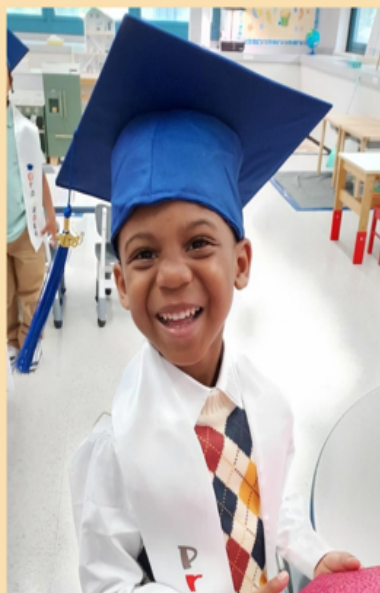




PLAYSKOOL

So Much to Learn, So Much Fun



Qualified teachers offer students:
The Alphabet, Phonetic Sounds, Word Families, Early Reading, Numbers 1-20, Graphing, Early Addition & Subtraction, Geography, Continents, Oceans, Land Forms & Map Reading, Weather, Seasons, Calendar, Days of the Week, Months of the Year, Nine Colors & Color Blending, Fourteen Geometric Shapes Rhyming, Opposites, Positional Words, Human Body, Dinosaurs, Space, Monthly Science Day, Gym Day, Story Stretcher Unit, Movie Day & more!
5-Day, All Day Students also enjoy Spanish Classes, Art Classes & Music

Playskool offers half day and all day programs.
Daily class hours: 9:00am-3:00pm

PARENT MANUAL 2026-2027

The perfect school start for your preschoolers.



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 or email Amanda Blatt at ablatt@lanoakparkdistrict.org

The Playskool year starts the week of Labor Day each year.

Tuesday/Thursday students attend the day after Labor Day.

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 socks, underwear, & shoes or rubber-soled slippers) Please label the box with your child's name. Each child will be provided a personal locker.
- A lunch if staying all day (no peanuts or peanut products, please)
- A big smile!!

Medical forms MUST be received no later than September 21

Have a wonderful year at Playskool. See you at school!!

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 school as a success.



Playskool will offer academic readiness:

- Recognize/name shapes and geometric shapes- Circle, Square, triangle, rectangle, semi-circle, star, hexagon, pentagon, octagon, oval, trapezoid, rhombus (diamond), (12 shapes total)
- Recognize, name, and count numbers 1-20
- Say the alphabet, recognize letters of the alphabet, uppercase and lowercase, and identify letter phonetic sounds
- Two and three letter words, sight words and word families
- Identify colors—red, blue, yellow, green, purple, gray, black, white, orange, pink, brown(11 colors total) learning primary colors, color blending
- Recognize/write their own name, say their phone number, learn address
- Sort items by size, color, shape, category-identify more, less, smaller, bigger, matching parts
- Identify opposites, rhyming words, positional words
- Geography - continents, oceans, reading relief maps, landforms
- Seasons, weather, days of the week, months of the year, reading a calendar
- Math concepts such as graphing, sequencing, addition, subtraction, and fractions
- Science concepts

But it's not all about the academics, we'll also work on: Independence in dressing oneself, basic personal hygiene, toileting, using a tissue to wipe their nose, coughing into the elbow, standing in line, drinking from a drinking fountain, taking turns and sharing, sitting quietly and listening, following simple directions, including fastening and unfastening zippers and buttons, putting on and hanging up a backpack, holding a pencil, crayon, or marker, using scissors to cut paper, putting things away, raising their hand and waiting to be called on, opening any food containers for lunch, serving their own snack, including clean up of the eating space.

The Playskool program will focus on four important goals for your pre-schooler - 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 all they will need to be prepared for their future education.

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 and musical instruments.

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 pre-writing skills. Many fine motor opportunities will be offered daily such as geo-boards, stringing beads, play-doh, kinetic sand, 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, gym activities, bowling and hopscotch. In addition, children will enjoy running, jumping, and playing outside as much as possible in two different outdoor spaces dedicated solely to the Playskool Program.

Children will regularly play outside. 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, office area, science center, construction site, 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, singing, language activity cards, and positive interaction with Playskool instructors will promote language and expressive development in Playskool participants.

Intellectual Development: Playskool offers 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, landforms, the environment, and much more will be featured through hands-on activities at the science table and as a group.

Creative Expression: A creative art project will be offered every day. 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.

Each day Playskool students will gather for a formal circle time focused on educational elements required for future school success.

Calendar and Weather: Each class will note the month, day of the week, date, and year on the calendar, along with the current weather conditions. Months of the year and days of the week will be covered in song!

Color Recognition: Eleven colors are introduced, including secondary (pastel) colors. We'll enjoy some hands-on fun by blending colors and separating colors.

Letters and Numbers: Playskool will offer opportunities for children to recognize letters, their phonetic sounds, early reading, number concepts, and numerals 1-20.

Shape Recognition: Basic shapes will be introduced along with geometric shapes -12 shapes in all. Recognizing shapes in common objects will enhance visual discrimination.

World Recognition: Playskool will introduce children to maps, map reading, the seven continents, our world's oceans, along with relief maps reflecting landforms such as deserts, mountains, grasslands, rivers, volcanoes, and more.

Story Time: Our talented Playskool staff will amuse and delight Playskool children twice each day with some of our favorite characters to cultivate a love of reading. A monthly story-stretcher day will bring elements of a story right into the classroom.

Math Concepts: We'll break away from just counting with activities to graph, sort, add, subtract, understand tally marks, and learn about fractions. New concepts will be introduced throughout the year. Kids will love **rhyming, opposites, and positional words.**



The Lan-Oak Park District Playskool program is not a state licensed pre-school. 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/Newsletters: Calendars are sent home monthly. Calendars will inform parents of the monthly themes and daily snacks, 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, so that information can be updated in your child's file.

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 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, lunch boxes, and backpacks. As a safety precaution, rubber-soled shoes are required. Please send your child in comfortable clothing that can be 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. Toileting accidents are common in the first month of school as students become acclimated. Be patient with your child.

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 or ablatt@lanoakparkdistrict.org 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 a contagious illness.

Inclement Weather/Closings: On occasion, Playskool may close for severe weather or other rare events (power loss, etc.). Parents will be notified of these closures in two ways: on our website at www.lanoakparkdistrict.org and by staff phone calls.

Payment: The non-refundable \$25.00 deposit (for each class section) at registration will be applied to your first month of Playskool tuition. Payment for Playskool is due monthly, on the first of the month. Please direct all payment questions to the Senior Superintendent. 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 Senior Superintendent 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 PLAYSKOOL.

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 front desk 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. Playskool is tasked with teaching children about the classroom environment and the difference between school and other environments like home, a restaurant, a doctor's office, etc.

Please do not stay in the Playskool classrooms regularly, for extended time periods. Parental attendance disrupts the daily schedule of the classroom and inhibits a child's ability to learn independence away from their parent-an important skill needed for elementary school. 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 may 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. Field trips are optional. Parents that are not comfortable with allowing their child to attend should plan a fun day off of school.

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, coats will be gathered if time allows. If time does not allow, teachers are equipped with blankets that will be taken outside for student use.

Progress Reports/Report Cards: Preschool children develop at very different levels and at very different times and speed. For this reason, it is 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. We love updating our parents. Feel free to ask your teacher about your child's progress.

****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.

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.



Home Resources/Blog/A Few Thoughts on Separation Anxiety

By: Meir Muller 08/01/2018

As principal of a school I talk to many parents about saying goodbye at the beginning of the school year. For children, separation anxiety is a natural part of going to school. I find that a child's response to separation is often unique to personality and temperament. Some children easily accommodate to new situations while other children do not. Preparing children can help them with saying goodbye.

Here are some suggestions to ease your child's anxiety:

1. Visit school before it begins. Help your child get familiar with the new surroundings.
2. Roleplay about what might happen. Think of some of the possible questions your child might have before the roleplay so you'll be prepared.
3. Read books about going to school like: Arthur Goes to School, Kindergarten Kids, The Kissing Hand, and Owl Babies.
4. Before you leave your child at school, be lovingly firm. Give your child a hug goodbye. Let your child know how much you love and miss them and look forward to seeing him later. You might say, "Mom loves you and will miss you today, but when I pick you up after school I'll be so happy to see you."
5. Allow your child to bring a picture, "lovey" or other form of comfort from home (if the center's policy allows).
6. Once you say goodbye, avoid returning for additional goodbyes. This creates confusion and can make it more difficult for children to settle into the school routine.
7. Remember that an easy or difficult time saying goodbye is not a reflection of your bond with your child.

It's important to remember that separation anxiety is a normal part of childhood development, for children in preschool and elementary school. Children can work through this stage with family and school support. Oftentimes, it can take up to ten school days for a child to fully settle into a new routine.



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.

It is important to know that vaping, smoking, marijuana, alcohol, and firearms of any type are not allowed on park district property.

This policy has been passed and is strictly enforced in order to keep Playskool students, their families, school staff, and all park district participants 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...

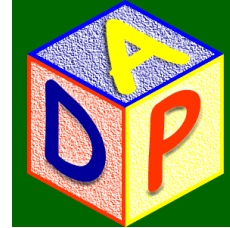
PROCEDURES

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 Senior Superintendent.

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.

For preschool 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. 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.

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 culture and background. With this knowledge we work to create a program that fits the children and the families we serve.

In addition, Playskool offers mixed-age classrooms-also appropriate for the preschool age group. Preschool-aged children do not develop or master skills at the same time and in the same sequence.

Combining younger and older children allows every child to feel comfortable, safe, and welcome as they are able to find others at their same level. Mixed-age grouping is more natural and family-like. In this dynamic, children can experience being the youngest or oldest children in the classroom, while either learning from or teaching peers.

We hope you enjoy the Playskool program.



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

Children derive a sense of security from a consistent schedule. Our 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!)

Children staying all day will enjoy their lunch with their teachers from 11:45am-12:15pm. All day students will be offered a different curriculum in the afternoon class, often related to the same theme as was introduced in the morning.

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!)





HANDWASHING

Handwashing with soap and water can help prevent the spread of infections and illnesses by removing germs from your hands. Germs can enter through your eyes, nose, and mouth, or they can get into your food and drinks you prepare or eat. Unwashed hands can also transfer germs to other objects, like door-knobs or toys, which can then be transferred to other people's hands.

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 handwashing rules by directing their child to wash their hands upon arrival.

Children should wash their hands when:

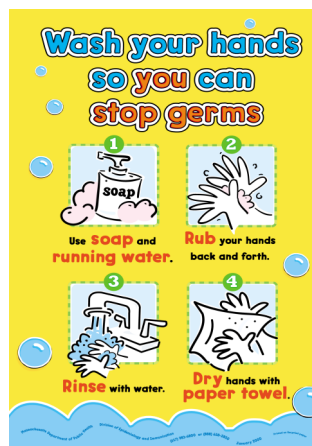
They arrive in the classroom each day.

After they use the toilet.

Before eating snack.

After using the water or sand table.

After they blow their nose



It's All About Play

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 pace 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. What about our fine (small) and gross (large) motor skills?**

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, tweezer sorting, Playdoh, kinetic sand, and more.

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. Don't miss the very popular block corner!

Language development will be achieved with magnetic letters, story books, sequencing cards, wooden word games, dramatic play with friends, and more.

Playskool offers a variety of math and science opportunities. Check out our interesting and challenging science center stocked with natural items like insects, rocks, turtle shells, and sea samples. Play with magnets, color paddles, and get up close with binoculars. It's all about math with sorting toys, number trains, number blocks, and stacking tiles.



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. Become a construction engineer at the construction site and a scientist in the science center.

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 the easel and visit the very popular sand/water table.



Playskool students will enjoy a variety of other activities like reading in the library, singing a tune with musical instruments, and problem-solving a variety of puzzles.

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.

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 U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT.



The Importance of Learning Through Play

Play is an important part of learning, and parents can help.

By: Heidi Borst Dec. 10, 2021, at 9:33am

It's no secret that kids love to play, but there's much more to play than having fun. In fact, play is an excellent way to learn, both in structured and unstructured environments, according to education experts.

"In addition to promoting curiosity, exploration and creativity, play provides children with the opportunity to practice important executive function and self-regulation skills like paying attention, inhibiting their impulses and remembering and updating information," says Stephanie Jones, a professor of early childhood development at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

Play is the work children do when they are developing, says Karen Aronian, an educator and parenting expert in New York. "It's the bedrock of understanding," she says. "In play, children are practicing the roles and skill sets of their burgeoning literacy, inventiveness and interconnectedness."

Because it's so important developmentally, many classrooms across the country incorporate play. Here is what play-based learning looks like in preschool, kindergarten and the early grades.

Learning Through Play in Pre-K

Play has long been a vital and recognized way that children grow and learn, says Katherine Green, who serves on the affiliate faculty at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

"It has been shown to have a direct positive influence on literacy and mathematics and supports the growth of social competence, confidence and self-regulation," Green says.

In preschool, play is learning, and experts say that classrooms should be set up to allow children to engage with toys and materials in ways that they direct and control themselves. This allows for increased creativity and engaged learning, Green says. For example, make-believe restaurants or shops in a classroom setting allow children to play with written materials like menus, shopping lists or recipes. Even if they cannot read, it initiates a rudimentary understanding of language.

"Children who are pretending to shop in the classroom store expand their knowledge of literacy, math and their social world," Green says.

"These early playful learning experiences set children up for a lifetime of improved academic outcomes."

In pre-K, children are beginning to learn the basic social and emotional skills needed to share, take turns and wait, skills that are required for success in peer interactions and schooling, according to Jones.

"These foundational skills prepare children to engage in increasingly complex play with their peers in kindergarten and the early grades," Jones says.

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.



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, thanks to the frosting on the upper panes. Noise levels

are controlled with acoustical ceilings and large carpet areas. Strategic traffic patterns allow uninterrupted play in a variety of 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.

Student bathrooms are close and convenient for student use. The classroom boasts large windows, size appropriate furniture, a refreshing water fountain, and a direct exit to the Playskool yard for safe travel.

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. Each week introduces a new letter and number. Monthly students learn about colors and shapes.

But we don't stop with the basics. We'll learn about:

The continents and oceans of our world A new continent is presented each month, along with discussion about map reading, land-forms, other cultures, and climates of the world.

Our changing seasons and the weather Kids love a full week of weather, explaining something that is often scary for kids

Ourselves, our families, and our school We are all superstars, and we talk about it, along with learning about the different types of families in our school.

Animals Nocturnal animals, insects, marine life, birds, marsupials, pets, animals specific to areas of the world, and many others!

Famous People Columbus, Lincoln, Washington, our favorite authors, Dr. King, the pilgrims, athletes, inventors, 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 So much more

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 and experience hands-on fun.



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

But what about STEM? STEM is an educational approach that combines the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math. Using these different elements, lessons are developed to help your young preschool child to apply these concepts in the real world. The Playskool classroom offers STEM activities with a variety of building opportunities, a marble run, take apart/assemble toys, alphabet robots, group science experiments, a drama center for engineers, and plenty of math fun. Check out our class bar graphs!

Playskool Provides Snacks

Playskool children will enjoy a “serve yourself” snack. During free play, two to 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), socialize with their tablemates, and clean up their space when done. 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.

No sticky, gooey, sugary snacks will be served. Juice served is always 100% juice.

The following are just some of the healthy snacks we will be serving:

Wheat crackers	Cheese slices or chunks	Carrots
Animal crackers	Cheese crackers	Goldfish crackers
Cheerios	Jello	Graham crackers
Pretzels	Fresh fruit	Celery w/dip
Saltines	Popcorn	Vanilla Wafers
Mini muffins	Biscuits	Applesauce
Tortilla chips	Ritz crackers	

Students following a specific diet may bring their own snack that follows the healthy eating policy used by Playskool.

In addition, due to a rise in the number of young children experiencing severe peanut allergies, **Playskool will not serve peanut butter or snacks containing nuts.**

Children bringing their own lunch may not bring peanut butter or foods containing nuts for lunch.

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 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! Birthday treats must be individually wrapped to take home.

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.
Check out the snack calendar sample provided in this manual.**

Playskool School Calendar

Playskool works to emulate the “big school” environment for our students, as well as cater to families with older children in elementary school. To that end, Playskool will not be in session during Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, and Spring Break. Days off will be indicated on your monthly curriculum and snack calendars.



Thanksgiving Break includes the Wednesday before the holiday, Thanksgiving, and the day following.

Spring Break will be a 5-day break usually in March or April each year.

Winter Break will include Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Years Eve, New Years Day, and the days between these holidays.

Playskool **will be in session** on federal and state holidays when the park district is open***: Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Casimir Pulaski Day, Martin Luther King’s Birthday, President’s Day, and Good Friday.

*****The Park District is closed on Labor Day, Memorial Day,**



Looking for five full days of fun?

Students attending Playskool five full days each week will enjoy the opportunity for enrichment classes. Every week, kids will learn in Spanish classes and music classes. Rotating fun will offer baking, cooking, water acclimation in the indoor pool, dance, art, fitness, athletics, and more. Playskool offers so much learning, so much fun!





Lan-Oak Park District

Playskool

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Celebrating 25 years of fun and learning.