



## **Utica Community Schools**

Early Childhood Programs

# **Traditional and Montessori Three- and Four-year-old Preschool**

## **2025-2026 Parent Handbook**

## Welcome

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Utica Community Schools Early Childhood! We are thrilled to embark on this journey with you and your little ones. Together, we'll create a nurturing environment where curiosity is sparked, friendships blossom, and each child's unique potential is celebrated.

We are pleased and honored to be part of your child's educational experience. At UCS, we strive to provide a supportive and enriching environment where every child can thrive. We look forward to partnering with you to foster a love for learning and to help your child reach their full potential.

I welcome your feedback and value your input as we work together to ensure the best possible educational experience for every child. Thank you for being an essential part of our educational community!

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Sincerely,

**CJ Wajeesh**

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Director of Community Education

**Cheryl Whiteman**

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Early Childhood Coordinator

## Contents

Welcome .....	2
Programs .....	4
Philosophy.....	4
MiLEAP Licensing Documents.....	5
Enrollment .....	5
Tuition.....	6
Enrollment Fees.....	7
Late Pick Up/Policy and Fees .....	7
Withdrawal Policy .....	8
Staff Qualifications and Screenings .....	8
School Closing.....	9
Weather, Fire, and Safety Drills.....	9
Items from Home .....	9
Toilet Training .....	9
Television, Videos, and Technology.....	10
Outdoor Playtime.....	10
Food and Snacks.....	11
Hearing and Vision.....	12
Confidentiality Policy .....	12
Parent Involvement.....	12
Communication and Family Engagement .....	13
Home Languages.....	14
Diversity and Inclusion .....	14
Inclusive Celebrations: Strategies for Anti-Bias Education.....	15
Parking .....	15
Attendance.....	16
Arrival and Dismissal .....	16
Transitioning to New Programs .....	17
Traditional Preschool Curriculum.....	17
Traditional Preschool Objectives for Development and Learning.....	19
Social-Emotional .....	19
Physical.....	19
Language .....	19
Cognitive.....	19
Literacy .....	20
Mathematics .....	20
Science and Technology .....	20
Social Studies.....	20
The Arts.....	20
English Language Acquisition.....	20
The following activities will be included daily: .....	20
Traditional Preschool Daily Schedule.....	21
Montessori Objectives for Development and Learning .....	23
Montessori Daily Schedule .....	25
Progress Reports and Screenings .....	25
Guidance on Challenging Behaviors .....	26
Field Trips.....	27
Health Policy .....	28
Immunizations.....	28
Allergies and Health Considerations .....	29
Medication.....	29

Procedures for an Injured Child .....	30
Addressing Parent Concerns.....	30
Early Childhood Resources .....	31
Board of Education .....	32
Administration.....	32

## 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 programs partner 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, if needed.

### **Enrollment**

Enrollment takes place annually in the winter. Families with children currently in a UCS Early Childhood program enroll first. Next, registrations are taken from in-district residents and lastly from non-residents.

Children must be three years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year in which they are enrolling for three-year-old preschool and four years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> for four-year-old preschool. We recommend children are independently toilet trained. Children should not be in diapers. Our three-year-old class ratio is 10:1 and the four-year-old class ratio is 12:1.

Program times and locations are subject to change. Please check with the Early Childhood Office at 586-797-4660 and choose option 2 for information regarding specific locations and times or visit our website at [ucscommunityeducation.org/early\\_childhood](https://ucscommunityeducation.org/early_childhood).

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 your teacher immediately if you have a new phone number (cell, home or work). We must be able to always contact one parent or emergency contact person.
- **Health Appraisal** - Form must be renewed every two years 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.

- **Date of Birth Waiver** – Required for 4-year-old Preschool students whose date of birth is between September 2 and December 1. Waivers not eligible for 3-year-old-preschool.
- **Child's original birth certificate with seal**
- If your child has an IEP, you 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, MiLEAP, Early Childhood Professional organizations, and the discretion of the Early Childhood Coordinator.

## Tuition

Current tuition costs are available by visiting our website at [ucsccommunityeducation.org/early\\_childhood](http://ucsccommunityeducation.org/early_childhood).

The total tuition is divided by 9 months to allow monthly payments to be equal. Last month's tuition (May) is paid at registration and the first payment is due September 1<sup>st</sup>. The remaining (7) payments are due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month October until April or until paid in full. ***Registration fee is non-refundable.***

The following payment options are available:

- Authorize an **automatic monthly deduction** from your credit card in Eleyo. The Community Education Early Childhood Accounting Office will automatically charge your credit card on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month (8 times) September through April or until account is paid in full.
- **Visa/MasterCard/Discover** payments are accepted by calling the Community Education Center Early Childhood Accounting Office 586.797.6985, the Early Childhood Office 586.797.4660 or online in Eleyo.
- Payments may be made by **check** (*make check payable to Utica Community Schools*) and mailed to:

Community Education Center  
Early Childhood Accounting Office  
38901 Dodge Park  
Sterling Heights, MI 48312

## Enrollment Fees

- Late Payment - \$25  
*If payment is not received by 11:59 pm on the 7th day of the month, a late payment will be added to account balance.*
- Re-enrollment - \$25
- Late Pick-Up - \$15 will be charged every 15 minutes beginning with scheduled release time.
- 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/termination.*

## 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.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

If you need to drop a class for any reason, you are required to 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 monthly tuition. 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.
- 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.

## **Staff Qualifications and Screenings**

Our Early Childhood teachers have the necessary combination of education and experience to meet Michigan Licensing requirements. At least one staff member with current certification in CPR and First Aid shall be on duty in the center at all times. Staff members receive yearly training on blood-borne pathogens and on health and safety topics. All teachers and assistants are required to have at least 16 hours of annual 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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **Items from Home**

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

## **Toilet Training**

Children enrolled in preschool programs should be independently toilet trained and not in diapers. A child should be able to communicate with the teacher that he or she 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, or jumper/romper.*)

Occasionally, a child may soil his or her clothes while attempting to use the toilet. Please provide an extra change of clothes. In the event your child has a bowel movement at school and needs to be changed, a parent will be called to come to the school to change him/her. Your child may remain at school for the rest of the school day. If a child is routinely unsuccessful using the toilet in the group setting, it may be necessary to disenroll until such time that toilet training is reliably established.

### **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.

## Food and Snacks

Snack time 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. Healthy food provides children with the energy they need to play and learn. Healthy foods are foods that follow the 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.

If your child's classroom has a scheduled snack time, your child may bring a snack to school. Snack containers must be labeled with the child's name and the date it is brought to school. Children are encouraged to bring water bottles, containing plain water, to school daily. Water bottles must be marked with your child's name and the date. This information can be taped to the outside of the bottle and snack bag daily.

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. Parents must provide food that is nutritious.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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. Volunteers will not have unsupervised contact with children in care.

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.

## Communication and Family Engagement

Creative 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.



Montessori teachers communicate with families through newsletters, end of the day announcements, and UCS email.

Program communications may be sent from Eleyo or program emails.

## **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.

### **Inclusive Celebrations: Strategies for Anti-Bias Education**

Utica Community Schools 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.

### **Parking**

We are fortunate to have Early Childhood programs in schools throughout the district. Some buildings have limited parking at times when parents with young children arrive and depart. Please follow the guidelines set forth by the school you attend. Building administrators develop policies based on the safety of all students. All vehicles should be parked in an approved space and never left running. Children, regardless of age, must not be left unattended in a car. If you need assistance, please contact your child's teacher.

## **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

Parents will be given a unique Eleyo code to sign their child in and out. Only share this code with people who are authorized to pick up your child and listed on their Child Information Card (through Eleyo). For your child's safety, staff can only share an Eleyo code with an approved parent or guardian. All other pickup people will need the code provided from the parent or guardian.

Attendance will be tracked and monitored through Eleyo. Parents will sign their child in/out daily through Eleyo. This is an official document, and children should not be signing in and out.

## **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.

Our staff will advise the person 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.

## **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.

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.

## **Traditional Preschool Curriculum**

Our traditional 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](http://www.TeachingStrategies.com) for additional information.

## Traditional Preschool Objectives for Development and Learning

Our traditional preschool program 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)

## Traditional Preschool 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>PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE</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> 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.
<b>Morning Meeting</b> 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.
<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> 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.
<b>Music &amp; Movement</b> 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.
<b>Read-Aloud</b> 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.
<b>Outside</b> 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.
<b>Large Group</b> 15 minutes	Children gather and recall, discuss the day, sing, reenact stories, and share ideas.
<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.
It may look like we are just playing, <sup>21</sup> but our school day is filled with learning!	

## Montessori Curriculum

Our early childhood classrooms utilize the Montessori method, a child-centered approach that fosters self-directed learning and hands-on activity. Teachers observe and support children's natural curiosity, encouraging independence and exploration. Through practical life activities, children develop fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and problem-solving abilities.

The Montessori classroom is designed to promote learning through specially designed materials and activities that cater to different learning styles. Sensorial materials help children develop their senses, while language and math materials introduce concepts in a concrete and engaging way. For example, sandpaper letters help children develop phonetic awareness, while number rods introduce mathematical concepts.

Teachers observe and assess children's progress, using the Montessori method's observational assessment approach to inform instruction and ensure each child is meeting their full potential. This approach allows teachers to tailor activities to each child's developmental needs, promoting a love of learning and a strong foundation for future academic success.

In the Montessori classroom, children are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively, developing social skills and learning to respect and care for one another. Teachers act as facilitators, providing guidance and support as needed, while allowing children to take ownership of their learning.

By incorporating hands-on activities, practical life skills, and specially designed materials, the Montessori method provides a comprehensive and engaging educational experience for young children.

## Montessori Objectives for Development and Learning

Our Early Childhood program is expected to follow and incorporate the following into their lesson plans:

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

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

### Practical Life Skills

1. Develop fine motor skills through activities like pouring, sorting, and buttoning
2. Practice self-care skills like dressing, feeding, and grooming
3. Learn to care for the environment through activities like cleaning and plant care
4. Develop hand-eye coordination and dexterity

### Sensorial Learning

1. Develop senses through activities like texture sorting, color matching, and sound exploration
2. Learn to distinguish between different textures, colors, and sounds
3. Develop spatial awareness and understanding of geometric shapes

### Language and Literacy

1. Develop phonetic awareness through sandpaper letters and moveable alphabet
2. Learn to recognize and write letters
3. Develop vocabulary and language skills through storytelling and conversation

4. Understand basic grammar and sentence structure

### Mathematics

1. Develop understanding of numbers and counting through number rods and sandpaper numbers
2. Learn to recognize and write numbers
3. Understand basic math concepts like addition and subtraction
4. Develop problem-solving skills through hands-on activities

### Cultural and Science Studies

1. Learn about different cultures and traditions
2. Develop understanding of geography and maps
3. Learn about basic science concepts like plants, animals, and seasons
4. Develop appreciation for art and music

### **Social-Emotional Learning**

1. Develop social skills through group activities and collaboration
2. Learn to respect and care for others
3. Develop self-awareness and self-regulation skills
4. Understand and manage emotions

### **Independence and Self-Directed Learning**

1. Develop independence and self-motivation
2. Learn to make choices and take responsibility for actions
3. Develop self-directed learning skills through hands-on activities
4. Understand the value of hard work and perseverance

These objectives are designed to support the overall development of the child, including their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth.

### **The following activities will be included daily:**

- Fine/small and large motor
- Language and Literacy
- Social and Emotional
- Math
- Science/Discovery

## **Montessori Daily Schedule**

Children do best with a consistent, predictable schedule. The routine provides a sense of security. Below is an example of a daily schedule. Although each class may have a slightly different sequence, the daily routine remains the same.

### **Morning Arrival and Welcome**

- Children arrive and are greeted by teachers
- Independent play or activity time, allowing children to transition smoothly

### **Practical Life and Sensorial Activities**

- Children engage in practical life activities like pouring, sorting, or buttoning
- Sensorial activities like texture sorting, color matching, or sound exploration

### **Language and Literacy**

- Children engage in language activities like sandpaper letters, moveable alphabet, or reading
- Storytelling and conversation time

### **Math and Cultural Activities**

- Children engage in math activities like number rods, sandpaper numbers, or counting
- Cultural activities like geography, science, or art

### **Outdoor Play**

- Children engage in outdoor activities like running, climbing, or nature exploration
- Encourages physical activity, socialization, and exploration

### **Closing Circle and Dismissal**

- Children gather for a closing circle, reflecting on the day's activities
- Dismissal and goodbye routine

## **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 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. 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.

### **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/meltdowns due to frustration, being overwhelmed, difficulty sharing or taking turns. 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 1:1 support. If a child struggles with social-emotional skills or behaviors, teachers work with families to develop a support plan.

We will work with families to develop strategies and provide resources for additional support when needed. If a child's behavior consistently disrupts learning or compromises safety, despite support plans, they may be excluded from the program..

### **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 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.

### **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. Field trips are intended as a special time between a parent and child.

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.

## 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.

## **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.

## **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. For additional support, contact the Early Childhood Coordinator, who is available for a meeting upon request. Please call 586.797.4663.

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

## 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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