

Millard Public Schools Early Childhood Programs

We offer a continuum of services and resources for families and young children in Millard Public Schools:

Drop In and Play: Parents and caregivers of young children (birth to age 5) are invited to bring their youngsters and join together to play, sing, read and create. Participation is free.

Family Resource Center: The Family Resource Center provides a lending library of educational toys, puzzles, children's books and parenting resources for families who live in the Millard Public School District. Activities and learning opportunities are also available for families and young children.

Storytime: This is a monthly story time for preschoolers and their parents or caregivers. Story time lasts approximately 30 minutes. Simple stories, songs and rhymes are provided along with activities to use at home. Preschool age-appropriate books are also available for checkout. Sessions are held at over a dozen MPS elementary schools.

Partners With Providers: This home visitation program is offered by Millard Public Schools to providers in the neighborhoods of Bryan, Cody, Holling, Norris, Sandoz, Neihardt, Disney, Rockwell, Morton and Hitchcock. A certified teacher visits the homes of providers on a monthly basis and shares preschool reading activities. This program is free, and licensed providers can receive in-service hours by participating.

For more information call: 402-715-6319 or visit
earlychildhood.mpsomaha.org

Birth to 5 Early Childhood Special Education Services for Students with Verified Disabilities

The Millard School District employs specialists in early childhood development. An evaluation of your child's skills may be recommended. The evaluation results will help to determine if there is a delay in your child's skills and whether early childhood special education may be appropriate. There is no charge for the evaluation or for services provided. Eligible children may receive special education services in their home, daycare, private preschool, or special education preschool classrooms located in many of our elementary schools. Special education service providers will work with you and your child and may include one or more of the following: Early Childhood Special Educator, Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, School Psychologist, Teacher of the Hearing Impaired, Vision Consultant, Augmentative Communication Specialist, and School Audiologist.

For more information call: Office of Early Childhood Special Education, 402-715-8302
or visit earlychildhood.mpsomaha.org

Preschool Programs: The Millard Public Schools provide Half-day and Full day preschool options for young children.

3 Year Olds: (3 years old on or before July 31)

- Early Childhood Special Education Half-Day and Itinerant Services for children with verified disabilities
- Title I and ELL eligible Half-Day program with limited availability at Cody and Sandoz Elementary Schools
- Montessori Preschool Program at Norris and Montclair Elementary Schools. The Montessori program is an option that provides an environment consistent with Dr. Maria Montessori's philosophy in which children learn through spontaneous and prescribed activities based on developmental needs as they become self-directed. (parent pay)

For more information call the Office of Early Childhood Education, 402-715-8339

4 Year Olds: (4 years old on or before July 31)

- Half-Day and Full Day options for children that combine Title I/ELL, Early Childhood Special Education, and Parent Pay programs
- Early Childhood Special Education Itinerant Services for children with verified disabilities
- Montessori Preschool Program Half-Day and Full Day options at Norris and Montclair Elementary Schools (parent pay)

For more information call: Office of Early Childhood Education, 402-715-8339 or Early Childhood Special Education, 402-715-8302 or visit
mpsomaha.org Curriculum and Instruction/Early Childhood Programs

MPS Preschool Curriculum and Instruction

Our MPS Preschool programs provide learning experiences that will promote school readiness for each learner. The curriculum has been aligned with our K-5 programs to provide a seamless transition from preschool to kindergarten that reflects the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines and MPS Preschool Standards and Indicators. Ongoing formative assessment and collaborative planning support the diverse developmental, academic, cultural, and family needs of our students. Whole group, small group and child choice experiences are provided to support social-emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. Early literacy experiences focus on oral language, basic concepts, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics and listening comprehension. Early mathematics experiences focus on number sense, problem solving, and basic concepts in the areas of geometry/spatial sense, measurement, reasoning, patterns/relationships, and using data. Language, literacy, and mathematical experiences will be integrated throughout the day. Interest area activities (dramatic play, block play, writing, math, art, music and movement, science and discovery, library, technology, and fine motor) and outdoor play provide planned opportunities to connect listening, speaking, reading, writing and math to play.

Social/Emotional Development:

- College and Career Readiness Skills: critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, collaboration and teamwork, and citizenship and personal responsibility.
- Achieving a sense of self: knowing oneself and relating to other people – both children and adults.
- Developing skills of independence: following rules and routines, respecting others, and taking initiative.
- Behaving in a prosocial way: showing empathy and getting along in the world, for example, by sharing and taking turns.

Physical Development:

- Achieving gross motor control: moving the large muscles in the body, especially the arms and legs, consciously and deliberately. Gross motor control includes balance and stability; movements such as running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping; and physical manipulations such as throwing, kicking, and catching.
- Achieving fine motor control: using and coordinating the small muscles in the hands and wrists with dexterity. As these small muscles develop, children are able to perform self-help skills and manipulate small objects such as scissors and writing tools. The achievement of fine motor skills generally lags behind gross motor development.

Cognitive Development:

- Learning and problem solving: being purposeful about acquiring and using information, resources, and materials. As children observe events around them, ask questions, make predictions, and test possible solutions, learning reaches beyond just acquiring facts. Persistence and knowing how to apply knowledge expands their learning even further. Science and social studies themes provide the foundation for this inquiry process.
- Thinking logically: gathering and making sense of the information by comparing, contrasting, sorting, classifying, counting, measuring, and recognizing patterns. As children use logical thinking, they organize their world conceptually and gain a better understanding of how it works.
- Representing and thinking symbolically: using objects in a unique way, for instance, a cup to represent a telephone, or a broom to represent a horse; pretending, for instance, to be mommy or a firefighter; portraying the world through charts of pictures, for instance, making a graph to show changes in the weather over time or a drawing to show what happened to a character in a story. Representations and symbols free children from the world of literal meanings and allow them to use materials and their imagination to explore abstract ideas.

Language Development:

- Listening and speaking: using spoken language to communicate with others, enlarging one's vocabulary, expressing oneself, understanding the oral speech of others, participating in a conversation, and using language to solve problems. As children learn to listen and speak, they gain control of themselves and their world, relate effectively to others, and gather and store more and more information.
- Reading and writing: making sense of written language, understanding the purpose of print and how it works, gaining knowledge of the alphabet, writing letters and words. When children begin to read they gain access to new worlds of information and faraway places, including the world of imagination. Writing things down expands memory, communication, and understanding.

Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to support learning, identify special needs, and to monitor and evaluate program quality.

The Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment provides the progression of development in each area. It is made up of goals and objectives in the areas of social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language/literacy, and math development. Teachers gather observational data and work samples to document progress in each area. This observational data helps teachers plan learning activities designed to encourage student growth. The checklist is shared with parents during fall and winter conferences as well as the end of the year.

Our preschool programs also complete two assessments of program quality. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) provides important feedback about our safety and personal care routines, learning environment, language and reasoning, learning activities, interactions and program structure. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) provides information about teacher/child interactions in three main domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional supports including language modeling, cognitive development, and quality of feedback.

The Family's Role

The child's home and school are their two most important worlds. Our goal is to ensure that we recognize and support the parent as the child's first teacher. The partnership developed between the school, staff and families is critical to the child's growth. This partnership involves getting to know families, making families feel welcome, communicating with families, partnering with families on children's learning and responding to challenging situations. Regularly scheduled family engagement activities and parent education opportunities are an important component of our preschool program. Ongoing communication can include daily and weekly exchanges in the way of home visits, newsletters, phone calls, e-mail, visits before or after school, and parent-teacher conferences.

Preschool Schedule

Teachers use a range of teaching approaches to guide children's learning. These approaches may include child-initiated learning, teacher-directed learning, interacting with children to promote learning, talking with children about their work, asking children questions, and adapting instruction to meet individual needs.

The preschool schedule includes whole group, small group, and independent learning opportunities. The amount of time for each period is based on the daily time in preschool. One-third of the time is spent in individual choice interest areas that allow children to explore and expand their learning through play.

Interest Areas include Blocks, Housekeeping/Dramatic Play, Library, Writing, Art, Music/Movement, Mathematics, Discovery/Science, Fine Motor, Games and Puzzles, Sand/Water, and Outdoor Play. Intentionally planned learning experiences provide ongoing opportunities to ask questions, problem-solve, and develop language, literacy, mathematics, and social emotional skills.

What Children Learn

Literacy: includes increased vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, letters and words, comprehension, understanding text, and literacy as a source of enjoyment.

Mathematics: includes number sense, number concepts, patterns and relationships, geometry and spatial sense, data collection, and measurement.

Science and Health: includes physical science, life science, earth, environment, scientific inquiry, and wellness.

Social Studies: includes civics, economics, history and geography.

Art: includes music, dance, performing arts and visual arts.

Motor Skills: includes gross motor development and fine-motor strength and coordination.

Digital Learning: includes awareness of technology, basic operations and concepts, and technology tools.

Half-Day programs include a daily snack. Full Day programs include daily breakfast, lunch, and snack. Full Day programs also include a daily quiet/rest time.

Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships have been established with several organizations to promote family engagement, early language and literacy experiences, and school readiness. Our goal is to continue to build partnerships with additional community organizations that provide support for families and young children.

Early Childhood Advisory Team

The Millard Public Schools Early Childhood Advisory Team is a representative group of MPS Early Childhood administrators and teachers, community partners, and parents. This team meets 3-4 times a year to collaborate in the development and review of early childhood programs and resources for families and young children. If you are interested in learning more about the Early Childhood Advisory Team and/or are interested in participating as a member of the team, please call the Office of Early Childhood Education, 402-715-8339.

For more information about any of our preschool programs, please visit
earlychildhood.mpsomaha.org