

## Hillsboro Early Childhood Programs Parent Handbook 2010-2011

Hillsboro Early Childhood Programs is the Hillsboro CUSD#3 Illinois State Board grant funded pre-school program for children 3-5 years of age. Our programs are located at 4 attendance sites in the district, Hillsboro Free Methodist Church and Coffeen are referred to as Pre-K, Beckemeyer is Head Start/Pre-K and Hillsboro Child Development Center on the hospital grounds is HCCDC Pre-School for All. All four sites offer the same family involvement activities, parent resources, developmentally appropriate curriculum, certified Early Childhood teachers and state certified teaching assistants. We provide a fully inclusionary setting for all children, regardless of their developmental level or disability.

It is the mission of Hillsboro Early Childhood Programs to facilitate the development of children and to strengthen and support families in their efforts to prepare their children for future school success, using research based, developmentally appropriate methods while fully including all children.

Your child will benefit from an enriching preschool environment and experience the joys of making new friends, the excitement of learning new skills, and the opportunity to develop independence. Parent involvement is an *essential* part of the program as parents are the first teachers of their children.

### YOU AND YOUR CHILD

You are your child's first teacher. Parents are THE most important people in a child's life. Everyone needs help being a parent! None of us are born parents. We learn to be parents by:

1. Talking to and watching other parents.
2. Reading books.
3. Listening to the advice of doctors and other professionals.
4. Remembering how our parents raised us.

Parents teach their children by PLAYING with them, TALKING TO and EXPLAINING things to them, and by SETTING CONSISTENT LIMITS. We believe that parents are the biggest influence on their child's school success. For that reason, we find as many ways to communicate with you as possible. Because there is NO COST for the pre-Kindergarten Program, we REQUIRE parents to volunteer in some way. Your child's teacher will provide you with a list of ways that we want you to help us.

## COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to visit your child's school anytime. It is best to wait until after the first couple weeks, until they have established a routine and feel comfortable with teachers and peers.

We provide a journal to write back and forth notes from school to home, especially important if your children are being bussed to and from school.

You will receive a monthly calendar from the main office with Pre-K news, family events, parent workshops, and attendance schedules. You will also receive a weekly calendar from your classroom teacher with classroom activities and reminders.

The phone contact is provided on your monthly calendar if you need to speak with the program director for any reason, Mrs. Lockett at 217-534-2314.

## CLASS SCHEDULES

Classes at Coffeen School are half-day sessions, AM and PM. They meet 5 days per week, Monday - Friday for 2.5 hours per day. To attend the Friday class, parents must make a year-long commitment for their child's enrollment in the 5<sup>th</sup> day. There is no bussing for the Friday class at the Coffeen Center. Morning sessions are approximately 8:15-10:45, afternoon sessions are 12:15-2:45.

At the Free Methodist Church classes are also 2.5 hours per day. They meet 4 days per week, Monday - Thursday. Morning sessions are approximately 8:15-10:45, afternoon sessions are 12:15-2:45.

At Beckemeyer School our state funded Pre-Kindergarten and the federally funded Head Start provides a fully blended classroom. Classes meet 5 days per week, Monday - Friday, 3.5 hours per day, for AM and PM sessions, 8:00-11:30 and 11:30-3:00. Only children living in the city of Hillsboro can be bussed to this center, AND must meet the criteria set by the Head Start program. If you have questions about the possibility of attending this center, talk with your teacher or Mrs. Lockett.

Hillsboro Child Development Center (HCCDC) is a daycare located on the Hillsboro Hospital grounds. This center is part of the HCCDC daycare program. All Pre-school children at this site must be enrolled full-time in the daycare center. The fees for 3-5 year olds are reduced because of the Pre-School program provided by the Pre-Kindergarten grant. This class meets 5 days per week, Monday - Friday from approximately 8:45-11:30. There is no bussing to or from this center.

## BUSSING

ISBE Early Education Program funding does *not* require that school districts provide bussing for pre-school aged children. With the rising cost of transportation, bussing is not provided from the door of every home to and from school.

- HCCDC daycare center Pre-K children are only transported to and from school by parents. No bussing is available to the center unless a child has a special education program they must attend elsewhere.
- Beckemeyer Head Start/Pre-K students are provided bussing Monday -Friday if they live within the city limits of Hillsboro, Schram City or Taylor Springs. Students living outside of town will have a designated bus stop. Your child's teacher will discuss the designated location with you prior to enrollment.
- Coffeen students are provided with bussing Monday - Thursday, but may have *designated bus stops* for children in some areas. Your child's teacher will discuss the designated location with you prior to enrollment. There is no bussing for students who have enrolled in Friday classes.
- Children attending the Hillsboro Free Methodist Church classroom are provided with bussing all 4 days, Monday - Thursday. Again, this is not necessarily door-to-door. There may be *designated bus stops* for children in some areas.

## FEES AND CHARGES

There is no charge for the program. Pre-kindergarten Programs are funded through grants from the Illinois State Board of Education. All school supplies or wish lists sent home by teachers are donations, and not required for attendance. If your child attends HCCDC, all 3-5 year olds participate in the pre-school program and automatically receive a discounted monthly fee because of the support of this state funded grant from their daycare fees.

## SCHOOL CLOSINGS—EARLY DISMISSALS

In case of bad weather, listen to radio station 106.1 WSMI. They will broadcast any changes in school times due to snow, ice, fog, or emergencies. School closings or delayed opening times will usually be broadcast from 6:30 a.m. until school opening time. In the event of early dismissals, the announcement will be made over WSMI as soon as the decision is made. Please be alert for this happening.

All school busses are equipped with radios with a base unit located at the bus garage and all attendance centers. If at any time you are concerned about where your child is on a bus route, just call the Pre-K office and we can contact the bus driver directly!

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Our parking lots can become very congested at arrival and dismissal times. If you are ever transporting your child to or from school, please escort your child into the classroom and out. Check with your child's teacher for the best time to drop off or pick up. Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot and never leave a car running on school grounds. If you have an infant, please do not leave them unattended. Speak with your child's teacher about special arrangements if you have physical limitations, a child with special needs, or an infant. We understand that situations make it difficult for you to come in and out of the building, and will accommodate this need to the best of our ability.

If someone other than parents are to pick up your Pre-k Child, you *MUST notify us in writing, or give us a call* when there is not time for a note. We cannot legally send a child with anyone other than parents or those designated by the parents or guardians in writing.

## SCHOOL BUS INFORMATION

**(This section does not apply to HCCDC)**

Many children will ride the bus to and from school, unless they are attending the daycare center program. You will be notified as to the exact time and place your child will meet the bus.

1. Have your child at the bus stop **before** your scheduled pick-up time. Children should be ready for the bus (coats and backpacks already on) before it arrives.

2. Remind your child to follow the bus rules, especially: **STAY IN ONE SEAT. REMAIN SEATED AT ALL TIMES. KEEP HANDS TO YOURSELF. USE YOUR QUIET VOICE.**
- 3.\* A responsible person **MUST** meet the bus and see the child home safely. A bus driver **CANNOT** drop off a preschooler unless he/she knows someone is at the bus stop to meet the child. If no one is there to meet the preschooler, the child will be kept on the bus and taken to the bus garage at the high school. You will be called and it will be your responsibility to pick your child up. **You will only be allowed to have this happen two times, if it happens a third time, your child will lose bus privileges and you will be responsible for transporting your child to and from school.**
4. Please notify the school and bus garage if your child is ill or unable to attend so that the bus driver can be notified and not stop to pick up your child. Bus garage: 532-6012 Pre-K: 534-2314.
5. If your child is to be picked up or dropped off at a different location other than his regular bus stop, you need to make these arrangements in advance with the Pre-K Coordinator unless it is an emergency.

\* We understand that emergency situations arise, or you may be delayed for some reason and will be late getting home to meet the bus. If this is happening **CALL US IMMEDIATELY!!** We will keep your child at school for you to pick up.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The teachers and assistants value the privacy of your child and your family. Our staff is trained and carefully follows our confidentiality policy. You can be confident that no staff member will discuss your child in any way at school unless it pertains to their educational plan. You can also be confident that they will not discuss any child outside of the school setting.

It is just as important that when you visit your child's school that you respect the privacy of all children and families. When you visit you will see many children who are just developing the social skills of turn taking, sharing, interacting with peers and following a routine.

All children have emotional ups and downs as they learn, just like at home. They are likely to act very differently when parents are present at *their* school. We find that children fully accept and understand their peers at this early age, no matter what the behavior, delay or disability may be. Please do not make judgements or comments about others.

When you visit our classrooms, please fully respect the privacy of all families and children. Every child and family deserves the same respect that you want others to have for your own child and family.

## **DRESS**

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that they can learn to manage themselves in the bathroom. They also need comfortable shoes, as part of their program involves large motor skill development of running, jumping, hopping, skipping and riding bikes, all of which we do daily. Cowboy boots and shiny dress shoes should be saved for other occasions.

We go outdoors until temperatures fall below 32 degrees! Please send the appropriate gloves, hats, and jackets as the weather requires.

## **SPECIAL POLICIES**

1. Please do not send toys with your child to school. Remind them that it may get lost or broken and that we have plenty of toys at school.
2. Each teacher will inform by her calendar how she will celebrate each holiday. We are very careful to respect the traditions and beliefs of all families. We are also careful to make holidays fun, not stressful or confusing to young children. Your teacher can explain this.
3. Birthdays will be celebrated by each teacher in a special way. Your child's birthday will still be celebrated even if you do not send anything. If you choose to send something, it must be a healthy treat approved by your teacher and pre-packaged.
4. We do not serve children sugary unhealthy snacks like candy or things with icing in our classrooms. Some suggestions are ice cream, yogurt, popsicles, jello, pudding, fruit, or let us provide the snack and send hats, plates or napkins in your child's favorite color or theme.

## **HEALTH, IMMUNIZATIONS, MEDICATIONS**

Your child's health is very important! Good health will make it easier for him to succeed. Children need to develop good health habits at an early age and YOU are the teacher they learn from the most! Please set a good example for your child.

1. Before your child begins school, he/she will need a **PHYSICAL EXAM** completed by your doctor. A special health form will be given to you for

you and the doctor to fill out and sign. A visit to the dentist is also strongly recommended. Your child's immunizations need to be up-to-date. **This form MUST be turned in to the school by the first day of attendance, or you child will not be allowed to attend.**

2. Your child needs to bathe and shampoo regularly. Teeth need to be brushed daily. Children, even at age 3 and 4, are extremely honest and verbal about what they see and smell and can make a child who has poor hygiene feel very bad unintentionally. Children of this age delight in being able to bathe and brush their own teeth and develop quite a sense of confidence and good self-esteem as they care for their own needs.
3. Your child needs **ten hours of rest per night**. Going to school is a big job and children need lots of energy to be ready to go each day. If bedtime is a problem, please discuss this with us as we have had lots of success with some solutions to this common problem.
4. **DO NOT send your child to school if ILL or has:**
  - a. a fever (or has had a fever within 24 hours)
  - b. a bad cold or cough
  - c. diarrhea
  - d. sore throat
  - e. been vomiting, or has a severe stomachache
  - f. a rash of unknown cause
  - g. a severe toothache, earache, or headache
  - h. watery, red, swollen eyes of unknown origin
5. **It is extremely important that you share with your child's teacher any allergies your child has to food or the environment!** She will pass that information on to the building nurse.

The official policy of the Hillsboro School Board is that all medication that a child needs to receive during the day must be left with the school nurse or designee. All medication should be in its original container or prescription bottle with the child's name, doctor's name, contents, and dosage clearly marked as appropriate. **NO MEDICATION CAN BE ADMINISTERED WITHOUT A SCHOOL MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM** signed by the parent and physician.

## TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN

The Hillsboro Pre-Kindergarten Staff realize the move from pre-school to Kindergarten is a major milestone for you and your child. We want to do everything we can to ensure this is a good experience children and their families. The following steps are taken to help make the transition as smooth as possible:

1. Four to six weeks prior to the last day of pre-school, a parent/teacher conference will be held to review portfolios with parents. The teacher will discuss your child's progress and show evidence of their strengths from photos, documentation, and a skills checklist. She will discuss skills that are still emerging and provide suggestions of ways you can help your child over the summer months with these skills.
2. Two to three weeks before the last day of pre-school, teachers will begin incorporating activities and discussions into the daily routine about the transition they will be making to a new teacher, classroom, and in some cases, school. Children will be reading related books, participating in group activities, and taking active rolls in group discussions about transitioning to Kindergarten.
3. One to two weeks before the last day of pre-school, children will visit the kindergarten classroom at their attendance site. The Kindergarten teacher will choose the best time for them to visit, which is most often for a story, brief discussion time, and during free-choice learning centers.
4. The Pre-Kindergarten teachers will meet with the Kindergarten teachers prior to, or in the first week of student attendance. They will review portfolios and focus their discussion on your child's strengths and how they learn best, and give attention to any special circumstances that may impact your child's learning.
5. Parents will be notified in mid-August by letter from the Elementary Building Principal of the school they will be attending regarding Kindergarten entry, registration, and any first week activities, including meeting their child's teacher and visiting the classroom for the first time.