



PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Lawrence Arts Center Preschool. We excel in providing an innovative, creative, arts-based preschool for young children. There have been many changes since our inception in 1985, including growing from one class; involving guest artists in the curriculum; being in a space designated for preschool including an outdoor classroom which now includes the fenced green space on the south side of the building; and offering the Early Birds and Kids' Club, our extended day program. Our guest artists will work in the classes as part of our Smart Moves curriculum of music, drama, creative movement and dance. We strive to provide a learning environment for your child and a happy, warm, and loving atmosphere. This results in a developmentally appropriate program for young children taught by well-qualified teachers.

Please read this handbook. It contains some important information concerning the Lawrence Arts Center Preschool.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with your children. You are sharing with us a most important gift, your child/children. If you have any questions or concerns, be sure to contact us. We need and respect your input and your support.

Sincerely,

Andria Devlin
Director of Early Childhood Education

Purpose

Our Philosophy is that every child will find success through a less conventional curriculum, no matter what his/her ability, developmental level, age, or background. The Lawrence Arts Center Preschool uses a creative, arts-based teaching structure to enhance a child's natural interest in learning. The arts allow children to think creatively, to build their own ideas, to solve problems in more than one way, and try new things. These skills not only create an excellent foundation for learning as children move into the academic world and throughout life, but they make learning fun!

Goals

Early Childhood Education is defined as children from birth to 8 years of age.

- ❖ We strive to hire well-qualified, dedicated teachers who are trained in child development, education, and/or the arts and who care about young children.
- ❖ The faculty at the Lawrence Arts Center Preschool is committed to providing a high-quality, developmentally appropriate program for young children.
- ❖ Each class, taking into account the developmental needs of the children, is planned to promote the creative, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual well-being of the children.
- ❖ The faculty works together to offer an environment where the self-esteem of children will grow through a rich and varied experience with the arts in combination with sound early childhood education.
- ❖ The daily curriculum encourages and supports active and involved children who explore, experiment, observe, talk, play and process a wide variety of developmentally appropriate materials and activities.
- ❖ The faculty use positive techniques when disciplining, including a wide variety of methods that teach children to cooperate, respect, and care for others. Through play and the development of appropriate communication skills, we provide opportunities to develop empathy and consideration of others.
- ❖ We strive to keep children safe and healthy. State Health Department approved snacks are provided. We promote good health habits and a healthy environment.
- ❖ We strive to help children become the best 3 year old they can be, best 4 year old they can be, best 5 year old they can be.

Code of Ethical Conduct

We follow the National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethical Conduct. The ideals and principles of this code present a shared conception of professional responsibility that acknowledges the responsibilities we have in the early childhood field. We have ethical responsibilities to children, to families, to colleagues, to community, and to society.

What we will learn and some of the ways we will learn:

- ❖ **Math:** music, blocks, songs, sequencing, counting, getting snack ready, puzzles, games, cooking

- ❖ **Science:** Color mixing, observing, blocks, tactile and sensory experiences—sand & water play, finger painting, shaving cream
- ❖ **Reading:** lots of books and reading, acting out stories, helping to read stories (repetition) like Mortimer & Owl Babies, writing center--making books, dictating stories to teachers—reading is written down talk. The things we need most when beginning to read (pre reading) are: Stories, poems, rhyme, songs, chants—these all make better readers!
- ❖ **Writing:** painting and art work with all kinds of tools—paint brushes, markers, spray bottles, all small motor activities, puzzles, scissors
- ❖ **Social Skills:** communication, solving problems, conflict resolution and getting along are life skills
- ❖ **Choices:** real choices—“what to do first”, “red or blue”, practice so children are comfortable making choices which increases independence and confidence

All developed through PLAY, curiosity, self-esteem, language, problem solving, creative thinking, cooperation, etc.

History

Originally located in downtown Lawrence in the City's former Carnegie Library building, the Lawrence Arts Center offers a wide array of arts experiences through its education programs. The Center's stated purpose, from the beginning in 1974, has been to educate Lawrence and the surrounding communities in the arts, provide a full program of arts classes, provide support for local artists, and serve the arts-related needs of the community. The Center opened the Arts-Based Preschool in 1985. The Lawrence Arts Center Preschool approaches the basics in early childhood education through the arts, including music, sculpture, painting, drawing, creative drama, architecture, and creative movement/dance. Children must be 3 years of age before September 1.

In April 2002 the Lawrence Arts Center moved to a new location at 940 New Hampshire. The Lawrence Arts Center is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization.

Line of Authority

Problems should be brought to the attention of the Director of Early Childhood Education. The Director of Early Childhood Education shall report to the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Chief Operations Officer of the Lawrence Arts Center with the final authority being the Board of Directors of the Lawrence Arts Center.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Lawrence Arts Center will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, sex, national origin, religion, or handicap in operating preschool classes.

Communication

The telephone number of the Lawrence Arts Center is (785) 843-2787. Someone is usually available to answer the telephone after 8:30 a.m. A voice message can be left at any time. Email address is andria@lawrenceartscenter.org. Website: www.lawrenceartscenter.org. Through the Lawrence Arts Center website you can access the preschool website. Covid policies, a calendar a events and this handbook are al

located on our website. A monthly newsletter will be email around the first of the month and will be posted on the bulletin board between the preschool classrooms. Additionally, snack calendars will be posted on the bulletin board inside each classroom. You may also follow the Lawrence Arts Center on Instagram @lawrenceartscenter, Twitter @LawrenceArtsCtr and on Facebook as Lawrence Arts Center.

We have a text reminder option through Remind.com for preschool. Throughout the school year we will have special days when the routine may be different or we ask that your child bring an item to school or a field trip is planned, etc. Typically we will send a paper note home as a reminder, but we also wanted to offer an optional texting reminder option. If you would like to receive text message reminders from the preschool, please refer to the parent letter or first newsletter.

Discipline Policy

Discipline means an ongoing process of helping children develop inner control so that they can manage their own behavior in a socially approved manner. The Lawrence Arts Center's policy states that there will be no physical or emotional punishment such as hitting, shaking, pushing, pinching, threats, shame, sarcasm, prolonged isolation, denial of food, or derogatory remarks about the child or the family. Children will be spoken to in a respectful and calm manner. Children may need guidance to "sit and watch" for a short period of time, followed by some conversation with a teacher. Parents will be notified of serious behavior issues.

Behavior Policy

We believe every child can learn. Our goal is that everyone grow to their greatest potential. We strive to and will make every effort to accommodate individual learner's needs in our program. Please know if we feel we are unable to accommodate your child's needs and/or if your child's individual needs are superseding the larger groups' needs, we will recommend you seek additional support resources through the Lawrence Public School District or private supportive services. We will collaborate with you as parents and the district/supportive services liaisons to determine the supports that would best suit your child's individual needs.

Toilet Training

Children need to be fully independently toilet trained and wearing underwear. This empowers children and helps them learn self-control. Each child will be allowed and encouraged to go to the bathroom individually as needed in addition to the planned visit to the bathroom to clean up before snack. Toilet training will not be a function of the preschool. We do understand that young children may have occasional accidents. We do have clothing available in case of emergencies. Parents will be called if necessary.

Times

Classes are available for 2, 3 or 5 half-days per week. Morning hours are 9:15-11:45 and 9:30 to 12:00 noon. Afternoon hours are 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Extended hours are as follows: Early Birds—8:00-9:30 a.m. and Kids' Club—3:30-5:30 p.m.(extended care will be on hold for the 22-23 school year). When picking up children, please gather notes from the teacher, papers, artwork, coats, etc. for your child. Children must be escorted to and from the classroom by an adult. Children need to be picked up on time to avoid a \$10.00 late pick-up fee. Please be sure that sitters or other adults who might pick up your child understand this. If your child is enrolled in our extended care program and they are absent from class, they will be unable to attend extended care that day.

Cancellation of School

When the Lawrence Public Schools are closed due to bad weather, the Lawrence Arts Center Early Childhood classes will be cancelled. We will communicate any inclement weather days via email and Remind. Additionally, check the LAC website (www.lawrenceartscenter.org), and social media for school closure information.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Classes will be cancelled one day for the MWF classes and one day for the TTh classes for parent/teacher conferences. These will occur in late January or early February. These scheduled conferences are short, but teachers are willing to schedule a conference at other times as requested or needed. Refer to your Calendar of Events for the exact dates.

DISASTER PLANS:

The Lawrence Arts Center Preschool has a disaster plan that is posted on the bulletin board in each classroom. Our designated relocation site is the parking lot across from Maceli's (1031 New Hampshire St.) Parents will be notified through a phone call if the disaster plan has been enacted.

Tornado Warnings: In case of a severe storm that results in a tornado WARNING, the children will be taken to the basement for protection and will remain there until an all clear is issued. We suggest that you do not come after your child for the safety of the entire family. We will practice these drills and post the practice dates on the bulletin board in the classroom.

Fire Drills: Each month we will practice leaving the building for fire drills. These dates will be posted on the bulletin board in the classroom.

Eminent Danger: Lawrence Arts Center faculty and staff have been trained for this event.

Pick-up Authorization

Only people that you authorize on your child's pickup form may pick up your child. If it becomes necessary for a person not on your list to pick up your child, we will need to receive your approval, a note or phone call from you stating that person's name and telephone number.

If a staff member has reason to suspect that the person picking up the child may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or otherwise lacking capacity to safely transport the child, the staff may contact another person authorized to pick up the child.

Field Trips

The State Health Department requires that all childcare providers obtain signed parental permission of each location to which children go off the premises. The general permission form that each parent signs gives the Lawrence Arts Center Preschool teachers permission to take your child on walking field trips in the downtown area. Field trips to other destinations and all bus or car trips require a separate parental permission form for each trip. If a parent does not sign for each separate trip, the child will be unable to attend and will remain in the office area at the Center. A "Driver Information Form" needs to be completed and on file for drivers on field trips. All children must be in car seats or booster seats if they are riding in a car. If your child is not riding with you, please bring their car seat into the classroom on Field Trip days. On all field trips, teachers take along emergency treatment forms and a first aid kit. Please make other arrangements for siblings, if you wish to help on a field trip.

Beginning of School Procedure

All children and families are invited to visit on the beginning of school Open House (date and time specified on the calendar). On the first day of school, half of the students will attend for the first hour and half of the students will attend for the last hour of class. Watch for an email in August for exact information. Each child will receive a post card in August telling about the Open House and what time they should attend the first day of class.

When bringing your child into the classroom, please do not suddenly disappear, for this can be quite distressing. Tell your child you are leaving, that you will return, exchange hugs and kisses, and quickly leave with a smile. Forlorn or worried glances from parents convey to children that this may not be a neat experience after all. Do not give your child mixed messages. Be positive, happy, and leave with a smile. Try not to feel guilty if you leave your child in tears, for teachers are very accustomed to this behavior. Almost all children cease crying within a short period of time. Feel free to call the Center to check on how the day is going. Often it takes weeks before a child feels comfortable and secure about coming to school. If it is taking longer for your child to adjust, we will begin a joint plan of action.

Dress

Please dress your child in play clothes appropriate for the weather. We will be outdoors as much as possible. We will offer messy activities in our classrooms and outdoors. We have paint shirts, but sometimes we get paint, etc. on our clothes. Please dress with mess in mind. **Please mark all outerwear,** as many children wear similar sweaters, jackets, raincoats, gloves and hats.

Snacks

We will have a daily snack to be furnished by the student families. If your child has any special dietary needs, please let us know. A snack calendar will be sent home each month with the snack schedule. Snacks do not need to be elaborate, but do need to meet Health Department regulations. A refrigerator is available for perishable foods. Drinks, cups, and napkins will be provided by the school. Snack suggestions are listed on a separate page.

Birthday/Holidays

If your child would like to celebrate a birthday with classmates, muffins, cookies, unfrosted or lightly frosted cupcakes, fruit, cheese, or ice cream may be brought to share at snack time. Please make birthday treats alike so there are no tears about what flavor, decoration, etc. If your child has a summer birthday, we could celebrate a "half-birthday" or celebrate at some other time during the year. Please let us know if you would like to do this. Invitations to parties will not be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited.

We celebrate Halloween and Valentine's Day in the preschool classes. We do not celebrate religious holidays. In conversation, children will talk about holidays they celebrate at home. During the course of the year, you may wish to share a "family tradition" with the class. Please make arrangements with the teachers so that this can be included in the class plans.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's preschool program, and later in school, and to actively participate in activities and functions at the Lawrence Arts Center. This is not a requirement for enrollment. We have opportunities to be part of our program. We need helpers on field trips, including drivers on some trips. Guest readers are welcome to share small group or large group stories with the children. Sharing a family tradition is always very special. Some of our cooking activities allow for helping hands.

Health

Please review our Covid-19 policies and keep your child at home if he/she is ill. **Children need to be free of fever and fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school.** We do not want to expose other children or teachers to illnesses. We will call you if your child does not feel well at school. Please notify us if any contagious diseases occur as we must report them to the Health Department.

Tuition and Fees

Monthly tuition will be due on the first of each month. A late fee of \$15.00 will be assessed after the 10th of the month. If you need to make other arrangements about payment dates, please do so at the front desk. Payment may be mailed to the school, given to the front desk personnel, or set up an ACH account or credit card account for automatic withdrawal. If you would like to have your monthly tuition automatically withdrawn from your bank account or automatically charged to your credit card, please ask the front desk personnel or the preschool director for the form to complete the transaction. If your child's fees are unpaid by the end of the month, the child's enrollment will be terminated and your deposit will be forfeited.

A \$70.00 enrollment fee for tuition and \$25.00 enrollment fee for extended day is charged at the time an enrollment form is submitted. These fees are **non-refundable**.

A security deposit equal to one month's tuition will be required to complete enrollment. The deposit can be used as the last month's tuition payment if all fees are current. Thirty days written notice is required to use the deposit before May.

The fee schedule is set in the spring for the term beginning in September. Fees are based on 2, 3 or 5 half days per week attendance. Current fees are \$155.00, \$200.00 or \$355.00 per month. Extended day fees vary per day and hours.

We do not send reports for tax purposes, please keep your receipt each month as you pay.

Parking Safety

You may park on New Hampshire Street or in the parking garage across the street. The lower level of the parking garage is 2 hour free parking. Please be careful, when walking and driving, as you use the crosswalk between the parking garage and the building. Children must be escorted to and from the classroom by an adult.

Books

We send home Scholastic Book Club flyers on a monthly basis. There is no obligation to purchase books. Books can be ordered online or by returning the order form on the flyers. Book orders are distributed from school.

Gifts

Sometimes teachers receive gifts. Teacher gifts are appreciated, but never expected. If you wish to give a teacher gift, please consider something to benefit the entire preschool, i.e. a book, CD, etc. At any given time, there may be an online (Amazon) or posted "Wish List" with particular items for the class. If you have any questions, please ask the Director of Early Childhood Education.

**Health Department Approved Snack Ideas
We are a nut-free school**

(Snack calendars will note special allergies in the classes)

Crackers—any variety
Celery and cheese spread
Fruit or veggies and cheese
Animal crackers
Snack mix – no nuts
Graham crackers (Cinnamon or honey)
Teddy grahams
Granola bars-no nuts
Bread, Bagel, or muffins
Fruit Kabobs w/crackers or cheese
Rice cakes w/cream cheese & fruit
Pretzel sticks w/cheese cubes or fruit
Crackers and cheese
Fruit or veggies and crackers
Ritz Bits with cheese
Popcorn
Yogurt
Bite size sandwiches (no peanut butter)
Pita bread triangles (w/cheese, applesauce, etc)
Hummus & crackers, veggies, or pita bread
Veggies & dip/dressing
Fruit w/ yogurt for dipping
Applesauce with pretzels
Applesauce with graham crackers
Bagel and cream cheese
Waffle sticks & fruit
String cheese & pretzels or crackers,
String cheese & fruit or veggies