



## **Museum Academy Magnet School**

A program of the Capitol Region Education Council

### **2018- 2019 Pre-Kindergarten Student-Parent Handbook**

**CREC Museum Academy PK Handbook**  
**Early Childhood Programs Supplemental Practices & Procedures**  
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## **Section 1-Welcome**

Welcome to CRECs Early Childhood Programs. Our goal is to provide your child with a healthy, safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment. Each CREC school offers a unique theme that allows children to identify, refine and develop their talents and interests. Each school provides a diverse learning community that prepares children for living and learning as global citizens in a diverse environment. Our schools offer a personalized educational approach for each child in a curriculum designed to spark a lasting appreciation for knowledge. The focus of our early childhood curriculum is not just an accumulation of facts and skills but rather the strengthening of an ability to reason and think independently.

### **Mission of CREC Schools**

The CREC Mission Statement is: Equity, excellence, and success for all, through high-quality educational services.

### **Early Childhood Program Philosophy and Curriculum**

We believe that children learn best in an environment where their interests and opinions are supported, their solutions to problems are encouraged, and active learning through play is valued. Our philosophy emphasizes respect for self, others and the classroom environment.

CRECs Early Childhood Program curriculum has its base in developmentally appropriate practice and uses the State of Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) as a guideline for curriculum development. The CT ELDS are learning and developmental outcomes to be intentionally addressed through planned experiences, materials and interactions. Learning outcomes are achieved through:

- A variety of hands-on discovery activities and materials on a daily basis that support learning goals.
- Responsive teaching staff who meet the individual needs of the children and families we serve.
- Reflective practices that create an environment of inclusion and honor diversity.
- Partnership with families that fosters strong reciprocal relationships and achieves mutually desired goals.

Our curriculum is implemented using teacher observation and documentation to plan relevant, developmentally appropriate experience where children can explore, experiment, play, and ask questions.

**CREC Museum Academy Elementary Magnet School Curriculum Statement:**

Museum Academy, located at 11 Turkey Hill Road in Bloomfield, CT is an inter-district magnet school operated and managed by the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC). The school's philosophical foundation is based on museum learning practices and Visual Thinking Strategies philosophy. Our mission is to provide a comprehensive and challenging museum-based learning experience to all students in grades preK-5. This approach will enable students to learn naturally in environments that support guided exploration and discovery, encourage apprenticeships and artifacts, and foster meaningful interactions among peers.

**Section 2-Classroom Routines and Procedures  
A Typical Day in our Program**

<b>Greetings/Attendance/Free Choice Centers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher greet families and children upon arrival</li> <li>• Children participate in table activities, free choice centers or read books with teacher and friends</li> </ul>
<b>Morning Meeting</b>	Includes a variety: daily greeting, morning message, whole group activities, songs, social emotional curriculum, read aloud, shared reading and writing
<b>AM Centers/Choice Time/ Small Group Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher initiated activity focusing on CT ELDS.</li> <li>• Children carry out plan plans, play in learning centers with purpose, solve problems and construct knowledge while adults interact with children in the play setting</li> </ul>
<b>Snack Time</b>	Served family style
<b>Related Arts</b>	Daily opportunity to participate in one of the following: music, physical education, library media, and art class.
<b>Shared Reading</b>	Teacher read stories or poems to the class. Children participate in literacy related activities.
<b>Outdoor and Gross Motor</b>	Children participate in group/team games and have the opportunity for structured and unstructured energetic outdoor and indoor play.
<b>Lunch</b>	Children may bring lunch from home or buy a school lunch. Self-help skills are emphasized.
<b>Quiet Time/Rest</b>	Children rest/nap comfortably and listen to quiet music.
<b>PM Centers/Choice Time/ Small Group Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher initiated activity focusing on CT ELDS.</li> <li>• Children carry out plan plans, play in learning centers with purpose, solve problems and construct knowledge while adults interact with children in the play setting</li> </ul>
<b>Gathering Time: Story and Closing Circle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story Time</li> <li>• Review of the day, wrap-up and movement</li> </ul>

We recognize that routine and structure are essential for a preschooler's sense of well-being. Each classroom has a predictable schedule from 8:30-3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### **Safe Arrival and Departure**

The Early Childhood Program is a full day, full week program. Children are expected to attend daily. It is important that each child begin and end the school day on time. When children arrive late to school they miss one of the most important components of the day, morning meeting. During morning meeting, the day's events are reviewed, children have the opportunity to greet one another and plan their day together. Thus, it is very important that children arrive on time for school. All children will be accounted for with a procedure developed by the classroom teacher that includes children signing in at arrival and signing out at departure.

If your child does not arrive by school bus you have the option of valet service. This supervised drop-off and pick-up procedure offers safety and security as well as ease, when transporting your child to and from school. We know that sometimes the unexpected occurs and you will need to drop-off or pick-up outside the regular operating hours; when this occur use the designated "PARENT DROP OFF LOOP" and escort your child to the front entrance. Parent drop off and pick up is another brief time to connect with families is helpful to ensure a smooth transition between home and school and allows us to learn any individual need your child may have that day.

### **Using the Bathroom/Toileting**

As a preschool program, we do not have the essential equipment or staffing to meet optimal health standards for diapering children. Therefore, families are strongly encouraged to ensure that their children are toilet trained before starting in the Early Childhood Program at the beginning of the school year. The exception would be if this is identified in an IEP or 504 Plan. We understand the transition to school may result in some initial toileting accidents. We will work with the child's family to ensure consistency both at home and at school. Children should be as self-sufficient as possible. Children are more successful when they wear pants with no snaps, buttons or zippers. Pants with elastic waists and underwear (not pull-ups) support children's independence with toileting. Early Childhood teachers and school nurse may assist in changing the child in an emergency.



Toilet\_training\_letter  
\_sample.pdf

## **Clothing**

Children play daily with sand, water, paint and play dough. Smocks are provided for water play and painting but still sometimes, clothing gets wet or soiled. Children are encouraged to wear clothing that they do not mind getting dirty and that they can easily pull on and off by themselves as needed. Please provide your child with two sets of extra clothing at school at all times. This includes: easy to pull on/off pants, socks, underwear and shirts. Please label all clothing with your child's name on them.

## **Outdoor Play and Sunscreen Application**

We play outside every day, weather permitting. The school nurse informs the teaching staff if recommendations from health authorities or dangerous conditions prevent outdoor play. Please ensure your child comes to school with the appropriate outer wear. Please label all outerwear with your child's initials or name.

Please apply UVA/UVB (SPF15 or higher) sunscreen protection on your child before school. Teachers do not apply sunscreen. Sunscreen is not allowed in children's cubbies. Please contact the school nurse if your child requires another application of sunscreen during the day.

When public health authorities recommend use of Insect repellent due to high risk of insect born disease, please apply this to your child prior to arriving at school. Teachers do not apply insect repellent. Insect repellent is not allowed in children's cubbies. Please contact the school nurse if your child requires another application of repellent during the day.

Playground-safe shoes are important. Please ensure your child wears non-slip, closed toed shoes (sneakers are ideal).

## **Snacks/Meals**

Daily snacks are an important part of meeting the nutritional needs of young children. Snacks should include:

- Fruit/vegetable
- Dairy (cheese, yogurt, milk)
- Meat or protein (beans)
- Bread (crackers) If a child has food allergies, the school nurse will develop a care plan that will be shared with all relevant teaching staff. Our school is nut sensitive. Please refrain from sending your child to school with nut based products.

We are not allowed to offer children high risk foods for choking such as whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, hard pretzels, raw carrots, raw peas, hot dogs. This applies to foods served as well as foods brought from home.

At Museum Academy snacks are served daily. We serve family style during centers exploration time. Snack time is a time to learn and practice communication skills and self-regulation skills as children talk and make their snack. Adults are available to

facilitate but not direct. Please refer to list sent home when making snack choices for your child.

### **Meal Time Lunches**

Each day, students eat lunch while at school. Lunch is served every day and classes eat between the hours of 11:00 am-12:00pm. During this time, students eat in the classroom with their peers. Adult support is present (as needed). Students help with mealtime tasks such as helping:

- To set the tables
- To facilitate trying new foods and conversation
- To open and assist with containers
- To wash hands
- To use utensils to clean up

### **Rest Time**

Our daily schedule includes a balance of quiet and active happenings. Rest Time is scheduled for 60 minutes daily. We provide each child with a cot and a blanket that can be easily stored, individually, in your child's cubby. Blankets will be sent home regularly for cleaning. If a family needs laundering support please feel free to let us know.

### **Celebrations** (birthdays and holidays)

Birthdays and other celebrations are special occasions for children. Parents should be mindful of the district's nutritional policy as well as the dietary restrictions of students in the classroom. These recognitions are short (ten minutes) and limited to the classroom community. We request that you inform the teacher at least one week in advance of the event and what you plan on providing to the class. The teacher will then be able to arrange a time and date for you to come in. **Please, no surprises!** We have many children with food allergies and medical conditions. Suggested alternatives to food treats include: pencils, notebooks, book marks, stickers, colored pencils, craft project or reading a book to the class. **Birthday party invitations are not to be distributed at school. Please send such invitations via the U.S. Mail system.**

### **Section 3-Health and Safety (in addition to school policies identified in the Family Handbook)**

#### **Handwashing Practices**

Young children are particularly susceptible to illness once they begin school, affecting health and causing missed educational opportunities. While illness is not always preventable, we take measures to reduce the risk of infection by practicing good hand washing and cleaning procedures. We will teach the proper handwashing procedure as part of our curriculum, and we ask all children to wash hands upon arrival, before and after meals, after playing outdoors and after using the toilet. We will use hand sanitizers as an alternative when hands are not visibly soiled.

### **Section 4-Home-School Communication & Family Involvement Opportunities**

#### **Communication between Family and Teacher**

A strong family-school partnership is important to the success of our Early Childhood Program. In addition to the Family-Teacher conferences held over the year, each teacher corresponds in a variety of ways to reach out to families and keep family members apprised of their child's preschool adventure. Our teachers send home weekly newsletters, use Twitter to tweet meaningful child milestones, and may post on Instagram and email to keep families apprised as to what is happening in the classroom. A media questionnaire and permission slip was included in your registration packet for this purpose.

Drop-off and Pick-Up times are another opportunity by which to share brief updates or ask quick questions of your child's teacher. You may also contact your child's teacher by phone or email.

#### **Volunteering**

If you would like to volunteer in your child's classroom, please arrange a time to do so with your child's classroom teacher. We hope you will consider volunteering in the classroom. It is an ideal way to see what the children are working on and how learning through play is valued. As a volunteer, you are expected to maintain confidentiality.

There are many ways to volunteer at your child's school:

- You might like to plan a special activity to tie into a learning plan/ unit of study the children are concentrating on
- You might want to do a cooking project with the children
- You may want to read a story to the children or help them write their own story!
- You may want to volunteer for one of our special events or join the PTO

- You may wish to run for a seat on the district Parent Senate
- You may choose to visit during exhibition
- You may choose to help create with the classrooms (for example-exhibits, projects, crafts, hobbies) there are additional opportunities to get involved in our school. For more information please see our school's Family/Student Handbook and feel free to reach out to our Family Community Liaison, Mr. Luis Rodriguez (lrodriguez@crec.org).

### **Confidentiality Policy**

This confidentiality policy has been adopted to ensure confidentiality and protection of individual rights to privacy for children, families and employees of The Museum Academy. The individual dignity of children, families and employees shall be respected and protected at all times in accordance with the law. Information about children, families or employees must not be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive such information. This policy extends to both internal and external disclosure.

#### **Confidentiality of Children's and Families' Information**

- All children's records must be kept in a secure file.
- Access to children's records is limited to appropriate employees and agencies.
- Children's records must not be removed from the school.
- Children's records must never be left out on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- Children's or families' private information must never be discussed among employees except on a need-to-know basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families or employees do not overhear information that is private.

### **Conferences**

At CREC Museum Academy Elementary School, conferences are held with the classroom teacher twice a year, in December and March. During this time, we address children's interests and progress in the program.

### **End of Year Transitions**

At Museum Academy, the Early Childhood Program is a two-year program. At the end of each school year, teachers will help prepare each child for the transition to summer. In May, of a child's second year in prekindergarten, transition activities are conducted. Transitions to Kindergarten visits are conducted. Children have the opportunity to spend time in a kindergarten classroom, meet the teachers, see and experience the classroom environment and try out an activity. Our preschool and kindergarten teachers meet to design the Transition to Kindergarten event. In addition the Prek and kindergarten teachers meet to discuss individual children's strengths, needs and next steps to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten.

### **Program Surveys**

We ask that all families please complete an annual survey to help us evaluate our programming. The Family Survey, distributed in April, provides you with an opportunity to share with staff your thoughts about your child's care and education in our program. Your responses to the survey questions will be an on-going method to inform our school's mission for maintaining high-quality standards in our program.