

**Early Childhood Family Education
Tilden Community Preschool
Parent Handbook**



**Hastings Public Schools Community Education
Early Childhood Programs
651-480-7670
Hastings, MN 55033**

**Office Hours
7:30am - 4:00pm
Monday - Friday**

**Office: 651-480-7670
Fax: 651-480-7680**

www.hastingscommunityed.com

General Information ECFE and Tilden Community Preschool

Class Location

All early childhood classes including ECFE classes and preschool classes are held at Tilden Community Center 310 River St. Hastings, MN.

Parking

Parking at Tilden Community Center is located on the east side of the building on River St. Preschool children should be walked in and dropped off at their class. For the safety of your children, **do not leave children unattended in your vehicle.** . If this does occur a school liaison officer could be called to assess the situation.

Age Guideline

Our program follows Hastings Public School's guideline regarding eligible age for school attendance. September 1st is used in determining age limits for classes unless noted. Classroom activities are centered around the developmental levels of the children in attendance.

Calendar

Families will be given a calendar at the beginning of the year designating important dates. The early childhood calendar is in alignment with the district school calendar in terms of staff development days and holidays, however, there are dates that are exclusive to our early childhood program which are noted.

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

The advisory council is comprised primarily of parents with children enrolled in our Early Childhood Programs. The advisory council assists in program development, fundraising, outreach and provides support for our program. If you are interested in becoming a member or want more information please call 651-480-7678.

Volunteers/Parent Involvement

We welcome volunteers and parents into our program and appreciate the work they do for us. Volunteer opportunities may include helping in the classroom, reading to children, helping at events, or serving on the advisory council to name a few. Parent involvement is key to your child's success in school. Let us know if you are interested in volunteering in some capacity.

Funding

Funding for Early Childhood Programs is provided through a combination of state aid, local levy, and participant fees. Early Childhood Program funding does not rely on, or impact, the K-12 general fund.

Grievance Procedure

A parent who has a grievance or complaint about some aspect of the program should first try to settle the issue directly with the teacher, staff member or other adult involved. If the conflict is not resolved, the grievance should be discussed with the Early Childhood Program Coordinator.

Smoke Free Environment

Hastings Public Schools prohibits smoking in school buildings and on school grounds.

Fire and Tornado Drills

Drills will be conducted on a regular basis.

Other Policies

Attendance

On scheduled parent-child days, children must be accompanied by an adult (one or both parents, an adult family member or other caregiver). All other arrangements must be approved by the program's coordinator prior to the day of the class. Please contact your child's teacher or the Early Childhood Program Coordinator if your child will be absent.

Early Childhood Screening

Screening is a mandate by the State of Minnesota. Children must be screened before entering kindergarten. Screening is best done before your child turns four years old. The screening includes vision, hearing and developmental assessments in addition to an immunization/health history review and parent input. For a screening appointment, register online at www.hastingscommunityed.com or call 651-480-7381.

School Closings

School closings can happen due to weather or other non-weather emergencies. Hastings Public Schools list school closings on our website, channels 4, 5, 9, and 11 and on our local radio station KDWA 1460. The best and most up-to-date information will be on the Hastings Public Schools website www.hastings.k12.mn.us School closing announcements for District #200 Schools includes the Early Childhood Program as well. Two hour late start indicates no morning classes, all classes beginning after 12 noon, start at their normal time. School closed indicates no morning, afternoon or evening classes.

Cell Phones/Electronics

Please be respectful of cell phone usage and other electronics when you are participating in class. Class is a time to spend quality time with your child and we want to minimize distractions that may interrupt that quality time with your child. We want to support your efforts in enhancing your parent child relationship. Additionally, we want to be respectful of other participants in the class.

Photo/Videotaping Policy

The Hastings School District's Policy states that unless a family files a "Denial of Release Form" then your child's work and image (including video) can be placed on school approved websites, in newspapers, used in special events, and in other public locations per our district policy. If you DO NOT want your child's image published, fill out the Denial of Release Form and return to your child's teacher. You can ask your child's teacher for a Denial of Release Forms or it can be found on our district website www.hastings.k12.mn.us.

Refunds

If classes are canceled due to insufficient enrollment, you will be notified and your money will be refunded. If you choose to drop a class prior to the class starting, you will be refunded and a \$5 processing fee will apply. If you have to drop a class, please contact the Tilden Community Center office as soon as possible, by calling 651-480-7670. No refund will be given after the start of class. Class fees will not be refunded for classes canceled due to weather. If you encounter a special circumstance please call 651-480-7678.

Medication/Health Plan

Generally, medication will not be given to students while attending an Early Childhood Program, however if it is absolutely necessary a child receive medications while at the school, a school nurse will

work with the parents to create a health plan for the child. Please let your child's teacher know if your child has any health concerns.

Immunizations

Schools are required by Minnesota State Statues to have up-to-date immunization forms on all children attending our early childhood program. Completed immunizations are due before classes begin. Children are not allowed to attend school until the immunization form is turned in.

Under-immunized Children

In the event of a disease outbreak, students who have not been vaccinated are at risk of contracting the disease, furthering the spread. The Minnesota Department of Health may require that a family keep exposed children home from day care and/or school if they have not been vaccinated.

Child Abuse Reporting

School district employees are mandated by the state law to report child abuse or neglect to county social services or the local police department.

Safety and Security

- Please keep purses and other valuables with you at all times. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- Sharing of phone numbers, email address or address should only be initiated by parents. We cannot provide class lists with this information to families.
- Please keep children with you at all times as you walk through the building.
- All perimeter doors with the exception of the front entrance are locked during the day.

Forms

Parents will be asked to complete the following forms at the time of registration:

- **Emergency Information:** Each family is asked to fill out an Emergency Information Form to be kept on file at school. When information changes during the school year, please update this form. Phone numbers of where you can be contacted during the day are required. We need to be able to contact you if child is sick, pick-up issue or if there is an emergency.
- **Authorized Pick-Up Form (Preschool Only):** This form gives permission for who can pick-up your child. Your child will NOT be released to someone who is not on this list. Please update this form as needed.
- **Census Form:** This form is used to identify who is in our school district and will be given to the district office so that they know that your child will be part of Hastings Public Schools.
- **MDE Questionnaire:** This form obtains data for the MN Dept. of Education. Filling out this form is optional and confidential.

Health Information

Illnesses

The Health Policy is to insure the safest and healthiest environment for your child, our families and our staff.

Please keep your child home and notify your child's teacher if your child comes down with or has been exposed to any of the following:

-Bacterial Meningitis	-Fifth's Disease	-Pertussis	-Chicken Pox	-Hepatitis A
-Diarrheal Illnesses	-Diphtheria	-Mumps	-Impetigo	-Measles
-Unidentified Skin Rash	-Rubella	-Pneumonia		

Please keep your child HOME if she/he has any of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea -Severe or persistent cough -Yellowish skin or eyes -Unidentified Skin Rash
- Pink Eye -Difficult/Rapid Breathing -Vomiting in the last 24 hours
- Fever (the fever needs to be absent, without the help of fever reducing medication for 24 hours)
- Infected Skin Patches (crusty, yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin)

*If your child develops any of these symptoms while they are in class, you will be notified. You may be asked to keep your child home until symptoms subside or a physician decided that the child may return to class.

** ***Please notify us if your child has any of the following: ASTHMA, SEIZURES, DIABETES, and/or SEVERE ALLERGIES.***

*Parents will be informed if children have been exposed to a communicable disease.

Peanut Free/Tree Nut Free Classes

- Please remember to check any packaged item for peanuts or peanut exposed foods.
- We will not serve items that list peanuts/tree nuts as an ingredient on the package.
- We will also do not serve items that have a package statement indicating that some machines in the production process may have been used for other items containing nuts.
- We encourage healthy snacks such as cut up fruits, cheese, vegetables, non-sugary snacks, real fruit juice, yogurt, whole grain options, etc.
- All cookie, cracker and cake-like snacks need to be packaged and unopened.
- Bakery items will not be allowed unless you can have the baker/store ensure in writing that the goods purchased are nut free and that they have been prepared or produced by machines that are also nut free.

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

What is ECFE?

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is a program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten. ECFE is based on the idea that the family provides a child's first and most important learning environment and parents are a child's first and most significant teachers. ECFE works to strengthen families and enhance the ability of all parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children.

What happens in ECFE?

ECFE programs are tailored locally to meet the needs of families in each specific community. Most programs contain the following components:

- Parent discussion groups
- Play and learning activities for children
- Parent-child activities
- Special events for the entire family
- Home visits
- Early screening for children's health and developmental.

Who participates in ECFE?

Parents and children participate together. ECFE is committed to accessibility for everyone, so fees are based on a sliding fee scale or are waived for families unable to pay.

Why start at birth?

Brain research confirms the first three years are an extremely critical period in a child's development. This is especially true in the areas of language, social-emotional skills and cognitive development. Getting involved in ECFE can help parents be better equipped to deal with the challenges of caring for these rapidly developing infants and toddlers.

Why involve the parents?

Research shows that early childhood programs involving parents and children are more effective than programs focusing exclusively on children. Educators and psychologists agree that it is vital for early childhood programs to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children. Involvement prior to kindergarten encourages parents to play an active role in their children's learning throughout their entire education. Children whose parents are involved in their education have been more successful in school.

Who benefits from ECFE?

Society benefits from strong families and healthy, well-developed children. The potential of ECFE to prevent or reduce later learning problems of children has been confirmed by evaluation of ECFE and similar programs. Parents involved in ECFE report feeling more supported and more confident in their role as parents. They also report having a better understanding of how children develop and having improved parenting skills. Research strongly suggests that dollars spent on ECFE are more than repaid by savings in remedial health, education and welfare costs later.

ECFE Vision Statement

Early Childhood Family Education is an early path taken with your child to discover tools to raise confident, responsible, well-rounded children.

Mission Statement

District 200 Early Childhood programs will provide opportunities for families and staff to listen, learn, teach and grow.

*Listen...*to what families tell us.

*Learn...*together about each child and parent's strengths and needs.

*Teach...*responsibly with regard to current research, best practices and individual needs.

*Grow...*together to provide the best possible community of support for families

Fees

ECFE fees are determined using a sliding fee scale. Sliding fees are based on a family's gross income. All families are welcome! No Hastings Public School District resident will be turned away due to inability to pay the class fee. If you have questions about fees or payments call 651-480-7670.

Arrival and Departure

Please arrive on time to class. It helps to keep the class running smoothly and eliminates the distraction of families coming in late. If you have a child attending sibling care, please allow extra time to drop them off before class. Additionally, please depart on time since the staff needs to prepare for the next class to come in. Keep in mind that there are other people working in the building, so please help your child use respectful behavior in the hallways (walking quietly, talking softly).

Snacks

- Snack time provides a valuable learning experience for children.
- Please inform staff about any diet restrictions your child may have prior to class starting.
- For children with severe allergies or other dietary restrictions, food items can be sent from home. Consult with your child's teacher.
- Families are asked to take turns providing healthy snacks. Snack should be low in sugar and peanut/nut free.
- Snacks brought in must be commercially prepared and brought to school in an unopened package.

Parent/Child Together Time

- During the first part of class parents and children will explore a variety of activities. This a time for parents to be together with their child in an educational setting and to take part in an educational setting under the guidance of a licensed teacher and parent educator.

Parent Education

- While children stay in their classroom with the teacher; parents are involved in a discussion led by a licensed parent educator. Topics are chosen from the areas of; parent development, parent-child relationships, early childhood development, family development and culture and community. Parents share ideas and experiences, discuss concerns and gain support from one another during this time.

Child Activity Time

- Children will separate from their parents when their parents go to the parent education room. Staff will be sensitive to child and parent needs during this time. If the separation time is particularly difficult for a child, staff may ask the parent to return to the classroom.
- Remember it is a normal part of child development for children to become upset about separation from parents and other loved ones. Early Childhood Programs provide a safe place for your child to accept and handle separation in a positive way.
- The children will stay in the early childhood classroom to engage in activities provided by a licensed early childhood teacher and classroom assistant. The activities will promote their growth and development along with social skills through play with other children.

Sibling Care

In order for a parent to give their full attention to the child registered for class we ask that other children, who need care on parent-child days be registered in Sibling Care.

- Registration and payment for sib care class is required. We do not accept drop ins, all children must be registered in order to attend sibling care.
- Immunization forms are required to be turned in prior to the first time in sibling care. A medical form is also to be filled out indicating any allergies, asthma, etc.
- If you have a child in sib care, please refer to sections in this booklet on separation, snacks, illnesses and immunization records, diapering procedures and other information which is pertinent to your situation. In addition, you should be aware of the following:
 - Label all personal items. (Bottles, blankets, diaper bag, etc.)
 - If you have specific instructions (ex. bottles to be given at a certain time) please provide a note to staff regarding these instructions.
 - Inform the staff that you are there and please do not allow your child, who you will be attending class with, to go to their classroom without you.
 - If your child is consistently crying or uncomfortable for an unknown reason, we may ask you to help assess your child's needs.
 - For the safety of your child, be sure to communicate with the sibling care staff if your child will be picked up by someone other than the person who has dropped them off.
 - A staff person at the door will check your child off as you leave the sibling care room.
 - Keep other children with you when you are picking up the sibling.

Diapering Policy

- The parent will be called from class if their child needs a diaper change, needs help in the bathroom or is having toileting issues. Staff members are not allowed to diaper children or help with any toileting needs. This is for your child's safety.

- Bathroom/changing tables are located in the early childhood wing and in the sib care room which are available for parents to use.

Tilden Community Preschool - Home of the Little Raiders

Philosophy

Tilden Community Preschool is designed to provide a variety of age appropriate experiences that contribute to the growth and development of children ages 3 to 5 years of age. These experiences serve as a foundation for later school experiences. A group/class experience fosters independence, builds self-confidence and provides the child with kindergarten readiness skills that will prepare them for the start of their school careers.

Coming to School-Items to Bring

- Send a backpack with your child each day.
- Label your child's backpack, clothing, shoes and outerwear with your child's first and last name.
- Children should be dressed in washable, comfortable clothes so they are free to take part in activities which could be messy or wet. We use washable materials, but we cannot guarantee they will come out of all fabrics.
- Children should wear tennis shoes to assure their comfort and safety indoors. Outdoor clothes and footwear, suitable to weather, are required as children often go outside.

Drop off and Pick up

- The safety of your child is very important to us. At the time of enrollment, parents must provide the Early Childhood Program with persons authorized to pick up the child. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to inform the center of any changes in the list throughout the year. If necessary, photo identification or other official identification may be required prior to releasing the child. If someone other than an authorized person (as indicated on the authorization form) is to pick up your child, please notify us. **We will only release children to authorized persons.**
- Child must be escorted to the classroom and signed in at the time of drop off. Please sign your child out when you pick up. Remember, staff and children are working and other activities are going on in the building so please help your child to use respectful behavior in the hallways (walk quietly, talking softly). Children are the responsibility of the parent before and after class. Additionally, do **not** leave other children left unattended in your vehicle. We will call the police liaison officer to assess the situation.

Transportation

- Busing is offered on a limited basis for an additional fee for families who live in the city limits of Hastings. Please contact the coordinator for more information regarding busing.

Snack Time

- Snack time provides a valuable learning experience for children. They experiment with taste, texture, smell, color, taking turns, making choices and helping them-selves. Children will wash their hands before snack and sit down together to eat. Staff will sit with the children during snack time and children are encouraged to try new foods.
- Teachers will discuss their plan with parents regarding bringing snacks. Please inform staff of any dietary restrictions you child may have.

Snacks

- Families are asked to take turns providing healthy snacks. Snack should be low in sugar and peanut/nut free.
- For children with severe allergies or other dietary restrictions, food items can be sent from home. Consult with your child's teacher prior to class starting.
- Snacks brought in must be commercially prepared and brought to school in an unopened package.

Curriculum and Assessment

- Tilden Community Preschool uses Creative Curriculum which is approved and recommended by the MN Dept. of Education. Our assessment tool is TS Gold which is used in daily observations and interactions with children. We also do an assessment in the fall and again in the spring called the Pre-KAT. This assessment is directly related to expectations of kindergarten and is used to help children be prepared for kindergarten.

Conscious Discipline

- Our discipline policy is to help children develop self-control and responsibility for their actions and to improve their behavior. Conscious Discipline is a curriculum we use to help students learn social and emotional skills, discipline and teaches them to self-regulate so they are better able to learn.

Teacher Web Pages

- All teachers have a web page to access important classroom information. To access web pages go to www.hastingscommunityed.com.

Conferences

- Parent/Teacher conferences are an important part of our program. Teachers will set up a time for these meetings which will occur in the fall and again in the spring to allow you to monitor your child's progress. Of course you may come to the teacher at any time with questions, concerns, or information concerning your child. Please note, we do not discuss your child in their presence or in front of others, it is better to speak privately with your child's teacher regarding your concerns. A summary of your child's progress will be given at these conferences.

Toilet Trained

- All children who are in preschool need to be fully toilet trained which includes not only not wearing diapers, but also being able to independently use the bathroom. Pull-ups that are used as a precaution or in a preventative manner are allowed just as long as the child is not utilizing them as diapers and wetting them regularly. Pull-ups will not be changed and parents will be called if the child uses them. If a child has an accident at school parents will be notified to pick up their child. If the accidents occur consistently over a period of time children may not be able to attend class until they are fully toilet trained.

Tuition

- Tuition is due at the first of the month Sept. through May. Bus fees are due as well if you are using transportation.
- Monthly payments can be automatically charged to your credit card or pay directly to Community Education. Contact 651-480-7670 if you have any questions regarding payment.
- A sliding fee scale and fee assistance are available. For more information regarding fee assistance contact Angie McGinnis program coordinator, at 651-480-7678.
- A \$10 late fee will be charged for late payments.

Early Childhood Staff Contact Information

Program Coordinator:

Angie McGinnis amcginnis@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7678

Teachers:

Michelle Bump mbump@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7366

Erin Lee elee@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7384

Colleen Thome cthome@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7384

Anna Tlougan atlougan@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7383

Parent Educator:

Debbie Fleming dfleming@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7385

Support Staff:

Linda Gunter lgunter@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7381

Screening Secretary

Laurie Knutson lknutson@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7670

EC Secretary

Teri Thompson tthompson@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7671

Secretary

Director of Community Education:

Kari Gorr kgorr@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7672

District Health Services Coordinator:

Mary Ellen Fox mfox@hastings.k12.mn.us 651-480-7353

Resources

Dakota County Public Health and County Services

- **WIC Nutrition Program: 952-891-7525**
Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a nutrition program that offers free nutritious foods and nutrition education to families (pregnant women and children up to age 5) WIC provides breastfeeding support and education to pregnant and postpartum women.
- **Family Home Visiting: 651-554-6115**
Home visits from Public Health Nurses and Dakota Healthy Families staff support families during pregnancy and after delivery. Staff can provide support for children with special needs.
- **Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC): 952-891-7500**
Child and Teen Checkups staff can help find a doctor, dentist, make an appointment, find transportation or an interpreter for families with children and young adults on Medical Assistance from birth to age 21.
- **Immunizations for children and adults: 952-891-7999**
Immunizations walk-in clinics are held monthly in West St. Paul and Apple Valley. Call for current information or to schedule an appointment.
- **Family Adolescents and Children Therapy Services (FACTS): 651-379-9800**
www.facts-mn.org
- **Help Me Grow: 1-866-693-4769**
Development information/referral for assessment for ages birth to 5.
<http://helpmegrowmn.org>
- **Dakota County Social Services: 651-554-6000**
- **Dakota County Crisis Intervention: 952-891-7171**
Crisis Intervention provides 24 hour response and referral for a mental health crisis.
- **Hastings Family Service: 651-437-7134**
Hastings Family Service provides resources, food and assistance to families in Hastings School District and the Hastings area.
www.hastingsfamilyservice.org
- **Pleasant Hill Library: 651-438-0200**
- **Child Care Resource and Referral: 651-290-9704**