Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center

Student/Family Handbook
2026-2027



235 School St, Kilmarnock, VA 22482
804-462-5100 ext. 5103

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The Mission & Vision for the
LANCASTER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER

Through a Public-Private partnership, our mission is to provide an inclusive quality education center for our children before entering kindergarten.

It is the goal of LCPS and the NN YMCA to serve as many students as possible in Lancaster County through a collaborative 3 & 4-year-old program. Working together, we will utilize shared resources to provide quality early intervention and instruction. Our center will include a diverse group of children learning through a holistic approach.

Benefits:

- Inclusive programming for students with disabilities
- Core academics provided by certified teachers
- Shared resources with additional staff for intervention
- Early intervention to reduce or eliminate achievement gaps
- Ability to serve more students from the community in our partnership
- Provides a research-based curriculum to all students geared toward academic and social-emotional development

Lancaster County Public Schools and the Northern Neck YMCA

OUR WARM AND CARING STAFF AWAITS YOU!!!

Welcome! We are delighted that your child will be a part of the Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center and YMCA Joint venture. The Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center staff is truly committed to working in partnership with you and your child to provide for the highest quality early childhood experience.

Please keep this handbook in a convenient place for future reference as you navigate the next few weeks and months of preschool. We are dedicated to making your child's first school experience a positive one. In this handbook we have anticipated some of your questions and concerns, so please read it carefully. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of our caring preschool staff for further assistance.

To keep you informed throughout the school year, your child's teacher will send home class newsletters, notes, monthly family activity calendars, and other reminders each month. Please check your child's backpack every day (even on the weekends) to make sure that you don't miss out on important information.

<u>Our Foundational Beliefs:</u>

At The Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center, we believe that students will benefit from:

- Early intervention to reduce or eliminate achievement gaps
- Inclusive programming for students with disabilities
- Core academics provided by certified teachers
- Shared resources with additional staff for intervention
- Ability to serve more students from the community in our partnerships
- Research-based curriculum provided to all students geared towards academic and social-emotional development.

Kind Regards,

Mrs. Amanda Ambrose
Coordinator of Early Childhood Education & VPI

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Lancaster County Public Schools does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The Compliance Office for Lancaster County Public School

Kelvin Evans
P.O. Box 2000
Kilmarnock, Virginia 22482
(804) 462-5100.

LANCASTER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Joan Gravatt, Chair
Cindy Clarke, Vice Chair
Kenya Moody
Faith Kemp
Margaret Socey

LANCASTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT

Mrs. Jessica Davis

LANCASTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUITY

Mr. Kelvin P. Evans

Lancaster County Public Schools Contact Information
School Board Administration (804) 462-5100

Superintendent: Mrs. Jessica Davis	jdavis@lcs.k12.va.us
Director of Human Resources and Equity: Mr. Kelvin Evans	kevans@lcs.k12.va.us
Director of Budget and Finance: Mrs. Takia Dobyns	tdobyns@lcs.k12.va.us
Director of Special Education and Federal Programs: Ms. Heather Adams	hadams@lcs.k12.va.us
Director of Operations: Mr. Travis Pittman	tpittman@lcs.k12.va.us
Director of Transportation: Mr. Clyde Hathaway	chathaway@lcs.k12.va.us
Director of Food Services: Mrs. Chrystal Jett	cjett@lcs.k12.va.us

School Board meetings are scheduled on the
second Monday of every month at
5:30 p.m. in the Haydon Building

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER CONTACTS

Coordinator of Early Childhood Education & VPI
Name – Mrs. Amanda Ambrose
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YMCA Preschool Director
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Administrative Assistant
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PreK Teachers	Instructional Assistants
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Regional Education Program Teachers	Instructional Assistants
Breanna Elbourn mdavis@lcs.k12.va.us	Kayla Whidden kwhidden@lcs.k12.va.us
	Judy Swann jswann@lcs.k12.va.us

THE PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM – STREAMin3

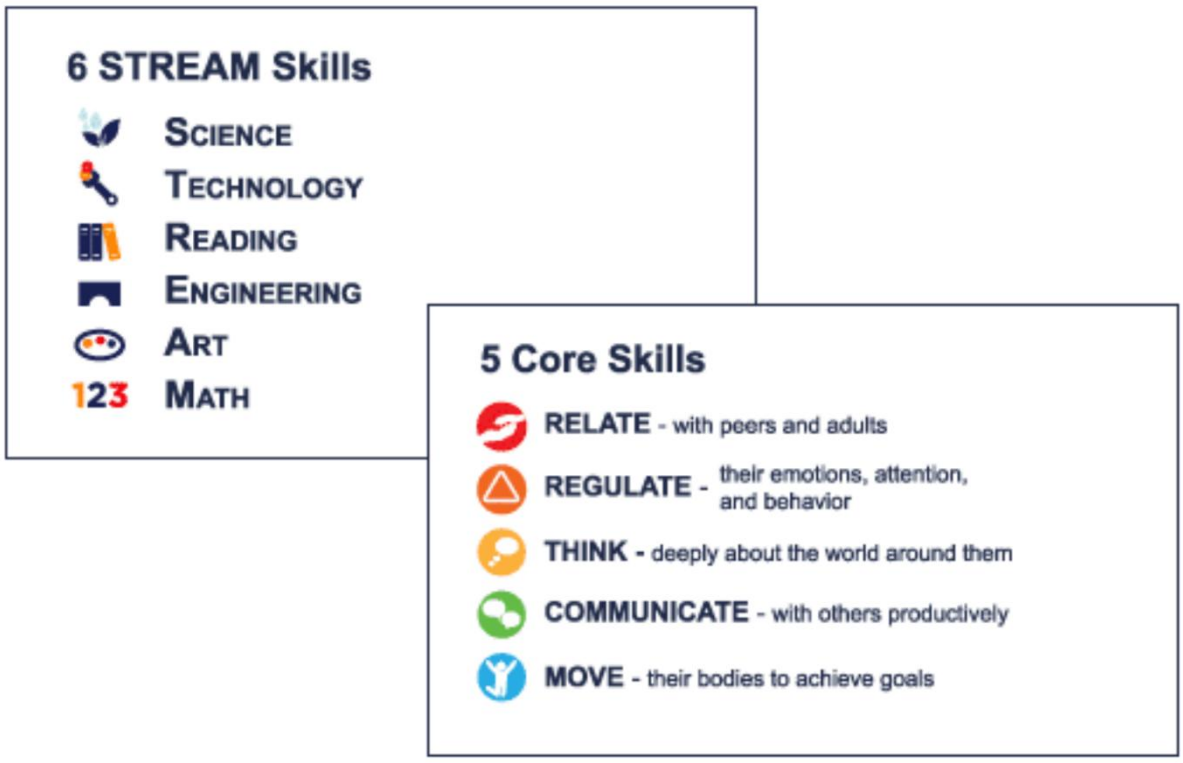
The first five years of a child's life involve significant impact on the developing brain and early learning. The concepts and skills that children learn during their early years also lay the groundwork for a successful transition to kindergarten and all later schooling. Virginia is committed to providing every child in the Commonwealth with the experiences and support that will provide a solid foundation for their learning and life. (VDOE)

STREAMin3 Curriculum is all about sparking a love for learning. The curriculum inspires little minds to think BIG, be problem-solvers, and embrace their creativity and curiosity when it comes to learning new things – setting them up for success in kindergarten and beyond!

STREAMin3: Integrated, Intentional, Interactions is an innovative, engaging, and interactions-based curriculum model for children ages birth through five.

The STREAMin3 Curriculum was developed at the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) based on what CASTL has learned about early childhood education – both in terms of the latest development and early education research and what we have observed to actually happen in early childhood classrooms and settings.

Skills that prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond



Preschoolers learn from both instructional activities and daily interactions with adults and other students. Therefore, a day in the life of a preschooler at the Early Childhood Education Center will typically include the following activities.

Arrival and Provocation Activity
Morning Circle/Calendar
Choice Time/Small Groups
STREAM – Group Activity
Outdoor Time
Lunch
STREAM – Story Time
Rest or Quiet Activities
Snack – as children wake up, they eat
Choice Time/Small Groups
Closing Circle

**Please respect instructional time for children and understand that classroom teachers will generally not answer their phone during the time they are instructing and supervising children. If you have an emergency, please call the Preschool office at 804-462-5100 ext. 5103 for assistance. **

MEALS - BREAKFAST, LUNCH & SNACK

Meals are provided daily at no cost to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program to encourage good nutrition and a well-balanced meal for all LCPS students.

However, students may also choose to bring packed lunch from home. Allergy and special diet information is required to be submitted to the Coordinator of Early Childhood Education each year using the Federal form for "Special Dietary Needs." This is a parent's responsibility. The Coordinator of Early Childhood Education will submit this information to the cafeteria manager to post on your child's cafeteria account for his/her safety. These forms can be obtained from the ECEC office.

MORNING CIRCLE/CALENDAR TIME

LECEC uses the calendar as a daily effort to familiarize preschoolers with common ideas and practices of everyday life. Calendar time is an educational tool that teachers use to introduce and develop the concepts of time and its progression. Teaching with and about calendars help preschoolers learn and become familiar with temporal concepts, weather, new vocabulary, number sequencing, patterns and etc. All of these are primary skills that can be discovered by incorporating calendar time in the early learning classroom.

LITERACY CIRCLE/STORY TIME

Young children communicate in meaningful social contexts with purpose. Children communicate using facial expressions, gestures, eye gaze, body movements, signs, and language to initiate interactions and respond to others. It is important to remember that text is just another form of communication. Just as young children must engage in meaningful exchanges and conversations to build language, they must engage with books, writing and drawing, and print in their everyday lives as part of building a strong foundation. These essential experiences create opportunities for children to further explore the connections among letters, sounds, and words and how they work together to create meaning. For this reason, emphasizing language, communication, and emergent literacy together is critical. Support for basic communication and support for literacy can reinforce each other.

CHOICE TIME

Young children learn through play. Play, alone or with other children, we believe is a child's laboratory for learning. Playing provides children with opportunities to imagine, question, investigate, collaborate, negotiate, practice, and discover. Caregivers and educators observe and guide children in play to ensure that children continue to expand their learning as they play. Daily center opportunities at LECEC include but are not limited to: kitchen, Legos/blocks, puzzles, math, reading and letters.

REST TIME

Approximately one hour is included in the preschool daily schedule for students to rest and/or sleep. Children will be encouraged to rest for at least 30 min. then alternative quiet activities can be provided for those who do not wish to rest any longer. Parents will need to send in a rest mat and a blanket for our rest time. We store all personal belongings separately, so that personal belongings are not touching each other. Bedding will be sent home at the end of each week to be washed and returned. Rest time is flexible to meet the needs of each individual child so we will try to accommodate children who need more or less time for rest when possible. Please make sufficient sleep a family priority at your home, as generally, preschool children need 10-13 hours of sleep per day (including naps).

OUTDOOR TIME

Children need time to explore freely. Additionally, the outdoors is a great space to engage children in fun, active games that challenge their bodies and minds. Teachers will offer children the chance to participate and encourage them to participate while exploring their surroundings.

Dress Your Child for Safe and Active Play

- In order for children to fully engage in hands-on learning, they need to be dressed in washable, comfortable, and safe clothing and footwear.
- Remember, painting and outdoor play are daily activities in preschool so please send your child in clothing that can be washed easily.
- Children's clothing should be uncomplicated so that they can easily use the bathroom by themselves.
- Please *label* all sweaters, jackets, coats, school bags, backpacks, etc. with your child's name. Often a child will have a garment identical to someone else's in the classroom.
- Tennis shoes are preferable. Dress-up shoes, sandals and flip-flops can be dangerous for active play.
- Jewelry and strings on hoods can also present safety hazards for young children.

STORY TIME

An open mind is a learning mind!

Our teachers love story time! This is a special time for teachers and students to interact with each other while reading/listening to a specially designed book from the curriculum. Story Time is a daily activity and during this special time, students are asked questions to help with recall, retention, and comprehension.

We believe that Story Time is important because children learn so many life and social skills by participating in story time. Story time also broadens their vocabulary and their horizons. Remember an open mind is a learning mind.

The Teacher Guides and Story Time Cards within the Streamin3 curriculum offer research-based teaching practices to support literacy learning during daily read-aloud, such as asking questions, connecting the story to children's lives, and retelling to aid comprehension. "Today's News" integrates additional research-based teaching practices, such as engaging in shared writing, examining concepts about print, and building alphabet knowledge.

CENTER & GROUP TIME

Wrap up for the day

During wrap up, your child's teacher reviews the day's learning goals and prepares students for the transition from school to home which can be a stressful time for preschoolers. Change in schedules can be disruptive to both students and classrooms.

Please allow your students to remain at school until the end of each day to ensure that they don't miss out on any instructional time. As you can see, each day is filled with learning from beginning to end, so if you pick them up early, they will most likely miss important information and instruction.

WHAT PRESCHOOL PARENTS NEED TO KNOW FROM A to Z

Accidents/Illnesses

Students with infectious or contagious conditions such as conjunctivitis (pink eye), impetigo, head lice, ringworm, or scabies will be sent home until treatment is initiated; once treatment is initiated, the student may return to school with documentation supporting treatment. The Virginia Department of Health guidelines are followed by the nurse regarding communicable diseases. Your child may be sent home, or asked to remain at home if any of the following signs or symptoms are present: fever of 100 degrees or higher, vomiting, repeated diarrhea, inflamed or draining eyes/ears, persistent cough/sore throat, skin eruptions/draining sores. If you know your student is ill, please keep him/her home. If your child is not feeling well, it is the parent/guardian decision to keep them home. Working together, the spread of illness can be minimized.

If a student has an accident or becomes ill during the school day, the nurse will assess their condition and provide appropriate first aid care. The parents will be contacted if the student needs to go home or needs further treatment. It is very important that the school be made aware of current telephone numbers, emergency contacts, changes in health status and student medications, and that emergency contacts live locally.

Attendance

School is a perfect opportunity for your child to acquire new skills and establish relationships with other children and adults. Regular attendance will allow your child to benefit fully from the high quality instruction offered in our preschool program. Consistent attendance strongly supports your child's education and sense of security. It is imperative that our children learn early in life the significance of attending school every day. The Early Childhood Education Center will adhere to LCPS's Attendance Regulations and Procedures located in the back of this handbook. Please read this entire handbook so that you are informed.

As required by VA State Law, parents/guardians will be contacted each day their student is absent from school unless the parent/guardian has contacted the school in advance. Excessive absences could result in the potential loss of your student's preschool spot.

Behavior/Discipline/PBIS

Behavior and Discipline/PBIS - Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports

The LCPS Early Childhood Education Center follows the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices developed by the Virginia Early Learning & Development Standards Birth to Five Guidelines. These guidelines recognize that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background.

While some behaviors are typical for a specific "age and stage", we recognize that children learn appropriate social behaviors at different rates. Children are guided in their behavior through clearly stated expectations, modeling of appropriate behaviors, positive reinforcement, correction, and redirection.

We believe in "positive discipline" which focuses on good behavior, rather than bad. We may need to redirect a child and speak with them about appropriate behavior. The teacher will keep you informed of any behavior concerns as soon as they appear. We will collaborate with you to make sure that your child is successful in every way.

If inappropriate behavior persists, we will work as team to include; the pre-school coordinator, the preschool teacher, the child's parents/guardians, and other early childhood professionals to determine the causes of the behavior and a plan for supporting the child as he or she learns behaviors that are more appropriate. There may be times when a parent/guardian will be asked to pick up their if they exhibit certain behaviors. These behaviors include, but are not limited to: repeated biting, repeated use of profanity, physical aggression towards peers'/staff members, and/or the destruction of school property. Continued aggressive physical behavior will not be tolerated for the safety of our students and staff and could result is dismissal from the program.

Drop Off/Pick Up

Students can be dropped off starting at 7:45 until 8:15. Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. will need to be signed in by their parents at the front of the building's intake room. Our office manager will escort students to their classrooms.

Occasional Pick-up
If you are picking up your child who normally rides the bus, please let the front office know in advance by a phone call or a note before 2:15. Daily changes in transportation will NOT be allowed after 2:15 pm.

Please note that any adult dropping off or picking up a preschool student must be on the Transportation pick up Permission form and have a Photo ID. Any updates or changes made to the Transportation Pick-up Permission form must be in writing and will take up to 24 hours to process

Emergency Information

Parents are responsible for updating the Emergency Information Card and Preschool Transportation/Pick-Up Permission Form whenever there is a change in phone numbers, address, etc. Please keep this information up to date for your child's safety and well-being. We will need a copy of any custody arrangements and/or court-ordered documents that you have.

Family Involvement

We share a very important common interest – your child! It is important to establish and maintain positive relationships through communication, cooperation, and collaboration. Children are the ones who benefit most from healthy, reciprocal relationships between teachers and families. Please check your student's folder daily for upcoming information on family and community events.

Medicine

Prescription Medications

Lancaster County Public School personnel may give prescription medication to students only pursuant to the written order of a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner and with the written permission from the student's parent or guardian. Such medicine must be in the original container and delivered to the coordinator, school nurse, or school division designee by the parent/guardian of the student.

Nonprescription Medications

Lancaster County Public School personnel may give nonprescription medication to students only with written permission of the parent of guardian. Such permission shall include the name of the medication, the required dosage of the medication, and the time the medicine is to be given. Such medicine must be in the original sealed container and delivered to the coordinator, school nurse, or school division designee by the parent/guardian of the student.

Pictures

Individual and group pictures are taken by various vendors at various times during the school year. Parents are provided the opportunity, but not obligated, to purchase their child's pictures.

Snacks

Our students will have snack time daily each afternoon. Your student's teacher will be sending home a signup sheet for those who wish to contribute snack items for the class to share. Please remember to only send nutritious healthy snacks for students during this time. All snack items should be store-bought items, we cannot accept homemade snacks for our students. Your child's teacher will inform you of any class allergy items to avoid.

Toileting

Teaching a toddler to use the toilet isn't an overnight task. It often takes between 3 and 6 months, but can take more or less time for some children. While it is not a requirement for students to be completely toilet-trained to enter our Pre-K program, we expect that students enter fully toilet-trained, or near completion of toilet-training.

Students entering pre-k not toilet-trained should be brought in a pull-up or underwear. Please do not send your student to school in a diaper. Please send in a change of clothing for your child and change the clothing out for each season. Teachers will send home reminders but it is the parent's responsibility to remember to send in seasonal clothes. Additionally, please make sure to label all of your child's clothing items.

Visiting the Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center

In an effort to keep students and staff safe, our building is secure and under surveillance at all times. Please enter through the main entrance of the building. We will have someone at the front desk the entire day to take your phone calls and to go get your child when you pick them up. We understand that appointments and other events come up during the day, but we would ask that you adhere to the school's drop-off and pick-up times so that your child can benefit from an entire instructional day. Classroom visitations are by appointment only for special occasions.

Changes

Any changes or additions to you or your child's contact information, home or mailing address, employment, medical need, etc. must be submitted to the front office. All changes must be made on the Preschool Information Change Form. This form can be found in the back of this handbook, requested from your student's teacher or by calling the ECEC office at 804-462-5100, ext.5103

Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center
Information Change Form

Child's Name:_____

Parent's Name
(Print):_____

Parent's Phone #: _____ Effective Date of Change: _____

Place a check beside all information to be changed and print all new information in the space provided.

_____Home address *(if you have moved, please attach a completed Residency Affidavit Form with necessary documents that confirm your new address. Acceptable documents for proof of address are listed on the Residency Affidavit)*

_____ Home phone New Phone #_____

_____Parent's employment

_____Work phone New Work Phone #_____

_____Medical information

_____Family situation

_____Bus Pick-up

_____Bus drop-off

_____Other

Print specific information change(s) here: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____
****Please send this to your child's teacher when any important information changes****

Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center
Transportation/Pick up Permission Form
2026-2027 School Year

Child's Name: _____ (Please Print)

*Please list all adults, including yourself, who are allowed to pick up your child from school or take them off the bus. *This must be an adult with identification.

	NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	PHONE NO.
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Parent's Name: _____ (Please Print)

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please note: Any changes to the authorized adults on this list will require that a new form be completed and approximately 2 business days to process once returned. The most recent version will replace all others.



Lancaster Early Childhood Education Center

2026-2027

Parent Signature Page

By signing this document, you are acknowledging the necessity of providing a safe and sound learning atmosphere free from distractions and agreeing to assist us in enforcing the rules and responsibilities of the Student Handbook. Your cooperation with us in the disciplinary process will help make our school a great place to learn and grow.

I will be responsible for reading the student handbook and complying with the contents. If there is anything I or my parents/guardian do not understand, I will contact the school within the first 10 days of school for clarification.

Student's Name_____ Gr._____ Date_____

T-Shirt Size: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature_____Date _____

PLEASE SIGN THIS PAGE AND RETURN IT WITH SIGNATURES TO YOUR STUDENT'S TEACHER

Thank you for your review of this acknowledgment and the Student Handbook!