



**HELPING HANDS
PRESCHOOL**

**2009/10 PARENT
HANDBOOK**

HISTORY

In July 1991 the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education responded to the federal mandate of Public Law 99-457 to provide services for children age three to five with disabilities. The Rules of Education of Preschool Children establish regulations for eligibility and appropriate programming.



Medina City Schools began the Helping Hands Preschool in September of 1989 with special grant funding to prepare for the Federal Mandate. The program soon grew and in 1993 a second classroom was added to the program. A third classroom was added at the start of the 2003-2004 school year, a fourth classroom was added at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, and a fifth classroom was added the beginning of the 2005-06 school year. Helping Hands Preschool offers quality preschool programming to the community for both children with disabilities and typically developing children.

Philosophy

In a caring and positive atmosphere, we create a warm and happy place where children may learn together. We strive to guide children to a continued good self image while building social skills in a school setting, which reflects the world beyond.

Language, motor skills, thinking skills and independence are enhanced through materials and activities which are developmentally appropriate for the preschool aged child. Teachers facilitate learning which is child centered, emphasizing the process and not the product of the child's effort, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride.



Eligibility

Helping Hands Preschool is an integrated preschool program. The program provides mandated preschool services to children three to five years of age with disabilities and offers a developmentally appropriate preschool experience for a selected number of typical peers. The children with disabilities must demonstrate a deficit in one or more developmental areas: Communication, Hearing, Vision, Cognitive, or Self-Help. Community peers are selected to balance the classrooms.



Classroom Makeup

No more than twelve children are enrolled in the classroom during any one session. Each classroom provides an integrated balance of children with disabilities and their typically developing peers. There is one teacher and one classroom assistant for each of the five classrooms currently in operation. Some of our students with disabilities may qualify for our itinerant option, which allows services to be provided at home, community preschools or at Headstart programs located in the Medina City school district.

Daily Schedule

Tuesday through Friday sessions run on a half day basis. Children are enrolled based on community standard and need for special education services.

The morning session runs from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. The afternoon session runs from 12:50 pm to 3:25 pm. The days in session follow the Medina City Schools calendar, in conjunction with activities at the Eliza Northrop Elementary School.



Registration Requirements

Students enrolling for Helping Hands are enrolling in the Medina City Schools and must follow the same registration guidelines as all Medina City School students. Parents are required to provide the following information at registration: Ohio School Health History Report and Physicians Report, emergency form, copy of birth certificate, proof of residency, and copy of custody agreement (if applicable). Forms must be updated annually, and must be in place before the child begins school. The forms help us assure that children are properly immunized and alert teachers to any health related problems and emergency situations.

Transportation

Children eligible for the preschool program as children with special needs will have transportation arranged in accordance with their Individual Educational Plan (IEP).



Pick Up and Drop Off Procedure

Upon arrival, parents will line-up vehicles along the right (west) entrance of the building. Children will be unloaded by Northrop/Preschool staff and escorted into the building. Please allow the buses to move freely.

Drop off times are: AM 8:55-9:00 PM 12:50-12:55
Pick up times are: AM 11:25 PM 3:20

Parents may line up for “pick up” in the “drop off” zone. Parents may enter the building only through the front lobby entrance at all times. There is no parking directly in front of the building at any time. Parents are asked to complete a form that includes a specific list of all individuals permitted to pick up their children. Students will only be released to individuals on this list.

Absence Reporting

Please contact the Eliza Northrop Elementary Office to report absences due to illness or other reasons. The attendance line phone number is (330) 636-4604.



School Cancellations

Helping Hands Preschool will be closed on days that the Medina City Schools are closed due to inclement weather or for any other reason. Information regarding school closings is broadcast on the following radio stations: WEOL (930 AM), WAKR (1590 AM), WHBX (1480 AM, 94.1 FM), WWWE (1100 AM), WGAR (1220 AM, 99.5 FM) and WQMX (94.9 FM).

Parent Visits and Volunteers

Parents are welcome to visit at any time. To avoid having too many visitors at any one time, please notify your child's base group teacher of a planned visit.

Parent volunteers are always encouraged. Many parents volunteer for weekly or twice monthly time slots in the preschool classroom. This enables staff to have more one on one time with the children and allows parents to be part of their child's school environment. Please consider volunteering in a classroom other than your child's.



Parent Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences, for peer models, occur in the fall. Appointments with teachers may be made at any time. IEP conferences are held annually but can be reviewed at any time by parent request.

Curriculum

The preschool curriculum includes the following developmental domains: Adaptive, Aesthetic, Cognitive Communication, Sensory-Motor and Social Emotional. The classroom is divided into interest areas in order to promote choice making and problem solving by students.

Daily planned activities provide opportunities for children to engage in exploratory learning activities that promote learning goals, such as: color identification, shape identification, rote counting, using scissors, coloring, painting, tracing, asking and answering questions, expressive language, receptive language, self help skills, self identification, taking turns, decision making, and following directions. The daily schedule is designed to provide balance between quiet and active play.

Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) will outline the specific goals and objectives for students with disabilities, based on their particular area of need.



Special Education and Related Services

The special education program for individual children is specified through each child's Individual Educational Program (IEP). Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and other related services are provided based on educational need through the IEP process. Parents are referred to their copy of the procedural safeguards for more information on Federal Special Education mandates and Due Process procedures.



Teacher Training

Teachers at Helping Hands Preschool are trained in both early childhood education and special education. This typically requires a Masters level degree of teaching.

Paraprofessionals assist the classroom teacher in implementing classroom activities.

Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists are also in the classroom providing specialized services.

Discipline

Our goal is to assist each child to develop the desire to “do the right thing”. Positive reinforcement and behavior modification are our tools. Through the use of a specific style of positive language, we hope to inspire self-confidence and increase problem-solving skills. The strictest form of discipline used is the time out method. If a child’s behavior is not in his/her control, he/she may be asked to leave an activity for a brief time. No child will be restrained without a specific behavior plan.

The center’s actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

- 1) There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking or biting.
- 2) No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- 3) No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- 4) No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
- 5) No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
- 6) Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- 7) Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
- 8) Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
- 9) Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child’s age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
- 10) The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.



Toys from Home

Toys from home should remain at home except for certain “sharing days” that will be listed on the monthly calendar of activities. Please be alert to small toys that may come home in pockets that belong at school.



Snacks and Special Diet Needs

Each day children will receive a snack consisting of foods from two of the four basic food groups as is required by law. A snack menu will be posted.

Snacks are provided by parents. We ask that parents donate a package of pretzels, crackers, raisins, or simple cookies and a large bottle can or frozen container of 100% juice at the beginning of the year and later during the year as need is indicated.

Special snacks may be provided as desired, keeping in mind that they need to be nutritious items such as fruit, cheese, peanut butter, etc. If you child has any dietary limitations, please be sure to notify the staff. It may be necessary for parents to send a snack daily for their child.

Field Trip Policy

Two family outings are planned each year. Parents accompany their children to Boyert's Farm each October and Jump Park each June. Parents provide transportation on these days. No other field trips are taken.

Birthdays

We will celebrate each child's birthday or half-birthday if the child has a summer birthday. You may provide a special snack and join us for any or all of our day. This is your child's special day.



Book Orders

Each month you will receive book order forms from See Saw and Firefly books. Scholastic Books provides these books at great prices. We accumulate points for your purchases which we use to buy books and materials for the classroom. Check the dates on the order forms to find when they must be returned to school. Please make checks payable to Scholastic Books for payment. Thanks for your orders!

Tuition Costs

Tuition will be billed in 4 equal quarterly payments. Tuition is calculated at \$10.00 per day x attendance days, and does not include holidays or days when classes are not scheduled to be in session. No refunds are issued for classes missed due to illnesses, vacations, or snow days. Payments are due in advance on a quarterly basis. A payment schedule will be provided. Failure to make payments in a timely manner will result in withdrawal from the program. (See payment schedule.)

Children with disabilities are provided a Free and Appropriate Education in accordance with PL 99-457.



Diapers

For children who have not yet complete their potty training, please put 1 or 2 diapers in their school bag each day, or send a package to school with their name written on it. Parents of potty training children are asked to provide one package of wipes at the beginning of the year. When needed, children are diapered according to our posted “Diapering Policy”.

Management of Communicable Disease

All children enrolled in the program and teachers are required to have a yearly physical maintained on file at the preschool.

If a child comes to school not feeling well, she/he may be more vulnerable to infection. It is in the best interest of your child and others to keep them at home when not up to active participation in the program. Should your child become ill at school, you will be called and your child will be isolated until you arrive to pick him/her up. You will be called if your child exhibits any of the following signs or symptoms:

1. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a twenty four hour period);
2. Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
3. Difficult or rapid breathing;
4. Yellowish skin or eyes;
5. Conjunctivitis
6. Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness.
7. Untreated infected skin patch(es);
8. Unusually dark urine and gray or white stool; OR
9. Stiff neck.
10. Vomiting
11. Sore Throat or difficulty swallowing.
12. Unusual spots or rashes.
13. Evidence of Lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation.

All families will be notified of exposure to diagnosed pink eye, ring worm, chicken pox or head lice.

Our teachers have been trained in the recognition of common childhood illnesses as well as hand washing techniques and appropriate disinfection procedures.

Administration of Medication

No medication of any kind will be given to a child without medical authorization. Please be sure to request appropriate forms from our office for any prescription or over-the-counter medication, including ointments and lotions. Please provide medications in original containers.



Safety

Safety is a primary concern at Helping Hands Preschool. No child is left unsupervised at any time. We have regular fire drills using a planned evacuation route which is posted in each classroom. A plan for weather emergencies is also posted. Our teachers have been trained in First Aid and a First Aid Kit is available at all times. As dictated by law, our staff will report to Human Services any indication of child abuse.

Incident reports shall be filled out in accordance with school policy following any injurious incident. A report will also be made to the family in accordance with school policy.

Clothing

Children should wear play clothing that is comfortable, washable, and allows for self-dressing. Shoes should be tennis shoes or other rubber soled shoes. Please! No jellies, sandals, Sunday shoes or cowboy boots as these shoes are not safe for the movement activities which the children will take part in each day, inside and outside. Children must wear shoes in school, so please send shoes when boots are worn.

As the weather gets colder, we will continue to go outside. Please send hats, mittens, and any other warm clothing that may be needed. All loose items— anything the child may take off in the classroom—should be marked with your child's name.

Please send a school bag or backpack that has a large opening to school each day. The child's name should be on the bag.

We are also suggesting that parent supply a change of clothing to be kept at school for use when needed. Clothing should be placed in a shoe box clearly marked with your child's name.



How to Obtain Records

A roster will be provided only to parents in the program. A signed statement that the individual wants to be included in the roster is provided.

Educational records, such as Evaluation Team Reports and Individualized Educational Plans, can be obtained by contacting the Office of Student Services. Progress reports can be obtained through the classroom teacher. Licensing reports for preschool operations can be obtained through the Office of Student Services or by contacting:

Silvia Gasser
Division of Early Childhood Education
172 W. High Avenue-Suite 102
New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663
(330) 343-8518

Complaints may also be addressed to this office. Refer to your copy of the procedural safeguards.

Correspondence

Medina City Schools
Office of Student Services
140 W. Washington St.
Medina, Ohio 44256
(330) 636-3091

Dr. Kristine Quallich, Director of Student Services

Location:

Helping Hands Preschool
Eliza Northrop Elementary School
950 E. Reagan Parkway
Medina, Ohio 44256
(330) 636-4600

Mr. Steve Heidorf, Principal



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**MEDINA CITY SCHOOLS
HELPING HANDS PRESCHOOL**

Superintendents Office (330) 636-3010
Randy Stepp, Superintendent

Office of Student Services (330) 636-3090
Dr. Kristine Quallich, Director

Eliza Northrop Elementary (330) 636-4600
Steve Heidorf, Principal

<u>Helping Hands Preschool Staff</u>	(330) 636-4600
Allison Aukerman	Psychologist/Counselor
Brigitte Dade	Classroom Teacher
Amanda Dodez	Classroom Teacher
Becky Gibson	Classroom Teacher
Wendy Good	Classroom Teacher
Jenifer Scott	Classroom Teacher
Jenny Kelly	Speech Pathologist
Nicole Olexa	Speech Pathologist
Wendy Lane	Physical Therapist
Fran Schoen	Occupational Therapist
Sandy Bracken	Paraprofessional
Brenda Fink	Paraprofessional
Fran Lance	Paraprofessional
Becky Leach	Paraprofessional
Gayle O'Brien	Paraprofessional
Patti Papesh	Paraprofessional
Maribeth Tomko	Paraprofessional