

# URBANA EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL



## FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023-2024

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<b>MISSION STATEMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VISION STATEMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ENROLLMENT &amp; WAITING LIST</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ENROLLMENT FORMS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACCESSING THE BUILDING</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>VISITING THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>RELEASE OF STUDENTS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>STUDENT ABSENCES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION FROM THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>STUDENT RECORDS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>BUS POLICIES</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SEVERE WEATHER</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>GUIDELINES FOR EMERGENCIES</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>MEDICATION AT SCHOOL</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HEALTH CONCERNS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>GUARDIAN TELEPHONE – ADDRESS CHANGE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SUPPLY LIST</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SCHOOL CLOTHING</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TOILET TRAINING &amp; BATHROOM</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>FOOD PROGRAM</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOME VISITS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>VOLUNTEERS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FAMILY GROUPS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FAMILY EVENTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FAMILY CONFERENCES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>BIRTHDAYS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOLIDAY POLICY</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>ILLINOIS STATE STANDARDS, CURRICULUM &amp; ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>LIBRARY</b>	<b>14</b>

**SCHOOL STAFF 15**

**SCHEDULES 15**

**FIELD TRIPS 15**

**BILINGUAL & MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMS 16**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES 17**

**BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS 17**

**RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS 18**

**CU EARLY 19**

**CONFIDENTIALITY 19**

**MANDATED REPORTING 19**

**ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO, & FIREARMS 19**

**SUSPENSION/EXPULSION 20**

**ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES & PROCEDURES 20**

**KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION 21**

**EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN 21**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Urbana #116 Early Childhood Program is to maximize each child's potential through a collaborative effort of family, staff and community by providing *an active, enriching learning environment where children of all abilities, families, and staff become empowered for their personal, social, and educational success while facilitating positive attitudes about self, family and the educational system in a multicultural and inclusive society.*

## **VISION STATEMENT**

To achieve our mission, we will strive to

- Involve families as partners in education their children
- Teach communication, social, and thinking skills crucial to academic learning
- Help children enjoy and become excited about learning
- Understand that play is a child's natural learning environment and provide rich play experiences
- Give children strategies for becoming responsible for the behavior choices they make
- Welcome diversity in cultures, abilities, and families because it enriches all our lives
- Provide services for children who have delays in development or disabilities
- Use a collaborative approach to teaching, planning and problem solving including staff, families, and community members
- Maintain a warm, friendly, and supportive school family and community

## **ENROLLMENT & WAITING LIST**

Students qualify for enrollment through procedures as outlined in the Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All (PFA) grant process. Each student is given a total score as recorded on the weighted eligibility checklist.

Families whose child does not qualify for UECS or who are on the waiting list will be directed to community resources such as Ready for Kindergarten, Bright Starts, Head Start, and other pre-K programs in the Champaign-Urbana community.

If the school program is at capacity, students who qualify for enrollment will be put on the waiting list. Spaces may be reserved for students who qualify for special education services coming in through Early Intervention or transferring from another district/program. Vacancies are filled based on weighted eligibility score and age. Students in homes with crisis status, (homeless, violence, etc), older students, and students with the highest at-risk total score are given priority. Extenuating circumstances may also be considered. As classroom vacancies become available, families on the waiting list are contacted to confirm if they are still interested in the available seat. All non-kindergarten-age students on the waiting list in the spring are given a classroom placement to begin the following school year.

## **ENROLLMENT FORMS**

All required documentation and enrollment forms must be completed prior to entry.

Proof of income: This may include:

- Pay stubs (two most recent, consecutive)
- Proof of WIC benefit
- Proof of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit
- Proof of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) enrollment
- Proof of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit
- Proof the family receives Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Tax return (most recent), Wages and tax statement (most recent W-2)
- Verification/letter from employer
- Proof that parent is enrolled in Medicaid (a medical card with the child's name does not prove income eligibility)

### **Birth Certificate**

The office must see the child's official birth certificate with the certification number. The office will retain a copy of the birth certificate and return the original to the parent. Official birth certificates can be purchased at the County Clerk's Office or Champaign-Urbana Public Health District. Hospital certificates are not acceptable.

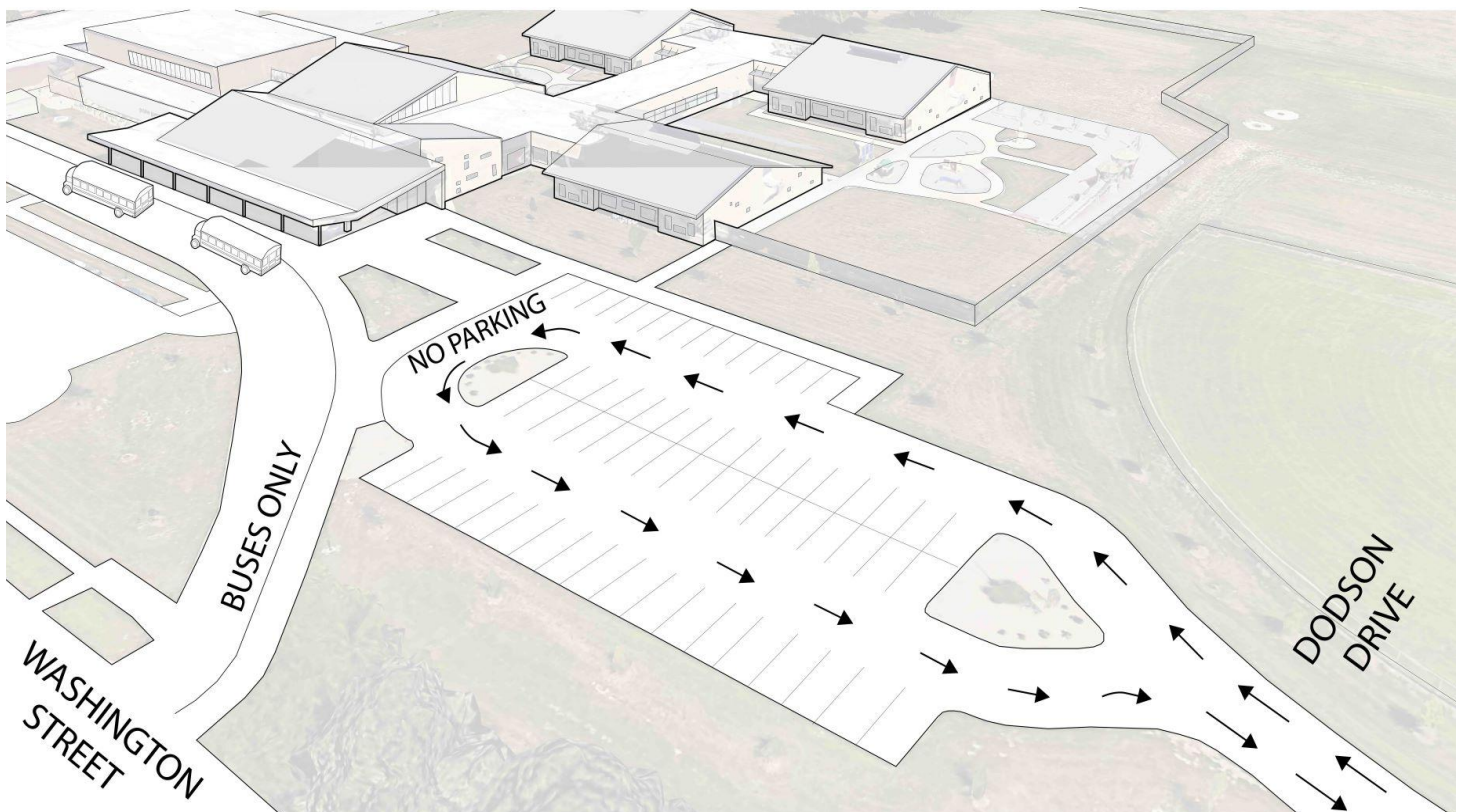
### **Physical Exam & Immunizations**

State Law requires that schools maintain a record of medical examination and immunizations for each enrolled child. Physicals must be signed by a physician AND parent. Any child who does not have a completed Health Examination Form on file in our office will not be eligible for school. The Urbana - Based Health Center serves all students in the Urbana School District. Call 217-239-4220 for an appointment.

## ACCESSING THE BUILDING

### Parking

The East parking lot is designated for family parking. The entrance is near Dodson Street on the East side of the Prairie Campus. For safety, follow the traffic pattern marked with arrows in/out of the lot. **WATCH FOR SMALL CHILDREN, STROLLERS, ETC.** It is difficult for drivers to see small children; **please walk children directly to the sidewalk on the North side of the parking lot.** Park only in marked parking spaces. **DO NOT BLOCK BUS LANES, PARK ALONG CURBSIDES PAINTED YELLOW, OR ILLEGALLY PARK IN HANDICAP PARKING AREAS.** Accessible parking spaces are clearly marked in our parking lot. Illegally parked vehicles are subject to tickets or towing at the owner's expense.



### VISITING THE SCHOOL

For safety reasons, all entry doors are locked at all times. Families and guests must use the designated entry area for the building. For entrance, push the intercom button on the wall.

Families are welcome and encouraged to visit classrooms at any time. Families must show ID, sign in at the office and receive a visitor's badge at that time. Families are encouraged to share their culture, talents, and interests with the classroom team. Representation of our students' experiences and community are important in our classroom spaces.

## **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE**

**No adult supervision is provided before or after the school sessions.** Upon arrival a family member and/or guardian must remain with the child until the school session begins at 9am or 1pm. Adults are welcome to wait in the lobby with their children, but are asked not to enter the hallways without signing in to the office and receiving a pass. When the school bells ring, the classroom staff will greet students in the lobby. **Families will not be encouraged to walk students to the classroom at arrival. If you would like to visit the classroom, please wait until arrival has finished and sign in to the office and receive a visitor sticker.**

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS**

Students will be released ONLY to the designated adults as listed by the family/guardian on enrollment paperwork. Families/guardians may contact the office to edit the authorized adult list at any time. **Any adult picking up a student MUST sign the child out in the office and show a photo ID each and every time. IDs are also required when taking a student off the bus each and every day. THE CHILD WILL NOT BE RELEASED FROM SCHOOL OR THE BUS TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON OR SOMEONE WITHOUT AN ID.** This policy is for the protection of the children. It is recommended that families/guardians, or authorized adults picking up a child, pick up the child prior to bus-boarding, (11:20am or 3:20pm for the half-day program). If, at the time of dismissal, no adult is at the school, the student will be put on his/her assigned bus.

## **STUDENT ABSENCES**

Daily attendance is necessary for children to learn the most they can during the year. Acceptable reasons for absence include student illness, illness in the immediate family, family emergency, and such situations beyond the control of the child. Families are responsible for contacting the school office at 217-384-3616 each day the student is absent. When calling in an absence, please state the child's name, teacher's name or room number, and a reason for the absence. Families are also responsible for notifying the bus company at 217-344-4586 to report a child's absence.

We encourage families to communicate any hardships that may interfere with regular student attendance so that we can partner with families and provide as many supports as possible.

Children who miss more than 30 minutes in a session/day will be counted as absent.

## **COMMUNICATION FROM THE SCHOOL**

Families will receive school information in a variety of ways. For example, teachers send home classroom newsletters in the book bag on a regular basis. Information is also sent home electronically through social media , email, texts, etc. The school principal sends a monthly newsletter via email to keep families updated on school and district news. Please keep your contact information updated with the school and check your child's bag daily for important information.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Permanent records will be retained for no less than sixty (60) years after the student has transferred, graduated, or otherwise permanently withdrawn from the school. Temporary records will be maintained for no longer than five (5) years after the student has transferred, graduated, or otherwise permanently withdrawn from the school.

## **BUS POLICIES**

\*\*\*Note that bus service is not guaranteed/required through the ISBE Preschool for All grant.

- Bus service is only available to students living within the USD #116 boundaries.
- The Urbana School District is not responsible for transporting children who relocate outside of the Urbana School District area.
- Students are only picked up/dropped off at designated bus stops. Students will NOT be dropped off at unauthorized bus stops.
- **BE AT THE BUS STOP 10 MINUTES BEFORE/AFTER THE SCHEDULED BUS TIME**  
**The driver will only wait one minute at each stop.** Bus personnel are not allowed to leave the bus or allowed to honk the horn.
- A designated adult **MUST** be at home and clearly identifiable to the driver and/or monitor. All adults will be asked to show a valid picture ID when getting a student off the bus. **ADULTS WITHOUT ID ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BOARD THE BUS TO TAKE CHILDREN.**
- Families who believe they have missed their child's bus drop-off time should call the bus lot (217-344-4586) to verify that the child is returning to the school office.
- Families should call the bus service office (217-344-4586) if their child is sick or does not need bus service. The bus lot opens at 7:00 AM. Please call the bus service office before 8:00 AM for the morning sessions, before 11:00 AM for the afternoon sessions.
- While drop off sites may be at different Urbana locations for arrival and dismissal times, (for example, picked up at home each morning, but dropped off at the babysitter's address after school) children must be picked up and/or dropped off at the same location each school day.
- It takes 4 days to make a bus change; daily changes in address for pick up/delivery cannot be made. Call the school office (217-384-3616) to make a bus change. We reserve the right to limit bus changes to 3 per child during the school year.

**Children who are having a tantrum and unsafe may be kept at school rather than put on the bus. The school will call the family to come and pick up the child and discuss the situation.**

**Violence, threats of violence, abusive language, refusal to follow bus rules, practices, and procedures by adults and/or students may result in a cancellation of bus services**

## **SEVERE WEATHER**

In the event that severe weather develops during the school day, **ANY EARLY SCHOOL CLOSING WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON LOCAL RADIO AND TV. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL DIRECTLY; OUR LINES NEED TO BE AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCY PURPOSES.** If an early dismissal occurs during the morning session, there will be no afternoon session. Families should have an established plan for supervision of their children should there be an early dismissal.

## **GUIDELINES FOR EMERGENCIES**

UECS works closely with first responders, law enforcement, and USD 116 District Office and has a plan in place to safeguard children in case of emergency. Plans are reviewed with all staff



frequently and emergency drills are practiced on a regular basis. Drills include medical emergencies, fire, intruders, missing students, bus evacuations, and others.

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

**\*DO NOT COME TO THE SCHOOL.** Law enforcement agencies will block the streets near the school so that emergency services have access. Families/guardians, and community members will not be allowed access.

**\*DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL.** Phone lines will need to be kept open for emergency personnel and calls out.

**\*STAY AVAILABLE AND KEEP PHONE NUMBERS UP-TO-DATE** so that the school can contact you if needed.

**\*TUNE INTO WILL AM580** on your radio. Updates and announcements will be made in as timely a manner as can be provided. In case of evacuation, announcements will include when and where to pick up students. Any parent or authorized adult picking up a student will be required to have an ID.

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION

All students are required to have emergency medical information on file. Please note that it is the school district policy to call 911 for any medical emergency. If 911 is called, the office will make every attempt to notify parents immediately. If families have not arrived and the student is taken to a hospital via ambulance, a school administrator or designee will go with the child. Please be sure to keep school staff up-to-date on any health issues that may need to be addressed.

Most staff members are certified in AED/CPR/First Aid. Staff members have also been trained in very specific medical techniques such as Epipen use, diabetes control, and seizure control. An updated list of certified staff members is available in the school office; an AED and Epipen are available outside the school gym doors. Note: training and certification in these areas does not keep staff from calling 911 in an emergency.

### MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

If medication needs to be given during school hours, the following rules **MUST** be followed:

- All medications, **including non-prescription drugs**, given at school must be prescribed by a physician. A **School Medication Authorization Form** **MUST** be completed each school year. **THE DOCTOR MUST SIGN THE FORM.** The form is available in the school office.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container labeled by the Pharmacy showing the student's name, name of medication, dosage and schedule of administration, date, and the prescriber's name.
- Non-prescription medication must be in the original labeled container with the student's name on the container. A medication authorization form must be completed.
- No medication will be given at school unless the above guidelines are met.
- **Under NO circumstances should the medication be sent to school with the child on the bus.**

If topical ointments such as sunscreen is necessary, teachers will supervise and assist with the application. Written parent permission must be given and all bottles must be marked with the individual child's name. Please send unscented lotions only. Lotions will NOT be shared between students.

\*Contact our District School Nurse if you have any questions. (217-384-3600)

## **HEALTH CONCERNS**

If a child is ill, and has any of the following symptoms/concerns, they should be kept at home:

1. Temperature of 100 degrees or more. Students must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
2. Diarrhea - Students must be diarrhea free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.
3. Vomiting - Students must not have vomited for 24 hours (without medication) before returning to school.
4. A "heavy cold" and/or symptoms associated with the flu virus such as a constant runny nose with colored discharge, hacking, heavy cough, headache, chills.
5. Skin Rash - unless doctor has verified that it is not contagious.
6. Pink eye - until treated for 24 hours.
7. Earache.
8. Ringworm - until treated for 24 hours.
9. Impetigo - until treated for 24 hours.
10. Chicken pox - stay home 6 days and then may return after the pox has been scabbed over for 48 hours.
11. Shigellosis - until verification of 2 negative stool samples has been provided by a healthcare professional.

If a child has any of the listed illnesses or is suspected to have something contagious, they will be isolated until a family member or designated adult picks up the child from school. Before the student returns to school, they must be symptom free from fever, vomiting, or diarrhea **WITHOUT MEDICATION** for 24 hours. Please report any contagious illness to the office or teacher. A classroom note will be sent home if a child is exposed to a contagious illness. If a student misses more than 3 days due to illness, a physician's note may be required to excuse absences and/or ensure that the student is ready to return to school. Families will be notified of any injuries and an accident report is completed.

**If there are any changes in a child's health status, please contact the office immediately. To ensure that the school can reach families in case of an emergency, it's important to make sure that the office has an up-to-date phone number, emergency contacts, and doctor's name.**

## **GUARDIAN TELEPHONE - ADDRESS CHANGE**

Please contact the office with any change in address or telephone numbers. This is important in case the school needs to contact families/guardians regarding emergencies, conferences, etc. Designated "emergency contacts" should also have updated phone numbers in our system.

## **SUPPLY LIST**

There are NO fees for preschool enrollment. The program provides all materials and supplies for preschool students; however, each child should have a backpack or tote bag to carry notes, art work, large library books, newsletters, etc. to and from school. If your child does not have a bag, the school can provide one. PLEASE CHECK THE BAG FOR MESSAGES EACH DAY AND RETURN/RESPOND AS REQUESTED.

Children who require diapers or pull-ups will need to use commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups. These are provided by the family; if assistance is needed, please speak with the school social worker.

## **SCHOOL CLOTHING**

We encourage students to dress in play clothes rather than more formal dressy clothes. Children are encouraged to wear smocks when engaged in "messy" activities, but accidents happen. The children play actively on the playground and in the gym so tennis shoes or similar play shoes are most appropriate. Sandals, flip flops, cowboy boots, or dress shoes are not safe to run and climb in.

Please send a complete change of clothing with your child's name to keep at school in case of accidents. All children who require diapers or pull-ups will need to use commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups. These are provided by the family. A list of resources for free/low cost diapers are available to families. Please contact the school for that information.

The children will go outside in most weather. The Illinois School Board of Education who oversees our grant funding recommends students be outside if temperatures are between 25 and 90 degrees. Therefore, children are encouraged to wear layers that can be added or removed according to the environment and temperature. Boots, mittens, hats, and a warm coat are encouraged in cold weather. Put the child's name on all outer clothing and boots.

## **TOILET TRAINING & BATHROOM**

No child will be denied access to school because they are not toilet-trained. Early Childhood staff will work with families to toilet train students as appropriate. Many of our students are young and just beginning this process.

Unless there are physician orders, cloth diapers will not be used at school. All children who require diapers or pull-ups, will need to use commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups. These are provided by the family; if assistance is needed, please speak with the school social worker. Diapers and pull-ups are immediately changed when wet or soiled. Students' diapers and clothing are changed only in the bathrooms, not elsewhere in the facility.

School staff follow all Blood Borne Pathogen policies in that they will wear gloves when changing a student, immediately bag soiled clothing, (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and send it home on the same day. Dirty diapers and pull-ups will be disposed of in hands-free bins with lids located in the restroom.

Staff take children to the restroom at least once during the 2.5 hour school session. If a child indicates the need to use the restroom at any other time, the child is taken to the restroom by a staff member at that time. Unless there is reason to believe a child requires changing,

non-toilet trained children are checked for wet or soiled diapers at the same time that their peers use the restroom. Children on a toilet-training schedule may be checked more frequently and/or at different times.

In general, students who require toilet training will use the typical student toilet. However, the school will work with students who require a specific toilet chair to meet individual needs. If an individual potty chair is required, it is cleaned and sanitized with bleach sanitizing solution after each use. To deter other students from accessing the chair, the chair is stored between uses in a location out-of-reach from children.

Changing tables are located in the restroom. Staff members remain with children on the changing table at all times and follow diaper changing procedures as posted above each changing table. In accordance with blood borne policies, staff will ensure that the changing area is clean prior to and sanitized with bleach sanitizing solution after each change. Staff follow all handwashing procedures/protocols prior to leaving the restroom or assisting another student in the restroom.

### **FOOD PROGRAM**

Children receive a nutritious snack each day. The food program is funded free of charge to the families through the Federal Child Care and Adult Food Program (CCAFP). CCAFP requires that each family have the appropriate free/reduced lunch application on file. The application for the food program must be completed for each enrollment period. The national food guidelines restrict exceptions to snack unless there is a specific medical need. A physician's statement must be on file for children with food allergies or requiring a medical exception. Religious exemptions are not always granted; this is handled on a case by case basis. Students will not be allowed to bring their own snack/food to school.

Menus are provided to families on a monthly basis and may also be downloaded at <https://usd116.org/foodservices/>. The district food vendor ensures that all snacks meet the monthly Federal Child and Adult Food Care Program nutritional and serving guidelines. Staff is trained annually to meet the Federal Child and Adult Food Care Program food safety and serving guidelines.

The Urbana School District #116 maintains a food allergy management program. The district does not serve products containing nuts. We prohibit the sharing of food. Food is to be eaten only in the designated area of the classroom. Pork products are not included in the menu. Staff will be cognizant of choking hazards to small children; foods such as chunks of raw carrots or peas, round hotdog slices, and hard pretzels are not served. Hands are washed prior to and after eating snacks. Surfaces are cleaned with a district-approved cleaning solution.

### **HOME VISITS**

To build partnerships and provide the best learning opportunity for children, our program encourages making connections through home visits. This may include bringing learning activities or resources into the home, collaborating about needs of the student or family, or discussing student strengths and progress. We invite families to guide how the time for home visit can best be used for them. At the start of the year, we attempt to do a home visit with each new family.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Families are encouraged to assist in the classroom whenever possible. Any person who volunteers at school more than 3 times must be fingerprinted and have a background check. Contact the school office for more information. (217) 384-3616

## **FAMILY GROUPS**

Support groups and other opportunities are offered throughout the school year. Childcare is offered free of charge. Families receive information on these via social media, newsletters, and through C-U Early flyers.

## **FAMILY EVENTS**

Families are invited to our regular family engagement events. The purpose of these events is to give families an opportunity to connect with other families and school staff, ask questions, get ideas for working with children at home, talk about issues, voice concerns, and make suggestions about our school, curriculum, and activities. Information about each event will be sent home, and available on social media.

Other special events are scheduled throughout the school year. Please read the classroom and building newsletters, and/or watch social media for dates and times.

## **FAMILY CONFERENCES**

Two formal conferences are scheduled each year. Conferences are designed to provide the family information about student progress and, in some cases, are led by students. Informal conferences can be scheduled throughout the year as needed. Families are encouraged to contact the classroom teacher or office with any concerns, questions, or comments.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays can be celebrated at school. If families want to send in a treat, we would encourage the treat to be a non food item. This could include stickers, small trinkets, etc. Please contact the teacher a few days in advance to make arrangements.

## **HOLIDAY POLICY**

The celebration of holidays in the classroom at school is a combined effort between families and classroom teachers. Teachers are encouraged to learn about the traditions/holidays that families celebrate. Families are invited to actively participate by sharing ideas and cultural materials with classrooms. Each classroom teacher may decide to celebrate the traditions with the class as well as enrich children with new cultural experiences.

Our preschool classes serve families from the entire Urbana School District. The district families represent many backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities and the district strives to honor each group represented. Therefore, it is important to expose children to a variety of traditions. The school staff does not teach religious values, but teaches children to accept and respect their similarities and differences.

## **ILLINOIS STATE STANDARDS, CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT**

The Urbana Early Childhood program has adopted the Creative Curriculum for its core learning activities. Creative Curriculum has been recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education as an approved curriculum that meets all Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards,

(IELDS). ([http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/early\\_learning\\_standards.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/early_learning_standards.pdf)). The IELDS are also available in the office by request. By ensuring that the learning standards are incorporated into the daily lesson plans, staff ensures that student progress is made in all areas.

On-going assessment is part of the daily routine. The staff is trained to use a variety of assessments to track student performance and progress. Some assessment tools include observation checklists, rating scales, anecdotal notes, student portfolios, informal and formal assessment, and individually administered tests. Assessment is most authentic when conducted in the natural environment during everyday activities; therefore, every effort will be made to assess students during their normal daily routine. All assessment results for students are available to their families/guardians. With an appointment, the teacher will be glad to discuss the specific instruments, procedures, scores, and implications of all assessments with parents.

The purpose of individual assessment is to evaluate each student's skills in development areas of gross motor, fine motor, adaptive, cognitive, social, language, and communication. Native language and culture are considered during evaluation. The results of these assessments are used to design lessons to support individual student learning, interest areas, and a possible need for special education referral. Goals are set for each child based on assessment results.

Family/teacher conferences are held in the Fall and Spring of each school year. Teachers share student performance information at that time. Formal progress reports are sent home three times per school year. Students receiving special education services also receive progress reports on individualized educational program goals three times a year and at their annual review. Families have the right to ask teachers and therapists about student progress throughout the school year

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Teachers choose instructional materials and books to meet best practices and in accordance with the Preschool for All Grant requirements. Often, student interest and cultural practices of our families drive the materials offered and used in the classroom unit. It is the responsibility of families to inform the building principal or assistant principal if they would prefer their children not use or observe instructional materials that have content that might be offensive to them. It is the responsibility of the family to inform classroom teachers when they need to use an alternative set of materials for personal reasons. This complies with Board of Education policy 6:40, Curriculum Development.

## **LIBRARY**

Each classroom has a 30 minute library time each week. The children listen to a story, engage in an activity and are encouraged to choose a book for check out. Students also receive a paper link to complete for the school-wide Links to Literacy program. Please fill out the paper link and return it in your child's backpack.

Students are allowed only one book checked out at a time. In order to check out another book, children must bring back the book from the previous week. Finding a special place at home to keep their library book often helps children keep track of their books. Please look for overdue library book reminders in your child's backpack. If a book is lost, for two weeks, your child will only be able to check a book out to the classroom while we attempt to find the lost book. While

no book fines will be collected, families may choose to send in a used or new book of their choice to replace the lost book.

## **SCHOOL STAFF**

Our staff works together as a team to provide the best possible early childhood experience. All staff members have the appropriate certifications, licensures, and qualifications to meet your child's educational needs. Professional development is on-going throughout the year.

Each classroom team is made up of one teacher and two teaching assistants. Other professionals in literacy, speech therapy, social work, occupational therapy, and physical therapy are also part of the classroom team. Therapy services are integrated into the natural context of the classroom whenever possible. The classroom team also includes a social worker, mental health specialist, and family coordinator to address the individualized needs of the family.

## **SCHEDULES**

**UECS Office hours are from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM on school days.** Calls before or after office hours will be directed to voicemail. Unless there is an emergency, classrooms will not be interrupted for phone calls. However, teachers will return calls as soon as possible.

**Unless otherwise specified by the PreK for All Grant, preschool students follow the same annual school calendar as the rest of Urbana School District #116. Please note that when k-12 has a shorter day in the school calendar, our students will not be in session for AM or PM.**

Attendance sessions are as follows: Half Day Mornings 9:00-11:30 AM, Half Day Afternoons 1:00-3:30 PM. Typical half-day sample daily schedules are noted below. The schedules vary for each classroom and will be shared with families and posted outside of each classroom.

<b>HALF DAY:</b>	<b>AM</b>	<b>PM</b>	
	9:00	1:00	Center Time, Snack
	10:00	2:00	Large Group Meeting (music, story, etc.)
	10:20	2:20	Outside/Gym Play
	10:40	2:40	Small Group Instruction
	11:00	3:00	Story/Drama
	11:20	3:20	Prepare for Departure
	11:30	3:30	Buses

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Urbana-Champaign is fortunate to be rich in community resources. Teachers are encouraged to use these resources to supplement and enrich the school experiences. From time to time, classrooms go on walking trips in the neighborhood, on special excursions to places of interest, and to public parks. Teachers will notify parents of field trips prior to occurrence. Family permission forms must be signed and returned. Families are not required to pay fees for field trips.

## **BILINGUAL & MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMS**

### **Transitional Bilingual Education**

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs are required at schools where there are 20 or more Limited English Proficient (LEP) students of the same language. Currently the school district offers a Transitional Bilingual Education program to students who speak Spanish at Urbana Early Childhood School. The TBE program is for non-native English speaking students who have difficulty with written or spoken English.

The Bilingual classroom provides instruction in Spanish for 90% of the school day. The program helps students to succeed in academic subjects and develop their native language. The goal of the program is bilingualism and biliteracy. The students are offered opportunities to interact with native English speaking students as well.

Priority into the TBE classroom is given to children from homes in which Spanish is the spoken language and to children for whom Spanish is the stronger language. A bilingual teacher and bilingual teacher assistants provide instruction in Spanish. The children will be exposed to English on a daily basis in their interaction with other children that speak English, during library, and also play time in the gym or outdoors.

### **Transitional Program of Instruction/English as a Second Language**

The Transitional Program of Instruction is for non-native English speaking students who have difficulty with written or spoken English. The program provides support to help students succeed in academic subjects and learn English.

### **Program Goals**

- Provide English Language Learners (ELLs), students whose native language is NOT English, and have limited English proficiency, the opportunity to receive equal access to education.
- Develop English Language Proficiency according to the WIDA Language Proficiency standards.
- Develop Native Language Proficiency for students in the bilingual programs in order to promote bilingualism and biculturalism.
- Promote native language and cultural integration in the learning classrooms.
- Meet or Exceed the Illinois Early Learning Development Standards.
- Support English Language Learners' linguistic and academic needs with research-based instruction.
- Promote multicultural awareness and diverse learning environments throughout the district.
- Provide families of English Language Learners with the ability to actively participate in the education of their children.

Urbana School District staff will make every attempt to ensure that a student who is an English Language Learner is served by an ELL-certified teacher. Students who speak another language and/or have the influence of another language in the home will be assessed by ELL certified staff to determine if they qualify for ELL services. It is the right of families to waive ELL support if they so choose.



## **Determining Eligibility for ELL Services**

At the time of screening, families complete the Home Language Survey. If families/guardians answer "yes" to one of the two questions in the Home Language Survey, students will then be administered the ISBE prescribed screening instrument. Currently the preschool classrooms use the Pre-IPT as our screening instrument. The purpose of the screening instrument is to determine the student's eligibility for ELL education services and, if eligible, the appropriate placement for the student. This will be done within the first 30 days of enrollment.

Scores obtained from the Pre-IPT, as required by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), determine a student's ELL eligibility. Students who score below ISBE's definition of English language proficiency for students in Illinois schools are eligible to receive ELL services. A recommendation regarding appropriate placement and services is made based on the results of the Pre-IPT as well as the student's native language.

A notification letter is provided to families explaining recommendations and services, as well as program descriptions. Families can accept or refuse ELL placement recommendations. If a family chooses to refuse the ELL services a waiver form must be signed. Regardless of participation in the programs, students identified as ELL will participate in all assessments required by ISBE.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

Urbana School District provides inclusive services at the preschool level. Students receiving special education services will be educated in the general education classroom. Evaluation for special education services will be completed in accordance with Federal and State statutes and District policies and practices. For questions about special education services, contact the UECS school office or the Deputy Superintendent of Student Services 217-384-3645.

## **BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS**

Our school community believes it's important for all students to be safe, kind, and responsible at school and at home. A number of strategies are used to help ensure a positive environment at school. Using a multi-tiered system of supports, children are taught the expectations and exactly what being safe, kind, and responsible looks like in all school environments. Staff and students talk about and practice safe, kind, and responsible behavior every day.

## **Tiger paws (Paper Award, Stickers & Stamps)**

Tiger Paw Tickets, Tiger Paw Stickers, and Tiger Paw Stamps are given to acknowledge that someone has been caught demonstrating our expectations of being safe, kind, and responsible. To highlight success, tiger paws can be given to individual students, to groups of students, or even to whole classrooms.

Family members are encouraged to talk with their children about their tiger paws. Families are encouraged to celebrate and give the students a high five. It's a great way to reinforce positive behavior.

## **Social Emotional Learning**

Teachers want to be sure your child is as ready as possible for Kindergarten. In addition to teaching academics such as problem solving, perseverance, letters and numbers, it is equally important that preschoolers learn how to get along with others. Preschool classrooms use the

*Second Step* early learning program in your child's classroom to teach these important social skills. All students will participate in *Second Step* lessons that focus on skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship skills and problem solving.

Throughout the year, the teachers share Home Links with families. Home links support each of the *Second Step* Weekly Themes. Home Links are simple, fun activities for families and children to do together. Thank you in advance for supporting the students in learning the skills that will help prepare them for school and life.

**"Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** is a proactive systems approach for creating and maintaining safe and effective learning environments in schools, and ensuring that all students have the social/emotional skills needed to strengthen their success at school and beyond."

If a student is having difficulty consistently demonstrating safe, kind, or responsible behaviors, supports are put in place to help them. Usually, the specific behaviors are re-taught and the student may be given pictures to help remind them to show positive behaviors. The student's family is contacted so that they can reinforce the expectations at home.

### **Check In/Check Out (CICO)**

Some children require extra practice and reminders about school expectations. For this purpose, a check in/check out (CICO) system is put into place for students who may need more support to be successful. Please note that the CICO system is meant to be a positive system that acknowledges all of the work that a student is doing to follow the school expectations. The student frequently meets with an adult to receive feedback and talk about how well the day is going and what the student can do to be successful across the day. The CICO system is a positive reminder for the student to be safe, kind, and responsible every day at school.

### **Social Academic Instructional Groups (SAIG)**

Social Academic Instructional Groups (SAIG) are designed to support students when they demonstrate a need for additional direct instruction and discussion with regards to behavior management and academic readiness. The purpose of these groups is to teach students acceptable behaviors that will help them be successful in the academic setting and other areas of their everyday life. These are small groups in which students are re-taught the school-wide expectations, review social skills, and are acknowledged for making respectful choices. The goal is to enhance the school experience through positive interactions and build self-confidence.

### **Classroom & All-School Celebrations**

Our school honors successes for meeting school and classroom expectations through the use of celebrations. Examples of celebrations may include but are not limited to music, dancing, stories, STEM activities or games. As each classroom meets their goal, the students vote on how they'd like to celebrate their hard work. All-school celebrations bring the school community together as a whole, uniting every student and staff member as they participate in these exciting activities. All families are welcome to join us!

### **RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS**

Each classroom has the benefit of support staff on the team. This includes a child & family support specialist, a licensed school social worker, an instructional coach, mental health support,

and an occupational therapists/therapy assistant. These team members collaborate with the classroom teacher about student interactions and may support students by teaching and modeling social/emotional skills with children both in and out of the classroom setting. These specialists are available to collaborate with families as well.

To support children and families, school staff members are eager to share information regarding community services. Information regarding food banks, local library information, housing, transportation, community events and activities, WIC, support groups, and health services are some examples of the information that is shared with families. Please contact the school with questions or requests for specific information.

### **CU EARLY**

CU Early is the Birth to three home visiting program that is located within UECS. CU Early provides home visiting services at least twice a month and monthly playgroups to enrolled families. Our CU Early home visitors also work with prenatal mothers. The goals of the program include assisting families with self sufficiency and preparing children for later school success. Bilingual services to families are provided as needed.

CU Early provides developmental screenings on all enrolled children and partners with parents to monitor each child's ongoing development. They also provide assistance to parents with community resources. When children in the program turn 30 months, our CU Early home visitor assists the family with transitioning the child into a Pre K, Head Start or another child care program.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Families are assured that any information that is discussed with the principal or any other staff members regarding their child, family, or other matters will be held in confidence. Please feel free to discuss issues that help the teachers interact with and teach your child more effectively.

Without a release of information form signed by a minor's parent or guardian, THE PRIVACY ACT prohibits the school and staff members of the school from sharing information to anyone outside the school. (This was amended to allow school districts to exchange records upon a student's transfer without a signed release.) This act also prohibits the sharing of information about a student with other staff members not involved with the education of the student.

### **MANDATED REPORTING**

By Law, all school staff members are mandated DCFS Reporters. If a staff member has concerns and/or reason to believe a child may be in a harmful situation or neglected, the staff member is obligated to call the appropriate authorities to report the situation. The authorities determine the need for investigation and follow through accordingly; staff members do not investigate.

### **ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO, & FIREARMS**

By State law, the use of firearms, alcoholic beverages, drugs and tobacco on school premises is prohibited. No person under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be permitted on school property or allowed to take a child from the premises.

## **SUSPENSION/EXPULSION**

We do not suspend or expel students from school. As stated in our mission and vision statements, it is our belief and practice to teach children appropriate social/emotional skills and self regulation so that they can make responsible choices and be successful in our community. Classroom teams partner with families to ensure that the appropriate behavioral interventions are in place to support their child as they learn to self-regulate emotions and develop socially appropriate skills to be safe, kind, and responsible.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

It is the school expectation that all individuals will practice safe, responsible, and kind behavior. As part of teaching and practicing these behaviors, students and teachers will treat each other safely and with respect. This is the foundation of our anti-bullying policy. As a proactive measure to teach social/emotional standards, all students are taught the school expectations and participate in weekly Second Step lessons.

If a student, parent, or staff member observes or reports that another individual is not feeling safe or being treated respectfully, the following steps/interventions shall occur: First, the teacher(s) of the student(s) involved will listen to and document all concerns being brought forth. The teacher will inform the parents of the next steps regarding the schools' actions in addressing the behaviors. The principal will receive documentation of the initial concerns and actions.

The teacher(s) will speak to the students individually about the expectations in our school. If requested, individual student guardians/families are welcome to participate in the conversation with their child. Students will be encouraged to use words with their friends to stop the offensive behavior and to let teachers know if they are being treated disrespectfully or in a way that makes them feel unsafe. Students will be reminded to keep their hands and bodies to themselves and to treat each other respectfully and safely.

When appropriate, the teacher(s) will also speak to the students together as a group. The student will be reminded of the expectations and supported as they problem-solve how to act/react to specific situations. The teacher will help role play/model correct behavior if necessary. Referrals for social work intervention and/or small academic intervention groups will be made if appropriate.

The teacher will monitor student behavior and follow up with the families regarding student success and/or continued concerns two weeks after the initial report. Interventions will continue if necessary. All steps of the intervention will be documented and shared with the school building administration.

PreK students are not, as a rule, given a password to access technology. However, please note, per district policy, school administration has the right to obtain a student's password if there is reasonable cause to believe that the student's account may contain evidence of bullying or other violations of school disciplinary rules of policy.

## **KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION**

Children who turn 5 on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> are considered Kindergarten age. Kindergarten registration is usually in April. Information will be sent home with children in the spring before the Kindergarten year. Staff will be available to assist as needed.

## **EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN**

The Illinois Acceleration Placement Act (Public Act 100-0421) defines accelerated placement as the placement of a student in an educational setting with curriculum that is usually reserved for students who are older or in higher grades than the student. Early entrance to kindergarten is the admission to kindergarten of a student who: (a) will not be five years of age on or before September 1 of that school term; or (b) is admitted prior to the dates established in the School Code based upon an assessment of his or her readiness to attend school.

Signs that a student is ready for acceleration into kindergarten may include: indications the student is ready for a full day of school, is independent in basic life skills, plays well/shares with other children, has adequate attention span and stamina to complete academic tasks independently. Academic skills may include: writes their own name independently, knows at least half of their letters and sounds, displays early reading behaviors, recognizes that words have meaning, rhymes words, recognizes patterns, orally counts to at least 30, counts objects to 15, identifies and writes numbers to 15.

Families/guardians interested in having their child assessed for early entrance into kindergarten should contact the UECS office and complete an Acceleration Evaluation form. The student will be screened for kindergarten readiness and the screening results will be discussed with the family/guardian as well as whether or not further evaluation for Kindergarten readiness is warranted. Areas of assessment include child development, social-emotional functioning, academic achievement, and cognitive ability. For students in which a language other than English is spoken in the home, an English language proficiency assessment will be completed prior to evaluation in order to determine the appropriate language of assessment. Once eligibility for acceleration has been determined, the team develops a plan to transition the student into the accelerated placement.

Families should consider the pros and cons of an accelerated placement. Within the first 30 days of accelerated placement, the family may choose to withdraw from the accelerated placement. After 30 days, the placement will become permanent.

Factors to consider: Spots at Urbana Early Childhood will not be guaranteed during the 30 day transition period. School and classroom placement will be determined based on address and school/classroom capacity. Applications for Dual-Language consideration are likely due before this evaluation process will be completed. You may submit an application for Dual-Language. However, your child must qualify for entrance to kindergarten prior to enrollment in a Dual-Language program. Contact the Director of Elementary Bilingual Programs with questions related to Dual-Language.

If you disagree with the decision not to evaluate your child or the eligibility decision, you may appeal the decision. Submit your appeal in writing (email or letter) to the Superintendent within 30 days of the decisions. You will receive a final decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal.