



Family Handbook

The Early Learning Center @ Amy Beverland

11660 Fox Road
Indianapolis, IN. 46236
(317)423-8214

The Early Learning Center @ Brook Park

5249 David Street
Indianapolis, IN. 46226
(317)423-8215

The Early Learning Center @ Mary Castle

8510 E. 82nd Street
Indianapolis, IN. 46256
(317)423-2816

The Early Learning Center @ Winding Ridge

11845 E. 46th St.
Indianapolis, IN. 46235
(317)-423-8217

Skiles Test Elementary Spanish Immersion

7001 Johnson Rd.
Indianapolis, IN. 46220
(317)-964-4700

Forest Glen Elementary Spanish Immersion

6333 Lee Rd.
Indianapolis, IN. 46236
317-964-4900

The Early Learning Centers MSD of Lawrence Township

Mission statement: MSD Lawrence Township is a district of destination where excellence empowers everyone to reach their full potential. Through innovation and dedication, we educate all students through graduation. The Early Learning Centers begin this education by providing strong foundations for every child’s intellectual, social-emotional, and physical development.

The “Design” of Early Learning in MSD of Lawrence Township

There is no better place for your child’s continued journey in early learning than MSD of Lawrence Township’s Early Learning Centers. Every aspect of the centers - from the buildings themselves to the programs and curriculum - has been purposefully designed by the highly qualified staff according to “best practice” research in early learning to meet and respect the development and learning needs of the young child, ages 3 years-6 years. The research is clear: the early years are the most critical in determining a child’s future academic and life success. That is why the MSD of Lawrence Township has made early learning a priority and is committed to accomplishing its mission of “empowering all students to contribute and succeed as self-directed, lifelong learners.”

Programs and Services Offered at the Early Learning Centers

The district’s early learning programs are designed to appeal to the natural curiosity, capability, and eagerness to learn of the young child. Rich in literacy and artistic expression, the Centers’ early learning programs implement the Indiana Preschool Foundations through a blended curriculum of HighScope, Montessori, Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Influences of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy in preschool, and the Indiana State Standards in Kindergarten. Most importantly, they foster a joy and life-long disposition of learning.

Providing high-quality, integrated early education experiences, The Early Learning Centers offer:

- **Preschool**- available at all four Early Learning Centers, Skiles Test and Forest Glen
 - Designed for children 3 to 5 years of age
 - Preschool School day -7:30am-3:00pm
- **Kindergarten**: available at all four Early Learning Centers, Skiles Test and Forest Glen
 - Full-day/every day
 - Student must be 5 on or before September 1st of the school year
- **Before and After Care**- before and after school childcare for Preschool Students and Kindergarten Students

*The Early Learning Centers are licensed by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Family Resources. They have also successfully completed the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation process.

Preschool Specific Information

Program Description

The preschool program at the Early Learning Centers of Lawrence Township begins with children who turn 3 and continues through the year before Kindergarten. The curriculum, which is developmentally appropriate for each age group, offers activities that enhance each child's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth through a blended curriculum, while adhering to the state Preschool Foundations.

We are committed to providing the highest quality early learning experience. Our environments are designed to promote intellectual skills, and healthy physical growth. We believe positive interactions with peers and teachers give children the opportunity to grow socially and realize their value as individuals. Our curriculum is a blend of the research of The National Association for the Education of Young Child (NAEYC), the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, the Indiana Preschool Foundations, the work of Maria Montessori, and the HighScope Curriculum. The Early Learning Centers are licensed by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Family Resources. We participate in the Paths to Quality Accreditation Program, and the program is also a Child Care Development (CCDF) provider. They have also successfully completed the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation process.

Philosophy

The preschool is based on the belief that all children are naturally curious and eager to learn. We believe children should be respected and valued for the knowledge they already possess. The role of the teacher is to facilitate, pose questions, and create learning experiences designed to support the inquisitive nature of each child, scaffolding the child's learning in authentic ways. Our Blended Curriculum, alongside the Indiana Foundations for Early Learning allow for a seamless transition to Kindergarten.

Preschool Program Operations:

Hours of Operation:

School Day	7:30AM-3:00PM
Before Care	6:30AM-7:30AM
After Care	3:00PM-6:00PM

Days of Operation: Monday-Friday

The preschool program follows the MSD Lawrence Township school calendar.

**The Early Learning Centers will combine at one location to provide childcare during breaks. Reservations are required by the parent/guardian. MSDLT reserves the right to cancel care on breaks if less than 20 students reserve a spot.

Cafeteria Procedures/Nutrition:

Our licensing requirements state that **no outside food may be brought into the Preschool setting.** We must ensure that all food is prepared in our school Food Service kitchen. Our Food Service Department complies with all state and federal health codes. This means that Preschool students

must eat a lunch provided by the school, and they are given two snacks per day that are also provided by the school. Parents pay an extra fee for breakfast and lunch, snacks are included.

Dental Hygiene - Tooth brushing is offered to each preschool student once per day per NAEYC guidelines. Brushing is with water only.

Communication:

Communication between the school and home is very important to the success of our programs. Teachers will communicate with families on a regular basis using our online tool, seesaw. There are also weekly phone calls from the principal on Sunday nights.

Health Examination and Immunizations:

A health examination including immunizations is required for each child within 12 months prior to admission or within one month of admission to the Preschool. Discontinuation of services will be enforced if all health forms are not returned within the above stated time period.

Items to bring to school:

- A full change of clothes (including socks and underwear)
- Blanket for nap time
- Comfort Item for nap time (for example: stuffed animal)
- Backpack (Medium Sized)

Withdrawal from the Preschool Program:

A two week written notice is required when withdrawing a child from the Preschool. If the proper notice is given, any prepaid fees will be refunded. If a child is withdrawn without giving the required notification, the parent or guardian will be financially responsible to pay for an additional two weeks of preschool fees.

****Continued enrollment in Preschool is contingent upon the parent/guardian's adherence to the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook, including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees.**

Kindergarten Specific Information

About the Program

The Early Learning Centers offer full day/every day kindergarten for all MSD of Lawrence Township kindergarten students.

Research shows that full day/every day students not only show additional academic gains but are better prepared socially and emotionally for first grade. The philosophy of the MSD of Lawrence Township has always been to create a system of high quality early learning experiences where there is never a gap to close.

To that end, our Kindergarten program is based on the belief that children are naturally curious and eager to learn and that children learn best through play. Our curriculum is grounded in our knowledge of child development and appropriate practices that is differentiated to meet and

challenge each child at their level of understanding. We adhere to the Indiana State Standards and use these as our guiding principles in our curriculum.

We provide direct instruction in word work and small group reading instruction. In addition to this we have implemented new experiences for ELC students to help them become even stronger and more confident in first grade. We strive to increase rigor, provide opportunities to practice important skills using technology, and incorporate student research using the Project Approach.

Full Day/Everyday: Your Kindergarten child will attend school:

Monday- Friday from 7:30am-2:20pm

Your child is considered tardy for school at/after 8:00am

Preschool and Kindergarten Procedures

Appropriate Attire

A student's dress and appearance are the responsibility of the family. It is the school's goal to ensure that the learning environment is not impacted by a student's clothing or appearance.

Inappropriate attire will be determined by the principal.

- Shorts, dresses, and skirts should follow the fingertip rule. These clothing items should be longer than the student's fingertips when his/her arms are by the side.
- Midriff or spaghetti strap shirts should not be worn.
- Pants should fit around the waist and not bag excessively – no sagging /no visible underwear
- Tennis shoes or other shoes that allow your child to participate in any activity are encouraged. Flip flops, and heeled shoes are discouraged as they can cause injury and inhibit activities.
- No shoes with wheels are permitted.
- Sleeveless athletic jerseys must be worn over a t-shirt.
- No clothing is allowed which promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or that is obscene in language and/or graphics.
- Hats, caps, and head coverings are permitted, but they must be worn outside the building except on "special clothing days".

Backpacks

A standard size backpack is required. We prefer that you purchase a backpack that does not have wheels. We would like for you to make it a part of your family routine to check the backpack every evening to maintain the family-school connection. This will ensure that important dates are not forgotten and that all information is received promptly. Having your child share in this responsibility will help him/her grow and communicate his/her experiences with you.

KINDERGARTEN only: Please do not remove the end of the day/transportation tag that the school provides! Any tag that is removed will be replaced by the classroom teacher before the child is placed on the school bus or placed in after care. This is to ensure your child's safety. If your child should lose this tag, please contact your child's teacher.

Holidays

Holidays can be stressful for the entire family. Young children may exhibit signs of stress from too much excitement and change around holidays. At the Early Learning Centers our emphasis is student learning and reduction of stress for children. You will not see decorations or big changes during the holidays at the ELCs. We will talk about the holidays as the children bring it forward. Your family celebrations and our society's attention on holidays are usually sufficient for young children. Many families have told us that our consistent environment and focus have helped their family enjoy the holidays more because their children are not over stimulated at this time of year.

Invitations and Birthdays

- The schools understand that birthdays are very special days for students and their families. School procedures must be followed to ensure the safety of students and the structure of the learning day.
- No food can be sent in for a student's birthday (homemade or store bought).
- No balloons or yard signs are permitted
- Deliveries, such as flowers will not be given to students during the school day.
- If families wish to celebrate a student's birthday at school, they are encouraged to bring pencils, small school item or donate a book to the classroom library.
- Birthday invitations should not be delivered at school unless every student in class is invited to the celebration.

Latex Balloons

- Latex balloons are not permitted in any school in MSD of Lawrence Township due to student and adults with latex allergies.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a vital part of our early childhood curriculum. We go outside every day unless the wind-chill temperature is below 25 degrees. It is important that you dress your child with clothing appropriate to the outside temperature. Please do not ask us to keep your child indoors because he/she is not feeling well. Your child should feel well enough to participate in every activity while at school. The exception is if you have a note from your doctor.

Attendance Procedures

Late Arrival (Tardy)

If your child is late, YOU MUST COME IN WITH YOUR CHILD AND REPORT TO THE OFFICE BEFORE YOUR CHILD MAY GO TO HIS/HER CLASSROOM. You will need to sign the late arrival form.

Reporting Absences

When your child is absent for any reason, please contact the office.

- **Your child's first and last name**
- **Teacher's Name**
- **Date**

- **Reason for the absence**

Please call in by 8:30 a.m. If absences are not called in, families will be contacted by the automated calling system.

Cafeteria Procedures/Nutrition:

Our licensing requirements state that **no outside food may be brought into the Preschool setting.** We must ensure that all food is prepared in our school Food Service kitchen. Our Food Service Department complies with all state and federal health codes. This means that Preschool students must eat a lunch provided by the school, and they are given two snacks per day that are also provided by the school.

For both Kindergarten and preschool

- The school breakfast option and lunch is a separate charge paid to Food Service. The cost can be paid weekly or monthly or even by semester if you wish.
- If your child requires a special diet or has food allergies please contact the school nurse for details concerning protocol for these situations.
- Breakfast and Lunch are served daily; however, breakfast is not served on 2 hour delay days.
- Breakfast begins at 7:35 a.m. Students who do not ride the bus must be in the cafeteria by 7:45 a.m. to receive breakfast.
- Visitors are welcome to join their student at lunch time.
- A visitor must make a reservation with the school's front office by 9:00 a.m. in order to eat lunch with a student.
- Visitors will eat with only their own student at a designated table (green table) in the cafeteria.
- Visitors cannot just "drop in" for lunch; a reservation is required.
- Visitors must follow the school's procedures for showing identification when entering the building.
- Visitors must exit the building after lunch; students must return to class with their teacher.
- Visitors should silence their cell phones during lunch. Due to privacy and safety rules, no pictures can be taken by visitors while in the cafeteria.
- Principals or their designees have the right to stop any disruptions caused by visitors during the lunch time.
- KINDERGARTEN ONLY: Students may bring their lunch from home (no soft drinks, please) or get a school lunch. PRESCHOOL STUDENTS MUST EAT A SCHOOL PROVIDED

LUNCH DUE TO LICENSING REQUIREMENTS OR PROVIDE A DOCTOR'S NOTE AND ADDITIONAL FORM TO BRING THEIR LUNCH FROM HOME.

Office Procedures

Student Release

If you need to pick up your child early, before 2:20 pm, YOU MUST GO TO THE OFFICE. While you are signing your child out, the office will call his/her classroom to let the teacher know your child will be leaving. Children are released to adults designated on the list maintained in Skyward. If, for some reason, someone other than a custodial parent (or an adult whose name has been provided to the office by the custodial parent) is to pick up your child, the parent will need to go to the office and add the person to the list of adults authorized to pick up the child. NO NOTES WILL BE ACCEPTED! The person picking up the child may be asked to show photo identification. If a person that is not listed comes to pick up your child, a call will be made to the custodial parent. If the custodial parent cannot be reached, the child will NOT be released to the person. For this reason, it is important to keep the list maintained in the office with updated and new information and contact numbers. This list will be maintained in Skyward.

Custodial Parent

Students are to be released to the custodial parent or those listed on the list maintained in the office. In the case of joint custody, or no custody agreement, the student can be released to either parent. The school **MUST** have a copy of the court documentation on file. The school will adhere to the guidelines set forth by the court.

Release of Information (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy act, passed by Congress in 1974, provides that parent's rights extend until the student is 18 years of age or is enrolled in a post-secondary institution even if he/she has not yet reached his/her birthday. An eligible student is one who has reached the age of 18 or is enrolled in a post-secondary institution. The law requires that schools receiving federal funds must:

1. Allow the parent or eligible student to review and inspect the student's record at reasonable times. This rule does not apply to records made and kept by one person, such as a psychologist or social worker, which is not shared with anyone but a substitute for that person.
2. Give the parent or eligible student the chance to challenge the records in a hearing to make sure that they are not misleading or inaccurate.
3. Obtain written permission from the parent or eligible student before revealing the records to other persons.
4. Notify parents or eligible students of their rights under this law. There are some exceptions to rule number 3 above: 1. Other school officials of the same school, including teachers. 2. Officials of other schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. 3. Certain federal, state, and local authorities performing authorized functions.
5. Court of law enforcement officials – only if the school is given a subpoena or court order.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

The Early Learning Centers are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). All reporting is done in compliance with Indiana law. When the report directly involves school personnel, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible. All other agencies will be notified as required.

Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, Illegal Substances

The use of tobacco, and use or possession of alcohol or illegal substances is prohibited on school grounds. The possession of firearms is prohibited, unless the person is required to carry a firearm as a condition of their employment.

Material and Supply Fee

A one time, material and supply fee is due annually by October 1st. This fee is used to purchase items for the school such as:

- Studio supplies
- Bike helmets
- Computer headphones
- Laminating film
- Classroom Manipulatives
- Plastics sleeves/zip ties for bus tags and name tags
- The ELC's do not have a textbook rental fee. Instead, a supply fee is charged to purchase books, science materials, replenish supplies, and etc.

Nurse's Office Procedures

Medications

In compliance with the Indiana Code, the guidelines for administering medication at school are as follows:

1. Non-prescription medication will be administered to students when accompanied by written instruction from the parent/guardian, as well as, a completed medication permission form from the clinic. Medication must be in the original container. The instructions must include:

Name of student

Name of medication and purpose

Dosage and directions

Parent signature and date

2. Prescription medication will be administered to students when accompanied by the medication permission form found in the clinic. Parent/guardian will need to complete and sign this form when they drop off the medication in the office or clinic. Medication must be in the original prescription bottle with the student's name on the label.

Medications must be brought to the office for safe keeping if your child needs to take medication during the school day. **PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO CARRY MEDICATIONS IN THEIR BACKPACKS, INCLUDING COUGH DROPS.** Medicine will be kept by the bus driver or teacher for life and death allergies, i.e. bee stings.

No out-of-date prescriptions or medicines will be administered. We cannot supply aspirin, ointments, cold remedies, Tylenol, cough drops, calamine lotion, or other over the counter medications for children.

Immunizations

At the time of enrollment in any grade, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of a student to provide proof of proper immunizations in accordance with current Indiana Code. **On his/her first day of attendance, a**

student without proper immunization is considered in violation of Indiana State Law (unless a waiver has been granted). Indiana Code section 20-8.1-7-10.1 provides the only acceptable criteria for a waiver

Immunization Requirements

Kindergarten or Grade 1 and less than 7 years of age:

- 5 doses of DtaP, DTP, or DT or 4 doses are acceptable if the 4th dose was administered on or after the 4th birthday
- 4 doses of either OPV or IPV, in any combination or 3 doses of all OPV or all IPV are acceptable if the 3rd dose was administered on or after the 4th birthday
- 2 doses of measles (rubella) vaccine on or after the 1st birthday
- 1 dose of rubella (German measles) vaccine on or after the 1st birthday
- 1 dose of mumps vaccine on or after the 1st birthday
- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- 1 dose of chickenpox (varicella) vaccine

Illness

Your child should be sent to school regularly unless he or she is ill. A child SHOULD NOT attend school if any of the following symptoms are present:

Nausea or vomiting, fever, excessive coughing, earache, diarrhea, red eyes with discharge, rash, or chills.

Be sure to consult your doctor when questions arise concerning your child's health. Please report all cases of communicable diseases such as chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc. to the office.

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will isolate him/her and contact you to pick up. It is reasonable to expect that parents/guardians will pick up an ill child **within one hour of phone notification**. If a parent/guardian is contacted but cannot pick up the child within one hour, it becomes the parent's/guardian's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone from the child's emergency contact form. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the staff will begin to contact those listed on the child's emergency contact form until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up. The decision regarding whether or not an ill child may remain at the program is entirely up to the discretion of the nurse, principal, site leader and/or program director.

IMPORTANT! After any illness, your child must be free from fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is still having any of these symptoms, the "symptom free" period has not begun. For example, when a student is picked up because of an illness on Monday, this typically results in the student not returning to school until Wednesday.

It is imperative that parents/guardians keep updated work and home phone numbers on file with your Early Learning Center in the event of a child's illness or an emergency. Please be sure to have your phone's voicemail set up and keep the message box available to receive new messages.

Transportation Procedures

Bus Transportation

MSD of Lawrence Township provides bus transportation to and from school for those students enrolled in Full Day Kindergarten and students enrolled in Preschool that qualify for special education services. If you choose not to use this transportation option and drive your child to and from school instead, all kindergarten schedules and procedures must be maintained. All transportation changes must be made through the offices of the Early Learning Centers. All bus changes require a 5-day wait period. Children will only be allowed to ride their assigned bus. The transportation department would like to kindly remind families that riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. Students that do not follow bus safety procedures or rules could lose the privilege to ride the bus.

Family Transportation

Drop-off and Pick-Up Procedures are school specific. Information regarding these procedures is given out at the beginning of the school year at each individual school.

If you need to pick your child up from school before dismissal or make a change to end-of-the-day transportation, there are different procedures to follow:

1. Please contact the office directly to indicate the need for early release and then contact the teacher.
2. If there is a need for an unexpected early release or change in transportation please contact the front office immediately to avoid any complications. Please see the Student Release Policy for more information.
3. If you need to make changes please call the front office by 1:30pm.
4. **Kindergarten** parent pick up ends at 2:35pm daily. If a child is not picked up by this time then the following will occur:
 - First time a child is not picked up by 2:35pm: Written Warning from the Office.
 - Second time a late fee of \$10 for every 15 minutes will be charged.
5. **Preschool** parent pick up time ends at 3:00pm. If a child is not picked up by this time then the following will occur:
 - First time a child is not picked up by 3:00pm: Written Warning from the Office.
 - Second time a late fee of \$10 for every 15 minutes will be charged.

If, for some reason, someone other than a custodial parent (or an adult whose name has been provided to the office by the custodial parent) is to pick up your child, the parent will need to go to the office and add the person to the list of adults who are authorized to pick up the child. **NO NOTES WILL BE ACCEPTED!** The person picking up the child will be asked to show photo identification. If a person that is not listed comes to pick up your child, a call will be made to the custodial parent. If the custodial parent cannot be reached, the child will NOT be released to the person. For this reason, it is important to keep the list in the office updated with new information and contact numbers. This list will be maintained in Skyward.

The release of a student to an intoxicated or impaired person will not be allowed. The person will be given the opportunity to contact another person listed on the student's emergency card to come and pick up the student. The situation will immediately be reported to the local police agency. If another person cannot be located to pick up the student, Child Protective Services (CPS) will be contacted.

Weather and Emergency Closing Procedures

If the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township is closed due to inclement weather or emergency conditions, The Early Learning Centers will also be closed.

If school is *delayed* due to inclement weather or emergency conditions:

- Preschool and Kindergarten will start at 10am
- Before and After Care will follow normal operating hours

If a school delay is extended to a school closing because weather conditions have worsened, parents will be contacted to pick up their children.

If school is released early, Preschool and Care staff will provide child care. Families are requested to have children picked up as soon as possible on these days.

If school is delayed or closed to bad weather, notifications will be sent to the local TV and radio stations. Information will also be sent to families via the automated phone message system. The website www.itschools.org will also have information as will the district's Facebook page.