

# Early Childhood Education Center

- Carver - Heritage - Skylark -

## Parent Handbook

### 2024-2025

## Important Contact Information

### Carver Campus ~

Site Principal: Jennifer Epp

\*\*ECEC Principal for all 3 Preschool Campuses

Site Secretary: Deborah Nelson

Address: 11150 Santa Rosalia St, Stanton

Phone Number: (714) 663-6437

### Heritage Campus ~

Site Principal: Ryan Loberger

Site Assistant Principal: Tran Don

Site Secretary: Sandy Gonzalez

Address: 426 S. Andres Place, Santa Ana

Phone Number: (714) 663-6108

### Skylark Campus ~

Site Principal: Cammy Devereux

Site Secretary: Cris Klaudt

Address: 111250 Mac Murray St, Garden Grove

Phone Number: (714) 663-6336

\*\*All registration, transportation needs, and school site changes are completed through the Carver Campus Office.

Dear Parents & Guardians,

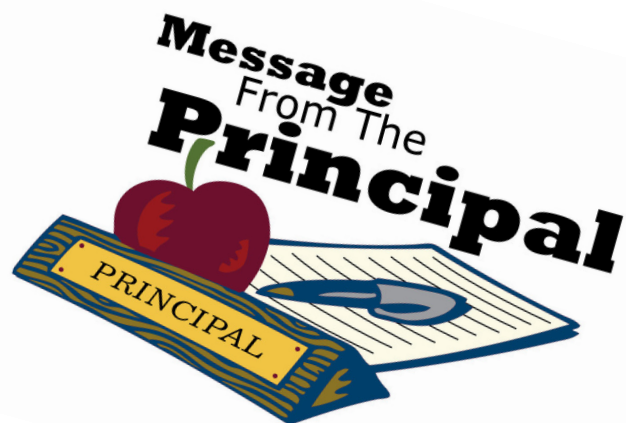
We would like to welcome all our new and returning children to the 2024-2025 school year. We are looking forward to a great year filled with laughter, learning and fun. We are so happy that you have chosen to entrust your child's education with us. Our special education preschool program offers a language-based learning environment to help support our children's academic success and prepare them for Transitional Kindergarten and beyond. All children will receive instruction at their ability level through the implementation of state adopted curriculum that is in alignment with the California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations.

Please review the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) handbook as it provides information regarding our mission, vision, program philosophy, preschool program and policies, wellness policy, district calendar, and family resources.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the ECEC Office at (714) 663-6437.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Epp  
ECEC Principal



## **ECEC Mission Statement**

**Our mission is to support our children in reaching their highest potential in academics, language, social-emotional, and overall independence. We recognize and respect that each child brings a desire to learn, a unique rate of development and diverse cultural/language experiences. We are committed to fostering an educational environment that supports the individual needs of each child and their family.**

## **ECEC Vision**

**The Garden Grove Unified Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) is committed to providing high-quality and comprehensive programs and services to prepare our young children for life-long learning.**

## **GGUSD Mission Statement**

**To ensure child success, we will provide a rigorous and supportive academic experience that motivates all learners to meet high expectations.**

## **GGUSD Vision**

**We are committed to preparing all children to be successful and responsible citizens who contribute and thrive in a diverse society.**

## **ECEC Philosophy**

**We believe:**

**All children are unique individuals.**

**Special Education is a service provided to our children, it is not a set location or place.**

**Learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant should be provided in a safe and nurturing environment for every child and reflect their developmental, cultural, and individual needs.**

**Purposeful and imaginative-creative play in a language rich environment is an essential component of the Early Childhood Education Center.**

**Parents and guardians are their child's first teachers.**

**Parent/guardian involvement in early childhood maximizes overall achievement and growth.**

## **About Us**

**Special Education Preschool programs are designed for children ages 3-4 years old who qualify for additional educational support through a multidisciplinary assessment with our Preschool Assessment Center (PAC). Children who qualify for our Special Education Preschool program receive embedded support from various providers including: Speech-Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Adaptive Physical Education teacher, and music teacher. Children are also supported by our school nurse, vision teacher, Deaf-Hard of Hearing teacher, and audiologist based on individual need.**

# GGUSD PreK-12 Calendar 2024-2025 School Year

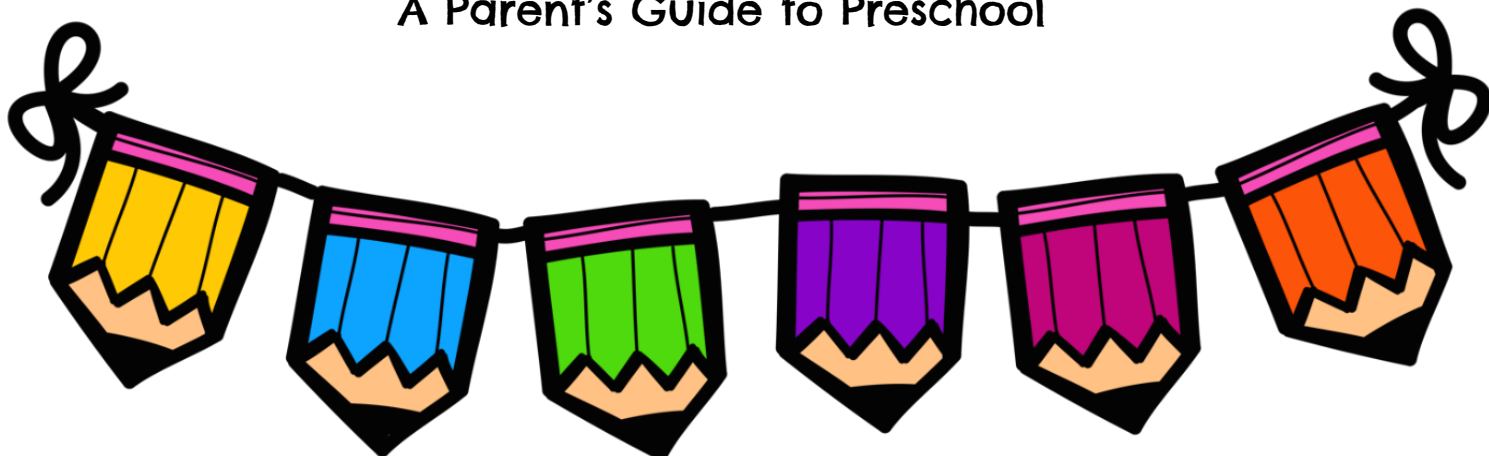
First Day of School.....August 12, 2024  
First Day of School.....May 28, 2025

## Legal Holidays & School Closures

Labor Day.....September 2, 2024  
Non-child Day.....November 8, 2024  
Veteran's Day.....November 11, 2024  
Thanksgiving Recess.....November 25-29, 2024  
Winter Recess.....Dec. 23, 2024-Jan. 3, 2025  
Non-child Day.....January 6, 2025  
Martin Luther King Jr Day.....January 20, 2025  
Lincoln's Birthday.....February 14, 2025  
President's Day.....February 17, 2025  
Spring Recess.....March 17-21, 2025  
Memorial Day.....May 26, 2025



## A Parent's Guide to Preschool



Helping parents and guardians understand what to expect in Preschool is crucial to the collaboration. More than 85% of the brain is developed before the age of 5. The preschool years are the time in which the brain begins to maximize efficiency (1). Children continually build their foundational understanding of concepts through play, interactions with peers and adults, as well as overall experiences both in the classroom and at home. Below are preschool activities with suggestions on ways to support at home to reinforce and extend your child's learning. Working together, we can help provide your child with a great start to their educational journey in GGUSD.

Preschool is considered to be a developmental period of growth and exposure to various academic concepts. Mastery of academic skills such as colors, shapes, numbers and letters are not required as part of your child's transition to Transitional Kindergarten (TK).

## **Daily Schedule & Activities**

### **Whole Group Instruction:**

In the classroom ~ children come together and become a community of learners, explorers and friends. They discuss the plan for the day. Children build language skills by listening to and responding to stories as well as singing songs or reciting nursery rhymes. Children will also be exposed to concepts including: calendar to learn the days of the week and months of the year, weather, alphabet, counting, colors and shapes.

At home ~ Parents and guardians can sing songs, read stories together and recite poems that you learned as a child. Share stories with your child about your family and your childhood. Talk about the weather and why we wear different types of clothing based on the weather. Reinforce vocabulary around the home as you engage in your everyday routine with your child.

### **Small Group Instruction:**

In the classroom ~ Working in small groups allows the teacher and classroom support staff to work more closely with each individual child. During small groups, children are exposed to various instructional materials to monitor their development of pre-academic concepts, language skills, and overall learning to learn skills. Small group lessons vary from 10-20 minutes in length with tiered supports for each child's individual developmental needs as well as level of engagement. Lessons are presented in a multi-modal approach to support all children.

At home ~ Spend time with your child one-on-one whenever possible. Have conversations about what your child learned at school.



### Structured Play:

In the classroom ~ Children make decisions about what and where they will explore, discover and learn each day. They learn independence by working by themselves or with peers during play in the classroom. Children are exposed to various developmentally appropriate toys and activities. Building these skills is critical in a child's social-emotional development.

At home ~ Allow your child to choose from parent selected activities whenever possible. As they continue to develop their play skills, allow your child to make a plan on what and how they want to play. Playing with your child provides them with a model of how to play with toys. Talk as you're playing to reinforce language skills.

### Motor Skill Development:

In the classroom ~ Children develop their gross motor skills every day during recess, weather permitting. Playing outside helps develop the children's muscles, improves coordination and reinforces healthy habits. The playground is a great place for children to learn social skills such as taking turns, talking with others, making friends and getting along. Fine motor skills are the foundation children need before they can learn handwriting including proper pencil grasp and control of writing utensils. Children strengthen their fine motor skills through coloring, cutting, and playing with play-doh.

At home ~ Take your child to the playground to explore all kinds of movement and sensory input. Play games you played as a child such as catch, water play, tag, and riding bikes/scooters. Let your child draw, color and cut with child safe scissors. Help your child make cards and pictures for family members and friends.

## Storytime:

In the classroom ~ Children listen to stories everyday. They are learning to ask and answer questions as well as learning new vocabulary words. During this time, children are developing skills for listening, reading, writing, speaking and critical thinking. Children get excited to hear what will happen next in the story and what they will learn as the teacher turns the page.

At home ~ Read different types of books with your child. When you read with your child it can be in English or your home language. Visit the local library and check out picture books about animals, people, places, and things. Let your child take a “picture walk” by telling you what the story is about when looking at the pictures. Talk about what may happen next in the story.

## **ECEC Curriculum**

Our ECEC Curriculum contains various thematic units to facilitate development to support:

- Pre-academics
- Language development
- Social-Emotional development
- Self-help skills
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Play and exploration

### **California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations and Frameworks:**

The Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks are similar to the Common Core State Standards for K-12 instruction. These Foundations and Frameworks enable teachers and parents to have a framework for teaching and learning in preschool.

- Approaches to Learning
- Social-Emotional Development
- Language & Literacy Development
  - Foundational Language Development
  - English-Language Development
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Education
- Health
- History & Social Science
- Visual & Performing Arts

## California Department of Education: Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP):

The is an observation based assessment used to measure the process of preschool aged children in California. Observational data is collected in the Fall and in the Spring. Teachers use this information to monitor child progress and create goals/objectives.

**BIG DAY Pre-K Curriculum:** Our ECEC curriculum is hands-on and based on scientific research. It provides children with the foundational skills they need to succeed as lifelong learners. The curriculum includes:

- Ready for School
- My Family
- Our Community
- Awesome Animals
- Imagine It, Make It
- Growing Up Healthy
- Nature All Around Us
- Moving On



## ECEC Parent Observation Policy

Families and professionals such as in-home ABA providers are welcome to observe instruction and other school activities. In order to protect the privacy of other children, maintain the integrity of our instructional program, and ensure the safety of our children it is important for parents and guardians to adhere to the following guidelines. Your signature below indicates that you understand the guidelines and will adhere to them throughout your visit.

1. A request for an observation shall be made at least 24 hours in advance. Please contact Jennifer Epp at the Carver office to schedule an observation.
2. All observations are 30 minutes in length unless previously agreed upon by the ECEC principal.
3. All visitors must sign in at the front office upon arrival and sign out upon the completion of the observation.
4. The number of people scheduled to observe a child or program shall be limited to 2 individuals at one time. Siblings are not permitted during observations.
5. Please respect observation start and end times agreed upon when scheduling your visit. If you are late, your appointment may need to be rescheduled.
6. A member of the ECEC team will accompany all visitors during observations. Please follow the directions from Carver ECEC staff related to your visit. Given the ongoing responsibility of teachers, support staff and therapists please refrain from asking questions or engaging in side conversations with members of the classroom staff during your observation.
7. Safety and instructional programming require the full attention of classroom staff and children. Please be a silent observer. If you would like to talk with a member of the classroom staff, please contact your child's teacher via Class Dojo, Parent Square or via email.

8. Visitors shall respect child confidentiality and shall not share any impressions of other children with anyone. School safety procedures must be adhered to at all times. The ECEC Principal retain the authority to exercise their discretion at any time to reschedule or end an observation in the event of an emergency or disruption that impacts the emotional or physical wellbeing of the children in the classroom being observed.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in following these guidelines to help us provide a safe and focused learning environment for our childs.

I understand and agree to adhere to the guidelines listed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Wellness Policy**

Although it is important for children to be at school everyday, sometimes they get sick. In order to avoid healthy children from being exposed to illness, please review the general guidelines for children coming to school.

### **School Health Office:**

Parents and guardians are responsible for the care of a child who is ill. Our school health assistant provides support to families as needed. The school health offices are staffed by a full-day health assistant and credentialed school nurse.

### **Health Concerns:**

Please contact the health office with any information regarding your child's health status including medical diagnoses (e.g. seizures, allergies, asthma, heart/lung conditions, etc). Depending on the nature of your child's health needs it may be necessary to have a health plan drafted and signed by the pediatrician/specialist prior to your child enrolling in school.

### **Prescription Medication:**

If your child requires a prescription medication it is best to ask the doctor to schedule the administration outside of school hours so children take their medication at home, when possible.

## **Over-the-Counter Medication:**

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications require parental authorization and an original, labeled medication bottle similarly to prescription medication. They must be administered in a manner consistent with the instructions on the label. The school nurse, health assistant or authorized school staff may request to receive further information about the medication prior to administration.

If your child must take medication at school (both prescription and over-the-counter), authorization forms are available in the health office and must be signed by the child's physician. All medications are kept in the health office and must be given to the child by the health assistant, school nurse or authorized school staff. Do not send medication in your child's backpack. All medication must be properly labeled and include signed paperwork that is kept in the health office.

## **Food Allergies & Food Preparation:**

Please communicate with your child's teacher and the site's health assistant and nurse if your child has food allergies or sensitivities. Children eat both breakfast and lunch daily at school. If your child has food allergies or sensitivities the school health office will provide forms to be completed by the child's pediatrician/specialist and submitted to GGUSD Food Services. If your child needs meals prepared to meet their individual medical needs (e.g. pureed or chopped food), please contact the school health office for the appropriate forms to be completed by your child's pediatrician/specialist.





## **Infectious Diseases:**

Infectious diseases are caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites that can be spread from one individual to another. Parents and guardians will be notified when a significant communicable illness has been identified in their child's classroom. A list of symptoms and other pertinent information will be provided when applicable. Please encourage good hygiene and regular hand washing at home.

Parents will be asked to pick up their child from school under the following circumstances:

- The child has had a seizure while at school
- The child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or above
- The child has multiple episodes of vomiting or diarrhea
- The child has a persistent cough
- The child has a rash that may be related to disease

Children should be kept home from school with symptoms listed below:

- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or above
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Persistent cough
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Infectious conjunctivitis (pink eye) - redness, irritation, and itchiness of the eye
- Flu-like symptoms
- Significant rash of undetermined cause

## Children may return to school:

Fever free for 24 hours without medication

No diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours

Infectious conjunctivitis (pink eye) - at least 24 hours after antibiotics have started and symptoms are resolved

Doctor's note to release the child to return to school with any necessary activity restrictions or modifications.

## Injuries:

Emergency and parent/guardian contact information must be kept up to date to assist the staff in the event of an emergency.

Classroom staff will treat superficial wounds (e.g. scrapes and cuts) sustained at school. Minor injuries will be treated with soap and water only. Parents will be notified by the classroom teacher either via Class Dojo or an "ouch report".

If your child is involved in a more serious accident or is injured, the school will attempt to notify the parent/guardian immediately. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, appropriate medical treatment will be sought following the information on the emergency card and continued efforts will be made to reach the parents/guardians. An "ouch report" will be completed and a copy will be sent home.



If your child is seriously injured or ill, the staff will give immediate care and may call paramedics for the following reasons:

Difficulty breathing

Suspected fractures

First time seizure or seizure lasting more than 5 minutes and/or according to seizure care plan

Loss of consciousness

Uncontrolled bleeding

Suspected head, neck or back injury

Please let the school staff know if your child has sustained an injury at home along with any treatment given and doctor's note regarding restrictions, limitations or modifications if applicable.

Due to unexpected illnesses and injuries that can occur, please ensure that updated home, work and cell phone numbers are provided to the school office.

# School Procedures

## **Clothing:**

Keep in mind that preschool children have a very active day. All children must wear closed toed shoes for safety reasons especially on the playground. Warm clothing is necessary for recess especially during the winter.

Please label all clothing. Many jackets and sweaters look alike. Provide jackets and outwear that are easy to put on and take off.

Choose clothing that allows for active play and is appropriate for the weather.

Send one complete set of clothing, including socks, labeled with your child's name, to be kept in their backpack.

## **Toilet Training:**

We support families who are currently potty training their child. All children follow a daily toileting routine and schedule. It is often helpful for families to replicate the routine at home for greater success in potty training your child. If you make the routine at home as similar as possible to the routine at school, you are likely to confuse your child when they learn in two environments. For our children who are not yet potty trained, we ask that parents/guardians provide diapers and wipes to be kept in the backpack.

### **Snack:**

All children are provided breakfast and lunch at school. Parents/guardians are encouraged to send a snack to school in their child's backpack each day. Please also send a water bottle daily. Some of our preschool campuses are nut-free schools. This is to ensure the health and safety of our children who are allergic to peanuts, tree nuts and nut products. Please do not send any food to school that contains any kind of nuts. Snack and mealtimes are great opportunities to work on self-help skills, language development and social skills.

### **Attendance:**

It is important that your child arrives on time each morning and is picked up on time each day. This will set good habits that support regular and on-time participation as well as support transitions to and from the classroom. Arriving late, once class is in progress, disrupts the scheduled activities and can make for a difficult transition at drop-off. While we understand the importance of maintaining outside services your child may be receiving, it is important that your child attend school to the maximum extent possible. If your child does not attend the full school day they may miss embedded services provided as part of our program. These services will not be made up or adjusted based on absences.

### **Late Pick-Up:**

Please make every effort to pick up your child on-time; please notify the school office if you will be late picking up your child. Adding a transition back to the front office away from peers can be upsetting for our children.

### **Riding the Bus:**

Only authorized emergency contacts listed on your child's emergency card may receive your child when they return home on the bus. Please ensure an authorized contact is on-time at the designated bus stop when your child is dropped off. Children not met by an authorized adult will be returned to the school and the parent/guardian will be responsible to pick the child up at their school site. Parents/guardians are expected to immediately come to school to pick up their child if no one is at the bus stop. If no one can be reached the Garden Grove Police Department will be contacted.

### **Parking Lot Safety:**

Do not leave unattended children in your car at drop off or pick up. Please hold your child's hand while walking in the parking lot. Young children can dart between parked cars making it very hard to see. Please drive slowly for everyone's safety. Park in designated parking areas at all times.

### **Picture and Video:**

To protect the privacy of our children, we ask parents not to video or take photographs of children on campus including at drop-off and pick-up. Teachers need consent before taking pictures or videos of your child to be used by the media in the district, school publications, district/school websites, etc.

### **Child Abuse:**

The State of CA requires (Section 11166 of the Penal Code) all employees working in child development programs to report all “suspected or possible” physical, emotional, neglect and/or sexual abuse to the child Abuse Registry. If your child has had an accident away from any of our preschool programs, which resulted in an injury, please notify the classroom staff. If your child is having serious or challenging behavior problems the classroom staff can direct you to appropriate supports/resources in the community. The department and licensing agency has the authority to interview children, staff and to inspect or audit child or child-care center records without consent.

### **Emergency Procedures - Fire:**

Fire drills are conducted regularly. Evacuation plans are posted in all classrooms. Proper order must be maintained during classroom fire/emergency evacuation. There are periodic fire and earthquake drills each year. All children and parents must evacuate the building. There is a map posted in each classroom. The district has a disaster plan that each site has been instructed to follow.

## **Emergency Procedures - Earthquake:**

In case of an earthquake

Children inside the classroom will remain inside the classroom, away from windows and will take cover under a table. The teacher and classroom staff will take all children outside when it is safe to do so.

Children outside the building will remain outside away from the buildings and playground equipment and will move to an open field with classroom staff.

The site administrator and office staff will direct children and classroom staff to the safest areas away from the building.

## **Back to School Night:**

We encourage parents and guardians to attend this informative evening in the Fall. Your child's teacher will present information on a typical school day. This is an adult only event; no childcare will be provided. Please speak with your child's teachers regarding the date and time for Back to School night.

## **IEP Meetings:**

Every child's IEP is updated at least once per year to discuss progress towards previously established goals, review progress in all areas of development, review newly drafted goals and discuss the supports and services that will be provided for your child the subsequent year. Any member of the child's IEP team can request a meeting be held throughout the school year, including the parent. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's progress please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher directly or the Carver Office to schedule an IEP Meeting.



### **Transition to Transitional Kindergarten (TK):**

All children in GGUSD whose birthday falls between 9/2/2020-9/1/2021 will transition to Transitional Kindergarten for the 2025-2026 school year. Your child's teacher will schedule an IEP Meeting with you to discuss your child's next steps in their education prior to the end of the school year. Some of our children transition to their School of Residence and participate in a General Education Transitional Classroom (TK) classroom while other children continue participating in a Special Day Class for Transitional Kindergarten (TK).

## Adjusting to the First Days of School

It is completely normal for your child to cry or protest the first few days/weeks of school. It is part of the normal development process of establishing independence and learning to transition to a new environment. The intensity of your child's distress/upset is often impacted by their overall personality and temperament. This is not something you should feel guilty or embarrassed about. Preschool aged children show this kind of behavior with initial separation. As children become more familiar with classroom staff and coming to school the transitions get easier.

It is often helpful when children sense their parents' and guardians' trust in the classroom staff and school as a fun and safe place to be. An overly long goodbye when a child is upset often makes it more difficult for the child, parent/guardian and teacher. Your child may cry again when you pick them up after school.

Some ways to support an easier transition to school include:

- Allow your child to be involved in activities such as packing their snack or picking clothes for the day

- Explain where you are going and when you will return

- Calmly and positively say goodbye

Please do not sneak away or "disappear". Be sure to leave your child with a positive statement such as "have fun" or "I want to hear all about your day when I pick you up". Avoid statements such as "be good today" or "behave yourself and listen to your teacher".

