

## **Preschool Philosophy**

Social, emotional and cognitive growth is promoted through play. Parents are the child's first and most important teachers, and staff will involve them in all aspects of their child's education. The focus on the classroom is to facilitate each child's development in a stimulating, but ordered environment where they make choices and act on them. Our preschool targets both the typical and non-typical learners. This inclusive model provides for the development of friendship and social interaction and an opportunity to understand and accept human differences.

Our preschool is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

**Web Site:** Please look for other PreK Information on our web site. Type in [www.scotlandschool.org](http://www.scotlandschool.org) and scroll down to "Staff Home Pages" and then onto "PreK."

### **Objectives**

- Utilize play activity for its value as an appropriate means of learning
- Reinforce and utilize the child's prior knowledge to learn new skills and concepts
- Provide a setting characterized by warmth, personal respect, positive support, responsiveness and cooperation
- Develop language and communication skills through experimental activities
- Assess children's strengths, needs, and progress continuously through observation and data collection
- Create an environment where teachers work collaboratively with each other to meet the individual needs of children

### **Curriculum**

- The classroom curriculum is developed to reflect the standards set forth by the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework in the areas of: Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies (to include "character education"). We use the PreK Harcourt Health and Fitness Curriculum and the Zaner-Bloser style of writing. We also use the Scott Foresman Reading Street PreK curriculum. Content is designed to achieve long-range goals for children in all areas: social, emotional, cognitive and physical and to prepare children to function as cooperative members of the school community.
- Addresses a broad range of content that is relevant, engaging and meaningful to children
- Content reflects and is generated by the needs and interests of the individual children within the group. Curriculum incorporates a variety of learning experiences, materials, equipment and instructional strategies to accommodate the broad range of children's individual differences.
- Builds upon children's unique experiences, learning styles and strengths to foster the acquisition of new skills and concepts
- Engages children actively in the learning process and gives them opportunities to make meaningful choices
- Emphasizes the value of social interaction to learning in all areas and provides opportunities to learn from peers
- Is supportive of children's physiological needs for activity, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest, hygiene and nourishment
- Is flexible so teachers will adapt to individual children or groups

## Preschool Assessments

- Assessments are an important part of preschool.
- Beginning at our preschool screening, even before a child is enrolled in school, I receive information verbally from the parents and from the DIAL 3 Parent Questionnaire (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning). I also send the parents a questionnaire that I created. On this form I ask parents to give me information such as the child's interests, any concerns they have, etc. I also call parents before the school year begins to find out further information about the child. At that time they are able to ask questions about the program as well. Sometimes parents will have concerns that are addressed. (i.e., a parent will have a child who is very shy and would like to visit our classroom several times before school officially begins to help the child with transitioning!).
- Once school begins, I assess the preschool children on a regular basis. I use a variety of assessment tools, such as: checklists, conversations with the children, observations, anecdotal notes, photographs, samples of children's work, and information from classroom aides and other preschool staff (i.e. gym teacher). I also gain insightful information from parents. Each child has a portfolio with his/her assessments that are kept in a locked file drawer in the preschool classroom for confidentiality.
- The purpose for assessing children is to get to know each child *individually*. I use the assessments to *purposefully* plan the curriculum – that is, plan the teaching strategies, materials, and methods that I use in the classroom. Intentional teaching is an on-going process (for further information regarding “intentional teaching,” please see, “The Connecticut Framework – State of Connecticut State Board of Education”).
- Twice a year we have formal **parent-teacher conferences** (more conferences as needed by parents and/or teacher). At conferences, the parents share with me their observations/comments about their child, and I share with the parents what the child has mastered, areas that are challenging to the child, and other child-related information. **Report cards** are sent home in January and June.

## Classroom Areas

**Parent Resources:** Includes a variety of books, pamphlets and brochures on the topics of parenting, child development, and educational activities that are beneficial to children. Books on parenting may be signed out for two weeks at a time.

**Science Center:** The materials in this center include plants, scales, magnifying glasses, rulers, a large functional thermometer, magnets, science books, a variety of objects found in nature (i.e. pinecones, bird's nests, seashells, live insects) and numerous other materials that change throughout the school year.

**Reading Center:** Equipped with a comfortable reading area and a very large selection of books, children who like looking through books and/or need a place to be peaceful will often seek out this corner. We also have magazines and many word sets on metal rings for the children to read (e.g. the children's names, days of the week, sight words, and months of the year).

**Reading Loft:** A variety of books are provided. We also have a flannel board and flannel sets for children to tell and retell stories that have been read to them. Children also use the flannel sets to create their own stories. We have a variety of these sets that are rotated throughout the year. A CD player is available for children to listen to books and follow along with the corresponding books.

**House Center, Puppet Theater, Barn, and Dollhouse:** Provides opportunities for make-believe and role-play. Pretending to be people in situations they have experienced helps give children a sense of the adult world. It gives them opportunities to work together, express their feelings and ideas and use

language to communicate their roles and respond to other's needs and requests. The House Center is fully stocked with play items such as a stove, sink, cupboard, refrigerator and other kitchen equipment, dress-up clothes (including multicultural clothing), multicultural dolls, recipe books, multicultural dishes, doctor's play equipment (with a functional stethoscope), functional doll-sized wheelchair, and hats. Our puppet theater changes periodically (i.e. to a grocery store).

**Instruments (including multicultural instruments from around the world):** We have a wonderful collection of instruments such as a xylophone, triangle, and many multicultural instruments as well, such as a Japanese Den Den, Mexican Guiro, Chinese Gong, Ghanaian Woven Rattles, Chilean Rainsticks, Asian Frog Rasp, and Peruvian Gourd Maracas. Most of the instruments are placed in a large Bolga basket woven by indigenous people in Northern Ghana called Bolgatanga.

**Art Center:** Exploring and using art materials allows preschool children to express original ideas, improve their coordination, develop small muscle skills, learn to recognize colors, shape designs and textures. Some materials included in this area: a variety of paint, collage materials, scissors, all types of paper and writing instruments, fabrics, yarn, clay, small items/materials such as buttons and glitter, glue, play dough with corresponding materials, an easel, stencils and recycled material that is contributed by children, parents and staff.

**Writing Center:** Allows children to investigate early forms of writing, book making, and drawing. Materials include a variety of paper, envelopes, pre-made blank books, dry/erase boards, chalkboards/chalk, pencils, crayons, markers, rulers, a variety of stickers, alphabet charts, and metal rings with the names of our preK students (for the children to copy when writing each other letters!).

**Math Center:** Exploring activities through manipulatives lay the groundwork for abstract concepts such as comparing, classifying, ordering, and sorting. Some materials/activities included in this learning center: unifix cubes, pattern blocks with activity cards, colored cubes, stringing beads, puzzles, geoboards, ordering boards, and a variety of other sorting materials and manipulatives.

**Texture Center:** Provides opportunities to explore the principals of math and science first-hand. By sifting sand and scooping water, children improve their physical dexterity. They develop social skills by joining others in making objects, such as a sandcastle. As they test various items in a tub of water, they learn scientifically which objects float or sink. Materials in this table periodically change; for example, when involved in a unit on birds, the table is filled with birdseed. Some objects included in this area: measuring cups/spoons, containers of varying sizes, letter, shape and number molds, sifters, water pumps, basters, small vehicles, and sink and float objects.

**Block Center:** Some items included in this area that are rotated: large wooden blocks, train sets, Bristle Blocks, plastic gears, tiles that are magnetic, Legos (including multicultural Lego people), small vehicles, signs, buildings, construction hats, and construction books.

**Computers:** We have computers in the classroom with educational software that is rotated. Also, children enjoy the computer lab at least once a week.

## General Information

**Services:** The following on-site services are provided to children who are identified with special needs (as stated by their individual P.P.T.): O.T. services (occupational therapy), P.T. services (physical therapy), and Speech and Language services. We also have a school psychologist.

**Snacks:** A time for snack is set aside each day. You will be given a list of the snacks every week in our preK newsletter. The school, through a Readiness Grant provides a daily nutritious snack for the children such as fruit, cheese, or fresh vegetables. Students have a choice of 1% low fat white milk or 100% juice. If you choose to have your child bring his/her own snack, we encourage you to give him/her a healthy snack. Scotland Elementary School participates in the National School Lunch Program.

Periodically a parent will bring in a snack to share with the classroom for a special occasion (i.e. their child's birthday). NAEYC Standard 5.B.02 states, "Staff take steps to ensure the safety of food brought from homes-food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or **commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.**" Food from home that does not comply with this standard will not be accepted. We want to ensure families that the safety of their children is one of our top priorities.

Our **refrigerator** is available for food storage that requires refrigeration. All items must be clearly marked with child's name.

A child with a disability who has **special dietary needs** will have a record kept by the nurse. A copy will be available to parents on request.

**Staffing:** The preschool is staffed with a Connecticut certified Early Childhood/Special Education teacher who holds a Master of Science degree in Early Childhood Education. The preschool is also staffed with instructional assistants. Their primary goals are to provide your child with a nurturing, stimulating program within a safe environment. Because of the unique nature of the program, the staff to student ratio is 1:8, which allows each child to receive individual attention. All preschool staff attends professional development workshops/seminars throughout the school year.

**Enrollment:** The preschool program serves all children from three to five years old to include children that are not toilet trained. Children may be enrolled in the five-day a.m. part-time session or the five-day full day session.

If a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) has identified your child as having special needs and determined that preschool is the appropriate program, placement is decided at a PPT meeting. The decision will be based upon your child's special needs. Services include speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and counseling. All services are provided by Scotland Elementary School staff on-site.

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. SES will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources.

**Schedule:** Our preschool program offers morning or all day sessions. Each child must be accompanied into the preschool room by a parent/guardian or authorized adult. Be certain a staff member knows of your child's arrival. The morning sessions are from **8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.** and the full day sessions are from 8:30 to 3:00. We have lunch from 11:45-12:15. The Readiness Grant has allowed us to offer early drop off and late pick-up. Students enrolled in the morning or all day sessions may be dropped off as early as 8:00. Students enrolled in the full day sessions may be picked-up as late as 3:30. The preschool follows the Scotland Public School calendar including vacations, early dismissals and in-service days. School will begin promptly at 8:30. If there is an unusual circumstance in which you must arrive late, be certain **you let the nurse know so your child will not be marked absent**. To ensure that your child's belongings stay together, be sure to label all clothing.

**A time for nap:** Please let us know if you would like to have your child take a nap which is from 12:25 – 1:25. Each child has his/her own mat that we provide (names are clearly marked). The lights are turned off (some natural light still comes in through the windows) and the children are able to rest quietly. Children are able to bring in a small blanket and a small stuffed animal if desired. Children are spaced at least 6 feet apart.

**Transportation:** Bus transportation is provided for preschoolers. Busses will be available to bring students to school for the 8:30 start time. Transportation will also be provided at 3:00 p.m. Transportation is not available for a midday run for students in the half-day program. Students are expected to: remain in designated seats toward the front of the bus, listen to the driver, and talk quietly and politely. Bus drivers will not release your child off the bus until they see you or a designated adult. If no adult is present, your child will be returned to school to await pickup. Please be courteous to other parents by making every effort to have your child ready for the bus on time in the morning, and waiting on time to meet your child in the afternoon. Preschoolers are required to be buckled in. An adult must be present to enter the bus to fasten and unfasten the buckle.

**Inclement Weather or other Emergency Closings:** If Scotland Elementary School is closed, opened late or dismissed early because of inclement weather or other emergencies, the radio/television stations will be notified and announcements made by these stations. The superintendent initiates school closings and late openings.

**Please see the SES student handbook for current channel & station listings.**

**Scheduled Early Release Days:** Please check your Scotland Elementary School calendar for scheduled early release days. Students may be dropped off as early as 8:00, but there is no extension offered in the afternoon. Children who normally stay all day will be dismissed at 1:00.

**Parking & Entrance:** Parents bringing their child to school may park in the designated "preschool parking" in front of the preK/kindergarten classrooms.

**Backpack** - Be sure your child's backpack is **large enough** to accommodate items such as a 9 ½" x 12" take-home/communication folder, winter clothing such as hat and mittens, take-home papers, small projects, and a lunchbox, (if needed).

**Departure:** The preschool session ends promptly at 11:30 and 3:00. The children will then be escorted to the side doors near the preschool room where the parents will sign them out. Students staying after

3:00 (but before 3:30) will wait in the preschool classroom. Parents should park their vehicle at the front entrance and enter the building through the main office.

**'Emergency Information' Card:** Parents/Guardians will usually drop off/pick up their child. In the case of an emergency or unpredictable circumstance, one of the three individuals designated on this form will be allowed to pick up your child. The office staff or preschool staff **MUST** receive a phone call or note which includes the name of the person to whom you are allowing us to release your child. If the staff is unfamiliar with the designated person, they will require the person to show their **drivers license**. Individuals authorized to drop off/pick up your child **MUST** be at least 18 years old and will be responsible for your child once they sign the child out.

**Pre-admission Paperwork:** Prior to admission, the following forms must be completed: the Health Assessment Record, a Scotland Preschool Registration Form, an optional ethnicity survey, a computer use form, an internet use form, and a "Tuition Agreement" Form.

**Updating Information:** Forms must be updated each August. Please inform the staff if there are any changes during the course of the school year. Please notify staff if a family event has occurred that may affect your child's behavior.

**Dress:** Your child will be involved in many hands-on activities. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes and rubber soled shoes or sneakers. Proper attire will help ensure the safety and comfort of the children. Outdoor play is very important to children. Please be sure to dress your child appropriately for the weather and season. If your child's clothing becomes wet (spilt milk for example) he/she will change in our bathroom. Please send in an extra set of clothing at the beginning of the school year. This will be kept in your child's cubby. If your child does not have any extra clothing, he/she will be brought to the nurse for clean clothing. (She only has a very limited supply of clothing. Please wash, dry and return the borrowed clothing to the nurse as soon as possible.)

On **gym days** children must wear sneakers. Your child should also wear loose clothing such as sweat pants and a t-shirt/sweatshirt.

**Behavior/Discipline Philosophy:** The entire staff uses positive methods of discipline, which encourage self-control, decision -making, cooperation and positive self-esteem. A child will never, under any circumstances, be physically punished, humiliated or threatened. If a child misbehaves, a staff member will always take the child aside to speak to him/her about the incident. A child may be asked to choose a different activity or a staff member may redirect him/her to another area. Time-out is used as a last resort when all other strategies have been exhausted. Time-out involves having a child sit in a chair away from the group to regain self-control. A staff member will then talk to the child about the incident and offer a positive alternative behavior.

**Communication and Involvement:** A primary goal of the Scotland Preschool Program is to maintain close communication between home and school. A preschool picnic is scheduled for late August from 11:00 to 12:00 to introduce the preschool staff - a small lunch will be provided by the P.T.O. (Exact date TBD.) An Open House is scheduled in the fall to introduce parents/guardians to the program and facility. The classroom teacher maintains contact with parents through weekly newsletters, memos, personal notes and phone/in-person conversations. A take-home/communication folder is sent home daily with information regarding curriculum, school news, and valuable parenting tips. This folder enables families to communicate regularly with the classroom teacher. Please put all communication in this folder, lunch/milk money, lunch form slips, tuition payments, etc. (we check every folder, but we do

not check the child's backpack).

Parents and community members are encouraged to contact the school regarding serving on our Indoor Air Quality Team, Superintendent Committee/Superintendent Action Team, School Readiness Council, and safety committee to develop decision-making policies. This includes development of the wellness policy and school parent compact.

**Open-Door Policy** - Please feel free to visit the program to observe or interact with your child at any time. We have an "open-door" policy. We actively seek parent participation. Parent volunteers are welcome in the classroom on a daily basis, as well as for special events. The entire staff truly seeks to form a partnership with you to provide the highest quality education for your child.

**Family Literacy:** The Scotland School Preschool program encourages the development of literacy through interactive activities in families. Many opportunities are provided to assist families in engaging in literacy activities with their young children. The following is a list of sample activities: sharing books at home, family story share, & Family Literacy Nights, Governors Reading Challenge, and RIF (Reading is Fundamental) book distribution (twice a year.)

Library services are available at the Scotland Public Library. Families are encouraged to attend. Adult Education programs are available through EASTCONN, 860-455-0707.

**Forms:** Prior to entry, you and your physician MUST complete the Health Assessment Record on form ED191. The school nurse prior to attendance will review it. Two Emergency Cards MUST be filled out and updated each August (one for the office, the other for the nurse's office).

**Status:** The school nurse and staff must be alerted about any child who has a medical condition which may require immediate attention or the administration of emergency medication. Conditions would include food or insect sting allergies.

**Services:** A school nurse is available to provide services to children enrolled in the preschool. He/She is responsible for completing annual hearing, vision and dental screenings and contacting parents if a child becomes ill at school. The school nurse serves as a consultant to the staff regarding medical concerns. The school nurse and school counselor will assist families to obtain medical insurance, a medical home practice, on-going well child care, immunizations, and health, dental and nutritional screenings as needed. Please speak with the school nurse or counselor if you would like assistance.

**Illness:** If your child has any communicable illnesses (e.g. virus, cold with fever or excessive coughing, strep throat or chicken pox) she/he must remain home until she/he is no longer contagious. Please notify us if any childhood diseases (e.g.. chicken pox) are going through your household, so that we and other parents can watch for symptoms in others. Equally important, many of these common diseases are potentially dangerous to pregnant women (i.e. measles, fifth disease). Kindly make us aware so that we can take the necessary precautions to protect our staff and volunteers.

Any child with a suspected contagious illness will require early dismissal. Signs of contagious illness include a fever of 100 degrees or greater, more than one episode of diarrhea or loose stool, reddened tonsils, runny nose with greenish/yellowish mucus, congestion with barking cough, nausea/vomiting, unknown rash and reddened eyes. Please see the Scotland Elementary School Student Handbook.

Generally, a child with a fever of 100 or greater, diarrhea and/or vomiting will not be allowed to attend preschool for 24 hours, unless a physician note permits attendance. Upon returning to the program, your child needs to be free of signs and symptoms of contagious illness.

If your child will not be attending the preschool on a given day, due to an illness, medical appointment, or any other reason, please call the office (423-0064) who will then notify the preschool staff.

If your child becomes ill at school, the school nurse will notify you at home or work. If she/he cannot reach you, she/he will contact the individuals listed on the emergency card.

### **Program Evaluation**

The Scotland Preschool Program needs your feedback to improve and evaluate our program. The staff is committed to continually improving and modifying the program to better meet the needs of our students and their families. Also, toward the end of the school year a survey will be given to obtain feedback regarding our program.

The preschool staff believes that parent input is a valuable part of our program assessment. Parents are encouraged to address concerns or share ideas with the teacher at any time.

Parents should bring any problems or concerns to the attention of their child's teacher. If the parents are unable to resolve the issue with the classroom teacher, they should contact Dr. Paul Blackstone, Scotland Elementary School Superintendent.

### **Transitioning your Child**

The staff is committed to having each child experience a positive transition in and out of the program. If this is your child's first formal preschool experience, and if it is your desire, the staff will communicate with you regularly to ensure a successful beginning. If your child has been enrolled in another preschool, the staff is willing to work cooperatively with previous teachers to make the transition a smooth one. When your child exits our program, the staff will assist you in preparing your child to attend kindergarten or another program. Children who will attend kindergarten in the fall will be given several opportunities for a smoother transition into kindergarten. For example, we will visit the kindergarten classroom for a tour while Mrs. Brisson (the kindergarten teacher) informs the children of what to expect in kindergarten! On another day Mrs. Brisson will read the children a story in the kindergarten classroom. It is our hope that your child will become familiar with our kindergarten teacher and the transition into kindergarten will be smooth! As part of the transition plan the school readiness staff and the kindergarten staff have the option of meeting throughout the year for collaboration and Professional Development Training. At the end of preschool all older students and records will be transferred to kindergarten.

### **Professional Development Plan & Experiences**

Scotland Preschool strives to maintain all recommended professional development requirements as outlined by NAEYC, School Readiness and the CT State Statute to ensure the highest program quality.

- Each staff member has a written professional development plan that outlines professional goals toward increasing their knowledge and expertise in early childhood practice
- Each staff member participates in early-literacy skill development training, and cultural and linguistic diversity training for early childhood classrooms within their first year of employment.
- Each staff member engages in professional development experiences each year that increases their awareness, knowledge, and practice of recognition and response to children's needs. (i.e.,

planning, observing, adaptive strategies, use of screening and assessment, special education strategies).

- Each year all staff members attend at least two early childhood-related professional development experiences that will advance their practice.

### **Fees**

Scotland Elementary School uses the current School Readiness sliding fee schedule provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education and Department of Social Services (DSS). Additional tuition assistance may be available through the Child Care Assistance Program (Care-4-Kids.) The school readiness coordinator is available to assist families with completing the application. Scholarships or tuition assistance are available; see the superintendent to apply.

The Scotland Board of Education, in conjunction with the School Readiness Council, sets the maximum per day fee amount. The maximum per ½ day is \$10 and school day is \$20. Scotland Elementary School determines fees in the summer (or upon enrollment) and is required to re-determine fees in January. After submitting the required income information, a summary of your daily, monthly and yearly tuition costs will be sent home. You will receive two copies of the tuition agreement, please sign one and return to the school. The other is for your records. If you have further questions about how your fee is calculated please call, 423-0064

### **Supervision of Children**

Teaching staff supervises preschool children primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as the teachers/staff check frequently on children who are out of sight. (For example, in the classroom bathroom.)

### **Confidentiality Statement**

Student information as defined herein must be protected from unethical, illegal and inappropriate disclosure through universal adherence to the principals of confidentiality and privacy by all employees and volunteers of education agencies in the State of Connecticut. Confidential information, unless otherwise defined, is information the disclosure of which would, or would likely to, constitute an invasion of personal privacy. Accordingly, confidential information concerning a student or student's family must be protected by all personnel in public school districts, approved private programs for special education and Birth to Three, Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs), Regional Family Service Coordination Centers (RFSCCs) and the Department of Education. Confidential student information must be protected regardless of how or where the information is obtained, that is, whether it is obtained through oral, printed or electronic means, on or beyond school or agency grounds, and regardless of what type of record, record-keeping, or method of record-storage is used. The requirements of confidentiality apply to all student information including, but not limited to, academic, family, social, economic, and health information, and to information, which is provided orally or electronically, and not solely information contained in "school records."

Updated 5/2/11