



Utica Community Schools

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Infant and Toddler

Full Day Preschool

GSRP Before and After Care



2025-2026

Parent Handbook

Welcome

Dear Early Childhood Parents,

Welcome to Utica Community Schools' Infant, Toddler, and Full Day Preschool Programs. Our goal is to offer quality childcare for working families. Our full day preschool and childcare programs provide for the social and educational needs of your child. Each classroom is designed to meet the needs of a particular age group in a safe, comfortable environment. Nurturing care is combined with age-appropriate educational opportunities provided by trained staff in early childhood. We are pleased to be part of your child's earliest educational experience.

We welcome your feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any suggestions, questions, or concerns. I can be reached at:

Phone: 586.797.6984 / 586.797.4665

Email: cassie.edwards@uticak12.org

Locations:

Community Education Center – CEC (Dodge Park & 17 Mile)

Infant, Toddler, Full Day Preschool, and GSRP Before/After Care

Duncan Early Childhood Center (26 Mile & Schoenherr)

Full Day Preschool and GSRP Before/After Care

If you have billing questions or concerns, please contact the Child Care Accounting Office at 586.797.6985.

Sincerely,

CJ Wajeesh
Director of Community Education

Cassie Edwards
Child Care Coordinator

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Programs

Utica Community Schools provides a variety of programs for young children and their families. Traditional three- and four-year preschools are offered morning or afternoon, as well as Montessori preschool. Full-day care is offered for infants and toddlers at the Community Education Center, and preschool age children at two locations. Extended day and part day PreK for All preschool classes are offered at multiple locations. Select locations provide before and/or after care to families enrolled in the extended day GSRP program, for an additional fee. Additional information regarding our Early Childhood programs is available through the Early Childhood Office at 586.797.4660, the Early Childhood Accounting Office at 586.797.6985, or on our website www.ucsccommunityeducation.org.

Philosophy

Our early childhood philosophy revolves around the belief that young children learn best through play, exploration, and hands-on experiences in a supportive and stimulating environment. We recognize the importance of respecting each child as a unique individual with their own interests, abilities, and learning styles.

Through our philosophy, we aim to lay a strong foundation for children's future academic success and lifelong love of learning, while fostering their curiosity, creativity, and resilience.

Our teachers use their expertise to choose materials that optimize learning opportunities and foster both short-term mastery and long-term growth in the learners. The daily schedule of activities maximizes children's active participation, exploration, and learning through a balance of structured activities and child-directed play. This approach not only supports their developmental needs but also nurtures their natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

High-quality early childhood education and positive relationships with caregivers and educators play a crucial role in fostering children's development and preparing them for future success in school and beyond. Together, we will build a supportive and collaborative relationship that ensures the well-being and educational success of our young learners as they embark on their early learning journey.

Early Childhood programs create a bridge from home to school. Teachers serve as a resource for parents, providing information about child growth and development and community resources.

MiLEAP Licensing Documents

- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports are available on the Child Care Hub Information Records Portal at <https://cclb.michigan.gov/s/>
- This resource can be accessed by clicking the link. You may ask your coordinator for assistance accessing the website from the office during school hours, if needed.

Enrollment

The Child Care Program enrollment takes place in the winter and is ongoing throughout the year when space is available. At registration, priority is given to currently enrolled children, their siblings, and children enrolled in our early childhood programs.

Our program closely follows the UCS school year calendar. Limited summer care is available at the Community Education Center. Children may be scheduled for a minimum of two full days or three half days and up to five full days a week. Children enrolling in three-year-old preschool must be three years old on or before September 1st of the school year in which they are enrolling. Our three-year-old class ratio is 10:1 and the four-year-old class ratio is 12:1. Parents complete their registration request online at ucscommunityeducation.ce.eleyo.com.

Required forms must be completed and turned in before your child can begin classes. In addition to the completed online registration contract, children must have on file:

- **Updated Child Information Record** - Please notify the director/lead teacher/assistant if you have a new phone number (cell, home, or work). We must be able to always contact one parent or one emergency contact person.
- **Health Appraisal** - Form must be renewed annually for infants and toddlers and every two years for three- and four-year-olds and signed by a physician with up-to-date immunizations and physical. Form is due within 30 days of the start of school. Failure to supply UCS Early Childhood with the completed health appraisal form will result in exclusion from the classroom for your child until the required documentation has been supplied.
- **Media Release online consent**
- **Use of Student Work / Photograph online consent**
- **Lunch and Beverage / Special Dietary Form**
- **External Topical Ointments Form**
- If your child has an IEP, the parents must provide the most current IEP to the Early Childhood teacher in order to address the recommendations.

Questions regarding enrollment, eligibility, fees, or classroom issues should be shared with the teacher and forwarded to the Early Childhood Coordinator if necessary. Decisions will be made within the guidelines of Utica Community Schools' policies and procedures, Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Early Childhood Professional organizations, and the discretion of the Child Care Coordinator.

Tuition

The program is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The program operates the school year with scheduled breaks for holidays.

Tuition is billed according to the schedule every Friday the week before care. If tuition is not paid, your child may not attend the program. All schedule changes must be made in writing and approved by the director. Fees for additional days must be paid in advance. If your child is sent home for any reason; behavior, illness, etc., you are still responsible to pay the tuition for their scheduled day.

Current tuition costs are available by visiting our website at http://ucscommunityeducation.org/early_childhood

Absences will be charged at the regular rate for sessions a child is scheduled to attend. If the programs are not available due to Utica Community School closings, fees may be adjusted (if closed for an entire day).

Tuition is prepaid and billed weekly. The following payment options are available:

- **Auto Pay** weekly deduction from your credit card in Eleyo. The Community Education Center Early Childhood Accounting Office will automatically charge your credit card weekly payments for the school year or until account is paid in full.
- 1. **Visa/MasterCard/Discover** payments can be made on Eleyo or by contacting Community Education Center Accounting Office at 586.797.6985 or the Early Childhood Office 586.797.4660.
- Payments may be made by **check** (*make check payable to Utica Community Schools*) and mailed to:
UCS Community Education Center
Early Childhood Accounting Office
38901 Dodge Park
Sterling Heights, MI 48312

If you qualify for DHHS assistance, you may be asked to pay a weekly copay amount. This is based on each individual's percentage and allowed hours. Please see your Director for more information.

Fees

- Late Pick Up - \$15 will be charged every 15 minutes beginning at 6:01 pm for the full day, or beginning at 1:01pm for the half day.

- Late Payment - \$25

If payment is not received by Tuesday night at 11:59 pm, a late payment fee will be added to account balance.

- Re-Enrollment - \$25 child

- Credit Card Decline - \$5

Non-Sufficient Fund (NSF) checks - \$25

NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) payments must be made with a money order, cashier's check or cash. A personal check or credit card WILL NOT be accepted. Accounts that are more than two weeks in arrears are subject to exclusion.

Flex Days

Your child has flex days that can be used each school year, which is equal to the number of days they are scheduled each week. (Example: If your child's weekly schedule is three days per week, they will have three flex days to use per school year.) Flex days can be used as vacation or sick days. If you use a flex day and your account was already charged for the week, you will receive credit on your account that will apply to future charges. To request use of your child's flex days you must email the Child Care Coordinator for approval.

Withdrawal Policy

If you need to withdraw for any reason, provide a two-week written notice to the Community Education Center, Early Childhood Accounting Office. Tuition and registration fees are non-refundable. If your child is excluded, you are still responsible for the unpaid tuition balance. All tuition must be paid in full in order to register for any Community Education program in the district. Furthermore:

- Families will be withdrawn from the program if fees are not paid up to date.
- There is a \$25 re-enrollment fee to re-enroll your child back into the program within same school year.
- Teachers work closely with parents to create a smooth transition from home to school. There may be situations where a child does not adjust to the group setting. The staff will meet with the parent and discuss concerns regarding the child. Parents may need to withdraw their child from the program if the child is unable to adjust to the setting.
- Children whose behavior presents a safety risk to themselves, or others (i.e. eloping) may be asked to withdraw from the program.
- Registration fees will not be refunded.

Communication and Family Engagement

Our curriculum provides a secure format for communication between families and the classroom teacher. Classroom teachers will send an invitation to join TS Gold Family to your email address. Multiple family members may join. Student information is shared with all members connected to the child.

Multi-lingual families can set their language preferences in the TS Gold Family App. We encourage families who speak different languages to continue sharing their heritage and embrace their home language. We will support families by sharing information in a variety of ways and open communication.

Ready Rosie is a tool through Creative Curriculum that is designed to strengthen connections between school and home by offering high quality resources about early learning. Through short videos, Ready Rosie demonstrates skills, techniques, games, language and other activities parents can easily use at home with their child. Teachers and parents can comment on shared content.

Your child's teacher will share how you can join Ready Rosie. Once connected, your teacher can send videos and articles to families that align with the curriculum and are developmentally appropriate for your child. Families also have access to

numerous topics related to social emotional learning, discipline, screen time, and much more. These can be viewed at any time.

Teaching Strategies Family and Ready Rosie can be downloaded to a cell phone, tablet, iPad, or accessed through a computer. Get them both free from Apple App Store and Google Play.



Home Languages

Families are encouraged to continue speaking with their child in their family's language. Students learning more than one language can thrive in our programs. Our early childhood teachers use a variety of tools, including modeling and pictures, to help students learn and understand. Your child's teacher can share more information with you about how they support dual language learners in their classroom.

Diversity and Inclusion

Our preschool programs strive to create an inclusive environment where every child feels valued, respected, and represented. Through stories, music, art, and play, we explore the traditions, customs, and contributions of people from various backgrounds, including different cultures, abilities, and family structures. Our program aims to:

- Foster empathy and understanding among children and staff
- Promote positive representations of diverse groups
- Encourage children to appreciate and respect differences
- Develop a sense of global citizenship and community
- Support families in sharing their unique experiences and traditions

By embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity, we help our preschoolers develop into compassionate, open-minded, and well-rounded individuals prepared to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Our programs are committed to providing an inclusive and accessible environment for children, families, and staff with disabilities. We strive to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to participate and thrive.

To achieve this, we:

- Strive to make reasonable modifications to support children with diverse abilities, whenever possible.
- Foster a culture of inclusion, respect, and empathy among children, families, and staff
- Collaborate with families and professionals to develop and implement support plans
- Provide ongoing training and resources for staff to enhance their skills and knowledge in supporting individuals with disabilities

Our goal is to create a welcoming and supportive community where everyone can reach their full potential, regardless of ability. We believe that diversity and inclusion enrich our programs and benefit everyone involved.

Curriculum

Our full-day toddler and preschool classrooms use Creative Curriculum, a high-quality research-based curriculum that is appropriate for young children at diverse developmental levels. Teachers observe, plan, and assess the growth and development of children daily. This allows children to engage in activities designed to promote learning based on the child's individual abilities and interest. Initial screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire provides the teacher with a baseline of information needed to plan appropriate activities. Children feel comfortable and confident as teachers challenge, support, and guide students.

Literacy is integrated throughout all classroom areas and routines. A trusting environment promotes speaking and listening. Letters, words, and numbers are presented in meaningful ways. The dramatic play area may have cereal boxes, coupons and cookbooks. The sand and water table may have a book about seashells nearby. Connections are made from objects to words by labeling items in the classroom. Teachers ask children to talk about their drawings and write down their comments on paper. The writing center provides pencils, paper, markers, scissors, and stickers to support children as they translate thought into written words.

The ability to count, sort and classify helps children organize the world in an orderly manner. Concepts such as "greater than" and "less than" can be observed on graphs of the children's favorite colors. Numbers play an important part in the routine as children count classmates for attendance and set the table for snack. A teacher may see that a group of children has sorted beads according to color. The teacher can extend that activity by working with the children to count each color group, write down the color name and discuss how many are in each group.

Teachers encourage children to verbalize what is going on in their world and problem solve together. Children are capable of working through social situations such as taking turns and following classroom guidelines. Teachers ask open-ended questions to promote curiosity. Children may give clues to their fellow students in a guessing game or predict what might happen next in the story.

Teachers observe and assess children, then plan accordingly. The Creative Curriculum provides the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment that allows teachers to arrange their observations according to each child's development in all areas. Visit www.TeachingStrategies.com for additional information.

Objectives for Development and Learning

Our full-day preschool program's success relies on the following objectives when developing lesson plans:

- Creative Curriculum
- MI Early Childhood Standards of Quality
- UCS Standards

Lesson plans must include the goals and objectives that are reached through each activity. Please note that television and movies will not be watched. If they are utilized in the classroom, they will tie in with learning and objectives. These goals and objectives are listed as follows:

Social-Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
 - a. Manages feelings
 - b. Follows limits and expectations
 - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
 - a. Forms relationships with adults
 - b. Responds to emotional cues
 - c. Interacts with peers
 - d. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
 - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
 - b. Solves social problems

Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
 - a. Uses fingers and hands
 - b. Uses writing and drawing tools

Language

8. Listens to and understand increasingly complex language
 - a. Comprehends language

b. Follows directions

9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
 - a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
 - b. Speaks clearly
 - c. Uses conventional grammar
 - d. Tells about another time or place
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
 - a. Engages in conversations
 - b. Uses social rules of language

Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
 - a. Attends and engages
 - b. Persists
 - c. Solves problems
 - d. Shows curiosity and motivation
 - e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
12. Remembers and connects experiences
 - a. Recognizes and recalls
 - b. Makes connections
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
 - a. Thinks symbolically
 - b. Engages in sociodramatic play

Literacy

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
 - a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
 - b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
 - c. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
 - a. Identifies and names letters
 - b. Uses letter-sound knowledge
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
 - a. Uses and appreciates books
 - b. Uses print concepts
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
 - a. Interacts during read-aloud and book conversations
 - b. Uses emergent reading skills
 - c. Retells stories
19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
 - a. Writes name
 - b. Writes to convey meaning

Mathematics

20. Uses number concepts and operations
 - a. Counts
 - b. Quantifies
 - c. Connects numerals with their quantities
21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
 - a. Understands spatial relationships
 - b. Understands shapes

22. Compares and measures
23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

Science and Technology

24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies

29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts

33. Explores the visual arts
34. Explores musical concepts and expression
35. Explores dance and movement concepts
36. Explores drama through actions and language

English Language Acquisition

37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

The following activities will be included daily:

- Fine and large motor
- Language and Literacy
- Social and Emotional
- Math
- Science/Discovery
- Sensory/Art (process art)

Daily Routine and Schedule

Children need a daily schedule that meets their physical, social, emotional and cognitive needs. The beginning of the day should not be rushed if possible. Allow time to talk to the staff and settle your child before leaving.

The infant/toddler day revolves around many caregiving events, such as eating, diapering/toileting and sleeping. These are times when the caregivers need to understand how routines at home are handled. In our center, it is an opportunity for small groups and individual children to interact with caregivers. As children progress from infancy to the toddler years, they develop the ability to anticipate and regulate their needs. It takes time for the caregivers and children to get "in sync", so parental suggestions are appreciated. Age appropriate mastery of self help skills are key components of our program.

Play times include music, singing to infants, and teaching toddlers simple songs and rhymes. Looking at pictures and books is the very beginning of reading. Caregivers follow the lead of the children so that activities are developmentally appropriate.

Our goal is to interact with the children at their level while challenging them to grow. When toddlers paint, color and put chunky pegs in pegboards, their fingers are developing strength for writing. Children enjoy pretending in the play house area re-enacting familiar experiences, such as eating, cooking and shopping.

Very young children learn how to interact with each other socially. It is very common at this age for children to play next to each other and, as their language increases, for cooperative play to develop. Many of the play activities encourage two or three children to play together. Adults foster cooperative skills, such as taking turns.

When your child moves into the Full Day program, we strive to provide a balanced experience. A typical day includes both opportunities for children to make their own activity choices and times when the teacher directs what the next activity will be. Teachers may gather children for a large group activity and at other times children play individually or in small groups. Young children learn best when they are actively involved with materials.

Children do best with a consistent, predictable schedule. The routine provides a sense of security. Classes include morning message, work time, large and small groups, planning and recall, read aloud, rest time, outdoor time (weather permitting), and meals. Although each class may have a slightly different sequence,

the daily routine remains the same. The schedule is posted in each classroom so that parents, children, and teachers know what to expect each day.

Daily Schedule and Routines

Children thrive on a consistent daily schedule that supports their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. We encourage families to allow enough time at drop-off to talk with staff and help their child settle in calmly.

For infants and toddlers, the day focuses on caregiving routines such as feeding, diapering/toileting, and sleeping. These moments are opportunities for caregivers to connect individually or in small groups with children. Understanding home routines helps us better support your child, and we welcome your input.

As children grow, they begin to anticipate and regulate their needs. Caregivers work closely with families to stay in sync with each child's development. Building self-help skills is an essential part of our program.

Play is a vital learning experience. Activities include music, singing, simple rhymes, and looking at books—laying the foundation for reading. Caregivers follow the children's interests, ensuring activities are developmentally appropriate. Art, pretend play, and fine motor activities help children build skills for writing and social interaction.

Social development begins early. Infants and toddlers often play side by side, gradually learning to take turns and engage in cooperative play. Adults support and model these skills through small group activities.

In our Full Day program, we balance child-directed and teacher-guided activities. Children have opportunities for independent play, small groups, and large group learning. Young children learn best through hands-on exploration.

Each classroom follows a consistent and predictable daily routine to help children feel secure. Activities may include a morning message, planning and recall, large and small groups, work time, rest, outdoor play (weather permitting), and meals. Schedules are posted in every classroom for reference.

Toddler 2 Sample Schedule

All times are approximate and vary to meet the needs of the children. Toileting and diapering as needed throughout the day.

7:00–9:00	Children arrive; Hellos and Goodbyes Child and teacher-led indoor play
9:00–9:30	Snack
9:30–9:45	Morning Meeting, Exercise and Stretch
9:45–10:45	Child-led work/play time
10:45–11:15	Outside
11:15–12:00	Storytime; Sensory play; Art
11:45–12:30	Lunch
12:30–2:30	Rest/nap time
2:30–3:00	Snack
3:00–3:30	Large group and child-led activities
3:30–4:15	Small group and teacher-led activities; Art; Sensory play
4:15–4:45	Outside
4:45–6:00	Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 combine Free play Hellos and Goodbyes



PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE

Arrival	As children enter the classroom, they will demonstrate self-help skills by taking care of their belongings. Each child is greeted as they join the group.
Sign In 5 minutes	Children will find their name card and “sign in” by writing their name. Name writing is practiced every day using a variety of activities. The children may be using dry erase boards, beads, pencils, or even playdough as they practice name writing.
Morning Meeting 15 minutes	Children gather to learn about the daily activities, question of the day, participate in rhymes/ fingerplays, review expectations/rules, share news and more.
Work Time 1 hour	Children choose who, how long, and which interest area to play within. They play with a purpose, participate in social settings, and solve problems. Teachers move throughout the areas supporting and engaging play. There is a 5-minute warning as the end of work time approaches.
Clean Up	Children and teachers work together to clean up by putting items back where they belong, picking up the floor and wiping the tables.
Small Group 10-15 minutes	Children gather into small groups with a teacher. This is a time where teachers introduce new concepts, focus on learning objectives and support students at all levels.
Music & Movement 10 minutes	Children listen to music or create music. We may sing, dance, play instruments, toss bean bags, play movement games, move with scarves or ribbons, or play with our parachute.
Read-Aloud 10-15 minutes	This is a time we interact with stories and books together. The teacher reads, the children read or tell the story, or they work together reading the book. The teacher will focus on concepts of print, connecting the characters or ideas in the book to the children, retelling, rhyming, predicting, and introducing activities based around the story.
Outside 20-30 minutes	Outdoor play allows the children to move their bodies and develop their larger muscles. We will focus on activities that include moving our bodies, developing skills such as balance and coordination and playing group games. Outside we often play with balls, hula hoops, stepping stones, and chalk as well as investigating nature and moving in various ways.
Large Group 15 minutes	Children gather and recall, discuss the day, sing, reenact stories, and share ideas.
Dismissal	We sing a goodbye song, pack up our projects from the day, and gather our belongings. We practice putting on coats, zipping and buttoning, and taking care of our own belongings and needs.

It may look like we are just playing, but our school day is filled with learning!

Arrival and Dismissal Procedure

Routine provides security for young children. Please inform staff of any unusual family circumstances (e.g., travel, illness, or stressors) that may affect your child during the day.

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their child to and from class. For safety: Follow all posted parking guidelines, do **not** leave your car running, and never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

Check-In and Check-Out

- Show your program badge to the camera at the entrance each day.
- Sign your child in and out using the classroom iPad with your unique code (your Eleyo account number, with two zeroes in front).
- Take time to communicate with staff about your child's sleep, meals, or any special concerns at drop-off.

Notify staff in advance of any changes to your child's routine or schedule. We will accommodate extra days/times if space allows. Report all absences as soon as possible by calling:

- 586.797.6984 or 586.797.4652 (voicemail available anytime), or
- Use the **Teaching Strategies Family** app to message your child's teacher.

Authorized Pick-Up

- Children will **only** be released to adults listed on the **Child Information Record**.
- Written authorization is required for anyone not listed.
- All adults must be **18+ years old** and show a valid photo ID.

If staff suspect a child's safety may be at risk due to the condition of the adult picking up, staff will:

1. Offer to keep the child until a safe alternative is arranged.
2. Encourage the adult to contact a friend or family member for help.
3. Offer to arrange a ride (e.g., taxi, Uber, or Lyft).
4. Clearly state that it is unsafe to transport the child.

If the adult leaves with the child despite concerns, staff will immediately notify the police.

Parking

Please do not leave an unattended car running or any child unattended in a car. If you need assistance, please contact your child's teacher.

Parking at the Community Education Center:

Park in the main parking lot, in a designated parking spot. Do not pull up to the curb, this is a fire lane. You will use door #8 located off the playground for drop off and pick up.

Parking at the Duncan Early Childhood Center:

Park in the parking lot across from the Early Childhood entrance at door #9, in a designated parking spot. Do not pull up to the curb, as this is a fire lane. You will use door #9 for drop off and pick up.

Late Pick Up/Policy and Fees

All students must be picked up by 6:00 PM. A late fee of \$15 will be charged for every 15-minute interval beginning at 6:01 PM and will continue until the student is picked up. If a child is not picked up the following procedures will be implemented.

- A call will be made to the parents/guardian to determine the approximate arrival time of the pick-up person. This does not exclude parents from being charged the late pickup fee.
- If parents/guardians cannot be reached, the teacher will contact people listed on the Child Information Record within 15 minutes of closing time.

If we are unable to contact anyone whose name is on the Child Information Record, the local police or Child Protective Services will be called.

Progress Reports and Screenings

Throughout the school year, teachers observe and write notes documenting children's ability in all areas of development. Teachers will schedule conferences once per year (older toddlers and preschoolers) with parents to review progress. Suggestions are made for home activities that will support growth in areas in need of additional work.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a developmental screening tool designed to identify a child's strengths or areas that may need additional support. The ASQ provides reliable, accurate developmental and social-emotional information for children aged birth through six. The ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE will be completed in September. ASQ screeners provide valuable information for teachers to use when planning activities and providing experiences.

During the first month of school, teachers work with preschoolers to assess their knowledge of numbers, letters, rhyming words and other pre-kindergarten skills. A UCS Young Five screener is administered in the spring and used to guide decisions for the best placement next year (young fives or kindergarten).

In addition to the screeners, teachers continually assess and observe the social-emotional health and well-being of their students. Creative Curriculum supports teachers with activities and games which are implemented to continually build students' social emotional and academic skills.

Transitioning to New Classrooms

As infants begin to transition young toddlers, they typically demonstrate increased independence, stronger communication, and begin to develop social skills. During this period, teachers look for key readiness indicators such as:

- The ability to clearly communicate needs
- Reduced separation anxiety
- Positive interactions with peers
- Emerging self-help skills, including self-feeding and early toileting awareness
- The ability to follow simple instructions and engage in short periods of independent play

Transitioning into preschool is a big step for children and families. There are things you can do at home, and we can do at schools to help transition students into the program.

We offer a Parent Welcome day. Parents and students may visit the classroom and meet the teacher before the first day of school. The teacher will greet families, collect additional paperwork, share the curriculum, and answer questions.

As the end of the year approaches, our 4-year-old preschool programs will begin talking with students about transitioning to Kindergarten or Young Fives. Many teachers will schedule "in house" field trips to meet a kindergarten teacher and/or visit a kindergarten classroom, participate in a lunchroom snack or meal, and learn about bus safety that includes a short ride on the bus.

Primary Caregivers

Infants and toddlers will be assigned at least one primary caregiver. The primary caregiver will be the adult who becomes most knowledgeable about your child, their likes and dislikes and methods of communication. Since young children cannot yet communicate with words, the primary caregiver will communicate with you routinely to have the most up-to-date information about your child. Children become settled in more quickly when daily routines, such as feeding and changing, are handled by consistent adults.

The State regulation for adult child ratio for infants and toddlers is one adult for every four children under two and a half and one adult for every eight children two and a half to three years of age. We meet or exceed these ratios at all times.

Our staff is knowledgeable about typical child growth and development. They consider individual differences in personality, temperament, and ability. When staff have a potential concern, they will mention it to the Child Care Coordinator. If appropriate, the teacher will meet with the parents and discuss the observations. There are many resources in our community to help parents determine if a child needs additional observation or services.

Lead Teacher

Each group of children has a Lead Teacher. This staff member is responsible for planning, implementing, evaluating, and assessing all aspects of the program. The Lead Teacher works cooperatively with the program Coordinator and other caregivers to plan and implement an appropriate program. The needs of individual children are addressed in the group setting throughout the day.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is linked to success in school. There are many ways for parents to be involved in their child's education. Daily pick up and drop off times are excellent opportunities to hear about your child's day and for parents to share updates with the teacher. Parents may send notes or contact teachers through TS Family Connections with questions, ideas, or concerns. Meetings may be arranged at convenient times for parents and teachers.

Parents are welcome in the classroom as volunteers. To protect students' health, safety and welfare, every volunteer must have an approved Volunteer Request form on file well in advance of volunteering at school or school-related events. UCS conducts criminal background checks on volunteers through the Michigan State Police. Teachers will have sign-up sheets and schedules for these opportunities.

Parents are encouraged to bring in authentic items representing their culture, such as menus, clothes for dramatic play, or family magazines in their native language, or to share hobbies and interest, such as gardening or traveling.

Rest Time

According to the State of Michigan guidelines, rest time must be provided for children. Children under three years of age shall be provided with opportunities to rest regardless of the number of hours in care. The center shall permit children under 18 months of age to sleep on demand. Time must be provided for children enrolled in childcare for five hours or more per day. This is a time, approximately one and a half hours, for children to relax and slow the pace of their day. A clean crib/cot is provided to each child daily. Children are more comfortable when they bring a small blanket, pillow, soft item, and fitted crib sheet from home. Nap items left at Full Day Care will be returned weekly to be laundered at home.

Sleeping Guidelines

In accordance with Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential Licensing rules and regulations:

- All bedding from home shall be appropriate for the child; clean, comfortable, and safe, and in good repair.
- A sheet and blanket of appropriate size shall be provided for all toddlers.
(Sheet only for infants.)

- Car seats, infant seats, swings, bassinets and playpens are not approved sleeping equipment.
- A crib or port-a-crib shall have a firm, tight-fitting waterproof mattress.
- A tightly fitted bottom sheet shall cover the crib or porta-crib mattress with no additional padding place between the sheet and mattress.
- Soft objects, bumper pads, stuffed toys, blankets, quilts, comforters and other objects that could smother a child shall not be placed in a crib or port-a-crib with a resting or sleeping infant.
- All sleeping equipment and bedding shall be washed, rinsed and sanitized when soiled, between uses by different children, and at least once a week regardless of use by different children.

Supporting Developmentally Appropriate Behavior

We understand that toddlers and preschoolers are still learning how to express their emotions, interact with peers, and manage frustration. Behaviors such as hitting, biting, tantrums, or difficulty sharing are a normal part of development. Our goal is to guide children through these challenges in a way that promotes self-regulation, communication, and social growth.

Our behavior guidance practices are rooted in respect, consistency, and an understanding of child development. They are also aligned with Michigan Child Care Licensing Rule R 400.8140.

What You Can Expect from Us:

- Clear, age-appropriate expectations and routines.
- Positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behavior.
- Redirection to more acceptable activities or choices.
- Gentle reminders and problem-solving discussions.
- Support in helping children label and manage their emotions.
- A calm, caring, and consistent approach from all staff.

We do not use any form of corporal punishment, threats, shaming, or physical discipline. Children are never denied food, rest, or bathroom use as a form of discipline. These practices are strictly prohibited under Michigan licensing rules and our program policies.

If Challenging Behavior Persists:

Some children may need additional support to develop their social-emotional and behavioral skills. When this happens:

1. Staff will observe and document the behavior.
2. The teaching team will meet with the Director to discuss strategies.
3. Families will be contacted to discuss observations and collaborate on a plan.
4. With parent permission, we may suggest outside resources such as **Early On** or other community supports for further guidance.

We value open communication and will work with you to create consistency between home and school.

When Safety Becomes a Concern:

While we strive to support all children, our program cannot provide 1:1 behavior support throughout the day. If a child's behavior:

- Repeatedly puts themselves or others at risk,
- Seriously disrupts the learning environment, and
- Does not improve with intervention and support,

We may need to consider temporary suspension, a revised care plan, or—in rare cases—withdrawal from the program. These decisions are made carefully, with the child's best interest and the safety of the group in mind.

Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment and will make reasonable accommodations whenever possible, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Michigan licensing regulations.

Confidentiality Policy

It is important that the privacy of our children, families and staff is maintained. The staff are required to keep information about children, families, and co-workers confidential. Staff and parents are asked to refrain from commenting about children or families in the presence of other adults or children. This includes personal contact that parents and staff may have outside of school hours.

There are times when information regarding a home situation would help our staff take better care of your child. Please know that all information shared will be confidential.

Staff Qualifications and Screenings

Our staff have formal education in the care of infants, toddlers, and preschool. At least one staff member with current certification in infant, child and adult CPR and first aid shall be on duty in the center at all times. All caregivers meet licensing requirements for required trainings, receiving at least 16 hours of ongoing in-service professional development training related to child development.

Staff have been determined eligible to work under MiLEAP licensing requirements. All child care staff must be “eligible” as determined through a comprehensive background check. To receive this determination, the individual must be entered into the Child Care Background Check (CCBC) system and then fingerprinted under the Child Care Licensing (CCL) Reason Code.

In compliance with State Law, licensed child care staff are required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect to Children’s Protection Service.

Health Policy

When children are in a group setting, it is a challenge to keep everyone healthy. There are several guidelines in place to prevent the spread of disease and infection. These guidelines apply to children, adults, and volunteers in our program. Children need to learn to wash their hands properly before they eat, after they use the bathroom or wipe their nose and when their hands are dirty. Parents need to keep children home when they are sick. The following are some symptoms/communicable diseases that would require a child to be kept at home (this list is not an all-inclusive list):

- **Chicken Pox**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Measles**
- **Scabies**
- **Strep Throat**
- **Lice**
- **Pin Worm**
- **Ring Worm**
- **Unidentified Rash**
- **COVID-19**
- **Impetigo**
- **Vomiting**
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**
- **Temperature of 100.2 degrees Fahrenheit or more (axillary)**

Children with a temperature of 100.2F or more must be fever free without a fever reducing medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. For bacterial infections, children must be under antibiotic treatment for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Many times, children are contagious before these symptoms are observed. Parents may be requested to pick up their child if symptoms are contagious or children are uncomfortable in the group setting; (*examples: continuous green running nose, coughing, rashes.*) Children may not attend care with an unidentified rash. You must provide a doctor's note stating they are not contagious. If you are required to pick up your child from school due to illness, they will not be able to attend the following consecutive school day.

Please call your child's teacher and report any of the above symptoms or diseases. We will let you know if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and our school nurse assists our teachers in matters regarding the health of our children.

Immunizations

At the time of your child's initial attendance, a record of all immunizations must be on file within 30 days for your child to attend class. All children who attend an early childhood program in Michigan are required by law to be fully vaccinated. If your child is not in compliance with health department standards, they could be excluded from the program. Questions regarding these requirements should be directed to the Macomb County Health Department School Immunization program at 586.466.6840.

Allergies and Health Considerations

Please inform your child's teacher of any allergies. Our school district has policies and procedures in place that safeguard the health of children while they are in our care. A Health Care Plan form and an Authorizaton For Medication form are required for use of prescription medication for your child to attend school. Health Care Plan forms are available from your Coordinator/teacher or on the District website at <https://www.uticak12.org/domain/3272>.

Children diagnosed with a medical or health condition must have a completed Health Care Plan, signed by a doctor, on file. A meeting with the teacher and a school nurse is required prior to attending class. Conditions include, but are not limited to, Diabetes, Seizures, Asthma, food or environmental allergies, or other medical concerns.

Medication

If a child must receive medication while at school, school staff will follow board policy, including the following procedures:

- Parent must accurately complete the medication form. (Physician signature may be required.)
- Medication must be in the original container with label intact and child's name and dosage clearly marked.
- Parent must provide an appropriate medical spoon or cup if required.
- Medications will be kept in a designated area.
- Staff will note the date, time, and initial the medication log after each dosage.
- In order to apply over-the-counter lotions, creams, sunblock, etc., a parent's written permission is required.

Procedures for an Injured Child

Staff will verbally notify parents at pick up time of typical, minor injuries. These injuries will be treated with first aid, such as rinsing a cut or applying a cold compress to a bump. All programs have staff trained in CPR and first aid.

If a child has a symptom or injury that might result in the child needing to be picked up, the supervisor/coordinator will call or email the parent when the concern is observed, such as the child looking pale, seeming lethargic or pulling on their ear.

In the case of a serious injury or accident, the teacher will immediately begin first aid, and direct other staff to contact the supervisor immediately, and/or call 911 if necessary. Parents will be contacted immediately.

Hearing and Vision

Preschool students will have their hearing and vision tested by the Macomb County Health Department technicians. All 4-year-olds should be tested before they enter Kindergarten. **Please keep the Hearing and Vision record in a safe location, as you will be required to provide the results at kindergarten registration.**

If, for any reason, by the end of the school year your child has not been tested, please contact the Macomb County Health Department Hearing and Vision Program at 586.412.5945. If you have concerns regarding your child's development, residents of UCS are serviced through the UCS Special Services Department and parents are referred to the Early Assessment Center (EAC). Please contact Special Services at 586.797.1020.

Weather, Fire and Safety Drills

To be best prepared for emergencies, it is necessary to practice safety drills in all our programs on a regular basis. Whether at home or in school, children need to be able to follow the directions of an adult in an emergency situation. Our practice drills provide the opportunity for children and adults to become familiar with the guidelines necessary in each situation. Our staff reassures children that adults are with them to keep them safe. Each building and program have routines and guidelines particular to their setting. We encourage parents to support our efforts and follow through by planning safety procedures in the home.

All parents present during the drill are asked to please follow the instructions given by the teacher. All classrooms have telephones. Staff are instructed how to respond in case of an emergency, including placing 911 calls.

School Closing

Inclement weather or building problems sometimes bring unexpected school closings. There are several ways parents can be informed about these unanticipated days. Television stations airing school closings information are Fox-2 News, WDIV-Channel 4 and WXYZ-Channel 7. Parents can connect to the web page by visiting www.uticak12.org. School closing information may be sent through text using Eleyo to our families.

Accounting will adjust accounts for weather related or emergency closings.

Food, Snacks, and Meals

Mealtimes provide much more than nourishment for young children. Healthy habits are encouraged as children learn to wash their hands, eat with utensils, and choose nutritious foods. Healthy food provides children with the energy they need to play and learn. Healthy foods are foods that follow USDA guidelines and adheres to the Child and Adult Care Food Program/National School Nutrition Programs. Please plan to provide foods that are high in nutrients and low in saturated and trans-fat, added sugar, and salt.

You must provide your child's snacks and lunch daily. Your child's snacks and meals must be a healthy choice and in compliance with classroom guidelines accommodating allergies. Food containers/bags must be labeled with the date and child's first and last name. Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school daily. Water bottles must be labeled with your child's name, the date and contents. This information can be taped to the outside of the bottle and snack bag daily.

Parents of infants provide all their child's formula and food. All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name and date. Please do not send in glass containers. As with rest time, the youngest children have their needs met on demand. When children develop more consistent patterns, small groups may eat at the same time.

Recently, young children have developed allergies at a younger age. Since these allergies are more frequent and severe, we **do not allow any foods with obvious peanut products in our programs. No peanut/tree nut/coconut can be brought into the classrooms.** If there is a child with a severe allergy to peanuts, we may have to be more restrictive.

Toilet Training Policy

Toilet training is an important developmental milestone, and our program is committed to working in partnership with families to support each child's readiness and success in this area. We believe that toilet training should be a positive, respectful, and individualized experience based on the child's physical, emotional, and developmental readiness.

Children typically begin to show signs of toilet training readiness between 18–36 months. Indicators may include:

- Staying dry for longer periods (2 hours or more)
- Showing awareness of the need to go (e.g., squatting, holding self, verbal cues)
- Communicating the need to use the toilet
- Interest in using the toilet and wearing underwear
- Ability to follow simple directions
- Demonstrating independence in pulling pants up/down
- Expressing discomfort with wet or soiled diapers

Once readiness signs are consistently observed, we work with families to develop a plan. Steps may include:

- Introducing the toilet as a routine part of the child's day
- Encouraging regular bathroom visits (e.g., after meals, before/after nap)
- Celebrating efforts and progress without pressure or punishment
- Modeling and teaching hygiene practices (e.g., handwashing, wiping)
- Using positive reinforcement and consistent routines both at home and at school

We ask that once toilet training has begun at home, families:

- Dress children in easy-to-remove clothing
- Provide several changes of clothing daily

- Switch from diapers to training pants or underwear during waking hours, both at home and in the classroom
- Communicate regularly with staff about progress, setbacks, or changes

Pull-ups or diapers may still be used during naptime or rest periods if needed, but our goal is to move children toward full use of underwear as they gain confidence and consistency.

Teachers will:

- Support each child's individual pace
- Communicate daily with families about toilet training routines and progress
- Encourage children to take increasing responsibility for their toileting needs
- Maintain a calm, supportive environment with regular opportunities to use the toilet

Toilet training is a team effort between home and school. Open, consistent communication is essential for your child's success. Please reach out to your child's teacher with any questions or concerns.

Items from Home

Please clearly label your child's outdoor clothing, backpack, etc. with first and last name.

Please provide a complete change of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, and socks). Children feel much more comfortable in their own clothes, especially after a spill or toilet accident. It is helpful to have at least one, possibly two additional changes. If your child is toilet training, an additional pair of shoes is recommended. Please be sure to check that extra clothes still fit your child and are appropriate for the season.

- Toddlers need shoes or "gripper" socks so that they do not slip on the tile surface. Shoes are strongly preferred (not sandals) so that feet are protected from pebbles and woodchips during outdoor play.
- Pacifiers should be marked with your child's name. It is recommended that an additional pacifier be left at the center.

Personal items, such as toys or special items, must remain at home. If your child has a special item they use for rest time, please be sure it is placed in their designated rest time bag before the day begins.

Television, Videos, and Technology

The presence of television, videos and computers is common in the lives of children today. Although these things are inviting to even the youngest child, nothing can replace human interaction and playing with real objects. We do not use technology as a substitute for adult-child interaction. Computers and videos do not replace three-dimensional playthings that have texture, weight, color, and shape.

When children in our program watch videos, it reinforces a theme that was presented in class. Computer programs provide children with opportunities to practice concepts introduced in conjunction with a language or math lesson.

Technology is used sparingly in preschool classrooms. When children enter elementary school, they can quickly acquire the skills necessary to put technology to good use. Our primary focus in the preschool years is to facilitate your child's growth through quality interaction with our staff, your child's classmates, and carefully selected classroom materials.

Outdoor Playtime

Healthy children benefit from regular opportunities to play outdoors. Make sure your child has proper clothing for the weather; for example: hat, gloves, scarf, boots, snow pants, and closed toe shoes for safety. Classes may go outside when the temperature, is above twenty degrees Fahrenheit, inclusive of the wind chill, or below ninety degrees Fahrenheit and air quality is reported to be at safe levels. When the weather is warm, teachers take children outdoors during the coolest times of the day to play in shaded areas whenever possible. Children who are healthy enough to attend class should be prepared to join the group outside. Staff: child ratios require that all children join the group outside.

Pesticide notices will be posted on the school. More information will be available from the School District and the Michigan Department of Agriculture, which can be reached at 1.800.292.3939.

Inclusive Celebrations: Strategies for Anti-Bias Education

Our early childhood programs emphasize the significance of holidays for all families, viewing them as occasions for celebrating with loved ones. However, we recognize that holidays can disrupt the predictable routines that children need, making life more hectic. Our early childhood programs strive to respect all children, families, and staff, acknowledging the diversity in holidays, celebrations, and traditions. Rather than favoring any specific belief or tradition, we encourage families to celebrate in ways meaningful to them. In the classroom, there is an emphasis on teaching acceptance and respect for cultural diversity, learning from each other's traditions. Special days are created to celebrate collective learning achievements without adding chaos, focusing on themes like giving, family, and community. The goal is to maintain calm and safety in the classroom while honoring special occasions and family customs. Celebrations of learning are intended to be inclusive of every student in the classroom and to provide opportunities for families to participate/engage with their child in the classroom. Classroom celebrations are for parents, guardians or adult loved ones to interact with your student in their classroom environment. Siblings may not attend.

Addressing Parent Concerns

In order to address your concerns and/or suggestions at the most appropriate and effective level, we suggest the following steps:

1. Daily concerns can be brought to the attention of your Lead Teacher. You can contact them by phone, email, leaving a written message or scheduling a meeting.
2. If parent concerns persist, contact the Child Care Coordinator, who is available for a meeting upon request. Please call 586.797.6984 / 586.797.4665.

Guidelines from the Michigan Department of Education, Utica Community Schools and other regulatory agencies are used to guide policy and procedure decisions.

Poison Control Number 1-800-222-1222

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, it is the policy of Utica Community Schools that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, disability, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in , be denied the benefits of , or be subjected to discrimination during any instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or in policies governing student conduct and attendance. Any person suspecting a discriminatory practice should contact the Executive Director of Human Resources at Utica Community Schools, 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 or call (586-) 797-1000.

Early Childhood Resources

Creative Curriculum

www.TeachingStrategies.com

Great Parents Macomb

www.migreatparents.org

Early On Macomb ISD

www.misd.net/earlyon

National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.naeyc.org

Community Assessment Referral and Education

www.careofsem.com

Utica Community Schools/Community Education

www.uticak12.org

www.ucsccommunityeducation.com

Great Start

www.greatstartforkids.org

Zero to Three

www.zerotothree.org

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

www.michigan.gov/lara

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

[Home | Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)



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