



LESD Community Education



LITCHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Education Department

PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022

Early Childhood Education Program

Revised: 5/2021

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Dr. Ron Sterr, Director of Community Ed
623-535-6042

OFFICE

250 E. Sagebrush Street, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340
Preschool Registrar 623-535-6068
Fax 623-935-3715
Accounts/Payments: 623-535-6046/6052

MAILING ADDRESS

272 E. Sagebrush Street, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

PRESCHOOL LOCATIONS

Belen Soto Elementary*
18601 W. Campbell Ave.
Goodyear, AZ 85395

Dreaming Summit Elem.*
13335 W. Missouri Ave.
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

Litchfield Elementary* ↑
13825 W. Wigwam Blvd.
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

15430 W. Turney
Goodyear, AZ 85395

Palm Valley Elementary*
2801 N 135th Ave.
Goodyear, AZ 85338

Rancho Santa Fe Elem.* ↑
2150 N. Rancho Santa Fe
Blvd.
Avondale, AZ 85392

18701 W. Thomas Rd.
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

Verrado Elementary* ↑
20873 W. Sunrise Lane
Buckeye, AZ 85396

Verrado Heritage Elem.*
20895 West Hamilton Street
Buckeye, Arizona 85395

Mabel Padgett Elementary*

**Scott L Libby
Elementary* ↑**

*Full-Day

*↑ Full-Day and 1/2-Day options

↑ 1/2 Day (AM or PM)

Notice: This handbook may be amended at any time. Additions/corrections will appear in the current version posted on the LESD Community Education Website.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Litchfield Elementary School District's Early Childhood Education Program. We provide an excellent preschool program geared to the developmental stages of three-, four-, and pre-kindergarten five-year-old children. All of our teachers certified or credentialed, highly qualified and experienced in early childhood education.

PHILOSOPHY & GOALS

The Early Childhood Education Program strives to offer children an opportunity to grow in an environment designed to meet the physical, mental, social and emotional needs of all students. Classroom activities are designed to create an environment that:

- * Encourages positive self-esteem,
- * Promotes independence,
- * Develops creativity and joy in learning,
- * Increases communication skills,
- * Develops self-control and responsibility,
- * Develops fine-motor, gross-motor and sensory skills,
- * Introduces pre-academic skills,
- * Encourages appropriate interaction with other children and adults,
- * Teaches problem-solving and decision-making skills, and
- * Uses a child-centered, individualized approach in planning the educational program,
- * Emphasizes fun!

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Children entering the Community Education program must be three years old on or before their starting date and must use the toilet independently. If your child turns 5 on or before August 31, he/she should be registered for kindergarten.

CURRICULUM

The Early Childhood Education Program curriculum is developmental, hands-on and planned around everyday experiences which help the children learn about self, family, friends, environment and community. It is based upon the Arizona Early Childhood Education Standards and concepts are presented through multi-sensory activities such as games, songs, and movement. Each child's individual needs will be considered in order to assist in developing to the best of his/her ability. The program focuses on the following developmental areas based on five domains:

- Speech and Language
- Communication
- Fine, Gross, and Sensory Motor
- Cognitive, Adaptive/Self-Help
- Social/Emotional

At LESD, we implement a research-based reading program that is closely aligned with the Early Learning standards in our community education preschool programs. Children learn letters and sounds and begin to read individually as they are ready through both whole-group and one-on-one instruction. At LESD, we understand that social emotional learning is a crucial component of preschool development and readiness for kindergarten. This exciting program helps our children love reading and succeed from the very start!

To support this development, we utilize the Conscious Discipline framework, which helps children to: 1. resolve conflicts peacefully, 2. recognize and self-manage their emotions

positively 3. empathize with others, and 4. make responsible decisions. These critical skills help set children up for success.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN

Our program focuses on modeling positive behavior and recognizing our students for demonstrating that behavior. It is our practice to directly teach and reinforce the skills which children need in order to interact successfully at school. When redirecting a child to a positive behavior, classroom staff consider age and the developmental needs of each individual child. To the extent possible, staff will be consistent in defining and maintaining clear expectations and procedures. When a child demonstrates a behavior that does not meet the expectation, staff help the child learn to problem-solve and come up with his/her own alternative solution. When behavior must be stopped immediately because of a potential danger to the child or another child, a staff member may physically support the child until he/she is in control. When a behavior problem becomes chronic or extreme, the LESD due-process procedures will be applied and the child may be removed from the preschool program.

TOILET TRAINING POLICY

Children must be completely toilet trained in order to attend the regular Preschool and Extended Day Programs in the Litchfield Elementary School District. Our regular Preschool and Extended Day programs are not licensed by the state to admit children who are not yet toilet trained or are in the process of being toilet trained. Occasionally accidents will happen; however, if frequent urine and/or bowel accidents occur (two or more accidents within a ten-day period) then they do not meet this requirement. Please understand that if your child does exhibit signs of not being fully toilet trained he/she will be removed from the program and any unused portion of tuition will be refunded. If an accident happens, the child will be taken to the restroom to change him or herself with an extra change of clothes provided by the parent. If a change of clothes is not available, the parent or guardian will be notified to pick up the child or provide a change of clothes. Please make sure your child has an extra change of clothes available.

VISITORS AND OBSERVATIONS

All visitors must sign in at the school front office before they can observe the Early Childhood Education Program. For liability and supervision reasons, children - including siblings - who are not enrolled in the Preschool program cannot participate in the activities and must be accompanied by a parent at all times. Service providers such as therapists who are not employed or contracted through the district are not allowed to use preschool time or facilities to work with students.

LICENSING/INSPECTION REPORTS/INSURANCE

Each facility is regulated by:
Arizona Department of Health Services
150 N 18th Avenue, Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85007-3244
602-364-2539

Inspection reports by the Department of Health Services are available upon request for public viewing in the classroom, at the Community Education Office, or at the Department of Health - Child Care Licensure Office. Each facility also carries liability insurance.

PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION

A minimum of 48 hours before the application of a pesticide on facility premises a notice will be placed on the classroom parent information board as well as on the main entrance door to the school and the Extended Day parent information board.

EXTENDED DAY

AM and PM Extended Day are both included for students registered for full-day preschool. For those students in HALF-DAY AM or PM preschool, Extended Day may be purchased separately. For students in Half-Day preschool who are registered for "Minimum-Use" Extended Day, additional days of Extended Day may be purchased individually by Thursday of the preceding week at the rate of \$25 per day, regardless of whether the child attends AM or PM Extended Day.

CLASS TIMES

The ALL-DAY and HALF-DAY (AM or PM) preschool program occurs five days per week, Monday through Friday and the ALL-DAY preschool program includes extended-day care - available both before and after school. Consistent attendance is very important to your child's educational program. Please make an effort to have your child in class on time every day. Your child must be accompanied to and picked up from class (or Extended Day, if applicable) by an adult - 18 years or older who is listed on the State Emergency Information & Immunization Record Card. For students in Half-Day programs, when bringing a child to school, parents must supervise their child until class time.

Please note: our program offers much more academic instruction than a typical daycare. If a student is consistently arriving so late as to miss significant portions of academic time, we may ask that you withdraw him/her and enroll in daycare.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The Early Childhood Education Program follows the LESD school calendar schedule.

ATTENDANCE

Please call the Preschool Registrar at 623-535-6068 when your child is absent from school for any reason. Credit will not be issued for days missed.

ILLNESSES/ACCIDENTS

If your child becomes ill during preschool, staff will contact you to pick up your child. If a parent cannot be reached, an authorized person listed on the child's Emergency Information & Immunization Record Card will be contacted to pick up your child. Please keep your child home if you are aware of - or suspect - that she/he has any contagious illness (strep throat, pink eye, flu, chicken pox, etc) or a fever over 100 F. A child must be fever-free for 24 hours before he/she may return to school. In the case of a serious accident, injury or emergency, parents or responsible persons listed on the child's Emergency Information & Immunization Record Card will be notified immediately and, if needed, 911 will be called.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

If your child has dietary restrictions, parents must make sure that the teacher is aware (See "Medical Conditions" below). Students will not be allowed to consume caffeinated drinks (including sodas) in preschool. Parents should avoid sending their child with high-sugar snacks - especially sugary beverages and candy, as these adversely affect mood and energy.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE/INFESTATION

Students with an infestation (lice, scabies, pinworms etc.) should not be sent to school until cleared. In case of an outbreak, information will be posted on the Parent information board.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If your child has any known medical condition (asthma, diabetes, seizures, allergies, etc.) Please be sure to let the teacher know and make sure it is stated on the Emergency Information & Immunization Record Card.

MEDICATION

If necessary please make arrangements with the school nurse for your child to have medication administered during school hours. Any changes to medications and dosing should be brought to the nurse's attention and noted on the child's Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in sensible clothing when sending him/her to school. Play is children's work! Many of our activities include the use of paints, glue, markers and other art supplies. We try to be careful; however, accidents do happen and we cannot be responsible for stained clothing. An extra set of clothing must be kept in the classroom to cover emergencies. Please label any clothing, lunch box, hats, nap sheet, etc. brought to the program. We often have water play during the hot weather. Your child's teacher will notify you of specific events so that you may send your child in the appropriate clothing.

TUITION

A tuition increase of 1% was approved by the governing board to match increases in staffing costs for the 2021-2022 school year. Discounts apply to families having multiple children in the Early Childhood Education Program and to LESD employees.

Tuition per Month	1st Child	2 children 10% discount for 2nd child	3 children 20% discount for 3rd child
Full-Day (includes Ext. Day)	\$783	\$1488	\$2114
Half-Day	\$329	\$625	\$888

Tuition is due the first of each month, August through May. The All-Day program tuition includes the daily Extended Day Program, early release days and Teacher In-service days, as well as Fall and Spring Break. To help keep the cost of our program low, statements are not mailed or sent out. We strongly recommend that parents use the online payment portal to make monthly tuition payments. Tuition payments are not accepted at school sites. If not using the online payment portal, please either mail your payments to L.E.S.D., Community Education, 272 Sagebrush Street, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340 or pay in person at the Community Education Office located at 250 Sagebrush Street, Litchfield Park. Office hours are 7:30am to 3:30pm. Payments may be left after-hours using the secure dropbox in our office door. Please make checks payable to Litchfield Elementary School District (LESD). Payments are due the 1st of each month regardless of weekends or holidays. *Any account balances and all applicable fees must be paid in full before the first (1st) day of the month.* NOTE: Accounts that are delinquent (payment made after the 5th of the month) more than twice in a school year are **ineligible** for 'Priority' enrollment for the following school year, but may still participate in the subsequent preschool lottery enrollment; Preschool enrollment for the following year is not guaranteed.

Change in Full-Day Preschool Camp Fees

The LESD Community Education Department will continue to include Fall Break and Spring Break camps for Full-Day Preschool students at no extra cost; we remind families that children must be registered at least one week in advance through the DayCareWorks Parent Portal. Additionally, a \$20 staffing fee will be applied to the account of students who attend fewer than two days of the week-long camps.

TUITION ON "SHORT" OR "LONG" MONTHS

In response to many requests for flat-rate pricing in order to simplify family budgeting, tuition is now based on an 180-day school year over a ten-month period. You will be billed for eighteen days each month regardless of the actual days of class in a month.

CHILD'S PERSONAL PROPERTY

Please do not send toys to school with your child/children. The Early Childhood Education Program follows school rules by not allowing toys, electronic games, personal media players, etc. to be brought to school. Toy weapons of any kind will not be allowed on school grounds.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Litchfield Early Childhood Education Program recognizes the important role of the parent's involvement in their child's preschool experience. Our doors are always open for observation and questions. Please schedule a conference with your child's teacher if you have specific questions or concerns. Volunteering in your child's classroom should be scheduled with the teacher. Volunteers who interact directly with children must complete the LESD online volunteer training and are required by ADHS licensing regulations to be issued a fingerprint clearance card. (Fingerprint card requirements do not apply to interacting with your own child, such as when accompanying on a field trip.)

PARTY POLICY

In order to be fair to all children and eliminate hurt feelings, party invitations brought to school should be for the entire class. Invitations for less than the entire class are not to be delivered to school. Please check with your child's teacher regarding individual class policies. Any foods provided to be eaten in the classroom must be store-purchased and sealed in the original packaging.

FIELD TRIPS

Special field trips to various off-campus locations help to enrich the education of children. Trips are planned in advance and require special permission from each parent to enable the child to participate. These forms will be available for you to sign prior to any off-campus field trip. Parents are always needed and welcome as chaperones on these trips. Chaperones **must** have completed the Online Volunteer Training prior to going on the trip. The online training is located on the Litchfield District website, under "Parent Resources". Scroll to the bottom and click on "Volunteers". Read and complete the online training, and submit the packet to your child's teacher at least one (1) week prior to the field trip. This is a special time for you to spend with your preschool child; please make other arrangements that day for the care of younger children. All chaperones must accompany their child on the LESD bus and all children and chaperones must also return to campus on the bus.

SIGN IN/OUT

Please provide us with the names and telephone numbers of persons designated to pick up your child. If a parent/stepparent is NOT permitted to pick up your child by court order, please provide his or her name also, along with any relevant court documents. PLEASE NOTE: Your child will not be released to anyone except those who are listed as emergency

contacts, **except**: both parents are authorized to pick up their child (even if not listed on the pick-up list) unless we have court documents stating otherwise.

Sign In: Students must be signed in daily by a parent or authorized person. A child may not sign herself/himself into class. To sign the child in, a parent or authorized **adult** must accompany the child to the site and write their full name and the time on the sign-in sheet.

Sign Out: For the safety of the children we require that a parent or authorized person sign the child out each day. **Please bring a picture identification.** A child may not sign himself /herself out of class. To sign the child out a parent or authorized person must visit the site and write her/his full name and time on the sign-out sheet. Please remember to use your full first and last name on the sign-in/out sheet; this is a requirement under state regulations. It is very important to update your child's Emergency Information and Record Card if there are any changes in your family or residency.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS

Children will only be released to persons designated on the child's Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card or upon verbal or written authorization from parent/guardian given to the teacher. Individuals will be required to show proof of I.D. to the staff each time the child is picked-up. If one person has sole custody of a child, legal documentation must be on file with the site stating the name of the legal guardian.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from the Preschool program is the responsibility of the parents. Program staff members are not allowed to pick up or drop off your child/children under any circumstances.

SECURITY

The gates are for the security of our students. They are opened and closed at designated times. You may check with your child's teacher for times. Preschool students are included in all site emergency drills. A crisis management plan may be obtained from your school office. In circumstances where an emergency drill occurs during parent pick-up time, students will not be released to parents until after the drill.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If your child has special needs (e.g.- Diabetes, IEP, 504 Plan, Allergies, Doctor's note, etc...) please make sure it is stated on the child's Emergency Information & Immunization Record Card. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the teacher of the child's specific needs. The teacher will then work in conjunction with the school staff when necessary to meet those needs and document any specific accommodations.

APPLICATION FEE

A \$25.00 non-refundable yearly application fee is due when requesting to participate in the lottery drawing or to have your child's name added to a current waiting list. This fee will be applied to the registration fee when the child is accepted into the preschool program.

REGISTRATION FEE

A \$50.00 non-refundable yearly registration fee is required per family. In the unlikely event of insufficient enrollment resulting in the preschool class being dissolved, your \$50.00 registration fee will be refunded.

REGISTRATION

You may register your child/children for Preschool at the Community Education office. A child may be registered into the program at any time if space is available. Spots are filled first with students during Priority enrollment - including returning students and their

siblings and the children of staff members. Remaining spots are filled during the Preschool lottery week, immediately following Priority enrollment in February.

In the event that space is not currently available, a \$25.00 non-refundable application fee will be required if to place a child's name on the waiting list and the enrolling parent will receive notification of any opening. Children will be allowed to attend the program only after all the required forms have been completed, signed, and returned. The Community Education office must have a fully completed State Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card. Immunization Record, proof of residence, and copy of birth certificate in order to admit your child/children to the program. The program expects all enrollment forms to be kept current with any new or changed information. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the program with updated information.

REFUND POLICY

Since our expenses are based on how many children are enrolled, tuition is based on the amount of time a child is **enrolled** and NOT the number of hours or days a child **attends**. There will be no automatic reduction of fees when your child is on vacation or gone from the program for any other reason.

LATE PICKUP

If students are picked up late, their account will be charged \$10.00 for the first five (5) minutes and \$1.00 for each minute thereafter per child. After three (3) incidents of late pick-up in a semester, students may be removed from the Early Childhood Education Program.

LATE PAYMENT

Tuition payments are due the first of each month regardless of weekends or holidays and will be assessed August thru May. A \$25.00 late fee will be charged for payments not received by the 5th day of each month. Failure to pay tuition by the tenth (10th) will result in the immediate withdrawal of your child/children from the Early Childhood Education Program.

PAYMENT QUESTIONS

Please call 623-535-6046 or 6052 with any questions concerning your account.

RETURNED CHECKS

Checks returned for nonsufficient funds must be replaced with cash or a money order immediately in the amount to cover the check plus a \$25.00 returned check fee. After two returned checks, only cash or money orders will be accepted. We cannot accept postdated checks under any circumstances. Failure to comply with the returned check policy will result in your child being withdrawn from the Early Childhood Education Program. We encourage you to use our online payment portal, which has an autopay option for your convenience.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

If you need to withdraw your child from the Early Childhood Education Program, a withdrawal form must be completed and filed with the Community Education Office during the month prior to withdrawal. These forms may be found at the Community Education Office or downloaded at:

<https://www.lesd79.org/departments/community-education-extended-day-and-prek/extended-day>

MULTI-HOUSEHOLD FAMILY GUIDELINES

In cases in which parents of a preschool student reside in separate households, it is our practice to afford both parents equal rights to the extent that there are no court documents IN OUR POSSESSION denying either of them those rights. It is the parents' responsibility to provide the

most recent court orders/documents which may pertain to your child and Preschool or Extended Day. Questions and requests regarding court orders should be made directly to the Community Education office.

Restraining orders, orders of protection, and court-ordered injunctions will be strictly enforced. For the purposes of this policy, "parent" refers to a person with legal parental rights, whether they received those rights through birth, adoption, or court order.

BOTH parents MAY (unless expressly denied by court order):

- Add others to the pick-up and emergency contact list.
- Pick up their child from Preschool (see item 2 below).
- Contribute to the payment of Preschool tuition.

NEITHER parent may:

- Remove a name from the pick-up or emergency contact list that has been added by the other parent without producing a court order to that effect.
- Visit one or more of their children during Preschool time except to pick them up. Parents may not sign their child out and then sign them back in on the same day.
- Place the other parent or another individual on the no-pick-up list without a court order to that effect.

Preschool and Community Education Department staff will NOT:

1. ...establish separate payment accounts for the same child/children. Each parent may pay a portion of the total, but it must be paid to the same account.
2. ...track whose turn it is to pick a child up; this must be coordinated between parents. The child/children will be released to the first parent to arrive and sign the child out.
3. ...ensure that every parent/step-parent receives a call about concerns and emergencies. Staff will call those on the Emergency Contact list until they reach a parent or caregiver who can respond at that time. It is expected that parents will communicate with each other the details and resolution of these situations.
4. ...interpret parenting plans for any individual. Please address questions to the Director of Community Education at 623-535-6042.

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to the rapid population shift in our district Preschool classes may be dissolved or moved to alternate locations depending on the need for classroom space.