

# **John Schroder Early Childhood Center**

## **Family Handbook**



**John Schroder Early Childhood Center  
1519 S. Grace Street  
Lombard, IL 60148  
(630)827-4260**

Dear Families,

Welcome to the school year with Lombard District 44's distinguished Early Childhood Program! Our program has received the Gold Circle of Quality which recognizes high quality programs within the State of Illinois.

The information outlined in this handbook includes District 44 information along with specific pages that are devoted to Lombard's Early Childhood Program. It is designed to serve as a quick reference guide to answer your questions. Similar information can be found on the school website ([www.sd44.org](http://www.sd44.org)).

Welcome to the new school year! We look forward to working with you and your children as we nurture the love of learning in all our students.

Sincerely,

The John Schroder Early Childhood Team

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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to shape the social, emotional and intellectual development of children with varying abilities in partnership with families and our community. We strive to maintain a developmentally appropriate environment, which fosters individuality, creativity, and respects academic and cultural diversity. We seamlessly integrate children of varying abilities into our classrooms. Together we support our children by holding each child to high expectations in hopes they become empathetic lifelong learners.

## **THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

The Lombard Early Childhood Program is a unique, multi-aged program that provides experiences for young children ages three through five who have varying abilities and young children who are considered at-risk. All children have an opportunity to play and learn together in an accepting and engaging environment. Each classroom is staffed by at least one certified teacher and one classroom assistant. Consistent with District 44's philosophy, the Preschool serves the needs of all children utilizing a developmentally- appropriate approach to instruction. It is not mandatory for preschoolers to be independent in their toileting skills, but it is encouraged.

The purpose of our program is to assist families in meeting the developmental needs of children, to promote the educational and social/emotional growth of children, and to provide a safe, secure and nurturing classroom environment. The program emphasizes the process of growth through active, hands on experiences. The program provides high quality enrichment experiences for our students, as well as activities and educational opportunities for parents and families throughout the year.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

The program runs Monday-Friday.

**EC Structured:** 9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.  
**EC Blended Morning:** 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
**EC Blended Afternoon:** 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
EC Teacher	Jennifer Damitz	(630) 827-4031	jdamitz@sd44.org
EC Teacher	Katie Bernas	(630) 827-4039	kbernas@sd44.org
EC Teacher	Amanda Montes	(630) 827-4020	amontes@sd44.org
EC Teacher	Vanessa Paoli	(630) 827-4034	vpaoli@sd44.org
EC Structured Teacher	Jennifer Suggs	(630) 827-4025	jsuggs@sd44.org
New Structured Teacher			
Occupational Therapist	Deb Wallenberg	(630) 827-4038	dwallenberg@sd44.org
Occupational Therapist	Lenell Vitale	(630) 827-4177	lvitale@sd44.org
Physical Therapist	Julie Segatti	(630) 827-4038	jsegatti@sd44.org
Speech Language Pathologist	Jamie Dunford	(630) 827-4229	jdunford@sd44.org
Speech Language Pathologist	Kim Wolf	(630) 827-4036	kwolf@sd44.org
School Psychologist	Dr. Maribeth Rossini	(630) 827-4035	mrossini@sd44.org
School Nurse	Eileen Rydelboesso	(630) 827-4157	erydelboesso@sd44.org
Principal	Cathy Angelos	(630) 827-4167	cangelos@sd44.org
Building Secretary	Virginia Erguven	(630) 827-4265	verguven@sd44.org

## **BLENDING AND BILINGUAL CURRICULUM**

### Creative Curriculum:

Lombard's Early Childhood program uses the Creative Curriculum as the framework for the preschool program. This is a developmentally appropriate curriculum that is accepted by The National Association of Education for Young Children. A variety of active and quiet work/play centers are provided so children can make choices, create, and interact with peers within their environment. The materials used provide concrete experiences and are adaptable to the many different play and developmental levels of children. The teachers also develop "Units of Study" that thematically complement the children, their cultures, and the community.

### Jolly Phonics:

Jolly Phonics is a fun and child centred approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. With actions for each of the 42 letter sounds, the multi-sensory method is very motivating for children and teachers, who can see their students achieve.

### Estrellita:

Estrellita is a complementary, accelerated, beginning Spanish reading program for students in Bilingual and Dual Language classrooms. Based on scientific learning and reading principles, Estrellita provides multisensory, in depth instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency. Because it was designed to meet the needs of children at all skill levels, layers of differentiated instruction are built into the program to accommodate students.

### Conscious Discipline:

Conscious Discipline integrates classroom management and social-emotional learning. It utilizes everyday events rather than an external curriculum, and addresses emotional intelligence.

## **What is "Developmentally Appropriate Practice"?**

- You will probably notice that our classrooms have a lot of bustle and noise with children talking, playing, and exploring. Such a classroom environment differs from the old images of a teacher doing a lot of talking while children sit and listen quietly.
- Research and experience tells us that to be effective with young children, teaching practices need to be "developmentally appropriate." What this means is simply that educators need to think first about what young children are like and then create an environment and experiences that are in tune with children's characteristics.
- Early childhood, after all, is a time of life quite different from adulthood, and even from the later school years. Children 3-6 learn far better through direct interactive experiences than through just listening to someone talk. They learn extraordinary amounts through play and exploration.
- A developmentally appropriate program like ours is age-appropriate, but that's not all. To make our program a good place for every child, we gear our classroom environment and activities to this community and the families involved. We're eager to learn as much as we can about each child's family, cultural background, past experience, and current

circumstances. With this knowledge we can work to create a program that fits the children and the families we serve.

Copple, Carol, and Sue Bredekamp. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009. Print.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE COMPONENTS**

**Student Arrival:** Includes individual greetings, hang coats, empty backpacks, mail, and library books, attendance, table activities.

**Circle Time:** Children sing songs and fingerplays, share views, complete attendance, talk about the day's activities and choices. Activities include; stories, dramatics, literacy, music, dance, and games.

**Center Time:** One hour of child-initiated play at learning centers which include: blocks and floor toys, dramatic play, table toys & games, art center, library area, discovery table, scooping table, water table, writing table, and computers. School provided snack will be incorporated during center time. Children will sit together for a self serve snack. During this time children have opportunities to make requests, use self help skills and practice conversation. Children put papers, artwork, snack bag and communication folders into their backpacks.

**Clean Up:** Children sort, categorize, and organize as they put away the materials.

**Small Groups:** Children participate in small group activities designed to meet each child's individual needs. Topics may include; graphs, charts, games, writing, communication, and academic skills.

**Gross Motor:** Children will participate in 30 minutes of gross motor activities such as playground equipment, balls, group games, etc. Gross motor will be outside weather permitting. During inclement weather children will have indoor gross motor play. Children will play outside daily when the temperature is above 25 degrees with the windchill.

**Closing Activities:** Class reviews activities from the day. Children are encouraged to put on coats and backpacks independently. Class sings goodbye song.

*\*\*\*Individual classroom schedules may vary and allow for flexibility but will include the daily components listed above.\*\*\**

### **Communication with Families**

Communication with families is a vital component of our program and facilitates a relationship with the classroom teacher, educational team and school staff. This may be accomplished through a variety of ways such as:

- Parent/Teacher Conferences or team meetings.
- Communication notebook
- Daily "Today We..."
- Monthly/Weekly Newsletters
- Email/phone call
- Parent Education and Family Activities
- Trimester goal updates (IEP students)

- Periodic family surveys to assist staff in meeting the needs of students/families

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD DROP OFF PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Please drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot for the safety of your child and others.

### **The procedure is as follows:**

Each family will receive 2 large rectangles and 1 small rectangle for the child's backpack.

A large colored rectangle must be displayed on the front or back passenger window of your car. (A second large shape is provided for each family in the event different people participate in the drop-off/pick-up process.)

The smaller tag is to be placed on the child's backpack

### **DROP OFF**

**Morning Classes: 8:50 a.m.      Specialized Academic Classroom: 8:50 a.m.      Afternoon Classes: 12:20 p.m.**

- Vehicles can enter the North parking lot **no earlier than 8:50 a.m.** (a.m. classes), **8:50 a.m.**(structured) and **12:20 p.m.** (p.m. classes). Enter into the circle drive and line up in a single file line along the curb. **DO NOT** exit your vehicle to walk your child to the preschool staff, remain inside your vehicle.
- A staff member will come to your car and remove your child from the vehicle and take your child to the lining-up area. Do not release your child from the car until a staff member arrives.
- After your child is removed from your vehicle, please wait until the car in front of you moves before exiting the circle drive. **PLEASE DO NOT PASS** the school buses or cars in front of you, as this is a major safety concern.
- The circle drive is **ONLY** for those parents who simply want to "drop-off/pick-up" their child. If you would like to walk your child to the lining up area. Park in the north parking lot and walk your child to the designated lining up area. Please note that parking is limited.

### **PICK UP**

**Morning Classes: 11:20 a.m.      Specialized Academic Classroom: 2:00 p.m.      Afternoon Classes: 2:00 p.m.**

- Any student that arrives late must be brought to the main office. (Enter at Door 1)
- Be sure the large classroom colored rectangle is displayed on the front or back passenger window of your car in order for your child to be released by the preschool staff. In the event that the sign is forgotten, parents will be asked to come to the office to pick up their child.
- After your child is placed into the car, **you must seatbelt your child before exiting the lot.**
- After your child is placed into the car and you have buckled them in safely, please wait until the car in front of you moves before exiting the parking lot. **PLEASE DO NOT PASS** the school buses or cars in front of you, as this is a major safety concern.

### **Classroom Colors**

**Miss Amanda - orange      Miss Jenn - yellow**  
**Miss Katie - green      Miss Vanessa - red**

**\*BY LAW CELL PHONE USE IS PROHIBITED WHILE OPERATING A VEHICLE IN THE SCHOOL PARKING LOT OR SCHOOL ZONE\***

## **ABSENCES**

If your child is going to be absent (sick, vacation, etc.) from school, please call the school office as soon as possible.

### **Call the attendance line**

**Before 9 a.m. (630) 827-4261**

**After 9 a.m. (630) 827-4265 after 9 am.**

Families are responsible for reporting student absence each day a child will be out. If you have questions regarding your child's illness and when it is safe for them to return to school, please call the school nurse.

### **Sick Child Guidelines**

Our common goal is to have your children in school, feeling healthy, happy, and able to pay attention and learn as much as possible. In order to help keep our preschool children as healthy as possible, as well as that of our staff, we ask that you do the following:

#### **Keep your child home if:**

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- White patches on the tonsils
- Difficulty swallowing or talking
- Rash
- Red or irritated eye or eyes, which may possibly be pink eye
- Nasal discharge, especially if very thick or greenish in color
- Persistent cough/extreme congestion

#### **Keep your child home until:**

- Temperature is normal without Tylenol or Ibuprofen for 24 hours
- No vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours
- Your child's doctor sends the school a note stating that your child's rash is NOT contagious.
- On antibiotics for 24 hours and temperature has returned to normal for Strep throat.
- Nasal discharge has cleared or doctor sends a note to school stating your child can return to school and is not contagious.
- Cough does not interfere with school functioning and your child is able to cover his/her mouth when coughing.

If your child has any contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, pink eye, impetigo, mono, lice, ringworm, scabies, Fifth Disease, etc., the health office must be notified immediately.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

In the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that present threats to the safety and well being of students, staff, or property, the Superintendent of Schools may deem it necessary to close school. District 44 utilizes an automated calling system to alert parents of school closings. The District also posts information on the district's website, [www.sd44.org](http://www.sd44.org). In cases of emergency early dismissal, the Superintendent allows one hour, if possible, from the time the announcement is made to the time of dismissal.

## **CLOTHING/SHOES/BACKPACKS**

*\*Please label items with your child's name*

- Please send an extra set of labeled clothing for your child to keep at school (including underwear and socks).
- Children should have comfortable clothing and be dressed to play.
- Children should have shoes that are comfortable and allow for moving, running, jumping and climbing. Please no flip flops, Crocs, or sandals.
- Children should have a backpack that is at least 17" high x 13" wide that allows for papers and art projects to fit. Please check your child's backpack everyday and return permission slips promptly.

## **WINTER WEATHER**

*\*Guidance from Illinois State Board of Education\**

Children will play outside daily unless there is active precipitation or if it is under 25 degrees with a wind chill. In order for your children to remain warm, dry and safe on the playground, we ask all parents to send your child in proper winter weather clothing.

This includes:

- warm winter coat
- hat
- scarf
- pair of mittens
- snow pants
- boots

*\*Please label items with your child's name*

When your child wears boots to school we recommend you send a pair of shoes that can be kept in their backpack to be sent back and forth each day. If you have any further questions, please contact your child's teacher.

## **SNACK**

Snack is provided by the program on a daily basis during center time. Snack items are state approved snacks (ex: various crackers and juice). If there are cooking activities occurring within the classroom school day, teachers will confirm approval with families via a permission slip to confirm any allergies or food restrictions.

***• If you have any allergies or dietary restrictions, be sure to let your child's teacher and the school nurse know.***

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are an exciting and special celebration. We will celebrate birthdays for a short time during our school day. You are welcome to attend this celebration and celebrate your child by reading your child's favorite book to the class, singing along or sitting with your child during a special birthday story. If you are unable to attend you can still send in your child's favorite book for the teacher to read. We ask that you do not send birthday treats, food or favors. If you wish, we invite you to donate a copy of your child's favorite book to expand classroom libraries. These books can include a special message from you to your preschooler and create a lasting memory of your child's birthday in the classroom.

Also, please be aware that students are not allowed to distribute birthday invitations at school unless all of the students in the class are invited.

## **FAMILY EVENTS**

Family is a very important part of a child's life, and we would like to encourage you to set aside some time to spend with your preschooler. Lombard Early Childhood Program invites you and your family to attend our family events, which are held multiple times throughout the year. This is a great opportunity for you to spend some quality time with your child and have fun. These events are planned by the preschool team and include developmentally appropriate activities such as games, art, singing, and dancing. Not only are these events beneficial for your child, but also for you as a parent/guardian. Family events provide opportunities for you to learn about some of the activities that your child participates in during the school year and teaches you how to bring them into your home. It also allows you to meet many of the other children and families in the preschool program. Information about dates and times of events will be sent home with your child.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

District 44 believes parents are the child's first and most important teachers. For this reason, Lombard's Early Childhood program embraces family involvement as a basic component of the preschool program. Research has shown that the greatest benefits are derived when parents and teachers work as partners to guide children in their growth, development, and education. Volunteer opportunities are provided within the classroom, on field trips, and for special occasions. Please refer to the [Lombard District 44 School Volunteer Handbook and Program Guidelines](#).

To ensure the safety and well-being of students, District 44 requires that all visitors to school buildings report to the school office (door#12) and obtain a visitor's badge after being let in through the secure entrance by school personnel. The badge is to be worn during the entirety of the visitor's stay in the building. A notice regarding the requirement for visitors to report to the office upon entry is posted on the entrance doors of all District 44 schools.

## **GOALS THAT GUIDE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

- Helps parents/guardians understand developmentally appropriate practices
- Provides parents/guardians with information related to how children grow and learn
- Provide support through resource, materials, referrals, and parent conferences
- Aid parents/guardians in recognizing and coping with stresses related to parenting
- Provide ideas and materials for learning at home
- Help parents/guardians understand the importance of regular, consistent school attendance for their child's future success

## **VOLUNTEERS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Family volunteers contribute greatly to classroom activities and we encourage you to sign up at the beginning of the school year through our Parents/Guardians Volunteer Forms. If you enroll mid year please inquire about volunteers options through your child's teacher. These volunteer opportunities do not include parent/guardian volunteers for field trips.

When volunteering adhere to the following guidelines:

- We ask that you do not bring siblings.
- Volunteering in the class must be arranged with the teacher prior to the volunteer date. There are a variety of ways parents can contribute either from home or by their presence in the classroom.
- Volunteers are reminded to maintain confidentiality in regard to student needs.
- Remember when you volunteer in the classroom you will be working with all of the students in the class and not just your child.

- Once you have been given your volunteer assignment, the teacher's primary responsibility will be with the children. While the teachers are available to answer questions about the project you are working on, they will not be available for conversations or to answer questions about the children in the classroom.