

# PSU Early Childhood Preschool Lab “Little Gorillas Preschool” Family Handbook



Department of Teaching & Leadership/Family & Consumer Sciences  
College of Education  
Pittsburg State University

Fall 2025-Spring 2026



# Little Gorillas Preschool 2025-2026 Calendar

Enrollment Forms Due  
Open House Visits  
First Day of Fall Semester

AUGUST 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Spring Tuition Due  
First day of Spring Semester

JANUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Labor Day-No Preschool

SEPTEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Spring Break-No Preschool

FEBRUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

NAEYC Conference-No Preschool  
Thanksgiving Break-No Preschool

OCTOBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

MARCH 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Last Day of Fall Semester

DECEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Last Day of Spring Semester

MAY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## **Quick Facts about the Little Gorillas Preschool**

Tax ID Number: 22-3981479

### **Preschool Director**

Dr. Amber Tankersley

- B.S.E. Elementary Education, Early Childhood, Missouri Southern State University
- M.S.E. Elementary Education, Missouri State University
- Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

Office Location: 108 FCS

Office Phone/Voicemail: 620-235-4460

E-Mail: [atankersley@pittstate.edu](mailto:atankersley@pittstate.edu)

### **Supervising Lead Preschool Teacher**

Ms. Sarah Winters

- B.S. Family & Consumer Sciences, Early Childhood Development, Pittsburg State University

Office Location: 109 FCS (Preschool Observation Room)

Preschool Phone/Voicemail: 620-235-4461

E-Mail: [swinters@pittstate.edu](mailto:swinters@pittstate.edu)

### **Family & Consumer Sciences Administrative Staff**

Dr. Jason Clemenson

Interim Chair, Teaching & Leadership

Office Phone/Voicemail: 620-235-4926

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Sammye Opela

Administrative Associate, Teaching & Leadership/Family & Consumer Sciences

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Office Phone/Voicemail: 620-235-4457 or 620-235-6105

E-Mail: [sopela@pittstate.edu](mailto:sopela@pittstate.edu)

### **Student Staff**

The preschool classroom is also staffed with PSU students enrolled in a practicum experience for one of our early childhood programs or in their preschool student teaching experience. All students are supervised by the preschool director and supervising lead teacher.

## **Introduction**

We welcome you and your children to the Little Gorillas Preschool program at Pittsburg State University! We are located on the south side of the Family and Consumer Sciences building on the PSU campus and have been in operation since 1964. We are committed to providing high-quality care and education for your child in a warm and supportive environment that will help foster your child's growth and development.

This booklet provides information about the preschool's educational program and the policies that govern it. We hope that you will find this information helpful.

If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them openly with your child's teacher or the director. We look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with you and your children.

## **Our History**

The preschool laboratory program at Pittsburg State University began in the fall of 1964, in the basement of the old Chandler Hall, with five boys and five girls aged three to five. The program was open from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., two days a week.

The lab was discontinued for a short period sometime after 1968 and then reinstated in the fall of 1971. At that time, six boys and six girls were enrolled.

In 1998, enrollment increased to sixteen, and the program was licensed to accept up to 24 children. The schedule also expanded from two to four days a week (Tuesday - Friday) to accommodate the increase in students needing to take courses associated with the labs. The program has continued to the present day and has served many children from the Pittsburg community.

In the spring of 2001, the Family and Consumer Sciences Department, including the preschool program, was relocated to other facilities on campus. The preschool was relocated to a temporary location in a farmhouse on the east end of campus while the old building was demolished and a new one was constructed.

In the fall of 2003, the Family and Consumer Sciences Department and the preschool lab relocated to our new facility, situated on the site of the former Chandler Hall. We continue to be licensed for 24 children per session, but we now have two sessions with an enrollment of no more than 18 children per session. Both preschool sessions meet Monday through Thursday, and families have the option to send their child for either 3 or 4 days.

## **Our Mission**

The mission of the PSU Early Childhood Preschool Lab is to create a safe and nurturing environment for the children of the Pittsburg community, including those of PSU students, faculty, staff, and alumni. We are committed to treating every child with warmth and respect. Our staff implements a developmentally appropriate curriculum that fosters the growth of socially responsible children.

## **Our Philosophy**

The Early Childhood Preschool Lab's philosophy is based on best practices for early childhood programs. We strive to meet the unique needs of each child, both individually and in group settings. We believe that young children learn most effectively through play and are committed to supporting their growth and development while ensuring they enjoy their childhood. Recognizing the family as the most vital influence in a child's life, we encourage families to collaborate with us in nurturing their children's learning journey.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Pittsburg State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital or parental status, ancestry, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, military or veteran status, or disabilities. The following person has been designated to address inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Director of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, 218 Russ Hall, 1701 S. Broadway, Pittsburg, KS 66762-7528, 620-235-4189, [equity@pittstate.edu](mailto:equity@pittstate.edu).

## **Purpose of a Lab School**

Early childhood laboratory schools are a standard fixture at many university campuses nationwide. These programs have leadership roles in four major areas:

1. Developing, demonstrating, and defending the rationale for developmentally appropriate practices
2. Preparing leaders...through their undergraduate education and work experience in an early childhood classroom
3. Conducting research in child development, early childhood education, and related fields
4. Providing community service through teacher training and public advocacy

Children will be enrolled in a program where it will be our privilege to work with them. College students in lab courses will be scheduled as observers and teaching assistants working with the children. Students who assist in the lab are learning about the growth and development of children, as well as how to plan and implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum in a classroom setting. These students are majoring in Family and Consumer Sciences – Child Development, Early Childhood Unified: Birth-Kindergarten, Elementary Education, Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, and other related fields.

## **Licensing & Accreditation**

The Little Gorillas Preschool is licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). A Child Care Licensing and Registration agent inspects the preschool annually. A copy of *Kansas Laws and Regulations for Licensing Preschools and Child Care Centers* is available from the director or on the KDHE website for your review at [www.kdheks.gov](http://www.kdheks.gov).

In 2012, the preschool program was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).

To become accredited, the preschool has completed the requirements and submitted to NAEYC validation and promises to remain committed to promoting the best practices regarding the following areas:

- Relationships: Creating a caring and equitable community of learners
- Family and Community: Engaging in reciprocal partnerships with families and fostering community connections
- Curriculum: Planning and implementing an engaging curriculum to meet meaningful goals.
- Teaching: Teaching to enhance each child's development and learning
- Assessment: Observing, documenting, and assessing children's development and learning
- Health: Promoting health and wellness in early childhood programs
- Physical Environment: Designing physical environments to meet the needs of early learning communities
- Professionalism: Demonstrating professionalism as an early childhood educator
- Leadership and Management: Supporting staff, children, and families through effective leadership and management

The preschool is up for reaccreditation every five years; our accreditation status is valid through April 1, 2027.

## **Enrollment Process**

1. The Little Gorillas Preschool is open to all children aged 3 to kindergarten eligibility who are on the waiting list are eligible for enrollment.
2. Applications for the waiting list may be obtained from the FCS webpage, the FCS Department (FCS 101), the program director, or the preschool office.
3. Applications for the waiting list may be submitted at any time after the child's second birthday. The child's name is placed on the waiting list for upcoming openings. Families may be asked to update their applications periodically if they were submitted more than a year before the potential date of enrollment.
4. Enrollment for each year begins in February. Families whose children are currently enrolled have priority in guaranteeing their child's placement for the following preschool year.
5. Families on the waiting list are notified of openings after current families have re-enrolled.
6. Generally, all families accepted into the program are notified by April.
7. The program enrolls children for the entire year, comprising two semesters: Fall and Spring. As specified in the preschool contract, the whole semester's tuition is due before the first day of class. Tuition payments are non-refundable.
8. A \$50 holding fee is required to confirm acceptance of a spot in the program. This deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the child's spring semester fee payment.
9. Once children are enrolled in the program, they are welcome to continue as long as they are within the 3–5 age range at the start of the fall semester and will not turn six before the end of the preschool year.
10. An enrollment packet containing all the necessary forms is sent to families after the office has received their completed contract and tuition payment. All forms must be completed and returned before the child's first day of attendance.
  - ✓ Medical Record/Child Health Assessment
  - ✓ Preschool Emergency Information
  - ✓ Authorization for Emergency Medical Care
  - ✓ All About Me
  - ✓ Photo Release
  - ✓ Permission for Off-Premises Trips
11. Questions regarding enrollment procedures should be directed to the preschool director.

### **Hours/Days of Operation**

The preschool will be in operation Monday through Thursday morning from 8:15 to 11:00 a.m. and Monday through Thursday afternoon from 12:00 to 2:45 p.m. during the weeks that university classes are in session, except for the first week of classes and finals week. During the first week of PSU classes, the lead preschool teacher, new student teachers, and practicum students prepare the preschool environment for your children. During finals week, college students are unavailable to assist with supervision, which could compromise the children's safety.

The laboratory will not operate during scheduled university holidays (Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Labor Day, the week of Thanksgiving), during breaks (between the fall and spring semesters, spring break, and summer break), or final exam week. The preschool is scheduled to be closed for several days each fall (typically in November) to allow staff to attend the NAEYC Annual Conference and Expo. The preschool calendar for the academic year is located at the front of this handbook. Dates may vary due to unforeseen circumstances. Reminders of special dates will also be included in emails and newsletters.

### **Fees & Financial Policy**

When children are enrolled in the program, they are expected to complete the entire academic year. If circumstances do not permit this, families are expected to notify the program director before the start of the next semester so that efforts can be made to reassign that spot. The program does not take children for only a portion of a semester. If families pay for the semester and then choose not to have their child attend for a portion, there is no reduction or reimbursement of fees. Formal withdrawal requires that written notification be provided to the program director.

A \$50.00 holding fee is required upon acceptance of the child for enrollment for the year. This fee reserves the child's place in the program for the year and is applied toward the spring semester's tuition payment. The holding fee is non-refundable.

Preschool tuition fees are used to support the operation of the preschool lab. Each family must sign a tuition contract indicating their understanding of the two-semester commitment, the number of days enrolled, and their intention to fulfill their financial obligations to the program. Preschool tuition for the 2025–2026 school year is **\$550.00 for three days a week** and **\$600.00 for four days a week** per semester, payable by the due dates specified in the preschool contract. A sibling discount of \$50.00 per semester is available for siblings who are concurrently enrolled. Partial payments are not accepted. Checks should be made payable to Pittsburgh State University or PSU.

Late payment of your child's tuition will incur a \$15 fee. If a child's late tuition is not paid by the timeline outlined by the director, the family will forfeit their child's preschool spot.



### **Parking/Drop Off/Pick Up**

When driving/parking on campus, please follow the posted traffic and parking signs. Two temporary parking spaces are available for families dropping off and picking up children, located south of the playground. If the temporary spaces are full, we encourage families to pull in at the alley's entrance, located to the west of our playground, to drop off or pick up children. If there are no parking spaces available, please circle the block (through the parking lot) until a spot is available. These spots are for temporary parking only; violators may be ticketed. We encourage families with parking permits (faculty/staff/students) to park for the day and walk their children to the preschool. Please do not leave your vehicle running or leave unattended children in your vehicle when arriving at or leaving preschool.

### **Arrival**

It is expected that the children will arrive on time for each session. The lead teacher and students in the preschool arrive early to prepare the preschool for the day's activities; however, children who arrive early will not be supervised or allowed to enter the classroom until the session's start time. The playground is available for use before each session, provided there is parent/guardian supervision. Children who arrive late often struggle to become fully engaged in activities.

Upon arrival, a preschool staff member will meet you and your child either at the playground gate, the curb, or your car. The lead teacher, a student teacher, parent, or other designated adult must escort each child to the playground. We will begin each day outside on the playground, weather permitting. The preschool has numerous umbrellas to retrieve and escort children through the playground on rainy days.

### **Separation**

Some children jump into coming to the preschool with both feet; others are hesitant to have their families leave them. We encourage families to develop a routine when dropping off their children, such as creating a special kiss or a wave. When it's time to leave, always say goodbye and depart decisively. Please do not try to sneak away. Children who cry when their families leave almost always settle down quickly and begin enjoying their day. Families are encouraged to call the preschool or use the observation booth to check on their child if they have any concerns. Our teachers will also contact families to inform them when their child has settled in and is actively participating in the day's activities. We have found that separation can be equally upsetting to families. If you have concerns, speak with the lead preschool teacher or the director. Separation is often easier when children arrive on a consistent schedule.

## **Departure**

The preschool staff will release a child to only the enrolling parent or to other adults authorized in writing on the *Enrollment Form*. Children will be released only to adults. For your child's safety, the teacher on duty will request identification from anyone unfamiliar to us who wishes to pick up children. Families may come to the playground gate, and their child will be released to go home, or preschool staff will bring children to their waiting cars.

If your child must leave before the end of the preschool session, please come to the preschool office. We will alert your child that you are there and help gather his or her belongings.

## **Late Pick-Up Fee**

Children are expected to be picked up within 10 minutes of the end of their child's session. Families arriving more than 10 minutes late will be notified that their child has not been picked up. Please ensure that you communicate pick-up instructions to others who may be picking up your child. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be applied to families who arrive late to pick up their children. This policy remains in effect even if the family notifies the preschool that they expect to be late in picking up their child.

## **Preschool Access**

All staff and visitors will enter and exit through the office/observation room (FCS 109) so that we can monitor who is coming and going. The preschool entrance from the building, FCS 110, is locked when preschool is in session.

## **Our Staff**

The preschool employs one full-time lead teacher and a director. Our lead teacher must hold at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood or a closely related field, and our director must have at least a master's degree in early childhood or a closely related field. The lead teacher and director must also complete numerous hours of workshops and continuing education in the field of early childhood. Licensing regulations require staff members to obtain at least 16 hours of annual in-service training.

The center is also staffed with students majoring or minoring in child development. Some adult students in the preschool are enrolled in *FCS 591 Supervised Teaching in the Preschool Lab*. They are referred to as student teachers. Student teachers attend their assigned session every day of the week. Each student teacher is assigned a portion of the semester where they oversee basic preschool operations and plan learning experiences for your children.

We also have students enrolled in preschool practicum labs. These students spend between 30 and 45 hours each semester in the preschool working with the teachers and children. Practicum students attend one session per week. The students enrolled in Developmental Planning create

learning activities and actively participate with your children. The *Interacting with Children* lab students practice observation, documentation, and interaction techniques.

We are required to maintain a ratio of 1:12; however, we are fortunate to have often more adults than needed, which provides the children with additional attention. We can easily maintain appropriate adult-to-child ratios with the number of staff and adult students.

### **Curriculum**

The preschool teachers and their assistants recognize that young children learn best through hands-on experiences. Therefore, the curriculum is constructive, allowing children to interact with their thoughts and experiences through learning centers and activities. The teachers prepare a stimulating environment that is conducive to learning.

Our curriculum is based on Jean Piaget's developmental theory, which identifies the characteristics of the young child's thinking, emerging abilities, and developmental limitations. Our curriculum emphasizes active learning, in which the child chooses an activity or task, carries it out, and then reflects on what they have done. It promotes the development of a child's thinking skills and problem-solving abilities.

The preschool program also follows guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices. In our planning, we design age-appropriate experiences that take into account individuality and each child's unique social and cultural background.

### **Goals/Developmental Domains**

Our curriculum focuses on your child's development in the following domains:

- **Creative:** A child's creative development centers on discovering and appreciating the world of art around them through the visual arts, dramatic arts, music, literary arts, and usable arts/crafts.
- **Social-Emotional:** The social-emotional domain focuses on a child's self-awareness, emotional intelligence, social skill development, socialization, social responsibility, and social studies. The social-emotional domain allows children to discover more about themselves, their friends, and others in the world around them.
- **Cognitive:** The cognitive domain encompasses children's understanding and processing of knowledge. Children gain physical and scientific knowledge about the world around them, develop mathematical skills, learn how to represent thoughts and ideas, become aware of cultural and social conventions, and develop an understanding of their thinking.
- **Language:** The language domain encompasses children's growing expertise in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- **Physical:** The physical domain includes children's development of fine and gross motor skills, health and safety knowledge, and nutrition.

## **The Importance of Play**

Our program is based on the philosophy that children learn from the world around them — through play. Children require numerous opportunities and experiences with real objects and events before they can comprehend the meaning of symbols, such as letters and numbers. Learning occurs as young children touch, manipulate, experiment with things, and interact with people. The teacher's role is to create an environment that supports the ideas and experiences of children, inviting them to observe, be active, make choices, and experiment. Children spontaneously engage in activities such as block building, painting, or dramatic play, adding information to what they already know and generating new understandings. Children learn simple concepts and then build on these concepts to grasp more complex ideas. The teachers observe the children's interactions with others and the environment, making changes and modifications to suit each child's needs for exploration and learning. For example, if children have mastered putting together simple puzzles, more complex puzzles with additional pieces and shapes would be introduced to provide a greater challenge.

## **Our Daily Activities**

The lead preschool teacher, student teachers, and/or practicum students plan each day's activities. While the preschool follows a general schedule each day, we are flexible to accommodate the children's interests, weather conditions, and special events. The following descriptions of activities are not necessarily listed in the order they occur during a typical preschool day.

**Arrival:** Teachers will greet families at the playground gate or alleyway to retrieve children before each session. During this time, children come onto the playground and stack their backpacks near the playground door.

**Outside Activity Time:** As the weather permits, children begin their day on the playground. There are many learning opportunities on the playground (planned and unplanned) and ample time for free exploration and movement. The climbing equipment, slides, tire swing, and sandbox are always available. Loose equipment and toys, such as tricycles, balls, hoops, blocks, bubbles, and scooters, are made available based on the children's interests and the day's plans.

**Transition:** During this time, children bring backpacks in from the playground and put their belongings in their cubbies. We encourage them to use the bathroom at this time. They all wash their hands before having a snack.

**Snack:** Snack is served family-style, with teachers sitting with the children, engaging in, and facilitating conversations. Snack time is a prime opportunity to practice math concepts, social conventions, self-help skills, and language skills—this is accomplished as we take turns passing items, identifying the number of snack items to choose, saying “please” and “thank you”, and participating in conversations. **Please notify us of any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have.**

There is another **transition from snack to our group meeting.** As snack time begins to wind down, an adult at each table begins to dismiss children to clean up their place at the table, which helps strengthen independence and self-help skills.

**Group Meeting:** Many things happen during group meetings. It is the one time each day when whole-group instruction takes place. It is a time when the children gather as a group with the teacher and other adults. Group meetings include activities such as singing songs, engaging in creative movement, reading books, and learning about special events. The format of our group meeting varies each day.

**Sign-In:** During this time, the children practice identifying their names as they “sign in” with the assistance of a teacher. “Sign-in is a way to foster emergent literacy in preschool-age children. Our “sign-in” routine varies from semester to semester and sometimes week to week as our student teachers experiment with different ways to accomplish this task.

**Small group activities:** This provides our teachers with an opportunity to work with small groups of children, offering more direct teaching and evaluation of their knowledge and skills. Activities are planned by the lead preschool teacher, student teachers, and practicum students; therefore, the activities vary daily. Activities target a variety of developmental domains. Lesson plans for individual group activities are kept on file in the preschool. Each plan details the activity, its objectives, and the expected outcomes.

**Center Time:** During this time, children choose to participate in activities available within the learning centers in the classroom. The teachers include a variety of activities and materials that target all areas of development, including physical experiences, literacy, mathematics, science, visual and musical arts, and social interaction, through their play. The teachers will also determine how many children should be involved in a center or activity at a time so that each child can benefit from the experience.

**Ending Group Meeting:** The children gather again with the teachers. This meeting marks the end of the session and serves as an opportunity to review the day’s events and provide closure for the children.

**Dismissal:** Children are dismissed to retrieve their belongings from their cubbies. Then, they go outside to line up near the playground gate to wait for their families.

## **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play will be provided daily unless it is raining, the temperature or wind chill falls below 32 degrees, or during periods of extreme heat. Most health professionals recommend a daily dose of fresh air for growing children. If children are dressed appropriately, weather conditions should not pose risks to them. All children in attendance will be expected to go outside. If your child is too sick to go outside, they should be kept at home until they are well enough to participate in all preschool activities, including outdoor play.

The preschool staff will use sound judgment in deciding whether to go outside.

Rainy days: Teachers plan additional indoor activities on rainy days. When damp or misty, the children may go outside for at least a short time, depending on the temperature. Families should plan for their children to go out every day, regardless of the weather, and dress them accordingly.

Snowy days: If the windchill is below 32 degrees, the children will remain indoors. However, on snowy days, children may go outside for a brief period. Please send appropriate clothing, including coats, gloves or mittens, and hats.

Hot days: When the temperature and/or heat index rises, we limit outdoor time. When possible, we incorporate water play on warmer days to help cool the children on the playground. We also ensure that drinking water is readily available when it's hot outside. Children should bring refillable water bottles to preschool each day.

## **Field Trips**

Occasionally, the preschool will take a field trip to enrich the children's experiences beyond what can be provided within the preschool setting. We are fortunate to have a wide variety of resources on campus; therefore, the classes will not take field trips that are not within walking distance of the preschool. A permission slip for excursions is included in the enrollment packet. Families will be informed when field trips are planned. Trips are only planned when there will be adequate supervision to ensure the trip occurs safely. Children will be accompanied by the lead preschool teacher, student teachers, and practicum students. Families may be invited to join the group for these experiences. When the classroom goes on a field trip, notices are posted on all preschool doors to inform families of our whereabouts while we are away. Preschool staff will also leave a mobile contact number. Emergency information for each child and a first aid kit must be taken with the group on their field trip.

## **Technology & Media Use**

In our preschool program, we focus on children engaging in hands-on activities. We do not have computers, iPads, TVs, or other devices for children to use in our program. We will occasionally show a brief video that relates to our current theme or provides visual cues for a music and movement activity.

## **Holiday Celebrations**

Our program believes holidays are essential to cultural and family growth and learning. However, for very young children, the anticipation, build-up, and experiences of events, when integrated into all aspects of children's lives, can be overwhelming. For this reason, we have chosen not to celebrate holidays as a part of the instructional experiences within our preschool. By doing this, we can focus more on teaching and providing your child with a consistent and rich learning environment. With our philosophy in mind, we kindly request that families refrain from sending treat bags and other gifts during the holidays.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays are a special time that we enjoy sharing with your child. Treats may be sent for your child's birthday; however, we request that all treats be pre-packaged or prepared in a commercial facility. We cannot serve homemade goodies. Please provide your child's teacher with advance notice if you plan to bring treats. The teacher will inform you of the number of children who will be in attendance on the day you plan to bring treats, as well as any food allergies or special dietary restrictions. The snack planned for the day will also be served unless the birthday treat meets our snack guidelines.

Please remember that although we are happy to share the excitement of your child's birthday by sharing a special snack and singing to them, this is not the appropriate setting for a full-blown party. In fairness to all, we want all children to have a similar birthday experience in the classroom; therefore, we kindly request that celebrations during preschool sessions be kept simple. If you wish to invite children from the center to an outside birthday party, the preschool teacher can send home invitations with each child. If you are distributing invitations at the preschool, we ask that you invite all the children from your child's classroom. Otherwise, contact families individually and refrain from sending invitations to preschool.

## **Personal Belongings**

Each child will be assigned to a cubby in the classroom. Children may use the cubby to store their jackets, backpacks, and other belongings. Please check your child's backpack for announcements, messages, and work.

Since our teachers prepare many activities for your children to engage in while at preschool, we kindly request that you leave toys at home to avoid potential conflicts, loss, or damage.

Weapons, real or pretend, are never permitted at preschool. Please check with your child's teacher to see if your child has something unique to share with the class, such as a book or another activity that the entire group may enjoy. All personal items should be clearly and permanently labeled to minimize the risk of loss or confusion over belongings.

### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in clothing appropriate for active play. While at preschool, children will participate in messy art projects, water and sand play, and outdoor play. We recommend that children do not wear sandals or other open-toed shoes. Sandals also fail to offer adequate toe protection from trikes and other outdoor equipment.

We request that each child always have a complete set or two of season-appropriate clothing in their backpack, including underwear, a shirt, pants, and socks. Some families prefer to send a set of extra clothes in a ziplock baggie marked with their child's name to be kept in the preschool for the semester. Families will be notified if we do not have a change of clothing for their child. Please label your children's belongings with their initials or names.

Ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Coats, warm pants, boots, hats, and gloves or mittens are necessary during winter, while shorts are suitable when the weather is hot.

### **Water Bottles**

Many preschools have a long list of supplies, but we do not. We kindly request that families send their children with a reusable water bottle to use throughout their preschool day. We prefer 14-16-ounce bottles, but no more than 20 ounces. The bottles should have closeable lids (rather than an open top or straw), the closures should stay attached, and your child should be able to open and close them independently.

### **Health Policy**

Within 60 days of a child's first day in preschool, we must have their completed medical form signed by a physician stating that they are free from communicable diseases and have received the required immunizations or are currently receiving the required immunizations. No new health form is necessary if your child continues from the previous year, provided their immunizations are up to date.

Children's immunizations must be up to date, following the recommendations of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. If we discover that your child is missing any immunizations, you will be notified to provide proof of the missing immunization or evidence that your child is scheduled to receive the vaccine. It is possible that your child could be excluded from preschool until their immunizations are up to date. Children who may be under-immunized may be excluded if a vaccine-preventable disease or illness occurs in the preschool.



## **Illnesses & Exclusion Guidelines**

Please check your child each morning before bringing them to preschool. We rely on you to keep your child at home if they show any signs of illness. If your child has been sick or if you're unsure whether they should attend, please let us know—we're happy to help. Keeping sick children at home helps protect the health of other children and staff. If your child is absent due to illness, please notify the preschool by calling or emailing us.

Preschool staff conduct daily informal health checks to monitor the well-being of children. To protect the health of all children, those showing signs of illness or infection will not be admitted to preschool. Any health concerns will be communicated directly to the family, and full cooperation with our health policy is essential. Our policies are designed to safeguard children's well-being and minimize avoidable absences due to illness. Families will be notified if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease or illness.

Refer to the following chart for more guidance when determining if your child is well enough to attend preschool:

<b>Symptom</b>	<b>Keep your child home until:</b>
Fever	fever registers below 100.4° without medication for at least 24 hours.
Runny nose	thick yellow or green discharge clears up.
Earache	a physician examines the child and recommends the child return to school.
Rash	a physician determines the cause and recommends that the child return to school.
Sore throat	a physician determines the cause, and that no strep infection exists, and the throat is healed.
Cough	coughing subsides
Pale or flushed skin	color returns to normal
Red or watery eyes	eyes return to normal or until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment for pink eye has begun.
Yellow discharge from the area around the eye(s) (Pinkeye)	a physician treats the child and recommends that the child is ready to return to school with no health risk to other children. Typically, the child may return 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.
Lice	the child has been treated, examined, and found lice/nit-free for two days.
Upset stomach or diarrhea (within 24 hours or less of departure for school)	no further problems exist, and the child is eating normally without experiencing an upset stomach or diarrhea.
Draining sore	until draining stops and/or a physician determines the child may return to school with the sore covered.
COVID-19 (positive test or exposure)	please refer to the current Kansas Department of Health & Environment isolation and quarantine guidance

### **Preschool staff will notify families if their child:**

- Has a fever (100° or above)
- Has diarrhea
- Vomits
- Shows signs of chickenpox, impetigo, or other rashes
- Shows signs of “pink eye”
- Shows signs of head lice or nits

Proper care at the beginning of an illness can often shorten its duration and severity. The family will be notified immediately if a child shows signs of illness or infection while at preschool. The child will be provided with a quiet place to rest until they can be picked up. Families will be asked to arrange for their child to be picked up within 30 minutes of notification. Children must be symptom-free for 24 hours and able to fully participate in all activities before returning to preschool.

**Health Policy Disclaimer:** During public health emergencies, the preschool will follow recommendations regarding children’s health and program procedures from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). These policies and procedures may differ from those outlined in this handbook. Families will be notified of any changes as they are made.

### **Medication Policy**

It is the policy of the Little Gorillas preschool to refrain from administering medication to children enrolled in its preschool program, except in cases where a child has a condition that may necessitate emergency administration, such as an inhaler or EpiPen, as ordered by a physician. When a child has such a prescription, it would only be administered by the lead preschool teacher or the preschool director, who have both had training specifically for the administration of medication. A permission form, available from the lead teacher or director, must be filled out by the parent or guardian. The medication, in its original container, would be provided with the following information: the child’s name, the name of the medication, the dosage, the dosage intervals, the name of the physician, and the date the prescription was filled. The label shall be considered the physician's order. Medications are stored in a locked box within a child-proof upper cabinet in the preschool's kitchen area. A record shall be kept in the child’s file of who administered the medication, along with the date and time it was given.

### **Sunscreen**

It is the policy of the Little Gorillas Preschool **NOT** to apply sunscreen to children. If sunscreen is required, the parent and/or guardian must apply it to their child before bringing them to preschool. Some shade is always available under the picnic canopy and the playground equipment.

### **Special Diets**

If your child has special feeding needs, food allergies, or restrictions, please discuss these with the program director and/or lead preschool teacher at the time of enrollment.

We need a statement for our files if your child has a food allergy or requires a substitution. If you have religious convictions against any food items, we kindly request a written statement specifying this to be included in your child's file. The preschool will eliminate restricted food items from that child's snack or provide a suitable substitution.

If a family requests it, the preschool staff will provide information about the type and quantity of food their child consumes daily.

### **Accidents**

If a child is injured while at preschool, the staff will take the following steps:

- Administer necessary first aid. At least one adult trained in first aid and CPR is always on duty.
- When a child receives a bump or scrape, the lead teacher will notify the family by phone or at pick-up. An incident form will also be completed. This form describes the nature of the injury and the type of first aid administered. Families will receive a copy of this form, and one will be kept in your child's preschool enrollment file.
- If a family cannot be reached, the director will ensure that the child receives proper medical attention as indicated by the family on the child's *Enrollment Form*.
- If the staff decides this is an emergency, campus security and/or 911 will be contacted to provide emergency assistance. If necessary, the emergency medical service will transport your child to a medical facility as designated on your *Enrollment Form*. A parent or alternate listed will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's primary healthcare provider may also be made.

### **Hand Washing**

Frequent hand washing is the most effective way to prevent disease and illness. Please join us, if you're not already, in helping your child develop the habit of frequently washing their hands. Children should learn to use soap and warm water and to vigorously rub their hands together for at least 20 seconds while washing. Hands should be washed before eating, after using the bathroom, after playing outside, and throughout the day as needed. Hand sanitizers are readily available and can be effective in a pinch, but hand washing with soap and water is the preferred method.

### **Child Passenger Safety**

Even though the preschool does not provide transportation for children, we encourage families to be aware of and follow current child passenger safety laws and recommendations.

- Kansas law requires all children to be properly restrained in a motor vehicle.
- Children under the age of 4 are required to be in a federally approved child safety seat.
- All children aged 4-8 are required to ride in a booster seat unless they weigh more than 80 pounds or are taller than 4 feet 9 inches.

Please keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until they reach the top height or weight limit allowed by the manufacturer of your car seat. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to transition to a booster seat, which should still be used in the back seat. For the safety of your child, please comply with this law. The law specifies that, as the parent/guardian, you are responsible for providing a child safety seat to anyone who transports your child. We expect families to use the safe practice of placing children in a car seat in the back seat of their car and buckle them in before they leave. Remember, it's the law.

### **Supervision of Children**

Our preschool staff engages in active supervision of children throughout the day by monitoring them through both visual and auditory means. Staff members strategically position themselves to keep all children within view and conduct frequent headcounts, especially during outdoor play, field trips, and transitions. With the involvement of numerous college students who observe and volunteer in our program, our adult-to-child ratios are often lower than the 1:12 ratio mandated by our licensing regulations for preschool-age children.

### **Background Checks**

All staff members, student teachers, and practicum students undergo a background check as required by their role, in accordance with our licensing requirements.

### **Child Abuse & Neglect**

Children need a safe and nurturing environment that supports their growth, learning, and sense of being loved by their caregivers. To grow and learn, children's minimum needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, bathing, clean clothes, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love, a sense of importance, and a safe, non-violent home setting must be met. When these needs are not met, a child cannot grow and learn as efficiently. If you are temporarily unable or unwilling to meet your child's minimal needs, as described above, our staff is mandated to report it to the county child protection agency. It then becomes the role of the child protection unit to work with your family to ensure your child's needs are met.

If you have difficulty providing for your child's emotional, physical, or safety needs, you are encouraged to ask for help. Our staff can help you find a community resource that can help.

All Little Gorillas Preschool staff members are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. Any suspicious activity will be reported. The Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-922-5330.

### **Emergency Plans**

The preschool has plans for fire, tornado, and other emergencies. The preschool staff will help prepare the children for such disasters through monthly fire and tornado drills. Lead staff will practice shelter-in-place and off-premises relocation plans each year.

If we need to evacuate the children and staff to another building, we plan to relocate to the Weede Physical Education Building (1701 Homer), which is approximately one-half mile from the preschool. Families will be notified in the event of an emergency; the sign-in book and children's emergency contact information will be taken to our relocation area so that we can contact families.

### **The following are the procedures to be followed for each type of emergency:**

#### **Fire**

In the event of a fire, the alarm will sound, and staff will quickly escort the children through either the playground door or the interior exit to the hallway, then proceed outside to the east wall of Whitesitt Hall. Campus Police and the fire department will be notified. The preschool director or lead teacher will take the attendance log and the binder containing the children's emergency contact information in the event of an evacuation. A headcount will be done to determine that everyone is accounted for. If the need to move further from the building arises, the staff and children will move to the lounge area on the second floor (west end) of the Overman Student Center. Families will be contacted when the children and staff are settled in a safe place.

#### **Tornado**

The preschool staff monitors the weather more closely when there is a threat of severe weather. Information regarding weather conditions is obtained from campus announcements, local news, and weather warning systems. Should a tornado warning be issued for our county, the children and staff will relocate to the director's office (FCS 108), which has been designated as an "Area of Storm Refuge." The preschool director or lead teacher will take the attendance log and the binder containing the children's emergency contact information when sheltering. A headcount will be done to determine that everyone is accounted for. Families will be notified when it is safe to do so. When the warning expires, we will return to the preschool.

### **Flood**

The preschool staff monitors the weather more closely when there is a threat of severe weather. Information regarding weather conditions is obtained from campus announcements, local news, and weather warning systems. Should a flood warning be issued for our county, and there is an immediate threat to our location, the children and staff will remain in the preschool (shelter in place) unless it is determined that evacuation is necessary. In a flood situation, it is challenging to predict an ideal evacuation location; therefore, we will rely on guidance from the Campus Police at the time of the event. Families will be notified of our situation when it is safe to do so. The preschool director or lead teacher will take the attendance log and the binder containing the children's emergency contact information in the event of an evacuation. A headcount will be done to determine that everyone is accounted for. Families will be notified when it is safe to do so. When the warning expires, we will return to the preschool.

### **Winter Weather Closing**

In severe winter weather (heavy snow or ice), the preschool lab will be closed only if Pittsburg State University or USD 250 Pittsburg Public Schools are closed. If, due to winter weather, PSU decides to delay the start time of university activities, the preschool will remain closed for that day. Notification of closed classes for PSU will be posted on the PSU web page and announced on local television and radio stations. Families will also be notified by email and Remind messages. The preschool voicemail message may also reflect the preschool's closure. Families will be notified if the campus closes early, and it will remain open until all children can be picked up safely.

### **Health-Related Closing**

In the event of a public health emergency, Little Gorillas Preschool will follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), local health department officials, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), our licensing agency. The preschool will also close if Pittsburg State University is closed due to a public health emergency. Information regarding the preschool's closure will be shared with families as soon as possible.

### **Utility Failures**

In the event of a power outage, adults should remain calm and notify the physical plant of the loss of power. If the weather is nice, the children and adults will evacuate to the playground if the preschool classroom is too dark or too warm to use. If necessary, we can relocate to a neighboring building that has power. If we leave the building or playground, we will collect the attendance log and the children's emergency contact information. If the physical plant believes that power can be restored quickly, we will strive to adhere to our regular preschool schedule while remaining flexible about where it may be held. If the physical plant determines the power will be out for an extended period and the preschool classroom will not be conducive to remaining open, then families will be notified to pick up their children, and the preschool will close. Families should arrange to pick up their children as soon as possible.

If the preschool experiences a loss of water, the physical plant will be notified. The preschool must meet minimum requirements regarding temperatures, hot water, toilet flushing, running water, and other essential services to operate. After the problem is evaluated, the director or physical plant personnel will decide whether the preschool should remain open or close. If necessary, preschool staff will escort the children to the bathrooms in a neighboring building for short-term use until all children have been picked up and the preschool is closed. Families will be notified to pick up their children.

#### **Chemical Release/Nuclear Emergency**

If a chemical release or nuclear event is detected, we will assess the situation immediately. This may include notifications from local authorities, such as sirens, alerts, or emergency broadcasts. The director or lead teacher will notify Campus Police and/or dial 911. We will follow instructions from local emergency management or public safety officials. If directed to shelter in place, we will close all doors and windows and retreat to an interior space with minimal windows/doors, such as the back storage room or director's office (FCS 108). If directed to evacuate, staff and children will exit the building and relocate to the Weede Physical Education Building or other designated locations as instructed by officials. Emergency supplies, the attendance log, and children's emergency information will be brought along, and families will be contacted as soon as it is safe.

#### **Intruder, Lockdown, Terrorism**

A lockdown may be initiated if the preschool needs to protect children and staff from intruders. Children will remain quiet and seated in the preschool storage room or the director's office, if possible. As quickly as possible, the lead staff will determine the best course of action based on the safest option for the current situation. All exit doors will be locked if possible. The director or lead teacher will notify Campus Police and/or dial 911 when it is safe. If the situation warrants, staff and children will evacuate the building and relocate to the Weede Physical Education Building. If evacuated, the attendance log and children's emergency information will be brought along, and families will be contacted as soon as it is safe. The lockdown procedures are reviewed each year.

#### **Preventing & Responding to Allergic Reactions**

If a child has a known allergy, the preschool staff will work to minimize possible contact with the trigger allergen. Known food allergies are posted in the kitchen area of the preschool. Food items served to children with known allergies are checked upon purchase and again before serving.

If a child begins showing signs of an allergic reaction, we will contact the child's family or emergency contacts and follow any instructions provided on the child's enrollment or long-term medication forms. If a child's family or emergency contact cannot be reached and the reaction doesn't respond to the instructions provided, then Campus Police and 911 will be called.

### **Missing Child**

If a preschool child is missing, the entire staff and building personnel will be notified to be on alert. Immediate attempts will be made to locate the missing child. The other children will never be unattended when locating a missing child. If the missing child is not located within ten minutes, the University Police, the Pittsburg Police, and the child's parent/guardian will be notified.

### **Social Development & Guidance Practices**

A key part of the role of an early childhood program is to help young children develop appropriate social behaviors. The preschool's philosophy is to provide meaningful opportunities that foster and enhance social relationships while developing self-esteem, confidence, curiosity, and creativity. We believe these behaviors are developed through positive social relationships.

Social relationships consist of the following:

- Mutual trust and respect are formed when warm and caring adults set consistent boundaries.
- Resolving conflict with peers using words: adults will model and help children find the words when needed.
- Looking at situations not only from one's perspective but from that of others.
- Being able to negotiate and apply rules with peers and adults.

The staff feels that children learn by doing and allows them the opportunity to work out their problems. The staff will use positive guidance methods that encourage self-control, self-direction, and self-esteem. We believe that misbehavior is least likely to occur when children are actively involved in developmentally appropriate learning activities.

Guidance techniques that are age- and developmentally appropriate include redirection, physical soothing, modeling appropriate behavior, encouraging reflection, and discussing feelings and possible solutions. Children are encouraged to calm down before resuming activities or discussing their concerns.

Respect for children is always shown. All actions that are humiliating or frightening to a child are strictly prohibited. Corporal punishment is not considered appropriate and, therefore, is not used at preschool.

When we determine that a child has an ongoing behavioral problem, we will arrange a conference with the child's parents or guardians to discuss our concerns. We believe attempts to modify a child's behavior are more successful when families and teachers work together toward a common goal. During this conference, the family and staff will determine a course of action to help the child function better in the program. Outside assistance may be sought from other professionals as needed.



On rare occasions, after a child is enrolled in the center, their behavior may become disruptive or harmful to others or themselves. In such situations, the preschool reserves the right to dismiss a child from the center or require the families to seek additional professional help for the child to continue in the program. Our program will provide recommendations of resources that may be helpful to the family in finding a more suitable program for their child, taking into account the child's specific needs.

### **Family Involvement**

You are welcome at the preschool at any time. We encourage families to come to observe or participate with the children. We especially enjoy having families share a skill, interest, or hobby with us. We may invite families to share these experiences throughout the year.

Families are encouraged to participate in family events scheduled throughout the year. Each fall, we host an "Open House" and invite all families to visit the preschool and meet the student teachers before the start of the semester. Educational meetings and social events may be planned to provide speakers on topics of interest to families. We also enjoy visiting and sharing information with our families daily.

### **Newsletters**

The preschool newsletter will be sent via email weekly. The lead preschool teacher and student teachers prepare newsletters. Newsletters will contain classroom news regarding current activities, notes about upcoming events, brief information about child development, and home-learning activities. If you do not have email access or prefer a paper copy of the newsletter, you can receive it in your preferred format. You will be asked about your preferences at Open House.

### **Communication**

The preschool staff will communicate with families at drop-off and pick-up as well as through phone calls, written notes, emails, and Remind messages. Families are encouraged to sign up to receive and send messages via the Remind system. Please inform us if your phone number, address, or email address changes.

### **Book Orders**

Each month, families will receive a packet of Scholastic Book Club flyers. The book club flyers enable families to purchase high-quality books and educational materials for their children at a reasonable cost. Ordering instructions will be included with each packet. Ordering books is purely optional. The preschool receives "points" for each order, which can be used to purchase books and materials for the preschool classroom.

## **Observation & Research**

Families are welcome to visit the preschool at any time to observe their child in the classroom or through the observation window in the preschool office. When visiting the observation booth, please turn off the lights and observe quietly so that the children in the classroom are not disturbed. Observing allows you to note age and individual differences related to behavior patterns and to watch your child as they interact in a social environment. Remember, when observing, you are only seeing a glimpse of a situation, so feel free to discuss your questions or concerns with your child's teacher or the director. Observers are asked to respect the confidentiality of what they observe. Avoid sharing stories about children, their families, or staff with others, both inside and outside the classroom. Special permission must be obtained from the director for any photographing or videotaping of the children while they are in the preschool.

The preschool operates as an educational laboratory for PSU's academic programs. Child development majors, as well as other students from other departments, use the preschool for observation throughout the year. When a student needs to work one-on-one with one of our children, we will not permit it without explicit permission from the family. Families are not obligated to allow their children to participate in any educational or research projects. We will obtain consent from families before any student works directly with one of our children. All research activities are supervised by PSU faculty and preschool staff. All research activities will be conducted within the Little Gorillas Preschool.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality of information about children and their families will be maintained. Enrollment forms and all other information concerning the child and family will be accessible to the parent/guardian, director, lead teachers, and licensing agents. Information concerning the child will not be disclosed to anyone without the express written consent of the parent or guardian.

## **Child Assessment**

At the Little Gorillas Preschool, we collect information on your child's growth and development through daily observations throughout the preschool year. We have a progress report that outlines basic skills typical for preschoolers, which we use as a checklist to note your child's progression. As our college students are learning about assessing growth and development, our practicum students and student teachers also participate in gathering information about your child's growth and development. A presentation, consisting of photos and captions, is created for each child, highlighting their strengths in the different learning domains. This presentation also provides recommendations for activities that families can do at home to promote growth and development across various domains.

Our purpose in assessing children's growth and development is to help us create plans for your child based on their strengths and needs. The documentation of children's growth and development enables us to make adjustments in our curriculum and programming to better meet the needs of all children and their families.

Families play a vital role in contributing to the assessment of their child's development and learning in a preschool program. By sharing insights about their child's interests, strengths, and challenges, families provide valuable context that helps educators better understand each child's growth. Families contribute information about their children's experiences and interests when they complete their child's "All About Me" form included in the enrollment packet.

Regular communication, whether through conferences or informal check-ins, allows parents to offer observations from home that complement classroom assessments. Additionally, families can support evaluations by participating in classroom activities, providing feedback on their child's progress, and reinforcing learning experiences at home. This collaboration ensures a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the child's development.

If we observe development that is not typical, we discuss observations with the families. Recommendations and resources are then discussed with the families. The family, preschool staff, and possibly outside resources will collaborate to develop a plan tailored to the child's needs.

### **Conferences**

Formal conferences will be scheduled at the end of each fall and spring semester to discuss your child's progress and address any concerns that the family or teacher may have. The progress report and presentations are shared with families at their end-of-semester conferences.

Student teachers may also participate in the conference with the families of the children they are assigned to assess as part of their student teaching experience.

We try to avoid discussing children with their parents in front of the children, except in general terms. Please ask a teacher to step out of the classroom for a moment if you need to discuss your child. We encourage you to schedule a conference with your child's teacher or director at any time during the semester if you have a question or concern about your child or the program.

Families have access to their child's development records obtained by any outside agencies (if applicable), as well as general observations made by the teachers. These observations are typically shared at formal conference time.

### **Transition to Kindergarten**

Preschool is often viewed as a transitional period before children start kindergarten. Our preschool program aims to prepare your child for kindergarten by providing opportunities to develop skills typically considered essential for kindergarten entrance, including basic number concepts, colors, shapes, the alphabet, problem-solving skills, communication, and social skills.

Each spring, local school districts begin kindergarten enrollment. While we often have information from local schools, it is a good idea to contact your local school for specific information regarding kindergarten entrance and enrollment. Most schools plan “roundup” events where children and their families can visit the school, complete enrollment paperwork, and participate in screening tests.

Children who are 5 years old on or before August 31 of the school year and are residents of Kansas are eligible to attend kindergarten in public schools in Kansas.

### **Screening**

We do not provide preschool or kindergarten screenings, as these services are typically available through your local school district. Additionally, your local Parents as Teachers organization may also offer these services. We recommend that children be screened by their school district as they are the ones who would provide any necessary services. Preschool screening is a brief check of developmental milestones. It can be a helpful way to identify areas where a child may require additional support. The areas of development that are assessed include speech and language, hand and body coordination, and general readiness for school.

We recommend that families consult with their child’s pediatrician to discuss referrals for additional screenings, such as vision and hearing tests.

### **Change in Family Information**

If there is a change in your address, home or work telephone number, emergency contacts, or family status, please notify us so that we can update your child’s file accordingly. We must have correct information on file in the event of an emergency.

It is especially helpful for us to be aware of new family situations, such as separations, divorce, remarriage, a new baby, or family illness, as these changes may affect your child’s mood or behavior. We can often help your child deal effectively with a new family condition if we are informed in advance. Please let us know if your child has any unique health concerns, unusual stressors, or obsessive fears.

## **Family Questionnaire**

Families are asked to complete a Family Questionnaire at the end of each spring semester. The information gathered from this survey enables us to make informed changes in the classroom or our program as a whole. We appreciate the input we receive from our families.

## **Family Concerns & Conflicts**

As an early childhood program, we are a community of children, families, and staff who interact and share our lives. In a community, people work closely together, and hopefully, interactions are positive, helpful, kind, and understanding. Yet it is to be expected that from time to time, people will experience some conflict, concerns, or difficulties.

We recognize that parenting is one of the most challenging, intense, and rewarding experiences in your life. Please share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams for your child. You want what is best for your child, and we understand that it is your job to advocate for and protect them.

We, the staff, may make mistakes and create misunderstandings, and occasionally, miscommunications may occur. As a staff, we strive to provide your family with the best possible early education services. To meet our goal, we need your input, suggestions, questions, and concerns.

When you have a concern, please remember:

- We want families to feel very satisfied with the early care and education their child is receiving.
- Whenever possible, speak directly with the lead teacher. The lead teacher would prefer you to speak with them directly, but they understand if you prefer to speak with the director instead.
- Realize that if you have a concern with a student teacher or lead teacher, the director will need to investigate and discuss your concern directly with the teacher, addressing the issue so that the teacher can improve their performance and/or correct any mistakes.
- Don't allow serious concerns to build up. As problems arise, please share them with your teachers. It is disturbing to learn later that a family had concerns but never expressed them.
- Sometimes, we may not be able to make the changes you request due to other restrictions, but we always appreciate your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a professional and timely manner.

Initially, families should discuss concerns with the lead preschool teacher or director. If the staff of the Little Gorillas Preschool is not satisfying your concerns, please speak with the Chairperson/Director of the Teaching and Leadership/Family and Consumer Sciences Department to voice your concerns.

### **Family Resources**

- The Kansas Department of Health & Environment is the state agency that oversees our operation as a licensed preschool center. You can access more information about KDHE at [www.kdheks.gov](http://www.kdheks.gov). The Kansas Department of Health and Environment consists of three divisions: Environment, Health Care Finance, and Public Health. The Division of Environment has six bureaus that work toward Kansans living in safe and sustainable environments: Air, Environmental Field Services, Environmental Remediation, Health and Environmental Laboratories, Waste Management, and Water. The Division of Health Care Finance includes Electronic Health Records, Health Information Technology and Health Information Exchange, KanCare, Medicaid Program Integrity, Office of Inspector General, Projections and Informatics, and the State Employee Health Plan. The Division of Public Health has the following six bureaus that work to protect and improve the health of all Kansans: Community Health Systems, Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics, Family Health, Health Promotion, and Oral Health. There are two support bureaus – Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics and the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratory – which provide information resource management and laboratory assistance to the other divisions and the general public. The Office of Vital Statistics, within the Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics, is responsible for registering births, deaths, marriages, and divorces and issuing those certificates.
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to enhancing the well-being of all young children, with a particular emphasis on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8. We adhere to NAEYC guidelines in our preschool practices. They are the organization behind our accreditation endeavors. For more information, visit [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).
- Parents as Teachers is an early learning program designed to provide practical and timely information to all families, including single parents, first-time parents, and expectant parents. The program is available to anyone with a child under the age of three who lives within a participating school district. You can find out more about the local Parents as Teachers program by visiting <https://www.greenbush.org/center-of-community-supports/early-learning-services/parents-as-teachers/>.

- The Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC), federally funded under Title V of the No Child Left Behind Act, is the official Parent Information and Technical Assistance Center for the state of Kansas. KPIRC promotes meaningful parent involvement at all levels of education and provides information and resources to help parents, educators, and other organizations promote the educational success of every Kansas child. [www.kpirc.org](http://www.kpirc.org)
- Child Care Aware is a resource and referral program that provides numerous resources to families and providers. Child Care Resource and Referral agencies support families by referring them to childcare programs that meet their specific needs, as well as providing valuable information on topics relevant to children of all ages. Child Care Aware of Kansas can be reached by calling 855-750-3343 or visiting <https://ks.childcareaware.org/>.
- Pittsburg Community Schools (USD 250) serves the city of Pittsburg, Kansas, and the surrounding rural areas. They are the largest district in Southeast Kansas. More than 500 employees work daily to provide a first-class teaching and learning experience to more than 3,300 students from Pre-K through 12. Students are served in four elementary schools -- George Nettels, Lakeside, Meadowlark, and Westside -- Pittsburg Community Middle School, Pittsburg High School, and an alternative education setting called PASS Academy. For more information, please contact the Bevan Education Center at 620-235-3100 or visit <https://www.usd250.org/>.