



**Utica Community Schools**

**Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)  
PreK for All Preschool**

**2025-2026  
Parent Handbook**



## **Welcome**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the GSRP/PreK for All Program!

GSRP/PreK for All is Michigan's state-funded preschool. This program is offered by the Macomb County Intermediate School District through Utica Community Schools. The program is funded and licensed through Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP).

The PreK for All Parent Handbook provides an overview of the program, its policies, procedures, and guidelines. During the application process, you electronically acknowledge viewing and accepting the conditions set forth in the GSRP/PreK for All Parent Handbook. We ask that you please take the time to review the important information and expectations contained in this handbook and use it as a resource throughout the school year to answer some frequently asked questions that may pop up.

There are many benefits to participating in GSRP/PreK for All including a highly qualified staff, research-based curriculum and community and parent involvement. We look forward to having you and your student participate in our 2025-2026 school year program.

Sincerely,

**CJ Wajeesh**

CJ Wajeesh

Director of Community Education

**Cheryl Whiteman**

Cheryl Whiteman

Early Childhood 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, toddlers, 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, 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](http://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 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. Our PreK for All partners with families and together we meet the needs of your child and family.

## 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 child's teacher for assistance accessing the website from the classroom during school hours, if needed.

## Enrollment

The PreK for All maintains a 10:1 child: adult ratio. Priority enrollment is given to four-year-olds. Children should be four years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year in which they are enrolling. Three-year-old children are considered if they are four by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the same year. Three-year-old children will be placed after eligible 4-year-olds are placed. To attend, children must have on file:

- Income documentation (1040 for the previous year, W2's, or current pay stubs)
- Complete updated Child Information Record  
Please notify your teacher immediately if you have a new phone number (cell, home or work). We must be able to contact one parent or emergency contact person at all times.
- Health Appraisal form signed by a physician and up-to-date immunizations
  - Must be turned in within 30 days of enrollment or the student will be removed from the program until compliant
- Media Release online consent
- Use of Student Work / Photograph form online consent
- Child's original Birth Certificate with seal
- Proof of residency (Mortgage documents, current tax bill, and/or lease agreement)
- Risk factor documentation as required by Michigan Department of Education
- Signed Parent Notice of Program Measurement form
  - Parent Notice of Program Measurement  
Utica Community Schools Early Childhood Department is required to work with MiLEAP to measure the effect of the state-wide GSRP/PreK for All. Information is sometimes collected about GSRP/PreK for All staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:
    - Ask parents questions about their child and family.

- Observe children in the classroom.  
Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers etc.
  - Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.
  - Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or the child could be identified. It is protected by law.
- If a child has an IEP, the parents must provide the most current IEP to the PreK for All office staff at the time of intake in order to address the recommendations. We work with a team to provide the best placements for students with an IEP.
- Placements are prioritized as follows:
  - In district four-year-olds based on quintile level and risk factors.
  - Out of district four-year-olds based on quintile level and risk factors.
  - Eligible three-year-olds will then be placed using the same process as four-year-olds.

Questions regarding enrollment, eligibility, fees, or classroom issues should be shared with the teacher and forwarded to the GSRP/PreK for All Administration Team. Decisions will be made within the grant and guidelines of MILEAP, Macomb County Intermediate School District, and Utica Community Schools Early Childhood policies and procedures.

## 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 Family to your email address. Multiple family members may join. Student information is shared with all members connected to the child.

Multilingual families can set their language preferences in the TS 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 to best support understanding 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 program uses Creative Curriculum, a 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](http://www.TeachingStrategies.com) for additional information.

## Objectives for Development and Learning

PreK for All'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 Schedule

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, outdoor time (weather permitting), and meals. Extended day classes will offer a rest time. 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.

 <b>GSRP SCHEDULE/PARTS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>Arrival</b>	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.
<b>Sign In</b>	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.
<b>Meal Time</b>	Extended day classes will share breakfast and lunch. Part day classes will share breakfast. Meals are served “family style”. Children love to serve themselves and will easily succeed with some guidance and encouragement. . Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat.
<b>Morning Meeting</b>	Children gather to learn about the daily activities, question of the day, participate in rhymes/ fingerplays, review expectations/rules, share news and more.
<b>Work Time</b> 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.
<b>Clean Up</b>	Children and teachers work together to clean up by putting items back where they belong, picking up the floor and wiping the tables.
<b>Small Group</b>	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.
<b>Music &amp; Movement</b>	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.
<b>Read-Aloud</b>	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.
<b>Outside</b> 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.
<b>Large Group</b>	Children gather and recall, discuss the day, sing, reenact stories, and share ideas.
<b>Rest Time</b> 1 hour	Rest time provides children to relax and calm their bodies. The lights are dimmed and calming music is played. Students have their own space on cots and comfort items from home. Children may sleep or rest quietly during this time.
<b>Dismissal</b>	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.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

Parents provide transportation to and from class. The safety of all children is critical and building parking guidelines will be enforced. Do not leave a car running and never leave a child unattended in the car. Building security requires that parents wait outside for the teacher at arrival and dismissal. Children must be received by a teacher. Parents arriving to volunteer or conference must sign in at the office and wear a visitor badge.

Upon arrival, please ensure your child is signed in on the classroom iPad and is in the care of a staff member before you leave. Classes begin promptly at the scheduled start time. If you arrive late, please call the classroom, and a teacher will meet you at the door as soon as possible. As class is in session, there may be a brief wait. At dismissal, please arrive on time and sign your child out.

Children will only be released to adults listed on the Child Information Record. Any other arrangements must be authorized in writing by the child's parent/guardian. All adults must be 18 years or older and prepared to show photo proof of identity when picking up a child. If a child should not be released to a parent or specified adult, notarized court documents must be on file to support request.

If an adult arrives to pick up a child and it appears to our staff that she/he may not be able to safely transport the child, our staff will:

1. Offer to keep the child in our care for an extended period of time.
2. Ask the adult if they would like to contact a friend or family member to pick them up.
3. Offer to arrange for a taxi, Uber or Lyft.
4. Our staff will advise the parent that it is not safe for the child to ride with him/her. In the event the person does leave with the child, we will then notify the police that the adult has left our facility with the child.

## **Attendance**

Regular and prompt attendance at school greatly increases a child's chance of educational success. Children are expected to arrive on time and be picked up at dismissal. Absences should be phoned in to the classroom with the date of absence and reason. Teachers may follow up to clarify symptoms of illness or length of absence.

Teachers must contact parents for absences of more than 2 days. Parents will be contacted if children are absent weekly or frequently throughout the month. If a child's attendance does not improve, the PreK for All Administration Team will meet

with the teacher and family to develop a plan to increase attendance. If a child is repeatedly absent for reasons that could be avoided, the child may be disenrolled from the program. If a child is absent for more than one week without contact, a letter will be sent, and the child will be disenrolled from the program and placed back on the waitlist.

Attendance will be tracked and monitored through Eleyo. Parents will sign their child in/out daily through Eleyo.

### **Late Pick Up/Policy and Fees**

When class is dismissed, all students should be picked up at the dismissal time. A late fee of \$15 every fifteen minutes will be charged 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 dismissal 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.

### **Home Visits**

Teachers and associate teachers visit the child and family at their home twice a year, once in the beginning and again in the middle of the school year. The initial visit helps establish a rapport between the teaching team and the family. Teachers will bring a few activities to engage and connect with students and work with parents to complete any necessary paperwork. They may also conduct an informal screening. At the second home visit, teachers will support families with the UCS enrollment process for kindergarten or young fives. During this visit, teachers will share activities that will support student growth through the summer months and provide information about transitioning into new classrooms/schools in the fall.

### **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 two (2) conferences per year 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 6. The ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE will be completed in September. The teacher may conduct a second screener in April. ASQ screeners provide valuable information for teachers to use when planning activities and providing experiences.

During the first month of school, teachers work with children 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 Programs**

Transitioning into preschool is a big step for children and families. There are some things you can do at home, and we can do at school to help transition students into our programs.

PreK for All teachers will meet families at the first Home Visit. At this scheduled visit in your home, teachers will meet your family, share important classroom information, collect paperwork, discuss and set goals together, and answer questions.

As the end of 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.

PreK for All teachers invite their families to a Family Participation Group meeting about kindergarten. This meeting includes how to register for a UCS kindergarten and how to support your child in this transition. Teachers will share information about transitioning for the next school year during the final home visit.

## **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. Volunteers must complete a background check through the Department of Human Services and Utica Community Schools prior to assisting in the classroom. Teachers 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 interests, such as gardening or traveling.

Parents are encouraged to attend our Family Participation Group meetings and field trips. When children see parents participating in school events, they come to learn that their education is valued.

- **Family Participation Group (FPG) Meetings:**  
FPG Meetings are scheduled at least two times per year. Families are invited to learn more about the PreK for All program and how to support their child's development and learning. Families share their thoughts and ideas about the improvement of the program.
- **Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Parent Coalition:**  
Each Intermediate School District is required to have PreK for All parent/family representation on the regional Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Parent Coalition, working with other committed parents/families to support early childhood practices in the community. These PreK for All parents/families, in turn, act as liaisons to local family participation groups, sharing ideas and activities in person, virtually or through emailed reports.
- **School Readiness Advisory Committee (SRAC):**  
Another opportunity involves participation in a school readiness advisory committee (SRAC) convened as a workgroup of the Great Start Collaborative that provides for the involvement of classroom teachers, parents or guardians of program participants, and community, volunteer, and social service agencies and organizations. The advisory committee annually reviews and makes recommendations regarding the PreK for All components. The advisory committee also makes recommendations to the GSC regarding other community services designed to improve all children's school readiness.



## **Guidance on Challenging Behaviors**

Typically developing preschoolers may exhibit behaviors that can be concerning but are often a normal part of development. These behaviors can include tantrums and meltdowns due to frustration or overwhelm, difficulty sharing or taking turns, and emotional ups and downs. Young children gradually learn to control their behavior with guidance from teachers who understand child development. The objective is for children to improve their ability to express their needs verbally, avoid physical actions, and develop problem-solving skills. When children encounter challenges, teachers initially encourage them to explain what occurred. Children are comforted with the assurance that school is a safe environment and are prompted to articulate their emotions, consider simple solutions, and seek assistance from adults.

Our preschool classrooms prioritize student growth and safety. Licensed programs maintain proper staff-to-student ratios, but don't provide 1:2 support. If a child struggles with social-emotional skills or behaviors, teachers work with families to develop a support plan.

If a child's behavior consistently disrupts learning or compromises safety, despite support plans, they may be excluded from the program. However, we won't deny enrollment or exclude children from PreK for All programming due to a challenging behavior or developmental delay. We will work with families to develop strategies and provide resources for additional support when needed.

### **Daily Classroom Practices for Promoting Social and Emotional Development**

Teaching teams will provide:

- A calm, loving, nurturing and respectful environment
- Positive adult-child interactions that focus on building relationships
- Positive encouragement, while focusing on children's strengths
- Ways to teach social/emotional skills as well as appropriate behaviors
- A safe learning environment while using positive redirection and clear classroom rules
- A predictable and consistent daily routine and transitions
- Ways for children to regulate their emotions and express their feelings appropriately
- Ways to guide children in learning how to problem solve and be part of the conflict resolution process
- Ways to build partnerships with families

**Per Licensing Rule R400.8140 – Any adults interacting with PreK for All children (Teaching Teams, Administrators, Classroom Aides, Substitute Staff, etc.) will NOT:**

- Use any form of corporal punishment (hitting, shaking, biting, pinching)
- Restricts a child's movement by binding or tying him or her
- Inflict mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliation, shaming or threatening a child
- Deprive a child of meals, snacks, rest or necessary toilet use
- Confine a child in an enclosed area, such as closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle

### **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 times.

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**

GSRP teachers have either an Elementary Certification with endorsements in Early Childhood Education or a bachelor's degree in early childhood. Associate teachers have an associate degree in early childhood development, child development or the equivalent, or a valid Center-Based Preschool CDA credential. At all times, at least one staff member on duty has current certification in CPR and First Aid. All staff members annually participate in 24 hours of professional development.

GSRP 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, we 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 things we do in order to prevent the spread of communicable 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
- Strep Throat
- Unidentified Rash
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Temperature of 100.2°F or more (axillary)
- Diarrhea
- Lice
- COVID-19
- Measles
- Pin Worm
- Impetigo
- Infectious Mononucleosis
- Scabies
- Ring Worm
- Vomiting

Children with a temperature of 100.2°F or more must be fever free without fever reducing medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. For Bacterial infections, children must be on an 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 the child exhibits symptoms of a contagious disease or children are uncomfortable in the group setting; (*examples: continuous green running nose, coughing, rashes*). 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 will be excluded from the program until they fulfill the requirements. 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. UCS has policies and procedures in place that safeguard the health of children while they are in our care. A Health Care Plan form and Authorization for Medication form signed by the child's doctor are required for use of prescription medication when your child is in school, and a meeting with the school nurse will be scheduled. An Emergency Care Plan must also be completed for children with diabetes, seizures, asthma or, if necessary, a General Health Care Plan. All forms are available from the teacher or on the District website. [Resources and Forms / Resources and Forms](#)

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:

- Parents must accurately complete the Authorization for Medication form. (Physician signature may be required.)
- Medication must be in the original container with the label intact, and the child's name and dosage clearly marked.
- Parents 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 teacher 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, 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**

It is necessary to practice safety drills in all our programs on a regular basis to be best prepared for emergencies. 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. All classrooms have telephones. Staff are instructed how to respond in case of an emergency, including placing 911 calls.

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.

## School Closing

Inclement weather or building problems sometimes bring unexpected school closings. There are several ways parents can be informed about these unanticipated days. Parents can connect to the district web page by visiting [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) to see school closings. School closing information may be sent through text using Eleyo or a district robo call. Television stations that air school closing information are Fox-2 News, WDIV-Channel 4 and WXYZ-Channel 7.

There are no refunds or make-up classes for weather related or emergency closings.

## Family Style Meals

Mealtime provides 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. Social interactions and fine motor skills are nurtured as children practice passing, pouring, and socializing. Healthy food provides children with the energy they need to play and learn. The GSRP/PreK for All mealtimes are served family style. This means students participate in making their own food choices from what is offered, and children serve themselves when possible.

Utica Community Schools Food Service follows the USDA guidelines and adheres to the Child and Adult Care Food Program/National School Nutrition Programs. Our program provides foods that are high in nutrients and low in saturated and trans-fat, added sugar, and salt. Daily meals include at least one each of protein, vegetable, fruit, and milk. Extended day programs serve breakfast and lunch. Let your child's teacher know of any food allergies. The district provides alternate options for allergies and are also able to meet many religious needs.

**\*No peanut/tree nut/coconut can be brought into the classrooms.**

## Toilet Training

A child should be able to communicate to the teacher that (s)he needs to use the toilet. Teachers will assist a child with buttons or snaps. When choosing clothes for school, please consider comfortable clothing that your child can manage on their own when using the bathroom and that allows freedom of movement; *example: elastic waistband pants, no belt, overalls, and jumper/romper.*)

Occasionally, a child may soil his or her clothes while attempting to use the toilet. Please provide an extra change of clothes.

## **Items from Home**

Please clearly label your child's outdoor clothing, backpacks, etc. with first and last name. Personal items, such as toys or special items, must remain at home.

Students attending extended day GSRP/PreK for All will be provided with rest time. Students who do not sleep are expected to adhere to a rest/quiet period. Once students are settled and have rested quietly, teachers may provide students with alternate quiet activities to do for the remainder of rest time. All students may bring in nap items. Items should be small enough to fit into a 16X11X10 box/bag. Recommended items include a small blanket, small pillow and one hand sized stuffed sleep toy. Full size items are difficult for young children to manage independently and to store.

## **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 play 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 piece of the curriculum that was presented in class. Computer programs provide children 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. Ensure your child has proper clothing for the weather; (*examples: hat, gloves, scarf, boots, snow pants, and closed toe shoes for safety.*) Classes will go outside when the temperature, inclusive of wind chill, is above twenty degrees Fahrenheit 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. Playground equipment used by preschool age children must be age appropriate and certified safe by a MiLEAP approved inspector.

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

AQI Basics for Ozone and Particle Pollution			
Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Green	Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Maroon	Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.

## Field Trips

Off-site field trips are intentional learning experiences that are related to the Early Childhood curriculum objectives. Field trips provide opportunities for parents and registered students (no siblings) to experience and enjoy a variety of community resources.

These events are in place of regular scheduled class time. It is necessary to have a permission slip completed and returned to your classroom teacher prior to the field trip. Parents provide their own transportation and meet the teacher at the designated destination. Parents, guardians, or appointed adults must always remain with and supervise the child during the field trip. We maintain a 1:1 ratio as the adult attending with your child is responsible for your child. Reminder, no siblings may attend field trips.

If the school district or teacher, for any reason, cancels a field trip, the event is no longer considered a UCS school sponsored event.



## **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. The GSRP/PreK for All 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 Early Childhood Coordinator, who is available for a meeting upon request. Please call 586.797.6930.

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-) 797-10

## Early Childhood Resources

The following resources are available online for your convenience. If you are in need and would like resources for food banks, shelter, mental health programs, Child Find, and/or medical/dental, or other resources, please talk with your child's teacher or contact the Early Childhood office.

Creative Curriculum

[www.TeachingStrategies.com](http://www.TeachingStrategies.com)

Great Parents Macomb

[www.migreatparents.org](http://www.migreatparents.org)

Early On Macomb ISD

[www.misd.net/earlyon](http://www.misd.net/earlyon)

National Association for the Education of Young Children

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Community Assessment Referral and Education

[www.careofsem.com](http://www.careofsem.com)

Utica Community Schools/Community Education

[www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org)

[www.ucsccommunityeducation.com](http://www.ucsccommunityeducation.com)

Great Start

[www.greatstartforkids.org](http://www.greatstartforkids.org)

Zero to Three

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

[www.michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs)

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

[www.michigan.gov/lara](http://www.michigan.gov/lara)

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

[Home | Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)



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