Program Philosophy

The Sioux City Community School District is dedicated to the success of all children. Guided by knowledge of child development and research-based practices the early childhood staff provides developmentally appropriate experiences. The staff uses the early childhood curriculum as a framework for facilitating children’s growth in all areas of development. All children are seen as individuals; therefore, staff provides modifications and adaptations to insure the success of each child. The classroom environment is set up to encourage play, which is the most important process through which young children learn. The early childhood staff feels families play an important role in their child’s educational success. On going, open communication is vital. It is essential that families actively participate in their child’s education.
Dear Parents,

This handbook is for you with the hope that the information contained herein will answer many of the questions that you may have concerning Sioux City Community School policies and procedures.

Please feel free to contact your child’s teacher or the building principal at any time. You may visit your child’s school at any time, however we recommend that during the initial first two weeks of school that parents not visit. This helps the children and staff to establish a routine. Please call ahead to inform classroom staff of your visit.

This is your school. You are welcome at anytime!

Preschools are located in the following buildings:

Bryant Elementary  3040 Jones St  279-6819  Mary Kay Kollars
Clark Early Childhood Center/ 4315 Hamilton Blvd 239-7030  Amy Denny
Perry Creek
Leeds Elementary  3919 Jefferson  239-7034  Angela Bemus
Morningside Elementary  3601 Bushnell St  274-4048  Dawn Stansbury
Riverside Elementary  2303 Riverside Blvd  279-6811  Angela Holcomb
Spalding Park  4101 Stone Ave  274-4043  Mimi Moore
Unity Elementary  1901 Unity Ave  279-6839  Eric Kilburn

Kim Burrack, Preschool Administrator 293-0436
DESCRIPTION
The preschool programs will be taught by a Sioux City Community School District Early Childhood Special Education Teacher and supported by two/three Para-Educators. This will offer the opportunity for children with and without disabilities to learn and play together in an integrated setting. Sioux City Community School District also offers other special education programming for preschool children.

CURRICULUM
The curriculum framework is based on the Creative Curriculum, GOLD Assessment, the State of Iowa Board of Education Early Learning Standards, and by each student’s Individual Education Plan – IEP (if applicable). Plans are tailored to meet each individual student’s educational needs.

Creative Curriculum Philosophy
At the heart of the Teaching Strategies approach to early childhood education is The Creative Curriculum®, the country's leading scientifically based, comprehensive curriculum for programs serving children from birth to age 5.

We believe that curriculum should be integrated with high-quality assessment, professional development, and family connection resources to create a well-rounded program that addresses the needs of early childhood education professionals, children, and their families.

The Creative Curriculum® helps you plan and implement a developmentally appropriate program that promotes children's social-emotional development and learning in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.

It combines the latest research and the freshest ideas into a forward-thinking approach to learning--one that honors creativity and respects the role that teachers play in making learning exciting and relevant for every child in their classrooms.

Our unique approach is designed to inspire teachers, to help them create a high-quality learning environment and, most of all, to support their important efforts as they open doors to successful learning.

With The Creative Curriculum®, every program can put together a complete system that promotes positive outcomes for all children, including English-language learners, children with disabilities, and advanced learners. More information on Creative Curriculum can be found at www.teachingstrategies.com.
The Curriculum objectives include:

Social–Emotional
1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
   a. Manages feelings
   b. Follows limits and expectations
   c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
   a. Forms relationships with adults
   b. Responds to emotional cues
   c. Interacts with peers
   d. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
   a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
   b. Solves social problems

Physical
1. Demonstrates traveling skills
2. Demonstrates balancing skills
3. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
4. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
   a. Uses fingers and hands
   b. Uses writing and drawing tools

Language
1. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
   a. Comprehends language
   b. Follows directions
2. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
   a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
   b. Speaks clearly
   c. Uses conventional grammar
   d. Tells about another time or place
3. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
   a. Engages in conversations
   b. Uses social rules of language

Cognitive
1. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
   a. Attends and engages
   b. Persists
   c. Solves problems
d. Shows curiosity and motivation
e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking

2. Remembers and connects experiences
   a. Recognizes and recalls
   b. Makes connections

3. Uses classification skills

4. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
   a. Thinks symbolically
   b. Engages in sociodramatic play

**Literacy**

1. Demonstrates phonological awareness
   a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
   b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
   c. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound

2. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
   a. Identifies and names letters
   b. Uses letter–sound knowledge

3. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
   a. Uses and appreciates books
   b. Uses print concepts

4. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
   a. Interacts during read-alouds and book conversations
   b. Uses emergent reading skills
   c. Retells stories

5. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
   a. Writes name
   b. Writes to convey meaning

**Mathematics**

1. Uses number concepts and operations
   a. Counts
   b. Quantifies
   c. Connects numerals with their quantities

2. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
   a. Understands spatial relationships
   b. Understands shapes

3. Compares and measures

4. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

**Science and Technology**

1. Uses scientific inquiry skills

2. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
3. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
4. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth’s environment
5. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies
1. Demonstrates knowledge about self
2. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
3. Explores change related to familiar people or places
4. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts
1. Explores the visual arts
2. Explores musical concepts and expression
3. Explores dance and movement concepts
4. Explores drama through actions and language

English Language Acquisition
1. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
2. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

Creative Curriculum Assessment: GOLD

Purpose of assessment
Assessment information is essential for individualizing instruction for young children. This new system supports teachers and promotes appropriate teaching practices that help all children building the foundation they need for school success.

Specific skills measured by GOLD
This measure focuses on the ten GOLD objectives for development and learning (listed above).

How is the assessment tool administered?
The classroom staff observes individual children over time, but the context for observations may be a group setting.

How is the assessment information used and shared with families?
The classroom staff will maintain records for each child and complete the skill level ratings. The teacher interprets the results and uses them in planning daily activities and determining the needs of each individual child. Twice a year families will have a conference with the classroom teacher where a family report will be shared. This report describes your child’s development in the above listed areas.

Family involvement
During conferences, home visits, and through daily communications, classroom staff will seek information from families about the skills and behaviors their child
demonstrates at home. The information gathered from families is used in the assessment process.

Other Assessments

The IGDI’s screening will be given to all students three times throughout the school year. The screening determines whether students are developing literacy skills at an appropriate rate.

DISCIPLINE

We believe that social skills must be practiced. We demonstrate appropriate behavior and are prepared to keep reminding and practicing with the children as often as is necessary.

- Staff is alert to recognizing warning signals of potential problems and redirect or intervene whenever necessary.
- Children are encouraged to “problem solve” with words when there are conflicts with peers rather than use their hands, feet, or teeth.
- Staff is always nearby to help work through difficulties or remove a child who is physically aggressive towards others.

The preschool does not permit any abusive behavior or language on the premises by a parent towards any child, parent, staff member, or any other person affiliated with the program.

HOURS OF OPERATIONS

Preschool follows the Sioux City Community School District school calendar with a few exceptions. Calendars will be provided monthly noting the exceptions and monthly activities/events. School begins at 8:35 a.m. and dismisses at 2:30 p.m. on Monday and 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Classrooms will be open for your child at 8:30 a.m. prior to the start time of classes. You will need to arrange for childcare outside of this time.

PICK UP AND DROP OFF

- An adult is required to sign in and sign out the preschool child daily. Your preschooler will only be released to an adult. Please ensure that your child is picked up and dropped off by an adult daily.
- Your child will not be released to anyone other than their parent/guardian without written or verbal notification and without proper verification.
- Parents are asked to inform staff of schedule changes such as late arrival or early pick up so they can accommodate the change into the schedule.
- Please park in the designated parking lot when dropping off your child. You assume full responsibility for your child when outside of the building. Hold your child’s hand when walking to and from the building and be alert for moving vehicles.
- Do not leave any children in your car unattended.

BUS TRANSPORTATION
At this time transportation is not being provided to preschool children unless your child has a disability that warrants transportation.

**ABSENTEEISM**

*Help your child succeed in school!* Build the habit of good attendance early. Educational research shows that daily attendance is linked to academic success. Students who participate in daily activities are more successful in all academic areas. Daily attendance also helps students build positive relationships with other students and adults in the classroom. The Iowa Department of Education monitors student attendance. The goal of each preschool classroom is to maintain 96% attendance. *If your child’s attendance falls below 90%, you will be required to meet with the preschool administrator. At this meeting it will be determined if you child will be able to remain the preschool program.*

Parents can help ensure good attendance by:

- Establishing a regular bed time and morning routine
- Laying clothes out for your child and going through your child’s book bag the night before
- Do not let you child stay home unless they are truly sick. Keep in mind sometimes complaints of stomachache or headache can be signs of anxiety and not a reason to stay home. If your child seems anxious about school, talk with your child’s teacher and discuss what is going on with your child.
- Have a backup plan for getting to school should something come up (a family member, friend or neighbor).

Parents are asked to call the school before class begins on days their child will not attend or will be late. Please call the school each day your child will not attend. Each month, parents will receive a letter stating the number of days their child has been absent. Parents will be asked to meet with administration if the attendance becomes a problem.

**When should you keep your child home?**

A healthy environment is an important factor at the preschool. Children are happier and are more open to learning when they feel alert and energetic. In order to maintain this standard of health, parents are asked to evaluate their own child and determine if their child should stay home. The following are some guidelines to follow:

**Fever**

Every home should have a thermometer. No child with a fever of 100 degrees or over should be sent to school. We recommend your child stay home until they are free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

**Vomiting/Diarrhea**

Consult your doctor if the stomachache is persistent or severe enough to limit the child’s activity. If vomiting or diarrhea occur, we recommend you keep your child home until he/she has not vomited or had diarrhea for a full 24 hours. Call your doctor if there is no improvement in symptoms after 24 hours.
If your child does not have one of the above listed symptoms, please send him/her to school. If your child’s teacher notices your child has any sign or symptom of a contagious disease or illness, the parent will be immediately notified to come and pick up the child. When possible, your child will be kept in a comfortable location away from other children to prevent exposure until a parent arrives.

HEALTH

A nurse will be provided to each building to follow through on a health program which includes screening, immunizations, physicals and personal hygiene. Parents are invited to call for conferences with the nurse on any health problem your child may have.

Medication

- A medication authorization form will need to be filled out by the physician and signed by the parent for any medication that needs to be given longer than two weeks.
- Any prescribed or over the counter medications must be accompanied by a parent-signed Medication Consent form. Staff cannot administer any medication without these forms.
- All prescription medications brought to school must be in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacist or physician.
- All over-the-counter medications have to be in their original container.
- The school will supply secure storage for any medication.

Physical Examination/Immunization

As with all children who attend Sioux City Community Schools, preschool children need up-to-date immunization records and physicals on file at the school.

Vision/Hearing/Dental

Preschool offers vision, hearing, and dental testing for each child. These screenings are provided by Northwest Area Education Agency, Siouxland Community Health Center and/or Siouxland District Health Department.

Blood-borne Pathogens

The Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) has requirements that if a child has an injury that causes blood to be visible on clothing, the clothing must be changed before the child is readmitted to class. Therefore, the school nurse or the secretary may be calling you to bring a change of clothing to school for your son/daughter. Many times the injury is not serious, such as a nosebleed, but can cause blood on clothing.

Head Lice

Parent/guardian will be contacted when live Lice are discovered. Any student who has been identified with Head Lice is encouraged to attend school each day. The school nurse is available to discuss treatment options with families.
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

SSCSD feels parent involvement is essential to having a successful preschool experience. The state preschool legislation requires schools to record parent participation. We realize that families are busy with work and activities and will always be mindful of this when planning activities. Your child’s teacher will inform you of several parent involvement opportunities which may include: monthly classroom activities for families, class parties, reading at home, homework activities, and field trips.

In accordance with preschool legislation, two home visits will be provided to each family. Home visits are designed to help classroom staff get to know your family and your family’s goals for your preschooler. Staff will also be sharing information about your child’s progress and how to build your child’s skills at home. Your family’s home visit will last approximately 45 minutes. It is important that your child and an adult family member are present at the home visit. Home visits will be completed twice during the school year. Once before school begins and the other after spring break.

CLOTHING

Children will be actively involved in their day, meaning paint might be spilled or puddles might be splashed through. Durable, washable clothes are a must. We would rather see a child freely explore than worry about getting dirty.

We go out almost daily. We recommend that children be dressed appropriately on inclement days.

Each child must have an extra change of clothes. These clothes must be labeled and available daily. Any outerwear must be labeled to avoid confusion. Soiled clothes will be returned in a plastic bag at the end of the day.

TOYS

We recommend that children not bring their own toys or games from home, as they invariably present problems. They get lost, damaged, or cause conflicts with other children. However, we understand that many children are attached to special items. We will work cooperatively with families when this occurs, to help the child gently separate from their special belonging. If an item from home is brought to the school, we cannot be held responsible if it is lost, damaged, or stolen.

LUNCH

Children who attend a full day preschool program will have the opportunity to be served lunch through the Sioux City Community School District’s lunch program. The rates and guidelines for elementary children will apply for preschool children. Applications for families that may qualify for free or reduced lunch will be available during the enrollment process. Children with special diets will be accommodated into the program when a physician’s note detailing the food sensitivities is given to the front office. Menus will be sent home monthly.

- Any student may bring a sack lunch and purchase milk.
- Money may be deposited in your child's account.
• Lunch count and attendance are taken in the morning. If your child will be coming to school later in the morning and intends to eat hot lunch, the school must be notified by 9:00 a.m. in order to have an accurate count.

SNACKS
Snacks will be provided. Your child’s teacher may ask your assistance in purchasing a healthy snack for the class. Healthy snacks should be purchased and remain sealed. Please check with the classroom staff to see if there are any student allergies to be aware of when purchasing a snack for the classroom.

REST TIME
Children who attend full day preschool programs will be required to rest for a portion of the afternoon. If your child does not fall asleep during this portion of the day, quiet activities will be provided.

BIRTHDAY
Birthdays are special days and the staff likes to be in on the fun. We ask that you check with the classroom staff prior to the birthday regarding the number of students in the classroom and any student allergies to be aware of when purchasing treats/snacks.

LABELING
Label all items that come from home. This is to protect your child’s health and safety as well as to prevent loss of possessions. The preschool is not liable for lost items. Label all items with permanent ink.

LOCKER/CUBBIES
Your child will have a locker/cubby. Please, place outer clothing, boots, backpack, and rest mat in their locker/cubby.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO
Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use is prohibited on school grounds; indoors and outdoors.

ACCIDENT OR INJURY
If a child is injured during the day and medical attention is required, the parent will be notified to come and pick up their child. If the situation is an emergency, the parent will be asked to meet the staff member and the child at the closest hospital emergency room. It is vital for parents to keep emergency information up-to-date and inform staff of temporary or permanent changes of address, phone numbers, emergency contact people and immunizations.

ACCIDENT REPORT
An accident report will be written when your child is injured. When picking your child up please sign and date the report and leave at the preschool for your child's file. You will receive a copy of the report.
OUTDOOR PLAY

Every day we try to spend some time outside, except in extreme weather. Children should be dressed appropriately so that they can stay warm and enjoy being outside. If your child is sick on a particular day and not healthy enough to play outside he/she should be kept at home unless documented by a physician.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

In compliance with state law and to provide protection to victims of child abuse, Sioux City Community School District believes incidents of alleged child abuse should be reported to the proper authorities. Employees are encouraged, and licensed employees are required as mandatory reporters, to report alleged incidents of child abuse they become aware of within the scope of their professional duties.

When a mandatory reporter suspects a student is the victim of child abuse, the mandatory reporter shall orally or in writing notify the Iowa Department of Human Services. If the mandatory reporter believes the child is in immediate danger, the local law enforcement agency shall also be notified. Within forty-eight hours of the oral report, the mandatory reporter shall file a written report with the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Within six months of their initial employment, mandatory reporters shall take a state approved training course involving the identification and reporting of child abuse. The course shall be re-taken at least every five years.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As employees of the Sioux City Community School District, we keep all children’s and their family’s information confidential. This includes children’s behavior, illnesses, and any information pertaining to them. Please respect this by not asking the staff about another child.

SEVERE WEATHER

Preschool will be canceled when there are severe weather conditions. Please watch the local television stations or the local radio stations for cancellation information.

EARLY DISMISSALS DUE TO HEAT

In the months when hot weather is a possibility, there may be days that are hotter than others. Occasionally, there may be heat-related early dismissals at our non air-conditioned elementary schools. Thankfully, our high schools, middle schools and eight elementary schools, Clark Early Childhood Center/Perry Creek, Irving/Irving Preschool, Liberty, Leeds, Loess Hills, Morningside, Nodland, Spalding Park, and Unity have air conditioning. These schools will NOT dismiss early on those days.

We will communicate early dismissals via Blackboard Connect, the District website, and the news media. Please make sure your contact information is up to date at your child’s school.
FIRE/TORNADO/EVACUATION DRILLS
Fire and tornado drills will be held monthly in all buildings. Please check with your school for their safety zone in the event of an actual emergency.

FIELD TRIPS
Field trips are planned in order to provide additional educational experiences for children. Generally speaking, these field trips are an extension of a classroom experience and have educational value relevant to material being studied in the classroom. Written permission is necessary for a child to go on a field trip, and if it is not received, the child will remain in the building. You will always receive advance notice of up-coming field trips and, on occasion, teachers may ask parents to assist in supervision.

SCHOOL PICTURES
Students’ pictures are taken during the school year. You will be notified of the exact day. The purchase of the pictures is optional.

STUDENT RECORDS
A set of records for each student is created when a child first enters the Sioux City Community School District. Parents or guardians may see the student’s educational records. Other than the parents, only authorized certified personnel may access the student’s educational records without the approval or the notification of the student’s parents. If copies of documents are requested, a fee for such copying may be charged. A conference to review your child’s file may be arranged by contacting the principal.

If there is a court order that limits the rights of one parent in matters such as custody or visitation, please bring a copy to the office. Unless you court order is on file with the school, we must provide equal rights to both parents.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
The student records maintained by the district are composed primarily of testing records, psychological reports, grade records, health records, attendance records, records relating to extracurricular activities, age records, and records of former disciplinary actions.

These records are kept at the school of attendance and are under the charge of the principal of each school.

Upon request, the district may disclose education records without parental consent to school officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, therapist); or a parent
or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The district may share any information with the Parties contained in a student’s permanent record, which is directly related to the juvenile justice system’s ability to effectively serve the student. Prior to adjudication, information contained in the permanent record may be disclosed by the School District to the Parties without parental consent or court order.

Information contained in a student’s permanent record may be disclosed by the School District to the Parties after adjudication only with parental consent or a court order. Information shared pursuant to the agreement is used solely for determining the programs and services appropriate to the need of the student or student’s family or coordinating the delivery of programs and services to the student or student’s family. Information shared under the agreement is not admissible in any court proceeding, which takes place prior to a disposition hearing, unless written consent is obtained from a student’s parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian.

Information obtained from others shall not be used for the basis of disciplinary action of the student. This agreement only governs a school district’s ability to share information and the purpose for which that information can be used.

**Parent’s Right to Review**

A parent of a student or a student who has reached age 18 may inspect the educational records of the student except as limited by law. The opportunity to inspect may be made at the school of attendance and shall be provided within 45 days of the request by a parent, or by a student who has reached age 18. The principal of the school may require that such request be made in writing.

**Parent’s Right to Amend**

The parent of a student or a student who has reached age 18, who believes that information contained in the records is inaccurate or misleading, may request in writing that certain records be amended and the reason therefore, and such request will be considered by the school district as provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

**Parent’s Right to File Complaint**

If the parent feels the school district failed to comply with FERPA requirements, he or she has the right to file a complaint with:

Alison Benson  
627 4TH Street  
Sioux City, IA 51101

**WEAPONS**

“Look-alike-weapons” are prohibited at school. These include any toy that resembles or appears to be a weapon, including, but not limited to, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy knives and toy grenades.

Any student found to be in possession of a weapon, which includes: any firearm, knife, club, numchuck, star, bomb, explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, grenade, mine, stun gun, any other device which fires or can fire a projectile by the explosion of a
propellant charge and/or is designed to or intended to incapacitate, threaten, or inflict bodily injury can be expelled for a period of not less than one year. The Superintendent may modify expulsion requirements on a case by case basis.

**Nondiscrimination Statement**
The Sioux City Community School District is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. It is an unfair or discriminatory practice for any educational institution to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age (for employment), disability, socioeconomic status (for programs), marital status (for programs), or veteran status in its educational programs and its employment practices. Inquiries or grievances may be directed to Jen Gomez, Director of Student Services & Equity Education at 627 4th Street, Sioux City, IA 51101, (712) 279-6075, gomezj2@live.siouxcityschools.com.