



Parent Handbook

2020-2021 School Year

Waconia Community Education
Early Childhood Family Education



Waconia Enrichment Center

Early Childhood Office

520 Industrial Blvd. Waconia, MN

(952) 442-0613

Community Education Office (952) 442-0610

www.waconiacommunityed.org

Welcome to Waconia Early Childhood Family Education

Waconia Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

Early Childhood Family Education is a District 110 program of Waconia Public Schools Community Education. All families with children ages birth to kindergarten are welcome.

- A terrific place for you and your child to play and learn together
- Provide education, support and friendships with other parents
- Weekly parent/child classes, field trips, special events for parents and children led by licensed teachers and qualified teaching assistants
- Parent coaching sessions and home visits
- Affordable with a sliding fee scale - no one denied participation for inability to pay



**EARLY CHILDHOOD
FAMILY EDUCATION**

Greetings,

Waconia Community Education is excited to welcome you and your family to Waconia Early Childhood Family Education. We are dedicated to providing a great learning experience for you and your child. Our staff will be working hard to provide support and education for healthy growth and development.

This handbook is intended to be a resource for you as we progress through the school year. We have included important contact numbers, descriptions of services and policies that apply to students and families. If you have further questions, we welcome you to contact our office.

Thank you for choosing District 110 Early Childhood for your child's early learning!

Sue Forster
Early Childhood Program Supervisor

Waconia School
Community Education
(952)442-0610
www.waconiacommunityed.org
516 Industrial Blvd.
Office Hours: 7:30 am-4:00 pm

Early Childhood Office
952-442-0613
520 Industrial Blvd.
Office Hours: 8:00 am-4:00 pm

ECFE
Waconia Enrichment Center
520 Industrial Blvd.

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Additional Resources
Early Childhood Special Education
952-442-0600

About District 110 Early Childhood & Family Education

Mission and Goals

To strengthen families through education and support of all parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth, and development of their children.

- Parents demonstrate sensitive and responsive care and interaction with their children
- Parents and children experience a smooth transition from early childhood programs and services into kindergarten and the k-12 school system, setting the stage for school and life long learning.
- Parent child relationships support the child's development
- Parents are engaged in their child's learning and education in the school-age years
- Parents have the knowledge and realistic expectations to anticipate and meet the developmental needs of their children



**EARLY CHILDHOOD
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We are a Pyramid Model School

Pyramid model is a social and emotional framework incorporated into the classroom to ensure high quality classrooms for all students. Teachers are supported in implementing this framework through the Minnesota Centers of Excellence. Children will benefit from this program through learning life long skills such as: friendship, self regulation, problem solving and learning about emotions. We are so excited about rolling this program out this year!



About the Staff

District 110 ECFE teachers and classroom assistants are highly trained in best practices and assessment. Teaching staff are licensed by the MN Dept. of Education. Continuing education and staff in-services are available throughout the school year.

Classroom Information

Parent/Child Class Structure

You and your child will spend time together in the classroom, which is set up with age appropriate learning activities for families to enjoy together. Follow your child's lead and have fun!

Parent Communication through Technology

Classroom teachers will use SeeSaw to communicate with parents about class happenings, parent handouts, class lists and class photos/video can be shared in this format. Zoom sessions will be provided for distance learning participants and parent coaching.

Parent-Child Time

Each class begins with parent and child interaction time. Please arrive promptly so you can participate in the activities for the day. During interaction time we suggest:

- Follow your child's lead. Let them choose the activities and the pace.
- Observe and focus on your child. Get down on his/her level, make eye contact and communicate with words, smiles and loving touch.
- Talk with your child while working and playing together. Offer positive encouragement and support for their efforts.
- Listen carefully to your child's words and to the feeling he/she expresses.
- Encourage creativity and imagination. Focus on the *process* of exploring rather than the *product*. The sensation of spreading paint is usually more valuable than the final picture. Let your child create and don't worry if it's not "perfect".
- Encourage your child to clean up what he/she was working on before moving to the next activity.
- Talk with other adults only when necessary. This is a special time with your child, and there will be time for adult conversations during parent discussion time.

Circle Time

The early childhood staff will let you know when circle time begins. During circle time, the whole group participates in songs, finger-plays, rhythms, and movement activities.

- We expect that some children will get up and wander; that is okay. We ask that the parent/guardian stay in the circle. We will encourage children back to circle as needed. Children learn by repetition, so we will repeat songs, finger-plays and activities. During this time children are learning:
 - to increase their attention span, to listen and follow directions
 - to develop an understanding of the rhythms of speech, music and life's activities
 - to build vocabulary and encourage speech development

- concepts that appeal to a child's interest and self expression
- beginning math concepts of size, shape, place, direction and sequence
- to move and wiggle in their own space, increase finger dexterity
- experience with social skills with other children and adults
- a closeness between parent and child

Children's Classroom

Licensed teachers and assistants will guide play with children. Children learn the following through their play:

Social and Emotional Skills-playing with children their own age, learning from adults, and using adults as resources, help children develop their uniqueness, competence and social skills. It involves children's feelings about themselves as well as their interactions with others.

Dramatic Play-dress up clothes, play house, dolls, blocks, transportation toys, animals are used for role-playing activities. Dramatic activities allow children to role-play members of the family and community, that can help them better understand the world around them.

Expressive Activities-these encourage children to express their creativity through the use of play materials, art, puppets, creative dramatics, and body movements.

Small Muscle Activities-cutting, pasting, printing, painting, coloring, lacing, buttoning, zipping, playdough, and fitting puzzles provide practice in developing eye-hand coordination, spatial relationships, and small muscle development.

Large Muscle Activities-running, jumping, hopping, sliding, catching and throwing help in the development of large muscle coordination. This allows children to gain control over their bodies and become more confident in themselves.

Cognitive Activities-the focus is on children's curiosity in the people and world around them. Children learn to think, remember, imagine, gather and organize information. Using information to problem solve and develop judgment.

During separation time, keep in mind...

Realize that sometimes separation may be difficult for you and your child. You may want to show your child the classroom where you will be during parent discussion. When it's time to separate, get your child settled in with snacks and/or activities, say a short good-bye, let them know you will be back after playtime and leave promptly. Be reassuring and relaxed. If your child senses you are unsure about separation, it may be harder to separate. Do not sneak out. Build a sense of trust by being honest with your child. You can leave a favorite toy, blanket, pacifier with your child to offer security and reassurance. If your child is crying, say "it's okay to be sad and cry. I know you will have a good time when you're done being sad. I love you, and I will come back. The teacher will call you if crying continues for more than 10 minutes.

Parent Education Time

Discussion time is planned to be relevant and tailored to participant needs and children's ages . ECFE provides a confidential environment where parents can make friends, share concerns, and gain knowledge about the five domains of parent education identified by the Minnesota Department of Education. The Parent

Education Core Curriculum Framework is used as a topic guide and content is structured around five main areas:

- Early Childhood Development
- Family Development
- Culture and Community
- Parent Development
- Parent-Child Relationships

A licensed parent educator guides and facilitates group discussion, providing information and resources. Sharing in learning and experiences decreases feelings of isolation and helps parents feel supported while they build and strengthen their relationships with their children. Increasing their joy and satisfaction in their role.

During discussion time, keep in mind

- Everyone participates at their own comfort level yet understands that the richness of group conversation is enhanced when all participate.
- Personal information shared in the group is confidential.
- It's okay to pass.
- Avoid side conversations to give full attention to those speaking.
- We all have different ways of parenting. It's okay to disagree and still support each other.
- The discussion time allows parents to learn from the entire group and to find support for their critical role as parents.
- After parent discussion time, please be prompt to pick up your children. They are eagerly awaiting your return.

Returning to the room

- Parents/guardians return to the room together and greet the children.
- The entire group cleans up together.

Distance Learning

- A distance learning option will be offered at 50% reduction in tuition.
- Distance learning will include a once a week virtual circle time with choice board activities to complete at home and a virtual parent education opportunity with parent coaching offered through zoom. [Parent Coaching Request Form](#)
- Tip on joining a meeting on zoom. [Zoom Tip Sheet](#)
- The seesaw application will be used to communicate with distance students.

Sibling Care

Due to the current pandemic we are experiencing we are not able to safely provide sibling care.

Care for siblings is available, if needed, during most classes. Siblings from three months through Kindergarten are eligible. Babies who are not yet crawling are welcome to come to class with parents. Registration is required as space is limited.

- Children may be dropped off 10 minutes before scheduled class time
- Please pick up your child promptly when class is done
- Snack donations welcome

Cell Phones

- Out of respect to all participants, avoid using your cell phone or texting during class.
- If you need to make an emergency call, please let staff know and step out into the hallway.

If you need to have your phone on in case of an emergency, put it on silent or vibrate.

Attendance Expectations

Please notify the office 952-442-0613 or email your teacher to let them know that you will not be attending class and include siblings registered for sibling care.

Arrival Time/Departure Time

- Staff are preparing the classroom, please arrive no earlier than five minutes before class time. To keep everyone safe families should go straight to their designated classroom. Please avoid loitering in the lobby and social distance should be maintained.
- Hang coats and personal belongings in designated areas.
- Put a name tag on yourself and your child every week.
- Wash hands with soap and water before starting class.

Dressing for School

We ask that you dress your child comfortably for play. It is our desire that children participate fully in large muscle opportunities as well as paint, sensory play, science experiences and nature play, which can be messy. Please make sure your child wears sturdy shoes to school for safety.

For **Bridge to Preschool** please provide a backpack or school bag for your child to bring each day. Inside the backpack, please provide a full change of clothes for your child in case of potty accidents or spills. Consider sending two changes of clothes if your child is struggling to complete the toilet learning process. A gallon ziplock bag works well to store the extra clothes. Please supply and label jackets, snow pants, boots, mittens, and hats as needed. You may also want to apply sunscreen and bug repellent to your child before school. **Please check and empty the backpack daily.**

Snack Time

Snacks will not be included in class time in response to COVID 19. A water bottle may be brought to school and must be kept in storage unless in use.

Allergies

We work hard to make our school a safe environment for every student. Please inform the staff of any allergies so that we can take appropriate precautions to prevent exposure. You will be provided a form to fill out giving our staff instructions on how to proceed if your child comes into contact with those allergens. You will be called back to the classroom if an allergic reaction is detected. We are able to store epipens you provide if needed for your child.

Birth Date Guidelines

For both ECFE and preschool classes, please select your class based on your child's age by Sept. 1, 2019 unless age is indicated. This age requirement aligns with district kindergarten age requirements.

Registration

Tuition

- Tuition will be collected the first week of class. Register with a \$0 fee and tuition will be charged the first week of class. Tuition reimbursements will not be given in the event that your child or family becomes ill or a class is required to enter distance learning for a short period of time. In-person classes will resume when it is safe.
- If our school is required to enter in distance learning, a prorated tuition reduction of 50% will be issued.

[Online Registration Website](#)

Fees

A sliding fee scale is offered based on income. The fee scale is listed on the ECFE website. Pick a category based on income, unless otherwise noted. All families are welcome at ECFE. No one is denied access to class due to inability to pay. Special Event Fees do not qualify for sliding fees.

[Sliding Fee Scale](#)

Refund Policy

A full refund is issued for cancellations before the session begins, minus a \$10.00 processing fee. After the first week, refunds are prorated. There are no refunds midway through a session or for missed days. Weather related refunds will not be issued for weekly ECFE classes. Special Events refunds will only be given with a 5-day advance notice. Credit vouchers may be given for special events that are cancelled due to weather in the event that it can't be rescheduled.

Behavior Guidance

Our licensed teachers understand the developmental level and needs of children and have appropriate expectations for young children. They are attentive to children and give verbal and visual cues to teach children about behavior expectations. Teachers positively reinforce helpful behavior, acknowledge feelings, use tools and strategies to teach self regulation and provide a framework for problem solving.

Safety Guidelines

As part of our ongoing commitment to student safety, we practice fire drills, tornado drills, and lock down drills throughout the year. When we conduct safety drills, visitors, parents/guardians and anyone else in the building are expected to participate. If you are in a building during a drill, follow the instructions of the early childhood or building staff.

Parking Safety

There is designated parking in the lot next to the playground at the District Education Center. Overflow parking is available next door in the Laketown Gymnastics lot or along the street on the school side curb. Our parking lots are very busy places.

- Drive slowly through the parking lot.
- Please hold your child's hand to and from the car.
- If you need assistance please ask your teacher. We will be glad to help.
- Remember to never leave your child unattended in the car while you come in to drop off/pick up another child.

Face Covering

- Staff are required to wear face coverings and/or shields when providing direct service.
- Caregivers are required to wear face coverings within the building.
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/masksafely.pdf>
- Children under the age of 5 are not required to wear a mask when attending class. If you choose to have your child wear a mask you may find this video helpful.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtfP2x8kG8Y>

Cleaning Procedures

Special Cleaning Procedures will be followed in response to COVID 19. See ISD110 ECFE Safe Learning Plan.

[ISD 110 ECFE Safe Learning Plan - COVID 19](#)

- We disinfect tables, toys and equipment after each class.

- If you notice your child mouthing a toy, please put it in a designated bin when they are done playing with it so it can be sanitized.

Child Injuries

Safety is a priority in our classrooms. Teachers do their best to prevent accidents and provide safe environments for exploration. If an accident occurs while a parent is out of the room:

- Appropriate first aid will be administered
- Parents will be called back to the classroom if injury interferes with child finishing the class
- Other injuries will be reported to the parent at the end of class
- In an emergency we will call 911 and parent
- Child will be transported to the nearest hospital if paramedics deem it necessary

Weather Emergencies

Any changes made to planned school hours will be posted on the school District's main page www.isd110.org and local news sources. A 2-hour delay cancels ECFE classes that start before 10am. In the event of school district early releases and/or after school activities are cancelled, ECFE evening classes are cancelled. ISD110 weatherline #952-442-0640 provides a recorded message.

[School Closings Policy](#)

Health Policy

All families must complete a health screening before attending ECFE classes. Click on the link to view the screening questions/guidance.

[COVID-19 SYMPTOM SCREENING TOOL](#)

[Sick Child COVID 10 Decision Tree](#)

Please keep your child home if he/she has had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

- a fever
- vomiting or diarrhea
- any undiagnosed rash
- red, crusty, weepy eyes until antibiotics have been started
- yellow or greenish discharge from the nose
- harsh cough, sore throat, a contagious stage of any communicable disease
- when your child is not feeling well enough to function and learn at school
- head lice

In order to provide a healthy environment for everyone, teaching staff will consult with you if your child appears too ill to be at school.

Notify the early childhood staff if your child has a communicable disease and has exposed other children. Staff will notify the parents/guardians of the children who were exposed.

Immunizations

State law mandates that an immunization record be kept on file for each child in our program. The immunization form is due before the start of class. Immunizations can be faxed from your doctor's office. Fax number is 952-442-0619. A notarized immunization form must be on file with our school for conscientious objectors. We have two certified notaries employed in the district who can help with this requirement. Free or reduced cost immunizations for children are available through Carver Co. Public Health at 952-361-1329.

Diapering

Parents/guardians are responsible for changing their own child's diaper or for taking them to the bathroom. A good time to do this is before leaving for discussion time. When children are in the process of toilet training we will assist unless advised differently by the parents or in any non-separating class. Parents will be called to change diapers for children using them. All diapering needs to take place on a changing table or pad, which is provided in the restrooms.

Mandated reporting

Staff are mandated by state law to report any instance of observed or suspected neglect and physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school, or community setting.

Wildcat Discovery Park

We believe children need to connect with nature to support healthy development. Wildcat Discovery Park is designed to be a place where children can connect with trees, shrubs, perennials, vines and edible gardens for children's enjoyment and healthy development. This outdoor classroom space will be used often in all seasons. The park is open to the community.

Park Rules

- Parents must supervise children when enjoying the park.
- Sticks need to stay in the fort area and are used for construction purposes.
- Children must stay in the fenced in area unless they are with an adult.
- Adults should take care to open and shut the gate.
- Please leave all "messy materials" and "loose parts" here for all to enjoy.
- No Pets Allowed Dog waste is a threat to the health of our children.

Due to the Pandemic, Wildcat Discovery Park will be closed to the public from 8:00am-6:00pm on Monday-Friday until we are approved to return to in person teaching.

Parent Communication

Parents are encouraged to share feedback with the teachers and the program supervisor at any time. An electronic newsletter will be emailed during fall, winter and spring session. Classroom teachers can be contacted through email or call 952-442-0613 to leave a message.

Evaluations

At least once a year, parents will be asked to fill out an evaluation form to provide feedback on your experience. Please know that we welcome your feedback and comments throughout the year-do not wait for a formal evaluation to let us know how we can better meet the needs of your family. Talk to your classroom teacher, parent educator or Sue Forster, Early Childhood Supervisor, sforster@isd110.org or (952) 442-0613.

Home Visits/One to One Parenting Session

We have access to many resources and information to support families with a wide variety of needs and would be happy to connect you. ISD110 employs parent educators who can lend support to parents. Home and center based visits, email, Q&A and phone conversations are available to families. To schedule an appointment please fill out this form and a staff person will be in contact with you. [Parent Coach Request Form](#)

- Parenting struggles/problem solving
- How children grow
- Being a parent/guardian
- Community help and resources
- Setting goals
- Learning through play

Parenting Resources

[Resource Link](#)

Early Childhood Advisory Team

This is a group of parents and staff that meet five times during the school year to support, advise, and take action on behalf of Waconia Early Childhood Programs. If you are interested in joining this group please contact Sue Forster, sforster@isd110.org.

[Advisory Council Information](#)

Holidays

We find that secular remembrance of certain holidays throughout the year can be a fun way to enhance our daily curriculum. Please be open with concerns you have about what might be included in these days and potential conflict to your personal beliefs. With open communication we have found solutions to make activities work for all of our students. If you have information about celebrations that you would like to share with the class, please let the children's teacher know to see how we might share those ideas.

Special Education Services

Extra help is available for students that need it. Our school works in full partnership with the district's Early Childhood Special Education program. Qualifying children will receive extra support and services at home to help them succeed at school.

[Help Me Grow](#)

[Infant Follow Along Program](#)

Donations

A giving tree is posted in the lobby of the ECFE office. Teachers add donation requests to the tree throughout the year. Donations are greatly appreciated and help keep our budget healthy. Donations such as Kleenex, disinfecting wipes, wet wipes, Ziploc bags and hand sanitizer are always appreciated.

Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening is a free, developmental check required by the State of Minnesota for all preschool-age children who will be attending kindergarten at a public school. Screening appointments:

- Last approximately 60 minutes with parent observation during the entire screening
- Screening at 3 is preferred, but a child may be screened between the ages of 3 and the start of kindergarten as required by law.
- Check your child's height, weight, hearing, vision, and immunization record, coordination, large muscle and small motor skills, speech, learning development, and social/emotional skills.
- Involves playful activities that make it an enjoyable experience for your child, while providing valuable information to ensure development is on track
- Are not tests. Screening simply helps identify any needs that may require additional support before your child enters kindergarten. Studies show that early intervention can make the biggest impact on development.
- Your screener will discuss the results of the screening with you immediately and answer any questions you may have

[Early Childhood Screening Link](#)

Class Photos and Video

We take photos in class. A portion of these photos are used in class as part of our curriculum and classroom management. Other photos are used in promotional literature or on our programs Facebook page. Others will be shared with you on a private platform via the internet. If for any reason you are not comfortable having your child's photo taken in class for these purposes please let a staff member know so that we can offer you an opt out form.

