FAIRFIELD COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

Learning Steps
PRESCHOOL

Handbook

2026-2027

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Our Mission

Through partnership with families, Learning Steps Preschool empowers children to become lifelong learners through an individualized educational experience in a fun, creative and nurturing environment.

BUILDING INFORMATION

Fairfield County Educational Service Center 740-653-3193

955 Liberty Drive, Lancaster, OH 43130

- Natalie Lewellen, Preschool Supervisor Ext: 5246
- Janet Adcock, Preschool Secretary Ext: 5260
- Kate Boelky, School Psychologist Ext: 5229

Bloom Carroll 614-837-4044

200 Market Street, Lithopolis, OH 43136

- Amy Trantino, Teacher - Terri Newcomer, Para
- Lynn Beros-Lincoln, Teacher - Lorena Young, Para
- Lauren Hapner, Teacher - Cassidy Eisnnicher, Para
    - Rachel George, Floating Para

Fairfield Union - Pleasantville 740-468-2181

300 West Columbus Street, Pleasantville, OH 43148

- Jessica Wilson, Teacher - Karen Young, Para
- Kathleen Householder, Teacher -Kaydence Stephenson, Para
    - Austin Snyder, Floating Para

Fairfield Union - Bremen 740-569-4135

210 Strayer Avenue, Bremen, OH 43107

- Laura Steele, Teacher - Errin Cramer, Para - Emily Shuttleworth, Para

Liberty Union 740-862-4143

1000 South Main Street, Baltimore, OH 43105

- Nicole Michelsen, Teacher - Shelley Wilson, Para
- Tina Shuster, Teacher - Brittany Bates, Para
- Brianna Sherrer, Teacher - Elizabeth Devoe, Para
- Sara Strawser, Teacher - Cathy Burden, Para
    - Annette Henry, Floating Para
    - Meg Giammarino, Floating Para
    - Sarah Cranmer, Floating Para

Walnut Township - Millersport Elementary 740-467-2216

1185 Lancaster Street, Millersport, OH 43046

- Miranda Knight, Teacher - Leah Groom, Para;
- Nicole Suttles, Teacher - Kim Kreher, Para
    - Hannah Tracy, Floating Para

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The first five years of a child's life set the foundation for and influence future success in school and life. Parents are the child's first and most significant teachers. It is vital that parents and educators work in partnership.

Fairfield County ESC/Learning Steps Preschool is staffed by qualified personnel and strives to provide a comprehensive and holistic preschool experience designed to enhance the child's physical, self-help, language, social-emotional, and cognitive growth.

These are crucial to enhance school success and overall development. This is achieved through a team approach including parents, teachers, therapists and others.

We believe that all children, whether they be special needs or typically developing, should be educated based on individual need. A child with a disability is always a child first. Children are more alike than they are different. Therefore, the same good learning principles apply to all preschoolers.

A basic ingredient to educational success is a positive self-image, which is developed to a great degree during this preschool period. Multicultural, non-bias experiences, age-appropriate consideration of individuality, appropriate equipment, activities, and materials are provided for children to develop their self-esteem and to encourage a celebration of diversity. Individual needs are met so that children are safe and secure.

Our intriguing, child-centered environment offers opportunities for both indoor and outdoor exploration and quiet and active play. Self-selected or teacher-selected activities may occur in individual, small or large groups. Group interactions enhance development through naturally occurring experiences that are concrete, real and relevant to the child's life. This environment provides for intellectual stimulation, social and language development, and physical development. Above all, experiences are fun, thought provoking and open-ended.

Acquisition of skills and concepts takes place according to each individual child's timetable for growth. Teachers guide, expand, encourage, and stimulate the growth process for each individual child. Concepts are introduced, extended and reinforced throughout the child's early childhood experience in ways that enhance individual growth and promote self-esteem.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

Our preschool program uses Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to promote positive behavior and create a safe, supportive learning environment for all children. PBIS is a proactive, evidence-based framework supported by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) and used across Ohio schools.

PBIS aligns with Ohio's expectations for early childhood programs and supports children's social-emotional development, self-regulation, and readiness for kindergarten.

What PBIS Looks Like in Preschool

PBIS focuses on teaching and supporting positive behavior rather than responding to behavior with punishment. Preschool-aged children are learning how to communicate, follow routines, and interact with others. Our staff intentionally teaches these skills throughout the school day.

We support children by:

- Teaching clear, consistent behavioral expectations
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Providing predictable routines and structure
- Using positive, developmentally appropriate language
- Reinforcing positive choices and efforts

PBIS practices are embedded into daily classroom activities and are aligned with the Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards.

Preschool Expectations

Behavior expectations are taught in developmentally appropriate ways using visuals, songs, stories, role-play, and repetition. Expectations focus on skills such as:

- Being safe with our bodies and classroom materials
- Being kind and respectful to others
- Following classroom routines and directions
- Using words, visuals, or other communication strategies to express needs and feelings

Expectations are reviewed regularly and adjusted to meet the developmental and individual needs of students.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive behavior is encouraged and acknowledged through:

- Specific verbal praise (e.g., “You were kind when you helped your friend.”)
- Visual supports and classroom recognition systems
- Opportunities to practice leadership and helping behaviors

Reinforcement strategies are age-appropriate and designed to build independence, confidence, and a positive sense of self.

Responding to Challenging Behavior

When challenging behavior occurs, staff respond calmly, consistently, and supportively. Strategies may include:

- Redirection and reteaching expected behavior
- Visual cues or reminders

- Teaching and practicing calm-down strategies
- Providing breaks or quiet spaces as needed
- Adult-guided problem-solving

Behavior is viewed as a form of communication. Staff work to understand the purpose of the behavior and teach alternative, appropriate skills.

Individualized Supports

Some children may require additional behavioral supports. For students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or identified needs, behavior supports are individualized and aligned with their goals and services. These supports follow Ohio special education guidelines and may include targeted interventions or behavior plans.

Families are involved in planning when additional or ongoing supports are needed.

Family Partnership

Family involvement is an important part of PBIS. We value collaboration and open communication between home and school. Families will be informed of concerns and included in problem-solving to support consistency across settings.

Our goal is to ensure every child feels safe, supported, and successful, while learning the social and emotional skills needed for school and life.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Fairfield County Educational Service Center (FCESC) operates the Learning Steps Preschool program. The Learning Steps Preschool program is a cooperative program of four school districts within Fairfield County: Bloom-Carroll, Fairfield Union, Liberty Union-Thurston, and Walnut Township. The preschool program was established in 1990 to provide special education services to children, ages 3-5, that have documented disabilities in one or more areas of development. We also service typically developing children between the ages of 3-5 that do not yet qualify for kindergarten.

Bloom Carroll and Fairfield Union classrooms are half day, Monday through Thursday.

	AM	PM
Bloom Carroll	8:50 - 11:35	12:55 - 3:40
Fairfield Union - Pleasantville	8:35 - 11:20	12:50 - 3:35
Fairfield Union - Bremen	8:35 - 11:20	12:50 - 3:35

Liberty Union and Walnut Township classrooms are full day, Monday through Thursday.

Liberty Union	8:50 - 3:25
Walnut Township	7:55 - 2:55

Our preschool program serves up to 15 students per classroom, 8 with special needs and 7 typically developing peers. Typically developing peers are considered an integral component of

the program to serve as role models for instructional and social interactions. Children of all abilities are motivated by their peers to try new things. All children work, play and learn together.

The program offers a range of services for children with disabilities, including itinerant services in the home, to classrooms. Services may be provided in a community-based early childhood setting or smaller, integrated classroom setting or may utilize a "pull-out"/therapy room model. Related services of speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, transportation, vision, orientation-mobility may also be provided to identify children based on the results of the Evaluation Team Report (ETR) and Individual Education Program (IEP).
The program operates according to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Early Learning and Development Standards; federal mandates for the education of the disabled (IDEA); and state preschool licensure rules and regulations. Child-staff ratios require one teacher and one assistant for eight children with disabilities and up to eight typically developing peer models per classroom. Our preschool teachers must hold an early education and intervention specialist license issued by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. Paraprofessionals/teacher assistants must acquire an educational aide permit also issued by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. Programs are inspected annually by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. Licenses and inspection reports are posted in each classroom. The ODE Ombudsman can be contacted with any concerns or complaints at 614-466-5203.

PRESCHOOL GOALS

1. To help each child recognize that he or she is a unique individual.
2. To provide opportunities for interactions with peers to develop social skills and relationships.
3. To provide a variety of materials and activities, with time to explore; inviting play.
4. To provide developmentally appropriate activities based on the special interests of the children.
5. To provide music, art, and drama experiences that will allow the child to express creativity.
6. To help assist children develop responsibility and self-help skills.
7. To assist children in learning to share, to cooperate, and to socialize.

The Early Learning Development Standards, developed by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, serve as our guide to meeting our goals. Developmentally appropriate activities and hands-on experiences are implemented throughout each session. Daily activities are flexible within a routine. Activities to go along with weekly themes are presented through art, music, stories, language, outside play, large and small groups, active and quiet activities, gross and fine motor activities.

WHAT DO WE DO DURING OUR TIME TOGETHER?

Arrival and Greeting	Clean-up Time	Lunch (all day programs)
Circle Time	Nutritional Snack	Nap (all day programs)
Learning Centers	Outside Time	

NAP

Learning Steps Preschool follows state licensing regulations for nap requirements for our all day programs:

1. The licensed child care center shall provide a quiet space for children who want to rest, nap, or sleep.
2. Nap and rest time shall be in accordance with the developmental needs of the child.
3. Rest or nap areas shall be lighted to allow for visual supervision of all children at all times.
4. Any child who does not fall asleep during a designated nap time shall have the opportunity to engage in quiet activities.

LEARNING CENTERS

In order to give children in a preschool program broad experiences and the opportunity to make choices about their activities, several centers should be a part of their preschool experiences. Within each of the areas, many materials can be changed but the basic structure is retained. In this way the child's need for security and confidence can be balanced against the possibility of boredom through too little that is new and stimulating.

- **Circle Time** includes lessons from Heggerty curriculum on phonemic awareness, which could include journaling, vocabulary building, and alphabet awareness. This is also a time to learn about the weather and calendar.
- **Literacy and writing** area are not only the source of good books but can also be a quiet place for a child who wants to be alone for a while or for a small group. Materials are available here to allow children the chance to read, write and create their own stories. Music can also be used to enjoy a story.
- **Math and science** area encourage thinking skill development, problem solving skills and following directions, including opportunities to interact with puzzles and games to introduce the concepts of sequencing, seriation, observation, and classification. Materials from various ecosystems are available for children to explore and discuss.
- **Dramatic play area** provides many opportunities for imaginative play and "trying-on" the lives of the people who are most important in the child's life. This also provides the opportunity to become a community helper or to use their imagination to transform into an important person they have observed. Children work on developing the concept of time and travel as well as developing organizational skills.
- **Blocks** area provides for activities in all areas of the curriculum. Children learn to work together, to experiment with size and shape, to plan to solve problems, to use large and small muscles, to develop patterns and to utilize imagination and language. Variety can be

provided in this area with the addition of animal and people figures as well as models of different forms of transportation.

- **Sensory table** area allows the child the opportunity to involve math reasoning, small group interaction, small and large muscle manipulation along with their own creativity to produce a successful process to reach their desired outcome. At the sensory table, children experiment with sinking and floating objects and their properties, they compare measurements of volume and the process of pouring develops hand eye coordination.
- **Art center** includes a variety of art materials. Children have access to various art materials to create their own artistic treasure. Crayons, markers, and collage are available daily. Children have play dough and clay, which they use to create unique objects. Children experiment with colors and discover their own creative potential.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Play is your child's way of learning. Through play, your child takes the lead. They choose a material or activity, explore it based on previous knowledge, experiment with new possibilities, and experience the feeling of success over new learning. Play is powerful!

1. Play allows a child to:
    a. Explore
    b. Be free
    c. Discover things and people in his/her environment
    d. Make decisions/be in control/use judgment
2. Play allows a child to:
    a. Try things/take risk
    b. Repeat
    c. Concentrate
    d. Plan
    e. Practice
3. Play helps a child:
    a. Build relationships with others (children and adults)
4. Play helps a child:
    a. Learn concepts/academics
    b. Learn about the world
    c. Learn about life/imitate adult roles
    d. Learn new interests
5. Play helps a child to:
    a. Use up energy
    b. Grow in size, control, dexterity, maturity, and strength
    c. Develop in all areas
6. Play allows the child to:
    a. Imagine
    b. Create
    c. Fantasize
7. Play helps a child to:
    a. Work through feelings

    b. Learn empathy for others
    c. Experience emotions
8. Play helps a child to:
    a. Understand language
    b. Communicate through actions
    c. Communicate verbally
9. Play helps a child to:
    a. Develop a positive self-concept
    b. Have a diversion from the routine

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

It is the policy of The Learning Steps Preschool and the Fairfield County Educational Service Center to help maximize the growth and development of the children through a variety of methods that emphasize positive behavior management approaches. Children are encouraged, but never forced, to join all activities, including eating snacks and trying new foods.

Discipline is guidance involving the whole learning environment. Every child is respected. Each class encourages good behavior through praise and various incentive programs. We also realize that children need limits set to develop self-discipline and socially acceptable behaviors. There are set limits, which the child will learn in the preschool room. The limits will also protect the child and the group.

Children are limited when they:

- Infringe on the rights of others
- Are endangering themselves or others
- Are misusing materials or equipment

The methods of discipline used include:

- Supporting their feelings & helping them verbalize the issue
- Redirection
- Natural consequences
- Physically stopping them when necessary
- Separation or “time-out” for repeated infringement

When these methods have been consistently used and the child is still in need of behavior management, a team that may include the teacher, parent, school psychologist, behavior specialist, or other persons deemed appropriate will meet to develop a behavior plan for your child.

All staff are trained in CPI, a Crisis Prevention Intervention, which focuses on ways to prevent behaviors from escalating to something more serious. The use of safe physical intervention as an emergency intervention to respond to an individual posing an imminent danger to self or others, such as a protective hug, are used as a last resort. If your child needs a protective hug at any time, you will be contacted. Staff have been trained and implement PAX Good Behavior Game in the classroom. These behavior techniques encourage relationship building and

strategies for self regulation. Staff and parents are encouraged to take the 2.5 hour training on PAX Tools. This links behavior strategies from school to the home.

Preschool staff members in charge of a child or group of children shall be responsible for their discipline. According to Preschool Rule 3301-37-10, discipline shall be restricted as follows:

1. There will be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to punching, pinching, shaking, spanking or biting.
2. No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
3. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
4. No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, box, or a similar cubicle.
5. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, or derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
6. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat or for toileting accidents.
7. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
8. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
9. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
10. The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance at the preschool program.
11. A staff member who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected is to immediately notify the public children services agency and a serious incident report is to be completed and submitted to the department in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

SAFETY POLICY

1. No child will be left unattended/unsupervised at any time.
2. Fire, tornado, and safety drills are conducted throughout the year as required by state and federal regulations. All procedures are posted in each room and reviewed with each child.
3. All preschool staff members are **required by Ohio Law** to report any **suspected** cases of child abuse or neglect, including physical abuse, child neglect, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, or educational neglect. If a child comes to school with bruises, etc., that were not there the day before, the parent should send a note explaining what happened. Staff members are not allowed to decide if they suspect that any abuse has occurred. They are required to make a report to Children's Services who will investigate.
4. Any injured child shall be observed and/or given appropriate treatment. The teachers will file an incident report to be given to the parents and copied for the school file. In the event of a serious accident or injury the parent will be contacted as soon as possible.
5. The classroom teacher needs written instructions from a licensed physician or licensed dentist before any medication will be dispensed or procedure performed.
6. All medications sent to school will be kept in a locked storage cabinet.

7. According to the *Missing Child Act*, staff members are required to call the home if a child is absent and no call-in has been given by the parent. **Please** contact the teachers by email or call the school **before class** if your child will be absent from school that day

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS

Students with Disabilities

Children are identified based on the Operating Standards for Ohio Educational Agencies serving Children with Disabilities. To qualify as a child with special needs, each child must have a multi-factored evaluation. This evaluation includes four parts:

1. An interview with a person who knows about the child, including developmental, family, medical, and educational history
2. Observations of the child on two different occasions
3. Standardized norm-referenced testing that compares children of similar age
4. Criterion-referenced testing that assesses skills mastered by the child.

A child is eligible for special services if s/he is 3-5 years of age and has a documented delay in one or more areas of development, according to Rule 3301-51-01, OAC:

1. Autism (ASD or AUT)
2. Cognitive Disability (CD)
3. Deaf-Blindness
4. Deafness
5. Emotional Disturbance (ED)
6. Hearing Impairment (HI)
7. Multiple Disabilities (MD)
8. Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
9. Other Health Impairment (OHI)
10. Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
11. Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)
12. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
13. Visual Impairment (VI)
14. Developmental Delay (DD)

All children who have been identified with special needs will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP will address specific goals for each child in his/her areas of delay along with placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and services for which the child is eligible. Children who move into the county with an active IEP are automatically eligible for our program. The IEP will be updated on an annual basis or more often as requested by parent or staff member.

Students that are Typically Developing

To qualify as a typically developing peer in our program, your child will be screened in all areas of development to ensure they are an appropriate role model for their special needs peers. Parents should go to our website of https://www.learningstepspreschool.org/ to complete the online application process. If there are any questions you can call us at 740-653-3193, option 1 for Learning Steps Preschool. It is recommended that your child be 3 years old to go through the screening. Children that will be 5 years old prior to August 1st of the current year, will not be accepted as a typically developing peer/role model since they are age eligible for kindergarten. Typical role models need to be fully potty trained prior to the first day of attendance.
Preference for the typical peers is given to children who:

- Demonstrate good language skills, positive behavior, and other age appropriate skills.

- Interact with other children and with adults in a sharing and cooperative manner.
- Are not considered at-risk or developmentally delayed in any area of development.

Going through the screening process does not guarantee a child will be included in a preschool program. Additional screenings will be done only if all available spaces are not filled. The preschool screening committee determines placement; parent requests are taken into consideration.

Referrals for typical peer role models are accepted all year long, as space is available.

TYPICAL PEER/ROLE MODEL CONDUCT

Children who are accepted into preschool as a typical peer are integrated with the children who are identified with a special need or some delay in their development. This is done to:

a. Have good role models for the children identified with a delay
b. Serve more children in our surrounding community

Occasionally a typical peer may display difficulty controlling disruptive or aggressive behavior. When this happens, the following steps will be taken:

1. When the behavior of a typical peer becomes disruptive or aggressive, the teacher will document these behaviors and meet with the child's parent(s) to discuss what is occurring in school and at home.
2. Together, the teacher, parent(s), and other appropriate school personnel will develop a positive behavior plan to address the targeted problem. All will work together, in a team approach, to help the student gain control of these identified behavior(s). The team will set a reasonable timetable to meet or conference on the phone to discuss the child's progress.
3. If the child does not respond to the behavior plan, and the behaviors are deemed to be severe enough, the teacher may suggest the child have an evaluation to determine if the child would qualify as a preschooler with special needs (see eligibility section for more information).
4. **If the parent does not participate in these steps to address the problem behaviors, the preschool reserves the right to dismiss the student from the preschool class for the remainder of the school year.**

TUITION GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR TYPICAL PEER/ROLE MODELS

All children who are typically developing peer models will be charged tuition to attend preschool.

All families are asked to fill out a Free and Reduced Priced School Meal application to determine eligibility. This will determine their daily rate for preschool

Half Day Program
Full Rate: $20.00 day Reduced Rate: $10.00 day Free Rate: $0

Full Day Program
Full Rate: $35.00 day Reduced Rate: $17.50 day Free Rate: $0

A $30.00 non-refundable application fee will be charged; however this will be credited to the first month's tuition.
Tuition will be charged on a monthly basis at a set rate (rate is determined by multiplying your rate by the number of school days). Tuition will be prepaid and is due on the 15th of each month. A fee schedule will be provided to you in mid-July or upon enrollment. Tuition questions may be directed to the Tuition Secretary at 740-653-3193 ext. 5236.

Payments can be made through our website www.faircoesc.org through PayPal (you do not need a PayPal account to use this option, you can check out as a guest). Or via check or money order made **payable to: FCESC or Fairfield County ESC** and either brought into the office or mailed to:

Fairfield County ESC
Attn: Kathy Stallard
955 Liberty Drive
Lancaster, OH 43130

Important: We appreciate your prompt tuition payments.

- Tuition received after the 18th of the month will receive a **$20.00 late fee**.
- If payment is not received by the 15th of the month, a reminder notice will be sent.
- If payment is not received by the 1st of the month, a second notice will be sent.
- Unless payment arrangements have been made, **your child will be removed from the program after one missed tuition payment (30 days past due).**
- For **voluntary withdrawal, 2-week notice is required**, otherwise tuition will continue to be charged. All refund and exception requests will need to be approved by the Preschool Supervisor and Fairfield County ESC Treasurer.
- **A returned check fee of $20.00 will be charged back to the parent in the following months tuition. After two returned checks, only money orders will be accepted.**
- Tuition will be charged for absences if your child does not attend the scheduled times.
- Tuition will be charged when the school is closed for any emergency reason.

- Tuition may be waived for excused absences if your child is hospitalized or suffers a severe illness lasting more than two weeks. Proof of hospitalization or verification of illness will be requested by the Preschool Supervisor and Fairfield County ESC Treasurer.
- No charge will be made for scheduled student days off, as listed on the school calendar.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Although attendance is not required in a preschool program, the Fairfield County Educational Service Center and Learning Steps Preschool believe that if a preschool placement was determined to be the best placement for the child, the child will benefit most when attendance is regular.

When your child is absent, please call both the transportation department (if applicable) and classroom numbers prior to the start of class and indicate the reason for the absence. You can also contact your child's teacher through Seesaw.

If the school is not notified of your child's absence, we are required to call you each time they are absent. This is in compliance with The Missing Child Act and is used to assure your child's safety. Please help us by calling in when your child is going to be absent.

School hours are important! It is highly recommended that all children with IEP's regularly ride their assigned bus. However, if you are transporting your child to and from preschool, please be on time and follow the Five-Minute Guideline, i.e., bring your child within five (5) minutes of the class start time and pick up within five (5) minutes of the class ending time. This is crucial for effective classroom management and courtesy to the other students in the program. Please discuss with your child's teacher any concerns you may have regarding times. Please call if your child will be absent or late.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Sign up for your local school district's alert system. If you are not sure how to do this, contact your child's teacher.

If the school where your child attends is closed, then you will not have school. When you hear/see that the home school is closed, then that preschool site is also closed.

Occasionally, school has been dismissed early due to weather conditions or other building emergencies. Please have listed on the transportation forms someone who can be reached should this occur.

If there is a 2 hour delay, AM Preschool is CANCELED.

If there is an early dismissal, PM Preschool is CANCELED.

Early dismissals and school closings do not change your tuition for the month.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation, mandated by state law, is provided for the children with documented disabilities. For transportation related questions such as pick up times, please call your school district's transportation department number listed below:

- Bloom-Carroll: 614-834-6706 or 614-834-6709
- Fairfield Union-Bremen and Pleasantville: 740-536-7820
- Liberty Union-Thurston: 740-862-4171
- Walnut Township: 740-808-2139

**If you signed an opt out of transportation document stating that you would provide your own transportation, this is for the entire school year.

BUS SAFETY AND INFORMATION

1. Please help the drivers stay on schedule by having your child ready when the bus arrives. You may need to help your child get on the bus and buckled in. If no one is in sight, or if your child is not ready, the bus cannot wait, nor can it come back. You will need to transport your child to school that day.
2. After school, when the child is returned home, an adult must be there at least one half (1/2) hour before the regular drop-off time. An adult must get the child off the bus.
3. **If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the Transportation Department for your child's preschool site.**
4. If you move or your arrangements change permanently, please provide at least one week's notice to make route changes. If you have temporary changes, you will need to provide your own transportation during that time.
5. Help your child be safe outside the bus when waiting to get on. Do not go near the bus until it comes to a complete stop. When getting off, watch the bus driver for instructions.
6. To prevent choking emergencies, make sure your child is finished eating before getting on the bus. **Food and drinks are not allowed on the bus.**
7. Please talk with your child about good bus manners:
    a. Stay in your seat.
    b. Be nice to others on the bus.
    c. Use a quiet voice on the bus.
    d. Listen to what the driver tells you.
    e. Be completely quiet at railroad crossing to help the driver listen for train
8. Be sure your child's book bag contains only items for school and that s/he will not get into it on the bus.
9. Do not give verbal messages to the bus driver to pass on to the teachers. Any message for the teachers should be put in writing and sent in your child's book bag or sent via message through Seesaw.
10. If you are sending medication for your child, please make sure that you have the proper paperwork and that the book bag is left in front with the driver.

ILLNESS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

One of the best methods for the prevention of diseases is through appropriate immunizations. All families are required to submit a yearly physician statement indicating that their preschooler is free from apparent communicable disease and have had the required immunization as determined by the Ohio Department of Health. The yearly physician statement must be submitted within thirty (30) days of your child entering the program. If this is not complete, it may impact your child's participation in the program.

Hand Washing is the most important measure in controlling the spread of disease. All preschool staff are trained in appropriate hand washing procedures. Preschool staff members have received training on how to recognize the common signs of communicable diseases or other illnesses. Additionally, a Communicable Disease Chart and Procedure Forms for Emergency Medical, Dental Emergency and Handwashing will be posted in the classroom.

Each child will be greeted upon arrival to school by a preschool staff member. If a staff member observes symptoms of illness, the child may be sent home. The teacher/nurse shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

If a preschooler is suspected of having a communicable disease or other illness, the staff will follow procedures outlined on the communicable disease chart administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. A parent or responsible individual (as stated in the Emergency Medical Authorization Form) shall be notified of suspected illness and may be asked to pick up the child. If the parent or responsible individual cannot be reached, and if the observed symptoms become severe or life threatening, emergency medical treatment shall be obtained per instructions on the Emergency Medical Authorization Form. Local emergency numbers will be posted in the classroom.

Below are common reasons why a child may be required to be picked up from school:

- Evidence of live lice (not nits)
- Fever over 100 degrees
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Pink Eye

Our young students are still learning how to care for themselves by wiping their nose and covering their face when coughing and sneezing. If your child is not feeling well or experiencing any of the above systems, please keep them home from school.

Students experiencing fever, vomiting or diarrhea cannot return to school for a **FULL 24 HOURS FROM THE LAST OCCURRENCE OF THE SYMPTOMS AND WITHOUT THE USE OF MEDICATION.** Students on an antibiotic for an infection need to be on the medication for **24 HOURS PRIOR TO RETURNING TO SCHOOL**.

If your child has been found to have a contagious disease, please notify your child's teacher immediately. If your child receives itinerant services, please contact your therapist to cancel their visit if your child is not well or others in the home are sick. When students are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease, parents will be notified.

The communicable disease chart can be found at https://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/. Search for form JFS08087.

Learning Steps Preschool is a consortium group run by the Fairfield County ESC. We serve Bloom-Carroll, Fairfield Union, Liberty Union-Thurston, and Walnut Twp. We will be following the guidelines of the school districts COVID protocols that we serve. Families should always look at the district protocols in the building in which your child attends.

All children deserve a safe and healthy environment to learn.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for home and school to work together effectively to educate your child, there are certain responsibilities for parents. Some are required by the State of Ohio, and some are strongly suggested by preschool personnel. All are necessary.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

It is **very** important for the parent and the educational team to work together to ensure the needs of every child are being met. Your participation in activities and meetings is encouraged, and your comments are always welcome. Please feel free to stop by and observe your child's classroom.

There may occasionally be evening programs to provide information or to meet other parents in the program. We invite you to join us during these sessions.

We encourage all parents to volunteer in our programs. Occasionally, it is difficult for a child to understand how to behave if his/her parent and teacher are in the same room. If you wish to volunteer and your child has difficulty with this, we will make arrangements for you to spend time in another classroom or with special projects. If you have a special talent that you would like to share, please inform your child's teacher.

Parents are advised to direct questions concerning the program or child to the teacher or supervisor. Parents are to report to the school's main office before going to the classroom.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Evaluation and assessment reports will rely upon observation by the parent and the teacher. Conferences will be held during scheduled elementary parent/teacher conference days. Conferences can also be scheduled by appointment on a Friday, or by mutual agreement between parent and teacher. A minimum of tw8o conferences will be scheduled for each child throughout the year. Report cards will be sent home at the end of each 9-week grading period

for Bloom Carroll, Walnut Township and Fairfield Union. Liberty Union will send home report cards on a trimester schedule. Interim reports will be sent home according to district/building policy to indicate progress on IEP goals.

PARENT TO DO LIST

- Please check your child's book bag and Seesaw **daily**. Your child's teacher will use notes or a notebook to communicate with you often.
- In case of emergency, make sure you or an alternate person is **always** reachable while your child is attending school. We **always** need to know your current phone number and address. If you will be gone from home while your child is at school, make sure someone else is available and let them know they could be contacted.
- When helping your child dress for school, please choose sturdy shoes for active play and clothes that are comfortable and that can be washed frequently.
- Please communicate any information or concerns you have.
- Events and changes in environment may affect young children. They may not be able to express their feelings or relay significant information, but it may show in other ways (e.g. behavioral problems, health issues, etc.). To help your child deal with changes, staff members will keep you informed of the happenings at school. Likewise, please keep your child's teacher informed of any events, such as:
    - Illness or hospitalization of family members
    - Pregnancies or births
    - Deaths of family members or close friends
    - Changes in family structure within the home
    - Plans for moving
    - Extra stimulation, such as visitors or celebrations
    - Any changes in medication
    - Any other changes that may affect your child
- Please keep us informed of any concerns or questions that you may have. We strive to work together to serve your child in the best way possible. Communication between parents and staff members is integral to helping your child achieve the best preschool experience possible.
- All of our teachers use Seesaw digital app to enhance communication. Check with your child's teacher to sign up for class alerts.

DRESSING FOR SCHOOL

While at preschool, your child will have many opportunities for play and new experiences. Please dress your child comfortably in clothes that suit the weather. Select shoes that are sturdy for outdoors. Shoes must be enclosed, with a heel back and not a strap for a heel. Sandals, flip-flops, crocs, and slippers are not permitted, except for designated theme days. Students may be asked to "sit out" of some activities as a result. Please send a complete change of clothing for your child (including socks) in a plastic bag for accidents. If your child uses diapers, please send enough diapers. Be sure to label everything with your child's name, including coats, hats, gloves, boots, etc. Every effort is made to have outdoor play, whenever possible. Make

sure that your child has appropriate clothing for the weather. Donations of spare clothing sizes 3-6, particularly pants and underwear, would be greatly appreciated.

LUNCH & SNACK

A snack will be served each day in all classes. Your child's teacher will let you know how snacks will be handled in your classroom.

In our all day programs, lunch will be provided for a cost or you can pack a lunch. You may also qualify for a reduced/free rate.

BIRTHDAYS

If your child would like to share a special treat with his/her classmates, please be sure to notify the staff at least two days in advance. Birthdays will be recognized for each child in our preschool. School policies vary, so please follow the guidelines in the elementary school handbooks or check with the teacher regarding allergies.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips may be taken periodically throughout the year. Parents will be notified in advance of each trip and its cost. If a child cannot pay for the cost of the field trip, please let your child's teacher know and arrangements for payment can be made. Parents will be required to fill out a permission slip for each off-campus field trip and/or give verbal permission over the phone.

SPECIAL DIETS AND MEDICATIONS

Preschool personnel may administer special diets and/or medications to a child only after the parent or guardian and physician have completed the proper forms pertaining to the administration of oral medications.

We encourage parents to give their child any needed medication at home. However, if it is necessary to give medication during the school day, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. The medication information form will be completed including the student's name, address, name of medication, storage requirements, dosage, time, duration of medication, reason for medication, possible side effects, physician's name, physician's address, physician's phone number, parent or guardian signature, and the physician's signature.
2. All medication provided by the parents must be in original containers and have an affixed label, including the student's name, name of medication, dosage, route of administration, and time of administration.
3. All medication is stored in a locked cabinet or in the clinic.
4. Individual medication records will be maintained and monitored by classroom personnel or the school nurse.
5. Food allergies and gluten free diets are especially important for staff to be notified. When snacks are offered daily, we want to ensure your child is safe to eat those items.

Please keep your teacher informed of all medications that your child is taking. Medication and changes in medication can greatly affect a child and his/her behavior. Please let your child's teacher know of any side effects of the medication (your pharmacy can provide a print-out of the medication that includes side effects and possible food reactions).

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

1. Each student must have on file an Emergency Medical Authorization Form. This information must be updated as soon as any change occurs. Should an emergency arise, current phone numbers, etc. are critical.
2. Parents are responsible for informing the school of the child's medical problems, such as allergies to bee stings, foods, etc. Please inform your child's teacher of any medical problems.
3. All emergencies or major accidents shall be called to the attention of the person in charge. As needed, said person will call 911 and notify the parent.

MEDICAL POLICIES

1. To enter preschool, all children must have an adequate immunization certification on file, including the following:

   4-DPT (Diphtheria, Whooping Cough or Pertussis, and Tetanus)
   3-Polio
   1-MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Rubella-German Measles)
   1-HIB
   3-Hep B
2. A physical examination by a physician/nurse practitioner and a dental exam by a dentist is required within 30 days of admission and yearly thereafter to attend the preschool program.
3. The Health Department will help with physicals and immunizations on a sliding fee scale if you do not have a family physician.

CUMULATIVE RECORDS FOR PRESCHOOL ENTRANCE

All contact information, emergency medical authorization and permission forms listed on Final Forms need to be submitted digitally before your child can begin preschool.

If any information provided on these forms' changes, please inform your child's teacher immediately. It is critical that we have working phone numbers in case of an emergency. Please inform your child's teacher when any contact information changes or is no longer working. We always need at least two (2) telephone numbers where either parent/guardian or an emergency contact can be reached.

It is necessary to maintain personal information on the child and the family. Information in the records is available to appropriate school personnel, and accessible to the child's parent or legal guardian, in accordance with school district policy and the Ohio Revised Code. All preschool programs will maintain the following records on each child:

1. Personal Data-name address, gender, date and place of birth (copy of birth certificate)
2. Admission and withdrawal dates
3. General family/child data
4. Emergency medical information
5. Immunization records
6. Attendance
7. Request for directory (roster) information for circulation to preschool participants
8. Progress reports

SUPPLY LIST

- Book Bag (big enough to hold a folder)
- 1” Hard Cover 3 Ring Binder
- Complete Change of Clothes (including socks and underwear), update according to the season
- Diaper & Wipes (if needed)

  **Typically developing students must be fully potty trained
- Snack and/or lunch
- Small Blanket for Nap (if all day)
- Classroom Items Requested by the Teacher