

Irvine Unified School District
Early Childhood Learning Center

State Preschool PARENT HANDBOOK 2011 - 2012



Welcome to State Preschool

The State Preschool staff welcomes you and your child to the Early Childhood Learning Center. Our program is operated by the Irvine Unified School District, funded by the State Department of Education and is licensed by Community Care Licensing. Children must be three years of age to enter and may attend until they enter kindergarten. Priority enrollment is given to parents who live or work in Irvine.

The full day State Preschool is open from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM throughout the year. Part day classes are offered from 8:30-11:30, 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00 from September 12-June 20. Holidays are based on the Irvine Unified School District 's school calendar. The program offers an educational component, a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack, and opportunities for parent participation and education. All staff meets State Department of Education certification requirements and receives ongoing training opportunities.

Our mission at the Early Childhood Learning Center is to work collaboratively with families to create a learning community that supports the growth of physical, social/emotional, language, and pre-academic skills through developmentally appropriate practices. The curriculum is based the State Department of Education Preschool Curriculum Framework which guides teachers in supporting and extending each child's development and learning in an "active learning" environment.

Parents are always welcome and are allowed access to their children and the staff providing care for their children during normal hours of operation. The program refrains from religious instruction or worship.

Please take time to review this handbook and keep it handy for reference. Using the guidelines will help make your State Preschool experience more enjoyable for you and your child.

We look forward to a productive school year.

The State Preschool Staff

STATE PRESCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

7:00 am – 6:00 pm
Monday - Friday

CLASSROOM HOURS

Rooms 3 & 4: 7:00-6:00
Room 5: 8:30-11:30 & 11:30-4:30
Room 6: 9:00-12:00 & 1:00-4:00

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Part Day: September 12, 2011 - June 20, 2012
Full Day: July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

July 5 - Independence Day September 5 - Labor Day November 11 - Veteran's Day November 24-25 - Thanksgiving Holiday December 19-January 2 - Winter Break	January 16- Martin L. King Jr. Day February 13 - Lincoln's Day Observance February 20 - Washington's Observance May 28 - Memorial Day
--	--

STAFF

Pat Desimone	Coordinator	(949) 936-5855
Roberta Lum Hugoboom	Program Assistant	(949) 936-7555
Suzanne Robert	Program Assistant/Enrollment	(949) 936-5885
Aurora Valencia	Clerk	(949) 936-5883
Gabriela Avalos Giles	Food Service Assistant	(949) 936-5869

TEACHERS

Suzanne Martinez
Faye Pakshir
Elizabeth Tullai
Ching Saechao

ROOM #

3
4
5
6

TELEPHONE #

(949) 936-7570
(949) 936-7571
(949) 936-7575
(949) 936-7576

Please visit our website www.iusd.org/eclc for all things ECLC!

ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION POLICY

The Irvine Unfired School District in accordance with federal and state policies prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, handicap or disability, religion or national origin. Reasonable accommodations will be made for children with disabilities.

Participation in the program is dependent on compliance with program policies, procedures and requirements.

ELIGIBILITY

All families are required to provide documentation to verify eligibility as required by the CA State Department of Education. Eligibility documentation must be completed before an entry date is scheduled.

Eligibility is based on documentation and verification of at least one of the following categories:

1. Homeless
2. Current cash aid recipient
3. Income
4. Child protective services referral
5. At risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation referral

Family size must be documented by acceptable documentation such as, birth certificates, verification of marital status, etc.

Families, who seek full day service, must demonstrate a need for extended hours by verifying one of the following criteria:

- Employment (current paychecks, employment verification, etc.)
- Seeking employment (signed agreement)
- Training toward vocational goal (schedule of classes, training verification, grades/progress report, etc.)
- Incapacity (doctor's verification)
- Homeless/Seeking permanent housing (written referral and/or signed statement)
- Referral (Court or professional written certification)

If a parent provides fraudulent, incomplete or misleading information to establish initial or ongoing income eligibility and/or need, services will be terminated.

Children participating in the part time program must re-qualify each school year.

INCOME

Families must meet the income guidelines established by the CA State Department of Education's Family Fee Schedule

Total countable income means all income of the individuals counted in the family size, for example:

- Gross wages or salaries
- Overtime
- Tips
- Cash aid
- Child support payment received
- Portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes.

Income documentation must verify the month preceding certification. All eligible income sources must be verified by appropriate documentation, such as, payroll check, We reserve the right to ask for all necessary documentation to verify income.

ELIGIBILITY LIST

An eligibility list is maintained in accordance with the California Department of Education, Child Development Division admission priorities. Pre-applications are maintained and prioritized by income and family size. Eligible families are admitted based upon their ranking on the wait list. Families are asked to complete an enrollment packet, as openings arise.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

As parents are notified of an opening, an appointment is made to begin the enrollment process. Parents will be advised of the appropriate documentation needed for enrollment purposes. A Notice of Action will be completed upon return of the completed enrollment packet and an entry date will be established.

LIMITED SERVICE LEAVE

Families, who temporarily do not need child care, can request approval for a Limited Service Leave. Enrollment in the program will be maintained for a period not to exceed 12 consecutive weeks. A leave for medical reasons may not exceed 16 consecutive weeks.

NOTICE OF ACTION

Parents will be given a Notice of Action for the initial enrollment certification, and for any change in family status and services thereafter. If a parent does not agree with the action as stated on the Notice of Action, an appeal process is available. The appeal process is explained on the reverse side of the Notice of Action.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

Failure to comply with any policies, procedures or regulations set forth by the Irvine Unified School District or State Department of Education can lead to termination of services for a minimum of one year from the date of termination.

Reasons for termination include but are not limited to the following:

- Parent provides fraudulent information.
- Parent consistently fails to meet the family fee payment policy.
- Parent or designated adult fails to sign in and out daily.
- Parent fails to report a change in family status within 5 days of the change (full day participants only).
- Child has a pattern of inconsistent attendance of an *unexcused* nature.
- Parent fails to adhere to class hours or contract hours established for full day services.
- Child's behavior interferes with learning and/or compromises the child's safety or the safety of others.
- Parent exhibits volatile, hostile or aggressive adult behavior that disrupts school/office operations or threatens the health and safety of children and adults.
- Parent no longer meets eligibility requirements as determined by the CA State Department of Education.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Please notify your child's teacher or the office of your intention to withdraw as soon as possible. With advance notice, fees can be adjusted. However, no refunds will be given once monthly fees are paid.

FULL DAY POLICIES

CHANGE IN FAMILY STATUS

Any changes affecting eligibility must be reported to the State Preschool office within 5 days of the change. Changes that will affect your eligibility include but are not limited to, employment, income, family size, marital status, hours and days of service, etc.

ENROLLMENT CONTRACT

A child's hours for full day enrollment is based on the parent's need for child care services. Please contact the State Preschool office if your schedule needs to be adjusted to suit your child care needs. Continued variation from contracted hours or inconsistent use of contracted hours can result in termination.

FEE POLICY

There is no fee for the part day State Preschool Program participants, for CPS or at risk referrals, for families with incomes below 40% of the State median income or for families receiving Cal WORKS cash aid.

A family fee is calculated using the Family Fee Schedule developed by the State Department of Education for parents who have a need for extended hours for child care purposes. Fees will be based on gross monthly income, family size and hours of attendance. Hours of attendance are defined as part time (less than 6.5 hours per day) or full time (6.5 hours or more per day).

Fees may be paid by cash, check or money order payable to Irvine Unified School District. Parents are billed monthly, based on the days of operation, contracted days of enrollment, hours of attendance and daily fee. The family fee is due by the first of the month and considered delinquent if it is not paid in full by the 7th of each month. Parents will be notified of unpaid fees and will be given a deadline for payment. Services will be terminated if not paid accordingly. Please contact the appropriate staff to request a payment plan if needed to avoid the delinquent fee process.

Please note: No refunds are provided for absences.

If a check is returned from the bank, all future payments for a period of one year must be made by cash, cashier's check or money order.

If you are paying child care fees for children not attending our program, you may be eligible for a credit to your family fee. A receipt or cancelled check is required to credit subsequent billing period. Contact the State Preschool office for more information.

RECERTIFICATION

Parents are required to update their enrollment information by verifying eligibility, need and income through the recertification process, as needed, but at least once every twelve months. When incomes vary, a parent must be recertified quarterly. State Preschool staff maintain the right to recertify any family at any time, as needed, to maintain compliance with State Department of Education requirements.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

It is expected that children will attend according to their regular scheduled class times or contracted hours for full day services. It is important that your child arrive and leave school on time.

For the safety and supervision of children, state law requires that **each child must be signed in and out each day by a parent or authorized representative**. The time and a full signature are required. The sign in/out sheet is located at the child's classroom.

If a child attends another program on site, program staff will be designated to sign your child in and out as appropriate.

- **DAILY PICK UP**

Children will not be released to anyone not designated on the emergency card. Only authorized people, at least 18 years of age, can pick up a child.

Written consent is required, if a person, not on the emergency card, will pick up your child. The *Parent Authorization* form located by the daily sign in/out sheet in the classroom can be used for this purpose. This will enable staff to release the child for *one time only*. If this is not possible, a parent must call the classroom or the office to inform staff of pick up arrangements. Photo identification will be required.

Legal documents restraining parents from pick-up must be kept on file at school.

- **LATE PICK UP**

All children must be picked up according to the class schedule or contracted hours for full time attendance. A late parent can be very upsetting to a young child. Please call your child's teacher or the State Preschool office immediately if you will be late in picking up.

If, you cannot pick up your child on time and have not made other arrangements, staff will call you and all emergency numbers listed on the Emergency Card. Staff will make every effort to place the child with someone listed on the card. However, if no one can be reached and the wait time has been reasonable, the Irvine police will be called as determined by staff.

Office Telephone	(949) 936-7555 or (949) 936-5855
Irvine Police	(949) 724-7000

After two late pick-ups within one school year (July 1-June 30), a parent will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for each 15 minute period when arriving 5 minutes after the designated pick up time. Late fees must be paid by the end of each month for continued enrollment.

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance will be vital to your child's future success in public school. Now is the

time to develop habits that support regular participation. We hope to see your child at school each day.

When a child's attendance record becomes irregular, an appropriate contact with the family will be made.

- **Absences:**

Please call your child's teacher if your child will miss school due to illness or other important reasons. **Upon your child's return, please indicate the reason for the absence with a full signature on the daily sign in/out sheet. Type of illness must be indicated, i.e. cold, flu, etc.** These records are very important as funding for this program is based on meeting attendance requirements. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

The following defines absence categories:

- Excused Absences
 - Child illness or quarantine (indicate the type of illness)
 - Parent illness or quarantine
 - Medical or family service appointments.
 - Court ordered visitation (verification must be on file).
 - Family emergency-sudden or unforeseen events, i.e. accident, car trouble, death in family, sibling illness, natural disaster, weather conditions, etc.
- Best Interest of the Child (limit of 10 days per year).
 - Vacation, out of town.
 - Special time with a friend or relative.
 - Special event, i.e. religious holiday, birthday, etc.
 - Other reasons which are clearly in the best interest of the child.
- Unexcused Absences
 - Child did not feel like coming to school.
 - Parent or child overslept
 - Any absence not falling in the best interest or excused absence categories.
 - Any absence beyond the 10 day "best interest" limit.

Parents will be notified when their child has reached the ten "best interest" day limit. Children with three unexcused absences will be terminated. The parent will be given fair warning of the problem with ample time to prevent termination.

BEDDING

For children who take a nap, a crib sheet and a blanket are required for napping. Please mark bedding items with your child's name. Cot bedding needs to be taken home each Friday for weekly washing.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The State Preschool staff supports the development of appropriate behavior and social skills for children by implementing the following practices;

1. Developing a positive, supportive relationship with each child.
2. Establishing appropriate routines and expectations.
3. Providing developmentally appropriate materials that promote children's engagement.
4. Using positive attention and encouragement to support prosocial behavior.
5. Teaching children about the expectations of the environment, using friendship skills and solving problems.

Parents of children with the following challenging behaviors which occur on a routine basis will be expected to meet with staff members to develop a joint plan of action to support the child's continued participation in the program.

- Behavior which interferes with learning
- Behavior which interferes with engagement in prosocial interactions
- Behavior which jeopardizes the safety of self and/or others.

Parents may be notified to pick up their child in extreme behavior situations. If a child's behavior continues to compromise the safety of other children, and/or exhausts the resources of the program alternate placement will be recommended.

BIRTHDAYS

Children's birthdays are important to us. Birthdays will be acknowledged in the classroom on your child's birth date with special activities planned by the teacher. Birthday cake, goodie bags, special treats, balloons, etc. are not permitted.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

By law, all on-site staff are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect for any reason.

CIVILITY

It is our goal to promote positive communication, mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among employees, parents and the public to ensure a safe, harassment free workplace for children and staff. Volatile, hostile or aggressive behavior that disrupts school/office operations or threatens the health and safety of children and adults will be reported to the appropriate authority.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The classroom consists of materials that are carefully selected to promote active "hands on" learning. The classroom is divided into at least four areas organized around specific kinds of learning experiences; creative/art; role playing/housekeeping;

block/manipulative; and book/print materials. In each area, materials are selected to meet the interest and developmental needs of children and organized so that children can access them easily and put them away independently.

CLOTHING

School clothing should be comfortable and appropriate for the weather and school activities. Please select clothing and shoes that are easy for the child to manage alone. For safety reasons, shoes should cover the entire foot. Open toed sandals are discouraged. Thong type sandals are not allowed.

In the classrooms, children use paint, glue and other messy materials that may get on their clothing. Although children wear smocks during paint activities, we encourage you to send your child to school in washable play clothes.

All clothing, backpacks, etc. should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Your child needs a change of clothing at school in the event of spills, messy activities or potty accidents. Please place underwear, socks, shirt and pants in a large ziploc baggie with your child's name. Soiled clothing will be send home. Please promptly replace the used items.

The program is not responsible for any personal belonging brought to the classroom, including clothing items.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and his/her family shall be restricted to the purposes directly connected with the administration of this program. Any release of information must have written prior approval from the parent.

CURRICULUM

State Preschool uses Scholastic's Big Day for PreK in our classrooms. This instructional program is aligned with the California State Preschool Learning Foundations and is supplemented by the High Scope Preschool curriculum. All instructional practice is supported by current educational research and best practices for Early Childhood Education. Our staff participates in ongoing professional development opportunities and has been trained on a variety of instructional strategies, including language, social-emotional and behavioral interventions.

Big Day for PreK encourages children to learn, play and engage with the world around them. Instructional activities are organized into three ways of learning:

1. Large group instruction-circle time/story time experiences
2. Small group instruction-directed activities that build on curriculum areas
3. Learning centers-intentional play, social interactions and exploration.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule establishes a consistent, balanced routine for children consisting of teacher directed and child initiated activities, meals, naptime (full day), and outdoor play activities. Please check the Parent Bulletin Board for the posting of the daily routine and weekly activity plans.

DESIRED RESULTS

Our goal is to ensure that all children are making progress in the domains of cognitive, physical and social-emotional development. Staff uses the Desired Results Developmental Profile, an assessment tool developed by the State Department of Education, to evaluate the development of each child. Children are assessed within 60 days of enrollment and every six months thereafter. The assessment helps staff to become better acquainted with each child and to plan appropriate classroom activities.

EMERGENCY CARDS

Please keep you child's emergency card up to date! We use emergency cards to contact you or the people you have designated if your child becomes ill, injured, or an emergency arises. Please inform your neighbor, relative, or friend if you have placed their name on your child's emergency card.

FIELD TRIPS

No field trips are taken in the State Preschool program. Children participate in on-site assemblies each year presented by community groups, such as the local librarian, local firefighters, musical performers, etc.

MEDICATION PROCEDURE

We urge you to arrange your child's medication schedule so that doses are given before or after school hours. If it is necessary for your child to take prescription medication during the school day, we must have written directions from the doctor and the medication must be brought to us in the original container. Please contact the office for the proper forms and procedures.

ILLNESS

The teaching staff will assess the well being of each child upon arrival to the program and throughout the day.

Parents can help by ensuring your child's health is adequate for participation in school activities before bringing her/him to school. If your child is ill or does not feel well enough to participate comfortably, please keep her/him home.

The following are examples of reasons to keep your child home:

- Fever
- Persistent cough

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Unexplained rash
- Difficulty breathing/wheezing
- Swollen, red, crusty or itchy eyes
- Any communicable disease.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you immediately. Please arrange for your child to be picked up within an hour. If necessary, sick children will be separated from other children and allowed to rest until you arrive. Children should be without symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please call the classroom immediately if your child has communicable disease, so that we can inform other families. Children absent with a contagious illness cannot return to school without a signed doctor's note.

Minor injuries sustained at school, will be handled by the staff. Soap, water and band-aids will be the extent of first aid rendered. Parents will be notified via the classroom *Ouch Report*. Parents will be notified immediately in cases of severe injuries or concerns.

MEALS/SNACK

Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack are served daily. All meals meet Child Care and Adult Food Program standards. Your child's participation in the meal service will depend on his/her hours of attendance. Monthly menus are posted on the Parent Bulletin Board for your information.

Children requiring special diets due to food allergies must have a physician's statement on file. Substitutions for non-medical reasons (vegetarian, religious) will be evaluated at the time of enrollment.

SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In order to provide an effective child care and development system that meets the needs of children, their parents and the community, the State Preschool program participates in a yearly self-assessment process. This review supports continuous improvement efforts in teaching and learning, classroom environment, parent education and involvement, staff training and qualifications and policies and procedures.

TOYS

The State Preschool program has many wonderful materials at school. Toys should be left at home, along with candy, gum, etc. The Irvine Unified School District's "Zero Tolerance" policy forbids guns or weapons on any school campus-including toy replicas.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

It is the intent of the Irvine Unified School District to fully comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Individuals, including parents, students, employees, an authorized representative, an interested party, public agency, or organization can file complaints regarding the alleged violation of a statute or regulation that the CA Department of Education is authorized to enforce. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination in any program funded directly by the State Department of Education. All complaints will follow the IUSD uniform complaint procedures.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Parents are invited to observe their child in the classroom setting and to share their observations with the classroom teacher during parent conferences. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule an observation.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

We strive to keep lines of communication between school and home by providing a variety of ways to keep in touch.

- **School to home:**

Please check the classroom bulletin/message boards, the sign-out notebook, parent mailbox, and your child's cubby for important notices of events and meetings. Newsletters are sent home, along with announcements of community and site events, parent classes and activities.

Two formal parent teacher conferences are held yearly in November and May. However, you are always welcome to schedule a teacher or director conference or call the office with questions or concerns at any time.

Please join other parents in planning activities for the program by joining the State Preschool Parent Advisory Committee or serving on the site wide PTA. Meetings are held regularly with child care provided.

- **Home to school:**

The State Preschool staff encourages parents to keep staff informed of changes that may effect your child's participation in the program. You can help us stay in touch with you and your child's needs.

PARENT EDUCATION

Please join other parents on site for the monthly parent education presentations and parent support group meetings. Notices will be posted at the classrooms and will be placed in your mailbox. Free child care will be provided.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Current research indicates that one of the most influential factors in a child's education is parent involvement. We have an open door policy and encourage you to take part in your child's experience at State Preschool whenever possible! It is never too late or too early to become actively involved in your child's learning. Please talk to your child's teacher regarding opportunities to volunteer and put a smile on your child's face!

SCHOOL SAFETY

EMERGENCY PLAN

All programs on-site participate in regular fire/disaster drills. In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, children will remain with program staff until a parent or authorized person arrives. Please be assured that the appropriate steps have been taken to maintain your child's safety on the premises. On-site staff is trained in CPR, First Aide, and emergency preparedness. Food and emergency supplies are stored on site.

PEDESTRIAN AND PARKING LOT SAFETY

To ensure that families and children are safe at all times, please be careful in the parking lot by following the rules below:

- Never leave children alone in your car as you walk your child to class.
- Always hold the hands of any children you are escorting across the parking lot and street.
- Always have your child exit onto the sidewalk, not the street.
- Lock your car when leaving it.
- Buckle up! It is the law!
- Always park in the parking lot or on Smoketree. Do not park at the red curb in front of the school or on Cambium (private street).

SCHOOL ETIQUETTE

- Supervise your children at all times in the building.
- Use indoor voices and avoid gathering near the offices.
- Turn cell phones OFF or on vibrate while in the building.
- Keep gates and doors with signs indicating "please close" closed.
- Children are not allowed to play on school campus before or after school hours for safety reasons. Please leave the campus after picking up your child.
- Keep children out of the bushes and off the retaining walls.
- No pets are allowed on school campus.
- Remember that ECLC is a "smoking free" zone.
- Please help us keep our environment clean.

SCHOOL SECURITY

All parents are required to wear a visitor badge while in the building. This badge will be

given to you on the first day of school. Keep it in a convenient location for easy daily access. Please inform friends and family members that they must sign in when entering the building and will be given a visitor badge for identification purposes. Please enter through the main school entrance as all other doors will remain locked throughout the day

Thank you for your cooperation.

