

# **Knox County Elementary Preschool Handbook**



**2025-2026**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to the Knox County Preschool Program. We are pleased you have enrolled your child with us and look forward to becoming better acquainted.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with important information about our program and the policies and procedures that affect you and your child. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, you are encouraged to call the Program Director or Elementary Principal.

**(660) 397-2285 ext. 7**

## **Staff**

**Sarah Setzer, Elementary Principal**

**Melissa Vannoy, Federal Programs Coordinator**

**Gale Hustead, Secretary**

**Saydie Potter, ECSE/Preschool Teacher**

**Jessie Penn, Preschool Teacher**

**Brittney Snelling, Preschool Teacher**

**Diane Morrow, Paraprofessional**

**Emily Fuller, Paraprofessional**

**Robin Golden, Paraprofessional**

**Roberta Penn, Parents as Teachers**

## **“Knox County R-1 School District Mission Statement**

“Knox County R-I Schools, Building Foundations for Life-Long Learning.”

### **Knox County R-1 Vision**

The Knox County R-I School District reflects and alliance among the students, parents, staff,

administration and community with a vision of a school where:

- Students enjoy learning as they prepare for post-secondary goals and opportunities to become productive citizens.
- Students are empowered to become life-long learners and critical thinkers and to work to their highest potential.
- Open communication between all stakeholders fosters a safe, caring, respectful learning environment.
- High quality curriculum, instruction and assessment ensure that all students achieve a firm foundation in basic academic skills.
- Students demonstrate physical, social and emotional well-being.
- Students learn and practice responsible behavior.

### **Program Model**

Knox County Preschool is a school-based preschool program designed to meet the developmental needs of children three to five years of age. This year, we will be offering two full-day classes for students who turn 4 on or before August 1<sup>st</sup>. There will also be two half-day classes for children who turn 3 on or before August 1<sup>st</sup>. Children must attend five days a week. Full-day sessions run 7:50-3:20, half-day class hours are morning 7:50 to 11:00 a.m., and the afternoon session is 12:00 to 3:20 p.m.

### **Program Philosophy**

Learning is determined neither by nature nor environment alone, but by the individual through interactions with people and the physical environment. Children will gain some autonomy as they learn to make choices and to regulate their own behavior within the social environment. Children need sufficient time and numerous opportunities to act on the environment and to reflect on their actions. Experimenting, creating, and imagining in a safe, caring environment where they are encouraged to be physically and mentally active results in meeting the needs of the “whole” child.

## **Program Goals and Evaluation**

### **Goals**

1. A curriculum that will provide opportunities for enhancing active learning in the areas of gross motor and fine motor skills. Kindergarten readiness skills will be evident in 80% of enrolling kindergarteners who attend the school-based preschool.
2. To provide a positive, enriched environment addressing social skills, academics, and early intervention strategies.
3. To provide educational opportunities to parents in their efforts to support their child's academic progress.

### **Evaluation**

1. 80% of the children who attend the school-based preschool will demonstrate kindergarten readiness skills on the Brigance Screening.
2. Parents will have the opportunity to evaluate the program. A survey will be emailed to families at the end of the year.
3. Children's health screenings and immunization records will indicate the children's families and caregivers are meeting medical needs.
4. Maintaining an enrollment of 25 or more children.

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum will include the use of the CKLA Pre-Kindergarten Reading Program and other resources. The program is designed to provide opportunities for children to develop early literacy skills through a print-rich environment that focuses on oral-language development, phonological awareness, concepts about print, alphabet knowledge, early stages of writing, and listening comprehension. This program is designed to build the foundation for students to use with the kindergarten CKLA Reading Program.

The curriculum will also consist of a Math Pre-K Program. Each unit develops mathematical ideas from one of the strands included in state and national mathematics standards. The program is designed to lay the foundation for the kindergarten mathematics program.

The students in the preschool program will attain deep understandings in the core content areas, while they also learn to work collaboratively with adults and peers, as well as learning to be lifelong problem solvers. The content area instruction will be integrated with a focus on learning through play with age-appropriate group activities and learning centers designed to stimulate academic development, build self-esteem, and allow for individual differences. The overall program is designed to lay the foundation for transition to and success in kindergarten.

### **Parents Involved with P.A.T.**

The preschool program will work in collaboration with the P.A.T. (Parents As Teachers) educator to promote parent education, involvement, and communication. ***Parents and children who participate in the preschool program will be required to participate in the P.A.T. program.*** Parents are encouraged to participate in group meetings and parent education meetings. Parents are strongly encouraged to be a part of the Parent Advisory Committee. Communication from school to home will include bi-weekly newsletters, conferences in the fall and spring, and notes or phone calls as needed.

### **Parent Advisory Committee**

The role of the Parent Advisory Committee is to be actively involved and provide input pertaining to the preschool program. All parents are invited to participate. Meetings will be held at least two times a year.

### **Eligibility/Enrollment**

#### **Eligibility**

· The program is available to three- and four-year-old children using multiple criteria:

- ü Brigance Screening Tool
- ü Eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch Program
- ü Health Screenings (health concerns)
- ü Speech/Articulation Screening
- ü Parent Survey.

These factors will be analyzed. Students will be admitted to the program based on analysis of greatest need and the number of students this program can accommodate in each session.

#### **Enrollment**

- Children should be three or four years of age by August 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year entry; unless otherwise selected to attend based on enrollment numbers and need, and potty trained. ***NO diapers or pull-ups are allowed in the Preschool Classroom. If there are persistent potty accidents, the child will be released from the program. Only exceptions will be due to IEP requirements.***
- Obtain an application for enrollment
  - ü Enrollment forms must also include an emergency/medical form.
  - ü Medical Consent Form
  - ü Immunization Record
- Complete the application and return it to school

- Enrollment in the P.A.T. program
- Attendance of 85% is expected. Failure to maintain this requirement can result in loss of preschool enrolment.
- Free and Reduced lunch forms **MUST** be completed and returned
- Placement on the waiting list based on the analysis of the criteria selection
- Contact if an opening is available
- Enrollment will be confirmed on or before August 1<sup>st</sup>
- Enrollment is complete when all forms are completed and immunizations are approved and turned in

### **Snacks**

Snacks will be purchased by the school district this year. ***Parents will pay a quarterly fee for this service.*** Parents may choose to pay \$25.00 quarterly, \$50.00 per semester or 100.00 for the entire year. Parents may still send in treats to celebrate birthdays. **Please do not send homemade snacks. It is school policy that all snacks must be sealed in the original packaging and the package must contain nutritional information.** If your child has a severe food allergy, you may be asked to send separate snacks for your child.

### **Preschool Hours**

#### **Half Day -Preschool Hours:**

**Morning class - 7:50 am to 11:00 am**

**Afternoon class - 12:00 pm to 3:20 pm**

#### **Full Day -Preschool Hours: 7:50 am – 3:20 pm**

Parents who transport their child may drop their child off at 7:15 in the Elementary Gym. Parents who transport their children for the afternoon class may drop their child off at 12:00 noon. If a parent wishes to bring their child early and wait with the child at the table in the foyer area until class time, it will not count as an early arrival.

**On early dismissal days, full-day preschool will be in attendance, but there will be no preschool for ½ day classes.**

Because of teacher duties, faculty meetings, etc., it is very important the children be picked up on time. **BE SURE AN EMERGENCY CONTACT IS DESIGNATED, IN WRITING, TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD IN THE EVENT YOU ARE UNABLE.**

If, because of weather or an emergency condition, the Knox County R-1 School closes or cancels school for the day, the Preschool is also closed. Please listen to the local radio and television

stations for this information. If the decision to dismiss early is made, the afternoon session will not be held. Listen to television or radio: KTVO, KHQA, WGEM, KIRX, KRXL, or KMEM.

### **Preschool Transportation**

Students attending full-day preschool will ride normal bus routes to and from school. Half-day morning preschool students will ride the regular routes to school with selected drop-off points. Half-day afternoon preschool will have selected pickup points and will ride the regular bus routes home. There will be no transportation reimbursement for mileage traveled by parents to and from drop-off points or for privately transporting your child to preschool.

### **“3 Strikes and You’re Out Rule”**

Transportation is not a requirement for preschool programs, and riding the bus is a privilege. To ensure the timeliness of our routes, we have incorporated a “3-strike rule”.

Parents can receive a strike for one of the following items:

1. Not being present when the bus arrives to pick up your child.
2. Not being present when the bus arrives to drop off your child.
3. Not calling the bus driver when your child will not need to be picked up. (You will get those phone numbers at Orientation).

3 strikes equal bus privileges being suspended for the remainder of the year. At that time, parents must transport their child and will not be reimbursed by the district.

### **Person Authorized to Pick up Child**

Parents must provide the Preschool with the names of persons authorized to pick up the child. This will be part of your child’s emergency form. It is the parent or guardian’s responsibility to inform the program of any changes in the names of persons authorized.

We will release children to authorized persons only. If necessary, photo identification or other official documentation may be requested by the program before the child is released. If someone other than an authorized person is to pick up your child, please notify the program in writing or by phoning the secretary.

***Copies of legal documents must be provided to the Program Director before any staff person can actively prevent non-custodial parents from picking up their child.***

### **Health**

Each child must provide evidence of immunizations upon enrollment at preschool and complete the health questionnaire provided by the school nurse.

### **Illness and Injury**

The following symptoms could indicate a contagious disease. Please do not send children to the Preschool when they have:

- Fever of 100 degrees or more – must be fever free/Tylenol free 24 hours
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Infection of the eyes
- Lice
- Skin rashes
- Constant sneezing and/or a productive cough
- Communicable diseases such as impetigo, chicken pox, strep throat . . .

If your child should show any of these symptoms, we will notify the parent. The same would apply to an injury. For this reason, it is extremely important to keep emergency information up to date.

### **Medication**

Prescribed medicines will be given only by the written order of a physician. Medicine is to be brought to the school by the parent, in the original container, and given to the school nurse to dispense. The container must state the student's name, date prescribed, dosage amount to be taken, time medication is to be taken, physician's name, phone number, and any possible side effects. If the child is to take an over-the-counter medicine, it too is to be sent in its original container and given to the school nurse to dispense.

You **MUST** also complete a **MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION** form as required by the Missouri Department of Health for ALL medications.

### **Bathroom Skills**

The program expects the child to be able to go to the bathroom with little assistance. If a child should have persistent accidents on a daily basis, the child will be dismissed from the program. The program will give a child two weeks to determine if this is a problem or not.



### **Safety Policies**

1. All electrical outlets must be covered when not in use.
2. Staff, children and parents must wear shoes or always have covering on their feet.
3. Any bottle must be disposable or plastic, no glass.
4. Children are to be supervised at all times.
5. All children enter and exit through the front door. (No child ever leaves from the playground).
6. If picking a child up between 8:00 and 3:00, a parent must enter through the main doors at the front of the school.
7. Any child who is deemed dangerous to other children will be dismissed from the program by the Program Director and Elementary Principal.
8. Safety drills (fire, tornado, earthquake, intruder) are held monthly on a rotating basis.

### **Behavior Guidelines**

Staff shall provide each child with guidance that helps the child acquire a positive self-concept. Discipline and behavior guidance used by each staff member will always be constructive, positive, and suited to the age of the child.

The following rules and standards will apply in the Preschool:

1. To prevent unacceptable behavior from occurring, the staff will:
  - a. Model appropriate behavior for the children.
  - b. Arrange the classroom environment to enhance the learning of behaviors that are acceptable.
  - c. Use descriptive praise when displaying appropriate behavior (i.e. "Look at the good helpers pick up the blocks!").
2. When unacceptable behavior is about to occur/is occurring, the staff will use:
  - a. Redirection: substituting a positive activity for a negative activity.
  - b. Distraction: change the focus of the activity or behavior.
  - c. Active listening: to determine the underlying cause of behavior.
  - d. Time out: separation from the group is used only when less intrusive methods have been tried and the behavior of the child is dangerous to themselves or the other children. In the event time out is used, the child will remain in sight and hearing of the staff. The child will be separated from the group for a maximum of five minutes.
3. Staff is expressly prohibited from using unproductive or shaming methods of punishment as well as corporal punishment.

This program believes parents and childcare staff must work together to deal with persistent behavioral issues such as biting, or unusual or dangerous aggression to self or others. In severe cases, the child will be removed from the classroom, taken to the principal's office, and parents will be notified. If the child continues to be a threat to self and/or others, the parent will be requested to remove the child from the program.

### **Parent–Centered Communications**

Contact between the parent and the teacher is an important part of the program. By sharing information concerning your child's activities and welfare, we can work together to meet the child's needs.

Newsletters are sent home bi-weekly to keep parents informed of class news, upcoming events, classroom learning activities, changes in policy, recent program happenings, and parenting "tips".

Parent-teacher conferences are offered in the fall and spring for establishing understanding, cooperation, and consistency between the home and program. Either the parent or teacher can arrange additional conferences as the need arises.

Parent participation and observation is encouraged. Some parents have special talents, skills, or experiences they can share with the children. Others may have some time to spend helping in the classroom or chaperoning a field trip.

Information concerning family issues and personal lives will be handled confidentially. In case of a divorce, separation, or joint custody ruling, every effort will be made to treat both parents equally. Without legal documentation, the staff cannot act as though one parent is more fit than another regarding the legal rights of their child.

### **Feedback/Suggestions/Grievances**

The staff welcomes comments and suggestions to improve the quality of the program. When areas of concern arise, the problem should be brought to the attention of the Program Director/Elementary Principal, who will hear your suggestions and/or grievance and attempt to work through the problem.

### **Data Privacy**

The only persons permitted to see your child's file would be you, the parent or legal guardian, the Program Director, the Preschool Teacher, the Elementary Principal, the Secretary, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

It is our policy not to disclose the names of children who may have caused injuries to other children while at the program. This is a safeguard for each family's data privacy.

We will not verify your child's enrollment to anyone via the telephone or in person without your consent.

### **Anti-Bias Policy**

Our program is committed to anti-bias education. This means we share a commitment to human rights, dignity of the individual and social justice. We strive to create a program which truly reflects the lives of our children, families, staff and community. By recognizing the impact bias plays on families, we will make every effort to provide culturally responsible education by affirming human differences and the right of people to make choices about their own lifestyles. We seek to recognize, appreciate, and respect the uniqueness of each child.

- Recognize the beauty, value, and contribution of each child.
- Foster high self-esteem and positive self-concept in children.
- Teach children about their own culture or handicap.
- Introduce children to other cultures and handicapping conditions.
- Provide children with a positive experience exploring similarities and differences.
- Encourage children to respect other cultures.
- Increase children's ability to talk with and play with people who are different from them.
- Help children to be a group member.
- Help children live happily and cooperatively in a diverse world.
- Help children notice and do something about unfair behavior and events.

### **Child Abuse/Neglect**

The State of Missouri Department of Health requires that all members of childcare institutions be on the lookout for, and report to the State, any and all cases of abuse to a child. The Knox County Preschool is therefore obligated to report to the State any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

## **Birthday Parties**

Birthdays may be celebrated by the birthday child. It is up to the parent as to whether they would like to send treats or tokens to celebrate, but it is not required. If you choose to send a treat, please check with the teacher concerning allergies and please do not send homemade snacks. It is school policy that all snacks must be sealed in their original packaging and the package must contain nutritional information. There are children who are allergic to certain foods and/or dyes. A birthday book given to the class in honor of the child is a nice alternative to sending treats.

## **Toys**

The classroom is adequately equipped with toys, games, and materials of special interest to young children. We ask for personal toys to be left at home. It is difficult to be responsible for personal play items as they can be easily damaged, misplaced, or lost at school.

## **Dress**

A wide range of activities is planned for each day. It is recommended that your child dress in comfortable, washable clothing. Please choose clothing items that are suitable for the child's ability to dress independently. These features include:

- Few fasteners – Avoid button/snap pants unless the child can fasten him or herself.
- Armholes and sleeves of good size
- Simple styles
- Clothes that allow freedom of movement
- Shoes that are appropriate for outdoor play or play in the gym. Children should be able to run and skip in their shoes.
- Send warm layers – the class will go outside if the temperature is above 40 degrees F.

An extra set of clothes should be left in your child's backpack in case of an accident or spill. Please put them in a large plastic bag. All clothes need to be labeled with your child's name.

## **Material and Supply List**

A list of needed supplies will be mailed prior to the start of the school year. Other supplies may be requested throughout the year based on need.

# **Knox County Preschool Handbook 2025-2026**

1. I have read and understand the Knox County R-I Preschool Handbook.
2. I understand that during the school year, my child may be videotaped, audiotaped, or photographed during/or as part of various educational activities.
3. I understand that to provide a safe environment for all students, ALL VISITORS must stop in the elementary office and sign in as soon as they enter the building.
4. I understand that NO PETS are to be brought to the school building without the permission of the building principal.

Please sign and return this sheet to your child's classroom teacher on the first day of school.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Documents to be Returned:**

\_\_\_ **Free/Reduced Lunch Forms**

\_\_\_ **Health Inventory (information for Nurse)**

\_\_\_ **Money for Snacks (\$25/quarter)**

\_\_\_ **Questionnaire for Preschool Parents**