



Parent Handbook

2025-2026

Community Park District of La Grange Park
1501 Barnsdale Rd
La Grange Park, IL 60526

www.communityparkdistrict.org

WELCOME TO READY TEDDY PRESCHOOL!

The Community Park District of LaGrange Park is pleased that you have chosen our preschool for your child and we look forward to happy “Ready Teddy” years.

This handbook should serve as a guide to your questions regarding our preschool. Please keep it close at hand for easy reference as we progress through the year.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Ready Teddy Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin or disability in admission to or participation in its school. Children with special needs will be actively integrated into our preschool in keeping with our philosophy to provide the best possible opportunity for all of our students.

REGISTRATION

Pre-registration for the next school year will be held in February. If necessary, a waiting list will be formed to use in case of withdrawals. All registrations require a non-refundable administrative fee of \$50.00 for each child. Administrative fee will not apply to tuition.

CHILD ELIGIBILITY

The minimum age of a child to start in the preschool is 2 years. Birth date of that child would be as of September 1st. Proof of age is required at the time of registration.

ANNUAL PARENT ORIENTATION

Parents are strongly urged to attend this evening meeting for parents only. Returning families are encouraged to attend, as well as new families. Parents with children registered to start in the January class should attend as this is the only scheduled parent orientation. This informal meeting provides an opportunity to meet the preschool staff, tour the school and receive additional information pertinent to the current school year. Field trips, curriculum, parties and snacks are a few of the topics to be discussed. Meet the Teacher, classroom visitation for children and families, is held at a special time immediately prior to the first day of school (See schedule in packet).

“THE FIRST DAY/WEEK OF CLASS”

The process of separation from the parent is a very important accomplishment for the preschool age child. First time separations can be difficult for children as well as for parents. Children usually do best when parents arrive on time, project a confident, positive attitude and depart with a short good-bye at the door. A delay of your initial good-bye makes the separation harder on both child and parent. Though your child may be upset when you leave, be assured that our staff is prepared for these moments and will make every effort to comfort your child. If a child cannot be comforted by the teachers within 15 – 30 minutes, parents may be called to pick the child up for that day.

TOILET TRAINING

Your child need not be toilet trained. Children may be in the process and every effort to assist will be made. If your child is in training we suggest “Pull-ups” be worn at school. Should an accident occur, diapers will not be changed; however, parents will be called to change the child’s diaper. Children not in diapers can change into clothing left at school if they are able to do so on their own. If they need extra assistance, parents will be called. All items of clothing should be clearly marked (see school supply list). Please be sure to have someone available within 10 minutes of the school if the need arises.

SCHOOL TOTE BAGS

All students will be supplied with a Ready Teddy Preschool tote bag. This bag is provided free of charge. Replacement or additional bags will be available for a \$5.00 fee. This school bag is adequate for all school projects, parent-teacher communications and extra shoes. The Ready Teddy Preschool tote bag should be used every day and is yours to keep at the end of the school year.

Please note: No other backpacks, kits or school bags are necessary. Students are required to use the bag provided by the school.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Ready Teddy is an academic preschool. Our curriculum reflects Illinois State Standards for Early Learning.

The philosophy of Ready Teddy Preschool is to help each child develop socially through the process of adapting to his or her peers through play and learning experiences. The sessions are designed to promote enjoyment through work and play, refine large and small motor skills, promote physical coordination, and encourage self-development. Free and individualized play is also encouraged and our supervised gym is exciting for each child. Organized activities and projects will provide new ideas and endless wonderment to each child. We will be exploring the world of community helpers, animals and insects, geography, science, music, nutrition, and many other concepts. We welcome parental participation, especially in planning holiday recognition and guest storyteller. We also encourage and welcome any questions parents may have.

Our primary goal is that every child who enters our doors leaves with a positive self-image. To assure this goal is met, we will provide play experiences and hands on activities to promote the following:

- Develop a sense of security in group situations.
- Develop empathy and respect for others.
- Establish routines and patterns and sharing behavior.
- Develop effective and creative oral language.
- Learn problem solving skills.
- To foster a love for language and books.
- To stimulate the imagination so numbers and letters remain exciting and challenging as the children move forward to their formal education years.
- To assist and promote the children at their individual levels through our program so that they are eager and ready to participate in kindergarten.

We have a variety of centers and ample space with materials to help us accomplish these goals. In addition, we have an experienced and dedicated staff who share our philosophy and goals. A child's first school experience is not only influential but vital, and we want it to be a positive one! Our preschool is a happy and safe place for this first experience to begin. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the program at any time, please feel free to call.

EMERGENCY CARD

Please see the front desk if you need to update your child's emergency card. An emergency card, completed by the registering parent, will be kept on file for each child at the preschool. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep the information on record current. We recommend all children be current with appropriate immunizations. Please check with your doctor for specific age requirements. All allergies must be stated in writing and on file before your child can begin class.

PARKING

Please use the Park District's parking lots in the front and north side of the building at all times. The parking lot south of the building does not belong to us, please refrain from using this lot. Security and safety prohibit leaving children and babies unattended in vehicles. Please do not block the front entrance when dropping off or picking up your child.

BEFORE and AFTER CARE

An optional program for our Ready Teddy Preschool families. This is a structured program designed to help our working parents and to accommodate families who have schedule conflicts with siblings. Before and After care is available between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Participants will be chaperoned to and from their preschool class. Students who have combined Enrichment classes with preschool may also participate in Before and After care. Students staying over lunchtime must bring a sack lunch and drink. All allergies must be stated in writing.

Before and After care is limited to currently enrolled Ready Teddy students.

Fees and Days:

Fee is \$13.00 per hour, minimum one hour per scheduled time. Participation is limited to 4 hours per day.

The best way to ensure coverage for your child is to submit a monthly schedule in advance. Other requests will be accommodated based on availability. A \$5.00 fee is applied for same day requests, provided space in Before and After care is available that day.

SEASPAR

South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation (SEASPAR) is a support group for the Community Park District of LaGrange Park and its Preschool. SEASPAR provides special assistance for participants who reside in communities which are affiliated with SEASPAR to enjoy any of these programs.

SAFETY

All staff are CPR, AED certified and trained in first aid.

The LaGrange Park Fire Department and the LaGrange Park Police visit the preschool classes with age-appropriate safety programs.

Fire and emergency drills are conducted throughout the year.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Please try to be on time for class. When a student is late to school they disrupt the rest of the class and miss some very important routines and learning opportunities that the teacher has planned. Late student arrival will require the adult dropping off the child to check in at the front desk. The classroom will be phoned to admit the late student. A call from the front desk will allow the teacher to safely open the classroom door. Please, when waiting in the hall for the classroom door to open, do not let your child run in the hall, bang on the walls or door or engage in other inappropriate behavior.

For pick-up, please park your car in the parking lot and come to the classroom door. A line should be formed along the wall and the teacher will admit/dismiss the class, one student at a time, to the proper authorized pick-up person. Pick up person will be asked to show an ID before the child is released to them.

Please be on time. Your child will be waiting for you and will worry if you are late. Teachers have a short time between classes and are not available to monitor children whose parents/caregivers are late. If you know you are going to be late, please call and the school will try to assist.

For your child's safety and protection, your child will only be dismissed to those persons as authorized by a parent. Authorization should be in writing and listed on your emergency card as having your permission to pick up your child from school. In the event of any change daily or long term, parents must notify the school in writing.

LATE PICK-UP FEES

A parent or assigned pick up person who picks up children more than 10 minutes after class dismissal, after a one-time warning, will be charged a \$10.00 fee and an additional \$5.00 for each 5 minutes thereafter. After 10 minutes, the child will be taken to the Before and After care classroom. This late pick up fee is paid at the time of pick up at the front desk. Late fee policy also applies to Before and After care.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Parent involvement is welcomed in planning and participating in holiday programs, field trips and special events.

If you have a skill or talent that you would like to share with the children, arrangements may be made with the teacher for a specific date and time.

Guest Storyteller: The guest storyteller program provides an opportunity for family involvement. A story may be told, acted out, sung or read. This time may also be used to share a hobby, talent, career, language or special skill. Visits are on a volunteer basis and sign-ups are available throughout the year for each classroom.

ENRICHMENT-OPTIONS

Our preschool curriculum is enriched by many activities such as field trips, assemblies, special events and the Guest Storyteller program. In addition, you may sign up for enrichment classes.

These enrichment classes include cooking classes, math, music, reading readiness and sports. These are scheduled to immediately precede or follow preschool classes, at the same site, for an additional fee. Students are supervised between classes and are chaperoned to their individual classes. Refer to the current Community Park District of LaGrange Park program guide for specific dates, time and fees.

These classes begin the week of September 15th:

- [Creative STEAM](#) (Mondays beginning 9/15 and Wednesdays beginning 11/5) : 10:30 - 11:15 AM
11:30 AM - 12:15PM, 12:30 - 1:15PM
- [Ready to Read](#) (Tuesdays beginning 9/16 and Thursdays beginning 11/6) : 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM
- [Little Chefs](#) (Wednesdays beginning 9/17 and Mondays beginning 11/3) : 10:30 - 11:15AM,
11:30AM - 12:15PM, 12:30 - 1:15PM
- [Ready, Set... Math](#) (Thursdays beginning 9/18 and Tuesdays beginning 11/6) : 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM
- [Ready for Sports](#) (Fridays beginning 9/19) : 10:30 - 11:15 AM, 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM , 12:30 - 1:15 PM

NEW THIS YEAR! Sign-up your half day 4-5 preschooler for add on lunch, this lunch option bridges the half-hour gap between morning classes and afternoon enrichment programs. Supervised and relaxed, it's the perfect way for your child to enjoy a mid-day break before heading into one of our enrichment options. Families may register and pay on a weekly basis for added flexibility.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an optional activity and not a requirement. However, we strongly encourage participation in all school activities. Each child must be accompanied by an adult for any field trips. Permission slips must be filled out in advance for your child to attend. Information will include dates, times and if additional fees are required.

COMMUNICATION

Our special projects, topics, visitors, “show and tell” days, etc. are announced each month in a monthly calendar which the children bring home. Information is sent via school tote bags, or email regarding field trips and special events. All of these are also posted in the hall. You can also access information by going to our web site and clicking the link.



Brightwheel is our parent/teacher communication platform. Prior to the start of the school year you will receive an email to set-up your account. If you already have an account, we will move your child to the appropriate classroom for the

year.

FACEBOOK: Please join us on Facebook at CommunityParkDistrict/Facebook.

A school tote bag is provided for each student. Please check the tote bag every school day for letters, homework, projects, flyers, etc.



In an effort to illustrate forms of respect to the children, the preschool staff will be addressed by their appropriate titles and proper name. For example: “Mrs. Smith”.



CURRICULUM: 2 - 2 ½ YEAR OLD CLASSES

The Ready Teddy Preschool is a blend of open and structured classroom modes. Each class session includes a variety of activities for children. These activities would include:

- Puzzles
- Self-expressed art
- Book corner
- Dramatic play, i.e. housekeeping center
- Building and block play
- Manipulative toys



A typical morning would include the above listed activities as well as:

Large Group Activities:

- Music
- Circle time. songs, finger plays, puppets, show & tell, reading stories
- Gym time (large motor development)

Small Group Activities:

- Story telling
- Arts & crafts (small motor development)
- Science and topic activities
- Colors, shapes, numbers

Gym Time:

- Simple Exercise
- Games and ball play
- Free play on climbing and slide equipment



Outdoor Play:

- Weather permitting, children may go to our outdoor play area

CURRICULUM: 3-YEAR OLD CLASSES

The Ready Teddy Preschool is a blend of open and structured classroom modes. Each class session includes a variety of activities for children.

An example of a typical morning:

- **Hello Time:** Show and tell, calendar time, songs, music and finger play. Active learning games are included during this time.
- **Large Group Activities:** free play is encouraged in learning centers. Areas of opportunity include the housekeeping areas, building materials, table games, books and puzzles, science center and art.
- **Small Group:** Formed to experience the following:
 - ❖ Arts & crafts
 - ❖ Science experiments
 - ❖ Reading readiness
 - ❖ Math readiness
 - ❖ Discovery tables
- **Discovery Tables:** Tables are arranged for sensory discovery. Students become aware of colors, shapes, numbers, odors, textures and visual experiences through activities they participate in with their teachers. A description of these discoveries, and when they are scheduled, are sent home in your child's school bag.

- **Bathroom and Snack**
- **Gym Time:**
 - ❖ Short and fun exercises
 - ❖ Games, running and ball play
 - ❖ Free play on climbing and slide equipment
- **Outdoor Play:** Weather permitting, children may go to our outdoor play area
- **Quiet Time:**
 - ❖ Story time
 - ❖ Flannel board
 - ❖ Puppet theater

This is an overall view of your child's morning. Season, current events, personal events, and holidays influence the activities. Other topics such as community helpers, animal visits, geography, nutrition, and safety are also included.

CURRICULUM: 4 & 5 YEAR OLD PRE-KINDERGARTEN

The beginning of the school year is a period of "settling in", getting acquainted, establishing routines and a review of manners, colors, numbers and other basics.

The accelerated Pre-K program begins each October. Parents will receive a letter prior to the startup of the Accelerated program. The letter outlines this very beneficial addition to the Pre-K curriculum. Below is a list of the goals included in this program.

- Letter recognition-upper and lower case
- Printing name legibly with upper and lower case
- Knows sight words and reading readiness activities
- Complete pattern sequences
- Identifies numbers 0-30 and math readiness skills
- Demonstrates fine motor skills in art activities
- Social studies-geography
- Musical activities-drama
- Science experimentation
- Involvement with books and reading
- Behavior and work habits appropriate to kindergarten



“My Big World” This is incorporated into the Pre-K Accelerated curriculum as well as a geographical theme that encompasses the Letter of the Week. The “My Big World” publication is sent home with each student to share with their family.

“Book It” Beginners: Our Pre-K classes have successfully participated in our program for emergent readers. This is scheduled for April. Letters will be sent to parents introducing this fun way to pre-read. This unit, “Book It”, plus others are updated and presented new each year.

Explorations: Students will be subject to many explorations of variety of materials and projects. In depth suggestions will be made to manipulate, construct and explore the properties, different cultures, geography, social studies and map skills. Reading readiness and math readiness activities further advance the minds of these eager learners.

School kits: School kits are provided for the Pre-K students in addition to their school tote bag. These kits are used in a variety of exercises for name recognition, sequencing and math readiness. Pre-K students take these kits home at the completion of the school year.

PRESCHOOL TUITION FEES

2 year old classes:	Tuition is paid monthly	
Tue/Thurs	Resident \$183.00	Non-resident \$193.00
2 ½ - 3-year classes:	Tuition is paid monthly	
Mon/Wed	Resident \$183.00	Non-resident \$193.00
3-year classes:	Tuition is paid monthly	
Mon/Wed/Fri	Resident \$254.00	Non-resident \$264.00
Tue/Thurs	Resident \$175.00	Non-resident \$185.00
4 & 5 year old Pre-Kindergarten	Tuition is paid monthly	
Half Day:		
Mon/Tue/Wed/Thurs/Fri	Resident \$365.00	Non-resident \$375.00
4 & 5 year old Pre-Kindergarten	Tuition is paid monthly	
Full Day:		
Mon/Tue/Wed/Thurs/Fri	Resident \$680.00	Non-resident \$690.00

On the 1st of the month, you will receive an invoice via email for tuition. Tuition is due on the 12th; a \$30 late fee will be assessed for tuition that is paid late. If you are unable to pay your tuition on time, please contact the front desk **before** the late fee is applied. We are unable to waive it once it's been charged. Failure to pay tuition will result in releasing your child's place in class.

Please check your online household account to make sure your email address is correct. To access your account, go to our website www.communityparkdistrict.org, click on online registration, and follow the link.

Credit Card Payments

Credit card payments may be made online, at the front desk, or over the phone. Credit card numbers will no longer be held at the front office.

Cash and Check Payments

Cash and check payments are also accepted. To ensure payment is applied to the correct student, we request that cash/check payments are placed in an envelope stating your child's name, teacher, and class day/time. We will have a supply of envelopes at the front desk; you may also use a personal envelope as long as it contains the required information. Envelopes containing check payments may be given to the front desk, Cash payments should be given **only** to the front desk.

No credit is given for any absences, including illness, vacation, holidays, weather-related closures, and unforeseen circumstances related to the safe operation of the building.

Fees are calculated from the starting date to the conclusion of preschool. Scheduled closings are taken into account at the time fees are determined. No make-up days will be allowed for absences.

ADDRESS AND AUTHORIZED CHANGES

Let us know if you have a new address, telephone number or email. The school should also be notified of any and all changes in emergency person(s) or persons authorized to pick-up your child from school. It is essential that the school can quickly reach you in the event of an emergency.

HOLIDAYS & SCHOOL CLOSINGS

For Holiday closings please refer to the separate calendar for the current year. School closings due to weather will not be made up or otherwise compensated for. Sign up for text alerts. Only in emergency situations will the alert system notify of emergency closings. Information may also be obtained by calling the park district and checking our website.

WITHDRAWAL/TERMINATION

If a child must withdraw for any reason, the school shall be notified two weeks prior to leaving. Two weeks' notice is required so that a possible refund may be processed.

SNACKS & BIRTHDAYS

Nutrition in early childhood is vital to building strong bodies and minds.

All parents of 3-year-old classes and pre-k classes are asked to sign up on a list to bring snacks. Simple and nutritional snacks are best. Snacks should be handed directly to the teacher.

No other food should be brought into the classroom.

We enjoy celebrating birthdays. A store-bought treat may be brought providing arrangements have been made with the teacher in advance.

Invitations to parties are a frequent occurrence at preschool but can present awkward situations. The preschooler is quick to realize when they are not included in a party invitation! Please do not ask the teachers to distribute invitations and do not present invitations in classrooms. You are welcome to distribute them yourself in the hallway to the parents before or after class.



CLOTHING

Please dress your child as comfortably as possible. Simple, inexpensive play clothes are best. We use a variety of art materials that tend to get messy. When needed, a smock will be provided. Shoes must always be worn in the classroom. Athletic type shoes are required for participation in gym and outdoor play. If a child is not wearing athletic type shoes, they will need to “sit out” when the class is playing in the gym or outside. Sandals, flip flops, crocs, etc. are not considered athletic type shoes.

Boots need to be removed and left in the hall or taken with the parent. If you want to leave your child’s boots, please make sure they are clearly labeled with your child’s name.

ABSENCES/HEALTHY CHILD POLICY

If you know your child will not be in class on a given day, please notify the preschool. You may choose to email your preschoolers teacher directly, call the front desk at 708-354-4580 or reach out via the BrightWheel App. In order to provide a healthy environment for all students and staff, the following health guide has been prepared to assist you with decisions relating to your child’s health and school attendance.

THE TEACHING STAFF HAS THE RIGHT TO REFUSE THE ADMITTANCE OF A CHILD WHO APPEARS TOO ILL TO ATTEND ON A GIVEN DAY. If you are in doubt about your child’s health, please keep him/her at home and notify the classroom teacher.

***The Ready Teddy Preschool follows the guidelines designated by the Cook County Health Department.**



When should I keep my child home?

If you answer yes to any of the following questions, your child should stay home for at least that day. Please monitor your child's symptoms and follow up with your doctor if necessary.

- Does your child have a fever of 100 degrees or higher without Tylenol?
- Does your child have a persistent, phlegmy cough?
- Does your child complain of a sore throat, and it is accompanied by fever, headache, diarrhea, lethargy, sharp pain, and or hard belly?
- Has your child vomited in the last 24 hours?
- Does your child have diarrhea?
- Are your child's eyes crusty, bright red, and/or discharging yellow or green fluid?

Please keep your child home until he or she has been symptom free for at least 24 hours or until the doctor indicated that you child can return to school and provides you with a note to give to school.

If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be isolated from the group and made as comfortable as possible. You or the emergency person on your health card will be contacted, so that the child may be picked up.

Communicable diseases such as Hand, foot and mouth disease, etc., should be reported to the school immediately. An email will be sent to parents. In the event of an emergency or serious injury, it is our policy to seek immediate medical attention for your child (ambulance first) and then contact the parent.

DISCIPLINE

For many children, the concept of group play and sharing will be new. Most preschoolers are progressing from the "egocentric", "I or self" stage of growth into the socialization stage. During this transitional stage, children at times have difficulty managing troublesome emotions. When these situations occur, a quiet time is more effective followed closely by an explanation or brief discussion. If a child has difficulty playing in a certain area, he/she will be asked to move on to another area of play before quiet time is necessary.

"1-2-3 Magic", a discipline plan of time out for children, written by Dr. Thomas Phelan, may be implemented in the classrooms. This is reviewed each year by all the Preschool staff. DVD and book copies of "1-2-3 Magic" are available for loan to parents.

Although discipline problems involving children in preschool rarely warrant it, the preschool reserves the right to exclude from the program any child whose behavior seriously disrupts the program or is a danger to himself/herself or to others. Dismissal from school is the final step and will occur only after several measures to improve behavior have taken place. Teachers and Preschool Director will meet with parents to attempt to work out difficulties.

CONFERENCES AND VISITING

Conferences for Pre-K students will be scheduled. Written progress reports will be provided for your children at the conference.

Please feel free to call the Preschool Director with questions regarding our program. Teachers or parents may request an informal conference whenever they feel it necessary.

Please take advantage of scheduled Open Houses, Guest Storyteller and special events to visit. Other visits and tours should be arranged with the Recreation Coordinator

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs will be taken of each student. Parents have the option of purchasing the pictures online through the company website. More information will come closer to picture day.

OPEN HOUSES/SPECIAL EVENTS

These are excellent opportunities for parents and children to become acquainted with the classroom, meet their teachers, and share their school projects and activities with family, friends, and neighbors. These are scheduled in the Fall and early Spring. A family program is planned for the Christmas holiday as well. Other special events may be planned throughout the year.

Parent involvement is welcomed in planning and participating in holiday programs, field trips and special events.

If you have a skill or talent that you would like to share with the children, arrangements may be made with the teacher for a specific date and time.

PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Guest Storyteller: The guest storyteller program provides an opportunity for family involvement. A story may be told, acted out, sung or read. This time may also be used to share a hobby, talent, career, language or special skill. Visits are on a volunteer basis and sign-ups are available throughout the year for each classroom.

Holiday Parties: Each classroom has a party for Halloween, Winter Holidays, and Valentine's Day. These parties are run by parent volunteers with the teachers there to assist in any way they are needed. For the parties, there are several "Jobs" to volunteer for:

All classes will have a sign-up sheet in the hallway for you to sign up to help with the party.

1. Party Leader – this person contacts the other volunteers to see if they need any help getting their things together for the party. During the party we ask that you keep track of time and let everyone know when it is time to finish up and move on to the next activity.
2. Craft – plan a simple craft for all of the students in that class to do together with parent guidance.

3. Games – simple games that can be done in about 10 minutes with a small group so that each group can rotate through all of the games during the party. You can have “prizes” as long as every child gets one after they play but they are not necessary.
4. Music – bring some Holiday music that can be played during the party and if time allows we can do some musical activities. Every classroom has a Bluetooth speaker that you can use.
5. Story – bring in a Holiday related book to read to the group.
6. Snack – bring a store-bought snack to share with the class. We are a NUT FREE school, please remember this when choosing a snack.

GRADUATION-YEAR END PROGRAMS

The year-end programs are a highlight of our school community. Our end of the year program includes a variety of songs performed by each class level.

We will celebrate the graduation of Pre-K children into Kindergarten. Year-end activities also include an “all-school” family picnic.



FUNDRAISING

Periodically Ready Teddy participates in optional fundraising opportunities. Tuition does not cover the cost of some activities and projects in our curriculum.

Ready Teddy will also have a variety of spirit wear available to purchase.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB

As a service to preschool families, Scholastic Book Companies provide the opportunity for you to order new, reasonably priced, popular children’s books, DVD’s and computer software. Although the preschool is given free books with each order, no one is obligated to purchase. Order forms are handed out approximately five times a year. More information will be communicated through the school year.

Michele Ritacco, Recreation Manager

mritacco@communityparkdistrict.org

Administrative Office Telephone:
708-354-4580

www.communityparkdistrict.org

