



Preschool Program Handbook

2025-2026

Spencer Elementary

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your child's early childhood education. This Preschool handbook is designed to answer many of the questions you may have about our program. Here are some highlights:

- ❖ Our Preschool Coordinator will work to assure a quality early learning experience is accessible to all children regardless of learning and developmental needs.
- ❖ Tuition is charged by the day with a minimum of two days per week recommended for each child.
- ❖ Families must provide transportation to and from Preschool.
- ❖ Spencer Owen Community Schools is a parent-paid program.
- ❖ Students eligible for preschool under IDEA Part B (special education law) pay no tuition so long as requested days do not exceed IEP recommendation. In addition to a Preschool teacher, they interact with licensed special education staff.



About Our Program

Spencer Owen Community Schools offers a fully inclusive Preschool Program for children 3 to 4 years of age. We believe that children learn through experience and discovery. Our goal is to prepare children to enter kindergarten with a healthy self concept and a positive attitude toward school and learning. This is accomplished by offering an age appropriate curriculum designed to develop social, emotional, physical and cognitive abilities in our students.

We want your child to enjoy coming to Preschool! We use positive classroom practices as the foundation for building a joyful community of learners. Our teachers and support staff take every opportunity to honor creativity and wonder as primary means for cultivating self-confidence and self expression. Conversation, observation and patient listening are the tools used by our entire Preschool team to develop the relationships children depend on as they work through challenges and share their accomplishments.

We know that parents, grandparents, and other caregivers rely on our communication. We promise to do our personal best to keep you informed of all special events, school celebrations, upcoming topics related to curriculum and other important information through our weekly newsletter.

About Our Curriculum

Our Preschool curriculum is based on the 2015 *Indiana Early Learning Foundations*. During each class session, children move through a series of specially designed learning centers where they may participate at their own personal level of interest and ability. The curriculum focuses on learning basic concepts and skills through hands-on experiences and activities. Some centers are designed to develop large and small motor skills while others are more academically oriented. By using the 2015 *Indiana Early Learning Foundations* as our guide, we provide a comprehensive approach to addressing development of the whole child.

Enrollment Process

Enrollment is rolling throughout the year, so children are welcome to enroll and attend on or after their third birthday at any time during the school year so long as there is space in the classrooms. Online registration through Final Forms is required for all students. Evidence that all immunizations are up to date, a copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of residency must be presented with the completed enrollment packet. There is a non-refundable \$60.00 Fee for every student. This fee is due by October 1 of the Preschool year. In the event that a student enrolls after the first semester has ended, the fee will be \$30.00.

Confidentiality Commitment to Families

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. Communications among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. We believe that conversations about a child, their behavior, or an incident should be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the school community. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest first contacting the child's teacher via email or by phone to arrange a time for productive discussion. Our goal is for communication between staff, parents, and program coordinator to be open and accessible.

Parents should expect that all children are cared for in a safe, supportive, respectful, and trusting environment. Behavior management will be fair, equal, and respectful of the individual development of all children. Behavior will be managed by the teacher and building principal. Educational experiences will be engaging and children have plenty of choice-time and play-time.

Attendance & Tuition Fees

Regular attendance in Preschool is highly encouraged. However, if your child must miss a day due to illness or for any other reason, please contact the school office to report the absence. Children must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to preschool. Our Preschool Program follows the Spencer Owen Community Schools calendar.

The Preschool program offers half day programming. The fee per half day is \$10.00. **Fees are charged each day regardless of attendance.** In other words, if a child is enrolled for 2 days per week and does not attend either day for any reason (including illness) the family is still charged \$10.00 per half day. Preschool days may not be switched or made up during the week if missed for any reason. Preschool tuition is due at the first of each month. This payment can be made by cash or check.

PLEASE NOTE: If you wish to add a day during the year, you must give 48 hours written notice using the *Spencer Owen Community Schools Change Form*. Only 1 change per semester is permitted. This is contingent on enrollment and space in the classroom. (Refer to [Preschool Tuition Information Sheet](#)).

Transportation/Release Policy

Parents of General Education Preschool students are 100% responsible for providing transportation to and from Preschool for their child. **The policy for release/special pick-up is as follows:**

- ❖ Please inform the school office with a note or phone call if someone other than those you have originally authorized will be picking up your child (a photo I.D. is required).
- ❖ Children can only be released to parents and adults whose names are designated in S-OCS online registration, Final Forms. Be prepared to show proof of identification upon request.
- ❖ For safety reasons, we are unable to release a child to another minor.
- ❖ Legally, we cannot keep a parent from picking up his/her child from Preschool without having a court order documentation in the school's main office.

Special Education Preschool students who attend per their Individual Education Plan (IEP) may receive transportation to and from school on their service days so long as the IEP team has dictated a need for this service. Special Education Preschool students who attend Preschool beyond the frequency of services stated in their IEP, must be transported by the family on those additional participation days.

Arrival/Dismissal

Our preschool classrooms have their own entry on the front side of the Spencer Elementary School building. Parents drop off and pick up at these doors. Morning class drop off time is **8:00** with pick up time at **11:00**. Afternoon class drop off is **12:15** with pick up time at **3:00**. In the event that a parent is more than 10 minutes late to pick up their child, their child will be brought to the front office and the parent will need to pick them up from there.

School Entry and Security

All schools are equipped with a video entry system enabling the school building to be locked during the school day. Each school varies on the particular location of the video equipment. You or someone on the authorized pick-up list may be required to ring the video monitor to be keyed into the building. If you have any questions about this process be sure to ask the office staff or building principal.

Home Connections (Family Involvement)

Activities may be sent home that involve you and your child. These activities will vary and help you see what your child is learning at Preschool. These activities are intended to be fun and help your child connect **you** with their Preschool classroom.

Please check your child's book-bag daily. Here you will find important information about what's going on at school, activities your child has completed and papers that may need a signature and returned to school.

Visitors and Program Observation

Spencer Owen Community Schools welcomes volunteers and classroom visitors. A criminal history check is required and confidentiality agreements may be required as appropriate.

Supplies and potty training

Every child must have a complete change of clothing at all times, including socks and underwear. If your child is not yet fully potty trained (having no accidents during the day at home) diapers/pullup and wipes sufficient for the day must be sent each day. If your child is working on potty training at home, the staff will support you in those efforts. But please note that they must be accident free for a week before sending them without diapers/pull ups. If your child has changed clothing during the day, please take home the soiled items and replace them the next day. All clothing items must be labeled with the child's full name. **A general supply list will be provided.**

Lost and Found

Please mark all personal items with your child's name. We will make every attempt to locate and return lost items. This task is much easier if your child's name is on the items. We cannot be responsible for any personal items that your child may bring to school. Please check the lost and found at school.

Snacks

Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy class for their child's classroom once a month. Please ask your child's teacher for suggestions.

Birthday Parties

Children are allowed to bring in pre-packaged snacks to celebrate their birthdays. If he/she brings a treat, only store-bought foods can be served, and the food provided must be preceded by a completed list of ingredients and food label notifications. Healthy treats are encouraged.

Illness

Colds, flu, and other contagious diseases seem to occur frequently and spread easily among Preschool children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagion at school, please keep your child home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

- ❖ Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- ❖ Complaints of ear pain
- ❖ Severe sore throat
- ❖ Eyes that are pink, burning or itching or producing discharge
- ❖ Diarrhea or vomiting
- ❖ Fever or chills
- ❖ Cough
- ❖ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Muscle or body aches
- ❖ Headache
- ❖ New loss of taste or smell

If these symptoms of possibly contagious conditions or other conditions deemed contagious are observed in your child during the day, you will be called to come pick up your child immediately.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until their temperature returns to normal and he/she stays fever free for 24 hours **without** Tylenol or ibuprofen. Children also must be free from diarrhea and vomiting for 24 hours prior to returning to preschool. If there are any lingering signs of illness, i.e. glass/watery eyes, listless, and/or drowsiness, etc., please keep your child home an additional day. This will help to ensure that the illness has actually passed and that your child will be well enough to resume school activities. Please call the main office if your child will be absent.

Medications

As a service to our parents, the school's nursing staff will administer medication prescribed by your physician. Medication must be in the original container with the child's name on the label, as well as the prescription number, name of medication, dosage, and expiration dates. A permission to administer medication form can be found in the school office and/or on the website and it must accompany the medication.

Discipline Practices

Use of Positive Measures to Produce Acceptable Behavior

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, disciplined environment, the children are taught the importance of safety, care of property, good habits, rules of conduct, consideration, and respect for others. Constructive methods of discipline are used to maintain group control and handle individual behavior. Our main focus on discipline (teaching/training) is preventative in nature, as we aim to build self discipline in the child.

Use of Constructive Measures to Discourage Unacceptable Behavior

When a child exhibits unacceptable behavior or attitudes, he/she is instructed as to what is wrong

and then directed to a positive alternative approach/behavior. Along with these new attitudes and behaviors, the child is guided in the direction of self-discipline by encouraging him/her to make as many decisions as possible within limits. **The limits are as follows:**

- ❖ If a child hurts another child, he/she and the other child are respectfully separated. Each child is asked to explain what happened (define the problem). After each child has verbally given information, they are asked to help solve the problem, talk to each other, reconcile with one another and are redirected to another activity.
- ❖ If a child is disruptive, he/she will be respectfully asked to stop the behavior. If the child persists to the point of disruption again, he/she is reminded of his/her behavior and how it affects others. If the disruption continues, and the child willfully refuses to yield to instruction, he/she will be separated from the other children. After the child has been separated from the class activity for a short period of time (2 to 5 minutes) he/she will be invited to rejoin the class.
- ❖ If a child continues to misbehave and disrupt the class, the parents will be asked to attend a conference to discuss how we can best meet the needs of the child.
- ❖ In addition, the building principal may also be involved, if deemed necessary.

Policy for 2 Hour Delay/Early Dismissal

In the event of bad weather that leads to school closings and school delays, the following is the 2 hour delay policy for preschool students:

- ❖ In the event of a 2 hour delay, there will be no morning preschool class.
- ❖ In the event of an early release, there will be no afternoon preschool class.

Termination of Enrollment

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the preschool staff to decide to discontinue a child's attendance. Such a decision would be based on whether it is in the best interest of that child. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is made. Termination of enrollment may be the result of the following:

- ❖ Enrollment will be terminated at the discretion of the school for non-payment of tuition.
- ❖ Disruptive or dangerous behavior
- ❖ The center's inability to meet the child's needs
- ❖ Abuse of other children, staff, or property

5 Areas of School Readiness

Spencer Owen Community Schools Pre-K measures and addresses readiness for school across five distinct but connected areas:

1. Physical Well-Being and Motor Development.

- a. Children's physical development (e.g. growth patterns of height and weight)
- b. Health status (the ability to see and hear)
- c. Physical abilities (e.g. ability to move to get needs met, assisted or unassisted)
- d. Proper nutrition and rest have a strong impact on readiness to learn, providing children with the energy and mobility to explore their environment and increase their ability to concentrate.
- e. Early identification of needs and provision of intervention services are critical for children with disabilities.

2. Social and Emotional Development.

- a. Children's knowledge of their own feelings and those of others
- b. The ability to develop positive relationships
- c. An interest in and demonstration of interpersonal skills needed to maintain positive relationships with adults and peers
- d. The capability of engaging and cooperating within a group
- e. The ability to demonstrate the skills needed to get along with peers (e.g. managing conflicts in a positive way)
- f. Highlights of this domain serve as a foundation for later school success and meaningful life experiences as an adult and consist of: developing and maintaining friendships, appreciating differences, solving conflicts, and functioning effectively in groups.

3. Approaches to Learning.

- a. Curiosity
- b. Enjoyment of learning
- c. Confidence
- d. Creativity
- e. Attention to task
- f. Reflection
- g. Interests and attitudes

4. Language Development.

- a. Expressive (e.g. expressive speech that is understood or use of a nonverbal system of communication)
- b. Understanding skills to effectively interact with others
- c. Early literacy skills are a part of language development (e.g. an awareness of print, an understanding that writing has a purpose).
- d. Language development and early literacy skills are correlated to how effectively children can

communicate their needs, interact socially with others, and describe events, thoughts, and feelings.

5. Cognition and General Knowledge.

- a. Basic knowledge of concepts and the workings of the environment in which the child participates (e.g. knows his/her own name, understanding basic science concepts)
- b. Cognitive competencies like early mathematical skills (e.g. number sense, discriminating shapes and colors, simple patterns, size, location, and time)
- c. Basic problem-solving skills (e.g. acknowledging similarities and differences, identifying solutions, and increasing attention and focus to challenging tasks.)
- d. A child's innate sense of curiosity and the ability to acquire, organize, and use information in increasingly complex ways are indicative of how the child acquires new knowledge and learns about the impact he/she has on others and the environment.

Although these areas are separate and distinct, there is constant overlap of skill acquisition in early childhood development. Skills in one domain are reinforced as skills are gained in another domain, (e.g. increase of communication skills builds confidence and positive self-image). Kindergarten teachers support all five domains of child development.

Child development occurs at varying rates, and as such we should not expect all children to reach a common "standard" of readiness. Children come from different cultures, with unique life experiences, and a range of ability levels. Therefore, it is anticipated that children may demonstrate competencies in individual ways and should be expected to show different patterns of development.

The concept of "readiness" includes much more than children's readiness to learn kindergarten standards. As defined by the National Education Goals Panel, the School Readiness Indicators Initiative (<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/reports/99rpt.pdf>), and others, "readiness" includes ready children, ready families, ready communities, ready early care and education, and ready schools. Readiness at every level is necessary so that all children will experience success.

It is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of children as they enter school and to provide whatever services are needed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential.

Indiana has developed the Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age 5. The Foundations are based on the latest national research and findings for all content areas and domains. By outlining specific skills and concepts and giving examples of instructional strategies, these foundations will support teachers, parents, and caregivers as they develop appropriate experiences for young children to help ensure success in kindergarten.

A copy of the Indiana Foundations can be viewed at:

http://www.doe.in.gov/primetime/docs/foundations/indiana_foundations.pdf