DES PLAINES PARK DISTRICT

CREATIVE CORNERS 2026-2027 PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

Come grow with us!

CREATIVE CORNERS PRESCHOOL







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WELCOME TO CREATIVE CORNERS PRESCHOOL!

This handbook includes our guidelines and expectations for preschoolers, families, and teachers.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Creative Corners Preschool Program provides each student with a quality early childhood experience by creating an atmosphere where students can grow socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually, by offering an engaging curriculum.

CONTACTS

a. Administrative and Leisure Center:	*847-391-5700*
b. Prairie Lakes Community Center:	*847-391-5711*
c. Candice Morden, Assistant Superintendent of Rec	*847-391-5096*
	Candice.morden@dpparks.org
d. Tess Wastyn, Recreation Assistant: Supervisor	*847-391-5093*
	tess.wastysn@dpparks.org
e. Fabulous 4's & 5's Classroom/Lunch Bunch:	*847-324-6741*
f. Terrific 3's Classroom/Nature Explorers:	*847-324-6742*
g. Preschool Prep Classroom:	*847-390-4907*
h. Spanish Immersion Classroom:	*847-324-6743*
i. Des Plaines Park District Website:	*www.DPParks.org*

CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY

The Creative Corners curriculum has built a solid foundation based on "Preschool Key Experiences." These learning processes prepare students for their formal years of education, and are central to a student's development. They are most likely to occur in situations in which these ingredients of active learning are present: Materials, Manipulation, Choice, Language, and Support.

CORE CURRICULUM

1. Social-Emotional Development
2. Physical Development
3. Language and Literacy Skill Development
4. Early Math and Science Skill Development
5. Technology Skill Development

AVERAGE DAY AT CREATIVE CORNERS

The division of preschool classrooms into several center areas encourages learning through exploration, investigation, and problem solving. In order to effectively stimulate and motivate student's curiosity, some center areas remain constant while the presentation of others will vary.

Units include: Alphabet, shapes, numbers, safety, weather, music, colors, animals, and families.

Centers include: Circle time, dramatic play, themed crafts, table games, building blocks, music and instruments, puzzles, and other school equipment used to enhance large and small motor skills.

Snack:
Please Provide Snack and water bottle each day. Please notify your teacher if your student has any food allergies. Please keep in mind that we are a peanut free preschool. Please also make sure to clearly label your child's water bottle and snack with their name on it.

Exercise:
We go outside to the playground on the northwest side of the Leisure Center. We will be outside when the weather is above 50 degrees and dry. Please dress your student appropriately. We will be in the gym when the weather is below 50 degrees or inclement.

SMART Technology:
Spanish Immersion, Terrific 3's, Fabulous 4 & 5's, and Nature Explorers classrooms are equipped with SMART Boards that teachers and students use every day. This SMART technology encourages a hands-on approach to classroom concepts, and provides your student with more opportunities to grow and succeed as a 21st century learner.

EPACT: IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

All students must have ePACT completed before dropping their child off for the first day of school. ePACT emails are sent to the email that was used during registration. Please know that for safety reasons, we will not allow any participant to be dropped off without this being completed! Please know that if you have more than one child attending the program, each child will need their own ePACT form filled out. If your child attends more than one program, only one profile needs to be completed. If your child requires medication of any kind (epi pens, inhalers, etc.), they must fill out a Medication dispensing form which can also be found and uploaded to ePACT.

If you need to make any updates to your account (such as the pick-up list) you can do so by logging into your account using this link:
https://portal-us.epactnetwork.com

If you have any technical difficulties with ePACT, please visit their Help Center website at https://epactnetwork.freshdesk.com/support/home or you can reach them via phone at 1 (855) 773-7228 ext. 2

DATES TO REMEMBER

School Year: *Tuesday,* September 8, 2026–Friday, May 14, 2027

Teacher Meet and Greet:

- Tuesday, September 1st for those that attend on Tuesday/Thursday
- Wednesday, September 2nd for those that attend Monday-Friday or M, W, F.
- Will be held from 5:00 pm to 6:30pm on both days.

M/W, M/W/F & M-F Classes Begin: Tuesday, September 8th and Wednesday, September 9th

T/TH Classes Begin: Tuesday, September 8th

Picture Day Dates: Tuesday, October 13th and Wednesday, October 14th

HOLIDAYS

These are days that classes **will not be in session for the 2026-2027 school year.** Be sure to mark your calendars. Dates found on the Des Plaines Park District website at www.DPParks.org . We do not follow School District 62 Institute Days.

- **Indigenous Peoples' Day:** Monday, October 12
- **Veterans Day:** Wednesday, November 11
- **Fall Break:** Monday–Friday Nov. 23-27
  Classes Resume Nov 30
- **Winter Recess:** Monday–Friday Dec. 21–Jan 1
  Classes Resume Jan 4th
- **Martin Luther King's Birthday:** Monday, January 18
- **Presidents' Day:** Monday, February 15
- **Spring Recess**: Monday–Friday March 22–26
  Classes Resume March 29

EXTENSION PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Nature Explorers Preschool!

This program offers additional instructional and enrichment for students who attend any of our morning programs. We will have your typical preschool curriculum but with a nature spin on it!

Offered on Monday -Friday for 3-6 year old's. M/W/F, Tu/Th or M-F options available. The class runs from 1 pm-4pm . You can pair this class with any of our other offerings!

Example Schedule:

Terrific 3's: 9:30 am-12:00 pm
Lunch Bunch: 12-1pm
Nature Explorers from 1-4pm

Perks of this class include:

- **Preparing your child for kindergarten**
- **More social time with peers**
- **Additional access to Leisure Centers Nature Learning Lab and Outdoor Classroom.**
- **All the benefits that nature has to offer!**

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is an extended preschool program in the afternoon where students between the ages of 3 and 6 years old get a semi-structured preschool experience with lunchtime included. Each child needs to bring their own lunch.

Daily 1-hour Lunch Bunch Pass is available for purchase at the front desk for $10.00
Daily 2-hour Lunch Bunch Pass is available for purchase at the front desk for $20.00

	1 or 2 Hour Option
• Monday & Wednesday	Noon–1:00p or Noon–2:00p
• Tuesday & Thursday	Noon–1:00p or Noon–2:00p
• Friday	Noon–1:00p or Noon–2:00p

Lunch Bunch Schedule

Lunch from Noon–12:30pm
Free Play 12:30–1:00pm
Specialty Activities 1:00–2:00pm.

Please review the guidelines below for all Preschool Extension Programs

- Talk to your student about eating the healthy foods first. Then the treat (optional).
- Pack foods that your student enjoys. (It is often difficult getting students to eat).
- Refrigeration is not available, send a reusable cold ice pack or equivalent when appropriate.
- Pack necessary straws and silverware.
- Please remind students not to share food because of allergies.
- Please do not pack any nut products or nut related foods.
- Students sit facing the table and practice good table manners (With help).
- Students eat and clean up after themselves before playing.
- Please label lunch boxes.

PAYMENT AND REFUND INFORMATION

As noted in the Des Plaines Park District "Refund Request Form", the Creative Corners Preschool Program has exceptions to the standard fees listed in the form

EFT Tuition Payment

- To set up an EFT Tuition Payment Plan: You must register at the Leisure Center, 2222 Birch Street. You must provide a valid credit or debit card. Your first installment payment includes both the tuition for September and the $35 non-refundable, nontransferable payment plan-processing fee.
- The balance divides into 8 equal monthly installment payments transfers electronically from a credit or debit card.
- Each additional installment payment transfers on the 15th of the prior month. (e.g., Oct. paid on Sept.15.)

Creative Corners Refund Policy

- $35.00 processing fee is non-refundable, non-transferable
- All refunds received and DATE STAMPED by August 7th will result in the retention of $75.00 of the September Tuition for each program registered, does not include Lunch Bunch. All refunds received and DATE STAMPED August 8th–August 30th will result in the retention of the full September tuition for each program registered, includes Lunch Bunch.
- All refunds received and DATE STAMPED after August 31st will result in the retention of all paid tuition including the month in which the refund was submitted.
- Requests for a full refund are only honored if the request is due to a medical condition or enrollment into an early intervention program. A note from doctor / school must accompany the request.
- No partial month refunds are paid, regardless of the reason.

WHAT TO BRING EACH DAY

Please have your student bring **a full-size backpack** or school bag to class so we can make sure they take their papers and art projects home. While the small backpacks are cute, they do not fit all the necessary items that go to and from home each day. We also do not want to squish the projects that the students worked so hard on!

We also ask that each student keep an extra change of clothes in their locker including a top, bottom, socks and underwear. Please put their name or initials inside each backpack.

Please send students with their own crayons and glue stick. Each student will have their own locker to store their backpack for the day. **Please label everything with your child's name on it.**

Food Items: Healthy Morning Snack, please do not pack snacks that contain peanuts
Daily Items: Dress for the weather. Pack extra clothes, gym shoes, water bottle

WHAT TO BRING CONT

Supply List: To be brought at "Meet the Teacher Night"

- *3 containers of surface disinfectant wipes*
- *2 containers of handwipes*
- *2 rolls of paper towels*
- *1 box of ziplock sandwhich bags*
- *1 box of kleenex*
- 1 pack of 9 inch uncoated economy paper plates
- 4 pack of glue sticks
- 2 pack of black permanent or sharpie markers
- 1 Crayola pack of broadline markers
- 2 containers of pump hand soap

Requests by your child's teacher may be made for items throughout the school year if needed. Thanks!

BATHROOMS

All students must be fully toilet-trained and tend to their own bathroom needs. **No pull-ups or diapers allowed.** Teachers will walk your student to the bathroom. Teachers will not change your student or assist them in the bathroom. **If your student has a bathroom accident, a teacher will call families to come and change them.** Please be sure the people on your emergency phone list are aware of this policy. Three incidents will indicate that your student is not fully toilet trained and removal from the program will be until they have achieved this requirement. Please emphasize with your student the importance of telling their teacher when they need to use the bathroom.

Exceptions are made for Preschool Prep if progress is being made towards full potty training. Students in pull-ups must have an adult waiting in the building for changing purposes.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays are special occasions and receive special attention at preschool, but not take the place of a party. We want to recognize your student's special day and continue with the day's planned activities. We ask that birthday activities stay simple and teacher-directed. Teachers will not pass out party invitations. **If you are interested in bringing treats for your child's birthday, please ask your child' s teacher what they would recommend for classroom allergy purposes.** Thank you for helping to keep each student's special day safe and kind.

CLASSROOM NEWSLETTERS/NOTES

For some special days, we may request that you bring certain items to the classroom via email. Family activities, general information, holidays, non-attendance days and special happenings, such as picture day, will be included in handouts and newsletters. Teachers will provide contact information during the first few weeks of school.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS: SNOW DAYS AND COLD DAYS

Creative Corners follows District 62 for *most* holidays and breaks but not all of them. In cases of inclement weather (snow) or extreme cold, the park district will evaluate the situation and notify families via ePACT of any closures if they occur. If staff/ families can travel safely to our facilities, we will not cancel programs. If in the event of cancellation due to weather, there will not be make up days.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

For all of our classes we ask that parents and guardians:
Please park in one of our parking lots and walk through a main entrance to enter our building. We try to keep our side entrances locked for safety. The sides doors can be used to leave but we ask that when you arrive, you use a main entrance. Please do not park in the circle drive when dropping off or picking up.

- For a smooth transition, the teachers will greet you at the door, ask you to sign in on ePACT and escort your student inside the building. Doors will open at the start of class but not before as our teachers need adequate time to organize and set up for the day.
- At pick up, please follow the same line up procedure outside of the West/Playground doors. We appreciate your promptness in picking up your student. Your student eagerly awaits your arrival and is disappointed when you do not arrive on time.

- Please use caution in the parking lots: drive slowly; look for pedestrians and especially students; do not use cell phones; and look before crossing.
- Our goal is to create a safe environment for your student. We appreciate your cooperation with this procedure. All classrooms will close 5 minutes after the class has started. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late, please go to the front desk, and we will escort your child to class.

AUTHORIZATION FOR PICK-UP

If you will not be picking up your student, please be sure that all persons authorized to pick up your student are on your pick up list in ePACT. Students will not be released to someone not listed on the ePACT list. If the teachers do not know this person, picture identification (e.g. a driver's license) will be required.

If an emergency arises where a parent requests someone who is not on list to pick up list to sign out their child, they must call the Leisure Center Front desk 847-391-5700, prior to pick up, so the teacher is aware of the change.

FAMILY-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Please keep us informed of any changes at home or in your student's life. A change can affect your student's behavior, and notification will help us work more effectively with your student. Notify the teachers when you have a new telephone number, address, email address or if there are any changes on the emergency information sheet. This will ensure that we can reach you in an emergency. We believe that families and teachers working together can provide the best learning environment for students.

Absent/Calling Out

We kindly ask that if your child will be out one day due to illness, vacation, or for any other reason, that you communicate that absence with your child's preschool teacher. This helps our staff prep for the day and will not keep our staff waiting for your child.

If your child will not be in class we ask that you call/email/or message our staff via Class Dojo to inform them.

CLASS	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL
Preschool Prep	847-390-4907	connie.launius@dpparks.org
Terrific 3's	847-324-6742	daphane.takacs@dpparks.org
Fabulous 4's & 5's	847-324-6741	margaret.nuscher@dpparks.org
Spanish Immersion	847-324-6743	elena.ortizgarcia@dpparks.org
Nature Explorers	847-324-6742	ciara.paluch@dpparks.org

Class Dojo!



- Class dojo will be used for class reminders, updates, and general teacher-parent communication.
- We recommend downloading the class dojo app to your mobile device
- Please create an account if you do not already have one.
- You will get an email invite for your child's class. This will be the same email as the one used for ePACT.
- You can also use the QR code associated with your child's class to join. This will be provided on the Teacher Meet and Greet dates.

LATE PICK UP

Classroom doors will open promptly at the time class is scheduled to begin and will reopen at dismissal. Please be on time for arrival and dismissal. If you will be extremely late, due to unforeseen circumstances, please call the Leisure Center front desk at 847-391-5700.

If you are late picking up, there will be a 5-minute grace period at end of school. After that, there is a $5 charge for every 5 minutes you are late picking up your student. (Example: Lunch Bunch ends at 2:00p and you arrive at 2:21p. There is a $15 late fee.)

Please make every effort to be on time. If you are more than 20 minutes late, your student goes to our front desk area.

Please pay Late pick-up fees promptly. **The fee adds to your Household Account and it will restrict you from registering for park district programs until the balance is clear.**

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Philosophy

It is our belief that behavior management is the on-going process of developing inner controls so that student can manage their own behavior in a socially respected and acceptable way. Our goal is that each student will move toward self-discipline in a positive environment guided by teachers who convey and model appropriate behaviors. Teachers acknowledge each student's capacity to handle their classroom setting. Any encounters that may develop add to the student's emotional growth.

Creative Corners teachers use behavior management that reinforces positive behavior. If behavioral problems occur, there may be a short removal from the group or redirection to a more appropriate activity. Families will be informed of continuing behavioral concerns.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT CONT.

Teacher's Role in the Behavior Management Process

Teachers use the following techniques when promoting self-discipline:

- Encouraging appropriate behavior
- Offering alternatives
- Applying natural consequences
- Redirecting student to another activity
- Using appropriate, student-centered, consistent and fair rules
- Incorporating the student's ideas into classroom rules
- Being a role-model for appropriate behavior
- Entering into play
- Reinforcing appropriate behavior in peers
- Removing the student from a situation to help the student gain self-control
- Working to strengthen a student's communication skills
- Offering choices and recognizing positive behavior

Student's Role in Developing Behavior Management

- Helping to establish classroom rules
- Encouraging others to Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe
- Being a role model for appropriate behavior
- Using words to express feelings
- Problem solving

Involving families in Behavior Management

If a student continues to exhibit inappropriate behaviors, even with the help and support of teachers and family, a meeting with teachers, supervisors and other support staff may be necessary. Written notices given to guardians who do not respond positively to a teacher's redirection, for behaviors such as:

1. Being physically abusive: hitting, kicking, biting, throwing objects
2. Defying/ignoring authority
3. Using abusive and/or foul language
4. Abusing equipment, supplies, facilities
5. Running away, or trying to leave the program room or facility

The First Written Notice

This will alert the parent of the continuation of inappropriate behavior. The family, Recreation Supervisor and teachers will meet to discuss steps to correct the behavior. Teachers may request permission to access outside resources from M-NASR, or District 62 for additional information on how to meet the student's needs. Depending on the severity of the situation, the student leaves the classroom for the remainder of the day.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT CONT.

The Second Written Notice

This will result in hosting a family/ teacher meeting to discuss inappropriate behavior. The family, teachers, Recreation Supervisor, and other professionals working with the student will develop a behavior modification plan. Revisions and modifications to this plan as needed. Depending on the severity of the situation, student leaves the classroom for the remainder of the day and receive up to a 2-day suspension.

The Third Written Notice

Depending on the severity of the situation, the student leaves the classroom for the remainder of the day and will be removed from the program. If at any time a student's behavior threatens his or her own safety or the safety of others, the family/guardian notified and expected to pick the student up within the half hour. If the student is not benefiting from our program, or the health, safety and welfare of this student and/or that of another student in the group are at risk, we reserve the right to dismiss the student.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Teachers act as advocates for you and your student. The identification of an early delay or disability, betters the chance that intervention services can help a student reach their potential. Your student's teacher can provide you with valuable resources. A teacher may need additional information on how to meet your student's needs. In this instance, the teacher will request your written permission for a professional from an outside organization to come and observe your student. This professional will then confer with you and the teachers. If you feel that your student would benefit from an evaluation, please contact the D62 Westerhold Early Learning Center. 847-824-1065.

ADA AND SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

The Des Plaines Park District participates in a cooperative agreement with Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation (M-NASR). This team of therapeutic recreation professionals provides inclusion assistance for park district programs. If, throughout the school year, a Creative Corners staff member requests an observation from M-NASR, we will request that the family visit District 62 for an additional observation. Information about M-NASR found on our website, www.DPParks.org, or the M-NASR website, www.MNASR.org .

Assistance will be determined on a case by case basis accounting for independent functioning. Eloping (or running away) will not be tolerated and will result in removal from class.

INJURY

For any student injured and requires more than basic first aid, the following steps taken:

1. Attempt to contact family/guardian.
2. Attempt to contact emergency contacts.
3. If necessary, the student transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance, accompanied by a staff member.
4. The Recreation Supervisor will make a follow-up phone call to the family.

The Des Plaines Park District does not provide accident insurance or medical insurance to its participants.

ILLNESS POLICY

Students are not able to benefit from our program when they are not well. Oftentimes, they can be spreading contagious illnesses to other students. We ask that you strictly adhere to these standards so all preschool students and staff stay protected.

We need your help! Please take your student's temperature before sending them to school. If they have a fever or are not feeling well, do not send them to school for the safety of your student, other students and our staff.

If your student becomes ill while at school, a guardian will be notified for pick up. If a guardian is unavailable, the emergency contacts called and the student picked up within one hour. Your student should not return to school until they have been fever/symptom free for 24 hours.

Students should not attend class if the following symptoms are present:

- **Cold/Flu/COVID:** If a student is lethargic, uncomfortable, with coughing, congestion and fever.
- **Runny Nose:** If mucus is green or yellow, the student should not attend class until the mucus is clear or completely gone.
- **Fever, Diarrhea, or Vomiting:** Must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Sore Throat:** If student has pain anywhere in throat
- **Earache or Ear Infection:** If a student has pain in their ear(s) or throat.
- **Rash/ Open Abrasion / Injury:** cuts, broken bones, open sores.
- **Communicable Disease/ Infestation/ Contagious Condition:** Contagious to others. (Examples: Head Lice/Strep Throat/Ringworm/Impetigo/Hand, Foot and Mouth/Bed Bugs/ Pink Eye)

Illness Guidelines:

Take prescribed medication for 24 hours or provide doctor's note to return to school. Medication administered at home. If your student requires medication or any kind of treatment during school hours, the Medication Distribution form needs to be completed. This includes EpiPens, injectors, and inhalers.

THANK YOU

Thank you for you for choosing Creative Corners Preschool as your child's early education experience. We look forward to a fun school year. For any questions regarding material in the handbook, please contact Candice Morden, Recreation Supervisor.