

Prairie Valley Preschool Handbook

Program Policies and Procedures



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Preschool Policies and Procedures

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Prairie Valley Preschool Program Policies and Procedures

1. WELCOME TO PRAIRIE VALLEY PRESCHOOL (IQPPS 10.1)

Prairie Valley Preschool was awarded the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant in 2010. This is an opportunity for all four-year-old children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

2. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS (IQPPS 10.1)

Mission

Southeast Valley Schools Mission Statement

Southeast Valley Schools provides students with the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge to allow them to become productive and responsible citizens.

Purpose of the Prairie Valley Preschool Program

The Prairie Valley Preschool Program undertakes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which students can have positive interaction with peers while learning social skills. Opportunities will be provided to enhance small and large motor skills; including the chance for each child to explore, investigate, manipulate, experiment and discover.

Our classroom will promote a sense of community for children, where each child is an important, valued member. Simple routines that are structured yet flexible will promote the child's sense of security and independence. The Prairie Valley Early Childhood Program will provide an environment where children can savor the satisfactions of achievement, mastery, growth, and friendship. Our primary aim is to help each child develop into a contributing member of society.

Goals for Children

Children will:

- show competency in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, literacy and language development skills.
- be safe and healthy.
- participate in small and large group activities.
- take care of own toilet needs and dressing self.
- contribute to group conversations and learn to express ideas.
- act courteously and show respect for others.

Goals for Families:

- ♦ Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- ♦ Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
- ♦ Families will advocate for their children.

3. ENROLLMENT

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of the Prairie Valley Preschool not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the school district, Brian Johnson, Superintendent, 515-352-3173. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the region VII Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800, Milwaukee, WI, 53203-2292, (414) 291-1111, or the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available upon request from the curriculum director's office.

Eligibility

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year and potty-trained (unless medically unable). Pre-registration will begin in the spring of the prior school year. Registration materials are available from the elementary secretary and will need to be turned in before the first day of class. Final registration will occur in the fall.

Hours

Classes meet for three hours each day, four days per week. The Preschool follows the Southeast Valley school calendar.

AM session: 8:15 - 11:15

PM session: 12:15 - 3:15

Weather Policy

If school is cancelled due to weather, we will not have preschool. If school starts late, there will be no morning class. If school is let out early there will be no afternoon class. Please update your emergency numbers if they change, so we are able to locate you in case of an emergency.

General Information (IQPPS 5.1)

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, we will need a copy of your child's birth certificate, social security card and health records that document the dates of service showing the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

(IQPPS 10.4)

The maximum class size is 20 children in each session based on square footage of the current location. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, arrangement for coverage will be made for the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratio.

Withdrawal Policy

A two-week written notice is required before the child’s withdrawal from preschool. The school will then have the opportunity to fill the vacancy.

Supplies

Each child will need a book bag big enough to fit a folder in it, one box of tissues, one package of napkins, one box of small Dixie cups, one box of plastic spoons, one spiral notebook, two 2-pocket folders. All other supplies will be provided by the school.

4. A CHILD’S DAY

Who Works In the Preschool Classroom (IQPPS 10.2)

Program Administrator The elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teacher A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement is assigned to the preschool classroom. (IQPPS 6.2)

Teacher Assistant

A full-time teacher assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education. (IQPPS 6.3)

School Nurse

The preschool will have the assistance of the school nurse. The current nurse is employed part time, is a certified RN, and is recertified every three years. She maintains student health records by updating them quarterly, and attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. She is available for parent consultation when necessary. (IQPPS 5.1)

Support Staff

AEA support staff provides resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others.

Daily Activities (IQPPS 2.6)

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

Large and Small Group Activities	Self-directed Play	Snack
<i>Learning Center Activities:</i> Art, Science, Math, Writing, Listening Center, Library Center, Games and Put together toys, Building Center, Pretend Play, Sensory Table	Story Time	Computers
	Outdoor Activities/ Gross Motor	Individual Activities

Lesson plans for each week are posted in the classroom showing how these activities are incorporated into the daily schedule. Monthly newsletters will be sent home to families in children’s backpacks.

Curriculum (IQPPS 2.1 - 2.3)

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

It is the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and life styles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society. **(IQPPS 1.7)**

The preschool program uses *Creative Curriculum* along with *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, a research and evidence-based curriculum. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways - through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening, and storytelling. Suggestions for modifications and adaptations are an integral part of the curriculum.

Child Assessment (IQPPS 4.1-4.8)

Guiding principles:

It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD is modified to align with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records student progress in all developmental areas at the beginning, middle and end of the year.
- Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an on-going basis.
- Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them.

- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones.
- To indicate possible areas that requires additional assessment.

(IQPPS 4.6)

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- A request made to Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing.

The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include visuals for children language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

Program Assessment

Prairie Valley Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. We received a verification visit the 2012-13 school year to confirm we are meeting these standards. We annual review and submit documentation of meeting these standards to the Department of Education through a desk audit. Administrators, families, staff, and other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

Supervision Policy

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to head custodian.

- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. using the toilet independently, children who are in the library area, etc.)

Child Guidance and Discipline (IQPPS 1.9)

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect, property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behavior (IQPPS 1.7-1.9)

The teaching staff in the preschool room is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- Interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- Helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- Engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child become physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action is there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.
4. Neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Water activities (IQPPS 5.7, 9.14)

We have a water table in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Snacks/Foods and Nutrition (IQPPS 5.9- 5.17)

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form. All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

Each child will need to bring enough snacks for everyone in the classroom once a month. **All snacks must be Peanut Free and all snacks must be prepackaged with the nutrition label.** Students are encouraged to try snack every day. Milk will be served with snack which is provided by the school. If your child would rather drink water, please contact the teacher for a diet modification form. Children attending the AM session may choose to have breakfast from 8:00am – 8:30am. A snack is served at least two hours after breakfast has ended. Children attending the PM session are served a snack at a regularly scheduled time. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program in individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

Outside Play and Learning (IQPPS 5.4, 9.5-9.8)

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. Sometimes we spend longer getting bundled up than we spend outside. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play.

In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him according to the weather. When it is cold outside they need a warm coat, snow pants, boots mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days dressing your child in layers is a practical idea. Flip-flops are not allowed on the playground.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. Program staff will complete the National Program for Playground Safety's Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a weekly basis.

Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Toilet Training (IQPPS 5.5)

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. Children must be potty trained to attend preschool – no pull ups and uses bathroom independently. Exceptions will be made for those with extenuating health issues and/or special needs. Children are welcome to start school as soon as they are potty trained. If your child is recently potty trained, staff will make effort to remind them to regularly use the bathroom. If a child has frequent accidents parents will be contacted to discuss ways to help the child.

For special needs children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

- Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
- Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards
- Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- Staff checks children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
- Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
- Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children.
- Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words.
- Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious disease

Objects from Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that your child does not bring toys from home. We will have special days that your child will be allowed to bring one toy from home for the day. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Classroom Animals and Pets

If you, as a parent or legal guardian, want to bring your family pet to share with your child's classroom you are welcome with prior approval of the classroom teacher or administration. The preschool teacher ensures that the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The animal would appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children. The teacher would ensure staff and children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming into contact with the animal and after coming into contact with the animal. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.

Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking requirements have been met.

Birthdays (IQPPS 5.10)

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

5. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES (IQPPS 1.1, 7.4)

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Staff will use notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Daily take home folders will also be used for communication between school and home. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will check in at the elementary school office. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions

Arrival and Departure of Children (IQPPS 10.9)

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate and size-appropriate seat restraints.

Parents or legal guardians must either accompany children to the classroom. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardian, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school.

If your child rides the school bus to school, teaching staff will go to each bus as it arrives to greet and assist the student off the bus. At dismissal, teaching staff will accompany each student to the bus and assist the student onto the bus.

When all children have arrived, teaching staff will walk the children to the classroom where the preschool teacher will record attendance for the day. Throughout the day each time children transition from one location to another, i.e. classroom to outdoor, the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

Transportation

The Prairie Valley Preschool will provide school bus transportation for preschoolers to designated stops and to registered/licensed daycare providers. Parents or legal guardians may request transportation at enrollment. Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher or elementary school secretary. All information will be updated at least quarterly by teaching staff.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The Prairie Valley Preschool bus is used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter and signs posted in the classroom well in advance. Consent for field trips was part of the registration packet. Adult family members may be asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. A notice posting the dates, time of departure, time of return, and the destination location will be posted prominently at least 48 hours before the field trip. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip. Before every trip, the teaching staff will instruct children and all adults using the bus about the 10-foot danger zone around the vehicle where the driver cannot see.

A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes in the Prairie Valley Preschool are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the elementary office with the reason for an absence no later than 8:30 A.M. if your child for the morning session and by 12:30 for the afternoon session. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the school secretary/teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

Ethics and Confidentiality (IQPPS 6.1)

Staff follows an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

Children's Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, contact the board secretary in the high school administration office.

Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Preschool Advisory Committee (IQPPS 7.2, 10.15)

The Prairie Valley Preschool has a preschool advisory committee composed of parents, school staff, and other community members interested in the preschool program. This group meets to provide feedback on services that meet children and family needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. Please let the preschool teacher know if you are interested in being part of the Preschool Advisory Committee.

Grievance Policy (IQPPS 7.5)

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high-quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the Elementary Principal who is the program administrator for the preschool. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Superintendent Prairie Valley Community Schools.

6. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT (IQPPS 7.1-7.4, 10.15)

Prairie Valley Preschool encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication; and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year. Program staff communicate with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year.

Prairie Valley Preschool values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also relies on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

Prairie Valley Preschool invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child allows the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs.
2. Attend family meetings.
3. Return all forms, questionnaires and so on promptly.
4. Attend Family/Teacher conferences in the fall and spring semesters.
5. Check your child's backpack each day.
6. Participate in field trip activities.
7. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
8. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
9. Read all the material sent home with your child.
10. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other

volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, run errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.

11. Serve on the Preschool Advisory Committee.

It is the policy of the Prairie Valley School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or physical disability in its education programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI or VIII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The school district believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

Home Visits (IQPPS 7.1)

Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher and associate to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The preschool program will have formal parent teacher conferences at the same time as the elementary school - fall and spring. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

Family Night

Family night is an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities. Based on results from a family survey, the teaching staff will select a topic for the evening. With help from family volunteers, the night will be planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom.

Transitions (IQPPS 7.7)

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible

by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Prairie Valley Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Health and Immunization Certificates (IQPPS 5.1)

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

Child Health and Safety Records

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request. **(IQPPS 10.8)**

Child Health and Safety Records will include: **(IQPPS 5.1)**

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and **(IQPPS 10.14)**

7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implements a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff complete "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times. **(IQPPS 5.3)**

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.

- fever greater than 100 degrees F
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eyes
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

The center's established policy for an ill child's return:

- Fever free for 24 hours
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other person authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up, the child is located where new individuals will not be exposed.

Reporting Communicable Diseases (IQPPS 5.3)

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, contacted those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Medication Policies and Procedures (IQPPS 5.8)

Policy: The school will administer medication to children with written order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

Procedure: The school nurse coordinates and/or administers medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone

by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies to prescription.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

Cleaning and Sanitization (IQPPS 5.18-5.19)

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47 of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible.

Hand Washing Practices (IQPPS 5.6)

Frequent hand washing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.

- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day;
- using the toilet;
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals; and

Adults also wash their hands

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting; and
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- In situations where sinks used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

First Aid Kit (IQPPS 9.12)

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom next to the door. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the First Aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Fire Safety (IQPPS 9.13)

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents (IQPPS 10.10)

The Prairie Valley School District has in place a “Safety Procedures Booklet” that describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Utility Failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break)
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats
- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder
- Evacuations
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures
- Accidental Injury or Illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations
- School crisis team members and a checklist to use
- List of CPR/First Aid experienced persons in each building

The booklet will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an “Injury and Illness” form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Emergency phone numbers will be updated at least quarterly. Emergency phone numbers will be verified by calling the numbers to make sure a responsive, designated person is available.

Inclement Weather

In the event that the Prairie Valley Schools must be closed due to bad weather, please listen to the radio or television. The following will have closing and delays:

Radio: KWMT 540 AM Fort Dodge, KKEZ 94 FM Fort Dodge

TV: WHO Channel 13, KCCI Channel 8, WOI Channel 5.

Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health

Program staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children's health with documentation on file. Custodial staff maintains the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

Smoke Free Facility (IQPPS 9.15)

In compliance with the Iowa Smokefree Air Act of 2008, Prairie Valley Community School buildings and grounds are smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the entrance to the preschool classroom building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

Child Protection Policies (IQPPS 10.6, 10.12)

The health and well being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete "Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse" at least every five years and within six months of employment.

The school district does not tolerate employees physically, or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal, or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the school district to designate an independent investigator to look into the allegations. The school district has designated Launi Dane at 515-352-3173.

Substance Abuse

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the Prairie Valley Community Schools. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Volunteers (IQPPS 10.11)

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher, the elementary principal, or our office secretary if you would like to be a school volunteer. We have a volunteer job description that defines the role and responsibilities of a volunteer. For safety's sake, if a volunteer will be working with children, he/she will be expected to execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

8. STAFF (IQPPS 10.11-10.14)

General Information

The Prairie Valley Community School district has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

Health Assessment

The preschool program maintains current health information from documented health assessments for all paid preschool staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children. A current health assessment (not more than one-year-old) is received by the program before an employee starts work or before a volunteer has contact with children. The health assessment is updated every two years. Documented health assessments include:

- Capacities and limitations that may affect job performance

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Superintendent's office.

CPR/First Aid Certification (IQPPS 5.2)

At least one staff member who has a certificate showing satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid and CPR training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for children, is always present with **each group** of children.

Orientation (IQPPS 6.1)

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

- Program philosophy, mission, and goals;
- Expectations for ethical conduct;
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for;
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;
- Daily activities and routines of the program;
- Program curriculum;
- Child abuse and reporting procedures;
- Program policies and procedures;
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria;
- Regulatory requirements.

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations.

Staffing patterns and schedule

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant in case of absence. If one of the teaching staff needs to temporarily leave the classroom, the person will call the elementary office to arrange for coverage in order to maintain the adult/child ratio.

Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties.

Staff development activities (IQPPS 6.6, 10.11)

Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. All teaching staff continuously strengthens their leadership skills and

relationships with others and works to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, and the area education agency. Staff are expected to attend all staff trainings and meetings throughout the year. Trainings will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan (IQPPS 6.6)

All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us.

Principal- Tina Kastendieck 467-5700 or tkastendieck@svjags.org

Teacher- Amanda Wirt 467-5700 or awirt@svjags.org