

# Park District of Oak Park Parent Handbook

## Playschool, Preschool, & Pre-K Programs



*In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences in programs, parks and facilities.*



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Oak Park, IL 60302  
Phone: 708.725.2000  
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[www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the Park District of Oak Park's Playschool, Preschool, and Pre-K programs! Your child is about to begin an exciting journey over the next year where they will learn and grow socially, emotionally, and cognitively in a nurturing environment. They will look forward to coming to school each day to learn and socialize, through play!

The following handbook has information that will answer many questions you may have regarding our programs. In addition to the handbook, you will receive a variety of communication from your teachers on a regular basis regarding the curriculum, daily class schedule, and your child's growth through handouts, email, phone, and day-to-day interactions.

Please take a moment to read through all of our program's policies and procedures provided to you in the following pages. This handbook will be a helpful reference tool to keep throughout the school year.

We can't wait to work closely with you and your child as we grow, develop, learn, and play together! If you have any questions, or if I can be of assistance, please contact me at any time. The teachers and I look forward to a safe and fun-filled school year!

Kind Regards,

Barb Grooms  
Early Childhood Program Supervisor  
[barb.grooms@pdop.org](mailto:barb.grooms@pdop.org)  
(708)725-2108



## Staff

Our teachers have a wide variety of experience in the education and/or recreation field. They are committed to providing each individual child with a safe, fun, and positive school experience. We pride ourselves on the quality of our staff and their professional development. Each of our teachers has successfully completed a background check and are required to have active First Aid & CPR certifications. All of our teachers are required to participate in a minimum of 15 continuing education hours each year by participating in Early Childhood workshops, college courses, or conferences. Many of our teachers have been with us for years and currently possess certifications in the education field. They put much of themselves into the program, and we value them for their individual strengths and team player attitudes!

### Center/Program Contact Information

<u>Location</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Cell Phone Number</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Longfellow Center	Playschool	(708) 426-3966	<a href="mailto:Stevenson.Playschool@pdop.org">Stevenson.Playschool@pdop.org</a>
Carroll Center	Preschool	(708) 613-1042	<a href="mailto:Carroll.Preschool@pdop.org">Carroll.Preschool@pdop.org</a>
Austin Gardens	Nature Preschool	(708) 606-7702	<a href="mailto:Austin.Preschool@pdop.org">Austin.Preschool@pdop.org</a>
Carroll Center	Spanish Preschool	(708) 638-8818	<a href="mailto:Spanish.Preschool@pdop.org">Spanish.Preschool@pdop.org</a>
Carroll Center	Pre-Kindergarten	(708) 426-3571	<a href="mailto:Carroll.Prek@pdop.org">Carroll.Prek@pdop.org</a>



## Our Goals

### **Playschool, Preschool, and Pre-Kindergarten**

A developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment provides young children opportunities to develop socially, emotionally, and cognitively with hands-on exploration, experimentation, and socialization.

Teacher-directed activities and center-time play engage your child in literacy, math, science, art, and motor activities while creating an experience focused on 21<sup>st</sup> century problem-solving and flexible thinking habits.

### **Park District of Oak Park Mission**

In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences through programs, parks, and facilities.

## Our Curriculum

Our preschool program is play-based. Play is an essential part of each child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Play is important to us because it:

- Fosters a sense of self-awareness, self-control, and self-confidence
- Develops communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution
- Encourages responsible risk-taking, curiosity, and independence
- Builds a strong academic skill base through hands-on experience and exploration

Through structured teacher-directed activities and unstructured center time play, your child will be exposed to colors, numbers, letters, shapes, and relational concepts. Learning will be through large and fine motor activities as well as open-ended play in drama, science, math, literacy, and art. Teachers will provide you with a weekly calendar outlining the curriculum and learning concepts your child will be introduced to in class, using play as a vehicle.



# Playschool

## **Playschool (Ages 2-3)**

This class is a great first independent experience for your child! Playschool is designed to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children 2-3 years of age. This transition from home to school will emphasize the active development of your child's social, emotional, motor, and cognitive skills. The caring, qualified teachers will focus on preschool preparedness such as: taking turns, following directions, listening, and sharing. Language development is supported through daily theme based activities that include ABC's, counting, story time, songs, games, and projects.

Potty training is not required to enroll in this program; however, upon an accident, parents/guardians will be contacted to return to school to assist their child. Diapers will not be changed by our staff as they are not equipped to do so.

## **Sample Playschool Daily Schedule**

<b>9:00am</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Sign in</b>
<b>9:15am – 9:25am</b>	<b>Morning meeting</b>
<b>9:25am – 10:15am</b>	<b>Center Choice &amp; Snack Time</b>
<b>10:15am – 10:25am</b>	<b>Clean up/Gear Up for Outside</b>
<b>10:25am – 10:50am</b>	<b>Outside/Large Motor</b>
<b>10:50am - 11:00am</b>	<b>Circle Time</b>
<b>11:00am</b>	<b>Dismissal</b>

*Please note program schedules vary per program/center and are a guideline for classroom routines; adjustments to daily schedules may occur due to special events, activities, or student needs.*



## Preschool

### Preschool (Ages 3-5)

Our Preschool program offers children an opportunity to participate in a variety of age appropriate activities as they develop socially, emotionally, and cognitively through play. Classroom activities are planned to meet the varying needs of each child. Students will be introduced to letters and numbers as they explore different themes, shapes, colors, and concepts. Teachers focus on the development of each student: problem solving skills, ability to make real life connections, and peer relationships through everyday math, reading, social, and science discovery offer a well-rounded experience for young children.

We prefer that participants in preschool are potty/toilet-trained, but will work with the family.

8:45-8:50	Welcome/Sign-in
8:50-9:10	Table Time/Fine Motor
9:10-9:25	Circle time
9:25-10:45	Center and Snack Time
10:45-10:55	Clean-up
10:55-11:30	Outside/Gross Motor
11:30 – 11:45	Closing Story time/Finger plays/Songs

*Please note program schedules vary per program/center and are a guideline for classroom routines; adjustments to daily schedules may occur due to special events, activities, or student needs.*



## Pre-Kindergarten

### **Pre-Kindergarten (Ages 4-5)**

Our Pre-Kindergarten program offers a developmentally appropriate, play-based class designed to meet the needs of children as they take their next steps in learning. Classroom activities are planned so that children can work independently, as well as in small and large groups. Curriculum materials focus on phonemic awareness, writing, math, and reading readiness while promoting independent thinking and problem solving skills. Our program goal is to provide academic opportunities that are critical in developing your child's foundation for future school success through interactions with materials, peers and teachers. To enhance our students learning for a bi-lingual future, this readiness program will introduce participants to basic colors, shapes, and numbers in Spanish as well as English.

### **Pre-Kindergarten Sample Class Schedule**

<b>8:30am-8:50am</b>	<b>Sign In/Table Activities/Journal writing</b>
<b>8:50 – 9:20am</b>	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<b>9:20 – 10:30am</b>	<b>Planned Activity Time/Snack Time</b>
<b>10:30 – 10:40am</b>	<b>Clean Up</b>
<b>10:40-11:15</b>	<b>Outdoor/Large Motor</b>
<b>11:15 – 11:25</b>	<b>Independent Quiet Reading</b>
<b>11:25 – 11:50</b>	<b>Small group work</b>
<b>11:50 – 12:00</b>	<b>Final Class meeting</b>

*Please note program schedules vary per program/center and are a guideline for classroom routines; adjustments to daily schedules may occur due to special events, activities, or student needs.*





## Program Times and Locations

### **Playschool (Ages 2-3)**

Longfellow Center	Mon/Tues/Wed	9-11:00am
610 S. Ridgeland	Thur/Fri	9-11:00am

### **Preschool (Ages 3-5)**

Carroll Center	Mon/Tues/Wed	8:45-11:45am
1125 S. Kenilworth	Thur/Fri	8:45-11:45am

### **Nature Preschool (Ages 3-5)**

Austin Gardens	Mon/Tues/Wed	8:45-11:45am
167 Forest Ave	Thur/Fri	8:45-11:45am

### **Spanish Preschool (Ages 3-5)**

Carroll Center	Mon/Tues/Wed	8:45-11:45am
1125 S. Kenilworth	Thur/Fri	8:45-11:45am

### **Pre-Kindergarten (Ages 4-5)**

Carroll Center	Mon thru Fri	8:30-Noon
1125 S. Kenilworth		

All Playschool/Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten programs in the PDOP system honor the Illinois State Standard September 1<sup>st</sup> birthday cut off structure.

School District 97 (Oak Park) requires that students enroll in the grade that is age-appropriate for your child beginning in the 2022-23 school year. In some instances, this means if you were enroll your child in an “extra” year of Preschool, they would essentially “skip” Kindergarten. [Follow this link for details regarding the SD 97 policy.](#) For questions regarding which class is appropriate for you child, please contact the program supervisor.



## Registration

Registration is available on-line at: [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org) through late August 2021. All enrollment completed will take place online. At the time of registration, you will need to:

- Pay a \$50 non-refundable administration fee
- Pay the first month tuition (fees vary per program)

Following registration, you will receive a welcome email and link for submitting your child's emergency contact information, immunization records, birth certificate, health information, etc.

- Oak Park residents actively enrolled in Playschool/Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten at the time of registration are eligible for priority enrollment for the following school year. (Siblings of currently enrolled Oak Park households are also given priority.)
- Currently enrolled non-residents will be able to register during the “non-resident priority” enrollment period. Non-residents (that are not registered for Playschool/Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten) will be able to register for the following school year after the priority non-resident registration has begun. This is to ensure that the residents of Oak Park, along with the non-resident currently enrolled families, have priority.

### Administration Fee

The \$50, non-refundable administration fee aids in covering the program cost for such things as: postage, newsletters & calendars, copy paper & ink, and processing fees.



## Paperwork

Each child is required to have completed emergency information on-site prior to your child's first day of attendance. Additionally, we require a copy of each participant's birth certificate, medical examination form (Physical) dated within 2 years, and immunization records. The medical information is to be completed by you and your physician on our Certificate of Health Form (found on-line).

**All children must be enrolled three business days prior to starting school.** This time is necessary for the Park District to process your registration, turn in paperwork, and for the teachers to prepare for your child's attendance.

Each program must reach a minimum of  
8 participants by August 15<sup>th</sup> in order to run.

If the minimum enrollment requirement is not met by August 15th, the Program Supervisor will keep a list of families that are interested in joining specific locations and we will re-evaluate opening a section, once the minimum is reached.

## Monthly Payment Information

You will be billed on a monthly basis for your child's tuition. Billing dates will be the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, starting in September. Payment is due to our registration offices by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the month, **BEFORE** the service is received. If you sign up for our auto debit program at the time of registration, charges will occur on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

If payment is not received by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the month, a Park District customer service staff member will contact you to make payment. If late payment is not received by the last day of the month, your child will not be allowed to participate in the next months' program until the installment is paid in full.



## Monthly Payment Instructions

### Automatic Payment Deductions

For your convenience, the Park District offers and encourages the use of an automatic payment system, where payments are deducted monthly from your credit card (MasterCard, Visa, Discover or American Express) when billing is processed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month (or first business day should the 15<sup>th</sup> fall on a Sunday). If you are interested in using this program, please visit one of our registration facilities to obtain and complete a copy.

### Manual Payment Options

- Online through your family's account at [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org) after bills are processed. A username and password is required.
- Over the phone. Please call one of our registration facilities at 708-725-2000.
- Checks may be mailed to one of our registration facilities (addresses above). If mailing a payment, allow at least seven days for the payment to be received and processed by the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the month.

**On-site staff members do not have payment information and will not accept payments.** Their primary responsibility is your child's safety and enjoyment.

**All monthly payments are the same.** Program costs are tabulated for the entire year, and then divided evenly between the September-May payments. Even if your child misses days occasionally, you are still responsible for your regular monthly tuition rate. We hire teachers, purchase supplies and pay for field trips based on the number of children enrolled.

Please contact Scott Sekulich, Customer Service Manager at (708)725-2023 or [scott.sekulich@pdop.org](mailto:scott.sekulich@pdop.org) should you have a situation that requires special attention, are looking for scholarship information, or have other questions pertaining to billing.



## Refund Policy & Receipts

### Refund/Credit Policy

Refunds will be prorated and based on the number of full program days remaining in the month. Daily rates are different for each program and will be calculated upon the receipt of the required Program Withdrawal Request form. This rate is based on the tuition for the entire school year (daily rate/program fees vary) divided by the total number of attendance days for your child's specific program (number of program attendance days vary).

**Refunds are only processed and prorated for days that the program is scheduled to operate during any particular month; scheduled school holidays and breaks are not included.** There are no discounts or refunds given for absences. Parents may not deduct payment for days their child is registered for, but does not attend.

### Withdrawing from the Program

Should at any time, you need to withdraw from the program please contact the program supervisor at (708)725-2108 or our Customer Service team at 708-725-2000. We require a 2-week notice and a Program Withdrawal Request form to be completed and turned in to one of registration facilities. This will allow us to properly cancel automatic debit, communicate with teachers, and transition the child out of the program properly. If notification of withdrawal is not given, billing will continue.

### Receipts

Receipts are available on your family's account ([www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org)). Receipts can also be emailed or printed during payment of program fees at the Administrative Office. The Park District will mail tax statements to families at the end of the year upon request.

The Park District of Oak Park's Tax ID Number is 36-6006028.

In case of a separation or divorce, the custodial parent is responsible to make payments on time, and will receive all bills and tax statements.



## Sign-In/Sign-out Procedure

### Signing-in

Please do not bring your child to school more than five minutes prior to the start of class. The teachers need adequate time to prepare for student arrival. At the time of drop off, staff will be completing a health check and signing in your child to prevent germ transmission. Children will begin the day by washing their hands (this is a DCFS requirement), using the restroom, and changing into shoes/slippers that are required to stay at school. Please wear a mask and maintain social distancing while in line to drop off your child. Staff will assist the children with their morning routine as we are asking that drop off occur at the building entrance, rather than at the classroom door.

### Signing-out

Pick up time is promptly at the end of your child's scheduled program. At pick up a staff member will sign-out your child from the program. Persons authorized to pick up your child will be found on the emergency contact form turned in prior to the first day of school. Please wear a mask and maintain social distancing while in line to pick up your child.

If you wish to authorize additional people to pick up your child, their contact information must be provided on the completed emergency form. The Park District must receive written or verbal notification from parents of any additions or changes to this list.

Please inform anyone who picks up your child that they will be asked to show photo identification; this may include parents who we do not see regularly.

If the teachers have any questions about an individual's authorization to pick up your child, you will be contacted before your child is released.

While we will always attempt to follow parental wishes, the Park District cannot stop a parent from picking up their child unless there is legal documentation in place. Please provide the Program Supervisor with confidential custody information.





## Late Pick-Up Policy

If you are running late, please call your child's teachers on the program cell phone to notify them of your arrival time (page 3). If you are stuck in traffic or unable to pick up your child for any reason, please contact one of the authorized adults listed on your child's emergency form.

### Late Fee:

5 to 15 minutes after program ends	\$10.00
16-30 minutes after program ends	\$20.00
31-45 minutes after program ends	\$30.00
Over 46 minutes after program ends	\$40.00

Teachers cannot accept late fee payments. All parents picking up their child late will be required to sign a late payment form and will be billed accordingly through our registration office.

If we have no contact from a parent 15 minutes after the scheduled end of the program, a responsible party from your emergency form will be contacted to pick up your child. If we are unable to make contact with anyone who can pick up your child 30 minutes after the program ends, we will contact the Oak Park Police Department for assistance. If you are late and there is no one at your child's school when you arrive for pick-up, first contact the individuals listed on your emergency form to see if they have your child.

**After three late pick-ups of 30 minutes or more, the Park District will dismiss the student from the program. This policy is enforced for the entire school year for all program locations.**



## Reporting an Absence

If your child will be absent from the program, whether due to illness or any other reason, you must call the center cell phone and leave a message for your child's teachers or send an email. Center numbers and email addresses can be found on page 3 of the handbook or on-line at [www.pdop.org/preschool/](http://www.pdop.org/preschool/). Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) require that we keep record of each child's absence(s) from school. When calling or emailing to report an absence, please give your name, your child's name (first and last), reason, and the date(s) they will be absent.

If the absence is COVID-19 related, or any other communicable disease (see page 17-18) a doctor's clearance letter will be required before their return to school.





## Calendar, Days Off & School Holidays

The Playschool, Preschool, and Pre-K programs follow School District 97's school calendar. Please note the Park District school programs may be closed additional dates due to other reasons, i.e., teacher institute days. Your child's teacher will remind you of non-attendance days in the weekly calendars, postings at school, or email reminders.

### School Year Dates:

- **First Day\*:**
  - Mon/Tues/Wed and Pre-K classes: Tuesday, September 7, 2021
  - Thurs/Fri classes: Thursday, September 9, 2021
- **Last Day:**
  - Mon/Tues/Wed classes: Wednesday, May 25, 2022
  - Thur/Fri and Pre-K classes: Friday, May 27, 2022

\*Playschool will have an adjusted schedule the first day of school in order to help the separation process. Your child's teacher will email with details.

### **2021-2022 Non-Attendance Day Calendar**

**Monday, October 11**  
**Thursday, October 21 Friday,**  
**October 22**  
**Tuesday, November 2**  
**Wednesday, November 24**  
**Thursday, November 25 Friday,**  
**November 26**

#### **Winter Break:**

**Monday, Dec 20 –Monday, January 3**  
**(School resumes 1/4/22)**

**Monday, January 17**  
**Thursday, February 3**  
**Friday, February 4**  
**Monday, February 21**  
**Tuesday, March 15**

#### **Spring Break:**

**Monday, Mar 28 -Friday, April 1**  
**Friday, April 15**



## Emergency Closings

For weather-related school closings check the park district website [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org), as well as the Homeroom app for more information. An email blast will be sent out to program participants. School District 97 may suddenly schedule a “Remote Learning Day” in case of extreme weather. (In previous years, this would have been described as a “Snow Day”.) In this instance, programs may be cancelled. Please make sure your contact information in the Amilia and CampDoc systems are accurate to ensure you receive such alerts.

Should the Park District facility where your child attends school experience issues like technical or mechanical difficulties or other unforeseen situations, our programs will be cancelled and parents will be notified.



## Health Care Policies

**For the benefit of all the children and teachers in the program, we ask that you keep your child home if they are showing any signs of illness.**

The Site Director, or designee, will conduct visual and verbal health checks of all that enter the center including children, parents and staff. Parents are to check their child's temperature at home before leaving to come to school. It is the parent's responsibility to verify their child's daily health is adequate before bringing them to school.

A physician is to diagnose any child who experiences symptoms of a contagious disease. If you have any questions regarding an illness, please call your health care provider in advance before dropping your child off.

**Staff will refuse entry to any child or adult with signs of illness, such as:**

- **COVID-19 related symptoms:**
  - Temperature of 100.4 degrees or above
  - Vomiting or Diarrhea
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Cough and/or shortness of breath
  - Chills and/or repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Loss of smell or taste
  - Unexplained rashes
  - Toe discoloration/pain/blisters
  - Symptoms consistent with conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- **Contagious Infestations or Infections:** These need prompt treatment to prevent the spread to others. If your child should come down with a contagious infection, other parents will be notified; names will be kept confidential.

- Below is a partial list of contagious infestations for which a doctor's clearance note is required prior to your child's return to school. This is not a full list.

- **COVID-19**
- **Strep throat**
- **Chicken Pox**
- **Ringworm**
- **Head Lice**
- **Impetigo**
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**

Make sure you have a plan in place in case your child gets sick while at school. If you are unable to leave work yourself, please have someone who is able to care for your child lined up. This is for the well-being and comfort of your child, as well as all of the other students and teachers.

**All PDOP Playschool/Preschool/Pre-K classes will follow the guidance of the Village of Oak Park Local Health Department, DCFS, and other applicable governing bodies.**

**Per DCFS regulations Children will be excluded from school until 24 hours symptom free, without the use of fever-reducing medication.**

Families must immediately notify the PDOP preschool if someone in their home tests positive, or if the child has been in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19.

**A new or freshly laundered mask must be worn each day. There should be at least 1-2 extra clean masks sent to school in your child's backpack.**

**If your child will not attend the program due to an illness, you must call the center cell phone and leave a message for your child's teachers or send an email. Please give your name, your child's name (first and last), reason, and the date(s) they will be absent.**

**If a child becomes ill or injured while on the site**, the parent will be notified immediately. Please always leave a phone number where a person authorized to pick up your child can be reached quickly. Teachers will call the emergency contacts listed on your child's emergency information form if they are unable to reach a parent or guardian directly. In case of a severe injury or illness that may require care from a health care professional, teachers will first contact emergency services to provide immediate care for your child on-site or for transport to a local hospital.

## **Dispensing Medication**

If your child requires medication during the time they are in our care, please notify your child's teacher as soon as possible. Before any medication (prescription and non-prescription) may be given to teachers to keep secured at school, a medication dispense form must be completed; these are available through your child's teacher or online at [www.pdop.org/preschool/](http://www.pdop.org/preschool/).

Both prescription and non-prescription medicines must be in their **original container and clearly marked with the child's first and last name, medication name, doctor's name, dosage and other specific directions**. Parents must bring medication directly to the teacher at the program location; please verbally review all instructions and any other special considerations with your child's teacher at this time.

All medications will be kept in a secure place determined by your child's teacher. Our teachers are not authorized to directly administer any medications unless given written permission otherwise.

**Thank you for your cooperation in helping us to provide a safe and healthy environment for all participants.**



## Snacks

The Park District of Oak Park will be providing snack to the students.

Due to the increased prevalence and risk of anaphylaxis associated with children who have peanut/nut allergies, **we are a peanut/nut-aware facility**. Despite our best efforts, we cannot guarantee an absolutely allergen-free environment. The goal is to create an atmosphere that will reduce the risks to children with life threatening peanut/nut allergies. Please note that there are black walnut trees on the property at Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center and children will be investigating natural materials. The PDOP cannot guarantee that a child will not have direct exposure to tree nuts or other allergens.

When providing snack, we will not knowingly provide:

1. Nuts of any kind (peanuts, walnuts, pecans, almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, pistachios,) and any other nuts.
2. Food that “may contain peanuts or tree nuts”
3. Food that is “made on the same equipment as peanuts or tree nuts”
4. Food that is “made in the same facility as peanuts or tree nuts”
5. Food without labels or official ingredients

If you wish to celebrate your child’s birthday with a special snack, the above peanut-free/tree nut-free requirements must be met. The snack must be store purchased and prepackaged. We will send the snack home with the students at dismissal time. Each family then may make their own choices regarding the extra birthday snack.

DCFS licensing standards require us to follow state guidelines.  
Therefore, homemade food goods are not allowed.

**The following snacks are examples (this is not an exhaustive list):**

Fruit cups	Rice Cakes	Bagels & low fat cream cheese
Apple Sauce	Yogurt	Pita bread & hummus
Cheese bites	Graham Crackers	Goldfish Crackers
Cheese & Crackers	Granola or Fruit Bars	Animal Crackers
Fresh Veggies (Like cucumber slices, green pepper strips) & hummus	Fresh Fruit: small oranges, berries, small apples, bananas, etc.	Fresh vegetables: cucumber slices, green pepper strips, etc.

**Due to choking hazards, the following snacks are not permitted.**

popcorn	Whole grapes (halved grapes are acceptable)
Uncut carrots (carrots in cut in thin, short strips are acceptable)	Cherry tomatoes (halved cherry tomatoes are acceptable)
Raw veggies that are not already cut into small manageable chunks.	

## **Food Allergies**

If a child has special dietary needs due to medication, allergies, illness, or special circumstances, teachers must be notified in writing in the CampDoc online system. Food allergies will be posted in the Park District facility's kitchen, so our teachers can ensure proper food distribution, if there are class-wide snacks provided for a special occasion. If a child has multiple food allergies or dietary restrictions and is unable to have the provided snack, we welcome families to provide snacks in a labeled container specifically for your child. In these special circumstances, please notify the Program Supervisor and teachers for approval.



## Guidance & Discipline Policy

A positive approach will be used regarding discipline. Redirection, distraction, gentle persuasion and loving guidance are used in handling most situations. We try to always work for the good of each child, as well as the class. If your child has specific circumstances that cannot be facilitated effectively by our classroom teachers, we will work with you to recommend outside resources to assist you.

We are committed to providing children and families with quality care in a safe and loving environment. A major part of that obligation is focused on the importance of redirection, guidance, and its effects on children in our care.

The following guidelines comprise our preschool discipline policy:

1. Teachers will set developmentally appropriate limits and behavior expectations.
2. Teachers will act with confidence, fairness, consistency, and patience when redirecting or providing consequences.
3. Teachers will praise and encourage positive behavior and serve as a role model for appropriate actions.
4. Teachers will state their directions and expectations in a positive tone and delivery, using a kind yet firm voice when redirecting or providing consequences.
5. Teachers will focus on the child's actions rather than their personality, making the child feel respected, confident, and reassured.
6. Teachers will address unexpected behavior immediately; consequences will be related to the act and may include a brief time away from the group.
7. Teachers will remove a child from one play area and direct them to another, and use time away for repeated unexpected behavior.
8. Teachers will keep a child's unexpected behavior in perspective.
9. Teachers will involve a parent in the disciplinary process when uncontrollable behavior and/or harmful behavior to self or others persists.
10. Teachers will maintain discipline guidelines set forth by individual state licensing authorities.
11. Teachers will NEVER use food or bathroom privileges as a form of punishment.
12. Teachers will NEVER use corporal/physical punishment.



13. All children, families and staff are to monitor and follow COVID-19 health & safety related guidelines from appropriate agencies including IDPH, CDC, Village of Oak Park, Cook County Public Health Department, DCFS and the like. This includes mask wearing, social distancing, and health and sanitation practices and other requirements deemed necessary by governing authorities.

The goal of discipline, redirection, and modeling is to help the child gain self-control through learning appropriate behavior. Time away from the group or activity provides the child an opportunity to refocus themselves. This time is short in duration and facilitated by a teacher.

The Park District of Oak Park reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers the safety of himself/herself or others. Each situation will be evaluated on its own merit and appropriate action will be taken.

After attempts have been made to meet a child's individual needs, any child who demonstrates inability to benefit from the type of program offered or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from the program. In all instances when the Park District decides that it is in the best interest of the child to terminate enrollment, parents' needs will be considered. Partnering with parents to meet the child's needs when he/she leaves the program, including referral to other agencies or facilities, will be provided.

The Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers the well-being of themselves or the program and no refunds are issued in these circumstances.



## Parent/Guardian Involvement

### Parent Teacher Conferences

Your child's teacher will schedule two conferences during the school year. As questions or concerns arise regarding your child's progress or development, additional meeting times can be scheduled. Please contact your teacher directly. As we approach parent/teacher conference time a sign-up sheet will be posted online.

We believe that open communication between parents and teachers is essential to your child's success and happiness.

### Family Events

There will be evening events held during the school year to accommodate and involve working parents. Events often revolve around the topics your child has been studying. All family events will follow current COVID-19/IDPH/DCFS guidelines.

### Field Trips/In-house Visitors/ Volunteers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, field trips, in-house visitors or volunteers will not be scheduled for the classroom this school year. This may change dependent on guidance from the appropriate governing bodies. There may be volunteering opportunities outside of the physical classroom. Please contact your child's teacher with ideas.



## A Day at School

### What to wear

Children should wear clothes that allow them to be comfortable exploring, playing, and getting dirty! Keep in mind that their play will involve experimentation with various media (clay, paint, mud, glue, play dough, sand, goop, grass, etc.) which may stain clothing. Please keep an extra change of clothes in your child's backpack and/or keep one at school for unexpected accidents or messes. Please label everything. All people, ages 2 and up, as permitted, will wear a facemask when arriving at and leaving the center, when in hallways and common areas and throughout the day except while eating/drinking. If social distancing cannot be maintained, even while playing outside, masks will be worn, as permitted. Please also bring a pair of shoes/slippers to be left at school and used only while at school.

### Outside play

Children will go outside on a daily basis, so dress appropriately for the weather. Please label all coats, boots and backpacks. Footwear should be conducive to running, climbing, and playing. We recommend closed toe and heel, rubber-bottomed shoes. Masks will also be worn when engaging in activities where the children cannot maintain social distance.

### Supplies

At the beginning of the school year, your teacher will provide you with a needed list of school supplies. There may also be other special project requests from your teacher such as paper towel rolls, a family photo, etc.

### Personal Belongings

Children are discouraged from bringing valuables to school, as neither the Park District nor teaching staff is responsible for lost or stolen items. Items from home will need to stay in the child's backpack during the school day.



## Specific & Special Needs

If your child has any specific needs, check and fill out the appropriate information on our on-line forms as well as communicate these needs directly with your child's teacher. Depending on the specific details, special arrangements may be made to best serve the needs of your child. Our goal is to help every student enjoy their first school experience.

Should you or your child's teacher feel your child needs additional support or one-on-one assistance, the Park District will work with WSSRA (West Suburban Special Recreation Association) to provide an inclusion aide during program hours at no additional cost. We are an inclusive program and partner with WSSRA to provide extra services for students. If you feel your child would benefit from such a service, please contact the Program Supervisor to start the process in finding a fit for your child.



## Emergency Forms & Paperwork

An on-line system, named “CampDoc”, is used by the Park District to fill out your child’s emergency contact information, complete waivers, share information, and upload documents. Please note if you have more than one child in our program(s) we require a separate form and documentation to be completed for each individual child.

Prior to jumping on-line and getting started, we ask that you have the following information ready as you begin the process and next steps in getting your child ready for the upcoming school year.

- A scanned copy of your child's birth certificate
  - Hard copies are accepted on site
  - Returning students already have a birth certificate on file. We do not need another copy.
- Certificate of Health Examination
  - Must be completed by you and your child’s doctor (TB test & Lead Test areas on the form need to be completed and the parent section needs to be completed and signed)
  - Hard copies also are accepted on site
  - The medical form has to be updated every 2 years, at minimum.
- Emergency contact information for those authorized to pick-up/drop-off your child
- Family health care provider contact information

Specific directions on how to complete the uploading of documents and indicating who is allowed to pick up your child from school will be provided as you work through the on-line document.

The link to begin will be emailed directly to parents/guardians from the CampDoc website. Please contact the program supervisor with any questions or problems with accessing the online database. Parents cannot access their account simply by going to the CampDoc website. The link is necessary to begin the process.

## **Medication at School**

The Medication Dispense form only needs to be completed if your child receives medication during program hours. Please ask your teacher for this form or download it from our website at: [www.pdop.org/preschool/](http://www.pdop.org/preschool/).

## **DCFS Licensing Standards Booklet**

This [handbook](#) provides parents with an outline of DCFS guidelines that our programs follow. In it, you will find staffing ratios, required teacher qualifications, general program requirements, health requirements and guidance & discipline information.

## **Privacy**

Information in your child's file will be shared with preschool staff, when necessary, to meet their educational needs. Your child's file will also be accessible to DCFS, but only if necessary. Otherwise, all records are to be kept private, and shared only with explicit written consent from the parent/guardian.

**ALL forms must be completed and documents uploaded to our secure site or turned in, in hard copy format, prior to your child's first day of school.**



## We Are Here For You!!

Questions and comments are always welcome! Additional information will be distributed to parents at each program location as the need arises. The Park District of Oak Park looks forward to a great school year.

### Customer Service (708)725-2000

Longfellow Center Playschool	(708) 426-3966	<a href="mailto:Carroll.Playschool@pdop.org">Carroll.Playschool@pdop.org</a>
Carroll Center Preschool	(708) 613-1042	<a href="mailto:Carroll.Preschool@pdop.org">Carroll.Preschool@pdop.org</a>
Austin Gardens Center	(708) 426-3585	<a href="mailto:Austin.Preschool@pdop.org">Austin.Preschool@pdop.org</a>
Carroll Center Spanish Preschool	(708) 638-8818	<a href="mailto:Spanish.Preschool@pdop.org">Spanish.Preschool@pdop.org</a>
Carroll Center Pre-K	(708) 426-3571	<a href="mailto:Carroll.Prek@pdop.org">Carroll.Prek@pdop.org</a>
Program Supervisor	(708) 725-2108	



*In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences in programs, parks and facilities.*



***I acknowledge receipt of the Park District of Oak Park's policy manual and the below listed policies:***

***Guidance and discipline policy***

***Hours of operation***

***School policy***

***Medical procedures***

***Expulsion policy***

***Financial policies***

***Snack policy***

***COVID-19 procedures***

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***Parent Signature:***

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***Date:***