

**Meadow Park Preschool
and
Child Care Center**



Learn Play Grow

Parent Handbook

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center. The teachers and support staff at our center are interested in you and your child. We hope this handbook will help you understand the policies and procedures of our center.

Our formal way of sharing information with parents/guardians is through this handbook, memos, and newsletters; however, we feel the best way for you to know about the center is to talk with us. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact us at any time. Your voice is important to us as you entrust your "little family members" to our care...

We hope your time at Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is an enjoyable experience. It is important to us that you always feel welcome.

Karin J. Swenson - Executive Director

Table of Content

Introduction	2
Enrollment	2
Child Care Plan	2-3
Arrival and Departures	3
Fee Policies	4
Food Policies	5
Sick Child Policies	6
Accident and Emergency Information	8
Parent-Staff Communication	8
Behavior Guidance Policies	9
Transportation and Field Trips	10
Child's Clothing and Personal Belongings	10
Rest Time Policies	10
Child Abuse	11
Insurance	11
Miscellaneous Information	11
Family Contact for Services	11
Appendix	1

Introduction

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is a non-profit corporation, located in The Church of the Savior at 971 16th Street Southeast, Rochester, Minnesota. A Board of Directors consisting of church members, community members and childcare parents supervises the center.

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center was organized in 1969 with the following goals:

1. To provide a service to families in the community in need of child care and/or nursery school experience.
2. To provide a safe, loving environment for children in need of child care and/or nursery school experience.
3. To provide a variety of learning experiences to stimulate physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of each child.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (1-651-296-3971) licenses this center for 39 children, ranging in age from 33 months through school age. The center is limited to 10 school-age children in attendance at one time.

This center does not discriminate in admissions or dismissals on the basis of race, religion, creed, national origin, or source of payment.

Enrollment Procedures

A Pre-Admission Conference must be scheduled with the Executive Director. This will give the parent and child an opportunity to tour the facility, meet staff members, and become acquainted with center policies and procedures. Also, at this time, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will provide the center with information regarding any specific needs or concern they may have for their children.

We must receive a completed Registration Form and the Registration Fee must be paid to guarantee placement in the program.

The following forms must be completed, signed and returned on or before the first day of attendance.

1. The Registration Form
2. The Emergency Form
3. The Preschool Health Summary Form—signed by physician
4. The Immunization Form—signed by physician or clinic

Child Care Program Plan Center Schedule

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is open from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, January through December. The center will closed on the following days: **New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day** and **Christmas Day**. If your child would regularly attend on one or more of these days, it is a paid day. **Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center** reserves the right to close on the preceding Friday or the following Monday if any of the above holidays would happen to fall on a Saturday or Sunday. If your child would regularly attend on the chosen date, this would also be considered a paid day. The center may also be closed additional days around **Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas/New Year's**. Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is also closed one week each year, prior to the start of the Public/Private School year for Teacher/Staff Development Training and Center cleaning.

Child Care Schedule Options

1. Full Day Program—over five hours during the hours of 6:30 AM-5:30 PM
2. AM Program—up to five hours in the morning
3. PM Program—up to five hours in the afternoon
4. Preschool Program—8:30-11:30 AM

(This is also known as the Preschool/Nursery School experience time)

Summer Program: runs June-August, with exciting new themes geared for summer fun and exploration. This program is offered over and above the regular classroom activities.

Education Plan

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is a Christian Child Care Center, dedicated to teaching basic Christian principles as an integral part of the total daily program. Children of all faiths are welcome to attend.

MPPCCC is dedicated to the following core behaviors:

- We believe children should learn in a caring, Christ-centered environment with dedicated well-prepared staff.
- We believe children are at the beginning stages of a life of learning and we will be deliberate at showing them God's world.
- We believe children can be best nurtured in a learning environment that prepares them for the challenges of their continued education.
- We believe that children should have a learning environment that positively nurtures the physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and relational dimensions of their young lives.
- We believe character building begins at the earliest stages of life and therefore must be taught and modeled.

Parents may ask, at any time, to review the complete Child Care Program Plan for M.P.P.C.C.C

A child's work is play. So that each child in attendance can develop to his fullest, our Child Care Program Plan is as follows:

1. To promote physical development through use of a variety of large and small muscle activities and equipment for indoors and outdoors
2. To provide a program, which stimulates the development of intellectual skills through exploration, dramatic play, construction, art and music, and a large variety of cognitive activities.
3. To provide a supportive social and emotional climate through the use of self-awareness experiences and self-directed activities which promote interaction with peers, positive reinforcement and ample opportunities for success.
4. To promote good health through the guiding and encouraging of good eating habits and personal health awareness.

Arrival and Departure Policies

A parent/guardian or authorized adult must bring the child into the center and accomplish the following:

1. Remove the child's outer clothing and make certain the clothing is hung up.

2. Sign the child in.
3. Leave any temporary emergency information for the day with the child's teacher or the support staff.
4. Place the child's belongings on his/her wall hook.
5. Get the child settled into a classroom with a staff member before leaving.

If a child has difficulty separating, the parent should not hesitate to leave. Be assured that the staff will be loving and reassuring to the child. Parents are encouraged to call during the day to see how the child is adjusting. As always, the center staff's responsibility lies with the children first. If you need assistance with your child, please ask and a staff member will be happy to help out.

Departing

The parent/guardian or authorized adult must be certain that the staff member in charge knows the child is being taken from the center. Before leaving the center, the following must be accomplished:

1. Sign the child out
2. Take the child's belongings home
3. Take the blanket home the last day of the child's attendance for the week to be laundered.
4. Check the child's wall pocket for art projects or center correspondence.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the center about any changes in arrival and departure times. This is necessary so adequate staffing arrangements can be made. The center must be notified if someone other than an authorized person is to take the child from the center.

MPPCCC closes at 5:30 PM. A child remaining at the center after this time will **NOT** be left unattended, but parents/guardians should make every effort to contact the center to inform them of their plans.

School-age Children

This center is **NOT** responsible for school-age children as they walk to and from our center. Center responsibility begins once the children are in the child care center building.

Fee Policies

Daily Tuition (Refer to Fee Sheet for costs.)

Late Fee

The Center closes at 5:30 PM. A fee of \$2.50 will be charges for every fifteen (15) minutes or portion thereof the staff needs to wait with a child.

Example: 5:31-5:45--\$2.50: 5:46-6:00--\$5.00

Paid Holidays

The center is closed for the following holiday: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. If a child would regularly attend on one of these holidays, it is considered a paid day. M.P.P.C.C.C. reserves the right to close on the preceding Friday or following Monday if any of the above holidays would happen to fall on a Saturday or Sunday. If your child would regularly attend on the chosen day, this would also be considered a paid day.

Payment Policy

Each family's payment schedule is determined at the time of registration and continues until other arrangements are made with the Executive Director.

Cash payments must include a letter explaining the dates the amount covers. Cash should be placed in an envelope that includes the child's name.

A check used for payment must include the dates the amount covers.

Fees and/or correspondence may be placed in the **FEE BOX** on the sign-in table.

Termination Policy

Two week written notice is required when a child is to be withdrawn from the center. The fee must be paid up to this date and all fees are due on the child's last day of attendance, in accordance with the signed agreement on the Registration Form, filled out at registration time.

Food Policies

The Center furnishes the following:

1. A breakfast-like snack, served in the morning that includes a fruit or vegetable, a grain product and milk.
2. An afternoon snack, which includes at least one nutritious, snack item and milk.

*If for medical reasons, your child should require a special diet or has a food allergy, please discuss this with the Executive Director. A signed statement from your physician is required if certain snack components must be omitted from your child's diet. If, for religious reasons, or because of a family decision, certain foods are to be omitted from your child's diet, the center must be notified in writing by the parent/guardian. The appropriate staff members will be notified of any special, prescribed diets.

Noon Meal

Children bring a box lunch from home. (The lunch box must be labeled with the child's complete first and last name.) A nutritious lunch should include a protein, a fruit and/or vegetable and a grain product. The center furnishes milk, napkins and silverware. In order to make our lunchtimes go more smoothly, for the children, as well as the staff, **PLEASE** make up the Pizza and Taco Lunchables ahead of time and send them prepared in a small container. It seems that most children are not able to open the sauce packages by themselves and by the time a staff person gets to the child to help, our lunchtime is nearly done.

Menus

Menus are prepared in advance and posted outside the kitchen door. New foods are introduced regularly and children are encouraged to taste all foods served.

MPPCCC participates in the Federal Special Milk Programs. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. We will not discriminate based on race, color, sex, age, special needs or national origin.

Treats for Special Occasions

Families may furnish special treats for birthdays or special days. Prior arrangements must be made with a teacher or the Executive Director. Treats must be commercially prepared and packaged. No hard candy or gum is served at the center.

Health Policies

Minnesota State Law mandates that each child has immunizations completed upon entrance to the center. A child must obtain a report on current physical examination within 30 days of admission. Papers are included in the registration packet and must be filled out, signed by your doctor and returned to Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center within 30 days. No child will be enrolled without an immunization statement.

Well Child Policy

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is concerned about the well being of **ALL** children in our care. It is important that everyone take precautions to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses. Please **DO NOT** send your child to the center if you feel that your child is too sick to go outside to play, or to join in on normal activities.

Sick Child Policies

When to Keep Your Child at Home:

Certain symptoms in children may suggest a communicable disease. Children who have the following symptoms should be kept home until a doctor has decided that the symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease, the child is no longer contagious, or the symptoms have gone away. A child **MUST** be fever-free **WITHOUT** fever reducing medication for a **MINIMUM** of 24 hours before returning to the center.

- ❖ **FEVER**—oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher, especially when accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash.
- ❖ **RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS**—difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing...child makes high pitched croupy or whooping sound after they cough...child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.
- ❖ **DIARRHEA**—an increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain or vomiting.
- ❖ **VOMITING**—two or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.
- ❖ **EYE/NOSE DRAINAGE**—thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose.
- ❖ **PINKEYE**—the child may return 24 hours after the antibiotic treatment has begun.
- ❖ **SORE THROAT**—sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present
- ❖ **STREP THROAT**—the child may return 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun
- ❖ **SKIN PROBLEMS—RASH**—skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious **INFECTED SORES**—sores with crusty, yellow or greenish drainage that cannot be covered by clothing or bandages **PERSISTENT ITCHING** or scratching of body or scalp
- ❖ **CHICKEN POX**—All pox must be crusted over and no fever present before the child returns to class
- ❖ **APPERANCE**—Behavior, unusual color—Child looks or acts differently: unusually tired, pale, lacking in appetite, confused, irritable, difficult to awaken...yellow eyes or skin, gray or white stools, dark or tea colored urine. These symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician.
- ❖ **LICE**—The child may attend after delousing treatment and when all nits have been removed.
- ❖ **RINGWORM, SCABIES**—The child may attend when antibiotic treatment has begun.

Let the staff know within 24 hours if your child has a communicable or childhood disease, such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, scabies, impetigo, pinkeye, or ringworm, so we can alert other parents to be on the lookout for possible symptoms in their children. Parents will be notified immediately if their child has been exposed to an infectious or communicable disease and of what symptoms to be aware of. The center reserves the right to determine when a child, who has been sick, can return to the center.

Parents should always have alternate child care plans for when the child is ill.

The center must be notified when a child is kept home because of an illness. Symptoms should be described to a staff member.

Parents must inform the center within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays, when a child is diagnosed by the child's source of medical or dental care as having a contagious disease or condition, including lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm or chicken pox.

Parents will be notified of their child's exposure to communicable diseases at the center. Parents must check the Illness Report daily that is located on the Parent's Bulletin Board.

If a child becomes ill at the center, we will move the child to a quiet supervised area away from the other children. We will notify you, or whomever you have indicated we should notify, immediately so that you may pick the child up. When you are contacted and told your child is ill, we require you to make arrangements to pick them up immediately. If you know this is a problem, please make sure your next two emergency contacts will be available to pick up your child.

A Public Health Consultant/Nurse makes visits our center. The Consultant/Nurse is available for consultation when medical problems or questions arise.

When a child is absent from the center due to illness, on a day which the child would normally attend, full payment is required.

Administering Medications

Prescription Medications can only be administered when specific requirements are met:

1. Prescription Medication Authorization Form is completed at the center, including the child's name.
2. Medication is brought to the center with a readable pharmacy label with the child's name on the container.
3. The directions are followed explicitly.

Non Prescription External Medication may be administered if:

1. The Non-Prescription Authorization Release is completed at the center.
2. The directions on the container are followed.
3. The child's full name is on the container.
4. Medication is brought to the center in the original container.

Non-Prescription Oral Medication will not be given at the center unless a prescription is given to us from your child's physician, giving explicit instructions of how and when to administer the medication.

Accident and Emergency Information

The staff is trained to be alert to potential dangerous situations, but occasionally accidents do happen. We will make every attempt to notify parents if an injury is serious enough to warrant medical care. A permission form signed at time of registration however gives MPPCCC consent to secure and authorize care and/or treatment as might be required while under the care of this center. The parent is responsible for all costs and fees incurred for any medical treatment for the child.

911 **WILL** be called in case of a medical emergency; the child **WILL** be taken to the appropriate medical center.

If the child has an accident and it is not an emergency, the child will be taken to a quiet area, made as comfortable as possible and a parent will be contacted. If a parent cannot be reached, other persons authorized to pick up the child will be called.

Bumps and bruises will be treated with an ice pack to reduce swelling. Minor cuts and scrapes will be washed with soap and water and then will be bandaged.

When a child has an accident, at the center, an Accident Report will be filled out and signed by a teacher/staff member. When a child has an Accident Report a parent/guardian will be required to read and sign the report. All reports will be kept on file at the center.

Parent-Staff Communication

In order to ensure that parents/guardians are involved with their child's progress at the center, conferences are offered two times a year. A fall conference is offered so that parents have an opportunity to provide the teacher with any information that is important in the care of their child, and/or discuss with the teacher any issues or concerns they may have about the child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. If at any other time you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher, please feel free to schedule a time with the teacher.

A second conference is scheduled for early spring. At this time, the teacher will discuss the progress the child has made in his/her development during the year.

Conferences are limited to these designated times. If at any time the parent or teacher feels there is a concern, a conference should be scheduled.

M.P.C.C.C Newsletter

A newsletter is published the first week of each month, September to June. The aim of this publication is to help keep parents informed of past, present and future activities of the center. A calendar of events for our Summer Program will be distributed for each month, June-August.

Parent Participation and Observation

Communication about the Center:

Wall pockets are located outside each room. They are used to distribute written information to parents and to send home your child's artwork and other projects.

Center Newsletters are placed on the wall pockets outside each room monthly during the school year (September-June). Summer Activity Calendars are printed for each summer month (June, July, and August).

An Information Bulletin Board is located near the sign-in area and maintained by the center staff.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to take an active part in their child’s “home away from home.”

Volunteers are always appreciated for various jobs around the center including repairs, painting, helping at special events, sewing or collecting of items for art projects.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to share their special talents, skills or experiences with the children. If the parent thinks they have something to share, arrangements should be made with the directed teacher.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to visit the center at any time, on any day. No prior arrangements are needed.

Talk to your child’s teacher. She/he can give you the most accurate information about your child.

Look at the daily schedule and weekly lesson plans posted outside the classrooms.

Call the Center during the day if you have a question. The staff will be glad to tell you how your child is doing.

Meet with your child’s teacher. Teachers are schedule individual conferences with parents twice a year. You may also request a conference at any time.

Suggestions and Comments

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is continuously striving to improve. We need suggestions. Should an issue or concern arise, it should be brought to the attention of the Teacher, Head-Teacher, or the Executive Director. We will listen to your thoughts and ideas and attempt to reach a solution. If a grievance should arise, the approach is as follows: For the chain of command—first go to: 1. Your child’s teacher, then: 2. The Head Teacher, then: 3. The Executive Director. You may submit a written grievance to the Executive Director. All decisions will be made within a 30-day period.

Behavior Guidance Policies

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center’s goal for behavior guidance is to help each child develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with other within the environment. Young children are in the process of learning acceptable behaviors. Our aim is to guide the child to a more positive self-concept and better self-control as they practice acceptable behaviors in various situations.

Guidance begins with the establishing of a warm relationship between the adult and child. The preferred methods of guidance and discipline used in this center are of a positive nature and include modeling, redirection, prompting, intervention and the teaching and encouraging of problem solving.

Persistent, unacceptable behavior may result in separation from the group for a short period within the confines of the classroom, under the direct supervision of a staff member. Children will not be subject to physical, verbal or emotional punishment. The child’s basic needs will not be withheld as a means of punishment.

Each child and staff member is special and will be treated with respect at all times. Any type of behavior intended to physically or emotionally hurt someone will not be tolerated at the center.

Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center reserves the right to exclude a child from the center when the emotional and physical well-being of the other children and staff is in danger and all other positive methods and resources have been exhausted. This notice can come without warning if the situation warrants.

Transportation and Field Trips

MPPCCC does not provide transportation. The center does schedule a few major excursions to places too far for the children to walk. School buses are hired to transport the children on field trips, such as Oxbow Park, the Public Library, an apple orchard, etc. Written permission will be obtained from the parent/guardian for each of these trips.

Nature walks to nearby areas are considered an integral part of our educational program. Walks are also taken when the playground conditions are poor. Permission for these outings is granted at the time of enrollment on the Registration Form.

Children's Clothing and Personal Belongings

A child should be dressed in comfortable, sturdy, washable, play clothes. This will permit the child the necessary freedom to participate in all the activities, indoors and outdoors. Tennis shoes are recommended for footwear as they are the safest for the wide variety of active play the child takes part of during the day.

***Clogs, sandals, open-toed shoes and cowboy boots are unsafe and/or cumbersome.

As a part of our educational plan, the children will participate in "messy" activities, such as painting. Although we do take precautions to prevent clothes from getting damaged, accidents do happen. Therefore, we recommend clothing that will not present a problem for you or your child. **Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center is not responsible for stained or ruined clothes.** Adequate clothing is needed for outside play the year round. We plan to go outside on as many days as possible.

- All children well enough to be at the center will be expected to participate in outside activities.
- All clothing, including footwear that may be taken off, should be labeled with the child's name.
- All other belongings brought to the center should be labeled, including the lunch box, blanket, and items to "show."
- Please do not bring toys for playtime, candy, gum or money. Guns, action figures, weapons, etc. are not allowed at our center.
- To prevent lost or broken personal items, please keep toys and other objects at home. Meadow Park Preschool and Child Care Center cannot be responsible for lost items. Please keep all valuables at home (i.e.—toys, money, expensive coats and other items of personal value or attachment).

Rest Time Policies

Children remaining at the center after noon lunch have the option of taking a nap or quiet play. This decision is pre-determined by the parent at the time of registration.

Parents should discuss changes in sleeping needs with Executive Director.

Occasional sleeping changes can be made with the Executive Director.

Child Abuse

Every parent is hereby informed that the law requires us to report any suspected cases of abuse or neglect as signed on registration and information form. See Appendix I.

Insurance

This center carries general liability insurance.

Miscellaneous Information

While specific teacher styles may differ from classroom to classroom, the spontaneous nurturing of children within the program is expressed in the following ways:

Hugging, holding on laps, carrying, rocking, rubbing/patting backs.

A small pet such as a hamster or fish may be housed at the center. All pets must be disease-free and cared for using guidelines set up by the local Health Department. If a pet is brought to the center for a visit, prior arrangements must be made with the Executive Director or a Staff Member.

It is the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)' responsibility to inform the center of any changes in emergency information, home situation or any other information needed for the care and understanding of the child.

Parents will give permission, in the process of filling out the Registration Form, for all occasions of public relations activities involving the child (i.e. pictures, videos and assessments).

Children generally do not have problems adjusting to our program. We have found that if children are kept interested and occupied they will enjoy their time at the center. If a child does not adjust, this center reserves the right to give the parent a two-week termination notice.

Contact Information for Early Childhood and Developmental Screening

What is an Early Childhood Check-in/Screening?

Did you know that the state of Minnesota requires that all children check in for a developmental screening before entering public kindergarten programs? The Rochester Public Schools provide a comprehensive early childhood check-in for and child 3-years-old or older at no charge. The school staff will check your child's vision, hearing, growth, Immunization status and skills in thinking, communication, and language; large and small muscle control; and social and emotional development.

The best time to schedule your child's check-in is when he or she turns 3-years-old. **DON'T WAIT!** Schedule your 3-year-old for an Early Childhood Check-in/Screening. **Just call 507-285-8585 and put your child on the path to success.**

Olmsted County Public Health Services provides a variety of programs, clinics and services to children, families, and adults. All clinics and testing services are located at 2100 Campus Drive SE on the first floor.

Children's Mental Health Resource is located at 2117 Campus Dr. SE, Suite 207. Call 507-328-6400.

Salvation Army Dental Clinic is located at 120 Broadway Ave. N. Call 507-529-4100.

Contact Information for Early Childhood Services, Programs and Developmental Screening

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Olmsted County Public Health Services

Olmsted County Public Health Services provides a variety of programs, clinics and services to children, families, and adults. Public Health Services provides individual visits, classes and groups in the home, clinic and community setting to families who are pregnant or have infants and preschool children. Information, support and referral to community resources is provided by public health nurses. Several of our programs are coordinated with social workers to provide a comprehensive program that addresses all aspects social, emotional and physical health as they relate to pregnancy, parenting and child development. All clinics and testing services are located at 2100 Campus Drive SE on the first floor. **Call 507-328-7500.**

Children's Mental Health Resource

Children's Mental Health Resource is located at 2117 Campus Dr. SE, Suite 207. This Program offers services to support and strengthen families of preschool children who are experiencing challenges within the home, community, day care or preschool setting. Serves children ages 3-6 years of age and children and families who reside in Olmsted County. **Call 507-328-6229.**

Salvation Army Dental Clinic

Salvation Army Dental Clinic is located at 120 Broadway Ave. N. The Dental Clinic works in collaboration with area dentists and agencies to provide basic dental services to Olmsted County residents. Service fees for those without insurance are based on a sliding scale determined by your income. The clinic also provides service to people who have Medical Assistance, U-Care or BluePlus insurance and cannot find a dental provider. **To schedule an appointment, call 507-529-4100.**

Contact Information for Family Education Programming

PAIR/Parents Are Important In Rochester

Early Childhood Family Education (PAIR –Parents Are Important In Rochester) is a **Rochester Public School District #535** program available to all families and is designed for parents and their children ages birth to kindergarten enrollment. PAIR has been providing support and information through a variety of classes since 1974. Their offerings include **Age Group Classes, Parents and Infants, Parent Workshops, and Parent Child Activities.** PAIR classes are taught by licensed parent educators and early childhood teachers who work directly with parents and their young children. **For more information about PAIR's classes, call 285-8030.**

Hand in Hand

Hand in Hand is a family literacy program offered by **ECFE** in the **Rochester Public School District #535** and the Adult Literacy Program. Hand in Hand offers instruction to enhance parenting skills, as well as small group and individual instruction in the areas of reading, oral and written expression, and math applications. For children, the program emphasizes activities that support physical, cognitive, social-emotional and creative development.

Families must have the following to take part in Hand in Hand:

- A child birth to age 7
- An income that would qualify them for free or reduced lunch program
- At least one parent who has not completed high school or passed the GED exam, or has ESOL needs.

This program is free for all participants, and takes place at different sites, mornings and/or afternoons, to provide flexibility in scheduling. Parent(s) must agree to participate in all components of the program – parent education, adult literacy and early childhood education. **To learn more about Hand in Hand or to initiate a referral call 285-8909.**

School Readiness

Families First of Minnesota sponsors the School Readiness Program which provides children 3 ½ years to kindergarten enrollment with opportunities to participate in early childhood programs and services that enable them to enter school with the skills and behaviors needed for them to progress and flourish. All parents want the best for their children, and all children deserve to start school ready to learn. **For more information about the School Readiness program, call 287-2020.**

Baby Steps

Olmsted County Public Health Services and Olmsted County Community Services offer the Baby Steps program for new parents and babies to age 2. The program is designed for first-time mothers who live in Olmsted County, are at least 18 years old and whose circumstances include some of the following characteristics: isolation, limited support and income, less than high school education or childhood history of abuse or neglect. **To make a referral to the Baby Steps program or for more information, call 285-8519.**

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services as part of the **Rochester Public School District #535** are designed for *children from age three until the child's seventh birthday*. Children can qualify for services under the ECSE criteria until the child turns seven.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services begin with a developmental evaluation. This evaluation documents a child's skills in a variety of areas such as cognition, motor, social-emotional, language-communication, and/or adaptive (self-help) development. There are also certain conditions and medical diagnoses that automatically qualify a child for ECSE services. For example, a qualifying condition/diagnoses is one that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay and the child currently demonstrates a need.

In Minnesota, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services are provided through the public school system. Districts within the state of MN often refer to these services as the *Help Me Grow* Program. You can use the **Help Me Grow website** at: www.helpmegrow.org, which is a free resource to look at the developmental milestones of young children, to learn if there are concerns, and to take the lead in seeking additional support or in referring your child for a comprehensive, confidential screening or evaluation at no cost.

What happens after the referral is made?

A school district assessment team reviews the referrals and meets with parents to discuss the evaluation process. Upon receiving written consent, the evaluation is conducted to determine if the child meets the eligibility requirements for ECSE services. If the child is eligible, a case manager (typically a teacher with a license in Early Childhood Special Education) is assigned to work with the family. Depending on the child's needs, additional service providers may be included on the child's team. The team members could include a physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech language pathologist, county public health nurse or social worker, vision or hearing specialist, or other providers. Parents are also a very important part of their child's team.

What happens next?

After the assessment is completed, the team, which includes the parents, will meet to identify goals and develop an individualized plan of services to support the child (called an Individual Education Program or IEP). Services for children ages three through six are provided in a school setting, typically preschool and/or kindergarten.

Services for children ages birth through two are provided in their natural environment, such as their home or childcare setting. See information on the right column about Early Intervention. **To learn more about ECSE or to initiate a referral call 328-3931.**

APPENDIX 1

REPORTING POLICY FOR PROGRAMS PROVIDING SERVICES TO CHILDREN

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report

- If you know or suspect a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 297-4123
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at (507) 289-1667 or local law enforcement at (507) 285-8580.
- If your report does **NOT** involve possible abuse or neglect, but **DOES** involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at (651) 296-3971.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any person responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Retaliation Prohibited

- An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom a report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe retaliation has occurred.

Failure to Report

- A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

The reporting policies and procedures must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request. The Division of Licensing recommends that parents with children currently enrolled in your child care program are informed of the development of the reporting policies and procedures, and provide them with an opportunity to request the information.