

Ledyard Public Schools
Students That Are Ready for School
School Readiness Preschool Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Located in the

Gallup Hill School
169 Gallup Hill Road
Ledyard, CT 06339
(860) 536-9477

Funded by the State of Connecticut School Readiness Grant

Revised 1/2014

Welcome to Ledyard Public Schools Students That Are Ready for School School Readiness Preschool

Serving children from the Ledyard and Gales Ferry community ages 3 through 5

Program

The Ledyard Public Schools STARS School Readiness Preschool program is a state funded initiative to provide children of the community with early educational experiences promoting school readiness. The program utilizes both the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Frameworks and the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework to align curriculum, monitor progress and assess whether curriculum goals and teaching strategies are appropriately educating all students. Therefore, the program is both well balanced and developmentally appropriate.

The Preschool programs at Gallup Hill School are licensed-exempt. The program is in voluntary compliance with the state's childcare licensing requirements. A copy of these requirements can be found at www.ct.gov/dph or are available upon request. The program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Each NAEYC accredited program must meet 10 Standards of quality. For more information about the Standards and NAEYC Accreditation, visit <http://families.naeyc.org>

Philosophy

The staff recognizes that all children learn at their own pace and style. Learning experiences created are purposeful and connected to encourage individual growth and learning. The STARS Preschool program seeks to strengthen and support the relationship between home and school by creating an educational partnership. The staff collaborates with one another to provide a full circle of support. Teachers collaborate and inform families about their child's experiences in their educational environment during the school day and encourage parents to share relevant information about activities in the child's home environment. The family plays a vital role in early childhood education; therefore, family involvement is embraced and encouraged.

Focus of Instruction

The Ledyard Public Schools School Readiness STARS Preschool is dedicated to helping children develop to their fullest potential. The program implements curriculum and designs assessments based on the early learning standards outlined in the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework and the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework. In addition, best practices as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) are considered when planning instruction.

Domains of Development

- **Physical**
- **Cognitive**
- **Creative Expression/Aesthetic**
- **Social/Emotional**

Program Goals:

- To facilitate cognitive and language development through play and a variety of active learning experiences
- To promote physical development including large and small muscle skills
- To encourage creative expression through art, sensory experiences, music and movement And pretend play.
- To develop positive self-esteem and appropriate social skills
- To encourage increased independence and appropriate self-help skills
- To promote an appreciation of the diversity and uniqueness of peers
- To encourage expression of feelings and respond appropriately to those feelings
- To promote positive health, safety and nutritional practices
- To support families and provide information to them through on-going home/school Communication

Admission Requirements

Our program is committed to serving families in the Ledyard community without regard to race, creed, color or national origin. Children of Ledyard and Gales Ferry **residents** age 3-5 are eligible to apply. Children must be 3 by the first day of the start of school in order to be eligible for an application. Children are selected to participate based on the availability of slots. The school has a capacity to serve 36 children (18 in STARS I and 18 in STARS II). Applications are selected through a lottery process that is conducted by LEARN.

INCOME VERIFICATION

Should your child's application be selected you will be notified and asked to provide evidence of the income listed on your application. Two forms of evidence are required (i.e. pay stubs, W-2 forms). Income verification occurs twice a year, once at the registration process and again in January.

TUITION FEE

The Ledyard Public Schools School Readiness STARS Preschool program is partially funded by the State of Connecticut School Readiness Grant. However, parents are required to pay a tuition fee. Tuition is established based on income guidelines. The Program utilizes the current Department of Social Services School Readiness sliding scale fee to calculate the tuition fee. Parents are required to sign the Commitment Form and return it prior to the start of school. Tuition is collected at the beginning of each week. Accounts that are delinquent more than two weeks could result in termination from the program. Tuition is based on a five day school week, regardless of absences (excused or unexcused) and shortened days.

REGISTRATION

Students are required to register through Ledyard Public Schools. Registration packets include a pupil registration form, physical/immunization health record, copy of birth certificate, proof of residency, commitment form and family survey form are all required prior to the start of school.

Hours of Operation

The Ledyard STARS Preschool will operate Monday through Friday, 8:45am to 2:45pm.

The program follows the Ledyard Public Schools calendar. Please refer to the calendar included at the end of this handbook for school closings and short sessions. On scheduled short sessions/half days the program will operate 8:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

In the event of a school cancellation or delayed opening due to weather conditions, information will be broadcast on local radio and television stations. In the case of a delayed opening, our program will begin at 10:15am. For further information, please refer to the Ledyard Public Schools Handbook.

In the event of an emergency school closing while the children are present, every effort will be made to contact you personally. If you cannot be reached, the persons listed on your emergency card will be contacted to pick up your child.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Transportation is **not provided** to the STARS preschool program.

Drop Off:

Families must park in the large parking lot and escort their child into the preschool classroom via the main entryway of Gallup Hill School. Any arrivals after 9:00 a.m. must be made through the main entryway of the school and families **must stop in the office to sign in for a visitor pass.**

Pick Up:

Dismissal begins at 2:30 p.m. Families must park in the large parking lot and enter the school via the main entryway of Gallup Hill School. Children must be picked up by 2:45 p.m.

Children must be signed in and out by a person authorized on your child's emergency card. We will only release children to those people listed on the card. Please let those on your authorized list know that a picture ID will need to be shown. Please contact the preschool if any changes need to be made to the authorized pick up list.

If a person appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, it is at the discretion of the staff person in charge as to whether that person is capable of safely caring for the child. In the event that person suspected to be under the influence becomes abusive or refuses assistance, proper authorities will be contacted.

Attendance and Absences

The learning experiences that occur in the early childhood classroom are meaningful components of your child's growth and development. Consistent attendance in our program is essential to helping your child develop to their fullest potential. By enrolling your child in the Ledyard STARS Preschool, you are committing to our full school day schedule: 8:45am to 2:45pm, Monday through Friday. To ensure accurate attendance, each child must be signed in and out on a daily basis.

If your child will not be attending school on a given day due to illness or any other reason, please call the Gallup Hill School office at 860-536-9477. Please call the office **every** day that your child will not be attending school. **Extended absences without contact may lead to withdrawal from the program.**

Health Care Policies

The school nurse provides services to children in the Ledyard STARS Preschool program. In addition to reviewing the Health Assessment Record, the school nurse will also complete annual vision and hearing screens. The school nurse serves as a consult to the staff regarding medical concerns.

The school nurse and preschool staff must be alerted about any child with a medical condition which may require immediate attention or emergency medication (i.e. asthma, food, or insect sting allergies).

Ledyard Public Schools policy states that children may be excluded from school for any of the following communicable illnesses: **excessive coughing, excessive nasal discharge, fever of 100 degrees or higher, pink eye, strep throat, chicken pox**, or if an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children. **Children may return to school 24 hours after symptoms have cleared.** For absences in excess of 3 days due to illness, the school nurse must see a child before returning to class.

If your child requires any prescription or non-prescription medication to be administered during the school day, your physician must complete an **"Authorization for Administration of Medication"** form, available through the school nurse. **All medications will be administered in the nurse's office.**

If your child becomes ill at school, the school nurse will contact you at home or work. If you cannot be reached, an individual listed on the emergency card will be contacted. **For specific questions, please contact the school nurse directly at 860-536-8029.**

Behavioral Management

The Ledyard STARS Preschool upholds the anti-bias discipline policy stated in the Ledyard Public Schools Handbook. Many inappropriate behaviors exhibited by young children can be typical. We attempt to minimize the incidence of these behaviors and guide children toward more acceptable behaviors through discipline. Discipline seeks to achieve several goals: to find a solution to the current problem, to help the child process feelings, recognize consequences, explore alternative solutions and outcomes and to develop self-control, ultimately promoting respect for each other and mutual rights.

To accomplish the goals we:

- Involve the children in discussions relating to the setting of simple rules
- Provide a balance of developmentally appropriate quiet and active periods
- Model appropriate language, verbalize situations and identify feelings
- Positively redirect the children's activity if necessary
- Promote acceptable and cooperative behavior efforts through liberal praise
- Consult with parents to access behavior patterns, find solutions and behavior strategies

Our aim is to assist the children's move toward gaining success in self-discipline by providing them with language skills, support, guidance, and model techniques. To develop self-discipline children need to be offered choices and opportunities to make decisions, knowing what the logical consequences will be.

**At no point will a staff verbally or physically punish or deny food to a child.
Children will never be left alone.**

Ledyard Public School policy states that all staff members are mandated to report to the Department of Children and Families any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect.

Special Education Policies

Ledyard Public School policy states that all students are entitled to equal education opportunities. Discrimination because of race, color, religious creed, national origin is prohibited. An intensive affirmative action program is an integral part of educational policies and programs.

Ledyard Public Schools has a child identification process that includes the location, identification and evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability or suspected of being gifted and talented. The Special Education Department coordinates the child identification process. The department and its staff use a variety of community resources and conduct many systematic activities in our efforts to identify children requiring special services.

Early Childhood screenings for children 3-5 years of age are conducted throughout the year. To initiate this screening process, parents and other referring parties contact the Director of Special Services at 860-464-9255.

Through this process, children who may require special education services are referred to the Planning and Placement Team for consideration for further evaluation. Parents and other referring parties may also contact the Director of Special Services at 860-464-9255 to refer a child to a PPT.

Confidentiality

Ledyard Public School Policy states that Educational records will be kept for each student. The STARS Preschool staff recognizes the legal requirements to maintain the confidentiality of educational records in accordance with state and federal law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Safeguards are established by the school administration to protect the student and the student's family from invasion of privacy in the collection, maintenance and dissemination of information.

Community Collaboration

The Ledyard STARS Preschool and the Ledyard School Readiness Council collaborates with many community agencies including: Department of Social Services, Mental Health, Public Health, Recreation Department, Public Library, Adult Education, Employment and Training Centers.

Our Learning Environment

Our active learning environment is designed with each individual child in mind. Our classroom is divided into several interest areas: ABC literacy blocks, dramatic play, art, table toys, library, sand and water, woodworking, writing, math, discovery/science. These centers offer multiple opportunities for children to explore, discover, learn and grow.

A daily routine is established to create a sense of predictability and order. Opportunities for play that are both teacher and child directed, large and small group, quiet and active, indoor and outdoor with ample transition times are provided to create an ideal preschool learning environment.

Our daily schedule will be as follows:

8:45-9:00 Sign In Arrival/Exploration and Discovery

9:00-9:25 Morning Meeting/Read Aloud/Thematic Unit

9:25-10:20 Literacy and Fine Motor Lessons

10:20-11:30 Learning Centers/Snack

11:30-11:50 Group Activity/Music and Movement

11:50-12:20 Math Lessons

12:20-12:40 Wash Hands/Lunch/Brush Teeth

12:40-1:30 Outdoor Play

1:30-2:15 Rest Time

2:15-2:30 Quiet Work Time/Afternoon Snack/Small Group Work

2:30-2:45 Dismissal/Sign Out

Snacks and Lunch

We are committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and proper nutrition is essential for young children's growth and development. We will provide a healthy mid-morning and afternoon snack for all of the children. A snack menu will be posted in the classroom.

Parents have the choice to participate in the Ledyard Public Schools lunch program for a fee or to provide your child with a nutritious lunch each day.

Please do not send high sugar foods such as soda, candy, cookies, or gummy snacks with your child's lunch.

Milk is available every day at lunchtime for a fee. Should you choose to apply for free and reduced milk, please complete the application form (Children's Nutrition Programs' application) enclosed in your registration packet.

After lunch, the children brush their teeth as they prepare for their upcoming rest period. Individual toothbrushes and toothpaste are provided.

Rest/Quiet Time

Rest time is a quiet, calm period allowing the children an opportunity to relax and regroup after an active morning. Blankets and cots are provided for the children.

Clothes

The children are encouraged to freely explore, create and experience learning through a variety of activities. Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes and safe non-skid shoes. Although smocks are provided, clothes do get wet and a bit messy with glue, play dough and paint! Please check your child's bin for a complete set (shirt, pants, socks, underwear) of extra clothing. Outdoor play is an integral part of our curriculum. Please see that your child is dressed properly for the weather or season. **Please remember to write your child's name in all of his/her belongings/clothing.**

Toileting

The preschool staff is committed to work with families in every aspect of their child's development process. We recognize that some children are coming to us not yet potty trained. Please provide additional clothes, shoes, and undergarments to help facilitate the potty training process. Teachers will work collaboratively with the family to establish a routine that works both at home and school. Please let your child's teacher know about any concerns you might have regarding the potty training process.

Sharing/Items from Home

A share time is incorporated into the literacy curriculum. Your child will have an opportunity to "share" items from home as they relate to our current classroom themes or the letter of the week. Our preschool is equipped with a wide variety of appropriate toys and materials; we therefore, request that playthings from home be brought to school only on these "sharing" days. This will also prevent special items from becoming lost or broken.

Birthdays

A child's birthday is a special event and birthday celebrations are welcome in our program. Please let the teacher know if you would like to send in a small treat for your child to share during snack. As stated in the Ledyard Public Schools Handbook, party invitations are not to be distributed in the classroom.

Children, Families and the Ledyard STARS Preschool

Family involvement is necessary to the success of the Ledyard STARS Preschool program. Family members are always welcome and volunteers are needed in a variety of ways within our classroom. We encourage families to volunteer any time and talent they may have. The teacher will share news about your child's day and will also communicate through a family bulletin board, daily information board, newsletters and posted curriculum plans. Conferences will be held in the late fall and spring to review your child's progress.

We are partners!

Together we will foster your child's lifelong love of learning and help them reach for the stars!

If you have any questions or need any further information, do not hesitate to contact the Ledyard STARS Preschool program at 860-536-9477.