

TUCSON UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Preschool

2020-2021

EARLY CHILDHOOD PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

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PRESCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of TUSD's preschool program, in partnership with parents and the greater community, is to assure that every child receives an engaging, developmentally appropriate and rigorous comprehensive education in an inclusive learning environment.

PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

WE BELIEVE EVERY CHILD:

- Is a unique, complex learner;
- Is a social being who learns through the development of relationships with peers and adults;
- Is entitled to learning environments that support optimal development of the whole child;
- Is entitled to opportunities to learn through active exploration;
- Learns through child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Each child progresses at a unique rate, has an individual learning style and possesses diverse abilities.
- Young children learn through active exploration of their environment where there is a balance between self-discovery and adult initiated/selected activities.
- Children's learning is based on prior knowledge and experiences guided by nurturing adults.
- Optimal learning occurs in environments where the adult is respectful of the child, the family, the language, the culture, and the community.
- Children's progress is best understood through observable behavioral change using ongoing observation, anecdotal recordkeeping, and collection of children's work.
- Children develop a sense of empowerment by having many opportunities to make choices within their daily routines.
- Children learn best when their health and nutritional needs are met.
- Families are the first teachers and primary caregivers of their children.
- Young children are capable and competent regardless of their backgrounds, their experiences and their varying abilities.

Arizona Department of Education Early Learning Standards. Arizona Dept. of Education, 2013.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The TUSD preschool program serves three, four- and five-year-old children and their families. The class size is limited to 16 students; each class has one teacher and at least one teaching assistant. Classes are 4 days a week (M, T, TH, F), no school on Wednesdays. Each program runs 2.5 hours a day with an AM and PM session (not including breakfast/lunch). Program hours depend on the site.

The primary goals of the preschool program are to:

- ❖ Provide meaningful play and learning experiences that promote young children's growth in all areas of development.
- ❖ Support the growth and development of families in their role as their child's primary teacher.

PLACEMENT & ENROLLMENT

Our programs are funded through Title I, Exceptional Education, and Quality First Scholarship monies; this means the federal government requires us to work under specific guidelines. One of the most important requirements is that each child must participate in a screening process either through the Title I or Exceptional Education departments.

Screening is ongoing throughout the year using a parent questionnaire for Title I students. This questionnaire was developed based on the Arizona Early Learning Standards and GOLD assessment standards. The data collected from the screener is then sent to the main office where students are put on a continuum from greatest to lowest need. Students with the greatest need, who are fully potty-trained are placed first. Children enrolled through Title I are required to be independently and fully potty-trained per funding requirements. Students receiving special education services are placed by our Child Find office.

You will be notified by the Preschool Department that your child has been selected to participate in one of our preschool programs. At that time, you will be given directions for registration and asked to go to the front office of the school and complete registration forms, which include emergency information that must be signed by a parent or legal guardian.

A copy of your child's certified birth certificate and current immunization record must be on file with the school before your child can begin attending. Your child's immunizations must be current. You will be notified by the school nurse when an update is required. Once registration is complete, your child will be enrolled.

Prior to the full group starting, families will attend an orientation program with the teacher. During this time, teachers will give an overview of procedures and introduce you and your child to the program.

QUALITY FIRST

TUSD Preschools strive for excellence; as a supporting component of our mission to provide high quality early childhood education, our teachers and classrooms frequently collaborate with Quality First. Currently, thirty-two (32) of our forty-seven (47) Title I / Ex Ed classrooms participate with Quality First; those who are not yet active with Quality First are on the waitlist to be selected for formal participation. Even though not all of our teachers and classrooms are formally working with Quality First, all of our Preschool educators get to enjoy and benefit from the trainings Quality First coaches do with our department several times a year.

To learn more about Quality First, please visit <https://qualityfirstaz.com/parents/what-is-quality-first/>

QUALITY FIRST SCHOLARSHIPS

Our TUSD preschool programs who have Quality Star Rating can receive Quality First scholarships. Teachers and children have access to field trips, upgraded learning materials, technology, etc. Funding is connected to your child's attendance. We encourage children to attend preschool every day to help with their transition to Kindergarten. We understand that there is intensive paperwork for families who apply and we greatly appreciate your support. For more information please go to <https://qualityfirstaz.com/providers/qf-scholarships/>

ATTENDANCE

Your child benefits most from the program when they attend regularly and on time. For your child to remain in the program, your child must attend at least 85% of their scheduled class sessions every month. This means, on average, your child will attend 16 sessions in a month. We recommend attending all sessions per month, with no less than attendance at 13 sessions per month. If families are unable to meet the minimum attendance requirement, students will be at risk of losing their placement. Please bring your child to school every day unless they are ill.

If your child will not be in school because of illness or family business, please call the classroom and notify your child's teacher daily for the duration of the absence, stating the reason for their absence.

Programs are not licensed before or after posted session times; please remember to drop-off and pick-up your child according to the session hours. *Refer to the last page for program information.*

If your child is absent for ten (10) consecutive days without notice, or if your child is chronically picked-up or dropped off late, they may be dropped from the preschool program. *Please refer to the TUSD website under board policies Student Attendance JE- R for further information.*

DISENROLLMENT

The preschool program has the right to drop your child from the program should they find that families are unable to follow the program's policies, or that the program cannot meet the needs of the child.

More than ten (10) days of consecutive, unexcused absences in a fiscal year will subject the family to termination of services.

TITLE I PLACEMENT: TOILETING/POTTY-TRAINED POLICY

Both the Interest Form for the Preschool application and the TUSD Preschool Questionnaire ask if the child is potty-trained. 'Potty-trained' is defined as children who can independently complete **all** of the steps of going to the bathroom on their own or, with minimal or infrequent adult assistance (snaps/buttons). A child who uses a Pull-Up is not considered 'potty-trained' and cannot be accepted into the program.

If your child has been enrolled as a Title I Peer, their placement is dependent on being fully potty-trained and independent (based on age appropriate developmental skills) with those toileting skills. If site teams report that a child enrolled through Title I is having toileting accidents regularly or is consistently in need of additional adult support regarding the activities of toileting, the child will be dis-enrolled from the program. The child will then be placed back on the waitlist until they are consistently and independently toileting and until a spot becomes available. It is a state licensing requirement that children enrolled through Title I are completely potty-trained as described.

SIGN IN/OUT

Your child must be signed in and out every day by an adult family member, legal guardian or other selected person listed on the emergency card. The person bringing or picking up your child must write the time of the child's arrival, departure and their full name (legibly: first + last name or first initial + last name). **Preschool children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18 or to those who are not listed on the emergency card.** Children will not be released to minors, including older siblings/cousins/family members. A 'warm hand-off' is required for our program; the child goes directly from supervision by parent/guardian to supervision of the classroom staff when they are signed-in and out.

PROCEDURE FOR RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Only authorized persons will be allowed to pick up your child. We will not allow your child to go with a person unless:

1. The person's name is on the authorization form.
2. An adult family member or legal guardian writes a note or calls the teacher to authorize an individual not on the authorization form to pick up your child. The caller will be asked to verbally identify your child's birthdate and identify by name and physical description the person(s) picking up your child.
3. The individual authorized by phone will be asked to provide picture identification.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

We strongly believe, and research confirms, that family involvement in your children's educational experiences greatly improves their ability to be successful in school.

Family interest and participation is an expected part of the preschool program. It is expected that you or another family member will be involved in your child's education so that your child continues to see you as their first and most important teacher. You and your child's teacher will be discussing your role in the home/school partnership, and the variety of ways you may be involved.

All visitors and volunteers in the preschool program are supervised by the teaching staff.

Please see your child's teacher for volunteer requirements, i.e. Fingerprint Clearance and file required by licensing.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Sharing curriculum with families is very important to us. In order to communicate with families, we may use family bulletin boards, newsletters, emails, and/ or flyers. All notices are posted on the boards including breakfast and lunch menus, monthly calendars, lesson plans, field trip announcements, workshops offered, and notices from the school.

If at any time you have questions or concerns about the program, please share these with the teaching staff. If you feel that you need additional support from an administrator to resolve a problem, please contact the preschool office at 225-1176 or 225-1177.

PARENT EDUCATION and SUPPORT

Family/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year and by appointment. If at any time you have questions or concerns about your child or their classroom experiences, please talk them over with your child's teacher.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❖ **Bring and pick up your child on time every day.**
- ❖ **Keep your child home if they are ill.**
- ❖ **Provide a full change of clothes for your child.**
- ❖ **Volunteer in the classroom.**
- ❖ **Go with your child on field trips.**
- ❖ **Attend workshops and meetings.**
- ❖ **Read with your child daily.**

HOURS

It is your responsibility to drop your child off and pick your child up on time. Doors may be opened no earlier than five (5) minutes before the session start time. In some cases children who are bused through IDEA, will get assistance from a staff member to pick-up breakfast or lunch and eat in the classroom prior to the session beginning. Children enrolled through Title I may eat in the cafeteria before or after their session with a family member (age 18 and over) accompanying them.

In the rare case where an emergency arises, and you are unable to pick your child up on time, please call the school and notify the preschool teacher. The teacher will reassure your child that you or someone you have authorized will be there soon. If you are chronically late in picking up your child he or she may be disenrolled from the program.

SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT

Sunscreen and insect repellent products need to be applied at home before you send your child to school. You will receive detailed information about sun safety and the safe use of insect repellent when you attend your parent orientation at your school.

CLOTHING

Please send your child dressed in clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for school. Your child will be involved in active and sometimes, messy play. When weather temperatures vary, please send a sweater or jacket, or dress your child in layers.

Shoes are required to ensure your child's safety on the playground. Please do not you're your child in shoes such as Flip-flops, thongs, or cowboy boots.

Your child will need an extra change of clothing, including underwear, pants, shirt and socks. Children will feel more comfortable changing into their own clothing if a change is needed.

Please label all items and clothing brought from home with your child's name (for example, backpacks, change of clothes, jacket, etc.)

IMMUNIZATIONS

In order for your child to attend the preschool program, the Arizona Department of Health Services requires that:

- ❖ Your child's immunizations must be current and a copy of their record signed by your health care professional must be provided before your child can begin attending the program. A copy will be made and kept in your child's file.
- ❖ Families will be notified during the school year if additional immunizations are needed.

SICK CHILD POLICY

Your child needs the comfort of home when they are not feeling well. They will not be able to learn or enjoy the school day if they are ill. Additionally, there is also the possibility that the illness could be spread to their classmates and teachers.

Please keep your child at home when:

- ❖ Your child has a fever (100 degrees +) or has had one during the past 24 hours. Your child may return when free of fever for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducer such as Tylenol.
- ❖ Your child has difficulty breathing or has a heavy cough.
- ❖ Your child has mucous or pus draining from red eyes, or thick, yellow-green drainage from his/her nose.
- ❖ Your child has had two or more very loose or watery bowel movement in the past 24 hours.
- ❖ Your child has vomited two or more times in the past 24 hours.
- ❖ Your child has a sore throat and/or swollen glands.
- ❖ Your child has a rash, infected sores, or persistent itching of body or scalp.
- ❖ You notice that your child has any unusual color in his/her eyes, skin, stool or urine.

If your child becomes sick at school, you will be notified and asked to pick them up. They will be able to rest in a quiet area of the room and will be kept comfortable by the teaching staff until you or the person you have designated arrives.

If you are unable to pick up the child immediately, you must provide authorization for someone who can.

ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY

Arizona state law requires all staff who work with children to report suspicion of any form of child abuse to Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) within 24 hours. This includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. The Tucson Unified School District does not condone, hide or tolerate any type of child abuse. *Our first responsibility is the safety of your child.*

ACCIDENT, INJURY OR ILLNESS

You, or an emergency contact person, will be called immediately in case of an accident, injury or illness. If no one is immediately available, your child will be made comfortable while calls are continued. **If an injury of a serious nature occurs, 911 will be called.**

Please keep your child’s emergency card up-to-date.

If your child is diagnosed with any of the following illnesses, please let the school office know. We are required to notify the State Health Department of the following:

Hepatitis A	Scabies	Measles
Mumps	Rubella	Shigellosis
Meningitis	Whooping Cough	Influenza Type B (HIB)
Foodborne illness	Giardiasis	

PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION

Pesticide notifications are posted on site 48 hours prior to application.

MEDICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The following are TUSD’s policy and procedures for dispensing medication:

- ❖ Over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, Tylenol or cough syrup cannot be given.
- ❖ Prescription medication must be given only as prescribed by your child’s Doctor, and only by the school nurse.
- ❖ You must fill out a preschool medication form.
- ❖ All medications will be kept locked in the nurse’s office and must be brought in their original container with a prescription number and the Doctor’s name.
- ❖ Epi-pens are kept with the teacher, who has received training.
- ❖ If antibiotics have been prescribed for your child, please do not send them to school until they have been on the medication for a full 24 hours.

Do not send any medications, such as cough drops, to school with your child. The classroom staff cannot give these to your child.

SHARING CURRICULUM WITH FAMILIES

Your child will participate in daily activities that include stories, writing, math, science, music, movement, block building, and dramatic play. The indoor and outdoor experiences that staff provide will promote your child’s growth in all developmental areas: social/emotional, physical, language and literacy, math, science, and the arts. Your child’s teacher uses the

Arizona Early Learning Standards in planning learning activities for the children. Written lesson plans are posted in each indoor activity area and you are encouraged to view them when you are in the classroom.

TRANSPORTATION

Our district does not provide transportation for Title I students to or from the program. Students who qualify for IDEA will be provided with transportation with parental consent.

FIELD TRIPS

The teacher notifies families of all field trips that are scheduled and provides them with the following details: the field trip destination, times of departure and arrival, and how the trip relates to what the children are studying. Parents/Guardians are required to give written permission for their child to participate. The program uses TUSD school buses to transport children and family members to and from their destination. Siblings may not attend field trips.

ASSESSMENT

The program uses Teaching Strategies GOLD as the ongoing assessment tool to measure children's progress throughout the year. Teachers observe the children as they participate in the daily routines and activities, and document the children's growth in each of the developmental areas in the Arizona Early Learning Standards. Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year: mid-year during Jan-Feb and at the end of the school year. Information will be shared with parents in a format based on data collected by TSG, which can be shared with the child's kindergarten teacher to assist with transition. All information about children is kept confidential and shared only with families and the TUSD team members that support the program.

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

If your child has additional needs, please discuss these with your child's teacher to determine what can be done to provide the best learning environment for them. Developmental screening appointments can be scheduled through TUSD's Child Find office at 232-7034.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Your child's teacher will share information with you in the spring regarding kindergarten transition.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

In the program, discipline involves the instruction of social/emotional, language, communication, and relationship skills required to be responsible citizens.

Staff uses relationship based methods which include positive reinforcement, redirection, logical and natural consequences, and other appropriate methods to help children learn how to be responsible for and manage their own behavior.

Your child will participate in activities that provide them with opportunities to learn and practice self-control, cooperation, making healthy and positive choices.

It is against the law for any staff to use discipline that is physically or emotionally abusive.

Staff will share any concerns about your child's behavior with you. A family conference will be scheduled to discuss strategies that will best benefit your child.

TOYS

Please keep your child's personal toys and other play items at home. If your child wants to bring items from home for a special purpose, please discuss this with the teacher prior to bringing the item to school.

NO GUNS, WAR TOYS OR OTHER TOYS THAT PROMOTE AGGRESSION OR DESTRUCTION ARE PERMITTED ON SCHOOL PREMISES.

MEALS

Breakfast and lunch are served daily in the cafeteria. For families who qualify for the free food program, there is no charge for breakfast or lunch for enrolled children. Children whose families qualify for reduced meals are required to pay \$.25 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch each day. Teachers post all menus on the Parent Board located in the classroom.

Free and reduced lunch application forms are in the registration materials or online at <https://mealapp.tusd1.org>

If your child has a special diet, a note from a doctor is required. Appropriate meals will be provided.

Students who qualify for transportation through IDEA, arrive before the class session begins and will be assisted by staff to participate in breakfast or lunch. Children enrolled through Title I may participate in breakfast or lunch served in the cafeteria while accompanied by a family member, parent, or guardian (age 18 or older) before or after their session.

SNACK

Per our licensing requirements via Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Child Care Licensing, Arizona Administrative Code and Arizona Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities, which can be found at <http://www.azdhs.gov/licensing/childcare-facilities/index.php> snacks are a required component of our Preschool programs. Your child's teacher will review the snack policy with families during your Orientation appointment.

HOLIDAYS

The preschool program follows the Tucson Unified School District calendar.

We believe that holidays and other celebrations are times to create traditions and lasting memories with children. A variety of holidays may be studied through culturally responsive songs, stories, cooking experiences, and/or by sharing how families celebrate these special times.

Birthdays may be acknowledged through special activities in the classroom. Check with your child's teacher on their policy for celebrating the children's birthdays.

If you do not wish your child to participate in any holiday activities or celebrations, please let the teacher know.

FAMILY ACCESS TO TUSD CLASSROOMS

Families are always welcome and encouraged to spend time in the preschool classroom. An appointment is not necessary.

To ensure the safety of all children in our schools, please check-in at the front office and let them know that you will be visiting the preschool classroom. Sign the visitor log and wear the visitor identification nametag. Some school sites allow parents to check-in directly with the preschool classroom.

FEES

There are no fees for our preschool program.

WITHDRAWALS

Please inform your child's teacher if s/he will no longer be attending the program. Any advance notice that you can provide is appreciated, so that we can prepare your child's portfolio for you to take.

INSURANCE

Tucson Unified School District carries liability and accident insurance. Documentation of the liability insurance coverage is available for review on the facility premises.

LICENSING

The preschool program is regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Inspection reports are available in the classroom upon request, and also at:

Arizona Department of Health Services
Office of Child Care Licensure
400 West Congress, Suite 100
Tucson, Arizona 85701
(520) 628-6540

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Each preschool classroom has a state certified teacher and at least one teaching assistant. Teachers have a degree in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education or Child Development. Teaching Assistants have a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent, previous experience working with young children, and college credits in early childhood education.

Staff members complete at least eighteen (18) educational/in-service hours in the area of early childhood per year.

TUSD WEBSITE

The preschool program is featured on the TUSD website. Go to: www.tusd1.org and click on each of these links in the following order:

- Directory
- Departments / Services
- Click on the letter P
- On the left click on the word Preschool

YOUR CHILD'S Preschool PROGRAM INFORMATION

SCHOOL _____

CLASSROOM PHONE _____

TEACHER _____

TEACHER ASSISTANT _____

Preschool COORDINATOR Celina Robles 520-225-1191

PROGRAM HOURS _____

ROOM # _____

NOTES



**“THE WONDERS OF
CHILDHOOD
ARE MIRRORED IN
THE WORLD OF PLAY”**

Cecilia Avalos, Founder
TUSD Preschool Pioneer

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Tucson Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its educational programs or activities.