



WACONIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS ISD 110

2024-25 ECFE Family Handbook



Explore Your Passions. Create Your Success.

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WELCOME

Waconia Community Education is excited to welcome you and your child to Waconia Early Childhood Family Education. We are dedicated to offering quality learning experiences for you and your child.

This handbook is intended to be a resource for you throughout the 2024–2025 school year. We have included important contact information as well as descriptions of services and policies that apply to families in the ECFE program.

Early Childhood Family Education is a District 110 program of Waconia Public Schools Community Education. All families with children ages birth to kindergarten are welcome. ECFE classes offer:

- A terrific place for you and your child to play and learn together
- Education, support and friendships with other parents and caregivers
- Weekly parent/child classes, field trips, special events for parents and children led by licensed teachers and qualified teaching assistants
- Parent coaching sessions and home visits
- Affordable with a sliding fee scale – no one denied participation for inability to pay

Waconia School Community Education
(952) 442-0610
www.waconiacommunityed.org
516 Industrial Blvd.
Office Hours: 7:30 am– 4:00 pm

Early Childhood Office
(952) 442-0613
520 Industrial Blvd.
Office Hours: 8:00 am– 4:00 pm



ISD 110 STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission Statement

ISD 110 maximizes opportunities for all students to explore their passions and create their success by committing to a community that includes academic rigor, social growth, and emotional wellbeing.

Vision Statement

ISD 110 commits to:

- Inspiring students to explore a variety of pathways including academic offerings and extra curricular activities that will allow them to recognize who they are and who they will become.
- Fostering a community with a collective sense of belonging and wellbeing.
- Establishing efficient systems and structures as part of a world-class school district that will create opportunities for staff to engage in innovative teaching and students to experience academic success.

Core Values

Respect

We honor and listen to all voices to ensure everyone feels valued.

Collaboration

We achieve our common goals through trust, teamwork, and partnership.

Inclusiveness

We welcome all and seek multiple perspectives to create one connected community.

Empathy

We listen and act with genuine care.

Resilience

We empower one another and persevere with courage, determination, and optimism.

Strategic Directions

Student Outcomes

Delivering high-quality instruction that advances academic excellence.

Student and Staff Experience

Creating and maintaining an experience where students and staff feel safe and supported, engaged, and belong.

Systems and Structures

Establishing efficient, effective, and sustainable systems and structures to support the fulfillment of the District's vision.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Early Childhood Key Contacts

Director of Community Ed.

Steven Jensen
sjensen@isd110.org



Early Childhood Manager

Renee Sorgenfrie
rsorgenfrie@isd110.org



Administrative Assistant

Brenda Buesgens
bbuesgens@isd110.org



ECFE Teachers

District 110 ECFE teachers and classroom assistants are highly trained in best practices and assessments. Teaching staff are licensed by the MN Dept. of Education. Continuing education and staff in-services are available throughout the school year.

A business card for Vanessa Schultz, Children's Teacher. It features a circular portrait of her on the left and contact information on the right. The card has a purple and yellow diagonal stripe design.

VANESSA SCHULTZ
CHILDREN'S TEACHER
☎ 952-442-0613
✉ vschultz@isd110.org

A business card for Heather Carlson, Children's Teacher. It features a circular portrait of her on the left and contact information on the right. The card has a purple and yellow diagonal stripe design.

HEATHER CARLSON
CHILDREN'S TEACHER
☎ 952-442-0613
✉ hcarlson@isd110.org

A business card for Lauren McQuillan, Parent Educator. It features a circular portrait of her on the left and contact information on the right. The card has a purple and yellow diagonal stripe design.

LAUREN MCQUILLAN
PARENT EDUCATOR
☎ 952-442-0613
✉ lmcquillan@isd110.org

A business card for Christine Pedretti, Parent Educator. It features a circular portrait of her on the left and contact information on the right. The card has a purple and yellow diagonal stripe design.

CHRISTINE PEDRETTI
PARENT EDUCATOR
☎ 952-442-0613
✉ cpedretti@isd110.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parent/Child Class Structure

You and your child will spend time together in the classroom, which is set up with age-appropriate learning activities for families to enjoy together. Follow your child's lead and have fun!

Parent-Child Time

Each class begins with parent and child interaction time. Please arrive promptly so you can participate in the activities for the day. During interaction time we suggest:

- Follow your child's lead. Let them choose the activities and the pace.
- Observe and focus on your child. Get down on his/her level, make eye contact and communicate with words, smiles, and loving touch.
- Talk with your child while working and playing together. Offer positive encouragement and support for their efforts.
- Listen carefully to your child's words and to the feeling he/she expresses.
- Encourage creativity and imagination. Focus on the process of exploring rather than the product. The sensation of spreading paint is usually more valuable than the final picture. Let your child create and don't worry if it's not "perfect".
- Encourage your child to clean up what he/she was working on before moving to the next activity.
- Talk with other adults only when necessary. This is a special time with your child and there will be time for adult conversations during parent discussion time.



Circle Time

The early childhood staff will let you know when circle time begins. During circle time, the whole group participates in songs, finger-plays, rhythms, and movement activities. We expect that some children will get up and wander; that is okay. We ask that the parent/guardian stay in the circle. Early childhood staff will encourage children back to the circle as needed. Children learn by repetition, so we will repeat songs, finger-plays and activities. During this time children are learning:

- to increase their attention span, to listen and follow directions
- to develop an understanding of the rhythms of speech, music, and life's activities to build vocabulary and encourage speech development
- concepts that appeal to a child's interest and self-expression
- beginning math concepts of size, shape, place, direction and sequence
- to move and wiggle in their own space, increase finger dexterity
- experience with social skills with other children and adults
- a closeness between parent and child

Children's Classroom

Licensed teachers and assistants will guide play with children. Children learn the following through their play:

Social and Emotional Skills: playing with children their own age, learning from adults, and using adults as resources helps children develop their uniqueness, competence and social skills. It involves children's feelings about themselves as well as their interactions with others.

Dramatic Play: dress-up clothes, playhouses, dolls, blocks, transportation toys, and animals are used for role-playing activities. Dramatic play activities allow children to role-play members of the family and community, which can help them better understand the world around them.

Expressive Activities: these encourage children to express their creativity through the use of play materials, art, puppets, creative dramatics, and body movements.

Small Muscle Activities: cutting, pasting, printing, painting, coloring, lacing, buttoning, zipping, playdough, and fitting puzzles provide practice in developing eye-hand coordination, spatial relationships, and small muscle development.

Large Muscle Activities: running, jumping, hopping, sliding, catching and throwing help in the development of large muscle coordination. This allows children to gain control over their bodies and become more confident in themselves.

Cognitive Activities: the focus is on children's curiosity in the people and world around them. Children learn to think, remember, imagine, gather and organize information which they use to problem solve and develop judgment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

During separation time, keep in mind...

Sometimes separation may be difficult for you and your child. You may want to show your child the classroom where you will be during parent discussion. When it's time to separate, get your child settled in with snacks and/or activities, say a short goodbye, let them know you will be back after playtime and leave promptly. Be reassuring and relaxed. If your child senses you are unsure about separation, it may be harder to separate. Do not sneak out. Build a sense of trust by being honest with your child. You can leave a favorite toy, blanket, or pacifier with your child to offer security and reassurance. If your child is crying, say "It's okay to be sad and cry. I know you will have a good time when you're done being sad. I love you and I will come back." The teacher will call you if the crying continues for more than 10 minutes.

Parent Education Time

Discussion time is planned to be relevant and tailored to participant needs and children's ages. ECFE provides a confidential environment where parents can make friends, share concerns, and gain knowledge about the five domains of parent education identified by the Minnesota Department of Education. The Parent Education Core Curriculum Framework is used as a topic guide and content is structured around five main areas:

- Early Childhood Development
- Family Development
- Culture and Community
- Parent Development
- Parent-Child Relationships

A licensed parent educator guides and facilitates group discussion, providing information and resources. Sharing in learning and experiences decreases feelings of isolation and helps parents feel supported while they build and strengthen their relationships with their children, thereby increasing their joy and satisfaction in their role. During discussion time, keep in mind:

- Everyone participates at their own comfort level yet understands that the richness of group conversation is enhanced when all participate.
- Personal information shared in the group is confidential.
- It's okay to pass.
- Avoid side conversations to give full attention to those speaking.
- We all have different ways of parenting. It's okay to disagree and still support each other.
- The discussion time allows parents to learn from the entire group and to find support for their critical role as parents.
- After parent discussion time, please be prompt to pick up your children. They are eagerly awaiting your return.

Returning to the room

- Parents/guardians return to the room together and greet the children.
- The entire group cleans up together.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sibling Care

Care for siblings is available, if needed, during most classes. Siblings from three months through kindergarten are eligible. Babies who are not yet crawling are welcome to come to class with their parents. Registration is required as space is limited.

Sibling Care Expectations:

- Children may be dropped off 10 minutes before scheduled class time
- Please pick up your child promptly when class is done
- Snack donations are welcome and appreciated

Cell Phones

Out of respect to all participants, avoid using your cell phone or texting during class. If you need to make an emergency call, please let staff know and step out into the hallway. If you need to have your phone on in case of an emergency, please put it on silent or vibrate and alert the teacher.

Attendance Expectations

Please notify the office (952) 442-0613 or email your teacher to let them know that you will not be attending class and include siblings registered for sibling care.

Arrival Time / Departure Time

- Staff are preparing the classroom, please arrive no earlier than five minutes before class time.
- To keep everyone safe families should go straight to their designated classroom.
- Please avoid loitering in the lobby. If you would like to chat after class, please do so outside the building.
- Hang coats and personal belongings in designated areas.
- Put a name tag on yourself and your child every week.
- Wash hands with soap and water before starting class.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Dressing for School

We ask that you dress your child comfortably for play. It is our desire that children participate fully in large muscle opportunities, art, sensory play, science experiences and nature play, which can be messy. Please make sure your child wears sturdy shoes to school for safety.

Snack Time

Our program includes child snack time as an important part of the children's classroom routine. It provides a time when all the children can gather around and begin to socialize with other children and develop self-help skills.

Minnesota Department of Health regulations require that all food brought to school for children be commercially prepared or it can be fresh produce. We encourage you to bring nutritious options. Celebration foods like birthday treats, may be brought to be shared with the class. Please let staff know in advance. Individual teachers may have special guidelines due to allergies and you will be notified in that case.

Parents with children who have food allergies, please help us keep your child safe by checking snack labels before they are served at each class time.

Allergies

In any given school year we may have students and staff with life threatening allergies to bee stings, peanuts and/or tree nuts. Although we can store emergency medications and treatments with your help in the event of a severe allergic reaction, the best treatment is prevention since measures may not be adequate to counteract the swift severe reactions that may occur. Ideally our environment would be free of all allergens, including those related to foods, but this is not always possible. With peanuts it can be especially difficult since they can be a hidden ingredient in foods. In an effort to keep children and adults safe we ask that you frequently remind your child never to share any part of their lunch or snack.

Birth Date Guidelines

For both ECFE and preschool classes, please select your class based on your child's age by Sept. 1, 2024. This age requirement aligns with district kindergarten age requirements.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Registration / Tuition

Register online or stop into the Early Childhood office during business hours. Tuition will be collected during the first week of class. Tuition reimbursements will not be given in the event of illness or vacation.

A sliding fee scale is offered based on income. The fee scale is listed on the ECFE website. Pick a category based on your household income, unless otherwise noted. All families are welcome at ECFE. No one is denied access to class due to an inability to pay. Special Event Fees do not qualify for sliding fees.

Refund Policy

A full refund is issued for cancellations before the session begins, minus a \$10.00 processing fee. After the first week, refunds are prorated. There are no refunds midway through a session or for missed days. Weather related refunds will not be issued for weekly ECFE classes. Special Events refunds will only be given with 5-day advance notice. Credit vouchers may be given for special events that are canceled due to weather in the event that they can't be rescheduled.

Safety Guidelines

As part of our ongoing commitment to student safety, we practice fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills throughout the year. When we conduct safety drills, visitors, parents/guardians and anyone else in the building are expected to participate. If you are in a building during a drill, follow the instructions of the early childhood or building staff.

Parking Safety

There is designated parking in the lot next to the playground at the District Education Center. Overflow parking is available next door in the Laketown Gymnastics lot or along the street on the school side curb. Our parking lots are very busy places.

- Drive slowly through the parking lot.
- Please hold your child's hand to and from the car.
- If you need assistance please ask your teacher. We will be glad to help.
- Remember to never leave your child unattended in the car while you come in to drop off/pick up another child.

Cleaning Procedures

We disinfect tables, toys and equipment after each class. If you notice your child mouthing a toy, please put it in a designated bin when they are done playing with it so it can be sanitized.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Health Policy

Please keep your child home if he/she has had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

- a fever
- vomiting or diarrhea
- any undiagnosed rash
- red, crusty, weepy eyes until antibiotics have been started
- yellow or greenish discharge from the nose
- harsh cough, sore throat, a contagious stage of any communicable disease
- when your child is not feeling well enough to function and learn at school
- head lice

In order to provide a healthy environment for everyone, teaching staff will consult with you if your child appears too ill to be at school. Notify the early childhood staff if your child has a communicable disease and has exposed other children. Staff will notify the parents/guardians of the children who were exposed using confidentiality policies.

Immunizations

State law mandates that an immunization record be kept on file for each child in our program. The immunization form is due before the start of the school year. If you are a conscientious objector, a notarized immunization form must be on file with the school district. We have two certified notaries employed in the district who can help with this requirement. Free or reduced cost immunizations for children are available through Carver Co. Public Health at 952-361-1329.

Diapering

Parents/guardians are responsible for changing their own child's diaper or for taking them to the bathroom. A good time to do this is before leaving for discussion time. When children are in the process of toilet training we will assist unless advised differently by the parents or in any non-separating class. Parents will be called to change diapers for children using them. All diapering needs to take place on a changing table or pad, which is provided in the restrooms.

Mandated Reporting

Staff are mandated by state law to report any instance of observed or suspected neglect and physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school, or community setting.

Evaluations

At least once a year, parents will be asked to fill out an evaluation form to provide feedback on their experience. Please know that we welcome your feedback and comments throughout the year. You do not need to wait for a formal evaluation to let us know how we can better meet the needs of your family.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Home Visit / One-to-One Parenting Session

We have access to many resources and information to support families with a wide variety of needs and would be happy to connect you. ISD 110 employs parent educators who can lend support to parents. Home and center-based visits, email, Q&A and phone conversations are available to families. To schedule an appointment please fill out this form and a staff person will be in contact with you.

[Parent Coaching Request Form](#)

[Parent Resource Page](#)

Early Childhood Advisory Council

All parents are invited to become active members of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, both Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Preschool alike. This council supports the early childhood programs in many ways including; fundraisers, staff recognition, volunteering opportunities and programs that enhance the education of our students and families. The Early Childhood Advisory Council meets Monthly and hosts events that build community within our programs.

Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening is a free, developmental check required by the State of Minnesota for kindergarten entrance.

Screening appointments:

- Last approximately 60 minutes with parent observation during the entire appointment
- Are best when complete at the age of 3–4 years
- Check your child's height, weight, hearing, vision, immunization record, coordination, large muscle and small motor skills, speech, learning development, and social/emotional skills
- Involves playful activities that make it an enjoyable experience for your child, while providing valuable information to ensure development is on track
- Are not tests. Screening simply helps identify any needs that may require additional support before your child enters kindergarten.
- Your screener will discuss the results of the screening with you immediately and answer any questions you may have
-

To schedule an appointment, use [this link](#). If you need assistance, call (952) 442-0613.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Holidays

We approach holidays with cultural sensitivity. Please be open with concerns you have about what might be included in these days and potential conflict to your personal beliefs. With open communication we have found culturally appropriate ways to celebrate a variety of holidays within our classroom. If you have information about celebrations that you would like to share with the class, please let your child's teacher know to see how we might share those ideas.

Photos and Video

We take many photos in class. A portion of these photos are used as part of our curriculum and classroom management. Other photos are used in promotional literature or on our programs Facebook page. If for any reason you are not comfortable having your child's photo taken in class for these purposes, please let a staff member know so that we can offer you an opt out form. In addition, professional photos will be taken of every child in the fall. Purchase of these photos is optional.

The staff recognizes the occasional request from parents to videotape and/or film an activity or programs in which their child is participating. The videotaping and/or filming of special programs is permissible. The videotaping and/or filming of routine daily instructional programming and/or practices requires teacher notification and permission and is not to include videotaping and/or filming of other students, adults, and/or staff without permission being granted by the parent/guardian and/or respective adult/staff member.

Lost and Found

There's a good bet we know where the missing gym shoe, mitten or hat is! Each year many items find their way to our Lost and Found, and you can help this problem by:

- Clearly labeling your child's coats, jackets, sweaters, caps and boots with their full name.
- Trying to locate the item immediately upon discovering it is lost. Don't let too much time elapse.
- Using caution in allowing articles of sentimental or monetary value to be brought to school.

Unclaimed lost and found items are donated to a local agency on a regular basis