



Preschool FAQs

Do you have curriculum for preschool?

CDC utilizes a formal, purchased curriculum called *The Creative Curriculum*. Staff members participate in regular trainings to ensure proper implementation of the curriculum. The curriculum contains early learning objectives that are subdivided into 10 categories including sense of self, responsibility for self and others, pro-social behavior, large motor skills, small motor skills, learning and problem-solving, logical thinking, mathematics, representation and symbolic thinking, listening and speaking, and reading and writing.

The Creative Curriculum balances student-led with teacher-led questions, investigations and explorations. During a Study, such as *Trees* or *Simple Machines*, the classroom is transformed into a learning community, which generates questions and finds ways to explore those questions. The children discuss the Question of the Day, participate in the Read-Aloud Book protocol, work in small groups with the Intentional Teaching Cards across the curriculum, and engage in the Mighty Minutes for playful learning, as well as for transitions. In addition, the Study-based materials are integrated across the Interest Areas for informal exploration by the children.

What do I have to bring each day for my child?

Parents provide a complete change of clothes and any security items such as a blanket or stuffed animal.

What are the credentials of the preschool staff members?

The lead teachers of the preschool classrooms hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related fields such as elementary education or special education. CDC exceeds the state's licensing requirements in this area to promote early childhood development.

Additionally, all assistant teachers in preschool classrooms have at least two years of experience working with children. Many assistant teachers in preschool classrooms hold child development associate (CDA) credentials or associate degrees in early childhood education.

Does staff know first aid and CPR?

All staff members are required to be certified in pediatric first aid and CPR. Recertification is completed routinely by CDC. We exceed the state's licensing requirements in this area to ensure that children are as safe as possible.

What other trainings are required annually for staff members?

Staff members take specific courses such as common illness, identifying special needs, and ongoing curriculum instruction courses. Periodically, experts within certain areas are invited to present topics that promote quality in the classroom.

Do I provide my own meals?

We will provide your child breakfast, lunch and a snack each day at no additional cost. CDC participates in the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which encourages proper nutrition and provides the appropriate food groups for each meal. Whole milk is provided for each meal until the age of two, then 2% milk is provided for each meal. Water also is offered throughout the day as a healthy drink to ensure hydration.

How do you handle mealtime routine?

The children sit as a group and eat family style. This means that the children are served or serve themselves from child-sized bowls and pitchers. The children develop independence skills by practicing mealtime routines. Staff members sit with the children to encourage conversation with their peers, proper use of eating utensils, and attention to the task of eating.

What does the preschool classroom look like?

The preschool classrooms are divided into Interest Areas including, blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water and music and movement. These areas are designed to accommodate a small group of children, which enables the children to feel comfortable and play more positively than in larger groups. Additionally, when spaces are well defined, children are able to concentrate on their work so it becomes more complex and elaborate. As the play expands, the teachers are able to facilitate and enhance the individual child's learning and development. During this process the teachers assess and document the child's current abilities and developmental progress, as outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education Early Learning Standards. Literacy, mathematics and the topic of the Study underway integrate the Interest Areas.

In addition, the Carpet Area includes displays and documentation of the children's learning such as the KWL (Know, Want-To-Learn, Learned) Chart, the Question of the Day, tallies, Study-based artwork and the Word Wall. In the Library Interest Area, the children utilize an alphabet featuring their names and photographs, as well those of the teachers. All of these displays are literacy tools designed for the children's use and to document their learning.

What are the Pennsylvania Department of Education Early Learning Standards?

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has developed a set of standards for learning for preschool children. These standards precede the Kindergarten Standards and have been designed to lead preschool children through kindergarten readiness skills. CDC uses these standards and *The Creative Curriculum* to ensure that all preschool classrooms are operating at a high level of educational quality for the children.

How do you keep track of my child's development?

Each preschool child has a developmental portfolio. The lead teacher maintains this portfolio to document progression of skills and abilities. Assessments of each child are made with the Work Sampling Online tool. Work sampling is designed to allow children to move from one developmental level to the next. The portfolio is a collection of the child's work and progress and is accumulated throughout the year. The portfolio is presented to parents during three conferences a year.

What are parent conferences?

Each lead teacher schedules three conferences a year with parents to discuss the developmental progress of their child. These face-to-face meetings are an opportunity for the lead teacher to demonstrate the current knowledge of the child and discuss the next steps for the child in preparation for kindergarten. The parent will be given an opportunity to contribute by establishing learning goals that bridge home and school learning partnerships. At the completion of the conference, the parent will be given a copy of the child's progress report to retain.

How often is the room cleaned?

CDC has full-time custodians in each building to ensure cleanliness. The rooms are cleaned every night.

Do the children go outside?

Each center has an on-site playground for the preschool children. Outdoor play is very important for the child's health and well-being and is a key part of their day. Additionally, it is important for children to see their community, so daily walks are encouraged. Children go outside daily, weather permitting.

What type of learning materials exist in the preschool classrooms?

Each preschool classroom is equipped with unit blocks, puzzles, manipulative toys (Legos, lacing cards, magnet blocks, etc.), books, tapes and stories, musical instruments, art materials, pretend play materials, sand and water tables, paint easels, board games, literacy games and science materials. There are many varieties of these items to ensure that children are able to interact in pairs, small groups or large groups.

Depending on *The Creative Curriculum* Study underway, other learning materials include artifacts and materials related to the Study.

Do you have computers?

Yes, each preschool classroom is equipped with computers and projectors. The equipment is used to enhance the curriculum goals and objectives, particularly to expose the children to virtual tours, demonstrations, diagrams, photographs and classic art.

How do I know what my child does every day?

Parents receive a detailed verbal account of their child's day. Impromptu conferences can be scheduled at the parents' request.

What happens if my child's clothes are dirtied?

Each center is equipped with laundering facilities to allow clothing to be washed immediately.

What are your hand washing procedures?

CDC understands the critical nature of proper hand washing procedures with regard to illness and safety for children. Hand washing procedures include the use of running water and liquid soap. Hands are rubbed vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around jewelry, and under fingernails. Hands are rinsed well and dried using a paper towel. The faucet is turned off with a paper towel. These procedures regularly are taught by CDC in accordance with the Pennsylvania Health Standards.

Will my child have the same staff members?

CDC understands the importance of consistency in your child's life. Therefore, each classroom is staffed with the same individuals each day. This helps your child with attachment to one or two caregivers and develops trust. Periodically the full-time classroom staff may be absent. At this time a substitute will be placed in the classroom. Your child will be familiar with this individual or the individual will be partnered with a staff member your child knows.

Does my child have to nap?

CDC's young preschool classrooms are napping rooms. In the pre-kindergarten classrooms, children do not nap. If you would like your child to nap, or not take a nap, you have the opportunity to discuss your request with the Center Director for accommodations.

How do you handle discipline?

CDC takes a positive approach to guiding behavior. First, we try to prevent problems before they happen, such as with proper room arrangement, allowing children outdoor time to release energy, and ensuring appropriate supervision at all times. At times it becomes necessary to redirect children's behavior to a more acceptable activity. We focus on social skills and self-regulation which teaches children the necessary skills to get along with others and follow simple expectations of safety.