Where Learning Begins!

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) offers preschool classes for our youngest learners, children 3-5 years of age. We have a preschool program to fit every child’s needs; currently we host five distinct programs. Something all of the programs have in common is the warm, caring relationships that are developed between staff and children throughout the building, from the front office to the classrooms and even into the lunchroom. This is evidenced by the happy faces you will encounter throughout the ECC. All classrooms are staffed with highly talented professionals who make learning engaging and fun. We want our students’ first school experiences to give them not only the skills to learn, but the desire as well. It is our mission that children will leave the Early Childhood Center with a love of learning and a strong academic and social foundation.

Great Start Readiness Program

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a free, state-funded preschool program at the Early Childhood Center that serves 4-year-old children from qualifying families. Teaching young children is as challenging as it is exciting, and the entire staff at the ECC works diligently to give the students the best experience possible to build a solid foundation for learning.

Following the research-based Creative Curriculum, students are engaged through exploration and discovery as they learn using various “studies” during the school year. Each study is planned based on student interest and student-led inquiry, incorporating the 38 Objectives for Development and Learning. The study is an integral part of the classroom atmosphere and is woven into all areas.

Families play a very important role in student learning and are involved throughout each study. For example, if our study is trees, families are encouraged to take their child on a nature walk, collect items to investigate, and have a daily discussion of what is being learned that pertains to that study. At the completion of a study, a celebration is planned for all to revel in what they have learned. Often, field trips are the perfect opportunity to conclude a study.

Student Quotes:

- “Trees make big leaves... they make apples for everybody to eat.” - Bethany
- “When I go outside, I see the trees.” - Piper L.
- “Trees are at my grandpa’s.” - Brayden
Our Tuition-Based Preschool program (TBPS) gives families the option to choose between full or half days with the flexibility to choose the specific days their child will attend in order to accommodate busy family schedules. TBPS mirrors GSRP in the caliber of instruction and focus on a trilogy of learning: curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Our program utilizes Creative Curriculum with whole-group and small-group instruction that focuses on fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development, and social-emotional skills, all while integrating literacy, math, science, and social studies.

In addition to academics, our TBPS program implements Conscious Discipline, a social-emotional self-regulation program that is based on fostering a School Family where everyone is valued and accepted. Children manage BIG emotions in our Safe Spot with a variety of self-regulation tools, such as the Feeling Buddies, Self-Regulation Board, and breathing exercises. One parent shared the impact the program has had on her son: "We have now made a Safe Spot in our home, where my son can go when he feels mad, sad, frustrated, or angry."

Student quote: "I like being a part of a School Family; we look out for each other."

Many staff members of our district bring their children to the ECC to take part in our Tuition Based Preschool program. This speaks to our quality and the confidence that our employees have in this program. Our TBPS classroom is busy getting students ready for kindergarten, both academically and emotionally! The ECC is a great place to be!

The Early Childhood Special Education program (ECSE) is a language-based, play-based program for special needs students. Students in this program must be evaluated and found to have delays in their development. We modify the Creative Curriculum to meet individual student needs and focus on developing functional communication. This may be verbal or nonverbal communication; nonverbal communication relies on the use of the Core Vocabulary Board or PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System).

While functional communication is our main focus, we include all aspects of the developing child. In addition to early literacy and early math skills, we focus on fine and gross motor skills. Students in the ECSE program receive occupational therapy; students who require direct physical therapy also receive this service.

We provide opportunities for social-emotional development by visiting our peers in the other ECC programs. Children learn best through play, especially play with others, so we strive for daily visits to the GSRP classrooms to enjoy choice time with our peers.

Another enjoyable aspect of our daily routine is going to our incredible gross motor/sensory room. We have fun climbing, jumping, swinging, blowing bubbles, and even building with large foam blocks. The gross motor room is the highlight of our day!

ECC also offers a unique program called Transition ECSE twice weekly for students transitioning from the Macomb Infant Preschool Program and for students who are identified as needing support in the area of speech-language development.

This class offers speech-language services with a licensed speech-language pathologist and a teacher consultant who work in collaboration to provide a language-enriched environment that promotes language acquisition skills and pre-school readiness skills.

The ECC also houses two Head Start classrooms. Head Start is a free, federally-funded program for those families that meet the eligibility requirements. To find out more about this program, you may contact the county at 586-469-5215.

Tuition-Based Preschool