



Great Start Readiness Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2022-2023



***Note: Our COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan will be provided separate from this handbook.**

It is the policy of the West Shore ESD not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and transgender identity), disability, age, religion, height, weight, marital status or family status, military status, ancestry, genetic information, or any other legally protected category (collectively, "Protected Classes"), in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy:

Randy Fountain: rfountain@lasd.net or 231.845.7303

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WELCOME

The West Shore Educational Service District (WSESD) Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) staff would like to welcome you and your child to the exciting world of preschool education. This handbook is designed to inform you of the policies and procedures related to our program. The rules and guidelines included help to make the classroom a successful and safe place for children to learn and grow. Please keep this handbook as a reference for questions. By signing the Handbook Waiver and returning it to your child's teacher, you are agreeing to follow the policies in this handbook. All of our programs are licensed by the State of Michigan. We have active relationships with the following community supports:

- Partnership with the Michigan Department of Education
- Partnership with the West Shore ESD Special Education services
- Partnership with the Mason, Lake, and Oceana Great Start Collaborative
- Partnership with the Great Start to Quality Western Resource Center
- Partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services
- Partnership with local Head Start agencies

West Shore ESD Vision Statement:

West Shore ESD's vision is success for all students by providing high quality early childhood experiences.

GSRP Mission Statement:

We are a research-based, developmentally appropriate program that provides a solid foundation for a child's success in their PreK-12 educational journey. We provide a safe and engaging environment for children and families focusing on social-emotional, cognitive, and academic growth.

GSRP Program Philosophy:

Our mission is to cultivate child centered, play-based environments that support the whole child. This includes nurturing children's critical thinking skills, developing positive self-concepts, and facilitating independence and social development - all of which build the foundation for lifelong learning.

Goals:

The WSESD Great Start Readiness Program is driven by developmentally appropriate practices. This means teaching in ways that support how children learn and grow. Our goals are:

- To provide programs that focus on promoting strengths of each family.
- To nurture and support children's learning through positive interactions and relationships.
- To encourage social-emotional competence and self-regulation skills in children.
- To ensure children participate in constructive, purposeful play, supporting essential learning.
- To intentionally set up the physical environment to ensure quality interactions take place.
- To provide a strong foundation for teacher-family partnerships that promote development and learning.

Our mission and goals validate the vital role of a child centered, play based model. It highlights the essential roles teachers play in building a strong foundation for children’s success in schools and in life.

ADMISSIONS

The Great Start Readiness children must be four (4) on or before September 1st. An application for enrollment in the program is required as well as:

- Preschool application
- Copy of income verification
- Transportation form (if applicable)
- Child’s Emergency Information Form (once enrolled, ensure this is up-to-date)
- Copy of child’s birth certificate or document indicating child is age eligible
- Copy of child’s up-to-date shot record (immunization) or waiver from Department of Health and Human Services
- Health Appraisal (Green Physical Form) completed with all tests and measurements (within 30 days of enrollment)
- Insurance or Medicaid number of applicant (if using as documenting age eligibility)
- Allergy/Asthma Forms and any applicable medication must be in place before child can attend
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Application

Applications for the Great Start Readiness Program are taken throughout the year. Once West Shore Educational Service District receives notification from the Michigan Department of Education that funding has been received and/or placements can be made, staff begin placing children in the order of most eligible based on income and eligibility factors. In the event programming has already started or our site has a waitlist, applications are reviewed and placements are made in the order of most eligible.

Children who turn four (4) and fall above 300% of poverty may be placed after all age eligible, income eligible children have been placed and after August 15.

Children who turn four (4) years old after September 1 but prior to December 1 may be placed after all eligible children have been placed and after September 1 of the program year.

Great Start Readiness Preschool:

GSRP is a state funded center-based preschool program serving children who are four (4) years old before September 1. Classes are offered all school day, four days a week, Monday through Thursday throughout Mason, Lake and Oceana Counties.

Program Costs:

Families enrolled in GSRP will incur no cost for food, programing, transportation, or field trips. Children who fall above the 300% of the Federal Poverty Line will be asked to pay a sliding scale tuition fee. Please reference the chart below.

Great Start Readiness Preschool Sliding Fee Tuition Scale

The GSRP program is a cooperative effort of the West Shore Educational Service District, Mason Lake and Oceana county school districts, and other local providers. The program receives funds from the Michigan Department of Education and every classroom is licensed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

WSESD offers GSRP Preschool at the locations list below:

Building Name	Building Address	City	County	Phone
Mason County Eastern Schools	18 S Main Street	Custer	Mason	231-757-3733
Oaktree Academy Inc.	6498 W Decker Rd.	Ludington	Mason	231-845-0220
Ludington Elementary School	5771 W. Bryant Rd.	Ludington	Mason	231-845-3850
Victory Early Childhood Center	4171 N Stiles Rd.	Scottville	Mason	231-843-2410
Diman-Wolf Early Childhood Center	306 Johnston Street West	Hart	Oceana	231-873-6330
Pentwater Elementary School	600 East Park Street	Pentwater	Oceana	231-869-4100 ext. 219
Shelby Early Childhood Center	155 6 th Street	Shelby	Oceana	231-861-6629
Walkerville Elementary School	170 North Street	Walkerville	Oceana	231-873-4850
Mason County Eastern Schools	18 S Main Street	Custer	Mason	231-757-3733
Oaktree Academy Inc.	6498 W Decker Rd.	Ludington	Mason	231-845-0220

Enrollment:

Enrollment of students will be based on the availability of openings. A wait list of eligible students will be maintained and openings filled based on eligibility factors and need. Prioritization is based on income and family need, not on the order in which they were received.

Joint Recruitment Statement:

To ensure your child is enrolled the school must receive the following documents:

1. All families must complete an enrollment packet prior to the first day of attendance in GSRP. The packet includes an application, health requirements, and an emergency information form.
2. All families must provide proof of current immunizations or the immunization waiver prior to the first day of attendance.
3. All families must provide proof of age. It is encouraged that a copy of the child's birth certificate is provided as documentation.

Fees & Tuition:

GSRP is a free program funded by a grant from the State of Michigan for those that do not exceed 300% of the poverty level. Enrollment will be prioritized by income levels. Applicants 301% and above the poverty level will be charged according to the sliding scale below.

- Families whose income falls below 300% of the Federal Poverty guidelines pay no fee for Preschool tuition.
- Families whose income is above 300% of the Federal Poverty guidelines will pay the following fee for Preschool tuition:

Annual Tuition Rate	300% of FPL and Below	301% to 400% FPL	At and Above 401%
Part-Day GSRP	No tuition may be charged	\$240* (5% of state GSRP allocation)	\$480* (10% of state GSRP allocation)
School Day GSRP	No tuition may be charged	\$480* (5% of state GSRP allocation)	\$960* (10% of state GSRP allocation)
Minimum Number of Other Risk Factors Required	0	1	2
Prepay Discount Available	N/A	10% if paid in full by Oct 1 st	10% if paid in full by Oct 1 st

Withdrawal Policy:

Our programming strives to meet the needs of all our children. Communication is critical to build a relationship of trust and understanding between your family and the site. Sometimes our program may not be the best fit for your family.

The Director will help you network with other agencies or centers that may be more appropriate. If you are choosing to withdraw from our program, please provide a written statement for the director to prevent any confusion.

If your child is absent without notice or contact from the family, the Director will:

1. Attempt to make phone contact
2. If we are unable to make phone contact, we will send written communication via email or mail.
3. After 30 days of consecutive absence, the Director will assume that your family has withdrawn from the program

Attendance:

Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward. Missing 10 percent of preschool (one or two days every few weeks) can:

- Make it harder to develop early reading skills.
- Make it harder to get ready for kindergarten and first grade.
- Develop a poor attendance pattern that's hard to break.

High quality preschool programs have many benefits for your child. The routines your child develops in preschool will continue throughout school. You can make the most of preschool by encouraging your child to attend every day!

Exclusion:

Staff are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our classrooms will enrich the experience for children and families. Children cannot be excluded or expelled because of need for additional medical or behavioral supports, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your child's health and safety is a matter of importance to us. Teachers strive to maintain a healthy environment. Both indoor and outdoor play spaces are checked regularly for safety hazards. Equipment and sleeping mats are sanitized weekly. Good hand hygiene practices are taught and encouraged throughout the day. Hand washing instructions that include picture diagrams are posted at each sink. All staff are trained annually in handling Blood Borne Pathogens. Universal precautions are used each day to control infection. Staff are trained annually in CPR and First Aid. West Shore Educational Service District reserves the right to implement any mandated safety/health protocols as prescribed by governmental authorities [such as for COVID-19]

Immunizations/TB testing/Physical Evaluations:

Immunization requirements must be completed in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan. On the first day of attendance, a copy of the child's immunization record or a copy of a current immunization waiver from the District Health Department must be on file with your child's teacher. It is the parent's responsibility to give the site an updated copy of their child's immunization records each time he/she is immunized.

A physical evaluation based on an evaluation by a licensed physician or his/her designee must be on file within 30 days of initial attendance. The examination must have been made within the preceding 12 months.

Sickness and Accidents:

In the case of a medical emergency every effort will be made to notify by phone the parent/guardian or emergency contact person. Your child will be transported to the hospital listed for preferred treatment on the emergency card and accompanied by a staff person if you are unavailable. A written report of all non-emergent accidents/incidents will be completed by a teacher and sent home.

Any time an accident occurs at a site that requires medical attention, a formal documentation of the event will be filed with the Department of Health and Human Services (Licensing book rule number R400.8158, page 16).

If your child develops symptoms of illness during the day, we will notify you and request that you pick your child up as soon as possible. If we are unable to reach you and are very concerned about the health of your child, we will call the emergency contact people on your emergency information form. To assure the health and safety of children and help minimize the spread of infection, children, staff, and volunteers will be excluded from programming from any of the following reasons:

- Fever over 100°F orally
- Diarrhea 3 or more times within a 24-hour period
- An unexplained rash
- Vomiting
- A thick discharge from nose or eye
- Lice, Scabies, Ringworm
- Severe Cough: Child gets red or blue in the face or child makes a high pitched croupy or whooping sound after he/she coughs
- Pink eye
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Any and all communicable diseases

In addition, Rule 400.8155 Rule 155(2) in the Technical Assistance and Consultation Manual Child Care Centers states that it is at the program's discretion to send a child home as soon as possible if one or more of the following conditions exists:

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities
- Illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

A call from your child's teacher is not a reflection on your parenting. Symptoms of illness often develop rapidly. Please notify the classroom immediately if your child develops a communicable disease. Children displaying the above symptoms must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Children who are under a doctor's care may return to the program when the doctor feels they are well enough to do so; a doctor's statement may be requested by the teacher. Please notify the classroom if your child will be absent due to illness.

Children in our programs are constantly on the go. The activity and social level of life in the classroom can make it difficult for children to muster the energy to fight an illness and keep up with their peers at the same time. The site's final health policy is this: if children are well enough to come to school, they are well enough to participate in all activities, indoor and out. Your child's health is of critical importance. The classroom will work hard to keep your child safe and illness free.

Head Lice Policy:

Head lice are not a sign of uncleanliness and is not a disgrace. Head lice can be very irritating and cause much discomfort to the person who has it. Please contact your child's teacher to notify them of any infestations to keep it from spreading.

The policy for controlling head lice will be:

1. Within the first week of school, all children will be checked for head lice. Information about head lice is available. Parents need to contact the classroom immediately if they find their child has head lice. Parents are requested to check their child's head regularly.

2. Those children found to have an active infestation of head lice will be sent home with instructions for treatment. Active infestations can be defined as the presence of live lice or nits found within ¼” of the scalp. Immediate treatment at home is advised.
3. The student will be readmitted to school after treatment and examination. If upon examination, the school personnel find no active infestation on a child, the child may re-enter the school.
4. Siblings and close playmates of infested children should also be checked.
5. If head lice occur in the classroom, all efforts will be made to keep belongings separate.
6. Routine head checks will be done in the classroom.
7. Information on steps for cleaning at home is available from the staff.

Allergies/Asthma:

Allergies and/or asthma must be identified by parent/guardian and verified by a primary health care provider on the health appraisal form. A copy of the allergy substitution form must be completed as well and signed by the child’s physician. Food allergies and substitutions will be handled according to the nutrition policy and procedures.

- A copy of the Allergy/Substitution form will be posted in a confidential manner readily available in the classroom.
- Any medical condition must also be identified by the parent/guardian and verified by a primary health care provider. If medication is needed during class time, please refer to the procedure for dispensing medication.
- All classroom staff are trained in First Aid and CPR for possible emergency situations.

Medical Conditions/Action Plans:

The Medication Action Plan is used when an allergy or a medical condition has been indicated by the parent/guardian. The form is filled out by the parent/guardian and the health provider. It contains important information for staff to monitor and manage a medical condition. A copy of the form is kept in the child’s file and in the classroom.

Medication:

Medication will be dispensed at the site if the following conditions are met:

1. Parents have thoroughly filled out the Medication Liability Release form.
2. Medication is in its original container, with the original label and instructions on the container. The label must indicate the physician’s name, child’s name, instructions and the proper name and strength.
3. Medication will only be given in accordance to the instructions listed.
4. Medication will be administered by a staff person, and witnessed by a second staff person. Staff will record the time and dosage given. Staff will sign the form in the appropriate box after medication has been given.

Medication will only be administered if accompanied by written authorization from a physician. If any questions arise regarding the child or medication, the teacher will contact you.

Pest Management:

Due to Department of Health and Human Services licensing regulations, all parents or guardians will be given advance notice of pesticide applications. This notice will contain information about the pesticide, including the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of the application, contact information at the center, and a toll-free number for a national pesticide or aerosol insecticide applications may not be performed in a room of a center unless the room will be unoccupied by children for not less than 4 hours or longer if required by the pesticide label use directions.

Emergency Procedures:

PMECC has emergency procedure plans in place in the event that an emergency should occur while your child is at school.

Evacuation Procedures:

In the event of a fire or tornado, staff will follow written instructions posted in every classroom including other licensed spaces within the building, describing the emergency evacuation routes and procedures to follow to ensure children arrive at the designated spot safely. In order to prepare children for the unlikely event of an evacuation, the site conducts periodic fire, lockdown and tornado drills according to state law and the Department of Health and Human Services licensing regulations.

FIRE: Fire drills are held five times per year. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and other licensed spaces within the building.

TORNADO: Tornado drills are held twice a year. Evacuation procedures are posted in each classroom and other licensed spaces within the building.

ACCIDENTS: Each child must have a Child Emergency Information Card on file at the site before attending, in case of emergencies. This form allows us to obtain emergency medical care for your child should the need arise. All accidents including bites (even minor ones) are documented, and you will be notified in writing of injuries that affect your child.

Should there be a need to evacuate the building due to fire, weather conditions, loss of power or water to the school or man-made other natural disasters, you will be notified by radio and possibly a television alert. We also use Alert Solutions, a reliable school notification system that sends information to your cell phone, providing details of the emergency or early dismissal.

Children with special needs (physical, developmental, mental, sensory limitations) will be assisted and supported by staff members in case of an emergency. Staff will carry medical emergency packs for children who require emergency medication. If a student requires special medical equipment that requires electricity, and power is lost, the child's parent or emergency contact will be notified immediately.

Accident/Injury/Incident Procedure:

In the unlikely event of an environmental threat, man made threat or an intruder or unauthorized person entering the building, a building "lockdown" will occur. The classrooms will be secured and 911 will be called if necessary. Classrooms will remain in position until an ALL CLEAR or additional instructions are announced.

There is always a staff member present that has received training in First Aid and CPR. In the case of a minor accident/injury, staff will administer basic first aid and comfort. The parent/guardian will be notified by phone or a note home. If the injury/illness would be more serious, first aid will be administered and the parents will be contacted immediately to assist in deciding the appropriate course of action. If any injury/illness is life threatening, the EMS team will be contacted, parents will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff will fill out an accident/injury report as soon as possible.

Parents MUST inform the center staff of any health or safety needs of the child that the program may be required to address. If your child has an injury or illness that may prevent activity, please call the site.

Weather Policy:

GSRP guidelines require children to be engaged in a minimum of thirty minutes of outdoor play where they can be active and physical. This includes but is not limited to running, jumping, climbing, etc. The outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom and provides students with many opportunities to explore and continue to build social skills. Research states, "Good physical health and well-being, and a safe environment contribute to improved learning. Gross motor development enhances body awareness, understanding of spatial relationships, and cognitive growth." [Michigan Department of Education]

The policy states that your child will go outside every day that they attend class **unless the temperature and/or wind chill is at or below 10* F**. Suitable outdoor clothing will be needed each day. Always send clothing appropriate to the weather and perhaps a bit more as the weather here in Northern Michigan is very changeable. We go outside every day, and without the appropriate outerwear (coats, hat, mittens, snow pants, boots, etc.), your child may be uncomfortable or unable to participate in certain outdoor activities. Waterproof gloves and boots are encouraged from October to April. Even if there is no snow, it is often muddy and wet. We can't stress enough the importance of gloves that fit properly and are waterproof. Wet, cold hands result in an uncomfortable child, and can cause chapping and other discomforts.

We have lots of resources for providing appropriate outdoor clothing for children, so if you need assistance in purchasing outdoor clothing for your child, please see their teacher.

School Closing Policy:

Ludington ECC has an automated phone system called Power Announcement. This phone system will call your home phone and your cell phone when school is delayed, cancelled, or releasing early due to bad weather.

If your cell phone has a ring back tone, this system will **not** be able to contact your cell phone. This system does recognize voice mail and answering machines and will leave a message. In order for you to receive these important messages, please make sure the school office has your correct phone numbers and email address. Please DO NOT call the school. The lines need to remain open for emergency phone calls.

School delay or closing information will also be announced on the following television or radio stations:

WZZM TV Channel 13

WWTW TV Channel 9

In the event that school is dismissed early, please make sure your child's teacher knows where your child will go, who will pick them up from school, or whether they should ride the bus as normal. This information is listed on the Transportation Form families completed to register their child. This is a rare occurrence, but it is important your child's teacher has this information when an early dismissal is announced.

Mandated Reporting Procedures:

At the time of enrollment all families must complete an ICHAT form for parents. Marking yes to any question on this form does not prohibit you from participating in classroom activities and field trips. If you have committed a crime that has placed you on the Sexual Offenders Registry, you must abide by all laws pertaining to Sexual Offenders Governing Students and/or School Safety Zones. According to the State of Michigan Child Protection Law, this Department is required to report any suspected cases of sexual, physical child abuse and/or neglect.

Licensing will be notified when:

- A staff or volunteer person is suspected by a colleague, parent, or community member of abuse or neglect of a child in our care.
- A child is suspected of abusing another child while in our care.

Child Protective Services will be notified when:

- A staff person suspects a parent or other individual has abused or neglected a child in our program. To make a report to Child Protective Services contact the DHHS Central Intake office at 855-444-3911.

Mandatory reporting training is provided to staff annually.

CLASSROOM

Staff:

Classroom Lead Teachers hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development with a specialization in preschool teaching or a valid Michigan teaching certificate and an early childhood general and special education (ZS) endorsement. Associate Teachers will have an associates degree in early child development, or minimum of a child development accreditation certificate (CDA). In classrooms where there are three adults, the third adult will meet the Department of Health and Human Services licensing requirements as a "caregiver."

All staff are required to meet all Michigan Childcare and Licensing Rules as defined by Michigan's Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). Staff members will have a comprehensive background check and be approved before working with students. Background checks will be renewed every five years. In addition staff will be required to submit appropriate credentials as defined by their hired job description.

A comprehensive background check includes: a check of the licensing database for previous disciplinary action, FBI fingerprint check (checks all state and federal crimes), Michigan child abuse and neglect registry, criminal history registry and child abuse/neglect registry for any states of residence in the past five years. If the newly hired GSRP staff member lived outside of

the country in the previous five years, and they cannot provide the above documentation, the person must sign a self-certifying statement that he/she is eligible to be the licensee and work in a licensed facility.

Prior to contact with children, staff must go through a complete screening process which includes a comprehensive background check, medical screening (TB Test) and signed statement by staff indicating the following information: The individual is aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law, has been informed of the center's policy on child abuse and neglect, and knows that all staff and volunteers are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to children's protective services.

Additional training as required by Michigan Childcare and Licensing Rules will be required and may include Blood Borne Pathogens, Medication, Mandated Reporting, CPR and First Aid trainings. Staff are required to maintain certification in required trainings by Michigan Childcare and Licensing Rules.

Volunteers:

Volunteers, especially parents/guardians and other adults caring for children, are always welcome in the classroom. Please consider spending time with your child in his/her classroom. All volunteers are expected to follow classroom and licensing policies. Safety procedures require all volunteers (including parents/guardians) who visit or volunteer within the classroom be supervised by a paid employee at all times. Those who are present on a regular basis, four hours or more per week, must complete the volunteer requirements which include:

- Michigan State Department of Human Services Clearance.
- Criminal Conviction Record Release.
- Medical Screening (TB Test).
- Signed statement by staff indicating the following information:
 - The individual is aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law.
 - The individual has been informed of the center's policy on child abuse and neglect.
 - The individual knows that all staff and volunteers are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to Children's Protective Services

Diagnostic Staff:

GSRP classrooms have the advantage of working with expert staffing from West Shore Educational Service District as well as local district personnel. We often have the following staff working with children in the building and in our classrooms throughout the week: Early Childhood Specialist, Special Education Teachers, Psychologists, School Social Workers, Occupational Therapists/Physical Therapist, Speech Pathologists.

Teacher to Child Ratio:

Your child's classroom maintains the following teacher/child ratio of 1-8 for preschoolers 4 years of age. Licensing states that if there are children of mixed ages in the same room or in a well-defined space, then the ratio shall be determined by the age of the youngest child unless each group of children is clearly separated.

Sample Daily Routine:

Arrival, welcome, choice
Read aloud

Fast Focus
Connect
Outdoor learning
Planning time
Small group/centers/choice
Recall
Lunch
Rest
Re-read
Snack
Fast Focus
Project wrap up

Adjustment Period:

Coming to a new program can be an overwhelming experience for some children. Your child will have to learn to trust new adults and to live in a very social setting. This process may take some time. We will work with you to develop a predictable and stable routine – children do better when they can anticipate the sequence of events. If the adjustment appears to be unusually rough, we will work with you to develop some plans to ease the situation to the best of our ability. An attitude of trust toward the classroom on your part will help your child believe that s/he is safe with us.

Personal Property:

Each child will be assigned a place to keep outdoor clothing, extra clothing, and papers that are to be taken home. We discourage children from bringing toys from home for a variety of reasons. It is difficult to sanitize toys brought from home. Some toys may not be appropriate for the classroom setting. We understand that often it is easier to aid your transition from home to school when your child is allowed to leave a special object. We support your family in this, but please leave the item in the car. Consider your child's day after you walk away and the child is asked to put away the item. It often sparks tears and upset emotions, which is no way to start a day. The classrooms are well stocked with toys and equipment so that children arrive ready to learn.

How was my day?

We believe that children do not have “bad” or “good” days in our classrooms. Children do not come pre-wired with knowledge of many of the social norms we appreciate as adults. We understand that your child should demonstrate developmentally appropriate behavior for their age. This can often include undesirable behavior. We will provide a safe and trusting environment for your child to learn, grow, and develop. In our programs, we emphasize which social skills your child is working on: sharing, taking turns, waiting their turn, speaking up for their needs and wants, etc.

What to Wear:

Think of your child's comfort and developmental needs when you dress your child—clothing free of complicated fastenings and easy to move about is important for your child to develop

self-help skills such as dressing and toileting. We are messy, we paint, play outdoors, cook and play on the ground- please send your child in clothing that will allow him/her to feel comfortable about paint drips, spills, mud, etc. We provide paint smocks and try to keep things neat, but we are not able to prevent all spills and accidents. We welcome extra sets of clothing, and they can be stored in your child's cubby or locker. Any clothing soiled during the day will be placed in a plastic bag and placed in your child's cubby or locker.

Suitable outdoor clothing will be needed each day. Always send clothing appropriate to the weather and perhaps a bit more as the weather here in Northern Michigan is very changeable. We go outside every day, and without the appropriate outerwear, your child may be uncomfortable or unable to participate in certain outdoor activities. Waterproof gloves and boots are encouraged from October to April. Even if there is no snow, it is often muddy and wet. We can't stress enough the importance of gloves that fit properly and are waterproof. Wet, cold hands result in an uncomfortable child, and can cause chapping and other discomforts. We have lots of resources for providing appropriate outdoor clothing for children, so if you need assistance in purchasing outdoor clothing for your child, please see their teacher.

Please LABEL all clothing- from socks and underwear to pants and shirts. We cannot be responsible for wandering articles of clothing. We work hard to help your child develop the habit of putting things away. Cubbies and lockers are meant to store clothing that is not in use.

Nutrition/Food/Celebration:

Ludington Area Schools provides meals, which meet one-third to one-half of your child's daily nutritional requirements (as recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA). Our classrooms follow a policy of **no sugar, low fat, and low salt** in the design of the menus. Monthly menus are sent home at the beginning of the month.

The classroom participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsored by the USDA and the State Department of Education. Meals are free to all enrolled students. Each family must complete a meal application which will be given to them by the classroom teacher at the first home visit.

Meals are served in a pleasant atmosphere, family style, with adults joining the children at mealtime. We recognize the individual food differences and cultural meal patterns that promote sound physical, social, emotional and developmental growth.

Mealtime is a learning experience. Children are encouraged to participate in mealtime activities such as setting the table, preparing food, serving themselves, and clean-up. Some food choices at each meal are served family style so your child can participate to the fullest extent.

Your child will receive breakfast, lunch and a snack each day. When school is in session for a ½ day children will receive breakfast only.

Parties/Treats:

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please plan this special day with your child's teacher. A parent wishing to bring food for a special occasion may ask the child's

teacher about quantity, storage facilities and potential classroom allergy. Your child's teacher will be able to give you suggestions on appropriate and healthy foods.

Sign in and out:

We encourage a relationship of trust and mutual respect with your family. We care that your family is safe. A parent or designated adult, 18 years or older, must walk the child into his/her classroom and notify the teacher of his/her presence. Parents/guardians must sign children in and out on the appropriate clipboard in the classroom upon arrival and dismissal. Department of Health and Human Services licensing requires that your child is signed in and out daily. The program's personnel will only allow the parent or designated escort person to pick up a child. If an escort person (someone listed on your child's emergency information form) is to pick up your child, please ask them to have identification ready so that the staff members can verify their identity. Please offer a verbal notice to a teacher if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child. If someone not authorized on the information cards is picking up your child, please notify the Teacher in writing prior to the pick-up time. WE WILL NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES LET ANY CHILD GO WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN HIS/HER PARENT OR LISTED ESCORT PERSON.

Discipline/Conflict Resolution:

Effective discipline offers opportunities to teach responsible behavior. We practice "preventive discipline" by providing children with challenging and stimulating activities, by treating them with warmth and respect, and by communicating clear and realistic rules and expectations. Emphasis is placed on a positive philosophy, enforcing limits in a positive way. Negatives such as "NO" and "DON'T" can be stifling to a child's curiosity and can give him/her a negative view of himself or his environment.

Our curriculum focuses on social skill development, providing children with many opportunities to learn appropriate ways to express themselves and to manage their wants, needs and emotions. We encourage children to work together to develop an appropriate solution to problems. Through modeling language, and "walking" through the problem with the teacher, children gain confidence and the very important skills to handle conflict. Staff will act as a mediator until the problem is solved. Through guided discipline, children develop a sense of self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and a spirit of cooperation. We never use any type of physical or emotional punishment. Children are firmly but gently reminded of the limits and rules. We believe that discipline is an ongoing learning experience.

Our teachers are highly trained, and our classrooms are well equipped, providing children with opportunities to interact with others with a minimal amount of stress. Children can rely on their teachers to be consistent in their expectations and interactions. Each conflict presents an opportunity for children to learn resolution skills. In the event of discipline problems that concern us, we will notify parents.

Together, we will develop a discipline plan. Below you will find the steps we use to encourage conflict resolution:

Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions. Place yourself between the children, on their level.

Acknowledge children's feelings. Say something simple such as "You look really upset." Let children know you need to hold any object in question.

Gather information. Ask "What's the problem?" Do not ask "Why" questions.

Restate the problem. "So, the problem is..."

Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together. "What can we do to solve this problem?"

Be prepared to give follow-up support. Acknowledge their accomplishments (e.g., "You solved the problem!") Stay nearby in case anyone is not happy with the solution and the process needs repeating.

Communication:

Good communication is an essential part of your child's school experience. We look forward to hearing from you. We strive to communicate with your family in a way that meets your needs. For example, we can communicate through email or phone with your family if you are unable to come in for a conference. We offer multiple copies of reports to families who share custody of children. Please let us know the best way to communicate with your family. Teachers use e-mail, newsletters, face-to-face and phone conversations to communicate information and keep families up-to-date on their child's activities and progress. Whenever possible, information is translated into Spanish. If translation of information is required, please let us know.

Parent Involvement:

We encourage you to visit often, join us for field trips, and take part in various activities.

Families who are willing to share their talents with the children are always welcome.

We are always ready to listen to parents and eager to involve you whenever and wherever possible. We hold many different opportunities for involvement throughout the year. We also hold parent advisory meetings twice a year.

Parent Advisory

We value your ideas about program development and quality. A parent advisory committee will be held twice a year to discuss your ideas as an active decision maker about your child's learning environment. These meetings will focus on data about your community, school readiness, and overall program quality. Members of Early Childhood Administration in your community will be invited to hear your ideas including building Principals, Kindergarten Teachers, GSRP Specialists, GSC Parent Liaisons. All notes from these meetings will be distributed to families enrolled in the classrooms.

Cultural Diversity:

Cultural diversity is reflected in the classroom activities: language, food, celebrations, equipment and materials. Parents and community members are encouraged to share their cultures and backgrounds. Please feel free to share your traditions with staff.

Home Visits:

Our program is designed to provide a variety of learning experiences in the classroom. In addition to the school-based preschool experience, we offer home visits to extend the learning in your home. Staff members (both teachers) work to support the families that they serve.

Home visits may include, but are not limited to, setting goals for your family, meeting emergency needs, making connections to community agencies, and acting as an extension to classroom activities depending on needs or goals of your family. Home visits help to establish positive relationships between the school and the family and to share information about your child's growth and development. Each family is entitled to two per year in which your child is enrolled. The teacher will call to schedule the first home visit before school starts to help ease the transition between home and school.

Conferences:

Conferences are an opportunity for teachers and parents to come together to discuss children's growth, progress, accomplishments and experiences at home and school. Scheduled conferences are held twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Your child's teacher will call to make an appointment with you. Teachers are always available to schedule a time to conference with families both formally and informally as needed.

Developmental Screener:

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE) are done on each child to observe and note developmental milestones as children grow. The ages and stages questionnaire will be completed at the initial home visit. The results of the developmental screener will be shared with you. As part of a regional initiative, all ASQ results are uploaded into the online database, which is operated by the Great Start Collaborative. Please see the ASQ partnership agreement at the end of this handbook.

Curriculum/Assessment:

All programs use Connect4Learning curriculum. Connect4Learning uses a project-based approach, in which children work toward a larger goal, such as playing a coral-reef scavenger hunt or converting their classroom into a museum throughout a curriculum unit. High-interest learning centers that support and extend children's growing understandings in social-emotional skills, science, literacy, and mathematics are a fundamental part of daily lessons. Each lesson can be tailored to fit the schedule and requirements of any classroom setting. Observation opportunities and individualized instruction strategies are also built into the curriculum. Classroom activities are built around the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool that are organized into areas of development and learning: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, science and technology, and mathematics. Teachers individualize their plans to meet the needs of each child in their classroom.

Confidentiality:

Children's files are located in the Ludington ECC office. Information includes contracts, registration documents, written communications with families, legal documents, and information relating to children's education, social progress and behavior issues. Classroom files may include observation notes, portfolio work and assessment information. Families may review their child's file upon request.

Ludington Area Schools ensures that child and family records will not be disclosed without written consent of parents or legal guardians, except as needed when child abuse or neglect is

a concern. Confidential information is shared only with staff members who need the information to perform their jobs.

Privacy and confidentiality of children and families in our program is important. Parents should refrain from posting pictures of children other than their own on social media sites (such as Facebook and Twitter) without the permission from the child's parent or legal guardian. It is a policy of the Ludington Area Schools district that no child's name be mentioned on sites such as these without permission from the child's parent.

Quiet Time:

All children are encouraged to be on their mats for quiet time. Often, children will fall asleep. Staff will be on hand at all times during this period. Parents are welcome to send a blanket and cuddle animal for their child while they rest. These items need to be identified with the child's name. At the end of each week, these items will be sent home to be washed. The classroom is a busy place and these developing bodies need some downtime. After 20 minutes of quiet time children who are not sleeping will be given a quiet activity to do.

GSRP Implementation Manual states classrooms that operate five or more hours must have a written quiet time policy. The policy must comply with rest requirements of DHHS, Bureau of Children and Adults Licensing.

- Rest time is no longer than 45 minutes, while accommodating for the individual needs of children.
- Alternative activities will be provided to children who do not sleep.
- Transition into and out of Quiet Time must be purposefully planned.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Licensing Notebook/Special Investigation:

All preschool classrooms are licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. A Licensing Notebook is maintained in the Early Childhood Wing and contains the following information:

- Inspection reports
- Special Investigation reports
- Corrective Action Plans

The licensing notebook is available for review during school hours. Licensing inspections and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Child and Adult Licensing website at: www.michigan.gov/michildcare

Grievance:

The following process should be followed to address a concern or complaint:

1. Discuss it with your child's teacher and try to resolve this issue as soon as possible.
2. If you feel the situation is not resolved to your best interest, then you should contact Ashela Trevino at 231-845-3850.
3. If the situation is unresolved by the Program Director, a formal grievance may be filed in writing to Jeni Schafer, Early Childhood Supervisor at West Shore Educational Service District jschafero@wsesd.org 231-898-1545.

All formal grievances will be reviewed by a team consisting of the GSRP Early Childhood Specialist, Program Director, GSRP Supervisor and Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services at West Shore Educational Service District.

4. If the situation is unsolved by the Early Childhood Supervisor and team, a formal grievance may be filed in writing to the Superintendent of West Shore Educational Service District, 2130 W. US 10 Ludington, MI 49431.

Staff Directory:

Staff Member	Position		E-mail Address
Ashela Trevino	Center Director/Program Director	231-845-3850	atrevino@lasd.net
Melissa Carrier	GSRP Lead Teacher		mcarrier@wsesd.org
Michelle Johnson	GSRP Associate Teacher		schaney@wsesd.org
Melanie Hargreaves	GSRP Lead Teacher		mhargreaves@wsesd.org
Erma Ortiz	GSRP Associate Teacher		eortiz@wsesd.org
Kristal Copsy	Kitchen Aide		
Jeni Schafer	Early Childhood Supervisor/Specialist	231-898-1545	bvronko@wsesd.org

Transitions:

The home to school transition may be a difficult time for your child. Some children experience not wanting to go to school only to indicate later that they don't want to leave school! Your child is most likely letting you know that s/he is comfortable in both settings. Here are a few tips to make each transition a little smoother for you and your child:

From Home to School:

- Talk to your child in advance about what will be happening and alert him/her of any schedule changes. Reassure your child as often as necessary that you will be back. If someone else will be picking him/her up, make sure your child knows it.
- Establish a "routine" with your child each morning at school: i.e. help your child put away his/her belongings, get involved in an activity. Have a special way of saying good-bye. When you are about to leave give your child a 3-minute warning (an advance warning helps in most situations with children).
- Let your child know when you are leaving rather than "sneaking away". Though it may be easier for you to leave while your child is not watching, it is more difficult for your child.

- Once you have said you're leaving, do it without hesitation. A teacher will take as much time as necessary to comfort your child. You are welcome to call the classroom to ask how your child is doing.

From School to Home:

- If your child is not ready to leave, please give him/her a 3-minute warning. This gives your child the opportunity to finish an activity, say goodbye to a friend, give a teacher a hug or put on his/her outerwear without being rushed.
- Help your child clean up the materials s/he is using. This will help reinforce taking responsibility for one's own materials.
- Once three minutes has elapsed, tell your child it's time to leave and then follow through. If your child is reluctant, you can say, "It's time to leave now. You can come by yourself or I will help you," and then do it.
- Avoid telling your child that you will leave without him/her. It's a threat that you can't follow through on and is often frightening for young children.

Preschool children who are dropped off in the office may be escorted to the preschool wing by office staff who have been fingerprinted per LASD fingerprint requirements but do not have childcare required FBI clearance and are independent of the licensed early childhood center. This may include administrators, secretaries or other LASD employed staff members. The children dropped off by LASD employed office staff or administrators will not be considered to be in the care of Ludington Early Childhood Center until the child is handed off to Ludington Early Childhood Center staff. By signing the receipt of the LECC handbook, parents are indicating agreement with this policy.

Bus Transportation (if applicable): Bus service is provided for children within the school district boundaries. Routes may have to be adjusted and may require families to meet at centrally located bus stops.

Bus Safety Rules - please see additional Bus and Pedestrian Safety Handouts

- Persons meeting your child at the bus list must be listed on your child's Child Emergency Information Form and have photo identification if staff are not familiar with who they are. Staff will not release your child to anyone other than those designated by the child's parent(s) or guardian. **Update your child's Child Emergency Information Form Regularly.**
- A parent or designated adult on the child's bus/emergency form MUST "hand the child to the staff" when going to school and "receive the child from the bus" when coming home. HAND-TO-HAND is necessary at each and every pick-up or drop off. This is for your child's safety. Failure to follow this policy may result in loss of bus privileges.
- If a parent or designated adult is not at the bus stop to get the child off of the bus, the child will be returned to the school. It will be your responsibility to pick up your child from the school. Being the only child on that big bus can feel very strange and scary to young children. Meet your child with a smile and welcome them home!
- The staff provides training for parents and children in bus & pedestrian safety. In addition, at least three bus evacuation drills will be conducted during the program year.
- All children must be properly seated while in transport.

- Children are not allowed to chew gum, eat, or drink while on the bus.
- Children must have all “belongings” secured on the bus.
- You must inform Pere Marquette Early Childhood Center.
 - If your child will be absent and will not be riding the bus.
 - Any changes to the Child Emergency Information Form; especially who your child may or may not be released to.
 - If there is any change in pick up or drop off locations. (Changes require a minimum of five days’ notice before taking effect & will depend on route availability.)

Parent Transportation:

- If your child is not riding a bus to school, you must bring your child to his/her classroom and sign in with the program staff.
- When picking up your child from the classroom, you must come to the classroom and sign out with the program staff.
- Always inform your child’s teacher of office staff, and sign the in/out form, when taking your child from the playground or classroom.
- Please park in the designated parking areas. The areas near the doors are reserved for the buses and other school vehicles.
- Persons picking up your child must be listed on your child’s Child Emergency Information Form and have photo identification if staff are not familiar with them. We will not release your child to anyone other than those designated by the child’s parent(s) or guardian.
- **Update your child’s Child Emergency Information Form regularly.** You will be asked to update at conference and home visits. Please notify us when there are changes. Emergencies do happen, be sure we can reach you.

ECS Role:

The Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) supports your child’s classroom through continuous quality improvement. The ECS supports the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), operated by West Shore Educational Service District, in partnership with local districts. This may include classroom observation, data collection, goal setting, coaching and the use of other strategies as necessary. The ECS will also support the work of the local Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Parent Coalition.

Data Analysis:

Data analysis is an integral part of our program and early childhood system. There are multiple ways in which we do this including: GSRP Parent Advisory Committee, Great Start Collaborative, Great Start Parent Coalition, and the School Readiness Advisory Committee.

School Readiness Advisory Committee:

Due to the rural nature of the 3-county region, this committee consists of multiple collaborative efforts of existing groups including: Great Start Collaborative, Great Start Parent Coalition, Great Start Readiness Program Parent Advisory Committees, Great Start to Quality Western Resource Center and continuous opportunities for feedback using technology. The School Readiness Advisory Committee meets as needed for special issues not currently addressed within existing structures.

Parent Notice of Program Measurement:

The POMH Child Development Department is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Information is sometimes collected about staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from one of these programs might:

- Ask parents questions about their family.
- Observe children in the classroom
- Measure what the child knows about letters, words, and numbers
- Ask teachers how the children are learning and growing

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law. Questions? Contact:

mde-gsrp@michigan.gov or 517-737-8483 or MDE Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services 608 W. Allegan PO Box 30008 Lansing MI 48909

Referral:

It is our goal to foster a learning environment that promotes success and confidence. Program staff will review anecdotal notes, formalized screening, and monitor your child's development throughout the course of the school year. Should concerns arise from parents or staff members, a meeting between you and your child's teacher will be scheduled to develop individualized classroom supports for your child. If it is determined that further support may be needed after additional strategies have been implemented, a formal assessment may be recommended. Formal assessments are done by the West Shore Educational Services District's Special Education Services. After receiving West Shore ESD's recommendations, a plan for your child will be created with input from you, the West Shore ESD's Early Childhood Special Education team, and your child's teacher. There will be ongoing means of communication between you and the team to ensure the success of your child.

Community Resources

Reporting suspected child or adult abuse or neglect:

Child Protective Services 855-444-3911

Questions or getting help after a sexual assault, domestic violence or date rape:

Communities Overcoming Violent Encounters (COVE) 231-843-2541

Emergency shelter, food, or help paying utility bills:

United Way's 2-1-1 2-1-1
Department of Human Services- Mason County 231-845-7391
Department of Human Services- Lake County 231-745-8159
Department of Human Services- Oceana County 231-873-7203
The Salvation Army Family Store- Mason County 231-843-6210
The Salvation Army Church Food and Baby Pantry- Mason County 231-843-3711
Bread of Life Food and Baby Pantry- Oceana County 231-873-2660
St. Ann's Church Food and Baby Pantry- Lake County 231-745-7997

Questions or getting help with parenting issues:

District #10 Health Department- Mason County 231-845-7381
District #10 Health Department- Lake County 231-745-4663
District #10 Health Department- Oceana County 231-873-2193
District #10 Health Department- Shelby Migrant WIC Clinic 231-861-6349
Parent Helpline (24 hour) 1-855-4A-PARENT

If you are pregnant and have questions or need help with health care issues:

District #10 Health Departments See Above
Department of Human Services See Above
West Shore Pregnancy Care Center 231-843-7094

Questions or need help with child development issues:

Early On 231-898-1600

Information about available child care:

Great Start to Quality 1-877-614-7328

TOLL FREE RESOURCES

American Red Cross 1-800-482-2411
Association for Children's Mental Health 1-888-226-4543
Brain Injury Association of Michigan 1-800-772-4323
Cancer Information Service 1-800-422-6237
Center for Missing and Exploited Children 1-800-843-5678
Children's Special Health Care Services 1-800-359-3722
Early On Michigan 1-800-327-5966
Focus on the Family 1-800-232-6459
Gerber Family Resource Center 1-800-443-7237
Hope Network of West Michigan 1-800-695-7273
Hospice of Michigan 1-888-466-5656
Michigan Children's Ombudsman
1-800-642-4326
National Domestic Violence Prevention 1-800-799-7233
National Literacy Hotline 1-800-228-8813
Parents Without Partners 1-800-222-1222
Suicide Prevention 1-800-784-2433

Great Start Readiness Program

My Child's Teacher(s):

Hours of Operation: Monday through Thursday, 7:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Phone number to call if I wish to reach the office 231-845-3850

Phone number to call if I wish to reach the classroom: 231-845-3850



DISTRICT GSRP CONTACTS AND PHONE NUMBERS

231-845-3850

5771 W Bryant Road, Ludington, MI 49431

West Shore Educational Service District contacts:

Jeni Schafer

Early Childhood Supervisor
West Shore Educational Service District
2130 W. US 10 Ludington MI 49431
P: 231-898-1545 F: 231-757-2406



Family Handbook Received

I have received a copy of the Great Start Readiness Program Handbook.

I understand that this handbook provides me with information I will need while my child is enrolled in the program. I understand that I am to read the handbook to be sure I have all the necessary information including:

- Admission and Withdrawal policy
- Schedule of Operations
- Fees (if applicable)
- Discipline Policy
- Food Service Policy
- Program Philosophy
- Child's Daily Routine
- Exclusion Policy due to Illness
- Notification of Licensing Notebook
- Accident/Illness report policy and Policy to Notify Parents

I understand that I may, at any time throughout the school year, ask program staff to explain information that I feel needs more clarification.

I have read the above statements and acknowledge receipt of the Parent Handbook.

Child(ren)'s Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan Received

I have received a copy of the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan for the 2020-21 school year.

I understand that this handbook provides me with information and policies to keep my child, other children, and the staff at Pere Marquette Early Childhood Center healthy and safe. My child and family will comply with all policies.

I have read the above statements and acknowledge receipt of the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan.

Child(ren)'s Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

7/20

