CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS

Pre-Kindergarten

PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027 School Year

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Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

Every Pre-Kindergarten student will have access to a nurturing and rigorous early childhood education that successfully prepares them for their Kindergarten journey and beyond.

Mission Statement

The mission of CCS Pre-Kindergarten is to provide all Pre-Kindergarten students with a rigorous and nurturing learning environment that promotes early academic skills, creativity, and discovery through the use of developmentally appropriate practices.

Welcome Letter



CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS

FROM THE OFFICE OF
PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Cumberland County Schools Pre-Kindergarten! I am so excited that you have given us the opportunity to provide your child with an enriching educational experience in our program! The school year is filled with excitement, new experiences, new friends, growth, and development. We are on a path towards excellence!

Our office team, school teams, administrators, teachers, and support staff all welcome you to Cumberland County Schools.

Sincerely,

Sean E. Brost
Pre-K Coordinator

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A Child's Eight Commandments to Parents

1. My hands are small; please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture, or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so that I can keep up with you.

2. My eyes have not seen the world as you have; please let me explore safely. Don't restrict me unnecessarily.

3. Housework will always be there. I'm only little for a short time~ please take time to explain things to me about this wonderful world and do so willingly.

4. My feelings are tender; please be sensitive to my needs; don't nag me all day long. (You wouldn't want to be nagged for your inquisitiveness.) **Treat me as you would like to be treated**.

5. I need your encouragement to grow. Please go easy on the criticism; remember you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.

6. Please give me the freedom to make decisions concerning myself. Permit me to fail, so that I can learn from my mistakes. Then someday I'll be prepared to make the kind of decisions life requires.

7. Please don't do things over for me. Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts didn't quite measure up to your expectations. I know it's hard, but please don't try to compare me with my brother or sister.

8. Please don't be afraid to leave for a weekend together. Kids need vacations from parents, just as parents need vacations from kids.

Adapted from Dr. Kevin Leman's *A Child's Ten Commandments to Parents*

Pre-Kindergarten Goals

When a developmentally appropriate environment is provided for young children at home and at school, each child will develop and expand in the following areas:

- Self-worth
- Begin to value and respect the physical environment and to assume responsibility within their personal space, classroom, and school
- In the ability to express, represent, and understand thoughts, feelings, and experiences of self and others in their personal space, classroom, and school
- In the ability to make decisions and to solve problems within their personal space, classroom, and school
- In the capacity to use large and small muscles in their personal space, classroom, and school
- In the ability to live in harmony with others in their personal space, classroom, and school

Activities and materials in the Pre-Kindergarten classroom are planned and organized to promote the growth and development of the whole child – physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

The Typical School Day

Each Pre-Kindergarten teacher has his/her own way of organizing class time and materials; however, all classes spend the day learning through play. Each class has a center time, group time, outdoor play time, and a rest time on a daily basis. Most classes eat breakfast and lunch in the classroom in a family style manner. A doctor's note is required for children with special dietary needs due to food allergies.

Typical Daily Schedule

7:15- 8:00*	Arrival/Wash Hands/ Free Choice Centers
8:05- 8:30	Wash Hands/Breakfast/ Morning Announcements
8:35- 8:45	Group Meeting/ Morning Songs
8:50- 10:50	Bathroom/Free Choice Center Time
10:55- 11:30	Recess Outside/ Inside
11:35- 11:40	Bathroom/Wash Hands/Music/Story
11:45- 11:55	Prepare for lunch/Wash hands/Bathroom
12:00- 12:25	Lunch
12:30- 1:30	Nap time/quiet time
1:35- 2:00	Snack/Bathroom /Recess
2:00- 2:25	Let's Talk About it!! Review of the Day /Dismissal
2:45-3:30	TEACHER MEETINGS/PLANNING

* This schedule is based on a school whose hours are 7:45am-2:25pm.

School Attendance

Pre-Kindergarten is a five day per week, full day program. Regular attendance is the expectation. Parents and guardians are responsible for seeing that children attend school each day it is in session. When a child returns to school after being absent, a note stating the reason for the absence, date of absence and parent or doctor signature, must be sent to school. The note should be sent to school on the day that the child returns to school after the absence.

In an effort to provide a quality Pre-Kindergarten program that helps prepare children for a smooth transition into kindergarten, it is important that we closely monitor student attendance. Excessive absences and tardiness may result in the child being dismissed from the program; however, every effort shall be made to maintain the child's enrollment and participation.

More information regarding Student Attendance is located on the CCS Board of Education website, Policy Code: 4400 Attendance.

Curriculum and Digital Resources

Our Pre-Kindergarten classes use the Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers curriculum. This is a play-based curriculum where children learn through play, social interaction, functional communication, motor development, and self-care/independence. Our curriculum is approved through the Department of Public Instruction and the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The curriculum is managed through an online platform called Smart Teach. Families will be given access to resources through the platform via email and text messaging.

Family engagement is an important aspect of child development and the curriculum. We utilize a program called ReadyRosie! This online program contains tools that help families create meaningful home-learning environments. Your child's teacher will set up your account so you can participate in the family engagement activities. Please click on this link for a video overview of the program.

Illnesses

If your child comes to school when he/she is not feeling well, he/she will be more vulnerable to infection. It is in the best interest of your child and of the other people at school to keep him/her home when he/she is ill. A child needs to be well to be able to participate actively in the program.

Please:

- Keep your child at home if he/she has a fever, bad cold, upset stomach, earache, rash, swollen glands, or a runny nose that is green or yellow.
- If a child is well enough to come to school, he/she will be expected to go outdoors with his/her classmates, weather permitting.
- Often children may ask to come to school, even though they are ill. Although your child may be disappointed, please keep them at home if they are sick.
- If your child becomes ill while at school and you are called, please cooperate by picking him/her up promptly. We will not call unless your child needs to be at home.
- If your child has prescribed medication, a medication form must be completed by your doctor in order for the school to dispense the medicine. All prescribed medication must be handled through the school office per CCS Health Services guidelines. Classroom teachers are not permitted to dispense medications.
- Pre-kindergarten students should not bring lotions, creams, Chapstick, cough drops or hand sanitizer to school.
- A child may not return to school until he/she is fever free without medication for at least 24 hours.
- A child must remain at home after vomiting and/or having diarrhea for at least 24 hours after the last episode and without medication.

It is very important that you provide us updated phone numbers whenever you have a change in your contact numbers.

Clothing

Clothing and shoes should allow movement and play. Be sure that your child's clothing is

- comfortable, washable, allows for self-dressing, and self-toileting,
- appropriate for arts and crafts (paint aprons are provided at school), and
- consistent with CCS and school dress code policies.

We get **INVOLVED** in activities and should not have to be too concerned with staying clean. We recommend our students dress comfortably in clothing that will need to be cleaned after a fun-filled day in school.

When the weather is cold, always

- send in mittens or gloves, a hat, and a sweater to layer over clothes. **We go outside every day.**
- provide pants or tights for girls who wear dresses; those little legs get cold without protection.

When it rains, always

- send in a raincoat
- **leave umbrellas at home**

We follow the DCDEE Child Care Weather Watch chart when going outside. Unless we are in the "Red Zone", we will go outside to play.

Parents are asked to send a complete change of clothing to school including socks and underwear. Place the clothing in a Ziplock bag. Label the clothing and bag with the student's name. The clothes will be kept in the child's individual cubby and will be available for your child to change into in case of accidental soiling or wetting. If your child brings home soiled clothing, **please send another set the next day.**

Toileting

It is developmentally appropriate for children ages 2-6 to be working towards complete bathroom independence. Our teachers and teacher assistants will work with your child towards independence through coaching, regular practice, and encouragement. We want your child to complete these tasks independently in the bathroom. If your child has an accident, we will assist as needed but we will be "hands off" to build on independent practice. If your child wears a pull-up, they will need to be able to change themselves. We will work towards transitioning away from a pull-up as soon as possible. If your child has unique toileting needs, please let your teacher know so that we can work towards bathroom independence. For additional information, please see the CCS Toileting Guidelines.

Meals

The Pre-Kindergarten school day is a full school day. Students will be provided breakfast, lunch, and snack. As noted above, meals are typically served family style in the classroom. All meals follow CCS Child Nutrition Services regulations and NC Child Care rules. Students may pack meals or eat from the cafeteria. Please make your teacher aware of any unique dietary needs. Also, your teacher will have further information about

free and reduced meal eligibility.

Transportation

Our first concern is the child's safety as he/she travels to and from school. Please make sure your child's teacher knows who is authorized to receive your child. Also, please make sure that your child's teacher is aware of any changes to the normal drop off/pick up routine. Only the parent/guardian may designate or change authorized persons on the pick up/drop off list at the front office.

School Bus Transportation

Pre-Kindergarten students **may be** provided with bus service if they live within the assigned school district's transportation zone. This information is available via the CCS Find My School website. Listed are the duties and responsibilities for riding the bus:

- An authorized adult is required to be at the designated bus stop, on time, in the morning and again to meet the child in the afternoon. Allowing a minor sibling or another child to meet the bus is not acceptable.
- If an authorized adult fails to meet the bus, the child will be brought back to the school and the parent called **(failures to meet the child may result in loss of bus privileges)**.
- Students are required to sit correctly in their seats, obey the bus driver, and assistant, concerning conduct on the bus. **Inappropriate behavior on the bus may result in loss of bus privileges.**

Parent Transportation

Pre-Kindergarten children should be under adult supervision at all times. This includes traveling to and from school and moving to and from the classroom.

- Drop off/Pick up is a school specific plan. Your child's teacher will give you information at the parent meeting about procedures.
- Your child will be released only to his/her parent or other persons authorized by a parent to pick up the child. **ID is required.**
- Be prompt in dropping your child off in the morning and picking up your child (follow school bell times) at the end of the day. Every minute counts!

Withdrawing from the Program

If you are planning to move, please inform the Pre-Kindergarten teacher of your plans. We appreciate knowing ahead of time that you will be withdrawing from the program. If you anticipate a move within the county, the Pre-K office will help facilitate your transfer to another school or center but cannot guarantee placement.

Transfers

Once a child is placed in a class, we are generally unable to transfer the student to another school. This ensures your child has a smooth, successful school year. If you are anticipating a move, please communicate with your child's teacher. If there are extenuating circumstances, please communicate with your child's teacher and the Pre-K office so that we can assist.

Change of Information

If you change your address, phone numbers, email addresses, or people listed as emergency contacts, please send the information to your child's teacher and the school office immediately. Accurate records help to ensure your child is safe and successful in school. You will have access to the Infinite Campus Parent Portal so that changes can be made online. Your teacher will have more information on the IC Parent Portal.

Parent Involvement

It is important that we, parents and school personnel, work together to ensure the best possible experiences for your child. Parents are encouraged to volunteer a minimum of 2 hours per semester. Parents are encouraged to complete the CCS Volunteer application, located on the Cumberland Family Academy/Family Ambassador website.

Volunteer activities include:

- attending parent workshops
- helping with classroom activities
- helping with school activities
- attending PTA/PTO meetings
- attending School Improvement Meetings

Parents can help their child in school by:

- making sure the child attends daily and on time
- attending parents/teacher conferences
- speaking with your child's teacher frequently
- keeping your child's teacher informed of his/her special interests and needs
- asking about your child's day with specific questions, such as:
  - "Whom did you play with today?"
  - "What was in the art center?"
  - "What choices did you make at playtime?"
  - "What was your favorite activity today?"

Activities at Home

Children live in homes; big homes and small homes, apartments and trailers, cottages and single rooms. HOME is where the FAMILY is, and children are a part of their family. No other environment is more important. For this reason, the home environment should be one in which adults:

- talk with children about everyday experiences
- listen to children and value what they have to say
- participate with children in activities
- read for their own pleasure
- read to children
- show affection for children
- provide for children's health, safety, and well-being
- use every day experiences such as cooking, playing games, and shopping as learning opportunities for children
- use common materials such as rocks and leaves to help children appreciate the natural environment

Examples:

- **Preparing Meals and Baking**
  - Washing vegetables and fruits; tearing lettuce for salads
  - Greasing cookie sheets or cake pans
  - Mixing juices; pouring cereal
- **Laundry**
  - Pouring detergent
  - Matching socks; sorting clothes
  - Putting clothes away; folding washcloths
- **Cleaning House**
  - Dusting
  - Polishing
  - Cleaning the sink
- **Shopping**
  - Helping to make a list
  - Finding items on the list at the store
  - Putting away groceries
- **Gathering Trash**
  - Gathering waste baskets from each room
  - Replacing new trash bags in baskets
  - Picking up paper and sticks in the yard
- **Table Setting**
  - Placing plates and silverware
  - Setting out napkins

Discipline and Behavior Management

We:

1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children.
2. DO reason with and set limits for the children.
3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. DO listen to the children.
6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
10. DO explain things to children on their level.
11. DO use short supervised periods of time-out sparingly.
12. DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.
13. DO use effective guidance and behavior management techniques that focus on a child's development.
14. DO use best practices to include Preschool Pyramid Model and Calm Corner strategies.
15. DO adhere to the CCS Student Code of Conduct, the CCS Board of Education Policies, and NC Child Care Law and Rules.

"Time-Out"

"Time-out" is the removal of a child for a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes) from a situation in which the child is misbehaving and has not responded to other discipline techniques. The "time-out" space, usually a chair, is located away from classroom activity but within the teacher's sight. During "time-out," the child has a chance to think about the misbehavior which led to his/her removal from the group. After a brief interval of no more than 5 minutes, the teacher discusses the incident and appropriate behavior with the child. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown the other children.

Adapted from original prepared by Elizabeth Wilson, Student, Catawba Valley Technical College

Four Year Olds Can... List

From 48 to 54 months, some things Four Year Olds can do are:

- stand on one foot for ten seconds
- name three shapes
- use many words (more than 1500)
- remember some things seen in a picture or in a group of objects
- ask lots of questions
- test adults limits frequently
- enjoy playing with other children more than playing alone
- walk on a balance beam
- ask for help when needed
- tell what their artwork is
- repeat rhymes, songs, or dances
- get dressed without much help
- jump backward
- try to imitate someone who draws a square
- draw a person with three parts
- know some prepositions, such as *in front of*, *under*, *behind*, or *on top of*
- walk downstairs, alternating feet
- recognize some colors
- catch a bounced ball
- play alone for 20-30 minutes
- know the name of a penny, nickel, dime
- fasten buttons quite well
- eat well with fork, cut easy foods with knife
- usually stay dry through the night
- jump over things
- recognize own name in print

From 54 to 60 months, some things Four Year Olds can do are:

- hop on one foot at least five times
- cut out a big circle
- tell you what some words mean
- brush teeth quite well
- draw a person with six parts
- ask permission to use things that belong to others
- do well in small groups of three or four
- lace shoes
- show correct number of objects, up to five
- taunt others by calling names
- play cooperatively in small groups often

- say “I’m sorry” to others
- do a somersault
- behave well in public most of time
- cut and paste simple shapes
- say when a sound is loud or soft
- say whether two words rhyme
- usually manage all toileting skills alone
- use four or five words in a sentence
- count to ten
- recognize a few printed words
- tell on others who do naughty things
- jump over knee-high obstacles with both feet together
- print own name but not clearly
- print a few capital letters

ATTACHMENTS

Summary of North Carolina Child Care Laws and Rules

What Is Child Care?
The law defines child care as:

- three or more children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis - at least once a week for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

It is only when all of these conditions exist that regulation is required. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is carried out through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the health and well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110. The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

Child Care Centers
Licensing as a center is required when six or more children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose not to be licensed. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

Two through Five Star Rated License
Centers that meet the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one-star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five-star rated license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet, the program standards met by the program, and one quality point option.

Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment
Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, appropriate discipline, or when a

child is not in a safe environment. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of Child Development and Early Education** at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect in a family to report that to the county department of social services.**

Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a center at any time while their child is present.
- Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
- Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be cited for violations of child care requirements and may be issued an administrative action, fined, and/or may have their licenses suspended or revoked. Administrative actions must be posted in the facility. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the child care requirements, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829.

Licensed centers must, at a minimum, meet the requirements in the following areas.

Education and Training

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must have current certification in CPR and First Aid. All staff must complete health and safety training and a minimum number of ongoing training hours annually, ITS-SIDS training is required the administrator and any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. One staff member must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan.

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background qualification is a pre-service requirement. All staff must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every five years thereafter.

Reviewing Facility Information

From the Division's Child Care Facility Search Site, the facility and visit documentation can be viewed https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/childcaresearch/ A public file is maintained in the Division's main office in Raleigh for every licensed center. These files can be viewed

during business hours (8am-5 pm) by contacting the Division at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829 or requested via the Division's web site at https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/

Staff/Child Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. The minimum staff/child ratios and group sizes for single-age groups of children in centers are shown below and must be posted in each classroom. A sample staff/child ratio chart can be found on the DCDEE website under "Provider Documents and Forms".

Age	Teacher: Child Ratio	Max Group Size
0-12 months	1:5	10
12-24 months	1:6	12
2 to 3 years old	1:10	20
3 to 4 years old	1:15	25
4 to 5 years old	1:20	25
5 years and older	1:25	25

Centers located in a residence licensed for six to twelve children may care for up to three additional school-age children, depending on the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group. Staff/child ratios for multi-age groupings are outlined in the child care rules and require prior approval.

Space and Equipment

There are space requirements for indoor and outdoor environments that must be measured prior to licensure. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well-maintained, and age appropriate. Outdoor equipment and indoor furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

Record Requirement

Centers must keep accurate records such as children's, staff, and program. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma policy must be developed and shared with parent of children up to five year of age.

Curriculum and Activities

Four and five-star programs must use an approved curriculum in classrooms serving four year old children. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to earn a quality point for the star-rated license. The Division website maintains a list of approved

curriculums for four-year-old children. Activity plans must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet activities. A written activity plan that includes activities intended to stimulate the developmental domains, in accordance with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore and use materials on their own and have choices.

Health and Safety
Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. Meals and snacks must be nutritious and meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care. Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed programs to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather conditions permitting) and must have space and time provided for rest. They must provide age-appropriate toys and activities. Centers must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan.

Transportation
Child care centers providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratio must be maintained.

Discipline and Behavior Management
Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

The law and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Child Care Resource and referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. For more information about choosing quality child care, parent resources and/or the in North Carolina law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919 814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829; or visit our homepage at https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/

This summary shall be posted for the public to view in accordance with G.S. 110-102



Division of Child Development and Early Education
NC Department of Health and Human Services
1915 Health Services Way
Raleigh, NC 27607

Child Care Commission
https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/Child-Care-Commission

Revised November 2025

* Up-to-date at time of publishing (January 2026). The most up-to-date Child Care Summary is located on the DCDEE Website linked here.

NC Child Care Required Information

The information linked below is required to be presented to parents in licensed child care centers in North Carolina. A signed receipt is required to be placed in your child's student record. This receipt is contained within your child's application.

- CCS No Smoking/Tobacco Use Policy
- Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Trauma Policy
    - Policy Code: 4301 Authority of School Personnel
    - Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abuse Policy-DCDEE Sample Edited for Use by CCS
    - CCS does not work with students under the age of 3; however, DCDEE still requires CCS to provide information to parents on Shaken Baby Syndrome.