

Lan-Oak Park District

Playskool



**Parent Manual
2021-2022**



Thank you for choosing the Lan-Oak Park District preschool program, Playskool, for your child's instructional needs. We are looking forward to an exciting year of discovery, fun and learning!!

Take your time in reviewing our parent manual.

If you should have any questions about the manual or about the Playskool program, please call 708-474-8552.

The Playskool school year starts the week of Labor Day each year. Tuesday/Thursday students attend the day after Labor Day and Monday/Wednesday/Friday students attend the Wednesday after Labor Day. Your teacher is eagerly anticipating your arrival and has been hard at work preparing the classrooms for your hands-on experiences!

Each child will require the following **by the first day of school**:

- A signed Parent Manual Acknowledgement Form
- A completed and signed Physical Exam/Immunization Form**
- A completed and signed Enrollment Form
- Completed and signed Payment Forms
- Payment for September tuition
- A shoebox containing a complete change of clothes (including shoes or rubber-soled slippers). Please label the box with your child's name.
- A big smile!!



Have a wonderful year at Playskool.

See you at school!!

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*Playskool understands the difficulty in scheduling doctor appointments in July and August. For this reason a short grace period is allowed in submitting these forms. Medical forms **MUST** be received no later than September 15.

So what's our plan?

Playskool plans to prepare your child for the school environment of their future. It is important that all children start elementary school happy, confident and prepared. Our program goals encourage independence, imagination, physical and emotional health, and the knowledge required to start as a success.

Chicago Tribune

Top 10 things kids need to start kindergarten

April 24, 2005|By Jody Temkin, Special to the Tribune.

Here are the Top 10 things parents should do with their children to get them ready for kindergarten:

1. Read, read and then read to your child some more. Gail Wilcinski, a kindergarten teacher at Dawes Elementary School in Evanston, said she asked a group of kindergarten parents two years ago how many of their children had TVs in their bedroom. More than half raised their hands. When she asked how many had bookshelves in their bedrooms, only a few hands went up. "Reading builds vocabulary and it also helps them develop a love of books," Wilcinski said.
2. Teach them to be self-sufficient, particularly when it comes to using the bathroom and getting dressed. With more of an emphasis on early academics in kindergarten, there's less time for teaching things like tying shoelaces.
3. Give them opportunities to use crayons and scissors. Give them a box of drawing implements and let them create something. This will not only improve fine motor skills, it will build imaginations.
4. Get them off the couch and into the yard, where they can develop gross motor skills. Kindergarten teacher Ann Vasconcellos at Bannes Elementary School in Tinley Park said one of the reasons she pushed for full-day kindergarten was to have time to take children outside to "hop and skip and jump."
5. Teach them to write their own names, and know the letters in their names. Wendi Smith, a kindergarten teacher at Oakhill Elementary School in Streamwood, said the State of Illinois standard is that children should know at least 35 letters (any combination of small and capital letters is OK) when they start kindergarten.
6. Teach them colors, shapes and to count at least to 10.
7. Give them opportunities to play cooperatively with other children and to learn to take turns and share.
8. Teach them to accept rules and limits and to follow directions.
9. Talk to your child. "It sounds simple, but this is one of the biggest things you can do," Wilcinski said. "Having that solid language background and vocabulary really helps."
10. Give your child opportunities for imaginative play. Many children's activities these days are adult-directed or passive, said Vasconcellos, who set up a space center and a farm veterinary clinic in her room this winter so children could use their imaginations.

The Playskool program will focus on four important goals for your preschooler - socialization, creativity, kindergarten preparation and physical development. Art projects will allow children to experience an abundance of materials (messy and fun) while creating at will. Opportunities will be provided for small group, large group and one-on-one socialization during ample free play and organized games. Free play will allow children to understand, discover, explore and learn independently. Our richly equipped classrooms offer children many exciting toy choices for large and small motor development, all while enjoying the guidance, encouragement and praise of our instructors. Organized circle activities will introduce students to colors, shapes, letters, weather, calendar, geography, numerals, trivia fun and more.

PROGRAM PARTICULARS

Socialization, discovery, exploration and motor coordination are very important for a child's positive emotional and physical growth. Primary consideration is given to the benefits achieved through independent play, making Playskool the fun learning experience it's meant to be.

Body Awareness: This segment helps children know their body parts and what they are capable of doing. Activities include animal walks, musical exercise, group games and an extensive human body unit.

Eye/Hand Coordination: The coordination and control of the movement of the eyes/hands and eyes/feet are emphasized through activities like bouncing, kicking, throwing and catching balls – particularly during monthly gym days!

Rhythm: Along with being enjoyable for children, the use of music and musical instruments helps to coordinate movement with a beat, as well as introducing children to a variety of musical types.

Space and Direction: Preschool aged children learn to relate to their environment. Interesting activities will promote the ability to understand where their body is in relation to the space around them. Concepts introduced will be positional directions of forward, backward, sideways, behind, above, below, between and more.

Fine Motor Activities: Developing the use of small muscles is vital to a child's prewriting skills. Many fine motor opportunities will be offered daily such as geo-boards, stringing beads, play-doh and more.

Gross Motor Activities: Children will exercise their large muscles daily with a variety of inside activities including hula hoops, ring toss, large block building, bowling and hopscotch. In addition, children will enjoy running, jumping and playing outside as much as possible.

Children will, on a regular basis, play outside. Please dress for the weather daily.

Dramatic Play: Each Playskool classroom will offer several activity centers geared toward social development through dramatic play: Kitchen, dress-up, baby area, puppet show, office area, store etc. Playing in these well-supplied areas will enable children to understand their world by acting out their experiences.

Language/Expressive Development: Stories, flannel boards, puppets, language activity cards and positive interaction with Playskool instructors will promote language and expressive development in Playskool participants.

Intellectual Development: Playskool will offer activities to strengthen intellectual development with independent discovery in the science and sand/water areas, planned math activities and science experiments. Plants, animals, insects, dinosaurs, the environment, and much more will be featured through hands-on activities at the science table.

Creative Expression: A new child-created art activity will be offered each day of the Playskool program. Children will learn with scissors, glue, tape, markers, crayons, watercolors, fingerpaints, easel paint and much, much more. Art activities are completed almost entirely by the child in order to allow children ample experience in using school tools.

An organized, daily Circle Time will introduce:

The Pledge of Allegiance

Calendar and Weather: Each class will note the day of the week and date on the calendar, along with the current weather conditions.

Color Recognition: Eleven colors are introduced, followed by secondary (pastel) colors.

Letters and Numbers: Playskool will offer opportunities for children to recognize letters and their phonetic sounds, number concepts and numerals introduced out of sequence.

Shape Recognition: Basic shapes are introduced, including circle, square, triangle and heart. More advanced shapes, including the diamond, rectangle, octagon, trapezoid, pentagon and oval are also introduced.

World Recognition: Playskool will introduce children to maps, map reading, the seven continents and our world's oceans.

Story Time: Our talented Playskool staff will amuse and delight Playskool children with some of our favorite characters including Little Critter, Dr. Seuss, Berenstain Bears and Curious George.



GENERAL INFORMATION

The Lan-Oak Park District Playskool program is not a state licensed preschool. Whenever possible, however, the state standards are followed as a guideline for operating our program.

Arrival and Dismissal: To ensure the safety of all Playskool participants, **all children must be signed in and out every day by an authorized individual.** Being on time to pick up your child is important as children are more secure knowing that Mom, Dad or their care giver will be there when the doors open. Chronic tardiness in daily pick-up will result in removal from the program without refund. Children will only be released to authorized individuals. CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO UNAUTHORIZED INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT IDENTIFICATION AND PRIOR NOTIFICATION BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS.

Calendars: Calendars are sent home monthly. Calendars will inform parents of the monthly themes and activities, as well as alerting parents to special announcements and possible program needs.

Please read your calendar regularly!

Car Pools: Car pools may be arranged among parents; however, instructors must be notified IN WRITING of carpool arrangements. It is the responsibility of the parent picking up the children to forward any information distributed and/or announcements made.

Handwashing: In an effort to reduce the occurrence of classroom illness, please assist your child in washing his/her hands upon arrival in the classroom. Children will also wash their hands before snack, after sand/water use, and after toileting.

Changes: All changes of address or telephone numbers must be reported to the Lan-Oak Park District at 708-474-8552. Also, please notify the instructor of any changes of address, telephone number (both home and office) and emergency contacts.

Removal from program: Playskool will make every attempt to make parents and children comfortable and successful in the Playskool program. On occasion, certain issues may result in a child being removed from the program without refund. These issues include, but are not limited to: chronic toileting accidents, chronic disciplinary problems, failure to promptly pay tuition, frequent tardiness in daily pick-up of child, violation of the Behavior Management Policy, and/or a parents repeated refusal to comply with the policies and procedures of the Playskool program.

Discipline: Playskool employs a time-out discipline plan. Before receiving any disciplinary action, a child's behavior is addressed through reminder of the rules, gentle discussion, instruction, and re-direction. If these methods fail, children are warned of a possible time-out and given three "strikes" in order to improve their behavior. If

given a “time-out”, the child will be asked to sit in a classroom chair for no longer than one minute for each year of age. Discipline issues are handled at school as a learning opportunity. Additional action at home will result in the child having a negative reaction to school. For that reason, parents will only be informed of discipline problems if they are serious or chronic in nature.

Clothing: All articles of clothing must be labeled with your child’s name. Please be sure to clearly label boots, sweaters, mittens, jackets, school bags and backpacks. As a safety precaution, rubber-soled shoes are required. Please send your child in comfortable clothing easily removed for toileting. **Children in Playskool will get messy!** Please dress your child appropriately. During the winter months, boots are not allowed as a child’s shoes for the day. Children must remove their boots and wear either shoes or rubber-soled slippers in the classroom.

Toileting: Although it is a requirement of the program to be potty trained, children do have accidents. Parents are required to supply a shoebox containing a complete change of clothes (including shoes or rubber-soled slippers), clearly labeled with their child’s name. The shoebox will remain at Playskool throughout the program, so parents should update it regularly for seasonally appropriate clothing. Instructors will minimally assist children in the case of a toileting accident, but parents should be aware that chronic toileting accidents may result in removal from the program. The regular use of “pull-ups” is not allowed.

Graduation: Only children progressing to kindergarten will participate in graduation at the end of the Playskool program in June. There will be a graduation ceremony to honor children for their accomplishments and to award diplomas.

Family Opportunities: Parents are invited to school for two special events each year. The Family Feast is a classroom celebration for Thanksgiving, and the Family Picnic takes us outside for some fun in the park at year-end.

Recital: All Playskool children will participate in a winter recital. The recital is held in the evening and all family members are welcome to attend.

Holiday Observances: In an effort to recognize the growing diversity of our community and include all Playskool participants in holiday observances, the Playskool curriculum will discuss many of the varying celebrations (including Christmas) held around the world in December. If your family observes a little known holiday, please inform your instructor so that your child may be included in the fun. **Playskool will NOT distribute holiday candy, treats, cards or student gifts sent to school from home for any holiday - no exceptions.**

Halloween – Halloween can be a scary time for little ones! The Playskool will **NOT allow the wearing of costumes**, but will plan a fun, theme-related curriculum during Halloween week.

Illness: Should a child become ill in school, parents will be notified immediately so that the child may be picked up as soon as possible. If the child so desires, a cot and blanket will be provided for their comfort while waiting for their parent's arrival. Parents whose children develop communicable diseases are asked to please notify the Superintendent of Recreation at 708-474-8552 as soon as the child is diagnosed. The name of the affected child is not released; however, Playskool parents are notified of the occurrence of contagious illness.

Inclement Weather: The Playskool program follows the emergency closing schedule of School District #158. If reported on the radio or television that District #158 is closed due to severe weather, Playskool is also cancelled. If it is reported that District #158 is closed due to reasons besides the weather, i.e. power loss, Playskool will not be closed. On occasion Playskool may close for severe weather or other rare events (power loss, etc.). Parents will be notified of these closures by classroom teachers by phone.

Payment: The non-refundable \$25.00 deposit at registration will be applied to the cost of the first month of Playskool. Payment for Playskool is due monthly, on the first of the month. Please direct all payment questions to the Superintendent of Recreation. No discounts are given for days children are absent from preschool (either for illness or vacation). Failure to pay tuition will result in a student's expulsion from the Playskool program. On occasion our Playskool families experience hardship situations (loss of a job, illness, etc.) that make it difficult or impossible to pay monthly tuition. Please speak with the Superintendent of Recreation before removing your child from school to investigate any possible options.

Snacks/Special Treats: The Playskool program provides all daily snacks. Please list any food allergies your child may have at the start of school. State regulations require that food served be prepared only in a commercially licensed kitchen. Birthday treats brought from home, while allowed, must follow the same state regulations. Please send in only store or bakery purchased birthday treats. Birthday treats must be individually packaged by the parent in Ziploc bags and will be sent home with the children. NO PEANUT BUTTER, PEANUT, CHOCOLATE SNACKS OR SNACKS ABUNDANT IN FROSTING OR SUGAR WILL BE SERVED AT THE PLAYSKOOOL.

Medical Records: Playskool participants are required to submit a record of immunizations obtained from the child's doctor by the first day of class. Playskool will comply with the Illinois Department of Health requirements for immunizations and physical examinations.

Medications: Playskool will dispense necessary medications to your child when required. Specific forms and waivers are required before any medication will be administered. Please obtain the park district policy and appropriate forms from the Superintendent of Recreation if your child will require medication while attending Playskool.

Volunteers: Parents are always welcome for brief visits in the Playskool rooms. Regular volunteers, however, are not required by the Playskool program. Please do not stay in the Playskool classrooms regularly for extended time periods. Parental attendance disrupts the daily schedule of the classrooms. If you feel you must observe your child for an extended period, the Playskool classrooms are equipped with several entry windows that allow observation from the hallway.

Field Trips: Playskool will plan one off-site, bus field trip each year. Parents will be notified in advance of the trip, participation in field trips is optional, field trips require payment of a nominal fee, and parents must sign a permission slip. Buses will transport the children and parent chaperones will be required. Due to space constraints, **not all parents may attend field trips**. Playskool will maintain a 1 to 3 chaperone/student ratio on field trips. Parents interested in chaperoning may sign-up outside their classroom. A random lottery of all sign-ups will determine the chaperones for each trip. Parent chaperones may not bring siblings on Playskool field trips. Parents not chosen to chaperone may not attend the trip by following the bus in personal vehicles.

Fire Drills: Playskool will conduct regular fire drills to ensure the safety of students during an emergency. During a fire practice drill students will not retrieve their coats. Every effort will be made to schedule drills on mild weather days. In the case of an actual emergency, teachers are equipped with blankets that will be taken outside for student use.

Separation Anxiety: It is not unusual for a preschool child to experience separation anxiety when arriving at school. Playskool instructors will assist parents in making the drop off procedure as pleasant as possible for students. If your child is still having difficulty after the first week of school, we suggest that parents not linger in the classroom, but depart quickly. This will allow your child to understand your desire to have them at school, and allow teachers to calm and direct the child quickly.

Progress Reports/Report Cards: Preschool children develop at very different levels. For this reason, it is very difficult to judge all preschool children on a specific set of criteria. Progress reports/report cards are not completed and parent/teacher conferences are not held at Playskool. Teachers are happy to discuss concerns or answer questions daily as they arise and will promptly inform parents of any problems they observe.

****Outside Play:** Playskool is fortunate to have its own play yard equipped with oh-so-fun playground equipment. Playskool participants will regularly go outside to play in the play yard or on the patio. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather of the day. This will include some outdoor play in the winter – do not forget boots, mittens, and hats. Children will only go outside if the air temperature exceeds 35 degrees.

****Please read the article on the next page regarding the inactivity of preschoolers, which ran in the Chicago Tribune. Don't worry – we'll keep your child active in Playskool!!**

Preschooler activity lacking

Chicago Tribune - Chicago, Ill.

Shari Roan

February 8, 2009

Preschool-age children seem to be always on the go. Or maybe not. A study of 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds in preschool has found that these children are anything but physically active, even during playtime outdoors.

The research should unsettle parents and health professionals. An estimated 60 percent of the nation's 3- to 5-year-olds who are not in kindergarten are enrolled in center-based preschools, and previous studies show more than one-quarter of children age 3 to 5 are already at risk of becoming overweight.

Climbing ladders, steering toy cars and riding tricycles would seem to be perfect preschool activity. But the study, of 539 children in 24 preschools, found that 89 percent of the children's day was characterized as sedentary. Even when the children played outside, 56 percent of the activity was sedentary, 27 percent was light physical activity and only 17 percent was moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.

The teachers rarely encouraged the children to be more active, said the lead author of the study, Russell Pate of the University of South Carolina. In another paper by Pate that is awaiting publication, he found that moderate-to-vigorous physical activity was observed in the children during only 3 percent of the day -- not including nap time.

Preschool-age children should get 120 minutes per day of physical activity, according to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.



Dress for the weather!!
Playskool offers two outdoor opportunities - the Playskool play yard and the Playskool patio. We will keep our students busy with gross motor fun every day!!





Behavior – It can be tricky!

In addition to the Playskool student discipline procedure, the Lan-Oak Park District employs a Behavior Management Policy. This policy corresponds to our students as well as any other participant in the program –

meaning parents, siblings, family members, and any other person who has contact with your Playskool student when they are here. This policy has been passed and is strictly enforced in order to keep Playskoolers and their families safe and sound in the Playskool program. The Behavior Management Policy follows. Please review this policy and rest assured that your Playskool experience will be fun and positive.

Behavior Management Policy

DEFINITION

For the purpose of this policy, “participant” will be defined as any person or persons registered in a park district activity; any parent, guardian, sibling, family member, or person entrusted with the care or transportation of a person or persons registered in a park district activity.

BEHAVIOR

All participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. The following guidelines have been developed to help make children’s programs safe and enjoyable for all participants. Additional rules may be developed for specific programs as deemed necessary by the Lan-Oak Park District. (Please note that the following guidelines are examples and could be replaced with the Lan-Oak Park Districts behavior code or program rules).

The Lan-Oak Park District insists that all participants comply with a basic behavior code. All participants shall:

Show respect to all participants, staff, and volunteers. Participants should follow program rules and take direction from staff.

Refrain from using abusive or foul language.

Refrain from threatening or causing bodily harm to self, other participants, or staff.

Show respect for equipment, supplies, and facilities.

Not possess any weapons.

Please turn the page for the rest of this policy...

PROCEDURES

Upon registration or entry into the program, the parent/guardian should be solicited for any information regarding special accommodations needed for the participant. If any of these special accommodations are behavior related, the parent/guardian should be contacted for information about any behavior modification programs in place at school or home. Attempts should be made to utilize these in the program. Also, the inclusion coordinator from the Special Recreation Association (SRA) should be contacted for guidance. Documentation should be maintained regarding any problem behaviors, special accommodations, and behavior modification programs. If the participant exhibits inappropriate actions, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Program instructors should determine the severity of the action and immediately take steps to correct it. These may include but are not limited to:
- A verbal warning,
- A supervised time-out from the program. (Most experts agree that a minute a year is a good rule of thumb for time-outs). The type of time-out may vary according to the situation (observational: from sidelines of activity; exclusion: away from the group but within view of the activity; seclusion: time-out area with staff member present away from view of the activity). If physical restraint is used to protect against injury, the time-out should be documented on a conduct report. Any conduct report made should be given to the full-time supervisor.
- A suspension from the program for a designated time period. When determining the timeframes of suspension, staff should consider the severity of the actions; the length of the program or activity; any past behavior issues with the individual; and willingness to improve their inappropriate behavior.
- Dismissal from the program or activity. If inappropriate behavior persists or the behavior completely disrupts a program, removal from the program or activity may be necessary. Once again, the Lan-Oak Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers his or her own safety or the safety of others.
- If a participant receives a time-out or a suspension, the supervisor of the program should contact the parent/guardian. The supervisor should explain the inappropriate actions that were observed by the staff. Documentation is strongly recommended.
- Communication between staff and parent should be ongoing regarding any further incidences of inappropriate behavior. Some other options may be discussed with the parent/guardian including:
- Transfer to another program where inappropriate behavior may be less prone to occur.

Limited/reduced timeframe that participant is allowed to attend the program.

Appeals by the participant and/or participant's parent/guardian should be directed to the Director of Parks and Recreation

What is “Developmentally Appropriate” practice?



Playskool parents have had the opportunity to visit and view our classrooms throughout the year. You may have noticed that our classrooms have a lot of hustle and bustle, noise, talking, playing, activity and exploring. Such a classroom environment differs from the grade-school images of a teacher doing a lot of talking at a blackboard while children sit and listen at their desks.

Research and experience tell us that to be effective with young children, teaching practices need to be “developmentally appropriate”. What this means is simply that educators need to think first about what children like and respond to, and then create an environment and experiences that are in tune with children’s characteristics.

Early childhood, after all, is a time of life quite different from adulthood, and even from later school years. Children 3 to 6 years old learn better through direct interaction than through listening to someone talk – they learn by doing! Young children learn an extraordinary amount through play and exploration. And the younger children are, the more what they learn needs to be relevant and interesting on the day they learn it, not just in the context of future learning. Based on such knowledge about children this age, we design a program to fit them. It works a lot better than trying to re-design children! While most preschools advertise that they are “developmentally appropriate”, many may not fit the bill.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices with Young Children



“Show me and I forget;
Teach me and I remember;
Involve me and I learn.”

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

A “developmentally appropriate” program like ours is age appropriate, interactive, and fun. But that’s not all – to make the program a comfortable place for every child, we gear our classroom environment and activities to suit the needs and wishes of our children. We are eager to build partnerships with parents in order to meet their child’s needs. We learn as much as we can about each child’s family, culture and background. With this knowledge we work to create a program that fits the children and the families we serve.

We hope you enjoy the Playskool program.



Every day is a bunch of fun in Playskool. But a little structure is good, too!

The Playskool Day

Children derive a sense of security from a consistent schedule. The Playskool class schedule will be followed daily, but will be flexible in order to allow children to lengthen or complete beneficial activities.

MORNING CLASSES

8:50am	Doors open to welcome students
9:10-9:20am	Brief circle time to introduce the day's activities and read a fun story
9:20-10:50am	Free play, art projects, worksheets, independent snack
10:50-11:00am	Clean up time
11:00-11:30am	Formal circle time, musical games, outdoor/indoor gross motor play
11:30-11:40am	Dismissal (please be prompt!)

AFTERNOON CLASSES

12:20pm	Doors open to welcome students
12:40-12:50pm	Brief circle time to introduce the day's activities and read a fun story
12:50-2:20pm	Free play, art projects, worksheets, independent snack
2:20-2:30pm	Clean up time
2:30-3:00pm	Formal circle time, musical games, outdoor/indoor gross motor play
3:00-3:10pm	Dismissal (please be prompt!)

All Playskool classes read twice each day





HANDWASHING

In order to teach our Playskool participants proper hygiene, as well as keep our classrooms as germ-free as possible, we ask that parents help the children remember our hand-washing rules.

Children should wash their hands when:

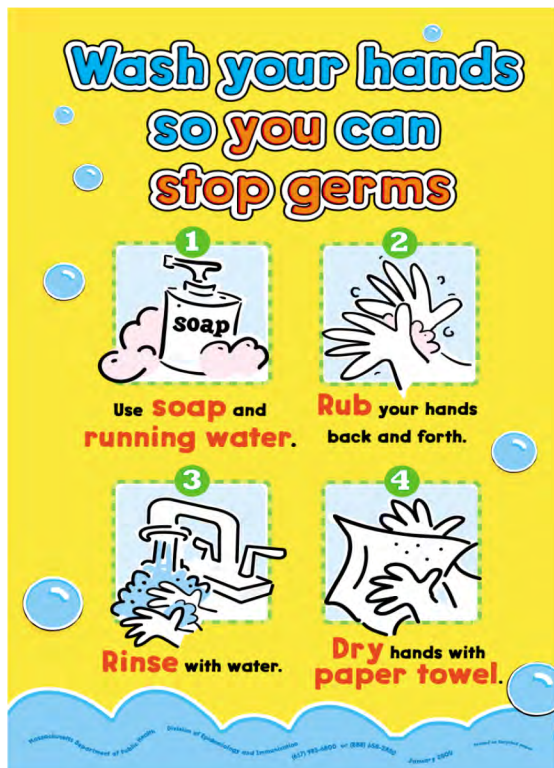
They arrive in the classroom each day.

After they use the toilet.

Before eating snack.

After using the water or sand table.

After they blow their nose





It's All About



Lan-Oak Park District is

committed to providing its residents with high quality, beneficial programming. Most important are our littlest residents, who depend on the park district to supply a healthy, productive and enjoyable learning environment. With that goal in mind the Lan-Oak Park District is proud to offer the Playskool program.

The most profound element of the Playskool program is the focus from a teacher-directed environment to a child-centered environment. The rooms have been renovated and equipped in a way that will facilitate fun learning experiences. In addition, the curriculum allows independent learning through play.

For decades sound research has indicated that preschool-aged children learn most effectively through play experiences. When the learning environment is equipped with specific toys and activity centers, children are offered the opportunity to learn at their own rate and in their own way. Research shows us that play contributes to healthy child development in many ways:

- Play provides the opportunity for children to practice new cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills.
- Through dramatic play children express and work out emotional aspects of everyday experiences, allowing them to better understand the world around them.
- Play makes learning fun – creating an appreciation for education that will stay with children throughout their learning years.
- By playing with peers, children learn important social skills like taking turns, consideration of other's feelings and accepting different ideas in a cooperative way.
- Independent play allows children to extend their attention spans in a natural rather than forced manner.
- During play, children make decisions and problem-solve.

When provided the appropriate tools, learning is effective through play. Our Playskool rooms have been equipped with fine motor activities that are important in strengthening the muscles of the hands and fingers in preparation for writing. Look for our stringing beads, tying boards, peg sets and lacing shapes. Gross motor tools will exercise the large muscles of the arms and legs. Play with our hopscotch mats, ring toss, hula hoops and bowling sets. Language development will be achieved with magnetic letters, story books, sequencing cards and flannel boards. The rooms offer a variety of math and science opportunities. Check out our interesting and challenging science table and practice number concepts with Number Bingo, rainbow numbers and Link N Learn Links.

Pretend play will be promoted in our many dramatic centers.

Children will act out home and parenting experiences in the kitchen area and baby area.

The office will allow our little executives to complete their important work. Children may become a variety of characters

by pretending with dress-up clothes. Language arts and imagination will be enhanced in the puppet show.



The Playskool rooms are carefully arranged to allow for one-on-one socialization, small group interaction or solitary play. Children will enjoy a choice of passive or active play, as well as the opportunity to independently create at our easel areas.

But are you preparing my child? YES!! Play has been accepted by researchers for decades as the most effective learning tool for young children. Play may look simple on the surface, but it actually provides a complex method for effective learning. Fine motor, gross motor, language, cognitive, social, and emotional development is enhanced through play. By allowing the children to play, make choices, develop skills and problem-solve in a fun and secure environment, we will watch them grow, learn and flourish!



Don't take our word for it – please read the article on the next page concerning the value of play. This article ran in the Chicago Tribune on November 19, 2008.

Child experts pressing play

All work makes Jack a dull boy and Jill socially inept, authorities warn

David Crary November 18, 2008

In one classroom, a group of preschool teachers squatted on the floor, pretending to be cave-dwelling hunter-gatherers. Next door, another group ended a raucous musical game by placing their tambourines and drums atop their heads.

Silly business, to be sure, but part of a serious agenda: To spread the word that America's children need more time for freewheeling play at home and in their schools.

"We're all sad, and we're a little worried. ... We're sad about something missing in childhood," psychologist and author Michael Thompson told 900 early-childhood educators from 22 states packed into an auditorium last week.

"We have to fight back," he declared. "We're going to fight for play."

After his keynote speech at New York's 92nd Street Y, the teachers dispersed into dozens of workshops, some lighthearted, some scholarly -- but all supporting the case that creative, spontaneous play is both vital and endangered.

The cause isn't brand-new. Two years ago time for play was endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. But social changes and new demands on kids' spare time confront free-play advocates with a moving target.

Among the speakers at last week's conference was Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a Temple University psychologist who contends that lack of play in early childhood education "could be the next global warming."

Without ample opportunity for forms of play that foster innovation and creative thinking, she argues, America's children will be at a disadvantage in the global economy.

"Play equals learning," she said. "For too long we have divorced the two."

Some of the factors behind diminished play time have been evolving for decades; others are more recent. Together they have resulted in eight to 12 fewer hours of free play time per week for the average American child since the 1980s, experts say.

"Parents are more self-conscious and competitive than in the past," Thompson said. "They're pushing their kids to excel. ... Free play loses out."

The consequences could be dire, according to Thompson. He contends that diminished time to play freely with other children is producing a generation of socially inept young people and is a factor behind high rates of youth obesity, anxiety, attention-deficit disorder and depression. Many families turn to organized sports as a principal non-school activity, but Thompson noted that this doesn't necessarily breed creativity and can lead to burnout for good young athletes and frustration for the less-skilled.

Vivian Paley, a former kindergarten teacher at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools and now an author and consultant, argues that the most vital form of play for young children involves fantasy and role-playing with their peers.

"They're inventing abstract thinking, before the world tells them what to think," Paley told the conference. "It gets them thinking, 'I am intended to have my own ideas.'"

She worried that preschools, in the drive to prepare students for the academic challenges ahead, are reducing the opportunity for group fantasy play -- and thus reducing children's chances to learn on their own about fairness, kindness and other social interactions.

Fretta Reitzes, director of the 92nd Street Y's youth and family center, which serves more than 6,000 children, says many of the parents she sees are struggling to find the right balance for their kids' schedules, asking, "How much is too much?"

The Classrooms

The Playskool classrooms have been carefully designed to cater to the needs of each individual student at any given time. Children desiring quiet time can relax in the library or choose a toy from the toy shelves and play at the tables. More active play is offered on the carpet and in the block center.



large carpet areas.

interrupted play in a variety of

The classroom itself offers a comfortable, child-centered environment. The walls are painted soft, unobtrusive colors. Patterns, colorful toys and displays offer just the right amount of contrast. The classrooms are kept at a comfortable 72-75 degrees and are air-conditioned. The lighting levels are bright enough for learning, but not glaring or overly bright. Noise levels are controlled with acoustical ceilings and

Strategic traffic patterns allow uninterrupted dramatic play areas.

All children experience a sequence of developmental stages while learning socialization. Younger children often play alone or next to another child. This stage develops into small play groups of two or three. Finally, children learn to play in large groups and develop a sense of cooperation in their play. Playskool classrooms offer areas catering to all levels of socialization.

The easel or small manipulative table provides an area to play alone, the library and office area allow partner play, the sand table and dramatic areas allow small group opportunities, while the carpet and large motor toys offer large group and cooperative play.



Playskool offers a comfy, child-friendly home away from home for the preschool student.

The Curriculum

The Playskool curriculum is based on thematic units that provide children knowledge in many educational areas. Each month offers opportunities for science experiments, math objectives, language development, history and geography. Here are just some of the fun and interesting themes offered in Playskool.



The continents and oceans of our

world A new continent is presented each month, along with discussion about map reading, landforms, other cultures, and climates of the world.

Our changing seasons

All about me, my family and my school

Animals Nocturnal animals, insects, marine life, birds, marsupials, pets, and many others!

Famous People Columbus, Lincoln, Washington, our favorite authors, King, the pilgrims and many others!

Festivals of Light In December, Playskool will discuss the many holidays and traditions observed around the world (including Christmas).

Holidays All the big ones!

The Human Body

Outer Space

Dinosaurs

Each Playskool month students will enjoy an opportunity for gross motor fun in **gym day**, for satisfying their never-ending curiosity in **science day**, to enjoy the whimsy of **poems, finger-plays and nursery rhymes**, and for developing a love of books and reading in a **story stretcher unit**.



Playskool emphasizes a basic, well-rounded curriculum that prepares children for kindergarten.

In all curriculum subjects, children are provided activities that allow them to use basic school tools, as well as to experience hands-on fun.**

And, of course, the alphabet, numerals, phonetic letter sounds, colors, shapes, the calendar, rhyming, opposites and weather! Whew!

We're tired!!

Parents are always updated regarding monthly curriculum. Please look in this manual for a sample of a monthly parent curriculum calendar!

**Please read the article on the next page. This article appeared in The Chicago Tribune on April 24, 2005 and it explains the value of getting back to basics within the preschool setting.

Kindergartners lack basic skills, teachers say

Jody Temkin

April 24, 2005

Despite a national trend that shows more children are attending preschool, it appears that fewer children are starting kindergarten with the basic skills needed to get them off to a good start.

Kindergarten teacher Susan Ginsburg laments the fact that a growing number of pupils entering her class don't know how to write their own names.

"And some of them can write the names, but they don't know the letters," said Ginsburg, who teaches at Hall School in Lincolnwood and who has been a kindergarten teacher for 20 years. "I've seen a downward progression over the last 10 years," Ginsburg said.

Kindergarten teacher Ann Vasconcellos at Bannes Elementary School in Tinley Park is concerned that some of her pupils come to school never having cut with a scissors and having little practice in coloring.

"Coloring has gone by the wayside," said Vasconcellos, adding that children need practice with scissors and crayons so they can develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination to get them ready for reading and writing.

"I think they're sitting at the computer or they're getting in the van and going to soccer, going to T-ball. They aren't sitting and coloring anymore," Vasconcellos said. Teachers say they can tell which children have attended preschool. Those children, for example, are more likely to know rote skills, such as counting and letters. And they sometimes are better at listening and following directions.

But even those children can be lacking skills, such as the ability to fully dress themselves.

Wendi Smith, a kindergarten teacher at Oakhill Elementary School in Streamwood, wishes parents would teach their children to be more self-sufficient so she wouldn't have to spend so much time the first few weeks of school, helping with shoes and zippers and trips to the bathroom.

"We get kids with a huge range [of abilities], but in general, it has gotten worse," said Smith, a 10-year veteran. "I think everyone's lives have gotten busier and maybe they don't have as much time to work with their kids."

Vasconcellos thinks it's not the amount of time but how parents use the time they have with their children.

"I was a working mom," she said, "but there was always time for books.

Not as many kids are being read to now. Parents should turn off the DVD that's in the van and get kids looking at the McDonald's sign, talk about the letters, learn nursery rhymes.

Vasconcellos said that Bannes school changed its program to include nursery rhymes and fairy tales.

"You can't imagine the number of children who don't know them," she said. "When we read 'Jack and the Beanstalk,' the kids go 'wow.' They've never heard it before."



Circle Time, like every other segment of the Playskool day, is geared to be enjoyable for the children. – even the “book learning” is fun!! Children are encouraged to sit up on the carpet during circle time. Children not yet ready to sit up for an extended period are allowed to lie down as

long as they remain attentive and do not disrupt others.

Because young children derive security from consistent schedules, circle time is conducted in the same order each day. Knowing what to expect makes circle information more familiar (and a little less scary) for students. There is no need for children to be nervous about knowing it all - calling on children individually answer circle questions is avoided – although group discussions about our favorite topics are frequent.

Pledge of Allegiance Our “room helper” holds the flag and everyone helps say the Pledge. (if you prefer that your children not recite the Pledge of Allegiance, please notify your teacher)

Calendar includes the month, year, day of the week, and number of the day. The “room helper” is asked to put the number on the calendar. Days already elapsed are counted as a math activity.

Weather The “room helper” is the meteorologist for the day (it’s okay if they are a little off - how many meteorologists do you know that are always, or even sometimes, correct?)

Colors The school year starts with eleven colors – we’ll add pastels a little later.

Shapes Playskool does not limit children to the customary four basic shapes – twelve shapes are offered for visual discrimination.

Letters and Letter Sounds One letter each week is introduced with its phonetic sound. Once introduced, the letter is posted on the circle board and reviewed daily.

Numbers As they are a bit easier, numbers wait to make their circle time appearance until letters are finished. But don’t worry – you can “count” on us covering 1 to 20!

Continents, Oceans, Map Reading Preschool children are very capable of understanding geographic concepts and map reading skills if offered in a simple, concrete way. Parents will be surprised how worldly their child becomes!

Storytime Curl up, get comfy, we read the best stories.

Supplemental Activity Songs, music, exercise, outdoor walk, play yard, Bingo!!

Opposites & Rhyming & Positional Words As the year progresses new concepts will be added to circle time when introduced. The concepts will then be reviewed daily for the remainder of the year.

The Toys are the Tools!!

Playskool offers many inviting and exciting toys for the enjoyment of its students. The toys, however, have been carefully chosen to provide not only fun, but valuable learning opportunities. Check out this breakdown of the educational objectives provided by our toys.

Science:



Magnet wands
Weight Balance
Magnifying Glasses
Nature Items
Color Blending Paddles
Binoculars
Microscopes
Specimens
Fossils Touch & Feel Prisms

Math:

Geo Boards Number Ducks
Link N Learn Links
Number Weights
Shape-Up Cards
Number Bingo
Numeral Dough Cutters
Magnetic Board with Numbers



Language:



Moody Bear Puzzles Rhyming Bingo
ABC Puzzles Sequencing Cards
ABC Mat Games Opposites Bingo
Language Cards/Pictures
Magnetic Board with Letters

Dramatic Play:

The Nursery
Kitchen
Dress-up Area
Puppet Show
Ice Cream Cart
The Office
Block Area
Barnyard

Discovery Play:

Sand Table
Water Table
Art Easel
Science Table

Experts agree that preschool children learn best through play. At Playskool we offer lots of play, lots of learning!



Playskool children will enjoy a “serve yourself” snack. During free play, three children at a time may wash their hands, sit at the table, serve themselves their own snack, pour their own juice (from our just-the-right-size-for-little-hands pitchers), and socialize with their tablemates.



Children love this opportunity to be grown up and independent!! Playskool will use snack time to emphasize healthy eating habits. For this reason, we will only serve healthy foods for snack. **The Playskool program will provide all snacks.** Families will not be required to donate snacks to the program. The following are just some of the healthy snacks we will be serving:

Wheat crackers
Carrots
Cheese crackers
Cheerios
Graham crackers
Fresh Fruit
Saltines
Vanilla Wafers
Biscuits
Tortilla Chips

Cheese slices or chunks
Animal crackers
Goldfish crackers
Jello
Pretzels
Celery w/dip
Popcorn
Mini muffins
Applesauce
Ritz crackers

Drinks: 100% juice products each day

No snacks containing excessive sugar, chocolate, frosting, marshmallows, etc. will be served. In addition, due to a rise in the number of young children experiencing severe peanut allergies

Playskool will not serve peanut butter or nut containing snacks.

Birthday Treats: Playskool will celebrate your child’s birthday (if you wish) by singing Happy Birthday to your child and distributing a treat to be taken home. **No birthday treats will be served and eaten at Playskool.** Take home treats will be of your choice and are not required to be healthy – so if you are looking for a time to “treat” the class to ooey, gooey, oh-so-sweet morsels, your child’s birthday or half-birthday (for those having summer birthdays) is the perfect opportunity!



Holiday Observances: Playskool will not serve or distribute take home treats brought in by students for holiday celebrations.

**Parents will be provided a monthly snack schedule.
Please see page 27 for a sample!**

IT'S THE RULE SHOTS BEFORE SCHOOL

As with all organized preschool programs, Lan-Oak follows state recommendations regarding the immunizations each

child is required to have before entering a preschool program. Records confirming required immunizations must be filed with the Playskool **by the first day of class**. The State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Public Health, requires that all preschool students have a physical exam within six (6) months prior to the start of preschool. The physical examination will be good for two years.

Required immunizations:

Hepatitis B

Evidence of three (3) doses of Hepatitis B vaccine

MMR

Measles/Mumps/Rubella Must be administered after 12 months of age

DPT

The first three shots must be one month apart. The fourth shot must be at least six months later.

Polio

The first two doses must be at least six weeks apart. A third and fourth dose are also required, with the fourth dose given at least 6 months after the third.

Varicella

(Chicken Pox) The State of Illinois now requires that all children, two and over, receive the chicken pox immunization if they are entering a preschool program for the first time.

HIB

Required for all children.

The Medical History section and the top portion of the physical form must be filled out in full, signed, and dated by the parent. The physician must sign and date both the Immunization and Physical Examination sections.



****A parent may request that immunizations, physical exams and and/or medical treatment be waived on religious grounds. **A child may be exempt from im-**

munization for medical reasons. A physician is required to note such exemption on the child's medical form. Thank you for your support in keeping our littlest participants safe and healthy!!

Below is a sample of the Playskool curriculum calendar that parents will receive each month.

Playskool - January 2014						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						
			1	2	3	4
			Play in the snow - we miss you!!			
5	6 School resumes!	7	8	9	10	11
Letter Bb	We're off to Asia!			Playful Pandas		Red is Best!
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Letter Yy	White Diamonds		Our Story Stretcher - Stone Soup		Preschool Fitness Month	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Letter Kk	No School MLK, Jr. Birthday	Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.?		High in the Sky		
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Letter Oo	Those Tricky Opposites	 	Science Day - Thermometers		Chinese New Year	

Below is a sample of the Playskool snack calendar that parents will receive each month.

Playskool Snacks - January 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
						
						
						
						
						
						
						
						
5	6 School resumes! Club Crackers & Berry Juice	7 	8 Wheat Crackers & Apple Juice	9 	10 Cheese Slices & Grape Juice	11
12	13 Pretzels & Pineapple Juice	14 	15 Bananas & Orange Juice	16 	17 Tortilla Chips & Berry Juice	18
19	20 Apple Sauce & Grape Juice	21 	22 Cheese Nips & Cherry Juice	23 Saltines & Apple Juice	24 	25
26	27 Popcorn & Cranberry Juice	28 	29 Cheerios & Pineapple Juice	30 	31 Fortune Cookies & Cherry Juice	



Lan-Oak Park District

Playskool

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