

APPLES Program Family Handbook

Kendra Brown, Director of Early Childhood and Interventions

Brooke Geib, Assistant Director of Early Childhood and Interventions

Corine Matarasso, Assistant Director of Early Childhood and Interventions

APPLES Program Information

Stamford Public Schools APPLES Early Childhood Educational Center is located at 381 High Ridge Road, Stamford, Connecticut 06905 in Rippowam Middle School. Students are placed in sessions based on their Individual Education Plan goals and needs. Please refer to the Stamford Public Schools Calendar for scheduled school closings.

APPLES stands for **A**ge-Appropriate **P**eers **P**laying, **L**earning and **E**xploring in **S**chool. Diversity of every type is explored, respected, recognized and appreciated at APPLES. APPLES students develop skills of understanding, honoring, and accepting voices of others. APPLES celebrates differences and similarities in each of us through a genuine multicultural education. We strive to provide experiences that empower and prepare children to become successful participants in their community.

APPLES follows the Stamford Public School Year Calendar: Click here for a copy:

Resources to support your child's transition to APPLES:

The APPLES teachers will be creating a welcome video that will be shared with all of you before the start of the school year!



We will also be hosting a **Meet and Greet on Friday, August 21, 2026 from 11:00-1:00 p.m.**

Here is a social story that will help your child transition:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z9xstTqQPpa5UsN1F5-CpF0CYAQGwRUj/view?usp=sharing

Communication:

APPLES administration and teachers will communicate with you through email, phone calls and Classroom Dojo. Here is a link to all the communications: APPLES Family Resources

Details are below:



@applesprek

Please join us in celebrating all the wonderful activities your children do while they are here with us! This page is private and requires you to “friend” us. Only parents will be accepted for privacy purposes. Please log onto Instagram and search “applesprek.” Then ask to friend us! This will serve as our online yearbook of all the wonderful growth your children will make during the 26-27 school year. Please join us!

We also use ClassDojo to communicate with you on a more frequent basis. Please click here to join our School Page.
https://www.classdojo.com/invite/?s=599eebf55f49ac9c0ce4ce9c

Each teacher will also be creating a ClassDoJo page as well. They will be in touch with a link to join soon!

We also use email to communicate. Kendra Brown, Director, sends out weekly updates through DOJO and email. Please make sure we have the correct email for you to receive these communications. You can email your email to Kbrown@stamfordct.gov and your child’s teacher.

Concerns /Resolutions:
Contact the educator first.
You may reach out by email, phone, or request a meeting (either during open-door times or by scheduling one).

1. **Allow time for a response.**
   You should expect a reply from the educator within **24 hours**.
2. **Discuss your concern.**
   Work together with the educator to try to resolve the issue.
3. **If your concern is not resolved, contact school administration.**
   Reach out to the principal or another member of the administrative team for assistance.

This process is intended to give families multiple ways to raise concerns and work toward a resolution in a clear and respectful manner.

How Families Can Contribute to Their Child's Assessment:

Families are an important part of the assessment process. Your observations help us gain a better understanding of your child's learning and development.

You can share your observations in the following ways:

1. During Parent-Teacher Conferences – Each progress report includes a Family Input section where you can share your observations, celebrate your child's strengths, and discuss any questions or concerns.
2. By Communicating with Your Child's Teacher – Families are encouraged to contact their child's teacher by email, phone, or in person to share observations about how skills learned at school are being transferred and demonstrated at home.

Your input is valued and is considered alongside classroom observations to support your child's growth and development.

Example Classroom Schedule:

8:00-8:15	Arrival/Table Top
8:15-8:30	Breakfast
8:30-8:45	Guided Free Play
9:00-9:20	Bathroom
9:20-10:00	Morning Meeting
10:00-10:30	Centers
10:30-11:00	Read Aloud
11:00-11:30	Centers
11:30-12:00	Recess 11:3012:00
12:00-12:35	Lunch
12:35-12:45	Closing Circle
12:45-1:00	Dismissal

School Closings

PROCEDURES FOR NO SCHOOL/DELAYED OPENINGS AND EARLY DISMISSAL DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER - Stamford Public Schools REGULATION #6110-R.

No School/Delayed Opening

In the event of inclement weather, the Superintendent of Schools will make a decision to cancel school or have a delayed opening early in the morning, after consulting with Transportation and Facilities personnel. Information about no school or a delayed opening is announced to the public no later than 6:00a.m.

Below is a chart that explains your child's adjusted day based on their program FOR A DELAYED OPENING:

School begins at 10:00 a.m. for a delayed opening.

Early Dismissal

Occasionally, weather conditions may necessitate dismissing school early. If the best available forecast indicates weather conditions will become hazardous by the end of the school day, the Superintendent of Schools will announce an early dismissal by 6:00a.m. This information is available to the public via the website (www.stamfordpublicschools.org) and area radio and TV stations. If, however, weather forecasts become increasingly hazardous after the school day has already begun, the Superintendent of Schools will make an early dismissal announcement by 10:00a.m. In a rare circumstance, an emergency may present itself after 10:00a.m. which may necessitate an early dismissal. Below is a chart that explains your child's adjusted day based on their program

FOR AN EARLY RELEASE:

Students will be dismissed at 10:30 a.m. on an early dismissal day.

PROCEDURES FOR NO SCHOOL/DELAYED OPENINGS AND EARLY DISMISSAL DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Parent Responsibility

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to keep informed of the latest weather forecast to determine if an early dismissal has been announced, since schools may not be able to contact each parent individually.

1. An automated **School Messenger** call will be made to each family in the District between 6:00 - 6:30 a.m.
2. Sign up to receive an early-morning tweet: http://twitter.com/SPSSuper.
3. A posting will appear on www.stamfordpublicschools.org by 6:00 a.m.
4. Check www.ctweather.com. Radio and Television announcements will be made by 6:00 a.m.

AM Radio:
- WGCH 1490
- WICC 600
- WCBS 880
- WINE 940
- WOYT 1510

FM Radio:
- WEZN 99.9
- WEBE 108
- WRKI 95.1
- WDBY 105.5

Television:
- Cablevision News 12
- WTNH Channel 8
- WVIT Channel 30
- WRNN
- WNBC Channel 4
- WFSB Channel 3
- WNYW Fox Channel 5
- Fox Channel 61

If your child attends another preschool program before or after our program, it is your responsibility to find out if that program is closing and let the teacher know if transportation is adjusted due to that closing. Please notify us as soon as possible on these inclement days.

Early Release Days

Following the Stamford Public Schools school year calendar, early release days for school holidays, parent/teacher conferences, and Professional Development days for teachers will follow an early dismissal procedure. Schedule is listed below:

Students will be dismissed at 10:30 a.m. on an early dismissal day.

School Supplies:

We thank you in advance for your support with School Supplies for your child. Please only purchase what you can! We are also working with Staples and Pitney Bowes to support our needed School Supplies. We have purchased small bins for all these materials to be stored in.

- **Small pack of crayons and markers**





- **Small scissor, Pencils, Paint Brush**



To continue to maintain the health and safety of our APPLES community please do your best to send in ***any (no need to buy all)*** of the following supplies:

- Unscented hypo-allergenic baby wipes
- Child safe, disinfectant wipes (no alcohol, no bleach)
- Tissues
- paper towels
- ziplock bags (sandwich and gallon sizes)

Each child will also need:

- a backpack and lunch box
- a water bottle with a straw that has been filled at home

- 2 extra sets of clothes ***LABELED*** in plastic bags
    - (shirt, pants, shoes, underwear, socks)

If your child is ***not toilet trained, you will need to provide us with wipes and diapers to change your child.

APPLES Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

We are the first preschool in Connecticut to have an official PTA! We are members of the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association. Please consider participating in some way. Parents are members of the leadership team, paid members that support the activities the PTA does for APPLES, or volunteers for the PTA.

Here is a link to the PTA's Membership Presentation.
APPLES PTA Membership

Please consider becoming a member. Visit this website to become a member:
Membership is $10.00. There is a small processing fee to complete your membership online.

https://applespta.memberhub.com/store

Our PTA also has an AmazonSmile account. Please check it out!
https://smile.amazon.com/ch/61-1900477

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Parents who are driving children to and from school will use the Loveland Road entrance. Please do not get out of your car until you reach the door. Parents are responsible for buckling and unbuckling car seats. School staff will meet the children and walk them to and from their classrooms.

School staff will meet the children and walk them to their classrooms upon arrival and will put them on the buses at dismissal. Any planned changes in a child's usual transportation home **must be made in writing and given to the classroom teacher or office as soon as parents are aware.**

Friendly reminders:

Please remember to buckle your children into their car seat before leaving the premises. It's the law!
Please help us keep the air clean and healthy for all children by turning off your vehicle while waiting during drop-off and pick-up. Thank you for helping reduce unnecessary idling and creating a healthier environment for our school community!

Attendance/Sickness

Your child is expected to attend school **every day** unless an illness, family emergency or unavoidable circumstance prevents his/her participation. Our staff will call or e-mail home to inquire when your child does not come to school. When children are late for school or are picked-up before the end of the school day they are missing important learning opportunities. We can't do our best work if your child is not at school.

If your child is absent due to illness, please make sure to contact the school nurse directly. Darline Gaspard can be reached at 203-977-8868 or DGaspard@stamfordct.gov. It is imperative that Darline know what illness your child is suffering from. Darline will inform you of next steps based on current CDC guidance.

Backpacks

Families are encouraged to provide backpacks for children to carry belongings to and from school. Please be sure **all personal items** are labeled with your child's name.

Change of Clothes

Preschool play is often messy! Children might get wet when playing in the water table, dirty when playing outdoors, spill milk at lunch or have a toileting accident during the day. Please send a labeled change of clothes including socks and under garments that can be left at school for these "just-in-case" times. If your child is in the midst of toilet training, we may need multiple sets of clothes, wipes, and diapers/pull-ups. If your child is not toilet trained, please make sure we have an extra set anyway, along with diapers/pull-ups and wipes. Please place these clothes in a labeled large zip lock bag.

Outdoor Play

Children will have an outdoor play period (recess) daily. Please be sure children are dressed for play. Children should wear sneakers (No crocs, "flip-flops" or sandals) and "play" clothes. Hats and mittens are needed for cold weather months. In the warmer months please put sunscreen on your child. We cannot do that here without a doctor's note.

School Program Meals

Chartwell's School Dining Services provides breakfast, lunch and snack for children. Chartwell's staff can be reached by calling 203-977-4737. **Please be sure the Nurse, Darline Gaspard, is made aware of any food allergies.**

Under state law, children with life-threatening food allergies may be entitled to an individualized health care plan, regardless of the child's status as a child with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Stamford Public Schools has developed guidelines for managing students with life-threatening food allergies. For more information, please contact the Food Service Director at (203) 977-4732.

Great news for you and your children! Stamford Public Schools has been approved to provide free healthy breakfast and lunch at school to all students during the 2023-24 school year!

- You do not need to do anything.
- You do not have to pay any money or fill out any forms.
- You do not need to send your child to school early for breakfast. Breakfast will be part of the school day.

If you would like to sign your child up for School Lunch, please let your child's teacher know. Here is the website to see the lunch menu:
APPLES Breakfast/Lunch Menu

Snack
Please send a ***nut free*** snack to school with your child.

You may send breakfast, lunch or snack to school for your child in a lunch box. Please be sure foods meet our Healthy Foods Guidelines.

APPLES E.C.E.C IS A PEANUT AND NUT FREE SCHOOL

School Safety
Safety procedures require that:
- ❖ Exterior and classroom doors are locked at all times.
- ❖ All staff wear a BOE Identification Card at all times.
- ❖ Visitors sign-in and receive a Visitor Identification card/badge in the APPLES ECEC Office.
- ❖ Safety drills occur as directed by BOE policy.

Your child will not be released to another adult without your written consent. This person will be required to show a photo identification card.

Toys
Please do not send other toys to school without talking to the teacher first.

Please let us know if you need this document translated.Déjenos saber si usted desea que este documento sea traducido. Tanpri, fè-n konnen si-w bezwen dokiman sa-a an Kreyòl

Important Information from the Stamford Public Schools

Important Information

Stamford Public Schools is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all qualified persons. Stamford Public Schools does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information & testing, Family & Medical Leave, protected veteran status, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Stamford Public Schools provides equal access to Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. Stamford Public Schools does not unlawfully discriminate in employment against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction.

Stamford Public Schools prohibits Retaliation against individuals who bring forth any complaint, orally or in writing, to the employer or the government, or against any individuals who assist or participate in the investigation of any complaint or otherwise oppose discrimination.

For further information, visit the US Department of Education website or call (800) 421-3481. Inquiries and reports regarding Stamford Public Schools' nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

DISTRICT LEVEL COORDINATORS	
District Coordinator: Title IX, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) & Age Discrimination Act	Christopher P. Soules, Esq. Executive Director of Human Resources Stamford Public Schools 888 Washington Blvd., Stamford, CT 06901 csoules@stamfordct.gov (203) 977-5598
	Michael S. Fernandes, Ed.D. Associate Superintendent for Student Support Stamford Public Schools 888 Washington Blvd., Stamford, CT 06901 mfernandes@stamfordct.gov (203) 977-5684

The Stamford Public Schools provide equal educational opportunities to all students and prohibits discrimination and harassment in any of its programs or activities. In accordance with Board of Education Policy, bullying behavior, teen dating violence, discrimination and harassment are strictly prohibited. For information on how to report prohibited behavior or

to make a report, you may speak with the school principal or the school coordinator, or you may follow the process contained in the District's Policy and Regulations (Safe School Climate Plan; Policy and Administrative Regulations Concerning Bullying Behavior 5005/4000.2; Policy and Administrative Regulations Concerning School Climate 5131.914; Title IX Policy, Regulation and Grievance Procedure, 4000.1/5145.44).

Students or other persons (e.g., parents or guardians) who believe that a student has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability or any other basis prohibited by law are encouraged to promptly report any such alleged act or incident, whether it occurs once or more than once. A report made can be verbal or in writing.

Students are encouraged to report bullying, discrimination or harassment to any administrator, teacher or other school staff member and may be made anonymously. Teachers, other school staff and District employees who become aware of, witness acts of, or receive a student report relating to a student experiencing bullying, harassment or discrimination are required to promptly notify the school principal in writing.

The Stamford Public Schools prohibits threatening to or retaliating against any other person for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, or for cooperating in an investigation of harassment or discrimination.

Each school has a staff member(s) who is available to answer questions and receive complaints about civil rights violations including discrimination and harassment. They can assist students or parents/guardians with making a complaint, seeking supportive measures, or understanding the investigation process in civil rights investigations. The School Based Coordinators for this school are:

SCHOOL BASED COORDINATORS	
Title IX Coordinator & Safe School Climate Specialist	School Principal Kendra Brown 203 977 4954 kbrown@stamfordct.gov

Meal Modifications for Students With Disabilities. To request modifications to meal services to accommodate children with disabilities, contact both the Food Services Director at (203) 977-4732 and your building principal.

State of Connecticut Department of Children & Families (DCF) Careline: 1-800-842-2288

Annual Notices

Please see the District's website for the required annual notice page for important information and required annual notices.
https://www.stamfordpublicschools.org/board-of-education/notices

Website posting is one of the ways the District shares required information each year. While all District policies are important, there are several important notices, policies, regulations, and forms that can be found on the District's Annual Notice page and on the District's Policies and Regulations page. These notices include, but are not limited to:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); Bullying & Harassment; Title IX; Complaint Form; Complaint Form Re: Transportation Safety; Food Allergies / Request for Meal Modifications; Student Data Privacy Contracts; Connecticut Safe Sports Policy, Child Abuse Prevention & Grooming Information Sheet; Safe School Climate Plan, Concussion and Head Injury Awareness and Prevention.

Remember to check these links often as these documents may be revised and updated throughout the year.

The District's Safe School Climate Plan:
https://www.stamfordpublicschools.org/about-us/safe-school-climate-plan

All Board of Education Policies & Regulations:
https://www.stamfordpublicschools.org/board-of-education/policies

If you would like a hard copy of any of this information, please speak with your building principal.

To report bullying behavior and/or teen dating violence speak with the school principal or follow the process contained in the District's Safe School Climate Plan, Policy and Administrative Regulations Concerning Bullying Behavior 5005/4000.2, and the Policy and Administrative Regulations Concerning School Climate 5131.914.