

Des Moines Preschool

2021-2022 Family

Handbook



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Des Moines Municipal Schools

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Creating Success Together . . . One Student at a Time

Dear Des Moines Preschool Families,

Welcome to our fabulous preschool program. We are looking forward to an exciting year of growing, learning and lots of fun! We are so excited to be able to offer this early learning program in the Des Moines Community which will set students up for success throughout their educational careers.

The community has expressed to us the need for high quality preschool and finally the opportunity arose for us to apply for a program. We appreciate the high rate of support in participation and we know that together students will thrive.

We will need your help in making this journey a successful time for your child. It has been said that parents are often their child's first teacher but you are also the only teacher that follows them through their journey being their forever teacher.

The Family Handbook has been prepared to help answer any questions you might have about our Pre K at Des Moines. Inside you will find our calendar of events, family engagement opportunities and much more.

Due to COVID, we have had to make several adjustments to our regular program to keep all students and staff safe. As the health order changes, we may have to make additional adjustments. We appreciate your flexibility during this time.

We look forward to having your child join our family here at Des Moines Schools. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 575-278-2611.

Sincerely,

Kodi Sumpter

Superintendent

Recruitment and Enrollment

Students must live in the Des Moines school district. Children must reach their fourth birthday before **September 1, 2021** and who are NOT age-eligible for kindergarten (NMSA 6.30.9.10). We do not discriminate when selecting student participants based on race, ethnicity, religion, national origin nor any other unique demographics of which our community's children represent.

Applications for enrollment are accepted at any time throughout the school year. Call or visit our school office for detailed information. Parents may visit the school website to download a school enrollment packet or pick one up from our office. Students enrolling in the Des Moines Schools for the first time must provide a current health record, birth certificate and proof of residency.

Selection/Prioritization—*Are there conditions where one child is selected instead of another for participation in the new PreK program?*

New Mexico PreK at Des Moines has a cap at 10 students. New Mexico PreK will consider the following situations as priority needs when making participate selections:

- Lives within the Des Moines school district.
- Four years old by **September 1, 2021**
- NOT age eligible for Kindergarten.
- Has an IEP

If the number of registrants is more than the allotted number of PreK slots available, parents will fill out the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to determine need. Placement will be determined by those children most in need as indicated by screening results.

Absences/Attendance

There is a direct correlation between good attendance and success in school. It is important that your child is in school every day unless they are ill or other special circumstances exist. Consistent attendance, attending at least 90% of the time, is important for your child to benefit the most from our program. However when

children are not feeling well they are not able to benefit from the experience gained at preschool. A sick child needs to be at home getting well. (Due to COVID 19 we ask that parents check student temperatures and not send a student to school that has a temperature of 100.4 or higher in addition to COVID symptoms listed in appendix.) Students will be encouraged to attend remotely if they are able while experiencing symptoms. This will also reduce the chance of infecting the other children. If your child becomes sick at school we will contact you right away, and try to keep your child as comfortable as possible until you arrive. **For your child's safety, please call to report all absences or tardies by calling 575-278-2611.** If your child rides the bus, please also call the bus driver so the bus does not wait for your child.

Excessive absences

When a child is reported absent or tardy, a phone call will be made to the parents. Per district policy, your child will be dis-enrolled if he/she misses 10 consecutive school days.

Curriculum

Curriculum describes how and what your child will have the opportunity to learn while at school. Des Moines Preschool will use ***Opening the world of learning (OWL)*** as a guide and the ***New Mexico PreK Essential Indicators***. This is a comprehensive early literacy program that focuses on six thematically organized units: Family, Friends, Wind and Water, The World of Color, Shadows and Reflections, and Things that Grow. The content of each unit is built around a daily routine within an activity center. Young children learn by doing. They use their bodies to touch, smell, move, listen and learn about the world in which they live. They like to play; this is called "child's work." Play is very important and tells us how well children are getting along with others. Through observation, we know how and what the children are learning and allow us to plan the next steps for learning and work to meet each child's individual goals.

Due to COVID19- students will be learning remotely during a portion of the school year. Currently the remote guidance allows Pre-k students to be on campus in 5:1 ratio with appropriate PPE and social distancing. When your child is not on campus they will participate in asynchronous instruction, which is independent

learning that can be completed on the family timeline daily. The teacher will record herself reading books and teaching lessons as well as interactive lessons via SeeSaw on the district provided i-Pad. If your family qualifies for free and reduced meals and need internet assistance please contact the school at 575-278-2611.

Children this age learn about letters and numbers through games and real life experiences, such as cooking, building, reading/sharing stories, books and songs. In this way children learn more than memorizing; they learn about language and writing through their own experiences. All preschool classes have music and movement built into the daily routine.

All children are unique. They are special to those who love them at home and to those who care for them at school. Every child in the classroom has something special to contribute. The teachers will provide many different activities, toys and materials so each child will feel successful and challenged in various learning experiences.

Our PreK program supports and encourages dual language learners. Implementing strategies that reflect their understanding of the stages of second language acquisition by planning activities, materials and experiences that support each stage.

Professional Development- *How do I know the teachers are qualified to teach my child?*

License and Education Levels

NM PreK teachers and Educational Assistants (EA) are required by the state of New Mexico's Public Education Department to have a degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE). All classroom teachers must hold a current New Mexico ECE teaching license and Educational Assistants must have an Associate's Degree in ECE. Any teacher or EA without these credentials must take classes to work toward acquiring the degrees. New Mexico PreK requires teachers and EA's to attend trainings on current topics to ensure best practices are being utilized to teach our young students.

Family Engagement

Des Moines School is dedicated to providing quality education for every student in our district. To achieve this goal of educating all students effectively, the school and parents must work together as partners. Neither home nor school can do the job alone. The goal is a school-home partnership that will help every student be successful. The family engagement program will be comprehensive and will include the following components of a successful family engagement program:

- Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
- Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Parents are welcome in the school and their support and assistance is actively encouraged. (Due to COVID-19 Families are not allowed in the school building. We will encourage parents support and involvement in their remote learning. We will encourage parents to visit the classroom as soon the Governor Lujan-Grisham and health order allows.)
- Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect their children and families.
- Community resources are made available to strengthen family practices and student learning.
- Development of staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in their child's learning.

The family is the most important part of a young child's life. We believe that all families want what is best for their child. We also believe that every family is unique, just like every child is unique. Together we can help your child succeed and celebrate those successes!

Research and many years of experience tell us that the more familiar and involved a family is with their child's program, the more the child grows.

Family Conferences -There are at least three family-teacher conferences held each year. In addition, either the family or teacher may request a conference. Your child's teacher will contact you to find a day and time that works for everyone involved. We will need to conduct these conferences remotely due to COVID 19.

Parent and Family Trainings and support

- Assist parents with interpreting assessment data to monitor their child’s progress;
- Provide training opportunities for parents on effective parenting skills;
- Provide training to help parents assist their children at home while equipping them with tools to enhance and extend learning;
- Provide parents with information regarding the necessary skills for their child to master to be considered kindergarten “ready”;
- Coordinate with other parent involvement activities in programs such as Kindergarten;
- To the extent possible, see that information is sent home in a language and format that parents can understand;
- Abundance of materials on the expected growth and development of young children and ideas to create meaningful interactions with young children available on the New Mexico PreK website at <https://prek.ped.state.nm.us/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● List all 2021-2022 Proposed Family Engagement Activities 	Topic	Proposed Date(s)	Contact Hours (The total must equal or exceed 90 hours.)
Virtual Home Visits	Introduction and relationship building	August	12
Virtual Fall Conferences	Child progress	Fall	6
Virtual Winter Conferences	Child progress	Winter	6
Virtual Spring Conferences	Child progress	Spring	6

Transition to Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Spring	2
Virtual Literacy night	Literacy and parent education	Once each quarter	8
Virtual Pumpkin math	Math games and parent education	October	2
Virtual Thanksgiving Program	Giving	November	2
Science Projects	Exploring science together	Once each quarter	4
Donuts with Dad	Literacy and parent education	Once each quarter	4
Muffins with Mom	Literacy and parent education	Once each quarter	4
Grandparents Day	Family	September	2
Music w/ family	Family	Spring	2
Virtual Story hour	Literacy and parent education	Once a week(30min)	18
Virtual Field trips	Hands on learning (virtually)	Each quarter	12
Proposed Total Family Engagement Hours			90

School/Family communication

Parents will be informed through a variety of communication methods throughout the school year. Student handbooks, weekly newsletters, automated phone system, district web pages, conferences, phone calls, emails, personal contacts and written notices will be used to establish and maintain an open line of communication.

Transportation

School bus transportation is available to children enrolled in Des Moines PreK program. If your child rides the bus please follow these rules to keep the bus running on schedule:

- Have your child ready and waiting
- Each child must be met by an adult at the drop-off time
- For their safety, children are to remain seated at all times on the bus.
- Due to COVID-19; Temperature screenings will be taken by bus drivers. Students with 100.4 or higher will not be allowed to ride the bus to school.
- **Please call the bus driver if your child will be absent or will not be riding the bus for any other reason.**
- If there is a change in your normal bus routine, such as someone picking up your child when he/she typically rides the bus, **please call the school and bus driver and notify your child's teacher in writing.**

Developmental and Health Screenings

Students are required to complete a brief screening. Screening help to discover a child's strengths and to determine if there are areas of concern that may need further evaluations. Through this evaluation, families working together with qualified professionals will look at all areas of development. This screening will be completed by the child's teacher during the first three months of attendance. (This will be done virtually on an individual basis if necessary due to health order.)

Special Education is a state and federally funded program to serve children who are eligible for service. Families and qualified professionals work together to identify the child's educationally related program strengths and needs. We work with Child Find and early intervention providers to meet the needs of children who are eligible for services.

Nutrition

PreK students are included in the school lunch program. Two nutritious meals, breakfast and lunch, are prepared daily by our cafeteria staff. We encourage students to eat the meals provided at school, but bringing a sack lunch for home is also permitted.

Transition Plan

PreK classes will complete specially designed transitioning activities for PreK students at the end of the school year to prepare students for a smooth transition into kindergarten. Curriculum activities will be designed to provide PreK students with the knowledge to be “ready” for kindergarten. Established routines and familiarity with kindergarten staff are examples of the activities that will be used to promote this transition. Kindergarten teachers and staff will be involved in the end of year family/teacher conferences to prepare families for the transition to kindergarten.