failure to accept services from PCSSD Early Childhood Special Ed. may result in dismissal from the pre-k program.

BEHAVIOR PLAN CONFERENCE

-With authorization from the ABC Pre-K Director making contact with the Department of Human Services, the child may be sent home. ONLY while awaiting a parent-teacher conference to address behavior concerns, which constitute immediate physical harm to the child or others. This timeframe may be extended only at the request of the parent, until such time when the parent can attend the meeting. If the parent does not attend the conference or refuses to participate in the child's behavior plan, then **dismissal from the Pre-K program may occur.**

ALTERNATIVE SERVICES

-Any decision to pursue an alternate environment (classroom/site) for a child eligible for services and IDEA, must be in the best interest of the child and shall be the result of an Individual Education Plan Team Meeting and Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood's approval. If a parent refuses services related to behavioral issues, the child may be dismissed from the Pre-K program.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

DISTRICT POLICY STATES THAT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT MAY NOT BE USED AS A DISCIPLINARY MEASURE IN THE PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BY ANY EMPLOYEE OF THE DISTRICT AGAINST ANY STUDENT. PARENTS/GUARDIANS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ADMINISTER ANY FORM OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT **ON SCHOOL GROUNDS.**

ABC FUNDING & RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

As PCSSD Pre Kindergarten is funded by ABC, all activities, curriculum, and experiences are designed to remain neutral in regard to religion in order to be inclusive of all families and beliefs. ABC requires the following statement to be distributed to all families attending ABC-funded programs (ABC 23.04.5):

"To assure that no religious activity is paid or subsidized by public funds or occurs in any manner suggesting a governmental endorsement of any religion or message:

(a) ABC funds must be used exclusively to support allowable ABC program costs incurred to provide non-religious instruction and activities during the ABC day; and

(b) No religious activity may occur during any ABC day regardless of the source of funds used to support the activity."

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: INVESTIGATION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT OR LICENSING COMPLIANCE

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Pre-K program complies with the Child Abuse Law, the Child Protective Act and Domestic Abuse Protective Orders. To the extent permitted by these laws, the ABC program strives to balance the rights of students with the rights of parents, family members, and legal guardians. In compliance with the Child Abuse Law, the Administration, faculty and staff are required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect they believe has occurred or is at substantial risk of occurring to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the police. Staff members are required to treat all matters with confidentiality, only revealing information to those who have a genuine need to know about the specific matter. Upon request, children may be interviewed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) licensing staff, social services and/or other law enforcement officials for the purpose of determining licensing compliance or for investigative purposes. By law, interviews conducted by DHS do not require parental notice or consent.

Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist for Parents

Approved by Arkansas Early Childhood Commission 1/17/17

Arkansas's Definition of School Readiness: School ready children have the social and academic knowledge, skills and behaviors for school success and lifelong learning. School readiness occurs when families, schools and communities support and serve ALL children, so they are successful in school and in life.

This list of indicators identifies skills, knowledge and behaviors that will help your child be prepared for that special day, going to kindergarten. The checklist is NOT a test. It is a tool that you can use to help your child make the transition to kindergarten.

Social & Emotional Development

- Separates from caregiver to another trusted adult
- Shares, takes turns and plays cooperatively with other children
- Expresses basic emotions such as happy, sad, mad or scared
- Responds sympathetically to others' distress with words and actions
- Recognizes similarities and differences in self and others (for example, boy or girl, hair and skin color)

Cognitive Development

- Is curious, interested and willing to try new things
- Completes a task such as working a puzzle
- Adapts to new situations
- Focuses and pays attention during an activity such as story time
- Engages in memory games such as "What's Missing" and simple memory matching card games
- Uses number- and letter-like forms and/or drawings to represent ideas or feelings

Physical Development & Health

- Gallops, slides, hops, leaps and skips
- Steers a tricycle, balances on beam or sandbox edge
- Catches a ball with both hands
- Tosses or throws balls
- Kicks moving ball while running
- Pours liquids without spilling and builds with Legos® or blocks
- Uses a 3-point finger grip on pencil, crayon or paintbrush
- Makes a variety of lines and shapes such as circle, dash, plus sign, square and triangle.
- Uses scissors correctly to cut simple shapes and pictures
- Buttons, zips, laces and buckles
- Names a variety of foods and begins to classify food items as either fruits or vegetables
- Is aware of safe behavior and follows basic safety rules and routines
- Takes responsibility for personal self-care routines such as hand washing, brushing teeth, dressing and toileting
- Can express own health needs such as, "I'm hungry", "My head hurts", and "I'm tired"

Language Development

- Understands an increasing number and variety of words for objects, for actions, and to describe things
- Comprehends who, what, why and where questions
- Performs up to three-step directions
- Uses four- to six-word sentences
- Tells increasingly detailed stories or ideas
- Communicates clearly enough to be understood by most people
- Takes turns in conversation with others
- Responds to the English language
- Speaks and expresses self in English

Emergent Literacy

- Listens, tells and engages in story being read
- Participates in singing songs and saying rhymes
- Retells stories from favorite books and personal experiences
- Decides if two words rhyme for example, cat and bat

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/wp-content/uploads/Kindergarten-Readiness-for-Parents.pdf>

Detach, sign, and return to your child's teacher

PCSSD Pre-K 22-23
Parent Handbook, Kindergarten Readiness Checklist, Discipline Procedures, and
Child Protection Policy

I have read and understand the PCSSD Pre-K Parent Handbook. I understand that my child should be on time every day and should stay for the entire day. If my child has more than 10 tardies, early checkouts, late pickups, or absences within a semester, he/she may be dismissed from the program. I will check with my school for specific arrival/dismissal times, and my child must be picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal, or it will be counted as a late pick up. This will count as one of the 10 unexcused tardies.

I have received the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators checklist and electronic link.

I have read the PCSSD Pre-K discipline procedures and the Child Protection Policy. I understand the policies, the teachers' and parents' roles and responsibilities, and the COVID-19 Guidelines and Expectations. I agree to support the program in its disciplinary policies and procedures.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

Please sign below if you **WILL ALLOW** your child's picture, video and/or name to be released to the district/school website, newspaper, television, or other publication.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

----- **OR** -----

Sign below if you **DO NOT ALLOW** your child's picture, video and/or name to be released to the district/school website, newspaper, television, or other publication.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____



   [pcssd.org](https://www.pcssd.org)

501.234.2000