



Mendham Township School District Preschool Program

18 East Main St.
Brookside, NJ 07926
973-543-7107

PRE-SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK



Program Philosophy

The Mendham Township School preschool program stresses care and safety, and the nurturing of learning through fun and exploration. The scheduling, pacing, and rhythm of these activities are recognized via the principles of early childhood education, which encourage each child to develop and grow at their own pace. Throughout the program, children will enjoy experiences that stimulate academic, social-emotional and physical growth. Fostering a love of learning is key for this program. Children will also learn and grow in the areas of self-esteem and respect for others.

The goal of our program is to help children develop to their fullest potential. The program will promote children's growth and learning through the following goals:

1. Involve children in their community to develop their social and living skills.
2. Encourage expression and acceptance of feelings, whether sad, joyful or otherwise.
3. Our school is a supportive and nurturing place, where children reach their potential.
4. Each child's strengths are valued.
5. Each child's learning style is supported.
6. Each child is given opportunities to demonstrate what he or she knows in a number of ways.
7. Each child learns to acknowledge the worth of every individual, and all students know they make a difference.
8. Parents are partners and the entire community is involved in the education of our children.
9. Our students and parents know we care about children.
10. Every student, Every day

Daily Schedule

The program day is from 8:45am-3:45pm. Drop off runs from 8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. and pick up is from 3:30pm-3:45pm. If you are using Before and/or After Care, Before Care opens at 7:00 a.m. and After Care ends at 6:00 p.m. The program follows the regular school schedule, Monday through Friday, excluding specific holidays and teacher in-service days.

In addition to learning in the classroom, your children attend enrichment classes such as Art, Music, Library, Gym, Technology, Spanish, and STEM. Children also have unstructured playtime daily where they utilize either our indoor centers or outdoor playground.

Preschool Sample Daily Schedule

7:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m Before Care

8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Table Play/Arrival

9:00 a.m - 9:20 a.m Circle time, and music and movement

9:20 a.m - 9:40 a.m Language Literacy Block

9:40 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Learning Centers

10:30 a.m. -10:50 a.m. Handwashing and Snacktime

10:50 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Special (Gym, Technology, Art, Library, Music, STEM)

11:30 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. Outdoor Play

12:00 p.m. -12:30 p.m. Lunchtime

12:30 p.m. -1:30 p.m. Rest Time

1:30 p.m. -1:45 p.m. Bathroom

1:45 p.m. -2:15 p.m. Math/Science Block

2:15 p.m-2:30 p.m Afternoon Snack

2:30 p.m-3:00 p.m Outdoor Recess

3:00 p.m-3:20 p.m Story Time

3:20 p.m-3:30 p.m Clean up/Pack up

3:30 p.m-3:45 p.m Dismissal

Program Educational Goals

Language and Literacy Development

- Identifies rhyming words
- Verbally expresses ideas and feelings clearly
- Follow two or more step directions
- Answers questions with complete thought
- Asks questions to further understanding
- Participates in story time interactively including predicting and comparing
- Shows general knowledge of how print works
- Identifies letters of the alphabet

Math Development

- Rote counts to 20 and uses one-to-one correspondence up to 10
- Understands and uses positional words
- Sorts a group of objects by one or more properties
- Creates and extends patterns
- Understands and uses measurement words and tools
- Reproduce shapes of circle, square, and triangle
- Recognizes numerals 0-10
- Identifies 6 basic shapes and 8 basic colors

Fine Motor Development

- Traces lines accurately
- Demonstrates correct tripod grip
- Correctly writes first name
- Can use scissors accurately

Social/Emotional Development

- Listens while others speak
- Works well independently and plays cooperatively in a group
- Puts forth best effort and accepts correction
- Acknowledges the feelings of others
- Completes work within reasonable time
- Cleans up after work/play
- Follows classroom rules
- Respectful of adults, peers, and classroom materials
- Displays self-control and self-confidence
- Respectfully verbalizes needs

Gross Motor Skills

- Throws, catches and kicks with control and accuracy
- Walks forward and backwards along a line
- Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (running, jumping, hopping, and galloping)

Hours of Operation

Full Day Program 8:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

*Before Care 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m./After Care 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Program follows the regular school calendar September - June.

Arrivals and Departures

Each child within the program must arrive at school before 9:00 or will be considered absent for the day.

Absences

In the event your child is sick or will be absent for any reason, please notify the office at (973) 543-7107 x152 and email teacher if possible.

Fire and Emergency Drills

The New Jersey Department of Education requires at least one fire and one emergency preparedness drill per month. Parents and visitors must evacuate the building as well as the children and staff during a fire or emergency drill. We are mindful of the tender age of the children in the program and care is taken to minimize stress during these drills.

Authorized Pick - Up

Only people whose names are on the Approved Pick-Up forms/Emergency Contacts/Pick-Up Plan will be allowed to remove children from school. When a parent calls to inform us that someone other than the normal pick-up person is coming to pick up a child, the District Staff reserves the right to ask for that individual's picture identification. Please remind that person to bring a form of picture identification with them when picking up your child.

**ONLY THOSE INDIVIDUALS ON YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY PICK-UP FORM
WILL BE ALLOWED TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD.**

Inclement Weather/Emergency Closing/Early Dismissal/Delayed Opening

It is important for all parents to be aware that the program will follow the Inclement Weather/Emergency Closing/Delayed Opening/Early Dismissal schedule as determined by the MTSD.

Honeywell Instant Alert:

Information regarding our Honeywell Alert notification system will be provided with your registration packet.

Commitment to Safety - Information to Parents

Our district is dedicated to providing you and your family with a safe, welcoming atmosphere in all of our programs and our staff is critical to this goal. Should you have any concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact your classroom teacher or the building administration.

Ratios

Our preschool classrooms have one (1) certified preschool teacher and a minimum of one (1) classroom aide to assist the teacher and students. Typical class size range 12-18 students.

Classroom Environment

The classroom is set up with the following centers to allow for independent exploration and play:

- art
- dramatic play
- cubby/storage area
- blocks/construction
- fine motor/math manipulatives
- Technology Center
- books/quiet area
- science/sensory table
- writing center

Lunch and Snack

Students are responsible for bringing lunch and a morning and afternoon snack to school on a daily basis. Please make sure that your lunch and snacks are **peanut and tree nut free**.

Discipline/School Code of Conduct

The goal of our staff is to work cooperatively with children and parents to help children develop self-control and confidence. We wish to help children of all ages become increasingly independent. We want children to feel good about themselves and to learn to balance their needs with those of other people, to see the possible consequences of their actions and to accept alternate behaviors.

Discipline comes from gentleness, understanding, sensitivity, and consistency. Effective discipline begins with prevention. Children need to know what behavior is expected while adults need to model positive behavior.

Actions and words should be used to guide a child. Do's should be used instead of don'ts, for example "feet belong on the floor" instead of "don't stand on the table". Children should be encouraged to think of alternative solutions and the possible effects of taking those alternatives; teachers are present to encourage children to redirect their attention to positive behavior and activities.

Children's positive beliefs about themselves should be encouraged. A child with high self-esteem will display positive behavior patterns. Above all, children should be treated with respect and be expected to treat others with respect.

Under no circumstances shall discipline of a child involve hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, unsupervised isolation, withholding of emotional responses or stimulation, enforced silence for long periods, association of a child's behavior with rest, toiling, or feeding or any form of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Our program follows our school's Code of Conduct and utilizes positive discipline and reinforcement to support behaviors. However, consequences for inappropriate behavior will be used to help the child recognize the expectations of the classroom. Teachers and parents will work together to help your child be successful and collaborate on the best strategies that meet the needs of your child.

In the event that inappropriate behavior continues to exist, the following actions will be implemented:

- discussion as needed between teacher and parent/guardian, which will be documented
- parent/guardian and school principal will meet to discuss ideas on solving the conflicts
- parent/guardian will be asked to keep your child at home for a few days
- referral to Intervention and Referral Services Team
- referral to Child Study Team

**The Mendham Township School District reserves the right to immediately terminate a child's enrollment if a severe and flagrant problem occurs, which jeopardizes the welfare of other children in the program.*

Termination of Service

The Mendham Township Schools reserve the right to terminate services if the following conditions occur:

- failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
- failure to complete required forms including your child's immunization records
- habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- physical or verbal abuse to staff
- failure to meet toilet training requirements (please refer to Toilet Training Policies)

Unfortunately, there are reasons why we may have to remove a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of your child in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

Child's Actions for Expulsion

- uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- excessive biting

Proactive Actions That Will Be Taken in Order to Prevent Expulsions

- Staff will redirect child from negative behavior and provide appropriate consequences .
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and confidentially will be maintained.
- Parent/Guardian will be notified. The classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote appropriate behaviors.

Health Policies/Sending a Child Home

Usually a child's teacher will bring a health concern to the attention of the school nurse (i.e. your child seems warm or has an unusual rash). We will use the following criteria to determine when to send a child home:

- 1) The school nurse will assess your child by appearance, checking your child's temperature and evaluating whether your child's behavior is any different than usual.
- 2) Occasionally, a child is not ill enough to be sent home but is just "not themselves". The parent will then be called by the school nurse, so a mutually agreed decision can be made as to what care should be given. You may decide to come for your child or have another caregiver pickup your child. If your child has to be sent home, please remember that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, we ask that your child be picked up within one hour after notification.

Fever/Contagious Diseases

**MTES sends a letter to parents if a student in their child's classroom has a contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, influenza, pneumonia, or lice. This letter will tell you what to look for so you can follow up with your pediatrician for further evaluation if your child shows any of the signs and symptoms.*

If your child went home with a fever, with diarrhea, or because he/she has vomited, as per the NJ Health Department, your child must be free from vomiting, diarrhea, and fever (**without fever reducing medication**) for 24 hours before returning to the program.

In case of a contagious disease, such as chicken pox, strep throat, influenza, or pneumonia, a doctor's note will be required before your child can return. We understand that it is difficult for a parent to leave or miss work; therefore, we suggest that alternative care arrangements be made in advance. If a child has been absent due to a communicable disease, a doctor's note **MUST** accompany your child to school upon his return.

Parent Requirements

If a child is sick or injured at school, we will notify the parent/guardian. In some cases, we may request that you immediately come for your child, in other circumstances we only inform you of your child's situation so that you can decide if some action should be taken.

The following list is provided for sending a sick child home (based on NJ State Health requirements):

- fever of 100.0 F or more
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- suspected ear or eye infection
 - child pulling on ear
 - complaining of earache
 - yellow eyes
 - red eyes with discharge
- sore throat and/or severe coughing
- sores/rash (other than diaper rash)
- weeping and/or bleeding skin lesions - untreated by doctor
- infected, untreated skin patches

***Attached is an illness guide that may help in deciding if your child should stay home.*

Important to Understand

- child might not be technically sick but still not belong in a group setting nor fit for group play
- sick children are better off at home where they can receive individual care
- We are not diagnosticians, only a medical doctor can say for sure if a child is ill. We are going by symptoms and what your child tells/indicates to us.

Child out sick may return to program when...

- temperature is normal for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
- child is symptom free or a licensed medical doctor indicates that your child poses no serious health risk to themselves or other children
- **If a child has been out of school ill for 3 or more days, it is necessary to bring a doctor's note upon returning to school.**

Administration of Medication

The school nurse will administer medications. However, the administration of all medications must be labeled with child's name on the package and the physician's orders must be current.

Non-Prescription Medication

Only the following non-prescription (over the counter) medication will be administered -

- acetaminophen
- tums

General Policies for Prescription and Non-prescription Medication

All non-prescription and prescription medication is stored in the Health Office and only administered by the school nurse. All medication that is brought into school must be brought in by the parent, NOT put into a student's backpack.

Parents should send medication to school in the original pharmacy bottle, not in a bag or envelope. The bottle must have a label with:

- child's name
- doctor's name
- name of the medicine
- how much and when to give the medication

For your convenience, you can download the medication administration form on our school website. This form provides the school nurse with permission to administer any non-prescription and prescription medication during school hours with parent signature.

*All prescription medications given during school hours MUST have a physician's orders.

Asthma/Respiratory Disease

If your child has asthma or any type of respiratory illness and needs to have an inhaler administered during school hours, either daily or as needed, the school nurse will need physician's orders and medication. *All forms are available on our website under the heading NURSE HEALTH FORMS.

Injuries

We will notify you when your child is injured. Minor injuries are washed with soap and water, if necessary, ice is applied as well as a Band-Aid. Serious injuries (broken bones, lacerations, that need stitches) are reported immediately to you. If needed, an ambulance will be called. Minor injuries to the face and/or head are reported to you as soon as possible. Other minor injuries will be reported to you when you pick up your child. All injuries to a child will be documented in an accident report.

Emergency Forms/Immunizations

State licensing as well as local and state health departments require that we keep immunization records on all our students. Please let the school nurse know when your child receives immunizations. For your child to continue in the program, immunizations must be kept up to date and a record of the immunization must be documented to the school nurse.

Communicable Disease Policy

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may NOT return to the school without a physician's note stating that your child presents no risk to him/herself or others

- respiratory illnesses

- gastrointestinal diseases
- contact illnesses - chicken pox, impetigo, German measles, Hepatitis A, lice, influenza, salmonella, scabies, measles, Shigella, Coxsackie Meningococcus, mumps, strep throat or whooping cough

If your child is exposed to any of the above communicable diseases while here at school, you will be notified in writing.

Toilet Training Policies

Children enrolled in preschool must be toilet trained before attending preschool. Children must be wearing underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull ups is NOT considered toilet trained.

Why do children have to be toilet trained before they begin preschool?

- There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups and our classrooms are not equipped for this.
- When an adult is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it is taking away from learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class.

We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing, to go and use the bathroom
- Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe him/herself after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3 year olds)
- Get on/off the toilet by him/herself
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
- Wake up during nap time should they need to use the bathroom

We certainly will ask your child many times throughout the day and always before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. This is an issue which protects all concerned.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Preschool staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. Please have your child dressed in clothing that he/she can easily

manage independently. Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents, and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time until fully trained.

A child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school.

After the first 4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed and corrected.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified on that day; and if not corrected by day three, the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained.

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers. Rather, cleaning accidents in the preschool setting is time consuming, and this time that teachers spend attending to and cleaning accidents is time that they are not spending interacting with children and facilitating the curriculum in a safe manner. This policy is intended to ensure the safety and happiness of children and staff at the Mendham Township Preschool. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Food Allergies

IMPORTANT

Mendham Twp. Elementary School classrooms are peanut/tree nut free. All classrooms are required to follow our school’s Food Allergy Guidelines. Please review these guidelines so you are familiar with our protocols.

Children with food allergies, either mild or severe, are required to have an Emergency Health Care Plan Form completed by the parents and child’s pediatrician. Health Care Plans must be submitted with Dr.’s stamp and forwarded to the school nurse prior to the start of school. Parents are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the school nurse and teacher to review specific needs and HCP,

Nutrition and Snacks

As part of our preschool program, we recognize the importance of good nutrition in the healthy growth and development of young children. The eating practices developed in childhood tend to shape future food choices. Presenting healthy foods to children in a positive and consistent manner begins the lifelong process of nutrition management.

Students are responsible for bringing a lunch and a morning and afternoon snack to school on a daily basis. Please send in a healthy lunch and snacks that are **peanut and tree nut free.**

PLEASE RETURN THE BOTTOM PORTION OF THIS PRE-SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

I HAVE RECEIVED AND REVIEWED THE MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PRE-SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK:

CHILD’S NAME: _____

PARENT’S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____



