

Early Childhood Program Family Handbook 2020-2021



Linn-Mar Community School District

Inspire Learning. **Unlock Potential. Empower Achievement.**

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Educational Equity (Board Policy 105.1)

The Linn-Mar Community School District will not discriminate in its educational activities and is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person will be excluded from educational activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, covered military veteran, disability, genetic information, familial status, physical attribute, political belief/party preference, or social-economic status.

The Linn-Mar Community School District requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity.

The Linn-Mar Community School District is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person will be excluded from educational activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and genetic information. Further, the Board affirms the right of all students and staff to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and harassment.

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MISSION

Our mission is to create and maintain an inclusive environment that engages children through active learning to achieve academic, emotional, and social success.

The Linn-Mar Early Childhood Program

The Linn-Mar Early Childhood Program values and understands the critical importance of play by observing, supporting and participating. Play is infused throughout the preschool day to form an integrated curriculum. It is an essential piece in all areas of development.

Early Childhood Blended Program (ECBP)

Linn-Mar's Early Childhood Blended Program is offered to children that are five years old by September 15th and not yet ready for our standard kindergarten program. The ECBP program offers a blended approach to learning that includes a mix of early childhood education and elementary education. The school day will focus on social, emotional and behavioral growth as well as have a literacy and math focus.

Enrollment in this program is determined by Linn-Mar's screening process and parental input. The main areas under consideration include: social readiness, fine motor skills, pre-reading skills and pre-math skills. Screening dates are in February and March at the Learning Resource Center.

Pre-Academic

Children expand their knowledge by interacting with people and real objects. Math, science, social studies and pre-reading are blended into the curriculum. Thematic units create a foundation for counting, number recognition, shape identification, measuring and the ability to reason.

Language/Literacy

The five basic areas of literacy: listening, speaking, writing, reading and thinking, are interdependently woven into the preschool day. Story time and group language enrichment activities are part of the daily curriculum, along with opportunities for structured dialogue.

Motor Skills

Many components of children's play help develop both fine and large motor skills. Staff facilitate students as they participate in activities that require agility, balance, coordination and strength. As they master their large motor skills, their fine motor skills become more controlled. Art activities, journaling, play dough, cutting and other manipulatives are all used to help advance the child's dexterity.

Social/Emotional

The programs include a nurturing environment where positive self-esteem and an appreciation of individual differences and cooperation are key. Teachers, parents and children all work together to create and maintain a learning community.

Music and Movement

Music and movement is incorporated each day to promote self-expression. Singing and dancing are coordinated to help the children refine their large motor skills.

Art

Art is an essential component of curriculum. A large variety of art materials are available every day. The program emphasizes the art process over the final product as the children use their imagination to explore the world of artistic expression. Children are encouraged to experiment with many different types of art techniques.

Creative Dramatics

Children use creative dramatics to role-play, imitate and dramatize experiences from their everyday life. Puppets, dress-up clothing and interest centers are favorite areas for children to practice their developing social and communication skills.

Curriculum

Little Lions utilizes Creative Curriculum, which is based on early childhood theories and research. It creates purposeful and productive play experiences that help children grow in all areas. The goal of the program is for children to become independent, self-confident, curious learners who work well with others.

Assessment

The assessment that compliments Creative Curriculum is Teaching Strategies GOLD. It is based on developmentally appropriate objectives that are predictive of school success and aligned with state standards. Staff will ask for input from families to help assess developmental progress of their child as well. The assessment information is then used to guide lesson planning and report progress to parents.

Staff

The Linn-Mar Early Childhood Program provides staff licensed by the State of Iowa. There is an educational assistant in each classroom.

Locations

Little Lions and Early Childhood Blended Program classrooms are located in the following elementary buildings for the 2020-2021 School Year:

Echo Hill Elementary

400 Echo Hill Road, Marion
Principal: CJ McDonald
Office phone: 730-3560
Attendance: 730-3561

Little Lions Teachers:

Cheyenne Boyd
Amy Nicholson

Linn Grove Elementary

2301 50th Street, Marion
Principal: Lori Manley
Office phone: 730-3500
Attendance: 730-3501

Little Lions Teachers:

Melissa Bray
Carly Remington

Novak Elementary

401 29th Avenue, Marion
Principal: Carol O'Donnell
Office phone: 447-3300
Attendance: 447-3303

ECBP Teachers:

Dianna Hamilton
Cyndi Hofstetter
Andie Paasch
Shawna Widdel

Bowman Woods Elementary

151 Boyson Rd NE, Cedar Rapids
Principal: Tina March
Office phone: 447-3240
Attendance: 447-3242

Little Lions Teachers:

Pam Hackbarth
Peggy Wakefield

Wilkins Elementary

2127 27th Street, Marion
Principal: Amanda Potter
Office phone: 447-3380
Attendance: 447-3382

Little Lions Teachers:

Megan Kucera
Christy Ness

Linn-Mar partners with two community preschools, Hand In Hand Early Care and Collins Aerospace Day Academy to offer more opportunities for free four year old preschool. Please contact them directly with questions regarding their programming.

Hand in Hand 377-5686

Collins Aerospace Day Academy 295-4440

Director of Early Childhood Education

Michaela O'Connell
Learning Resource Center
2999 10th Street, Marion

Early Childhood Number

319-730-3627

Please check the Linn-Mar website at www.tinyurl.com/earlychildhoodLM for more information.

Hours and Days of Operation

All Little Lions Classes meet Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Morning session is 8:30-11:15 and afternoon session is 12:15-3:00.

Little Lions is a fully inclusive preschool. Some of these students may require additional support and qualify for Student Support Services through an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Animals

Most of the preschool classrooms have a class pet. Visiting animals are dealt with on an individual basis due to allergies and other health concerns.

Attendance

Parent should call the building your child attends to let them know of an absence, late arrival or early pick up.

Attendance Policy for students participating in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Grant (4-year-old students):

The Iowa Department of Education has amended the Iowa compulsory attendance law regarding attendance for students enrolled in preschool effective July 1, 2013. The law allows school districts to remove from its enrollment a child who is not regularly attending the district's program. The Early Childhood Preschool Program follows the Linn-Mar Community School District's attendance policy.

The Linn-Mar Community School District Attendance Policy:

After 8 accumulated occurrences per quarter, a letter will be sent to notify families of the attendance issue. If, after receiving this letter, attendance does not improve, the family will be withdrawn from the program. Special medical problems, health considerations or absences due to ethnic holidays will be considered on an individual basis; however, physician documentation may be required.

Cancellations

If Linn-Mar has a late start due to weather, the morning session of Little Lions will not meet. If there is an early dismissal, the afternoon session will not meet. Please watch the local TV stations or check the Linn-Mar web site at <http://www.linnmar.k12.ia.us> for weather related announcements. You can also find information on Facebook and Twitter.

Drop off/Pick up Procedures

Drop off and Pick up procedures vary from building to building. Each teacher will share procedures with families prior to school starting in the fall.

Arrival time is no more than 5 minutes before the start of the student day. Parking policies vary from building to building and will be shared by the teachers in each building.

Fees

Students attending the Early Childhood Blended Program will pay the school registration fees during the school registration times.

The Iowa State Legislature has provided a Statewide Voluntary Preschool Grant. This allows children living in Linn County that are four by September 15th to attend preschool without paying monthly tuition.

Statements for tax purposes are available upon request in the business office. Contact the business office at 447-3018.

Health Requirements

Records

Proof of child's date of birth and an up-to-date immunization record is requested for every child to attend preschool. These can be given to the school prior to the first day of class.

Hearing Screenings

The Grant Wood Area Education Agency provides hearing screens during the course of the school year to students on Individualized Education Plans. Parents who do not want their child's hearing tested will need to indicate that in writing to the school.

Vision Screenings

Linn-Mar will partner with the Lions Club of Iowa to give our students to participate in the Iowa Kidsight Vision Screening Program. More information about this program and consent forms can be found at www.medicine.uiowa.edu/KidSight/.

Medication

School personnel cannot administer medication during the school day, including prescription and over-the-counter medication; unless a medication permission form is completed. These forms are available at the school.

Prescription medication must be supplied to the school in the labeled prescription container along with a permission form signed by the parent/legal guardian. All medication must be delivered to/from the school by the parent/legal guardian.

Hand Washing

All staff, students, volunteers, and visitors (including parents) must wash their hands upon entering the preschool classroom.

Sunscreen

Children will play outside whenever the weather allows. You are encouraged to put sunscreen on your child prior to their arrival at preschool. If this is not possible and you would like Little Lions staff to apply sunscreen, please send sunscreen with a note. Sunscreen must have an SPF of at least 15.

Illness

If your child becomes ill or injured at school, every attempt will be made to contact you. If this is not possible, an emergency contact will be called.

Is My Child Too Sick for School?

Each day many parents are faced with a decision: should they keep their sick children home or send them off to school? The following guidelines, recommended by experts at the Mayo Clinic, should be considered when making this sometimes difficult decision. A student should remain home when he or she:

- Vomits or has diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- Has an oral temperature higher than 100 degrees.
- Coughs almost constantly or complains of difficulty breathing.
- Exhibits abdominal pain for more than two hours.
- Has sores on mouth or skin that are crusty, yellow or draining.
- Shows symptoms of contagious diseases such as chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough, strep throat.
- Has constant runny nose with green or yellow discharge.
- Displays an unexplained skin rash or red eye (with or without crusting/drainage).

Keeping a sick child home prevents the spread of illness in the school. It also allows the child opportunity to rest and recover. A sick child cannot learn effectively and is unable to participate in classes in a meaningful way. If you have questions, please contact the school nurse.

Communicable Diseases

Staff will inform parents when there has been any possible exposure to a communicable disease. Any child with a contagious disease should be reported to the preschool immediately.

Parent Involvement

Volunteers

Parent volunteers are welcome in the preschool classroom. All district volunteers are required to complete a volunteer information form. Preschool teachers will provide more information on volunteering opportunities.

For more information contact:
Community Relations Coordinator
Karla Terry
Phone:(319)447-3110

Special Events

Families will be invited to various events throughout the school year. Some of these include:

- Home Visits-Scheduled August 24th, 25th and 26th.
- Meet and Greet – Before the school year begins families have a chance to visit the classroom.
- Family Night – Once during the school year families will be invited to participate in a themed evening event.
- Seasonal Parties – Families will be notified of several parties during the school year. These will take place during the school day.
- Preschool families are also welcome to attend any of the events sponsored by the elementary not specific to preschool.

Home Visits

Home visits are an important part of the early childhood program. These are scheduled prior to the first day of school or early in the school year. These visits allow the early childhood teacher to get to know each child and family. This is a great time to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and to share information about your child's interest and learning styles. It is also a time to share your goals and any concerns you may have. This visit helps strengthen the partnership between home and school

Parent Teacher Conferences

Two conferences will be scheduled for each child, one in the fall and one in the spring. At that time the teacher will share observations, assessments, and other information that they have learned about your child. They will also be interested in hearing your observations and goals for your child.

Snacks/Birthday Treats

Children will receive a monthly snack calendar indicating when they are requested to bring a healthy snack for the class. Suggested snack items are vegetables, fruits, crackers, cheese, etc. Please refer to the appendix for additional snack ideas. Water, cups, and napkins are provided. According to school guidelines, we cannot serve homemade snacks. Please leave items in the original package so the staff can check for allergens.

The staff at Linn-Mar Community Schools has committed to promoting the health and well-being of our students. In accordance with Linn-Mar's designation as a Blue Zones School District, procedures are in place to provide students with healthier lifestyle choices in regard to birthday celebrations in the classroom. Student birthdays may be celebrated at school. However, students will be encouraged to no longer bring food or beverages to share with classmates. Instead, birthdays can be celebrated with non-

food options including (but not limited to) name recognition on the school announcements, a special acknowledgement from the school office and classroom recognitions (i.e. birthday crowns, sit with a special friend, being designated as the line leader for the day, etc.). Students may also choose to bring in nonfood items to share with classmates and school staff such as pencils, special note pads, pens, other writing tools, etc. Please contact your child's school with any questions about the way to celebrate birthdays.

APPENDIX



Little Lions Healthy Snacks



****We do have children in our classes that have peanut allergies so please be mindful when choosing a snack to bring to preschool.**

All snacks need to be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers.

Grain Foods

Animal Crackers

Bagels

Bread Sticks

Cereal/ Cereal Mixtures

Granola Bars

Cheese Crackers

English Muffins

French Bread

Graham Crackers

Oyster Crackers

Chex Mix

Baked Potato chips

Fig Bars

Rice Cakes

Crackers

Fruits and Vegetables

Apples

Applesauce

Canned Fruit Cups (in juice)

Dried Fruit

Fruit Juice/Frozen Fruit Bars

Celery Sticks

Broccoli or Cauliflower

Orange, Peach, or Pineapple
slices

Plum

Seedless Grapes

Strawberries

Tangerines

Cucumber

Dairy Foods/ Protein Foods

Cheese (Cubes, slices, string)

Frozen Yogurt

Ham or Turkey Deli

Salami

Beef sticks

String Cheese

Yogurt

Creative Curriculum Objectives for Development & Learning

Social-Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
 - a. Manages feelings
 - b. Follows limits and expectations
 - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
 - a. Forms relationships with adults
 - b. Responds to emotional cues
 - c. Interacts with peers
 - d. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
 - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
 - b. Solves social problems

Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
 - a. Uses fingers and hands
 - b. Uses writing and drawing tools

Language

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
 - a. Comprehends language
 - b. Follows directions
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
 - a. Uses and expanding expressive vocabulary
 - b. Speaks clearly
 - c. Uses conventional grammar
 - d. Tells about another time or place
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
 - a. Engages in conversations
 - b. Uses social rules of language

Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
 - a. Attends and engages
 - b. Persists
 - c. Solves problems
 - d. Shows curiosity and motivation
 - e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
12. Remembers and connects experiences
 - a. Recognizes and recalls
 - b. Makes connections
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
 - a. Thinks symbolically
 - b. Engages in sociodramatic play

Literacy

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
 - a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
 - b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
 - c. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
 - a. Identifies and names letters
 - b. Uses letter – sound knowledge
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
 - a. Uses and appreciates books
 - b. Uses print concepts
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
 - a. Interacts during read-alouds and book conversations
 - b. Uses emergent reading skills
 - c. Retells stories
19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
 - a. Writes names
 - b. Writes to convey meaning

Mathematics

- 20. Uses number concepts and operations
 - a. Counts
 - b. Quantifies
 - c. Connects numerals with their quantities
- 21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
 - a. Understands spatial relationships
 - b. Understands shapes
- 22. Compares and measures
- 23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

Science and Technology

- 24. Uses scientific inquiry skills.
- 25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
- 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
- 27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
- 28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies

- 29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
- 30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
- 31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
- 32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts

- 33. Explores the visual arts
- 34. Explores musical concepts and expression
- 35. Explores dance and movement concepts
- 36. Explores drama through actions and language

English Language Acquisitions

- 37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
- 38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

Linn-Mar Early Childhood Discipline Policy

The Linn-Mar Early Childhood program uses a positive and proactive approach to helping all children develop social and emotional skills. Praise and positive descriptive feedback are effective methods of behavior management of children. We are implementing a program-wide approach, the Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development. This model assists our team with the following:

1. Ensuring that all teachers and staff use effective and culturally responsive teaching practices that promote social and emotional competence of all children.
2. Providing more individualized interventions to children who need additional instruction or behavior support.
3. Including family input to ensure that interventions are appropriate and relevant within their culture and values.

Our program-wide approach is guided by a leadership team that uses data for decision-making, provides training and support to teachers, and fosters partnerships with families.

In our program, we have established the following program-wide expectations for all children and adults:

**We are Safe
We are Kind
We are Workers**

Our staff members teach all children about these expectations and link classroom rules to these core values. The expectations can also be taught at home and link to the rules that you might have for your child at home and in the community. We find that when we are all on the same page with our expectations, children are more able to understand and meet those expectations.

Our staff members use only positive methods of child guidance. The techniques we use include:

- Communicating to children using positive statements.
- Communicating with children on their level.
- Talking with children in a calm quiet manner.
- Giving attention to children for positive behavior.
- Stating the expected behavior in positive terms.
- Praising and encouraging children.
- Applying rules consistently.
- Modeling appropriate behavior.
- Providing alternatives and redirecting children to acceptable activities.
- Giving children opportunities to make choices.
- Teaching and encouraging children to solve as many of their own problems as possible under the guidance of a staff member.
- Providing appropriate words to help solve conflicts.
- Using storybooks and discussions to work through common conflicts.
- Listening to children and respecting children's needs, desires and feelings.

Our staff members receive developmentally appropriate training in child guidance procedures, practical strategies to support the equity of response across all children and are monitored on their implementation of those practices.

If children have behavior challenges that are a concern, we will contact the family so that we can work together to develop and implement a plan for teaching the child social and emotional skills and reduce

the behavior challenges. We also encourage families to ask questions about appropriate child guidance techniques and seek our assistance if they have concerns about the child's social, emotional, or behavioral development.

If children engage in behavior that is harmful to themselves or to others, staff will initiate the safety plan to meet the needs of the child and/or situation. If the behavior incident is dangerous or might be physically harmful, we will seek to conference with the family immediately with the goal of developing an effective approach to support the child. For some children, an evaluation, consultation with professionals outside the program, or additional services might be needed to ensure the child can be successfully supported in the program.

Safety Plan

This Safety Plan is to be implemented when a child is a danger to themselves or others:

1. Staff should implement CPI (Nonviolent Physical Crisis Prevention Intervention) de-escalation techniques:
 - a. Allow space (avoid crowding the individual in crisis)
 - b. Speak in a neutral tone of voice and remain calm
 - c. Give clear instructions: short, simple, and positive (tell the student what to do as opposed to what not to do)
 - d. Offer choices
 - e. Set limits (When/Then, First/Then)
 - f. Use visuals to limit verbal interaction
2. If response strategies are not effective, prevent the child from hurting self or other by:
 - a. Removing the other children, clear the room
 - b. Verbally redirecting the child to a quiet space in the room
 - c. Demonstrating and encouraging the child's use of calming/coping strategies
 - d. Blocking child aggressions or property destruction (without touching child)
3. Solicit assistance from another adult, "I need help immediately."
4. Seclusion and restraint should only be used in the event of a safety risk to the individual in crisis or others. This measure should only be taken if attempt at de-escalation has occurred and not worked. Meaning, there is a continued safety risk. If a continued safety risk is identified, only those certified in CPI should be responding to the individual in crisis.
5. After the child de-escalates, the coping model should be used to debrief both staff and the individual in crisis.
6. A Behavior Incident Report and any other required incident reports are completed.
7. Family is contacted by teacher and/or administrator and informed of the incident.
8. If an individualized support plan has not been developed and is needed, the process will be initiated. If a support plan is in place, it will be reviewed.

CPI COPING MODEL

Adapted from Nonviolent Physical Crisis Prevention Intervention

CONTROL

Check that everyone is back in physical and emotional control. Staff will assist the individual in regaining control.

ORIENT

What was the message behind the individual's behavior? As a staff member, take the opportunity to begin to understand what the person's precipitating factors might be.

PATTERNS

Is there a common thread that could be a precipitating factor? Has this happened before? Same day? Time of day? We will look at the ABC's: Antecedents, Behavior, Consequences and Setting Events to analyze patterns.

INVESTIGATE

Analyze ABC data and brainstorm any alternatives that can be used in the future so the situation does not repeat itself.

NEGOTIATE

The opportunity to agree on the plan for future interventions. Help the student develop and agree to the new coping strategy. Suggestions for conversations or considerations:

- Next time do you think you could come see me first to help you cool down?
- Let's pretend we are in that situation; what would you say next time?
- Think about how we can teach the individual the new strategy.
- Do we need other resources or people involved in order to proceed with this plan?

GIVE

Give each other support, trust, honesty, respect and encouragement. You made it through a stressful situation where decisions needed to be made quickly. Think about how we can continue to provide feedback to the individual as well as ongoing encouragement. Continue to monitor and collect data on the support plan.

More information on the Pyramid Model can be found on:

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html>

More information on the CPI can be found on: <https://www.crisisprevention.com/What-We-Do/Nonviolent-Crisis-Intervention>