Welcome, Friends.
We’ve been waiting for you!
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A. This Is Who We Are

Welcome!
We are honored that you have chosen our programs for your family. Our experienced, highly skilled staff are ready to provide the outstanding learning and support you and your child deserve. But we can’t do this alone! Parent education is woven into every aspect of our programs, because we know that your involvement contributes significantly to your child’s success in school and in life. The guidelines in this handbook provide you with great ways to start. Thank you for the privilege of learning and playing with your family!

Monica Potter, Ed. D
Director, Early Childhood Programs
Robbinsdale Area Schools

Our Beliefs
1. Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers.
2. Kindergarten readiness begins at birth.
3. Children learn best through play, hands-on experiences, parent involvement, and settings that are safe, happy, challenging and caring.

Our Program Goals
1. Eliminate barriers to participation, growth and learning by addressing diversity, inclusiveness, learning styles and interests.
2. Teach to the whole child. Support development in all areas—social/emotional, cognitive, physical and creative expression.
3. Provide the education, support, and resources which expand parents’ understanding of child development, increase involvement in their children’s education, and build confidence in their parenting abilities.
4. Help prevent child abuse, family violence and other negative outcomes.

Our Commitments
1. Use best teaching practices and research-based curriculum.
2. Respect family privacy and the right of parents to be the final decision-makers.
3. Actively seek parent/teacher partnerships for the benefit of their children.
4. Honor each family’s cultural history, beliefs, and practices, particularly in the realm of family life and parenting.
5. Be able to recognize a child’s possible need for early intervention. Approach parents with sensitivity, sound reasoning and observations, appropriate timing, and respect for their decisions and responses..
B. Programs and Resources

Our Preschool Programs offer warm, welcoming, learning-through-play environments. Our licensed teachers focus on individual strengths and needs, social/emotional growth and kindergarten readiness. Each preschool varies somewhat in approach, yet all instill a love of learning and are in alignment with the District’s K-3 grade curriculum. Classes are 2 ½ hours, and are located at several sites. In some cases, tuition is free for qualifying families. See page 22 for contact information.

Great Start — 5 days, 4 yrs.  K-Prep — 5 days, 5 yrs.
Kick Start — 1-2 days, 3-5 yrs.  Eden Park — 4 days, 3-5 yrs.
Creative Play — 2 days, 3 yrs. or 3 days, 4-5 yrs.
ECFE Preschool — 2 days, 3-4 yrs. or 3 days, 4-5 yrs. (includes one ECFE parent/child day)

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) parent/child classes provide education, learning activities and support for families with children birth through pre-kindergarten. Licensed Children’s Teachers and Parent Educators help parents and children boost their skills and confidence. Every class includes parent/child time to play and learn, time for children to learn and play with each other, and parent time for support and education. Fees are on a sliding scale. Sibling care for 3 months - 5 years is available during most classes. Call 763-504-4170.

Family Literacy is a 20 hour per week school program for parents and their children, ages 2 ½ - 5 years. Parents work on GED, basic skills, ELL or their high school diploma, and also attend parenting classes. The children’s program focuses especially on language and literacy, and includes Kick Start, a preschool class. Sibling care for 2 ½ months - 3 years is available. Transportation (if needed) is provided for District 281 residents. This program is free for qualifying families. Call 763-504-8300.

Helping Us Grow (HUG) is a free home visit program for parents of infants, birth-12 months. Families meet with a Licensed Parent Educator. Parents receive information on community resources, parenting with attention to brain-based learning, and much more. Call 763-504-4170.

Ask a Parent Educator serves parents of children 1–5 years, extending through third grade in the very near future. Licensed Parent Educators provide free one-to-one consultations by phone, in your home, or at New Hope Learning Center. Call 763-504-4170 if you need some extra attention or a more private setting to discuss your concerns.
Early Childhood Screening is a quick and simple check to see how your child is growing and developing. Screening is required by the state for all children before starting kindergarten. It needs to be completed only once. But don’t wait! Screening is preferred at age 3, but can be done at 4 or 5. The results are based on your child’s age at the time of the screening, which takes about an hour. Call 763-504-4180 for an appointment. Students who attend Great Start should be screened before beginning that program.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) provides support and information for families on child development—speech, language, behavior, cognition, and motor skills. We collaborate with ECSE to support children in their programs. If you have a concern about your child’s growth or development, contact this free, highly professional service, or ask your child’s teacher to assist you in doing so. For more information, call the district’s ECSE office at 763-504-4160.

Learn more about District 281 Early Childhood Programs at ced/rdale.org

C. Safety Comes First

Medical Emergencies—If your child is injured or has a medical emergency, we will immediately administer appropriate first aid. We will call you if an injury interferes with your child finishing the day. Other injuries will be reported to you at the end of class. If emergency treatment is indicated, we will call 911, you, and your child’s doctor. If the paramedics deem it necessary, your child will be taken to the nearest hospital by ambulance.

Safe Behaviors—We all share responsibility for protecting children from physical or emotional harm. Please watch for teachable moments that help your children learn how to be safe.

- **Hallways**—Children need to walk, not run, in the building. Hold hands if your child will not stay next to you. The handicap door button is for adult use only. Repeated, unnecessary pounding on the button shortens the life of this expensive, automated system.
- **Parking lot**—Always hold hands in the parking lot. The most cooperative child could impulsively run away from your side. Drive slowly through the parking lot, and always use child car seats.
- **Hot beverages**—No hot beverages may be brought into any children’s classroom.
• **Unattended children**—NEVER leave a child alone in a vehicle (for example, while escorting another child to class.) Minnesota law prohibits leaving a child without supervision appropriate to the child’s age. All district staff are mandated reporters and will call 911 if they see a child alone in a vehicle.

**Safety Drills**—Every year each school conducts five lock-down drills, five fire drills, and one tornado drill. Staff have thorough emergency training and safety plans for emergencies such as dangerous weather, fire, building lock-down and building evacuation. ECFE parents should stay with their enrolled children and not go to sibling care for their other children. Sibling care staff are prepared to quickly and safely move children to the predetermined emergency location.

**Building Security**—Each building site has its own security plan and set of expectations for adults. Please follow all the security routines in your child’s building, wear identification tags, and sign in/out as requested. Be aware that all staff wear district photo IDs that should be visible at all times.

Our programs can not be responsible for lost or stolen items. Although lockers or cubbies are provided for adults’ and children’s coats, please keep purses and any valuables with you at all times. Every site has a Lost and Found. Please do not send valuable or very special items to school with your child.

**Mandated Reporters**—Staff are mandated by state law to report any instance of observed or suspected neglect and physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school or community setting. A staff member suspecting that a child is in danger or has been abused or neglected in the preceding 3 years is required by law to call the proper authorities. If a child is in immediate danger, we will call 911. Reports of suspected abuse or neglect can be made by anyone in the community to Hennepin County Child Protection at 612-348-3552 or the city police where the incident may have occurred. Call 911 to connect with any police department.
D. Healthy Families & Staff

Allergies—If your child has allergies of any kind, please inform the teacher on or before the first day of school. Information about your child’s allergy and emergency instructions will be kept in the classroom. If your child has food allergies, check the snack list outside the classroom or send a non-allergenic snack to school with your child.

Hand, Toy, Surface Washing—All children should wash their hands with soap and water before entering the classroom. Hands are also washed before snack and after using the restrooms. Many parents who attend with their child also wash hands at the end of class to further decrease the spread of illness. Surfaces, especially for snack preparation and eating, are cleaned and sanitized before and after use. After a child has mouthed a toy, the parent or staff member should immediately set it aside for staff to wash and sanitize after class.

Medications—In most cases, medications can be administered at home. Exceptions are made if a student needs specific medication at specific times, or if emergency treatment might be required (ex., Epipen.) In those cases, complete a request form, available from classroom staff, which must be signed by you and your child’s health care provider. Your teacher will keep this form and the prescribed medication in a safe place.

Peanut Aware—Our classrooms are in a Peanut Aware Zone. Allergies to foods containing peanuts or other nuts can be life-threatening for some children, even without actually eating anything. Please do not bring or send any foods that list these ingredients on the content label.

Sick Child Policy—Children may not attend class if they are ill or exhibit symptoms of an oncoming illness, including:
1. A fever of 100 degrees or more, within the last 24 hours
2. Diarrhea or vomiting – Keep your child home for 24 hours after the last episode.
3. A sore throat, earache, or chills
4. An undiagnosed rash – Check with your child’s physician before coming to class.
5. Cold-related runny nose or yellow/greenish discharge from the nose
6. Chicken pox before lesions are dry and crusted
7. Pink eye (conjunctivitis) – medication for 24 hours with no drainage
8. Breathing difficulty or persistent or harsh cough
9. Child looks or acts differently—child awake all night, unusual crying,
tired, pale, lack of appetite, irritable or abnormally restless
10. Surgery within the last 48 hours
11. Contagious stage of any communicable disease—If you’re not sure
whether your child is still contagious, consult with your healthcare
provider.

- If a child becomes ill at school, he/she must be taken home immediately.
The child will be made comfortable until the parent comes into the
classroom or the office for pick-up.
- Parents should notify the teacher or the program office if their child has
exposed other children to a communicable disease. In some cases, we
will notify the parents of those exposed children.

Restrooms, Diapering, Toilet Training
- Children must be fully toilet trained (daytime only) in order to attend
child-only preschool classes.

- Parents attending class with their child should take him/her to the
restroom or change diapers as needed. Changing tables and child-
sized toilets are located in each boys’ and girls’ restroom at New Hope
Learning Center. Wrap soiled diapers in a plastic bag, located next to
changing table, before disposing into the diaper pail. Please wash your
hands and your child’s hands after using the restroom. Do not, under
any circumstance, diaper your child anywhere other than on a changing
table.

E. Parent/Teacher Partnerships
If You Have A Concern—Parents and teachers are strongly encouraged to
approach each other with concerns or questions, of any kind, sooner rather
than later. We will listen carefully, assume that others have positive
intentions, and share information with respect and a genuine desire to team
with parents for the best outcomes. Such communication remains
confidential, unless sharing limited information with another staff member
would allow us to better meet the needs of a student. Parents, if you have a
concern, begin with the teacher if possible. She will be happy to talk or meet
with you. Most issues are easily taken care of this way.
If you are wondering about your child’s development, seek the observations of your child’s teachers, have your child screened (if at least 3 years of age) or call Early Childhood Special Education for guidance, observations or possible assessment. You are also welcome to contact the Program Director or one of our Program Assistants.

- Early Childhood Screening, 763-504-4180
- Early Childhood Special Education, 763-504-4160
- Pam Johannes, Preschool Program Assistant, 763-504-5333
- Jessica Rich, ECFE Program Assistant, 763-504-4172
- Monica Potter, Early Childhood Programs Director, 763-504-4161

**Communication**—Each program provides announcements and updates for parents on hallway bulletin boards and class newsletters emailed or sent home with students. Parents may also register for E-News at [www.ldaile.org](http://www.ldaile.org) to receive periodic e-mail updates about Early Childhood, Community Education and other school district programs.

**Parent Feedback**—Your feedback is always welcomed and valued. You will also be asked to participate in formal assessments of your family’s experience with us. The timing for each program will vary, but your teacher will notify you in advance of these opportunities.

**Parent Involvement**

- **Parent Advisory Council (PAC)**—PAC provides opportunities for all parents to become involved in making decisions for the program. PAC meets monthly while classes are in session. It sponsors occasional fundraisers during the school year to support scholarships and purchase materials for the center. Sub-committees of PAC include volunteer/outreach, legislative, library, fundraising, community liaison, and newsletter/social media. You are invited to join PAC or one of its sub-committees! For more information, or to explore other volunteer opportunities, call 763-504-4170, or email at rdale.ecfe.pac@gmail.com.

- Parents of preschool students are welcome to visit the classroom regularly. A calendar is posted in the classroom if you would like to sign up as a helper. If you have special interests, traditions, or hobbies that you would like to share with the class, please let the teacher know! There are other opportunities throughout the year to participate in your child’s education. Just ask your child’s teacher.
F. Respect For All

**Human rights**—Every family and staff member has a right to be respected and protected under District policies on affirmative action, non-discrimination, bullying, offensive behaviors and sexual harassment. These policies can be viewed at www.rdale.org

**Anti-Bullying Policy**—Robbinsdale Area Schools is committed to the elimination of all forms of bullying. Staff members have a unique opportunity and an ethical obligation to teach, model and respond to bullying in the presence of young children. Join us and be a part of the solution to this emotionally and physically destructive behavior. If you witness or suspect such behavior, please tell us of your concerns. We will not look the other way. You can view the district’s Anti-Bullying Policy at www.rdale.org

**Data Privacy**—All programs comply with state and federal data privacy laws. Information may be shared with district employees whenever this exchange would allow staff to better meet the needs of your child. Student records are forwarded to District 281 elementary schools and, if requested, to schools in other districts. For the purposes of carpools, or play dates, we are allowed to share the student’s name, address, and phone number with classmates.

**Photos & Videos**—Parent permission/release must be obtained before any parent or child is videotaped or photographed for use in publications. The permission/release is included on the program registration form.

**Dismissal of a Student**

1. In rare instances, one of our programs may not be the right fit for the needs of a child or family. We will first work with the family and district specialists to find strategies within the resources of that program. If an agreed upon approach cannot be found, we will make our best efforts to identify possible alternatives, within the district or the community at large, and to support the family’s transition.

2. A child or family may be dismissed if the parent does not provide legally required data, is not current with fees, or fails to follow the policies outlined in this handbook.

3. Child-only preschool students who are chronically picked up late or who attend only sporadically may also be dismissed.
4. All children in child-only classes must be fully toilet trained for daytime dryness. Unfortunately, if a child in preschool experiences a setback, he/she will have to be dismissed. However, one of our Parent Educators may be able to assist you in helping your child re-establish independent self-care when toileting.

G. Just for Preschool

This is What We Do!

Learning Centers—Our preschool classrooms are equipped with play-oriented learning centers which follow High-Scope's concept of active participatory learning. They offer an abundance of diverse activities, supplies and age-appropriate materials so children can explore and discover through direct “hands-on” and “minds-on” contact. Children learn best and enjoy school more if they can choose their play partners and visit the centers which match their interests, ability levels and learning styles. Activities revolve around a common focus, and centers are changed frequently. A learning center might focus on manipulates (small piece puzzles or building sets), art (paint or crafts making), writing, home living (playing “house”), science or sensory activities (Play Dough, sand, water), a book corner, blocks of various types, computer activities, or creative dramatics.

Typical 2 ½ Hour Class
10  Greeting, sharing
30  Story, early reading skill development
40  Free choice, work and play at learning centers
25  Calendar, math skill development
10  Snack, language, conversation
15  Physical, large muscle activities
15  Small group, math and literacy instruction
  5  Dismissal

Student Assessments—Every child’s progress is assessed throughout the year. Fall assessments help the teacher determine what your child knows and can do, and assist her in planning classroom learning experiences. During the months that follow, the teacher will monitor your child’s progress and modify the curriculum as needed. At the spring conference, your teacher will provide you with a summary of your child’s development and accomplishments.
Conferences—Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year. Parents are required to attend these important meetings. They are also required to participate in parenting workshops and family events associated with their children’s class. Involvement in these events helps parents become stronger teachers for their preschoolers at home. And parents’ participation in school events helps foster a love of learning and positive attitudes about school. At the October conference parents and the teacher set goals for the student. During the March conference, they review the child’s progress. These conferences are adult meetings and do not include children. Childcare is not available.

Transportation: Busing
An adult must be present at the bus stop for pick up and drop off. NO EXCEPTIONS. All parents of children riding the bus have signed an agreement which outlines their responsibilities and the district’s policy on safe busing for young children. If you misplace your copy, please ask for a duplicate so you will have these details on hand when you need them.

Transportation: Driving
- **Driver sign-in sheet**—A parent or authorized driver must sign-in at the classroom when dropping off and picking up.
- **Arrive promptly**—It is important for a child to feel comfortable entering the classroom and to not miss out on any activities. Drivers must accompany the child to the classroom door.
- **Pick up on time**—Children can become worried when they see all their friends leaving, but they are left behind. If you are running late, call the classroom to notify staff. Some consideration will be given if late pickup is due to an emergency. If a parent is consistently late, a meeting will be held with the parents, teachers and program director to determine a plan of action. If there is no resolution, dismissal from preschool may be necessary.
- **New driver**—To protect all students’ safety, teachers must be notified in advance if a newly authorized person will be picking up. Any adult not recognized as an authorized pick up driver will be asked to show a photo ID before leaving with a child.
- **Precautions**—Turn off the engine, lock the car, and take valuables with you. Do not leave other children alone in the car! If necessary, ask another parent to watch your child. If you need help (ex., driver permanently or temporarily impaired) contact your classroom teacher in advance so she can arrange for your assistance.
**Tuition**—The annual preschool tuition amount is divided into 9 equal installments. The first installment (if your class is not tuition-free) was made during registration. The remaining 8 are due on the first of every month, beginning October 1. If you have questions about payments for Creative Play or Great Start, please do not hesitate to call 763-504-5330 for assistance. Parent-child class tuition is on a sliding fee schedule. For tuition information regarding ECFE classes, sibling care or ECFE Preschool, call 763-504-4170.

**H. Just for ECFE**

**This Is What We Do!**

*Parent-Child Interaction*—This is a time to enjoy playing together and for you to observe and learn about your child. The children's teacher has chosen activities that specifically follow the curriculum for your child’s age and interests. Your child is waiting for this special time with you. Visiting with other adults will diminish an otherwise joyful and meaningful time together. As soon as you arrive, follow your child’s lead to whatever activity area intrigues him or her. Play with the activity together. Use eye contact, smiles and the kind of intimate communication that says, “This is really fun for me. I’m truly interested in what interests you, in how you play with this toy, and how you explore the room.”

*ECFE Parent Education*—During this segment, parents have a chance to develop friendships as they share their joys, concerns and wisdom in a confidential setting. A Licensed Parent Educator leads the group in meaningful discussion, presents accurate, research-based information and guides them through portions of the Parent Education Core Curriculum, prescribed by Minnesota’s Department of Education. By building on their strengths, parents increase their confidence, enrich their parent/child relationships, and enjoy greater parenting and family life satisfaction. During this time children learn and play with their teachers. Parents of older toddlers and preschool-age children leave the classroom to meet in an adult discussion room.

*ECFE Children’s Program*—The children’s program is woven into the entire class period. The curriculum follows the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress from Minnesota’s Early Learning Standards, which supports social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development, starting at birth. One size does not fit all. Classrooms, weekly themes and activities are designed specifically for a group’s age range and interests. Each activity fosters children’s learning through play—indepently or with their peers,
teachers and parents. Play is the “work” of children. Play is how they best learn and grow.

**siblings**—If a parent prefers, his/her infant sibling may stay in the ECFE classroom until the age of 3 months, although sibling care offers high quality care for brothers and sisters ages birth to 5 years. Babies over 3 months may not stay in the ECFE classrooms, but can be enrolled in Sibling Care at that time, or parents can make private arrangements elsewhere. Every child regularly in a classroom, from birth on, must have an immunization form on file, whether enrolled in a class or not.

The goal of our Sibling Care staff is to provide a safe, supervised environment for siblings of children enrolled in an ECFE class with a parent. The adult to child ratio varies, depending on the children’s ages. Please help us meet this goal by following these requests:

- In order to keep all children safe, please do not allow your other children to open the Sibling Care door.
- Write any special instructions for the day and give them to a caregiver.
- Please label all items that are being left in the room, such as bottles, sippy cups, pacifiers, diaper bags.
- Children can be checked into the Sibling Care room 5 minutes before the ECFE class begins.
- Please return promptly to pick up your children when class is done.
- Our security procedure is posted outside the door. It is intended to keep every child safe and accounted for in a setting where children are frequently arriving and departing. Thank you in advance for following it carefully.

**adult attendance and visitors**—Parents must attend classes with their children, as this is a parent/child program. If a parent cannot attend a class with the child, another family member may bring the child to class and participate in the parent’s place. If you invite a visitor to join you, please give the teachers advance notice, when possible, so they can plan a positive experience for everyone. If possible, please introduce the basic routines and parent group discussion guidelines to your guest or family member.

**parent/child separation**—Older toddlers and preschool-age children separate from their parents during parent group. The teachers will listen and work with you through this transition.
I. Your Growing Child

Separation

ECFE Parent/Child Classes—Separation can be difficult for some children—and for some parents as well. Our staff are very experienced at supporting families while they’re learning to separate with confidence. Most children who show initial distress calm down quickly. If a child is having a harder time, we develop a plan with the parent that’s a good fit for the family. Some suggestions to consider:

1. Before class, bring your child to the parent discussion room to see where you’ll be while she’s “playing with her new friends.”

2. Walk with your children to the classroom, rather than carry them. This helps them feel more capable and confident.

3. Point out where your coats are hanging. Explain that they will “wait” in the locker for both of you until after class.

4. If your child has a security object—toy, blanket, stuffed animal or pacifier—bring it along. Self-calming and self-soothing is an important emotional skill for your child to learn. Some children are comforted by holding or “taking care of” Mom or Dad’s sweatshirt or scarf. Be sure to label the item with your child’s name. Masking tape from the classroom works well.

5. Before leaving, involve your child in an activity. When you leave, get down to eye level as you briefly and cheerfully say, “Goodbye. I’m going to my class. I’ll come back for you after snack (story, gym time).” Don’t hesitate or wait to assess your child’s reaction. Leave quickly, with a smile. Fake it if you must! And NEVER go out the door without making sure your child knows you’re leaving. Children become anxious if Mom or Dad mysteriously disappear from the room whenever they attend class.

6. If your child is clinging to you, ask a teacher or assistant to physically take your child into their loving arms. This frees you to get out the door and gives the staff person a chance to cuddle, distract, reassure and build a trusting relationship with your child.

7. Some children start to cry all over again when parents return, even though they settled and even participated while Mom or Dad was gone. Stay calm, smile, and be reassuring. Your child’s “meter” has just run out, and he or she is relieved to have you back!
Separation in Preschool Classes—Learning to be comfortable and confident while apart from familiar people and settings is an important kindergarten readiness skill. Our staff understand this may be hard for some children and are ready to work with you and your child to make this adjustment. Some suggestions:

1. Model a relaxed attitude. “I know you’re sad, but this will get easier.”
2. Express confidence in your child. “I think you’ll want to play when you’re finished crying. I wonder which toy you’ll choose.”
3. Describe what he/she will be doing at preschool.
4. If your child has a special item, such as a small toy, a blanket or stuffed animal, label it and let the teacher know you’re sending it to school. She will guide your child to put it in his/her cubby or locker during times when it’s not needed. To avoid possible loss or damage, we recommend not sending your child’s most precious security object.
5. Books can also help, such as *The Kissing Hand*, by Audrey Penn (about separation) or *Maisy Goes to Preschool*, by Lucy Cousins and *Friends at School*, by Rochelle Bunnett (what happens at preschool.)

Let’s Get Ready for Kindergarten—Free parent education opportunities are available to parents whose children will start kindergarten in September, 2016. Those families will automatically receive parent/child play-and-learn activities, information about kindergarten, invitations to kindergarten readiness events, and summer materials for reinforcing and extending readiness skills. Meanwhile, parents of birth to three year olds play, learn and grow toward school readiness as they follow a comprehensive curriculum for each age and stage of development. It all fits together, right up to the first day of kindergarten!

Teaching and Guiding Positive Behavior—Young children need patient, calm, caring adults who can guide them towards positive behavior. The TACSEI model (Teaching Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention) is the cornerstone of our approach to guiding behavior, supporting social/emotional growth, and strengthening learner outcomes for all children. TACSEI’s innovative perspective and strategies are highly successful in preventing the dismissal of young children from early childhood settings and increasing learning successes for all children, regardless of their needs and challenges. Visit [http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu](http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu) to learn how this highly effective model applies to parents as well as teachers.
**Birthdays**—Birthdays are a special event in school. We have fun celebrating with birthday crowns, songs, poems and lots of special attention for the birthday child. If your child would like to bring a favorite book from home, the teacher will read it to the class on that special day. For more ideas, talk with your teacher. Please do not send “goody bags”, treats or food of any kind to class. If you choose not to have your child participate in birthday celebrations, please let us know. In consideration of each child’s feelings, please send invitations to birthday parties by mail, rather than passing them out at school. Children with summer birthdays are welcome to celebrate during the school year, too. Just check with the teacher to find the best day to celebrate.

**J. Miscellaneous, But Important!**

**Clothing**—Children learn from a variety of activities, including outdoor play and messy indoor activities.

- Dress your child (babies too) in comfortable, practical, washable play clothes. Choose sturdy footwear, such as tennis shoes, instead of sandals or regular shoes, so your walking, climbing, jumping, running child can play hard and have fun.
- Assume that preschool child-only classes will go outside every day, so dress for the weather! Children will stay inside if it’s raining, too icy, the temperature is below 10 degrees F or above 90 degrees or the time conflicts with a special activity.
- Older ECFE classes sometimes do go outside to play instead of in the gym, so come prepared.
- Remember to send or bring shoes when your child wears boots to school.
- If your ECFE child is in the process of toilet training, always bring a set of dry clothes. We will ask you to assist him or her in changing clothes.

**Donations**—Contributions such as crayons, tissue and scissors are greatly appreciated. Please understand that your donations will go to the classroom with the most need, not necessarily your child’s room. If you wish to donate any items to our program, a receipt for tax purposes can be provided.

**Family Library**—The Jackie Fish Book Lending Library is in Room 16 at New Hope Learning Center. This wonderful library is available to all families in our Early Childhood programs. It includes delightful children’s books and helpful parenting books. Items are checked in and out on an honor system.
Immunization forms—State law requires a completed immunization form for each child in any of our programs, or any non-enrolled child who is present in a classroom on a regular basis. Every year a new immunization form must be completed or an old one updated. Immunization forms are due the first week of class.

Insurance—District 281 carries general liability insurance and automobile liability coverage. The district does not provide accident or health insurance for students.

Classroom Pets—If a pet is added to the classroom, parents in that class will be notified.

School Closings—In the case of severe weather, consult your local TV or radio channels. We are included under “Robbinsdale Schools District 281.” Usually specific early childhood programs such as Creative Play, ECFE, or Great Start are also listed. Severe weather closings are also listed on the district’s web page at www.rdale.org. If Robbinsdale is closed due to severe weather, our programs do not run. When schools are one or two hours late, morning classes are canceled, but afternoon and evening classes will run.

Snacks
- In some programs parents will be asked to provide a nutritious commercially prepared snack for the children.
- In other programs, Early Childhood provides the children’s snacks. Food preparation complies with Dept. of Health policies.
- Special care is taken with students who have food allergies.
- We can not serve dairy products, foods containing peanuts, or items that require refrigeration.
- We provide cups and napkins.
- Some ECFE parent groups which do separate take turns sharing adult snacks during weekly group discussion. Coffee and tea are also made available through parent donations.
- All ECFE parents can sign a “Food Donations” sheet for ECFE children’s snacks.
- For children’s safety, hot beverages are not allowed in any children’s room.

Solicitations—Please limit advertising for private events to the parent bulletin boards provided in the hall. Examples would be home parties for selling/purchasing items that are not fundraisers for our programs.
Staffing Teams—All Parent Educators and Children’s Teachers are licensed by the Minnesota Department of Education. Educational Assistants (EA’s) are professionals experienced in early childhood learning and care settings. Continuing education, training and in-services for all staff are provided throughout the school year, including first aid and CPR.

Every preschool class is staffed with at least one children’s teacher and one or two EA’s. The maximum preschool class size is 18, with a teacher student ratio of 1:9 or better. ECFE classes vary in size, depending on the children’s ages, and always include 1-2 licensed teachers and 1-2 EA’s.

Toys from Home—To prevent loss or damage, please do not send toys from home unless an item relates to a unit of study or helps with separation. Label all items sent to school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Dates of Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Start</td>
<td>MTWThF</td>
<td>Tues, Sept 8 – Thur, June 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-Prep</td>
<td>MTWThF</td>
<td>Tues, Sept 8 – Thur, June 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Lit.</td>
<td>M T W Th</td>
<td>Tues, Sept 8 – Thur, June 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Play</td>
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<td>Tues, Sept. 8 – Thur, May 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Play</td>
<td>M W F</td>
<td>Wed, Sept 9 – Fri, May 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kick Start</td>
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<td>Sem. 1 Mon, Oct 5 – Wed, Dec 16</td>
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<td>Sem. 2 Mon, Jan 11 – Wed, May 18</td>
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<td>Tues/Thu Aft.</td>
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<td>Sem. 1 Tues, Oct 6 – Thur, Dec 17</td>
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<td>Sem. 2 Tues, Jan 12 – Tues, May 17</td>
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<td>Sem. 2 Fri, Jan 15 – Fri, May 20</td>
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<td>ECFE Pre-K</td>
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<td>Sem. 2 Fri, Jan 29 – Fri, May 13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Nov 23 - 24: ECFE parent/child classes do not meet
** Nov 3 & March 1: no evening class
*** Tues day classes end Apr 26, Tues evening classes end May 3
**** Oct 8 - 9 & March 17 - 18: No Classes for Creative Play
Sept 8 -11 Creative Play 1 day only that week; parents attend also
Sept 8 - 9 Great Start with parents Sept 8 or Sept 9 (half class)
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<tr>
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= No school for any program
Connect with Us!

Whether you’re reporting an absence, need some answers, have a concern or a message, or ideas to share with any of us, we want to hear from you!

Many questions and all absentee reports should go to the teachers. If you do not know the room number, phone number, or teachers’ names, call from the phone list below. They will be happy to assist you!

**Creative Play Preschool**  
**Great Start Preschool**  
Phone 763-504-5330  
Fax 763-504-5339

**Family Literacy**  
**Kick Start Preschool**  
(at Sandburg Learning Center)  
763-504-8300

**Kindergarten Prep Preschool**  
763-504-8033

**ECFE Classes, Sibling Care**  
**ECFE Preschool**  
**Eden Park**  
**Kick Start Preschool**  
(at New Hope Learning Center)  
Phone 763-504-4170  
Fax 763-504-4174

You can email any staff person using this format:  
**jane_doe@rdale.org**

The office doors to our Program Director and Program Assistants are always open for you. These program leaders are ready to listen and assist you in any way they can. Please don’t hesitate to contact any of them. Their offices are at New Hope Learning Center, 8301-47th Av. N. New Hope, MN 55428.

Monica Potter, Ed. D  
763-504-4161  
monica_potter@rdale.org  
Director, Early Childhood Programs

Pam Johannes  
763-504-5333  
pamela_johannes@rdale.org  
Preschool Program Assistant

Jessica Rich, MA  
763-504-4172  
jessica_rich@rdale.org  
Program Assistant  
Early Childhood Family Education
Quick Reference

1st Child ________________________________
Program (circle one)
ECFE       Creative Play       ECFE Preschool       Great Start       Sibling Care
Family Literacy       Kick Start       Kindergarten Prep       Eden Park
Day(s) ________   Time ____________
Room Number ________  Classroom Phone ________________
Bus Pick-up Time ________  Bus Drop-off Time ________
Teacher(s) and assistant(s)
________________________________________  ____________________________
________________________________________  ____________________________

2nd Child ________________________________
Program (circle one)
ECFE       Creative Play       ECFE Preschool       Great Start       Sibling Care
Family Literacy       Kick Start       Kindergarten Prep       Eden Park
Day(s) ________   Time ____________
Room Number ________  Classroom Phone ________________
Bus Pick-up Time ________  Bus Drop-off Time ________
Teacher(s) and assistants
________________________________________  ____________________________
________________________________________  ____________________________

Sibling Care is Room 17 at New Hope Learning Center, 763-504-4497.

If found, please return this handbook to the classroom teacher or
________________________________________
Parent’s Name