

Ledyard Public Schools

S.T.A.R.S Preschool

Students That Are Ready for School

School Readiness Preschool Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK



**Gallup Hill School
169 Gallup Hill Road
Ledyard, CT 06339
(860) 536-9477 Ext. 4101**

National Association of Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accredited
Partially Funded by the State of Connecticut School Readiness Grant

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Welcome to Ledyard Public Schools

PROGRAM

The Ledyard Public Schools (S.T.A.R.S) School Readiness Preschool program is a state funded initiative to provide children of the community ages 3-5 (who are not kindergarten eligible) with early educational experiences promoting school readiness. The program utilizes both the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) 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 are licensed-exempt. The program is in voluntary compliance with the state's child care 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 Ledyard Public Schools Early Childhood Program philosophy is that all children learn the best through active participation in a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences. We believe that all children are unique individuals who benefit from learning in an engaging, safe and consistent environment supported by a trained, caring and responsive staff. Children need a variety of experiences that include daily opportunities to participate in small and large group activities that encourage language, math, problem-solving, socialization, self-help skills and muscle development.

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 and inform families about their child's experiences in their educational environment during the school day. Parents are encouraged to share relevant information about activities in the child's home environment. The family plays a vital role in early childhood education; family involvement is embraced and encouraged.

The School Readiness Preschool has been accredited by the National Association for Young Children since February 2009. The largest association of early childhood educators recognizes our program as being committed to providing high-quality educational services to young children and their families.

FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

The School Readiness 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 Early Learning & Development Standards (CT ELDs) 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.

Benchmarks are based upon CT ELDs to measure success in student achievement. Teacher evaluation plans and individual teacher goals are created to assure effectiveness and quality of the program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff participate in ongoing professional development which positively affect the quality of the program. Professional development includes, but is not limited to early childhood and development, responsive classroom training, early literacy and early math training, first aid and CPR training. All teaching staff and paraprofessionals have access to training relevant to the circumstances of children they teach, such as, children from military families or migrant families; dual language learners; children who are homeless; require special education or have experienced trauma. An online training program, The Child Care Education Institute, is available to staff, to access topics related to the needs of the early childhood team as related to professional development.

Weekly team meetings provide opportunities to revisit topics of ethical concerns and practices, such as, appropriate student discipline, student safety, and curriculum support for student learning.

All early childhood teachers received extensive training in Video Self Monitoring (VSM) by Dr. Melissa Root. VSM is a form of observational learning in which individuals observe themselves performing a behavior successfully on a video, and then imitate the targeted behavior. All staff members are now certified in VSM and Dr. Root continues to be a resource to the program.

THE CONNECTICUT EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

Domains of Development

Cognition

Making sense of the world, staying with something and working hard to solve problems.

Social and Emotional Development

Understanding yourself, your feelings and how to play with other people.

Physical Development and Health

Learning to take care of yourself and to do things with your body and hands so that you grow strong and healthy.

Language and Literacy

Communicating using your body, language, signs and written communication.

Creative Arts

Enjoying music, dance, and art and expressing yourself in these ways.

Mathematics

Understanding numbers and how to use them, counting, patterns, measuring and

shapes.

Science

Understanding the world around us, including living things, the earth and space and energy.

Social Studies

Understanding the world and knowing about the people in it. This starts with knowing about your family, then the community and world.

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 movement and pretend play
- To develop positive self-esteem and appropriate social skills
- To encourage increased independence and appropriate self help skills
- To promote positive health, safety and nutritional practices
- To support families and provide information to them through on-going home/school communication

The CT ELDs are used for planning learning experiences, observing and documenting child progress and implementing teaching strategies. The curriculum aligns with the CT ELDs.

Preschool Curriculum Resources

World of Wonders (McGraw Hill) provides the support and structure that children need for learning, while building cross-curricula, establishing classroom routines and addressing the needs of all learners through differentiated instructional pathways.

This program builds strong foundational skills for success with a focus on:

- Letters, oral language development, knowledge building and listening comprehension
- Development of social/emotional skills
- Math content that is developmental and recursive
- Integration of science, social studies and music in every unit

Math Connects (Macmillan/McGraw Hill) is designed to provide a balanced approach to mathematics learning by offering opportunities to

- investigate concepts and build conceptual understanding
- review, learn and practice basic skills
- apply mathematics to problem solving situations

Handwriting Without Tears is a multisensory program which includes language development, social skills, fine and gross motor skills, color and shape awareness, letter and number recognition and counting.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Our program is committed to serving families in the Ledyard community without regard to race, creed, color or national origin. Children from all backgrounds and abilities are welcome in the preschool program. Children age 3-5 who are of Ledyard and Gales Ferry residents are eligible to apply to the STARS program.

Applications are selected through a lottery process that is conducted by LEARN, a regional educational agency, that supports the grant process.

The children who have reached kindergarten entry age are not eligible for STARS. 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 program has a capacity to serve 36 children with 18 in each STARS classroom. Both classrooms utilize the same curriculum and program.

Our policy is to have 18 students in the classroom with 1 certified teacher and 2 paraprofessionals who supervise the student activities and monitor learning and safety. Our recess is in an outside environment where there is a minimum of 2 paraprofessionals to 18 students.

For any STARS students who have a change in Ledyard residence during the school year, that student will be granted a grace period of up to 45 calendar days to remain in the Ledyard STARS preschool program if requested.

TUITION FEES

The Ledyard Public Schools School Readiness STARS Preschool program(STARS) is partially funded by the State of Connecticut School Readiness Grant. However, parents are required to pay a tuition fee that is determined based on income guidelines established by the CT Office of Early Childhood. If income circumstances change that will affect ability to pay tuition, a written letter must be submitted to the Early Childhood Coordinator. A new tuition fee will be determined and reviewed with the family based on substantiating documentation. Parents are required to sign the Commitment Form and return it prior to the start of school. The fee calculation worksheet is shared with families upon request. Tuition is collected in advance on Thursday for the following 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 and is not adjusted for absences or shortened days or weeks.

INCOME VERIFICATION

Documentation of gross household income must be submitted with the application. Income verification is required once a year at the beginning of each school year. The primary source of income verification is done using federal or state income tax returns unless they are unavailable.

FEE SCHEDULE

The Income Guidelines for School Readiness Grant Funded Programs are based on the State Median Income (SMI) levels published annually in the Federal Register. The Early Childhood Coordinator uses the current Office of Early Childhood (OEC) School Readiness sliding fee scale to determine a family's tuition rate.

- School Readiness programs can enroll families over 75% SMI. The ten percent calculation for income over 75% SMI is calculated for each family size and is noted in the row under the family size for each SMI range over 75%. The School Readiness Councils will NOT determine fees over 75% SMI. Programs will use the calculation provided, not to exceed their School Readiness published cost of care or the Child Day Care maximum rate.

- The Income Guidelines for School Readiness Grant Funded Programs and for Child Day Care Contractors are effective May 2019. Families must be notified 30 days in advance before changing the fee. Fee calculations are reviewed with the parents, which includes parent signature and parent receives a copy of the fee calculation form.
- OEC Guidelines and Per-Child Fee Schedules are listed as General Policy B-01. This fee schedule is available upon request or can be accessed at:
http://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/gp_b-01_june_2019combined_document.pdf.
 Effective June 1, 2019

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Ledyard STARS Preschool will operate Monday through Friday, 8:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

The program follows the Ledyard Public Schools calendar. Please refer to the Ledyard Public Schools calendar for scheduled school closings and shortened day sessions. On scheduled shortened/half day sessions the program will operate 8:45 a.m. - 12:45 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 and on the Ledyard Public Schools website, www.ledyard.net. In the case of a weather related delayed opening, our program will begin at 10:45 a.m. For further information, please refer to the Ledyard Public Schools handbook.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Transportation is not provided to the STARS preschool program

Drop Off:

Drop off procedures will be explained at the program Open House on the first day of school. Any arrivals after 9:00 a.m. must be made through the main entryway of the school.

Pick Up:

Dismissal begins at 2:35 p.m. Children must be picked up by 2:45 p.m. Pick up procedures will be explained at the program Open House on the first day of school. 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.

All children are required to be in an approved child restraint safety seat at pick up and drop off as mandated by law.

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 and expected in order to help 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: 8:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., 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 who have been vomiting, or have a fever, may not return to school until 24 hours after the last episode. Parents will be called when children have a fever, and may be sent home. For specific questions, you may contact the school nurse at 860-536-9477. **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 prescriptions or non-prescription medication to be administered during the school day, your physicians must complete an “**Authorization for Administration of Medication**” form, available through the school nurse. All medication will be administered and stored in a locked cabinet 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 Gallup Hill School 860-536-9477. Vision screening for preschoolers is conducted by the school health office. If there is a concern regarding hearing then the early childhood team encourages the parent to contact their child’s healthcare provider. Parents are provided information about dental care that is available through the United Community Services-Smiles on the Move.

The district social worker assists families in securing medical insurance and a medical home. The school nurse consults with the parents about well-child care immunizations, and health, dental and nutritional screenings.

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT

The School Readiness program (STARS) upholds the anti-basis discipline policy stated in the Ledyard Public Schools Handbook. Our ultimate goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures. 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 these 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.

The Board of Education policy regarding Seclusion and Restraint can be found here:

http://ledyard.ss7.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_111100/File/District/Board%20of%20Education/Policy%20Manual%2010.23/Students/51441.pdf. ***Our policies regarding the use of suspension, expulsion or other exclusionary measures are communicated to family and staff annually through the Policies -Regulations- Statutes Handbook, which can also be obtained by visiting www.ledyard.net News & Info -Parents-Handbooks.***

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

We are mandated by the State of Connecticut to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. We take this obligation seriously and may possibly question you about bumps, bruises, etc. that we may notice. We may document this and ask you to initial it. Your child's health and safety are the main concern for taking these steps. If any staff member or parent feels that a Ledyard Public Schools staff member is not acting in a proper manner regarding the health and safety of our children, please speak to the principal or program coordinator and the appropriate steps will be taken to remedy the situation. Any complaints will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. The Department of Children and Families hotline number is 1-800-842-2288.

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 School 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 or talented. The Student Services Department coordinates the child identification process. The department and its staff uses a variety of community resources and conducts 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 Student 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 evaluations. Parents and other referring parties may also contact the Director of Student Services at 860-464-9255 to refer a child to a PPT.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT PLANS

Universal Screening

The Office of Early Childhood recommends the Early Childhood Program conducts preschool screenings monthly as part of federal and state Child Find guidelines. Screenings to help determine if a child has delays that may require further evaluation. Free screenings are available for children ages 3 and 4 (not Kindergarten eligible) who live in Ledyard or Gales Ferry.

In addition, families who would like their child to be considered for the peer model program need to bring their child to screening. Families call in to the early childhood office to schedule an appointment. Screening takes about an hour, and staff assess a child's Developmental Skills, Speech & Language Skills, Hearing, and Vision. Parents are asked to complete questionnaires that provide the team with information regarding a student's likes, dislikes and interests, developmental milestones and family history.

Assessment methods used include:
Observations during the screening process
Parent Rating Scales
Individually administered screening tools
Brigance Developmental Tool
Fluharty Assessment
Ages & Stages Questionnaire

After developmental screening, parents receive information regarding their child's individual results. The letter indicates whether students have passed all areas and have developmentally appropriate skills, or that they will be contacted by an Early Childhood representative to schedule a comprehensive evaluation. Results of these screenings are utilized to identify children who may need a more comprehensive assessment (diagnostic assessment). When a student receives a more comprehensive evaluation they may be found eligible for special education services. Students found eligible for only Speech and Language don't necessarily join the Early Childhood classrooms, but may come to the program on a weekly basis for services.

In addition, developmental screening results are utilized to identify typically developing peers to be included in all of our Special Education classrooms.

Formal Assessments

Assessing for Special Education services

The special education preschool classrooms conduct various assessments on an ongoing basis. Students receiving special education services have already taken part in a comprehensive developmental assessment conducted by the team. Students are assessed by either the special education teacher/school psychologist and speech and language pathologist using a multidisciplinary approach. Information obtained by parents through the use of checklists, rating scales, or interviews are incorporated into a formal report and reviewed with the parent(s) and other members of the team. In addition, after entering the preschool program, children who are eligible for special education services are assessed by classroom teachers using the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development-II (Developmental version) per the State Department of Education (including students only receiving speech and language services). The state requires districts to

report assessment information regarding children's functional and developmental progress. The second administration of the BDI-II (Developmental version) occurs as the student's exit from the preschool grade to kindergarten or prior to the student exiting preschool special education for other reasons (move, discharge, etc.)

School Readiness Screenings

The School Readiness classrooms (STARS) conduct various assessments on an ongoing basis utilizing a variety of tools. The OEC (Office of Early Childhood) recommends that upon entering the School Readiness programs, children are pre-assessed using the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development-III (Standard version) per the State Department of Education. Students are post-assessed toward the end of the school year. STARS is partially funded by the State of Connecticut School Readiness Grant and therefore, the district is responsible for reporting results of the pre and post assessments of the BDI-III. Results from the pre-assessment are utilized to create individual academic planning for students.

Assessments inform families and teachers and provide information on appropriate instruction to meet individual children's development and growth needs. Assessments are reviewed and data is analyzed to plan educational activities.

Informal Assessments

As recommended by the OEC, all of the Ledyard Early Childhood classrooms utilize the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards (CT ELDs) and ongoing progress monitoring in order to inform planning, assess children by observing their performance during typical classroom activities, focus on describing what children can do and the progress they have made, and make assessment decisions based on multiple observations in a variety of activities throughout the year.

Students are assessed in multiple areas upon entering the program in the fall-literacy, math, fine motor and gross motor skills. Ongoing progress monitoring occurs throughout the school year and instruction is adjusted based on the assessments. Post assessment is completed in the spring and shared with parents at conferences.

YEARLY FORMAL CONFERENCES

Twice a year teachers and parents reflect and discuss their child's program at planned teacher/parent conferences to discuss student progress and review written updates on student performance. Together they review student progress, updates on students performance, and assess the effectiveness of the program. During conference meetings families are encouraged to ask questions about assessment methods used and to state any concerns about the assessments used with their child. Feedback from parents is valued and appreciated during this reflective process.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Ledyard Public Schools hold monthly fire drills and lock down drills 3-4 times per year as required by CT State law. There are published evacuation procedures located in the main office at the school. Evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms throughout the building.

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.

Confidentiality of student records is an essential component of the legal rights granted to students by education law. All personal information, evaluations and special education records are kept in locked cabinets. Please be aware that staff cannot discuss information about other students in the program with you. Written records shared with other agencies require the parent's written consent.

FAMILY/COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The Ledyard STARS Preschool and the Early Childhood Council of Ledyard/Gales Ferry collaborate with many community agencies including: Department of Social Services, Mental Health, Public Health, Recreation Department, Public Library, Adult Education, Employment and Training Centers.

We have made it a part of our mission to give back to our community by participating and getting our families and students involved in a number of outreach programs throughout the year. The following are some of the outreach projects we have completed in the past.

- Parents are encouraged to join the Ledyard Early Childhood Council which offers parents the opportunity to participate actively in monitoring our preschool programs
- Parents are invited to participate in ongoing workshops
- Each year we organize a preschool fair where representatives from the community provide the opportunity to learn about services available to families. The preschool fair includes community services such as health care, rescue services, youth services, private daycare facilities, public libraries, after school programs.
- Families are encouraged to visit and/or volunteer in the classrooms
- Parents who work in the community are asked to come in and share their occupations or hobbies (knitting, yoga, dental hygiene, woodworking)
- Local community helpers including police officers, firefighters, and coast guard visit the programs
- Local librarian comes into the classes for story hour
- Involvement in local food drives organized by the school or district
- Family and community gatherings-book swap, ice cream social, fall festival
- Outreach programs visit the school to involve the children in a variety of hands-on activities- Children's Museum, Mystic Aquarium, Nature Center, Connecticut Story Tellers, Mystic Seaport.
- Parent literacy workshops are provided that are modeled by teachers to support effective student literacy development. Each family is provided "bookbags" with appropriate literacy activities and questions to use with these activities to help support student comprehension skills

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The Early Childhood staff strives to maintain close communication between home and school. A parent orientation and an open house are held at the beginning of the school year to introduce families to the program. The staff maintains contact with families through phone conversations, emails, folders, and conferences. Family newsletters are sent home regularly reviewing classroom activities, and providing home suggestions, as well as information about upcoming events.

Each child in the program is provided with a folder that is used for teachers to send home the daily notes, art projects, newsletters, and other important information to families. Please check the folder. Parents may use the folders to send messages to their child's teacher or other school staff.

Yearly program survey is completed by staff and families and results are analyzed by the Early Childhood Team. The Early Childhood teachers and director meet as a team to review the survey and create an action plan to address the program's needs. The information is shared with families. The schools have a parent teacher organization that parents are encouraged to join and participate in a wide variety of school activities and learning experiences (i.e. Science Day, Art Day, Reading Across America).

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND 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 wide 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, newsletters and posted curriculum plans. Conferences will be held in the late fall and spring to review your child's progress.

We value and encourage our parents participation in working together to support the learning, social development and social success of our students. Thank you for your support and commitment to these important goals.

If you have any questions or need any further information, do not hesitate to contact the Ledyard STARS Preschool program at Ledyard Public School Central Office 860-464-9255.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Parents are invited to become members of the parent advisory council. The Ledyard Advisory Council and the School Readiness Council provide opportunities for parent education and support activities for preschool education. If interested, please contact the Early Childhood Coordinator (860-536-9477 x4101).

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, sensory, 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. Weekly specials include Music and Gym.

An example of our daily schedule:

8:45 - 9:00	Sign In/ Arrival/Exploration and Discover
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 or Outside Play
11:50 - 12:20	Math Lessons
12:20 - 12:40	Handwashing/Toileting/Lunch
12:40 - 1:30	Outdoor Play
1:30 - 2:15	Rest Time
2:15 - 2:30	Afternoon Snack/Small Group Play Centers
2:35 - 2:45	Dismissal/Sign Out

SNACKS AND LUNCHES

We are committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and proper nutrition is essential for young children's growth and development. We provide a healthy mid-morning and afternoon snack as well as milk for all of the children. A snack menu is posted in the classroom. All snacks are served family style and children sit with staff and peers to encourage social interactions and healthy eating practices.

Parents have the choice to participate in the Ledyard Public Schools lunch program (partially funded by the National School Lunch Program, (NSLP) for a fee or provide your child with a nutritious lunch each day.

As part of the program's commitment to helping children make healthy choices, we ask that families not send high sugar foods such as soda, candy, cookies, or gummy snacks in your child's lunch.

Should you choose to apply for free and reduced lunch, which is a program funded by NSLP, please complete the application form (Children's Nutrition Programs' application) enclosed in your registration packet. ***Please note according to the most recent NAEYC accreditation criteria: "Hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrot, and large chunks of meat" are not to be served to children under the age of 4. Please do not send these in as choices, as we will not be allowed to serve them.***

REST/QUIET TIME

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

CLOTHING

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 closed toe, non-skid shoes or

sneakers. Although smocks are provided, clothes do get wet and a bit messy with glue, play dough and paint! Please regularly 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. In the winter, we will be playing outside. Your child will need snow pants, snow boots, appropriate hat and mittens/gloves and a warm coat. **Please remember to write your child's name in all of his/her belongings/clothing.**

BATHROOM ROUTINES

The preschool staff is committed to working with families in every aspect of their child's development process. Children should be in the advanced stages of toilet training. Throughout their day, children are given reminders and opportunities to use the toilet independently. Please let your child's teacher know about any concerns you might have regarding the toilet training process.

If diaper changing becomes necessary, universal precautions are followed. Disposable gloves are required when changing diapers, in any accidents resulting in blood, or in any instance when bodily fluids could be transmitted. After each use, all surfaces of the changing table and potty seats are disinfected. If your child is allergic to latex gloves, please notify the Early Childhood staff and indicate this on your child's health information card. Children who are potty trained will have scheduled bathroom breaks throughout the day, or can use the toilet on request. Staff is available to assist the children as needed.

Staff must wash and/or sanitize their hands:

- Before and after eating
- Before and after toileting
- After handling garbage
- After cleaning

SHARING/ITEMS FROM HOME

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

BIRTHDAYS

A child's birthday is a special event, 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.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Transition to kindergarten is a gradual process involving families, school, community and early care education settings and is based on the needs of the child and family. This process is a gradual introduction to kindergarten that includes support and multiple opportunities for the child, family and teachers to interact and

meet in an informal setting. The transition supports development of cohesive programming which seeks to maximize student growth. The early childhood staff meets with kindergarten teachers to inform them about students' social emotional and academic progress in the early childhood programs.

Ledyard transition activities include developing a sense of safety, comfort, understanding expectations and establishing open communication. Children visit kindergarten classes, families are invited to school information gatherings and Open House events. Staff encourage participation in local community base playgroups/activities of a social nature, visit early care centers to observe students in their preschool setting and share curriculum newsletters, book lists, literacy and numeracy take home calendars.

The orientation is held in the spring prior to entry into the kindergarten program and families are assisted in filling out any form necessary to complete the process. The school nursing staff is available to provide support and to review health records and immunization records necessary for kindergarten registration. All Early Childhood health and education records are transferred to their kindergarten school. The district social worker is available to assist in providing families with community support, health care and health insurance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's teacher. We look forward to welcoming your child to our school while working and collaborating with you.

SUPERVISION POLICY

ALL CHILDREN ARE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES WHILE AT LEDYARD PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of the children while they are in the care of our preschool program, the following procedures will be used:

- There are three teaching staff working in each classroom. This ensures that in the event a member of the teaching staff leaves the room, the group remains in appropriate child/staff ratio with appropriate supervision.
- All members of the teaching staff must be certified in Pediatric First Aid/CPR, and must keep certification current. Copies of certificates are maintained on file in personnel files. This ensures that there is always at least one staff person certified in First Aid/CPR with any group of children.
- If one staff person must leave the classroom for any reason (i.e. take a child to the bathroom, get something from the kitchen, use the bathroom, etc.), the other two staff will remain in the classroom with the children.
- The three staff will position themselves around the classroom in such a way that all areas of the classroom are visible by at least one adult. The room is arranged in such a way to avoid creating "blind spots" where children cannot be seen.
- When a child needs to use the bathroom, a staff member will accompany them to the bathroom.
- Children may enter and use the toilet privately; the staff person will remain near the bathroom within hearing distance of the child, available to provide assistance if necessary.
- When the children are on the playground, teaching staff will position themselves around the playground in such a way as to maintain visual contact of all areas of the playground. Staff will pay particular attention to those areas of the playground where children can "hide" from view as well as monitor both gate areas of the playground.
- If a child needs to re-enter the building/classroom for any reason, they will be accompanied by a staff person. The other two staff members will remain on the playground with the rest of the group.

- A first aid kit will be brought out each day to the playground. Staff will take the walkie talkie outside every time the group goes outside to support communication.
- When it is time to leave the playground and go inside, children will line up at the door with a staff person at the front of the line. The children will be counted by a staff member. Once it is established that all children are present in line, the group will walk inside, with one staff person at the beginning of the line, one at the end of the line. The last person to come inside will be a staff member, who is responsible for closing the locked door and counting all children to confirm that all children are safely back indoors.
- Any class transition out of the classroom (i.e. PE class or Music class) will involve counting all children leaving the classroom and recounting the students re-entering the classroom. Students will be transported to other areas in the school by three staff members or more if needed.
- Parent/Student drop off will be done with parents bringing their child to the pre-school lobby to be signed in by the classroom teacher. At pick up time parents will again pick up their child in the preschool lobby and the parent will sign out their child at the end of the day. If your child arrives by school bus, staff will meet each child at his/her bus and walk each child to his/her classroom where the student will be signed in to the class. At the end of the school day, staff will walk your child to his/her bus, get them on their bus and sign each student out of school on our daily class list.
- Nap or rest time will occur in the classrooms with staff setting up student rest areas and monitoring and supporting students during this time.
- At no time will any student be left unattended or unsupervised by qualified trained staff.
- If a student will be absent from school, parents are required to call the school office to let the staff know of the student's absence. If the student does not arrive at school a call will be made to the student's home to verify that the child will not be attending school that day.

LEDYARD EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF

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STARS PARENT HANDBOOK

By signing this form I acknowledge that I have read and understand all concepts of the STARS handbook.

Signature _____ Date _____