



**Placentino Preschool
Handbook
2013-2014**

Philosophy and Goals

We believe that children succeed in learning when provided an early childhood program that consists of developmentally appropriate educational experiences in an inclusive setting. Our preschool is designed to provide a rich and meaningful learning environment that focuses on all areas of a child's development: social, emotional, cognitive and physical. Our goals are:

1. To provide a nurturing environment in which independence is encouraged and individuality is respected.
2. To provide experiences through a wide ranging, developmentally appropriate curriculum that meets children's needs and stimulates learning in all developmental areas and levels.
3. To provide interactions and activities designed to develop children's self-esteem, independence, social skills, and the freedom of choice.
4. To provide an atmosphere in that classroom which will promote respect for others and for materials.
5. To implement the techniques of positive self-management skills.
6. To promote and encourage self-help skills and independence in the daily routine.
7. To be supportive of parents and encourage their involvement.

Placentino Preschool

The Holliston Public Schools provides inclusive language-based preschool classrooms for children ages 3 to 4. An inclusive preschool is defined as having typically-developing children as well as children with disabilities. Activities are purposefully designed to promote communication skills, readiness skills, motor development, and opportunities for experiences in creative art, music and movement. The classroom environment provides consistent structured routines and engaging materials to encourage independence and success.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks: Guidelines for Preschool Curriculum Experiences and Open the World to Learning (OWL) published by Pearson which is a comprehensive curriculum that covers all domains of learning. The program consists of both active and quiet play in individual, small group and large groups where teachers encourage activities and interactions that will enhance learning. Teachers assess children through observation and formal/informal assessment methods in order to individualize and expand curriculum to meet individual needs and interests.

Teachers encourage parental input in getting to know children's unique needs and learning styles.

Typical Daily Schedule

A typical day includes free play, center work, art, sensory play, books, games, puzzles, outdoor play, music, movement activities, cooking activities, and computers. Teachers set up the environment to enhance and enrich all active learning experiences.

Sample Schedule for Preschool Day: 2013-2014 School Year:

8:55 / 12:45

Children Arrive

- cubby routine
- wash hands

9:10-9:20/1:00-1:15 Gathering Circle:

- Welcome Song
- Teacher announces day's schedule - including description of art project/learning centers
- Sharing time
- Mini Curriculum Lesson

9:20/1:15

Class is dismissed from *Gathering Circle* to:

9:20-10:20/1:15-2:15 Work and Play (Choice Time):

- Art Activity
- Dramatic Play
- Computers
- Blocks
- Sand/water table
- Small group learning/individual work

10:20-10:45/2:15-2:40 Group Time:

- Classroom Helper Jobs
- Creative Movement/Music Activity
- Math or Literacy Group Lesson
- Story Time

10:45- 11:00/2:40-2:55

Snack Time and Book Time

11:00/2:55

Outside Playground Time, if weather permits
or Inside Group Motor activity

Staff

Each preschool classroom is staffed with a preschool teacher, who is certified in early childhood education and special education through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Each classroom has one teaching paraprofessional. Additional staff include Speech/Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Guidance Counselor, School Psychologists, Nurse, and Behavioral Specialists.

Home/School Communication

Teachers encourage parents to maintain close communication with staff, and work closely with parents to develop strategies for dealing with specific issues. Although, ideally, we would like to be able to talk to parents everyday about their children, it is difficult to find sufficient time to talk before or after school. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers through email:

last name first initial @ holliston.k12.ma.us
(example: mcgortyc@holliston.k12.ma.us)

Telephone messages can be left at the teachers' voicemail at 508-429-0647.

Mrs. Beaver X2014
Mrs. McGorty X2010
Mrs. Radcliffe X2016

Teachers communicate classroom activities and events through newsletters and schedules. Please check our web pages for updates at the parent section of:

<http://www.holliston.k12.ma.us/placentino>

Some notices and communication coming from the Holliston Public Schools will be found on the school's webpage through "Backpack Express."

The preschool staff recognizes the important role of parents in your children's learning and growth. It is very helpful if you keep us informed about special or unusual events in your child's life, such as, change in routine or special occasions. We welcome and encourage you to be a partner in your child's program. We hope that you will enjoy new friendships with other preschool families that you meet.

Conferences and Meetings

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled once a year in January. Written progress reports are provided twice a year in January and June. Children who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) receive progress reports three times a year. Individual conferences can be initiated by the parents or the teacher at any time during the year, if there is a specific need.

Guiding Behavior

Our preschoolers are learning the appropriate ways to interact in a group setting away from their family. It is the teacher's role to use every opportunity to guide children in learning self-control. Expectations are clearly defined with simple and understandable rules. Teachers will use an understanding of developmental levels to guide behavior in consistent ways. This guidance will be constructive and positive, including such methods as alternative choices, natural consequences, encouragement and praise. Teaching staff never use negative approaches to guiding behavior (such as punishment, threats or derogatory remarks.)

NUTS AND BOLTS

What your child should bring to school?

Your child should bring a backpack to transport art projects, books, notices, etc. Each child will receive a folder for sending messages back and forth between home and school. Make sure to check your child's backpack and folder each day. The backpack should be large enough to fit such things as the folder, a library book and various size art projects, but also an appropriate size for a preschooler to carry independently.

Arrival and Dismissal

Children arrive at the Preschool door at 8:50 AM for the morning session and 12:45 PM for the afternoon session. Dismissal times are 11:25 AM for the morning session and 3:15 PM for the afternoon session.

Arrival:

- Parents who wish to walk their child to the Preschool door should park in the designated Preschool Parking spaces and ensure that their Parking Identification Card is clearly visible on the dashboard of their vehicle or parents may also park in the Placentino Main Parking Lot.

- Parents and children will walk along the sidewalk and the painted "safety" area to the Preschool door.
- Parents who choose to "drop off" their child will enter the Access Road from the Adams Middle School entrance and proceed to the "drop off" area. There are 3 designated spaces marked "1-2-3" for parents to stop, exit their vehicles, remove their child from their vehicles, and "hand" their child to one of the Preschool paraprofessionals assigned to this area.
- If the spaces are full when parents arrive, it is important to stop and wait in line by the playground area until the paraprofessionals signal the next 3 cars to move forward. Please keep your child in his/her safety seats until they are in the designated arrival spaces. Police take notice.
- The entrance door closes promptly at 9:00 AM and 12:55 PM. If you are later than this, please bring your child to the main office.

Dismissal:

- **At 11:25 AM** - Parents will enter through the Kindergarten Entrance and meet their child in the hallway. **Parents will be asked to show picture identification until teachers and paraprofessionals at the door are familiar with those approved to pick up our students. This procedure is based on our important security measures in all our schools.**
- **At 3:15 PM** - Parents will "pick up" their children at the Preschool door. Parents will not enter the building.
- You may park in the designated Preschool parking spaces (with your identification card) or in other parking spaces in Placentino's main parking lot.
- Parents need to sign out their child on designated form at door. **Please be prepared to show your picture identification if entering the building.**
- If parent is not picking up child, a written note must be given to teacher stating who is picking up the child. If this is a new person to the teacher, please be prepared to show your photo identification.
- If you are late picking up your child, your child will be waiting for you in the school's main office.

Clothing

Children should come to school dressed comfortably in play clothes . Although attempts will be made to keep children's clothes clean with art smocks, clothes may get stained with paint, glue or other art materials. Please dress your child

appropriately for outdoor play as the weather changes. Outdoor clothes should be easy for your child to put on independently (for example, mittens are easier than gloves!)

A change of clothes (including underwear and socks) should be put in a zip lock bag that is clearly marked with your child's name. These clothes will be kept at school in case of a toileting accident, snack spill or water table spill. Please mark all clothing and other belongings with your child's name (for example, name or initials on tag with permanent marker.)

Toys in the Classroom

We discourage children from bringing toys to school for a variety of reasons, including, difficulties with sharing, potential of losing toy, and distraction from planned activities. The teachers will provide planned opportunities for showing special items as the year progresses. If your child has a "lovey" that is a comfort item, your child can bring it to school and keep it in his/her backpack. If the child needs a comfort break, it is always available for a quick hug.

Snack

In our preschool classrooms we have snack everyday. This is a time for the children to engage in conversations, practice manners and get refreshed. It is a social time but also a learning time. We practice math skills in counting out our own individual snacks. We practice reading skills by finding our names on our placemats. We practice fine motor skills by pouring our drinks.

We have a class community snack supply that is provided by the parents. You will receive a letter requesting a specific snack item a few times a year. **All our classrooms are peanut and tree nut free.** We participate in Wellness Wednesday where we encourage healthy food choices. Our room parents will coordinate volunteers to send in fruit, veggies, cheese or other healthy choices each Wednesday.

Birthdays

Preschoolers love birthdays and enjoy celebrating their own and their friends. It is a school policy that we do not include any food in our celebrations due to a rising concern with food allergies. Following are a list of suggestions of how you can contribute to a celebration of your child's birthday:

- send in a favorite music cd for a dance party
- send in pictures of your child as a baby to share with the class

- send in a favorite book for a read aloud
- send in a favorite game that your child can play with friends
- volunteer to do a craft project or read a book with the class
- donate a collection of birthday party items for the food pantry

Diapering/Toileting

Preschoolers vary in their age of being independent in toileting skills. Staff will assist you in carrying out the toileting routine upon which you and the teacher agree upon. If your child wears diapers or pull-ups, please send in a labeled package of diapers or pull-ups and a package of wipes. We will let you know when these items need to be replenished.

Children and assisting staff members will wash their hands with liquid soap and running water any toileting routine. When handling soiled clothing, staff members will wear gloves and bag clothing in sealed plastic bags, storing them apart from other items.

Illness Guidelines

Here are some guidelines that might be helpful in keeping our children as healthy as possible. Preschoolers can be in very close contact with each other while they play and do not always have the same self-care skills for a cold or infection as older children. This information will assist you in making decisions about when to send your child to school if they are not feeling well.

- **A fresh cold** - a combination of cough, watery eyes, sore throat, and/or continuous nasal discharge, which has developed within the past 24-48 hours is considered contagious.
- **Fever** - fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Vomiting/Diarrhea** - keep at home for 24 hours after symptoms have resolved and the child keeps food and fluids down.
- **Strep Throat** - wait 24 hours after antibiotics have begun.
- **Conjunctivitis** - your child will be prescribed eye ointment and should not return to school for 24 hours.
- **Head Lice** - until treated and has been checked by our school nurse.

Visitors

Parents are welcome in the classroom. Volunteering in your child's classroom may involve reading a book or helping with a special project and is at the discretion of the classroom teacher. All volunteers need to have a CORI check.

CONFIDENTIALITY: As a parent volunteer in the school you will be obligated to keep all situations you may witness confidential. This is for the protection of the children as well as for their families.

For safety reasons, any non-school personnel, including parents, must report to the front office upon arrival at the school. Please be prepared to show picture identification. If you have a scheduled appointment or are volunteering, you are required to sign in and get a visitor's badge.

It Is Better to Build Children Than to Mend Adults

If a child lives with...

criticism, a child learns to condemn.

hostility, a child learns to fight.

fear, a child learns to be apprehensive.

pity, a child learns to feel sorry for him or herself.

jealousy, a child learns to feel guilty.

tolerance, a child learns to be patient.

encouragement, a child learns to be confident.

praise, a child learns to be appreciative.

recognition, a child learns it is good to have a goal.

approval, a child learns to like him or herself.

honesty, a child learns what truth is.

fairness, a child learns justice.

acceptance, a child learns to love.

security, a child learns to have faith in him or herself and others.

friendliness, a child learns the world is a nice place in which to live.

- author unknown

Just Playing

When I'm building in the block room,
Please don't say I'm "Just playing."
For, you see, I'm learning about balance and shapes.
I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up,
Setting the table, caring for the babies,
Don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing."
I may be a mother or a father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint,
Or standing at an easel, or molding and shaping clay,
Please don't let me hear you say, "He is Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm expressing myself and being creative.
I just might be an artist or inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair
"Reading" to an imaginary audience,
Please don't laugh and think I'm, "Just Playing"
For, you see, I'm learning as I play
I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle
Or "plaything" at my school,
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "play."
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.
I may be in business someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run, and move my body,
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning how my body works.
I may be a doctor, nurse, or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today,
And I say, "I just played."
Please don't misunderstand me.
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work.
I'm preparing for tomorrow.
Today, I am a child and my work is play.

- author unknown