

LOVING ELEMENTARY PRE-K

PARENT HANDBOOK

2020 - 2021



LOVING MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Loving Municipal Schools PreK program for the 2020 - 2021 school year! It is with great excitement that we embark on this adventure together. We are delighted that you have enrolled your child in our early childhood program.

Our purposes are twofold:

1. To prepare your child so that he or she will start Kindergarten ready to learn

2. To involve you through home visits, parent conferences, and trainings so that you will learn how to help your child to become a successful, lifelong learner. The program is designed to meet the developmental needs of young children, including social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs. It is aligned with the New Mexico PreK Program Standards and Learning Outcomes.

Our PreK program is held four days a week (Monday-Thursday). Students will attend full day either Monday/Tuesday or Wednesday/Thursday. The PreK calendar indicates the dates for home visits, parent evenings, parent-teacher conferences, and continuation.

Your child will receive free breakfast and lunch daily. We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Sincerely,

Katrina Chaffin
Principal & PreK Coordinator

Loving Municipal Schools PreK Program

The mission of the Loving Municipal Schools PreK Program is to prepare children for Kindergarten and for lifelong learning.

We will achieve our mission in the following ways:

1. We will address the following essential knowledge and skills for young children:
 - a. Health and physical well-being
 - b. Reading readiness
 - c. Writing readiness
 - d. Numeracy readiness
 - e. Aesthetic awareness, creativity and problem solving
 - f. Scientific and conceptual understanding
 - g. Self, attitudes, learning, family and community.
2. We will involve families in our program in three ways:
 - a. Home visits
 - b. Parent conferences
 - c. Parent trainings.
3. We will transition the children into Kindergarten as follows:
 - a. Preparation of a comprehensive portfolio for each child
 - b. Transition visits for PreK children and their parents
 - c. Participate in activities at Loving Elementary.

Developmentally Appropriate Classroom Practices (DAP) & Curriculum Model



Loving Elementary PreK follows the above process in order to provide developmentally appropriate practices, which requires all teaching practices to be appropriate to the children’s age and developmental level, viewing them as unique individuals, and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live. (NAEYC, 2009) Children in our PreK program benefit from planned, teacher-guided, interactive small-group and large-group experiences. It is vital for the early childhood settings to provide opportunities for high-level meaningful play and for the teachers to actively support children’s progress toward such play. The teacher will use of a variety of approaches and strategies to support children’s interest and ability. Learning is embedded in play, routines, and interest areas. Our program incorporates the use of themes that are of interest to the student in this area. All content areas (math, science, social studies, language arts) are incorporated into these themes, which are also guided by incorporating the New Mexico PreK Early Learning guidelines. The teacher then adapts the curriculum to meet the needs of each incoming group of students to promote optimal learning and development.

Loving Elementary PreK Program

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS, STUDENT SERVICES, AND POLICIES

Recruitment: How do you let parents know about PreK at Loving Elementary?

Thanks to the New Mexico PreK grant initiative, we are in our second year of providing PreK classes for 4-year-old children in the Loving community. We provide information about our program to all populations throughout our village. We do not discriminate when selecting student participants based on race, ethnicity, religion, national origin nor any other unique

demographics of which our community's children represent. Students must, however, live in the attendance zone of Loving Elementary School.

Loving Elementary School notifies the community of openings for our PreK program in a variety of methods that include:

- Notification is posted and found on our school website www.lovingschools.com
- Flyers posted at the post office, local bank and other local businesses
- Information posted on our school and district Facebook pages
- Flyers sent home to all students: kindergarten through 5th grade
- A robotic call is sent out to all students in Loving Municipal Schools

Flyers, social media, and our school web site continue to post PreK information throughout the year. In addition, parents interested may call our office between the hours of 7:30 am – 4:00 pm, Monday – Thursday at (575) 745-2071.

Collaboration efforts between Loving PreK and other local early learning providers ensure children receive the educational services to meet their needs. Eddy County Head Start and CARC, along with other private day care centers share the responsibility of locating age appropriate children in our community for participation in an effective early learning educational program.

As a reminder, students cannot participate in New Mexico PreK at Loving Elementary and be served in any additional programs funded by CYFD PreK. Please check with the school's personnel if you have any questions pertaining to this topic.

Eligibility – How old does my child have to be to qualify for the PreK program at Loving Elementary?

PreK

All children served must have reached their fourth (4th) birthday before September 1 of the current calendar year.

All children must also live in the attendance zone of Loving Elementary.

Loving Elementary hosts Child Find events throughout the year to support parents on identifying any suspected delays with their child. Contact us at (575) 745-2071 for additional information or to make an appointment for your child during our next Child Find event.

Enrollment: How do I get my child signed up for PreK at Loving Elementary?

Applications for enrollment are accepted at any time throughout the school year. Call or visit our school office for detailed information. Parents may visit the school office to pick up a school enrollment packet. Bring it back to the office along with the child's birth certificate, current immunization records, proof of residence (utility bill, rental agreement, mortgage statement, bank statement, etc.), and social security card.

Loving Elementary pre-registration is typically held in March for our Pre-K and Kindergarten programs.

Enrollment of NM Pre-K is determined by the number of students obtained during our registration process.

- 1) If the number of registrants is less than the allotted number of PreK slots available on the last day of May, and thereafter, then all registrants are enrolled and assigned a teacher and a session. Registrations for enrollment are accepted until all slots are filled. A waiting list is then started for any additional inquiries and registrants.
- 2) Slots vacated during the school year are filled with students from the waiting list data base maintained by administration at the school site.

Attendance: What if my child is absent from school?

A definite relationship exists between success in school and good attendance. Therefore, it is very important that your child is in school every day unless they are ill or other special circumstances exist.

PreK students are required to follow the Loving Municipal Schools attendance requirement that requires parents to call the secretary and inform of student's absence. If absence is more than three days, parents are required to provide a doctor's note. Attendance is taken daily and input into the student database on STARS.

Your child will be learning and developing the skills essential for success in school. It is **imperative** that your child attends PreK regularly on a daily basis in order to learn skills, to gain knowledge, to develop self-discipline, and to become ready for Kindergarten. Any PreK child who has missed 10 consecutive days without contacting the school or the teacher will be dropped from the program. We will contact the parents of the next child on the PreK waiting list and invite that child to fill the vacated spot. Once the process is complete, the child who was dropped will go on to the bottom of the waiting list if he/she desires to return to the program.

Loving Elementary will work in partnership with parents or guardians to prevent a child to be dropped from our PreK program. School personnel will schedule family meetings when concerns

arise regarding student attendance. An Attendance Plan will be developed and resources provided to assist the family in getting the child to return to school consistently.

Medications at School

The following are the guidelines for medication administration by the school nurse or her designee.

Medication will only be allowed at school when a failure to take medication could jeopardize the student's health and/or educational abilities. Medication should be limited to students with long-term chronic illness or disability. Any other type of medication should be given by the parents, either before or after school hours. If a student must take a medication at school, the following are required:

1. Parent or guardian must provide a completed Physician Order and Medication Authorization Form, or appropriate chronic illness action plan (allergy, asthma, cardiac, diabetes, or seizure) signed by the child's doctor before medication can be administered.
2. Medication brought to school must be in a container labeled by the pharmacy or the doctor, including the date of the prescription.
3. No over the counter medications are allowed at school without a Physician Order and Medication Authorization Form completed by the child's doctor and returned.
4. At the end of the school year, parents/guardians should pick up medications. Medications not picked up will be properly disposed of.
5. A new Physician Order and Medication Authorization or Action Plan must be completed each year.

PreK School Hours: What time are the daily sessions?

Monday/Tuesday 7:45 am – 2:15 pm

Wednesday/Thursday 7:45 am – 2:15 pm

Students attend their 2 days a week unless otherwise noted on the calendar.

Dismissal during School Hours: What if I need to pick up my child before class is over?

We are very concerned about the safety of our children. It is school policy that children can only be dismissed from school early when a parent or authorized adult picks them up. Students will only be released to an adult listed on their Pickup Verification Form and signed out at the school office. We **will** ask for photo ID to verify.

Visitors: What if I want to visit my child at school?

Due to Covid-19 best practices, we are not allowing any visitors in the building at this time. Once we open up fully, we will welcome visitors at that time.

We welcome parents to our school as you are an important part of the educational process! To ensure the safety of the children and staff, **EVERY** visitor must sign in at the Loving Elementary

School Office. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS!** Please wear a Visitor's Pass. Unless it is a special event, all visits will be limited to 15 minutes without prior approval from the principal.

Screenings: Will my child be screened during the PreK program?

Due to Covid-19 protocols, every child will have their temperature checked upon arrival and asked health questions.

Children will be screened for dental and physical health, including vision and hearing. They will also be screened in the areas of fine and gross motor skills, speech-language skills, and cognitive and social-emotional development as part of district Child Find activities, which are scheduled during home visits and before PreK begins. Screenings will be administered to students during school hours to those who are enrolled after school begins. Results will be shared with parents during parent/teacher conference.

Food Services: Will my child be served a meal at school?

PreK children will receive a daily, free breakfast and lunch (dependent on which session they attend). Breakfast, snacks, and lunches will follow U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrition guidelines for school meals. If accommodations are needed, i.e. allergies to foods, a written doctor's note must be provided.

Assessment: How will my child be assessed in PreK?

As per the Public Education Department requirements for PreK programs, children will be assessed three times per year using the New Mexico PreK Learning Outcomes Observation Tool and three times per year we will complete a Focused Portfolio assessment. These assessments will help us to track your child's progress over the PreK year in language, literacy, math, science, initiative, social relationships, creativity, movement, and music.

In addition, the Public Education Department will conduct assessments of the program components and effectiveness, and your child may participate in assessments conducted by outside agencies contracted with the Public Education Department.

Field Trips: Will there be any field trips?

At this time, no field trips are allowed due to Covid-19. They may lift that ban later during the year.

The PreK Program may schedule field trips during the school year as extensions of the curriculum. Parent permission is required for any child to participate in a field trip. Parents will be encouraged to accompany their children on these outings as official chaperones. A child does not have to return from the field trip with his/her class as long as the Parent Release Form has been filled out and is on file with the PreK teacher who is the field trip sponsor.

Lost Articles: What if my child loses something at school?

Please mark coats, hats, jackets, lunch boxes and all school supplies with your child's name.

This will help us to return lost articles to your child. Lost items are kept in the Elementary School gym. Unclaimed items are donated to charitable organizations each year.

Personal items such as toys, games, or electronic equipment are not permitted at the PreK without prior approval of the Principal or Teacher. These items will be taken from your child and must be picked up by you, the parent.

In Case of Bad Weather: Refer to student handbook

http://www.lovingschools.com/Elementary_School

Family Engagement Plan – How can I be a part of my child's learning?

Loving Municipal Schools PreK will comply with the New Mexico PreK Program Standards approved by the Public Education Department and the New Mexico Child Development Board.

Loving Elementary PreK will provide opportunities for parents to be meaningfully engaged in their 4-year old child's experience during the school day. Efforts to support our PreK parents with 90 hours or more for family engagement activities are outlined below.

Parent Visits to the Classrooms

Parents are welcomed to visit classrooms as desired. It is necessary for you to take into consideration, however, that situations where you need to talk extensively with the teacher be scheduled outside instructional time. All visitors are required to first sign in at our front office and get a visitors pass.

Home Visits

Each NM PreK teacher and assistant schedule visits to each individual child's home prior to the first day of school. Not only do the children and families get to meet the teachers, but our teachers and parents are given the opportunity to learn any pertinent information for the design and development of instruction so children are set up for a successful school year. Any child entering NM PreK during the year will receive a home visit as well.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent conferences with teachers are scheduled close to the date that Authentic Observations are completed on all NM PreK children. Teachers will contact you to set up an appropriate time for the conferences. The dates for the Parent/Teacher Conferences for the 2019-2020 school year are:

- October 12 – 16, 2020
- February 15 - 18, 2020
- May 17 – 21, 2020

Parent Trainings

Trainings may be held in person or by Zoom during this time that large groups are not allowed due to Covid-19.

Topics for our Parent Engagement Events that have taken place include:

What is assessment?

Adventures in Reading

Counting On – Math Fun

STEM – Exploring science, technology, engineering and math

Getting Ready for Kinder

Calendar: Please see the attached calendar for the PreK. In general, it follows a schedule similar to Loving Elementary School, other than a late start. Loving PreK will begin the on-site program on August 24, 2020 following home visits with parents during the weeks before the PreK program begins. The PreK staff may be required to attend state-mandated PreK trainings during the school year. Parents will be notified if staff will be out of district. The last day for PreK will be May 27, 2021.

Transportation of Children: How will my child get to and from school?

Children who attend Loving Elementary PreK are allowed to ride the bus if they live in a designated area. Transportation is only given for the morning.

Parents **must** use the parking lot by the gym. DO NOT park in the bus lane/staff parking area to pick up or drop off your child.

PreK Website

Many additional parent resources are available on the New Mexico PreK website at

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/literacy-humanities-early-childhood/new-mexico-prek/> .

Parents will find an abundance of materials pertaining to child expected growth and development, ideas to create meaningful interactions with young children, and help if you need assistance finding what you need.

Serving Children with Suspected Developmental Delays and/or Disabilities: Loving Municipal Schools conducts Child Find universal screenings during April or within the first month of school at Loving Elementary PreK. Results of the screenings are provided to the parents of the children at Loving Elementary PreK.

If a screening finds areas of developmental concern, the child is referred, with written parent permission, to Loving Municipal Schools for an evaluation. A multidisciplinary team that includes the parent(s) meets to review the results of the evaluation. If the child meets criteria for eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the team will write an Individual Education Program (IEP) for the child with the parent's input as well as the PreK instructor. The instructor contributes observations and class- room data. The IEP delineates the

level and setting for Special Education services. Services are provided within the school day by providers from the school district and parents are supported by the instructor and the Special Education teacher.

In some cases, children were identified with special needs prior to their entrance into Loving Elementary PreK. In that event, the multidisciplinary team, which includes the PreK and special education staff, meet to review the previously developed IEP and either implement or revise the plan as deemed appropriate for the child by the multidisciplinary team. The PreK teacher and special education staff meets weekly during Professional

Learning Communities (PLC) to discuss ways to implement child's goals in class, progress, and will give parent strategies to help the child at home. The Observational Assessment is completed within 30 days of a child's enrollment.

There is an open house for families and parents who are encouraged to visit the classroom. Student/staff ratios are closely monitored and follow State guidelines. Students with IEP's are funded by the district's Special Education Department and are not counted in the PreK funded enrollment. Staff is appropriately trained to meet the child's needs.

Records for students with IEP's are maintained confidential and modifications are written in lesson plans with the student's initials only.

Annual IEP meetings are held to provide input about the student's academic and social levels.

Loving Municipal Schools provide all special education services as per policies approved by the Loving Municipal Schools Board of Education.

Transition Plan – How do I get my child ready to move on?

We understand that changes can be scary for our little ones so we make every effort to prepare them for transitioning from home/daycare into PreK and from PreK into kindergarten.

- ✓ March – Early registration at Loving Elementary with community agencies participating, brochures provided to parents and questions answered, Kinder registration held, End of Year Child Find
- ✓ May – Selection and teacher assignments for new PreK students, Current PreK students get to tour and spend time in kindergarten classrooms, PreK teachers share special needs of students to Kinder teachers, Promotion celebration
- ✓ June/July – K5+ program for current PreK students transitioning to kindergarten. Available PreK spots filled as student enroll.
- ✓ August – District open house PreK-12; PreK Home Visits take place
- ✓ October/March – Transition conferences held 90 days prior to child's third birthday for determination of eligibility for Part B services; Parents are encouraged to participate in school activities and learning opportunities.

PreK students at Loving Elementary are involved in school-wide activities. Because they participate in assemblies, Character Counts, spirit days, Pennies for Patients, weekend food

backpacks, and see the Kindergarten teachers throughout the school year, the change from PreK to Kindergarten is often smooth and less scary.

Loving Municipal Schools PreK Program

Sample Daily Schedule

Class Schedule

7:45 – 7:55 Handwashing

7:55 – 8:15 Breakfast in classroom

8:15 – 8:30 Large Group

8:30 – 8:50 Story Time

8:50 – 9:50 Learning Centers

9:50 – 10:20 Small Group

10:20 – 10:50 Outdoor Gross Motor

10:50 – 11:20 Restroom/Lunch

11:20 – 11:30 Restroom/ Hand Wash

11:30 – 12:00 Rest Time

12:00 – 12:20 Clean up from rest time/restroom

12:20 – 12:40 Story Time

12:40 – 1:10 Outdoor Gross Motor

1:10 – 1:30 Small Group

1:30 – 1:50 Center Time

1:50 – 2:00 Restroom/Handwashing

2:00 – 2:15 Afternoon Meeting and Dismissal

Professional Development – How do I know the teachers are qualified to teach my child?

License and Education Levels

NM PreK teachers and educational assistants are required by the state of New Mexico's Public Education Department to have a degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE). All classroom teachers must hold a current New Mexico ECE teaching license and assistants must have an associate's degree in ECE. Any teachers or assistants who do not have these credentials must take classes towards acquiring these degrees.

Continued Professional Training Opportunities

New Mexico PreK requires teachers and assistants to attend trainings on current topics to ensure best practices are being utilized to teach our young students. In addition, PreK staff participate in professional learning communities (PLC) and district vertical teams. These groups of educators meet at least weekly to discuss opportunities to improve instruction and processes. Staff members who exhibit expertise in specific areas often provide modeling and professional development for colleagues.

Individual Professional Development Plans

Administrators, teachers and assistants are required to design an individual professional development plan each year. The plans must have an overall goal and short term objectives that give the steps that they will take to accomplish their goal and improve as educators.

Program and Classroom Quality Improvement Plans – Do things always stay the same?

Each year, each month, each day, we consistently identify procedures and practices that need to be different to make your child's experience in PreK to be successful. Some of these practices can be changed immediately while others must be planned, implemented, studied, and suggested changes acted upon to make meaningful improvement in our program and classrooms.

As a part of the New Mexico PreK program, Loving Elementary sets both short and long term goals. These goals reflect the individual ambitions of the school and its students. Continuous and enduring progress is based on knowing the site's opportunities for improvement and planning for sustainable growth.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

*Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the students' education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

*Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not

to amend the record, the parents or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

*Generally, schools just have permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose these records without consent to the following parties or under the following conditions:

1. School officials with legitimate educational interest;
2. Other schools to which a student is transferring;
3. Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
4. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
5. Organizations conducting certain studies for, or on behalf of, the school;
6. Accrediting organizations;
7. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
8. Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
9. State and local authorities, with a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information, such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents or eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information or technical assistance, call (202) 260-3887 or 1-800-877-8339. Or contact Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20202-5920.

Parent Agreement Form

Dear Parents,

Please read the contents of this handbook and then sign and return this page to your child's teacher. Thank you.

Name of Your Child _____

I have read the Loving Elementary PreK Program Handbook.

I understand the contents of these documents.

I accept my responsibility to follow these guidelines so that I can actively contribute to a quality-learning environment in the PreK program and support quality learning experiences for my child in the PreK program.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Witness for the PreK Program

Date

Family Engagement Calendar

Home visits – August 12th – 19th

First day of PreK Program – August 24th

Parent conferences – October 12th – 16th

Thanksgiving Dinner – To Be Announced

Parent Conferences – February 15th – 18th

Kindergarten Registration – in Spring – to be announced

Parent Conferences – May 17th – 21st

PreK Graduation – To be announced

Last Day of PreK Program – May 27th

Other activities for the whole school will be announced as the year progresses. Notes will be send home as reminders.