

P.H Miller Elementary School & Plano Early Learning Center



Preschool Parent Handbook 2023-2024

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Preschool Program at P.H. Miller

P.H. Miller Elementary Preschool is a grant-funded program designed to provide children with the learning environment and varied experiences that help them develop socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development. Funding for the Plano Preschool Program comes through the Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion grant programs from the Illinois State Board of Education, as well as some locally funded spots provided by our Plano CUSD 88 school board. The Illinois State Board of Education has awarded the “Gold Circle of Quality” to P.H. Miller’s preschool program.

Children are invited to attend the program based on the results of the screening process that includes academic, social/emotional, and home environment information. Students are enrolled in the program to ensure success when they enter kindergarten. Students who do not initially qualify for the program are placed on a waiting list. Playgroups, parent activities and education, and special events are offered to students and families in the program AND on the waiting list. If spots become available throughout the year, students will be added to the program in the order they are on the waiting list. The P.H. Miller Preschool waiting list is prioritized according to the current educational needs of students as outlined by the state’s mandated criteria.

Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum is one of only a few state approved programs for Preschool for All/Preschool for All Expansion grant programs. This curriculum is widely used across the nation and closely aligns with Illinois' Early Learning and Developmental Standards. This curriculum assesses all aspects of your child's development. There are 17 interest studies for children to have the opportunity to explore throughout the school year.

Second Step is the social-emotional curriculum that is used to develop social/emotional maturity. The program provides universal and targeted support for children's positive behavior and social-emotional development. Preschool spends the first 12 weeks focusing on Social Emotional Literacy. This is also supported by using materials from the Pyramid Model Consortium. More information will come home during the school year with tools that are used at school as well as tools that can be used at home.

KinderMusik is the music and movement program used in the classrooms and for playgroups.

Illinois Early Learning and Developmental Standards:

Available on the Illinois State Board of Education website at:

https://www.isbe.net/documents/early_learning_standards.pdf

Program Structure

The PFA-PFAE Compliance Checklist drives our instruction and program practice in order to provide a Gold-rated program for your child. More information can be found at:<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/PFA-Compliance-Checklist.pdf>

Full Day Schedule example:

7:10-7:30 Arrival/Independent Work
7:30-8 Breakfast
8-8:30 Gross Motor
8:30-8:50 Circle
8:50-9:05 Small Groups
9:05-10:05 Centers
10:05-10:20 Clean up/Heggerty/Story/KinderMusik/Dancing
10:20-10:50 Gross Motor
10:50-10:55 Transition/ Wash Hands
10:55-11:25 Lunch
11:25-11:30 Transition to Cots/Story
11:30-12:30 Rest
12:30-1:30 Snack/Centers
1:30-1:45 Circle
1:45-1:55 Dismissal

Half-Day Schedule example:

7:10-7:30	Arrival/Table Work
7:30-8:00	Gross Motor
8:00-8:20	Circle
8:20-8:30	Small Groups
8:30-9:30	Centers/Snack
9:30-9:40	Clean Up
9:40-9:50	Closing Circle
9:50-10:00	Backpacks/Staging
	10:00 Dismissal

Rest Time:

Per PFAE compliance requirements, students who attend our full day program are required to rest on a cot for one hour. If a student cannot sleep they are required to remain on their cot quietly for the duration of rest.

Clothing:

Please dress your child in clothes that are appropriate for the weather and will not cause a crisis if they get dirty at school. Play clothes are suggested, as we do involve the children in messy activities from time to time. Please send an extra set of weather-appropriate clothes to keep at the school in case they get dirty or wet.

Shoes:

There will be days the weather does not permit us to be outside to play and students will go to the gym. Only tennis shoes can be worn in the gym. We have found it convenient to keep a pair of tennis shoes either at school or in their child's book bag for gym. ***In general, tennis shoes are recommended for children to wear most of the time at school.*** They are safe for running and jumping during movement activities and are not uncomfortable when a child sits on the floor (many boots and fancy shoes have buckles or ties that get in the way, and sandals have a way of slipping off). Velcro shoes are recommended so children can put on shoes independently.

Boots:

If your child wears boots to school (either snow boots or rain boots), then he or she **must** bring shoes to put on or have shoes at school. Boots cannot be worn in the classroom.

Attendance

Attendance is key for your student's success in school. When your child is in the classroom she/he receives the full academic and social benefits of schooling. Absences will interfere with your child's opportunities to participate in learning activities. Students are expected to attend school everyday unless illness or other circumstances prevent your child from attending.

Families with a child who develops a pattern of frequent absences or tardies will be asked to meet with the building principal and the social worker to establish a plan that addresses the needs of the child.

Absentees:

If your child is going to be absent, please call the PH Miller office at 630-552-8504 and leave a message. If you know in advance, please send a written note to the teacher at least 2 days prior to the expected absence.

On days that your child will be absent, please contact Transportation at 630-552-8980 so that the bus does not make an unnecessary stop at the child's point of pick-up.

The instructional hours for the half-day programs are 7:10am to 10:00am for the morning preschool classes and 11:10am to 2:00pm for the afternoon preschool classes. The instructional hours for the full day program are 7:10am to 2:00pm. Children who arrive after 7:30am (AM class/Full day class), 11:15am (PM class) will be marked tardy for the day and must sign in at the front office.

Extended Absence Policy

Upon 15 days of consecutive absences, or 15 days of absence within a 25-day period, a family meeting will be required to review the student's attendance and determine whether or not the student will remain in the program. If the extended absence is due to the child's medical condition, medical documentation must be provided by the attending physician in order for this exclusion to be waived. If the extended absence is not due to the child's medical condition, a determination will be made about the child's enrollment in the Preschool For All program.

School personnel will contact families when a pattern of excessive absences and/or tardiness exists in order to determine how best to support families in getting their children to school each day; excessive absence is defined as 5% or more of the last 180 school days.

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Vacations:

Vacations scheduled during the school year are strongly discouraged. Vacation days are considered unexcused absences and count against student attendance. Other requests for absences must be pre-arranged with the administration at least (3) days in advance of the absence. Please send a written letter to request an extended absence.

Health and Safety

Allergies:

The administration, teachers and staff at PH Miller are aware of the increasing number of children with food or other related allergies. In order to help manage allergies and provide appropriate support to all students, parents/guardians must submit documentation to the school nurse and building administration of a child's allergy.

Allergy Plan:

All children with an allergy resulting in a reaction that is potentially life threatening must have an established allergy plan on file in the nurse's office. A copy will be kept with the classroom teacher.

Contagious Illness:

If your child catches a contagious and/or serious illness, such as chicken pox, strep throat, etc., please notify the school nurse and us and **keep your child at home** until

the risk of infecting the other children has passed, and they have been fever free for 24 hours.

COVID info:

Please see the district website for more information.

Illness:

If your child is ill for more than 5 days, the school nurse needs to have a note from a doctor stating that it is okay for your child to return to school.

Other Illness:

Occasionally, children also get things like lice, pink-eye, skin rashes, colds, stomach flu, etc. Please treat these according to a doctor's instructions and keep your child home until the risk of infecting the other children has passed. In general, a guideline for colds and stomach flu is this: ***If your child is not able to function normally*** due to constant cough, fever, tiredness, runny eyes, runny nose, ***then please keep your child home until he or she is better***. If your child is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea, then please keep your child home until they have been symptom/fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

Medication:

School policy does not allow school personnel to administer medication to a child unless the child's attending physician prescribes it. A release to administer medication must be received by the building nurse prior to the medication being dispensed. The necessary form is on the district website and can be dropped off in the PH Miller front office.

Sick Child at School:

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be called first. The child will then be placed in a quarantine room while waiting for a parent. In the event you cannot be reached, the first person on the emergency contact will be notified and asked to pick up your child immediately. A child will not be sent on the bus if he/she has a fever of 100 degrees or higher, is vomiting, or has diarrhea. Before a child can come back to school, they must be fever free for 24 hours. **A child who becomes ill on the way into school will be sent home.**

Transportation

All students enrolled in the Plano CUSD 88 preschool program qualify for bus transportation to/from school. Parents/families are encouraged to use the bus transportation to ensure that your child arrives at school on time, to minimize separation anxiety at arrival, and to reduce traffic and congestion at the school during arrival and dismissal.

Meeting the Bus:

In order to make sure your child is safe, please be **sure** that an adult is watching for the bus when he/she is returning from school (whether to home or to a babysitter's). The **bus driver needs to see an adult or be met at the bus stop by an adult** before he or she will let a child leave the bus. (This is to be sure that a child is not let off at an empty house)

If the Bus Finds No One at Home:

If no one is present at the stop when the bus returns your child from school, the bus driver will bring your child back to school. The office will call home to ask you to pick up your child. If no one answers the office will call the emergency numbers. Please keep the office informed of any changes in contact numbers.

Bus Rules:

PH Miller teachers and aides, along with bus drivers, will review the bus rules throughout the school year. Please reinforce these rules at home. You can practice them in the car to help your child learn about good bus safety rules:

Stay seated until the bus stops

No food or drink on the bus

Keep your hands and feet to yourself

Use quiet voices on the bus

Listen to the bus driver

Changes in Address:

Occasionally, it may be necessary for you to change where the bus picks up or lets off your child. If so, please call the school office and transportation coordinator with the instructions (**please include the new name, address, and phone number, and the date the change begins**) at least **one week** ahead of time, and give written notes with the same information to the teacher.

Other Changes:

Please notify us in writing **immediately** if you move to a new address, change your home phone number, or change your workplace and/or work number. We need to know how to contact you at all times.

Bringing your Child to School

P.H. Miller Preschool will conduct curbside drop-off and pick up. This means that **drivers remain in their vehicles and school staff will assist with helping the child to exit or enter the vehicle**. In order to make this process as safe as possible, we request that you put your child's car seat on the passenger side of the vehicle (if possible) so that they are exiting the vehicle on the sidewalk instead of in the parking lot. The Illinois Child Passenger Protection Act requires that all children under age 8 be properly secured in an appropriate child safety restraint system.

1. **Pull up as far as you can**, at the direction of the staff assisting with arrival/dismissal with your car rider sign in the front window.
2. **Remain in the vehicle and wait for a staff member** to open your vehicle door and assist your child in exiting or entering the vehicle. Your child's temperature may be taken before they exit the vehicle (TBD).
3. Once your child is out of the vehicle (at arrival) or buckled up in the vehicle (at dismissal), you are ready to exit the parking lot. The parent/guardian is responsible for buckling their child.
4. **Wait until the vehicle(s) ahead of you pulls away** and then follow them out of the parking lot.
5. Please **do not go around vehicles ahead of you** since this actually slows down the process AND creates challenges and safety concerns in the parking lot for our students and staff.
6. Illinois Child Passenger Protection Act

The Child Passenger Protection Act requires that all children under age 8 be properly secured in an appropriate child safety restraint system. This includes the use of booster seats, which must only be used with a lap/shoulder safety belt. If the back seat of the vehicle is not equipped with lap/shoulder type safety belts, a child weighing more than 40 pounds may be transported in the back seat without a booster seat, secured with a lap belt only.

Arrival Procedures

Preschool families will drop off students in the front of the building at Door 1. Drop off times are:

- Full Day- 7:10am (Door 10)
- A.M. Arrival-7:10am (Door 10)
- P.M. Session Arrival-11:10am (Front of School by front office)

PH Extension (Fox Valley Family YMCA Campus) Preschool families will drop off students in the front of the building. Drop off times are:

- Full Day- 7:10am (Entrance just west of the Main Entrance)
- A.M. Arrival-7:10am (Entrance just west of the Main Entrance)

- P.M. Session Arrival-11:10am (Full Day- 7:10am (Entrance just west of the Main Entrance)

Dismissal Procedures

All families will be given two color-coded cards with their child's name on it. **Place one of these cards on the passenger side dashboard of the vehicle when picking up your child from school.** If you have two children to pick up, place both name cards on your dashboard. If you need additional name cards, please contact the main office. The staff will use the name cards to identify which child belongs in each vehicle. Anyone picking up a child at dismissal, **including those who walk up to the door**, must use their child's name card to identify the student they are picking up. We want to be sure to release children to the appropriate adult and the name card helps us to do this. Dismissal proceeds much more quickly and smoothly when everyone uses the name cards therefore **we thank you in advance for your cooperation.** Your child's safety is our #1 priority; therefore, if you forget your child's name card, you can sign your child out in the Main Office so that we have a record of who picked your child up. For safety reasons we will only release a child to authorized persons with an ID.

PH Miller Preschool families will pick-up students as listed below. Dismissal times are listed below:

- 2:00 p.m. for full-day preschool (Door 10)
- 10:00 a.m. for morning session (preschool in the front of the building at Door)
- 2:00 p.m. for afternoon session preschool (Door 10)

PH Extension (Fox Valley Family YMCA Campus) Preschool families will pick up students in the front of the building. Pick-up times are:

- 2:00 p.m. for full-day preschool (Entrance just west of the Main Entrance)
- 10:00 a.m. for morning session ((Entrance just west of the Main Entrance)
- 2:00 p.m. for afternoon session preschool (Entrance just west of the Main Entrance)

If you have questions or concerns about student drop-off and/or pick-up, please contact the P.H. Miller Elementary School Main Office at (630) 552-8504. **Also all changes to normal transportation need to be made in PikMyKid app at least 45 minutes prior to dismissal; changes can be scheduled ahead of time using the app.**

Communication

Communication:

Parents will receive communication about school events and activities periodically throughout the year. Please check your child's purple folder in their book bag and Learning Genie each night for important communication from your child's teacher and/or the school. Classroom teachers will send newsletters and notes that highlight

the learning experiences in the classrooms. Notifications about field trips will also be found in your child's folder.

Power Alert is a mass communication system that allows the school and/or district to communicate with families for the purpose of reminding them of upcoming events as well as emergencies. These messages are received via telephone or email. **Be sure your contact information in the main office is current so that you receive these important messages.**

Early Dismissals Due to Bad Weather:

During the winter, school occasionally closes early when the weather is unusually bad. Please listen to the local radio station (WSPY 107.1) to find out what Plano District 88 is doing. Parents will receive an automated call if school is dismissed early/canceled due to inclement weather. Please make sure your contact information is up to date.

Late Start Days:

The school district may have a 2-hour delayed school start as an option during inclement weather conditions. This option would be in addition to other safety measures that include full school day cancellations. AM sessions will not have preschool on late start days; PM sessions will continue at their regular start time.

School Pictures:

The preschool classes have their pictures taken on the same day as PH Miller School. Detailed information will be sent as soon as we have it. Check your child's book bag for important information about school pictures. There are normally fall and spring pictures..

Food and Snack

Milk/Water:

White milk and water is available daily.

Snack:

A healthy snack will be provided for all students who attend the preschool program. **Please alert your child's teacher to any special dietary requirements your child may have as well as recommend food allergy accommodations.**

Breakfast/Lunch (full day):

A healthy breakfast and lunch will be provided for students in the full-day program. **Please alert your child's teacher to any special dietary requirements your child may have as well as recommend food allergy accommodations.**

Preschool Celebrations

Preschool celebrations occur throughout the year to create a sense of community among all preschool students, staff, and families. Families will be given additional details about events and parent involvement as each date nears. If a date changes we will notify you as soon as we have that information.

Field Trips:

Field trips are great ways to allow children to gain experience outside the classroom. They support each child's growing need to become familiar with his/her community. Field trips provide a great opportunity for language development, connecting to previous experiences, and acquiring new knowledge. Please send your child to school in their purple PH Miller shirts on the day of field trips. **Parents MUST sign and return the field trip permission slips in order for their child to participate with the field trips.**

Birthdays:

Children are welcome to bring in **NON-EDIBLE** treats to celebrate their birthday. We encourage families to consider treats such as small toys, bracelets, coloring books or crayons. All food items will be refused by the office or returned with the student. (Please note that this is a district-wide procedure to insure the safety and health of all students).

Progress Updates

Parents/Guardians will receive information about their child's progress throughout the school year. Progress reports and report cards address different developmental domains: Social-emotional, physical development, language, cognitive, math, literacy, the arts, social studies, science, and technology. Two progress reports will be sent home prior to the end of the trimester report card. In the fall and spring, parents and teachers will also get together to discuss each child's progress at Parent/Teacher Conferences. Parents/Guardians can learn more about their student's development at any time by contacting their child's classroom teacher via phone or email.

Family Support

Family education opportunities are designed to support families in meeting the needs of their children and achieving family goals.

Home Visits

Home visits are wonderful opportunities for us to get to know each student a little better and for the students to share some of their home lives with us. These are not academic conferences, just opportunities for our students and their families to share their lives with us. These home visits are a lot of fun and the students really enjoy them. If you are uncomfortable with us coming to your home, we can meet at a park or a coffee shop

as well. **Your child's teacher or a family support worker will schedule appointments as needed to fulfill program requirements.** The adult participating in the home visit needs to be a person who normally takes care of the child in the home. More information will be given when your home visit is scheduled. Home visits may be scheduled virtually if/when caretakers are unable to meet in person.

Participation

Parent and family involvement in the school is the single most important determinant of a child's success. Our goal is for the school and families to work together as partners in education. We strongly encourage families to participate in school activities and to be involved in your child's education whether they are in-person or virtual opportunities. The families in our program are expected to participate in 4 events each school year per the grant requirements. Attending school events: in-person/virtual open house, in-person/virtual parent/teacher conferences, in-person virtual home visits, or parent university opportunities.

We ask families to provide learning experiences and activities at home to support what we do in the school and to enhance student growth and acquisition of new skills.

Your voice, opinions, ideas and expertise are extremely valuable and important to us. We need and want you and your family to participate in our meetings and school activities. We try our best to schedule meetings and activities during hours that meet the needs of our families. We understand that sometimes it is difficult to participate, but we encourage you to stay informed. **We want you to know that we are here for you, for your family, and for your children.**

Parent Education:

Families receive regular opportunities to learn from experts in the areas of child medical and dental health, mental wellness, and family strengthening.

Visiting Your Child's Classroom

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to visit the classroom on scheduled days and at their convenience. We ask that parents/guardians arrange for their visit through their child's teacher. Parents without scheduled appointments with a classroom teacher will not be allowed to enter a classroom. This is to insure the safety of our children and maintain the building as a secure place.

Volunteers:

Volunteers are vital to the continued success of our program. There are many opportunities to volunteer and be of service to the children and staff at PH Miller. All visitors are to stop in the school office, sign in with an ID, and put on a visitor's tag before coming to the room when bringing or picking up a child. Then, before leaving, visitors need to sign out in the office, and return the tag. A volunteer form also needs to be filled out when filling out the registration packet. There may be opportunities to do this virtually.

Family Resource Center

The Plano Family Resource Center is located at the United Methodist Church - Plano, 219 N. Hale Street, Plano, IL. The Center is home to weekly playgroups and is continuing to expand access to other agencies and opportunities. All programs and related resources are free and open to any family with children up to the age of five, living in the Plano community. Families can register to participate in weekly playgroups, use our resource library (books/toys/resources), and parent events/workshops. Contact one of the Family Support Workers, Angelica Nicola or Sherri Rachord, for more information on the services and programs offered at the Plano Family Resource Center.

****PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO YOUR
CHILD'S TEACHER****

- I understand that with my child's enrollment in the P.H. Miller preschool program, I will be required to participate in the parent portion of the program. In return, the preschool program's personnel will make every effort to accommodate my schedule. When possible, a variety of times, transportation and/or childcare will be provided in order to make my involvement in the program beneficial for both my child and myself.
- I have read and acknowledged the information I have been given about the P.H. Miller preschool program.
- Any items checked out from the teacher and/or school must be returned in order to continue to receive books and activities. I know that responsibility is important for my preschooler to learn and demonstrate while they are in the program.

If you agree to the above statements please sign and return to your child's teacher.

Student Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date