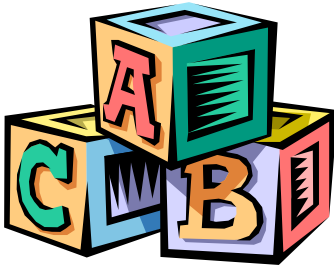


Geauga County Board
Of
Developmental Disabilities

Metzenbaum School



PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK
2009-10



The ABC's of Preschool

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ADMINISTRATION

Program and Building Issues Dr. Alan J. Koterba, Director

Intake, Student Related Information and IEP Meetings
Glee Slivka, Administrative Assistant

Inclusion and Respite Programs and Day-to-Day Operations
SuAnne Gubanyar, Departmental Secretary

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
School Age Student Hours:
8:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Preschool Student Hours:
8:45 - 11:30 am session
12:15 - 2:45 pm session
8:45 am – 2:45 pm Full Day Program

Staff Hours: 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.
Teachers, Therapists and Staff at Metzenbaum
are available to receive phone calls from
8:15-8:45 a.m. and 2:45- 3:15 p.m.

Administration Office
Don Rice, Superintendent
Carol Brill, Assistant Superintendent

Community Support Services/Family Support Services
Tami Setlock, Director

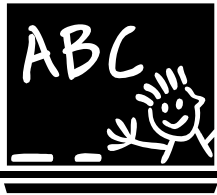


PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The purpose of the program is to:

- ❖ Present a learning experience that incorporates the Ohio Department of Education's Academic Content Standards.
- ❖ Design a creative, developmentally appropriate learning environment.
- ❖ Promote play, problem solving and positive interactions among children and adults.
- ❖ Develop school readiness skills with a strong emphasis on literacy development.
- ❖ Instruct and challenge children meeting individual needs through differentiating instruction.



Your child will benefit from guided instruction in the classroom and in the community in the following developmental areas:

- ❖ **Communication Skills** (following directions, making choices, etc.)
- ❖ **Social Interaction** (playing and working with children and adults)
- ❖ **Academic Content Areas** (English, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies)
- ❖ **Fine Motor** (cutting, writing, etc.)
- ❖ **Gross Motor** (jumping, swimming, etc.)
- ❖ **Self-Help** (following routines, dressing, toileting, etc.)

SCHOOL CALENDAR/CALAMITY/SNOW DAYS

You will be given a calendar at the beginning of the school year. If Metzenbaum is closed due to weather or other emergency, the preschool classroom will be closed. Please watch your TV or listen to the radio for current list of school closings (look for "Geauga County Board of DD"). TV channels are: 3, 5, 8, & 19.

RESPITE PROGRAM

Metzenbaum School provides an AM/PM Respite Program for the children and families enrolled in our Early Intervention and Preschool program. The hours of operation will be from 7:00 am – 8:45 am and from 2:45 pm – 5:00 pm. This service is a prepaid program that cost \$3.00 per child per

hour. The service will be available Monday – Thursday throughout the school year. If you are interested, please contact the school office at 440-729-0026.

OHIO’S ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

“Academic standards are statements that clearly define what students need to know and be able to do”...in the areas of Mathematics, English, Language Arts, Social Studies and Science.

Standards are:

- ❖ A set of high academic goals all children should reach.
- ❖ The same for ALL children.

Standards require:

- ❖ Focused staff development to ensure that teachers have the tools necessary to teach ALL children.
- ❖ Varied teaching styles to reach student with varied learning styles.

Standards help:

- ❖ Parents, students and teachers speak a common language about what students are expected to learn and when.
- ❖ Provide a clear road map for teachers, students and parents to follow throughout high school.

*All of the information above was taken directly from the Ohio Department of Education web site (www.ode.state.oh.us). Every family will be given a copy of “Preparing for Kindergarten Success: A guide for Families”. This booklet explains Ohio’s Early Learning Content Standards. We have adopted a curriculum that is aligned with and incorporates these Standards. This curriculum is called AEPS (Assessment, Evaluation system) Other curriculum resources are used to supplement the AEPS Programming.

Get It, Got It, Go! (GGG)

Get It, Got It, Go! is a quick, efficient and repeatable tool that is useful to measure children’s risk and progress in critical language and early literacy indicators. These individual growth and developmental indicators include: picture naming, rhyming, and alliteration. The information gathered through the administration is used for two purposes. The first is to supply the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness with aggregated information to track program trends. The second purpose, and the one that directly impacts student progress, is to inform individual instruction. Children are to participate in GGG at least two times during the school year (once in fall and once in spring). In keeping with the purpose of informing instruction, teachers are encouraged to use GGG every month or two, or as needed to keep close tabs on student progress.

AGES AND STAGES-SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire/Social-Emotional assessment is done to meet the reporting requirements set by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). All children with disabilities enrolled in preschool special education programs are reported. This tool is used to

assess the social/emotional competence in very young children. Parents are either interviewed or given a questionnaire to fill out. Early identification of children with social and emotional difficulties is of paramount importance for improving outcomes for children and families.

POVERTY LEVEL INFORMATION

ODE requires all publicly funded preschool programs to report income levels for all students enrolled. A form to indicate your family's household size and income is included with the registration packet. Every year this form must be updated as income status changes. You have a choice to give us your income level information or not. Either way, the form **MUST** be returned. All information on this form is confidential. There are many services and programs families and children may qualify for based on income level including free or reduced lunches.

PLAY CENTERS



Preschool classrooms are designed as “center-based” learning environments. Examples of centers include reading, dramatic play, art, manipulatives, sensory, etc. Centers are structured learning areas where students can move freely and explore the materials in a meaningful and natural way. Play is children's work.

As children investigate and explore their environment, language, movement, spatial relations, basic math concepts, music, self-help and social skills evolve. Instructors facilitate learning by asking questions, eliciting conversations, guiding, evaluating and planning learning opportunities through a variety of materials and techniques.

Specialists in the areas of Speech and Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy, Music Therapy and Adaptive Physical Therapy also guide learning and development within some classroom settings.



OTHER CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- ❖ **Circle Activities:** This time slot provides for teacher-directed music, finger plays, rhythmic, calendar and weather, concepts, etc. Additionally, it is a time for developing listening skills, auditory memory, following directions and sitting quietly.
- ❖ **Self-Help Skills:** We will continually work to develop independence in toileting, dressing, and feeding skills. Please remember to dress your child in **loosely fitted clothing**. Clothing that is too tight does not provide for independence.



- ❖ **Sensory Activities:** Within our manipulative center, attention will be given to sensory stimulation through a variety of tactile activities (play-doh, shaving cream, gak, clean mud, wood shavings, rice, beans, cornmeal, sand and water play, etc.)

- ❖ **Storytelling:** Daily, we will utilize enjoyable stories and various props to encourage story appreciation, listening skills, language development, attention span and just plain fun. This is a teacher-directed activity even though the children actively participate with props throughout the story. Books are made available to children as part of the classroom. Books are changing constantly based on thematic units and skills being addressed. They are displayed and accessible throughout the room.



- ❖ **Music:** Music activities are incorporated throughout the child's day. In some classes a Music Therapist may work with the children using a variety of rhythms and musical instruments, songs, movement and the beloved parachute.

- ❖ **Gross Motor Skills:** Children in all locations have daily and weekly opportunities to develop large motor skills. Throughout the week children go to the gym, outside on the playground, to the vestibular room or gross motor room. **Tennis shoes are a must on gym days.**



- ❖ **Snack/Lunch:** Parents will be asked to provide snack for their child in half day classes. There is no longer a lunch program for Full Day Program. For full day students, parents will need to pack and send in lunch for their child.

- ❖ **Speech, Music, Physical and Occupational Therapies:** These therapies are provided for students with IEP goals. Therapists will join teachers in the natural environment of the classroom to provide services. Therapists, work on skills that enable children to access the curriculum and develop like their typical peers. They may make recommendations to teachers about what modifications and accommodations may need to be made to the curriculum or the environment in order for a child to make progress in and have access to the curriculum and their instructional level. Collaboration about curriculum goals and objectives occurs between therapists and the teachers.

GUIDANCE and DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our goal in providing guidance and discipline is to encourage the development of children's self-control and self-discipline. We help children negotiate conflicts through the use of words and problem-solving strategies. We use constructive language by phrasing guidelines for behavior positively: "Walk in this room," instead of "Don't run." We especially encourage children to verbalize their feelings.

Children, who are motivated and engaged in activities throughout the day, rarely pose major discipline problems, but minor conflicts do arise periodically. We encourage children to handle these on their own whenever possible or practical. If a child is behaving in a way which is

potentially harmful to self, others, or property, adults will intervene. Although each problem that arises calls for unique solutions, we use these guidelines to provide clear boundaries and guidance for children.

Step One: Know the child. Is the behavior unusual for this child?

Step Two: Stop the behavior. Use a gentle look, shake of the head, or words to indicate the behavior is inappropriate.

Step Three: Describe appropriate behavior, give rationale, and remind the child of the consequences. For example, “move the sand carefully. If you throw sand it might get in someone’s eyes. You will have to leave the sand area if you throw sand.”

Step Four: Warn only once. If the inappropriate behavior continues, remove the child from the situation. Help the child to describe his or her feelings and realize the feelings of others. Restate the appropriate behavior and discuss strategies the child can use successfully in that situation.

Step Five: The child stays with the teacher or staff member until he or she feels ready to return to the activity. The responsibility for behaving appropriately is placed on the child.

Step Six: Help the child return to the activity successfully. Offer support and acknowledgement of appropriate behavior.

Step Seven: If inappropriate behavior continues, the child loses privilege of working in the area. Repeat steps four through six, having the child choose a different activity.

If behavior problems persist, the teacher will discuss them with the child’s parents. Together they will come up with strategies to help the child overcome his or her difficulties.

IMPORTANT PROCEDURES

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

If you are planning to move, please contact the school office or teacher as soon as possible. Early notification of address changes will allow us to notify your district for transportation needs (for students IEP’s only) in a timely manner and keep your child’s records updated.

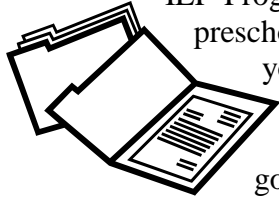
If your phone number has changed or is not working, the school must know where to reach you in the event of an emergency. **ANSWERING MACHINES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE AS AN EMERGENCY NUMBER.**

ABSENCES

If your child is absent from school, please call and let the office know at 440-729-0026. That way we are not waiting by the bus or waiting to start the day’s activities. We also have mandatory obligations to find out where your child is if they are not in school but are expected. **REMEMBER**, if your child rides the bus, you need to call your local school district transportation department.



IEP PROGRESS REPORTING



IEP Progress reports are completed per the student's IEP. Progress on mastery of the preschool curriculum is reported in January and June. If you would like to discuss your child's progress at other times, you may contact your child's teacher. You may request a conference with the teacher/team at any time throughout the year. Annual IEP meetings are conducted to review progress and develop goals for the next year.

HOME VISITS

Your teacher may conduct home visits at least throughout the year to discuss your child's progress, answer any questions you may have, and to observe your child in the home setting.

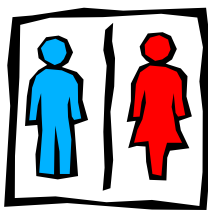
CLOTHING

It is very important that children be comfortable at school. Clothing that is able to be "played in" is required. Children spend 90% of their day on the floor. They need to move, climb, crawl, roll, etc. Tennis shoes are important for safety and maneuverability. Because children want and need to be independent, clothing should be easy to fasten, get on and off easily and not too big or small. Velcro is a good thing. Also, because we live in Ohio, we have the luxury of four distinct seasons. Outdoor play is the goal every day. Please dress your children for it.

STUDENT RECORDS & CONFIDENTIALITY

Student records are maintained in accordance with federal, state and agency regulations. Accurate records are essential to an effective education program and safe environment. Parents/guardians may review and obtain copies of records upon request. Student information can only be disclosed to authorized persons for programming purposes. Release of information to any other party requires parent/guardian written consent. All preschool students (whether on an IEP or a role model) in a preschool special education classroom are students of the district where the parents live. Records are shared with that home district and children are registered with that district. Reporting of student data is done through your home school district. Metzenbaum is only acting on your home districts' behalf.

VOLUNTEERS



We encourage and actively recruit volunteers to assist with various programs in the school. Each volunteer's interest and abilities are coordinated with the particular needs of our students. If you or a friend would like to be a volunteer, please let your child's teacher know.

ANNUAL LICENSURE REVIEWS

The Ohio Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, conducts annual licensure reviews of the Metzenbaum facilities. If you have any questions related to the reviews, please contact the school office. Licenses are posted in the facility. Any complaints concerning the operation of programs regulated by the Administrative Code may be reported to the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness at 1-877-644-6338.

VISITATION AND PICK-UP/DROP OFF PROCEDURES



You are encouraged to visit the school to observe your child. To make the observation most meaningful, your visits should be scheduled in advance. Please contact your child's teacher and arrange a convenient time. Due to very busy days, the therapists and teachers may not be available for consultation.

Please follow the building procedure regarding classroom visits and drop off/pick up procedures. **Our school has strict safety and security policies.**

If your child attends Metzenbaum Center, please wait with your child in the front lobby until the teacher picks up/drops off your child. If you stay in the lobby, you do not need to sign in or wear an ID badge. **Due to the safety of our children, it is our policy that after the second week of school, the parents will remain in the lobby for drop off and pick up of children.**

If you go to the classroom for ANY reason, you must wear one of the following ID Badges. If your child is late or leaving early, you must stop at the school office and have your child's teacher paged.

If a student is to be released to someone other than the parents, the teacher must be notified in writing and the person picking up the child will be asked to show an ID (driver's license).

TRANSITIONING TO SCHOOL

For some children, being dropped off at school is a difficult transition. Children need to feel comfortable leaving a parent to go to their classrooms. When children avoid going to the classroom, it is often because they are experiencing difficulty with the transition. To alleviate difficulty, we suggest the following:

- Arrive to school on time. Long waits in the lobby may make the separation harder. Conversely, being rushed or arriving late can also add to a difficult transition.
- Develop a routine for saying good-bye and then stick to the routine. This really helps!
- If your child is running in the lobby, hiding under chairs or behind you, it may be best to take him/her aside and explain your behavior expectations. Expectations should be reasonable. A 15-20 minute wait time in the lobby can be very hard for some children.
- If your child has a tantrum or plays avoidance “games” in the lobby, be careful, extra attention, hugs, etc. may prolong and reinforce the child’s inappropriate behavior. Empathize with the child and let him/her know that you understand it is hard to leave Mom, Dad or Grandma/Grandpa. Acknowledge the feeling not the behavior.
- When the teacher comes to get your child, please follow through on your “good-bye” routine and leave at the appropriate time.
- In extreme cases, your teacher will work with you on a plan for the transition that will work for everyone.

INCIDENT REPORTING

The state requires that public school programs have an incident reporting process in place. Board Policy, Department procedures & forms are available upon request. Preschool staff is mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.

At Metzenbaum, staff involved in the incident or those who witness the incident are required to report within 24 hours of knowledge of the incident. Written reports, including nurse follow-ups, if applicable, are required. Typical examples of incidents are falls, scrapes, bumps & minor bruises. ALL explained & unexplained bruises must be reported. If 2 children are involved in an incident, each child has his own report with ONLY his name on it. The 2nd child is referred to as *another student* or the child’s initials or first name are used.

Without exception, incidents of a more serious or suspicious nature are documented and forwarded to Job & Family Services and Metzenbaum Incident Investigator. All incident reports are maintained in a separate file in the school office. If you have questions or concerns about the incident reporting process, please make an appointment with the Director of Children’s Services .

HEALTH SERVICE/MEDICATION



Metzenbaum Center employs nursing staff throughout the program year. The duties include monitoring immunizations, administering medications, detecting nutritional problems, taking care of illnesses/injury that occur during program hours. As a courtesy, please let the nurse know of any injuries that are received at home (i.e.: sprains, large black and blue abrasions, etc.)

IMMEDIATELY REPORT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES TO THE NURSE/TEACHER. Common diseases to report are chicken pox, scarlet fever, strep throat, impetigo, pink eye, hepatitis B, head lice and scabies. In order for a child to return to school after head lice, they must be nit free. The school will inform parents in the event an incident is reported in your child's classroom.

If a child exhibits the following symptoms while at school, they will be isolated from the other children – **fever, rash, vomiting, unusually tired, diarrhea, pink-eye, excessive cough, green/yellow discharge from nose or eyes, sore throat.** Parents will be contacted to pickup the child. The child may return to school when he/she is on medication for 24 hours, is fever free for 24 hours, or symptom free depending on the diagnosis. Please see the Ohio Dept of Health Communicable Disease Chart for details.

ANY MEDICATION TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE NURSE MUST BE IN A LABELED PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE, IDENTIFYING THE NAME OF THE CHILD, NAME OF THE DRUG, DOSAGE, AND TIME OF ADMINISTRATION. IF PROPER PROCEDURE IS NOT FOLLOWED, THE MEDICATION WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED. THE PARENT/GUARDIAN WILL BE RESPONSIBLE TO ADMINISTER THESE MEDICATIONS UNTIL THE PROPER PROTOCOL IS COMPLETED.



In order to give a child a prescription or non-prescription drug during the school day, a *Request for Medication Administration Form* must be signed by the parent and the physician and sent along with the medication. This allows the nurse to administer the medication. This rule is for ALL medications, regular or short-term; prescription or non-prescription. Please notify the nurse of any changes in medication even if the medication is NOT given at school. Good communication will help to ensure that we provide the best possible care for your child.



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is provided by your local school district. Should you have any questions regarding your child's bus route, please contact the following individuals.

Berkshire Local School Transportation Department

Ms. Lisa Shirkey (440) 834-8087

Cardinal Local School Transportation Department

Ms. Diane Baumgartner (440) 632-5913

Chardon Local School Transportation Department

Ms. Diane Malner (440) 285-4069

Kenston Local School Transportation Department

Ms. Ava Christie (440) 543-9567

Ledgemont Local School Transportation Department

Ms. Paula Doerr (440) 298-3341

Newbury Local School Transportation Department

Ms. Kim Sass (440) 564-2281 ex: 106

West Geauga Local School Transportation Department

Mr. Al Davis (440) 729-6809

DRIVING YOUR CHILD?.....

Please drive carefully in the parking lots. Only park in lined/marked spots. Never park along the curb, fire zone or in a handicap spot unless appropriate. Always accompany your child through the parking lot. Obey all signs and directional markers.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES/ FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM



Community Support Services is designed to assist families in obtaining and coordinating all available services to maximize the quality of their child's life. Families, who have a child with mental retardation or a substantial developmental disability, who is living at home, may be eligible for **Family Support Services**. Services can include:

- ❖ Counseling
- ❖ Respite care
- ❖ Training and education
- ❖ Adaptive equipment
- ❖ Home modification
- ❖ Special diets
- ❖ Many other things.

Contact the Community Support Services Department at 440-729-9406 for more information.

CHILD FIND

Every school district in the Country (yes Country not County) is mandated to identify children in their districts who have disabilities, ages 3 to 22. On the preschool end of that, we work with the school districts, Job and Family Services, Help Me Grow, Metzenbaum Center, and the Geauga County ESC to find and identify children ages 3 to 5 who have special needs. Six general screenings are done per year. If you have questions about your child's development and they are of preschool age (or will be age 3 in 6 months or less) call the preschool psychologist at the Geauga County ESC office: 440-279-1708.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Geauga County Educational Service Center (ESC)– A service providing agency and educational organization whose primary customers are the Superintendents of the seven local school districts of Geauga County. Every county in Ohio has one (an ESC that is!). If a school district needs a person, program or service for students (3-22 year olds) they often turn to the ESC. There are approximately 250 employees of the ESC assigned to work in various districts in roles such as teachers, therapists, one-on-one aides, and supervisors.

Geauga County Department of Developmental Disabilities – Students and adults who attend programs offered by GCBDD receive programs and services that develop skills aimed at achieving the maximum level of independence possible for each individual. The mission of GCBDD is: “To insure the availability of programs, services, and supports that assist eligible individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities in choosing and achieving a life of increasing capability such as they can live, work, and play in the community, and to assist and support families of these individuals in achieving this objective.”

Ohio Department of Education (ODE) – The big guys in Columbus! A department of state government responsible for implementing rules and laws pertaining to education of children ages 3-22. ODE licenses our preschool classrooms.

Specialized Instruction (or special education) – After you and your child have gone through all the testing and assessments and a team determined your child is a preschooler with the disability, then, there is an IEP written (individualized educational plan). The goals written on that IEP will determine what services your child will need. How unique, different and specialized those services need to be is what determines where a child is given services. Special education is NOT a person or a place....it IS a SERVICE. By law, your team must consider serving a child where they would be if they did not have a disability and bringing supports and services to the child. The educational professionals on your team will discuss service delivery options with you as well as the continuum of services.

Continuum of Services – Really refers to the different places and ways services could be delivered. How intense and restrictive does a setting need to be for a child to make progress on their IEP goals? A child’s IEP team determines where and how services are to be delivered. ODE and the Federal Government mandate teams to consider the least restrictive environment possible to deliver services - starting with where the child would be if they did not have a disability. Environments can and should change based on progress children make on goals – even in the middle of a school year.

Early Childhood Setting – By definition from ODE: A preschool special education service delivery setting in which 51% or more of the children do NOT have disabilities (such as neighborhood preschools or childcare’s, homes).

Early Childhood Special Education Setting (special education classroom) – A preschool special ed service delivery setting in which 51% or more of the children in the setting HAVE disabilities.

PLEASE SEE OTHER SIDE

Itinerant Services – Special education delivered at the location of the child (early childhood setting). This could be in a community based preschool or in the home.

Child Care – Usually a full day, full year all day preschool class for parents/caregivers who work. Working outside the home is not a pre-requisite unless you wish to access ELI funds. Attendance can be anywhere from all day, every day to partial week, partial day. We have fully licensed teachers, literacy rich curriculum and a flexible program. Call Gayle Michel for more information.

Differentiated Instruction – Simply means teaching the same things in different ways and at different levels. Not everyone learns the same way at the same rate and is at the same place of understanding. Teachers need to figure out how each one of their students learn and what their instructional level is. Then, they need to teach in that modality and at that instructional level.

Multi-disciplinary team – A team of educational experts that determines interventions or designs goals for a child then implements them. Usually affiliated with specialized instruction but is just as important for regular ed children. In a true team, roles are released to one another. For example, a teacher can work on speech goals and an occupational therapist can work on curriculum. It should be a seamless delivery system. All that happens revolves around the all important curriculum. Keeping and tracking data on progress is crucial. Collaboration among team members is continuous. Parents are part of the team!!

Department of Job and Family Services – A county social service agency that provides services and supports for individuals and families. Services run the gamut from health, social work, food stamps and education to parenting, preschool and childcare.

Help Me Grow – HMG provides services that promote children’s growth and development and support families during the important early years of a child’s life. It is for pregnant women and families with children birth to 5 years. Each program is designed with your family’s concerns and goals in mind. The program is voluntary. Call 1-866-975-1100 for information.

Role Model Student – A student in a preschool special education classroom (classroom with more than 51% of children having disabilities) that does not have a disability and is functioning within the normal range in all domains, these students play a very important role in our preschool special education classes.