De Soto Little Dragons

Early Childhood Center

2026-27



HANDBOOK

1812 Rock Rd. De Soto, MO 63020
636-586-1040

Updated July 2026

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Section 1:Contact Information

1.1 Teachers and Paraeducators

At the Early Childhood Center, all of our teachers are certified in early childhood education. Many staff members are dual certified in special education as well. All directory information can be found on on District website at www.desoto73.org.

Mindy Glidewell is a Missouri state certified teacher who has been teaching for more than 16 years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Missouri Baptist University. Her paraeducator is Ana Gibbar.

Kim Graham is a Missouri state certified teacher who has been teaching for more than 16 years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Missouri Baptist University. Her paraeducator is Molly Huffman.

Halie Easter is a Missouri state certified teacher, in her fourth year of teaching. She received a Bachelor's Degree from Southeast Missouri State University and her Master's Degree from Webster University. Brittany Benson is her paraeducator.

Tammie Keefe is a Missouri state certified teacher and holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Missouri, St. Louis She has been teaching for more than 20 years. Her paraeducator is Tonya Cupp.

Stacia Plackee is a Missouri State certified teacher who graduated from Central Methodist University with an elementary education degree. She certified to teach elementary education and early childhood special education. This will be her first year teaching.

April Hendricks is a Missouri state certified teacher who has been teaching for 9 years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Missouri Baptist University. Kathy Hess, a retired teacher, is her paraeducator.

Holly Eberhart is a Missouri state certified teacher and holds a Bachelor's Degree from Missouri Baptist University. Shiloh Burt-Rothlisberg is her paraeducator.

Hunter Westbrook is an additional paraeducators who support our students in Ms. Holly's classroom.

Rebecca Snead is a Missouri state certified teacher who taught for over 15 years. She earned her certification from Fontbonne University and her Masters Degree from Southwest Baptist University. Her paraeducator is Shawna Fitzgerald.

Rachel Strode is a Missouri state certified teacher and holds a Bachelor's Degree from Missouri Baptist University. Her paraeducator is Shannon Sancoucie

Michelle Mullins is certified in Missouri to teach early childhood and elementary education. She has been teaching for over 15 years. Her paraeducator is Ashley McFarland.

Susan Niswonger is certified in Missouri to teach early childhood, elementary, and special education and holds a Bachelor Degree from Missouri Baptist University. Her paraeducator is Sandy Eakin.

Brenda Nickelson is certified in Missouri to teach early childhood and elementary education. She received her Bachelors and Masters degrees from Missouri Baptist University. Brenda has been a kindergarten teacher for the past 26 years. Her paraeducator is Loni Beth Price.

Kylie Bell is certified in Missouri to teach early childhood and elementary with a Bachelor's degree from Southeast Missouri State University. This will be her fourth year in education. Her paraeducator is Kathy Batts.

1.2 Administration

The Director of the De Soto Early Childhood Program is Diana Casey. Mrs. Casey has her Bachelor's Degree in Education from Hiram College, in Hiram, Ohio. She earned her Master of Arts in Education, with an emphasis in leadership, from Chapman University in California. Additionally, last year, she earned a Specialist Degree in administration and a Special Education Director Certificate from the University of Missouri, St. Louis. She has been an educator for 21 years.

1.3 Therapy and Support Staff

Occupational Therapist – Courtney Harness, COTA
Physical Therapist – Melanie Viner
Speech and Language Therapist – Alyson Jacobson, SLP-A, Rachel Stauffenberg, SLP
Process Coordinator – Lori Gowen
Nurse – Charlene Maggard
Secretary –Crista Pfeffer (ECC Main), Cindy Portell (ECC Primary)
Cafeteria and Cook – Penny Cheney
Building Maintenance Staff –Sierra Kinzel, Tracy Burley
Parents As Teachers – Aleen Davis

1.4 Office Information

Main Campus
1812 Rock Road
De Soto, MO 63020
Phone 636-586-1040
Fax 636-586-3320

Primary Campus
3775 Athena School Road
De Soto, MO 63020
Phone 636-586-1041
Fax 636-586-3320

1.5 District Calendar



Section 2: Beginning of Year

2.1 Supplies

We ask that families provide the following items for school.

1 Watercolor paint set
1 Box crayons (Crayola preferred)
2-3 Glue sticks
1 Plastic pencil box
3 Containers Clorox wipes
2 Packages baby wipes
1 Spiral notebook - one subject, solid color
1 Full size backpack- large enough to hold a folder and change of clothes
1 1 ½ inch three ring binder with clean pocket (for portfolio)
Girls 3 Rolls of paper towels
Boys 3 Boxes of tissues

Additional Notes

***In your child's backpack, include a seasonally appropriate outfit (top, bottom, underwear, socks, and shoes if possible). These items remain inside your child's backpack at all times, in case of accidents or spills.

***If a student wears diapers/pull-ups, the parent/guardian MUST supply those plus wipes for their child throughout the school year. (These are in addition to the supplies above).

2.2 Open House

An Open House is scheduled at the start of each school year for parents. Parents have the opportunity to meet their child's teacher as well as the director, special education process coordinator, secretary, nurse, therapists and other staff. Paperwork and forms are finalized and parents have the opportunity to ask questions.

It is strongly encouraged for new students to make a visit with their parents prior to the first day of attendance to meet their teacher, see their classroom and meet some of their new classmates. Open house visits assist children in becoming familiar with their new surroundings and to ease the transition process to the school environment.

2.3 New Enrollment

While we host a school-wide Open House at the beginning of each school year, we warmly welcome families who join our community mid-year. To ensure a smooth transition for your child, we provide the following opportunities to visit our facility and meet our staff:

For Students with an IEP: Families joining us through the Special Education process will have the opportunity to meet their child's teacher, therapists, and support staff face-to-face during the initial IEP evaluation and placement meetings.

For General New Enrollees: Once a classroom teacher has been officially assigned to your child, you are welcome to contact them directly to schedule a brief, personalized visit. To minimize disruptions to the instructional day, these building tours and introductions are scheduled either before or after school hours.

Section 3: Academics

3.1 Program Philosophy

The De Soto Early Childhood education program provides an opportunity to open a door to a child's future through a curriculum grounded in individual interests and developmental needs. At the Little Dragons Early Childhood Center, children thrive in a safe, nurturing, and collaborative community that empowers them to make choices, contribute, and learn in ways that reflect their unique strengths and promote personalized growth.

Because early childhood is the most critical period in human development, the quality of these early experiences lays the foundation for how children perceive themselves. By blending academic, social, and emotional skills, we foster the strong character and social-emotional readiness needed for a smooth transition into the K-12 academic environment. Through meaningful, enriched learning, we build a strong foundation, ensuring our students become confident, competent individuals, and productive, responsible citizens of our community and the world.

ECC Mission:
The mission of the ECC is to provide a safe environment that supports the academic, social, and emotional skills needed for future success.

ECC Vision:
Little Dragons fosters a nurturing and collaborative community that prepares students for an academic environment by encouraging strong character, social-emotional readiness, and personalized growth.

3.2 Curriculum and Program Objectives

At the De Soto Early Childhood Center, we believe that children are not passive recipients of information, but active builders of their own understanding. To honor this, our program utilizes

Project Construct, a comprehensive, research-based curriculum framework fully approved by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Aligned with the Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS), Project Construct is rooted in the belief that children learn best through hands-on interactions with their physical and social environments. Rather than relying on rote memorization, our hands-on approach encourages students to ask questions, collaborate with peers, and solve problems critically.

While our building shares cohesive monthly themes, we honor the unique interests of each classroom. Our teachers have the professional flexibility to design weekly themes based entirely on student interest and engagement. This ensures the learning environment remains intrinsically motivating, personally relevant, and deeply engaging for every child.

3.3 Learner Objectives & Curriculum

The following goals outline the specific developmental objectives and learning outcomes our students will achieve through active, hands-on exploration.

I. Students will demonstrate developmental growth in the sociomoral domain.

A. Develop positive social relationships

1. Build relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults
2. Build relationships with peers
3. Consider the perspective of others
4. Negotiate and apply rules

B. Display positive dispositions

1. Be curious
2. Take initiative
3. Be confident
4. Be creative

II. Students will demonstrate developmental growth in the cognitive domain.

A. Develop logic-mathematical knowledge

1. Construct classificatory relationships
2. Construct numerical relationships
3. Construct spatial and temporal relationships

B. Develop conventional knowledge

1. Know personal information
2. Know about the community
3. Know conventional notations, manners and customs

C. Develop physical knowledge
    1. Act on objects and observe reactions
    2. Act on objects to produce desired effects

III. Students will demonstrate developmental growth in the representational domain.
A. Increase symbolic recognition
    1. Represent ideas and feelings through pretend play
    2. Represent ideas and feelings through movement
    3. Represent ideas and feelings through music
    4. Represent ideas and feelings through art and construction

B. Increase language development
    1. Use language for a variety of functions
    2. Expand and refine the form and organization of language
    3. Construct meaning from language
    4. Represent ideas and feelings through language

IV. Students will demonstrate developmental growth in the physical domain.
A. Develop small and large motor skills for personally meaningful purposes
B. Develop healthy and safe habits for daily practices

3.4 Daily Activities and Routines

During the school day, our classes each participate in daily activities and routines. Our daily schedules include the following routines:

Large Group Time - Teachers use this time to introduce the day's activities and theme for the week, as well as working in journals, art projects, etc.

Circle Time - Students sit on the floor in a circle and participate in calendar, weather, and theme of the week activities (shape, color, letter and sound). Literacy and language activities are also emphasized at this time.

Center Time – Students take turns working in adult lead small group activities that focus on the weekly theme. The groups are focused in science, math and communication arts. This small group teaching allows for increased student to teacher interaction, while other centers provide independence.

Free Choice Time – Students have the opportunity to select and explore individual areas of study such as math, science, art/painting, dramatic play, reading/books, music, manipulative,

construction, cooking/ housekeeping, and sensory activities. The children are encouraged to use the materials in different ways and to explore actively.

Language Classroom Time – Students are instructed in a whole group setting and further investigate the weekly theme through a language experience. This is done through an activity or a story time.

Indoor/Outdoor Play – Students participate in activities in the large gross motor area or outside playground. These areas and equipment are designed to provide opportunities for overall physical development.

3.5 Progress Reports

Teachers will share each student's quarterly progress through a printed progress report sent home in your child's folder. These benchmarks are aligned with the Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS). Data is collected to indicate whether a skill is not yet observed, developing, or demonstrated independently and consistently across the domains of language and communication, mathematics, social-emotional development, physical development, science, and the arts. Both qualitative and quantitative data (observations and measurable metrics) are gathered to track how students are progressing toward these standards. At the end of the school year, students will bring home a comprehensive portfolio binder showcasing their growth and learning journey from the beginning of the year to the end.

3.6 Individualized Education Plan Goals

For students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), progress toward their specific IEP goals will be shared quarterly alongside their general progress reports. Each IEP goal is tailored to the student's individualized developmental needs. Teachers and therapists track this progress and update goals as required by the IEP team. Should you ever have questions regarding your child's IEP goals, please contact their designated case manager or classroom teacher.

3.7 Developmental Delays Suspected

At the beginning of the school year, each child participates in a developmental screening to help identify any potential areas of delay. If the screening indicates significant areas of concern, we will contact you to discuss next steps and potential further evaluation.

Additionally, if at any time parents or guardians suspect their child may be struggling with a developmental delay, we encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher, the school Process Coordinator, or the Director to discuss your observations. If the educational team also suspects a delay, we will partner with you to recommend a formal evaluation, which requires parental

consent, to determine if your child meets the criteria for a Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD) or another qualifying category for an IEP.

Section 4: Student Code of Conduct

4.1 Behavior

Our program follows the basic guidelines of the Conscious Discipline program. Conscious Discipline is a social-emotional learning and behavior-management approach developed by Becky Bailey. Its core idea is that adults first regulate themselves, then help children learn self-regulation, problem-solving, and relationship skills.

The basic tenets (core principles) include:

- ➢ Safety and Connection Come First
  - Children learn best when they feel safe, connected, and emotionally secure.
  - Building strong relationships is considered more effective than relying primarily on rewards or punishment.
- ➢ Adult Self-Regulation
  - Adults model the behavior they want children to learn.
  - The approach emphasizes staying calm and responding thoughtfully rather than reacting emotionally.
- ➢ Behavior Is a Form of Communication
  - Challenging behavior is viewed as a sign that a child lacks a skill or is experiencing stress, rather than simply being "bad."
  - Discipline becomes an opportunity to teach new skills.
- ➢ Teach Social-Emotional Skills Explicitly
  - Children are taught skills such as emotional awareness, self-control, empathy, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.
- ➢ Focus on Teaching Rather Than Punishing
  - Mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning.
  - The goal is to help children develop internal self-control instead of relying solely on external consequences.

Students work with adults to establish classroom commitments and find solutions to problems that may arise. Through intentional environmental planning and predictable daily schedules, we proactively minimize behavioral challenges.

If a child experiences a difficult moment, they are encouraged to utilize the classroom's calm-down area to regain composure. Because emotional regulation is based on a child's internal state rather than a timer, the student may return to the group as soon as they feel calm and ready.

If the classroom environment is no longer effective for a calm-down space, a change of environment to co-regulate with a trusted adult will be utilized until the child is ready to safely rejoin their peers. For ongoing challenges, the teacher, parents, and support staff will partner to develop structured, individualized positive behavior techniques tailored to the child's specific needs.

4.2 Discipline

At the Early Childhood Center, we utilize the Conscious Discipline framework. This evidence-based approach views challenging behavior not as a disruption to be punished, but as a missing skill and a vital opportunity for teaching and learning. We focus on safety, connection, and emotional regulation to help children navigate difficult moments.

When a student experiences a significant emotional upset, our first step is to offer co-regulation support within the classroom's designated safe place or calm-down space. If a child is unable to regulate within the classroom environment, they may take a supportive, supervised break in a different school environment with a trusted staff member to help reset their nervous system.

Our ultimate goal is always to safely reintegrate children into their classroom community. However, if a child's dysregulation escalates to a point where it poses a safety risk to themselves or others, or if all school-based interventions have been exhausted without success, families may be contacted to pick up their child for the remainder of the day. This last-resort measure is only utilized when a child requires a secure home environment to fully rest and reset, ensuring the safety and well-being of the child and their peers.

4.3 Toys and Electronics

Please do not send items from home with your child unless previously arranged with your child's teacher for a specific purpose. Toys, including electronics, sometimes get lost or broken at school, and we cannot be responsible for the items.

To support a safe and focused learning environment, our district has adopted the following policy regarding student use of electronic personal communication devices per state law Section 162.207. An electronic personal communication device includes any portable device used to send, receive, store, or view communication, information, images, or data electronically. Examples include (but are not limited to) cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, iPads, and similar devices.

Students may not use, display, or have active electronic personal communication devices from the start of the school day (8:15 am) until the end of the school day (3:10pm). This includes, but is not limited to; instructional time, meals, breaks, and special event days. Devices must be turned off and stored out of sight during the entire school day unless otherwise authorized.

Device use may be permitted under the following conditions; an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or other approved health-related plans.

4.4 Daily Attire and Footwear Guidelines

Clothing and Protection

We ask that students come to school dressed for active play each day. Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that you do not mind getting wet, painted on, or dirty. Our curriculum includes authentic childhood experiences that regularly involve paint, sand, shaving cream, water, and outdoor exploration. Please also pack an additional season appropriate outfit for your child each day.

Children play outside every day, weather permitting. Please dress your child appropriately for the current season (e.g., winter coats, hats, and gloves for cold weather, or lightweight clothing for the summer). Note: If your child requires sunscreen or insect repellent, please apply it before arriving at school.

Footwear

For your child's safety, shoes must be appropriate for running, climbing, and riding toys. Sneakers or closed-toe shoes with rubber soles are best. Please avoid: flip-flops, slides, and sandals with slick bottoms or no back-straps, as these present a significant tripping hazard on the playground.

Independence in the Restroom

Clothing should be easy for children to take on and off independently. As children learn to use the toilet, elastic-waist pants are highly recommended. Pants free of complicated buttons, snaps, belts, or overalls make it much easier for children to succeed in the restroom.

Diapering & Pull-Ups

If your child is not yet fully potty trained, please send at least four diapers or pull-ups in your child’s backpack each day. Alternatively, you may send a full box or sleeve to be stored in our changing area; your child's teacher will notify you when the supply runs low.

For sanitary reasons and efficiency, we do not use cloth diapers. Please send disposable diapers or pull-ups with Velcro/tear-away sides so changes can be made without completely removing your child's clothing and shoes.

Section 5: Daily Operations

5.1 Schedule
PreK classes run from 8:15 AM - 3:10 PM
ECSE, self-contained classes run an AM and PM schedule.
AM 8:15 AM- 11:10 AM
PM 12:10 PM- 3:10 PM

Drop off will begin at 8:05 and runs until 8:15. After 8:15, students are considered tardy and will need to be signed in at the front office.

5.2 Drop Off (Arrival)
Public school transportation is only available for students in grades K-12 or for preK students receiving special education services. For parents utilizing our drop-off system at both locations, please drive to the back of the building where a staff member will greet your child. We ask for your cooperation in arriving on time for drop-off to help ensure a smooth start to the day for all students. If you happen to arrive after the scheduled drop-off time, we kindly ask that you park in the front and come to office to sign your child in.

Location: Please drive to the back of the building where a staff member will greet and assist your child out of the vehicle.
Assistance: To keep the line moving smoothly, after your pull up, please exit your vehicle and unbuckle your child. A staff member will be by to walk your child to the gate.
Late Arrivals: Punctuality ensures a smooth start to the day. If you arrive after the drop-off line has closed, please park in the front lot and escort your child to the main office to sign them in.

5.3 Pick Up (Dismissal)
Routine: Drive to the back of the building. Students will be lined up inside and brought directly to your vehicle by a staff member.

Location: At ECC Main, two lines will form, with the outermost line emptying first and

the inner line following. At ECC Primary, please use lanes 1-3 to line up if you do not have a K-2 child to pick up as well. If you have a K-2 child, you will use lanes 4+ and notify staff through Kid Account to get both children when the Primary students are released.

Authorization & ID: Every vehicle must clearly display the ECC-issued pickup card featuring the child's name. Anyone picking up a student must be listed on the child's approved pickup form. Staff reserve the right to request photo identification at any time (in the car line or the office) before releasing a child.

Timeliness: No before- or after-care is provided. Please refer to our Late/Tardy Guidelines for details regarding late pickups.

5.4 Car & Passenger Safety

Parents/guardians are legally and safely responsible for properly buckling their child into an age-appropriate car seat before driving away. For your reference, the Missouri state guidelines are outlined below:

Approximate Age of Child	Approximate Size of Child	Type of Child Restraint Seat
Birth to One Year	Birth to 20 pounds and/or under 26 inches tall	Rear-Facing Infant Restraint
One to Four Years	20-40 Pounds and 26 to 40 inches Tall	Forward Facing Child Restraint – 5 Point Harness
Four to Eight Years	40 to 80 pounds and 40 to 57 (4'9") inches tall	Booster Seat

For the safety of our students, the ECC will not allow a child to be placed in a vehicle if there is an immediate safety concern. Furthermore, we will not release a child to any individual we suspect is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and law enforcement will be notified immediately.

5.5 Bus Transportation

Transportation is only available for grades K-12, or students that have an Individualized Education Plan. If you child does indeed receive school transportation, and your child will not be riding the bus for the day, please contact your child's transportation department to let the driver know of the changes.

5.6 Late/Tardy Guidelines

Punctuality ensures a smooth start to the day, and late arrivals interrupt the instructional process for the entire classroom. If you are running late, please notify the school secretary immediately. The back drop-off entrance closes promptly at 8:15 AM; any student arriving after this time must enter from the front of the building and be personally escorted into the main office by an adult to be signed in. Please note that three or more late arrivals or late pick-ups will warrant a conference with the Director to establish an attendance support plan.

5.7 Attendance, Tuition, and Fees

For families who pay tuition, the amount per month is established by calculating expenses for running a quality program for our students. Tuition is on a sliding scale and based off of the District's Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application. This should be completed on the Parent Portal through the Infinite Campus. We encourage all parents to fill out the Meal Family Application as changes occur throughout the school year.

Tuition Guidelines

1. Monthly Tuition Posting

Tuition statements are posted and distributed on the first Monday of each month. A letter will be sent home in each student's folder indicating the total amount owed, with the balance clearly highlighted for easy reference.

2. Payment Due Date

Tuition is due by the 15th of each month. Families are encouraged to make payments on or before this date to maintain enrollment status and ensure smooth school operations.

3. Overdue Notices

If payment has not been received by the due date, an overdue letter will be sent home on the 16th of the month (or the next school day if the 16th falls on a weekend or holiday). This notice serves as a reminder — no late fees are applied.

4. Final Payment Deadline

All tuition payments for the month must be completed by the last day of the month.

5. Flexible Payment Options

To support families, flexible payment arrangements are available:
Payments may be made in four equal installments of 25% throughout the month.

Payments may be made at any time before the final due date.

No penalties or late fees will be charged for installment payments.

6. Attendance Holds for Nonpayment
If tuition is not paid in full by the last day of the month, for two consecutive months, the student's attendance will be placed on hold.
The school will hold the student's spot for up to two (2) weeks to allow families time to make full payment.

If payment is not received within these two weeks, the enrollment hold will be lifted, and the student's spot may be offered to another family on the waiting list.

7. Communication and Support
Families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the school administration to discuss available options or payment plans. The goal of this policy is to ensure transparency, flexibility, and fairness for all families.

Children enrolled in the special education program are provided services as indicated in their Individual Education Programs (IEP) at no cost to the family. Attendance schedules for children with IEPs are determined by their teams according to the unique needs of each child.

5.8 Meals and Snacks
A free snack, provided through the District's food service program, will be served to every child during their class time. If your child has food allergies, please inform the nurse and your child's teacher. If you desire, you may send snacks from home.

Breakfast is available each day and served upon arrival, until 8:30 each day. Students may purchase breakfast, bring something from home, or eat before they arrive. Breakfast is available for the costs shown below. If your child arrives after 8:30 breakfast will no longer be available.

Our students begin each day in their classrooms by making their lunch choices or letting their teacher know they have a packed lunch. Please make sure your child knows if they need to order a lunch. Families are welcome to send healthy breakfast, lunch, or snacks from home.

Meal	**Reduced Price**	**Full Price**
Breakfast	$0.30	$2.00
Lunch	$0.40	$3.10

Breakfast/Lunch Prices for 2026-2027 School Year

Meal Balances

You can check your child's lunch balance on Infinite Campus. Negative lunch balance letters will be sent home periodically through your child's folder. If your child's meal balance is below -$5.00, an alternative breakfast will not be offered. An alternative lunch will be provided for any students with negative balances that exceed -$5.00.

5.9 Visiting

Holdays and Special Events

We will have several building holiday parties, and you will be notified of these in advance. Due to safety concerns, most parties are students only. We do hold special events during the school day that are open to families and those that participate in the Parents As Teachers program. When we hold these events, all participants will need to be scanned in through our Kid Account system. Please bring your photo identification with you if you plan to attended a building event.

Birthdays

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please talk with your child's teacher to arrange a time to drop off a special lunch or treat. Students may also be signed out for a special lunch on their birthday. All treats for parties must be store bought, we do not allow children to pass out homemade items.

If your family does not celebrate holidays or birthdays, please speak with your child's teacher, so other arrangements can be made for your child during these times. Teachers will inform parents of events where parent attendance is encouraged.

Visitors

College and high school students periodically visit to observe our program and fulfill the requirements of a college class. This is an important opportunity to assist in instructing future teachers. Visitors are never permitted to be alone with children, and children are not identified to the visitors, nor are they discussed with anyone who is not employed by our Early Childhood Center. Visitors do not have access to any student's file or personal information.

Section 6: Communication

6.1 Parent Communication

Parents are encouraged to ask questions and share ideas with their child's teacher. Communication can take place through a phone call, messaging apps, email, during after school pick up, or a conference can be scheduled. A positive relationship and open communication is imperative for your child's security and happiness. You are also welcome to contact the director with any questions or ideas. Your input is valuable.

6.2 Newsletters
Classroom teachers send home weekly newsletters containing information about classroom areas of study, happenings in the classroom and upcoming events.

6.3 Folders
Your child will receive a folder that will go home each afternoon. This folder serves as our basic daily communication. Any class or building events will be shared through paperwork in this folder. Additionally, your child's classwork and projects will be shared through this communication folder as well.

6.4 Peachjar
The District will utilize Peachjar to send home community opportunities. Peachjar is a cloud-based communication platform that streamlines school-to-home communication by distributing community resources directly to parents as digital flyers. Peachjar notifications will be sent to the email address specified on Infinite Campus.

6.5 Parent Conferences and Progress Reports
Conferences will be held in October and quarterly progress reports will be sent home in student folders to share each child's progress towards the Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELs). A portfolio of each child's work and progress will be sent home in May. Children who attend the program with an Individual Education Program (IEP) will also receive their quarterly progress notes as part of the IEP.

6.6 Photos on Website and Apps
Throughout the school year, your child's image (photograph/video) or schoolwork may be included in classroom or district projects. These may be shared in one or more of the following ways:

- As part of demonstration lessons or activities in educational workshops, conferences, or professional development.
- As examples on presentations, or digital resources by De Soto #73 Schools for classroom or staff use.
- On the De Soto #73 School District's website, individual building websites, or their social media pages.
- Submitted to publishers or sponsors as sample student work or as part of a contest.
- Featured in a video or live presentation during classroom activities or student projects, including multimedia demonstrations.

- Included in a school-related television or news segment produced by a local station or county educational program.
- Printed in school or local publications, such as newspapers, magazines, or yearbooks.

There is no financial compensation for the use of student images or work, but these examples help showcase student learning, support teaching, and encourage other students.

If you do not give permission for your child's image or work to be used as described above, please contact your school's director to complete an opt-out form.

Section 7: Health & Safety

7.1 llnesses

Please carefully review the De Soto School District Health Services Department Policies memorandum in this booklet covering medication administration, illness, etc. that is included here. You will also find the De Soto School District form covering Permission for Administration of Medication.

7.2 Accidents

Our school nurse will treat any minor accidents, such as a scraped knee, bump, or stomach ache and she will send a note home to explain.

For some accidents parents will be notified immediately by the school nurse. Parents will make arrangements for medical care for their child. If parents cannot be reached, the information provided by parents on the emergency medical care form will be followed. Parents need to make sure they have a plan in place in the event their child becomes sick or has an accident and must be picked up from school.

In the case of a more serious accident, staff will make every attempt to contact parents. If the parent cannot be reached, attempts will be made to contact the person(s) authorized to take the child from school as provided by parents on the enrollment form. If a situation requires emergency action, 911 will be called.

7.3 Absences

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the building office and leave a message with the secretary, or our voice mail, and the information will be given to your child's teacher. If your child has a contagious illness, please give us that information as well. **If your child rides a bus to school, call the bus garage for your school district to let them know they**

do not need to come by your house that day on their route. If you need to get a hold of the bus shed in De Soto, please contact transportation at the following number: 636-586-1078.

7.4 Health Services Department Policies Memorandum

Parent/Guardian,
The following information is a reminder of several of the De Soto School Districts' policies as they pertain to the Health Services Department.

Medication Administration
The following criteria must be met before medication can be administered to a student. All medication, prescription and over-the-counter must:

- Be in the original container or package
- Be marked with the child's name
- Be accompanied by a permission slip signed only by parent or guardian and include the child's name, name of medication, dose needed, time to be given, parent/guardian signature, and date. (Permission slip enclosed in folder)
- Must not be expired (Please check expiration dates prior to sending medication)
- Current prescription labels must accompany inhalers. Inhalers will not be accepted without the prescription label.

Medications not meeting this criteria will not be given. **Medications that are expired or are above the recommended dosage will also not be given**. All medications must be kept in the nurses' office and may not be kept on the student. In the event that the student is missing doses of medication that is given prior to their arrival at school, please contact me to make alternative arrangements for the medication. Arrangements can be made for that student to take the medication at school after their arrival or the parent/guardian may leave additional medication, to be kept in the nurses' office and given only with parent/guardian confirmation that the morning dose of medication was missed.

Head Lice
De Soto School District has a no-nit policy. Students found to have head lice will be sent home and will not be allowed to return until they are cleared by the school nurse. Please refer to the student handbook for the complete policy.

Emergency Forms:
Please complete all emergency and medical information on the Infinite Campus portal. Please complete and return the orange emergency information card that is sent home..

Bathroom Accidents Pre-K, (Kindergarten and 1st Grade Students)
Please send an additional change of clothing with your child, to be kept in the child's backpack, in the event of a bathroom accident. The school has an extremely limited supply of clothing.

Dress Code
Please refer to the board approved handbook regarding appropriate dress. code.

Fever, Vomiting, Diarrhea

Students sent home with a temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, for vomiting and/or diarrhea, may not return to school for a period of 24 hours. During this period of time, the student must remain fever free and have no episodes of vomiting or diarrhea. Any student returning to school after being sent home by the nurse must report to the nurse prior to returning to class.

Pink Eye

Pink eye (conjunctivitis) is an inflammation of the conjunctiva (clear membrane that covers the white part of the eye and the inner surface of the eyelids). In the event that a student presents to the nurse with complaints of redness and itching of the eyes, it is at the nurses' discretion whether the student is to be sent home. If these symptoms are accompanied by drainage from the eye, the parent and/or guardian will be notified and the student will be sent home. The student may not return until cleared by a physician. A note from the physician must accompany the student upon their return to school. Any student returning to school after being sent home by the nurse must report to the nurse prior to returning to class.

Rashes, Poison Ivy, Ringworm

Students with unidentified, potentially contagious rashes should remain at home until cleared by a physician to return to school. **The student may not return until cleared by a physician.** A note from the physician must accompany the student upon their return to school. Students with poison ivy are permitted to attend school without a medical authorization because poison ivy is not considered to be contagious. Students with ringworm must have undergone treatment for at least 24 hours before returning. The area of ringworm must also be covered. It is required that any student returning to school have any draining lesions covered. Any student returning to school after being sent home by the nurse must report to the nurse prior to returning to class.

Impetigo

Students with impetigo will be permitted to attend school under the following conditions:

- Student has been seen by a physician
- Actively undergoing treatment
- Lesions are covered
- No active drainage from lesions to face or areas that are not able to be covered with bandage or clothing

MRSA/Staph Infections

Students with MRSA/Staph Infections will be permitted to attend school under the following conditions:

- Lesion(s) are not open
- No active drainage noted from lesion(s)
- Lesion(s) are covered with bandage or clothing

If active drainage is noted from lesions, the student will not be permitted at school or to participate in school functions, sporting events, etc. until cleared by a physician. All lesions must be covered upon the students return to school.

Strep Throat

Students diagnosed with strep throat must be excluded from school until they have been on antibiotics for a period of
24 hours. The student must have remained fever free as well during this 24 hour period of time.

Medical Conditions and Medications Changes

Please fill out the Medical Update form and return it to the nurse as soon as possible. This information is kept by the nurse and is pertinent in the event of an injury or emergency. Please update the school nurse via phone, 636-586-1040 or e-mail, maggard.charlene@desoto.k12.mo.us with any changes in medications and/or medical conditions of your student.

Sincerely,

Charlene Maggard, R.N.
De Soto ECC Nurse

Permission for Administration of Medication

A student found possessing and/or using any type of medication (including prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and herbal preparations) is subject to Section V #2 and V1 #2b of the Desoto Disciplinary Handbook. The district does not supply any type of medication.

All prescription medication (including inhalers) must include the label from the pharmacy. All over-the-counter and herbal medications must be in the original container/box with the child's name on it and be accompanied by the following permission slip.

I, _____, give my permission that my child, _____
may take the following medication:

Medication Name: _____
Amount to be given:_____
Time to be given:_____
Daily or As Needed:_____

Medication Name: _____
Amount to be given:_____
Time to be given: _____
Daily or As Needed:_____

Medication Name: _____
Amount to be given:_____
Time to be given:_____
Daily or As Needed:_____

Medication Name: _____
Amount to be given:_____
Time to be given: _____
Daily or As Needed:_____

7.5 Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Drills

The safety of our students is our absolute priority. The Early Childhood Center has comprehensive response plans in place for fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, and intruders. Emergency exit paths and building maps are posted in every classroom, and our safety equipment is regularly inspected by local authorities.

To ensure our school remains crisis-ready, a variety of scheduled and unannounced drills are conducted quarterly. Staff review written procedures prior to every drill, keeping instructions easily accessible at all times. During any evacuation or building movement, teachers carry student rosters for precise attendance tracking, along with a first aid kit for minor injuries. Key personnel utilize walkie-talkies and personal communication devices to maintain continuous communication throughout the center.

We explicitly teach and practice drill safety with students using age-appropriate language, emphasizing the importance of listening to their teachers to stay safe. If your child is sensitive to loud noises or alarms, please notify their classroom teacher so we can support them during these practices. Families are welcome to review our full crisis plan at the main office upon request.

7.6 Family and Custodial Issues

Divorce or separation is a difficult time in a family's life. Both parents are important in a child's life and, if needed, your child's teacher can schedule two separate conferences or send separate newsletters to encourage involvement of both parents. Please note, however, that De Soto School District cannot deny a non-custodial parent access to his/her child unless we have a copy of a current court order that denies such access or information. If you have a court order on file, please ensure that you provide a copy of that order to the main office.

7.7 Notification of Student Information Changes

It is essential that we have current addresses and phone numbers for all students. It is the responsibility of the guardian to notify the school of any changes in the information provided on the enrollment form. Please put new information in writing and give it to the teacher as soon as the changes occur.

Section 8: Legal Complaince and Documentation

8.1 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

State law mandates the entire Little Dragons staff to report any suspected case of child abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The director and the nurse may be notified when a staff member suspects abuse. The Child Abuse Hotline will then be contacted. Abuse is any physical injury,

sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted on a child. Neglect is failure to provide the proper or necessary support in education, nutrition, medical, surgical or any other care necessary for the child's well-being.

8.2 Grievance Procdures

Parents should make every effort to resolve concerns with their child's program with the assigned teacher. If issues are still unresolved, parents should address these concerns to the Director, Mrs. Diana Casey. She can be reached at the ECC building at 586-1040. All unresolved issues at the building level may be presented to the Superintendent, Mr. Farrow (586-1000), or the Board of Education at their regularly scheduled meetings. The board secretary may be contacted at the Central Administration office (586-1000) regarding procedures to be placed on the board agenda.

8.3 Access to School Information

In accordance with Missouri Department of Health and The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, posted in the back of this manual, parents have access to the following materials: child abuse and neglect policies, De Soto School District Board Policy and Procedures, student developmental records and student's files, including IEP files. The main office keeps files for employee Family Care Registry and houses all student developmental records and files. The secretary is in charge of student files and monitors access. Only specified school district personnel have access to files. Those persons with file access are posted in the file area. Please make requests to the Director to review these files.

8.4 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

De Soto School District
Notification of Rights Under FERPA
For Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 year of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.
Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write to the building principal or the district's Director of Guidance, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by De Soto School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

8.5 Child Find Mandate -Public Notice

All responsible public agencies are required to locate, evaluate, and identify children with disabilities who are under the jurisdiction of the agency, regardless of the severity of the disability, including children attending private schools, children living outside the district but are attending a private school within the district, highly mobile children, such as migrant and homeless children, children who are wards of the state, and children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education even though they are advancing from grade to grade. The De Soto School District assures that it will provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to all eligible children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 under its jurisdiction. Disabilities include autism, deaf/blindness, emotional disorders, hearing impairment and deafness, mental retardation/intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment/blindness and young child with a developmental delay.

The De Soto School District assures that it will provide information and referral services necessary to assist the State in the implementation of early intervention services for infants and toddlers eligible for the Missouri First Steps program.

The De Soto School District assures that personally identifiable information collected, used, or maintained by the agency for the purposes of identification, evaluation, placement or provision of FAPE of children with disabilities may be inspected and/or reviewed by their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians may request amendment to the educational record if the parent/guardian believes the record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of their child. Parents have the right to file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education or the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education concerning alleged failures by the district to meet the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The De Soto School District has developed a Local Compliance Plan for the implementation of State Regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This plan contains the agency's policies and procedures regarding storage, disclosure to third parties, retention and destruction of personally identifiable information and the agency's assurances that services are provided in compliance with the General Education Provision Act (GEPA). This plan may be reviewed at the De Soto School District, Special Education Office, from 9:00am – 3:00pm, Monday through Friday, when school is in session.

This notice will be provided in native languages as appropriate.

Christina Bourbon, Director of Special Education
De Soto School District
60 Vineland School Road.
De Soto, MO 63020
(636) 586-1040
DE SOTO SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that De Soto School District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, De Soto School District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow De Soto School District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
The annual yearbook;
Honor roll or other recognition lists;
Graduation programs; and
Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.*

If you do not want De Soto School District to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by the end of the first week of September each school year. De Soto School District has designated the following information as directory information:

Student's name
Date of Birth

Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
Weight and height of members of athletic teams
Photograph
Degrees, honors, and awards received
Dates of attendance
Grade level
The most recent educational agency or institution attended

*These laws are: Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7908), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), the education bill, and 10 U.S.C. 503, as amended by section 544, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (P.L. 107-107), the legislation that provides funding for the Nation's armed forces.

8.6 Notice of Compliance

The Department of Education's (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces several statutes that protect the rights of beneficiaries in programs or activities that receive financial assistance from ED. These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), sex (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972), disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and age (Age Discrimination Act of 1975). OCR also has responsibilities under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits state and local governments from discriminating on the grounds of disability.
The De Soto School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. De Soto School District will provide equal access to its educational facilities and programs for individuals. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Name and/or Title	Christina Bourbon, Director of Special Services
	De Soto School District
Address	610 Vineland School Rd.
	De Soto, MO 63020
Telephone No.	(636) 586-1000

8.7 504 Public Notice

The De Soto School District, as a recipient of federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education and operates a public elementary or secondary education program and/or activity, is required to undertake to identify and locate every qualified person residing in the District who is not receiving a public education; and take appropriate steps to notify disabled persons and their parents or guardians of the District's duty.

The De Soto School District assures that it will provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each qualified disabled person in the District's jurisdiction regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability. For purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the provision of an appropriate education is the provision of regular or special and related aids and services that (i) are designed to meet individual educational needs of disabled persons as adequately as the needs of nondisabled persons are met and (ii) are based on adherence to procedures that satisfy the requirements of the 504 federal regulations.

The De Soto School District has developed a 504 Procedures Manual for the implementation of federal regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Subpart D. This Procedures Manual may be reviewed at De Soto School District Administration Office by contacting the Section 504 Compliance Grievance Officer, Dr. Clint Freeman, Assistant Superintendent, De Soto School District, 610 Vineland School Rd., De Soto, MO 63020

This notice will be provided in native languages as appropriate.

8.8 Special Education Grieveance Procedures

A grievance procedure has been adopted by the De Soto School District to expedite prompt and equitable resolution of any complaint. Any student, parent, or employee alleging non-compliance with any part of Title IX, Section 504, or ADA should file a written complaint with Christina Bourbon, Director of Special Services, 610 Vineland School Rd., De Soto, MO 63020