



**SHELDON COMMUNITY
PRESCHOOL
HANDBOOK**

**Sheldon Community School District
501 Normal College Avenue
Sheldon, IA 51201
712-324-4337**

❖ **Programs:**

❖ **Classrooms:**

- **His Little Ones Preschool**
 - **Teacher:** Lynn Shoberg
 - **Address:** St. Patrick's School, 1020 4th Avenue, Sheldon, IA 51201
 - **Phone:** 712-324-4001
 - **Sessions:** Monday through Thursday:
 - AM Preschool (8:10-11:20)

- **Little Orabs Preschool**
 - **Teacher:** Courtney Hansmann
 - **Address:** Little Orabs Learning Center, 109 N 18th Avenue, Sheldon, IA 51201
 - **Phone:** 712-324-4337
 - **Sessions:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:
 - AM Preschool (8:15-11:15)
 - PM Preschool (12:00-3:00)

- **Little Orabs Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**
 - **Teacher:** Brittany Peters
 - **Address:** Little Orabs Learning Center, 109 N 18th Avenue, Sheldon, IA 51201
 - **Phone:** 712-324-4337
 - **Sessions:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:
 - AM Preschool (8:15-11:15)
 - PM Preschool (12:00-3:00)

- **Kingdom Kids Preschool**
 - **Teacher:** Brooke Granstra
 - **Address:** Sheldon Christian School, 1425 E 9th Street, Sheldon, IA 51201
 - **Phone:** 712-324-2429
 - **Sessions:** Monday through Thursday:
 - AM Preschool (8:20 – 11:30)

- **Noah's Ark Preschool**
 - **Teachers:** Leisl Lidiak & Reka deBoer
 - **Address:** 1425 Pleasant Court Drive, Sheldon, IA 51201
 - **Phone:** 712-631-0010
 - **Sessions:** Monday through Thursday:
 - AM Preschool (8:15-11:15)
 - PM Preschool (12:00-2:45)

Principal: Jason Groendyke Secretary: Amber Beukelman

Preschool Policies and Procedures

Table of Contents

I.	Welcome to Sheldon Iowa Preschool	5
II.	Mission, Philosophy, and Goals for Children and Families	5
III.	Enrollment	6
	▪ Equal Educational Opportunity	6
	▪ Eligibility	6
	▪ Arrival and Dismissal Times	6
	▪ Fees	6
	▪ General Information	6
	▪ Inclusion	7
IV.	A Child's Day	7
	▪ Who works in the preschool?	7
	▪ Daily Activities	7
	▪ Outside Play and Learning	7
	▪ Curriculum	8
	▪ Child Assessment	9
	▪ Program Assessment	10
	▪ Supervision Policy	10
	▪ Child Guidance and Discipline	10
	▪ Snacks/Foods and Nutrition	11
	▪ Birthdays	12
	▪ Clothing	13
	▪ Toilet Learning	13
	▪ Objects From Home	13
	▪ Classroom Animals and Pets	13
V.	Communication with Families	14
	▪ Open Door Policy	14
	▪ Field Trips	14
	▪ Attendance	14
	▪ Ethics and Confidentiality	15
	▪ Children's Records	15
	▪ Grievance Policy	15

(Continued on next page)

Preschool Policies and Procedures

Table of Contents

VI. Family Involvement	15
▪ Home Visits	17
▪ Family/Teacher Conferences	17
▪ Family Night	17
▪ Transitions	17
VII. Health and Safety	17
▪ Health and Immunization Certificates	18
▪ Health and Safety Records	18
▪ General Health and Safety Guidelines	18
▪ Illness Policy Exclusion of Sick Children	19
▪ Symptoms and Illnesses	19
▪ Reporting Communicable Diseases	20
▪ Medication Policies and Procedures	20
▪ Cleaning and Sanitation	21
▪ Handwashing Practices	21
▪ First Aid Kit	22
▪ Fire Safety	22
▪ Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents	22
▪ Inclement Weather	23
▪ Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health	24
▪ Smoke Free Facility	24
▪ Weapons Policy	24
▪ Child Protection Policies	25
▪ Substance Abuse	25
▪ Volunteers	25
VIII. Staff	25
▪ General Information	25
▪ Orientation	26
▪ Staff Development Activities	26
▪ Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan	26
▪ Notices of Special Education Rights	26
▪ Open Enrollment Deadlines	27

Sheldon Community Preschools Program Policies and Procedures

I. WELCOME TO SHELDON IOWA PRESCHOOL

Sheldon Community Preschools participate in the State Wide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP). Our preschool program provides your child with skills and resources to ready himself/herself for Kindergarten or Transitional Kindergarten. The program's goal is to provide high quality preschool instruction that meets each child's needs, including children with disabilities. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide the expectations for the children and instructional practices.

II. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS

Mission Statement of Sheldon Community Preschools: **LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Mission:

The mission of Sheldon Community Preschools is to prepare all students to be self-confident learners. The child-centered, enthusiastic, dedicated staff, in cooperation with family and community, will provide an appropriate well-defined curriculum through rich, varied experiences to meet individual needs in an accepting and nurturing environment.

Preschool Philosophy of Education:

Sheldon Community Preschools strive to provide the following:

- A safe, consistent, and nurturing atmosphere.
- Respect for your child and appreciation for his/her unique characteristics.
- A consistent daily routine that includes a balance of activities.
- Nutritious snacks available that contribute to the growth and development of a healthy child.
- Acceptable alternatives when your child demonstrates inappropriate behavior, set limits for your child, and provide your child with natural and logical consequences for their behavior.

Goals for Children:

- ◆ Children will show competency in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language development skills, the arts, math, and literacy.
- ◆ Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- ◆ Children will be safe and healthy.

Goals for Families:

- ◆ Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- ◆ Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
- ◆ Families will advocate for their children.

III. ENROLLMENT

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of the Sheldon Community Preschools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact: Cynthia Barwick, Middle School Principal Sheldon Community School District 310 23rd Avenue Sheldon, Iowa 51201 712-324-4346 cindy.barwick@sheldonschools.com. Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Board requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity.

Eligibility

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current year to attend four-year-old preschool. Pre-registration will be done during an open house at each facility in March of each year prior to your child starting preschool. Registration materials are available at each preschool location. Final registration will occur in the fall.

Arrival and Dismissal Times

If your child walks to school or is dropped off by a private vehicle, please have them arrive at their preschool location by the appropriate start time listed below. School bus transportation is available using the district school bus stops and busing to daycare providers.

Children attending Little Orabs Preschool will have sessions Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. or 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Children attending His Little One's, Kingdom Kids, and Noah's Ark Preschool will have sessions Monday through Thursday with the following class times:

His Little Ones - 8:10 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.

Kingdom Kids – 8:20 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Noah's Ark – 8:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Fees

There is no cost for the 4-year-old preschool program.

General Information

Prior to the first day of preschool, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations, along with proof of the child's date of birth (birth certificate or other document stating date of birth).

The maximum class size is 20 children in each session however; this number will vary based on square footage of the each individual location. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained to encourage adult/child interactions and promote activity among children. The elementary principal will maintain a current list of available substitutes for the Little Orabs Preschool classrooms. Should one of

the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, the teacher will call the elementary office and the principal will arrange for coverage of the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratio.

Inclusion

The preschool program provides all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs, access to high quality instruction. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns to include children with special needs in the preschool program. Staff are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our programs will enrich the experience for teachers and all the students in the classroom. The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

IV. A CHILD'S DAY

Who Works In The Preschool?

Program Administrator The East Elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teacher A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement is assigned to each preschool classroom.

Paraeducator A full-time teacher's assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher's assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education.

School Nurse The preschools will have the assistance of the school nurse. The school nurse is a full-time employee of the school district, is a certified RN, and is re-certified every three years. She maintains student health records by updating them quarterly, and attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. She is available for parent consultation when necessary.

Support Staff NWAEA support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and others.

Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

Interest Areas: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys & Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand & Water, Music & Movement, Cooking, Computers, and Outdoors.

Education will be provided in large and small groups as well as individual activities. Self-directed play and outdoor activities will also be arranged.

Weekly notes will be sent home to families in children's backpacks and electronically, if parents desire.

Outside Play and Learning

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits, provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop

their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. Sometimes we spend longer getting bundled up than we spend outside.

When we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions), children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, snow pants, mittens or gloves and a hat. For warmer days, dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing your child in layers is a practical idea.

Curriculum

Teaching at the Sheldon Community Preschools is based on two integrated teaching systems: Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD. Together these systems help make Sheldon Community Preschools high-quality programs that provide a safe and fun learning environment for your child each day.

Creative Curriculum

We use the Creative Curriculum to guide learning in our classroom.

- The Creative Curriculum is research-based and contains resources to help guide and promote high-quality learning.
- It consists of studies throughout the year, which generates new, in-depth learning and problem-solving skills.

Creative curriculum is based upon five fundamental principles. They guide practice and help us understand the reasons for intentionally setting up and operating our preschool program.

1. Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a foundation for learning
2. Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success
3. Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning
4. Physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions
5. Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning

Teaching Strategies GOLD

Teaching Strategies GOLD helps support both of our curriculums and helps guide the assessment of children throughout the year. It assesses children on their growth throughout the year based on the following objectives:

1. Social-Emotional
2. Physical
3. Language
4. Cognitive
5. Literacy

6. Mathematics
7. Science and Technology
8. Social Studies
9. The Arts
10. English Language Acquisition helps follow a child's progress in developing both receptive and expressive skills in English.

Child Assessment

Guiding principles:

It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results are used for planning experiences for the children, and to guide instruction. Assessments will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- *Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment* is aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records student progress in all developmental areas at the beginning, middle and end of the year.
- Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones;
- To indicate possible areas that require additional assessment.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. In addition, the *Creative Curriculum Preschool Progress Report* will be sent home at the end of the first semester. The preschool teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the *Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment*, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- A request made to NWAEA for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing.

The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

Program Assessment

Sheldon Community Preschools implement the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS). The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. A report of the annual evaluation findings is shared with families, staff, and appropriate advisory and governance boards. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

Supervision Policy

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets will be covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to head custodian.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently).

Child Guidance and Discipline

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and planning to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior using consistent clear rules and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking skills.

Challenging Behavior

The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.

- modeling turn taking, sharing, and caring behaviors.
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and NWAEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child become physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.

Snacks/Foods and Nutrition

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

We prefer to serve only nutritious snacks during our daily snack time. Snack items are purchased and provided for the classroom through the funding of SWVPP. Parents are given the opportunity to volunteer in bringing snack for the classroom. If parents choose to bring a snack, they need to be peanut free and in the original store-bought packaging.

Below are examples of some acceptable nutritious snacks:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Granola bars | String Cheese |
| Goldfish | Popcorn/Popcorn Mix (Needs to be popped) |

Teddy Grahams	Graham Crackers
Animal Crackers	Yogurt Cups (send spoons)
Crackers – any kind	Pudding Cups (send spoons)
Trail Mix	Fruit – apples, bananas, etc.
Chex Mix	Vegetables – carrots, celery, etc.
Crackers & Cheese	Fruit Cups (send spoons)
Pretzels	Applesauce Cups (send spoons)
Muffins	

Snacks that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you and you will be asked to replace them with a box of graham crackers or something that is nutritious.

Below is a list of some snacks that are not considered nutritious (These may be brought for birthday if you choose):

- Fun Fruits & Fruit Snacks
- Fruit Roll-ups
- Little Debbie Snack Cakes, Rolls, Cookies, Bars
- Cookies or Cakes
- Candy
- Potato Chips

There will be milk provided during snack time. This is provided through the 4-Year-old Preschool Grant.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child’s health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and a specialist involved in the child’s care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child’s allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

The school district does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. Birthdays afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or treats in the original store-bought packaging or in factory-sealed containers. No sheet cakes are allowed, a great alternative is cupcakes! Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school. Absolutely no food items containing peanuts or peanut products are allowed.

Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we cannot guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. All families will be asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is an important time in a child’s development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards:
 - Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
 - Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers will be changed when wet or soiled.
 - Staff change children’s diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
 - At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
 - Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed, are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
 - Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.
 - Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures using visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.
3. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
4. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Objects from Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an “attachment” item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Classroom Animals and Pets

Live animals will not be allowed in school district facilities except under special circumstances and only for an educational purpose. Permission from the principal will be required of anyone wishing to bring an animal into school district facilities. Appropriate supervision of animals is required when animals are

brought into the school district facilities. The person bringing the animal must furnish transportation for the animal brought to school. Animals will not be allowed to travel to and from the student's attendance center on the school bus without prior approval from the principal. It shall be the responsibility of the principal to determine appropriate supervision of animals in the classroom.

Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking these requirements have been met.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will write notes for families no less than weekly. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom. When possible, please contact the teacher prior to your visit.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The Sheldon Community District school buses are used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter well in advance. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for each child before each trip. Adult family members are asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip. We may ask for parent volunteers, but please note that each volunteer may be subject to criminal background checks.

During the field trip, all children will wear identifying information that gives the program name and phone number. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes in the Sheldon Community Preschools are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the appropriate preschool building with the reason for an absence no later than 9:00 a.m. For safety's sake, if a student is

absent without notification, the school secretary/teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

Children's Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission.

Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Grievance Policy

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the elementary principal.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the elementary principal who is the program administrator for the preschool. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the superintendent of the Sheldon Community School District.

As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year, we also provide you with a family questionnaire to evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

VI. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Sheldon Community Preschool program encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions. If possible, please make advance arrangements with your child's teacher.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication. Information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds may also be shared. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year. Program staff communicate with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Family/teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. At least one family night is held during the year.

Sheldon Community Preschools value the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for the child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also rely on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

Sheldon Community Preschools invite you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well:

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child allows the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs.
2. Attend family meetings.
3. Promptly return all forms and questionnaires.
4. Attend family/teacher conferences in the fall and spring semesters.
5. Take time to read the family bulletin board.
6. Check your child's backpack each day.
7. Participate in field trip activities.
8. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
9. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
10. Help prepare snack and enjoy it with your child.
11. Read all the material sent home with your child.
12. Come to play.
13. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, run errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.

The Sheldon Community Preschools, to the extent possible, will provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format

and, including alternative formats on request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

The Sheldon Community Preschools believe that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

Home Visits

Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family. Home visits allow for you to begin creating a partnership between home and school to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you would like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator.

Family/Teacher Conferences

The preschool program will have formal family/teacher conferences twice a year- during the fall and spring. During the conference, the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

Family Night

Family night is an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities. Based on results from a family survey, the teaching staff will select a topic for the evening. With help from family volunteers, the night will be planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom. We encourage all parents to take advantage of this opportunity.

Transitions

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will collaborate with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

VII. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Sheldon Community Preschools are committed to promoting wellness, to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Health and Immunization Certificates

Prior to the first day of preschool, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted showing the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations, along with proof of the child's date of birth (birth certificate or other document stating date of birth).

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, or legal guardians, must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program. An exception to this is made when the parents are claiming a religious exemption related to immunizations.

Health and Safety Records

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems), and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and
7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.

- All teaching staff complete “Occupational Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens” annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

We understand that your work is important and taking time off for a sick child can cause inconveniences at home and work. When your child comes to preschool ill or becomes ill while at school, it can become a negative experience for your child. Not only is it exhausting for your child, but the illness can also be transferred to another child or staff member. **Therefore, we cannot allow you to bring your sick child to preschool.**

Please call the respective preschool building with the reason for an absence no later than 9:00 a.m.

Symptoms and Illnesses

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children are not brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children:

- fever greater than 100 degrees F
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eyes with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

The center’s established policy for an ill child’s return:

- Fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child will be observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child’s ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. If the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child comes in contact with, the parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the child from school.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other designated persons will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you and your authorized emergency contact person. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, he or she will be located where new individuals will not be exposed until they can be picked up.

Reporting Communicable Diseases

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur. The school district, through partnerships with county health agencies, will communicate with families when necessary.

Medication Policies and Procedures

Policy: The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

Procedure: The school nurse coordinates and/or administers medication, or a trained med-aide staff member will administer medication, during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents would be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication, the date the prescription was filled, the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription, the medication's expiration date, and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in the original labeled, child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed medication permission sheet, by signing permission through online registration, or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies to both prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions, which state that the medication may be used whenever needed, will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the school staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log.

Cleaning and Sanitization

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Facility cleaning that requires potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible.

Handwashing Practices

Frequent hand washing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper handwashing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding handwashing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught handwashing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Handwashing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when handwashing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assist children with handwashing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day;
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants);
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);
- before preparing and serving snacks;
- after playing in water that that is shared by two or more people;

- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals;

Adults also wash their hands:

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting; and
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include:

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.

In situations where sinks used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the First Aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. The First Aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Fire Safety

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool location with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents

The Sheldon Community Preschools have in place a “Safety Procedures Booklet” that describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Utility Failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break)
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats

- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder
- Evacuations
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures
- Accidental Injury or Illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations
- School crisis team members and a checklist to use
- List of CPR/First Aid experienced persons in each building

This booklet will be accessible to staff. The booklet will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an “Injury and Illness” form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Emergency phone numbers will be updated at least quarterly. Emergency phone numbers will be verified by calling the numbers to make sure a responsive, designated person is available.

Inclement Weather

- EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING OR DISMISSAL Should inclement weather or any other emergency occur resulting in the closing of school please listen to the following media stations for inclement weather announcements:
 - KIWA Radio Station – Sheldon – AM 1550/FM 105.3
 - KTIV Television Station – Sioux City – Channel 4
- District staff, parents, and students may also check the following websites for school related announcements:
 - Sheldon Community School District Facebook page via the district website www.sheldonschools.com
 - KIWA Radio - <http://www.kiwaradio.com>
 - KTIV Channel 4 - <http://www.ktiv.com>
- School announcements can also be received by following the district’s Twitter account @sheldonschools, which can be found on the school district’s webpage at www.sheldonschools.com
- All community partner preschool families may sign up for district text alerts (weather and emergency information) during the online registration process.
- If there is a 2-hour delay in starting school at the Sheldon Community School District, the afternoon session **WILL** be held **ONLY** at Little Orabs Preschool and Noah’s Ark Preschool.

Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health

Program staff protect children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could affect children's health with documentation on file. Well water is tested on a regular basis by the city water department. Custodial staff maintain the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities, so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children.

Smoke Free Facility

Sheldon Community School District buildings and grounds are smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the entrance to the building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

Weapon Policy

The Board believes that weapons, dangerous objects, and look-a-likes cause or may cause material and substantial disruption to the school environment or present a threat to the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors to School District premises or property within the jurisdiction of the School District.

School district facilities are not an appropriate place for weapons, dangerous objects and look-a-likes. Weapons and other dangerous objects and look-a-likes will be taken from students and others who bring them onto the school district property or onto property within the jurisdiction of the school district or from students who are within the control of the school district. Parents of students found to possess weapons, dangerous objects or look-a-likes on school property are notified of the incident. Possession or confiscation of weapons, dangerous objects or look-a-likes will be reported to law enforcement officials, and students will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion.

Students bringing firearms to school or knowingly possessing firearms at school will be expelled for not less than one year. The superintendent has the authority to recommend this expulsion requirement be modified for students on a case-by-case basis. For purposes of this portion of this policy, the term "firearm" includes but is not limited to, any weapon which is designed to expel a projectile by the action of explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a muffler or silencer for such a weapon, any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, or otherwise defined applicable law.

Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials or other individuals specifically authorized by the Board are exempt from this policy. The superintendent may develop and administrative process or procedures to implement the policy.

Child Protection Policies

The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete “Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse” every five years and within six months of employment.

The school district does not tolerate employees physically, or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal, or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the school district to designate a Level I investigator to look into the allegations. The school district has designated Jason Groendyke as Level I investigator and he may be reached at (712) 324-4337.

Substance Abuse

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of any of the Sheldon Community Preschool programs. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher, the elementary principal, or the elementary office secretary if you would like to be a preschool volunteer. For safety’s sake, if a volunteer will be working with children, he/she may be subject to a criminal background check. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

VIII. STAFF

General Information

The Sheldon Community School district has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. All Sheldon Community Preschools must follow these policies. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

Orientation

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

- Program philosophy, mission, and goals;
- Expectations for ethical conduct;
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for;
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;
- Daily activities and routines of the program;
- Program curriculum;
- Child abuse and reporting procedures;
- Program policies and procedures;
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria;
- Regulatory requirements.

The employee's immediate supervisor should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. The superintendent will explain payroll procedures, employee benefit programs and accompanying forms to the employee.

Staff Development Activities

Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. All teaching staff continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities. Staff are expected to attend all staff trainings and meetings throughout the year. Trainings will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community and staff will have the opportunity to work as individuals or in their PLC (Professional Learning Communities) on content relevant to their program area.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan

Staff evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.

Notice of Special Education Rights

When your child has been referred for special education services, federal and state laws give you certain rights. Some of these are:

- The right to be contacted and told what the school plans to do about your child's educational program. This must be done before your child is tested or placed in a program.

- You have the right to consent. This means the school must have your permission prior to placing your child in a special education program.
- The right to a full evaluation of your child's needs. If you don't agree with the school's findings, you may request an outside evaluation.
- The right to see your child's records kept at school.
- The right to privacy of information. With a few exceptions, no one may see your child's record without your permission, given in writing. Exceptions are people such as your child's teacher, or other school officials engaged in planning your child's educational program.
- The right, as much as possible, to have your child in classes with children who are not in special education programs.
- The right to be involved in the development of your child's IEP (Individual Education Program).
- The right to have someone present to help you in the development of your child's IEP. This could be another parent, a teacher, a lawyer, or an advocate.
- The right to appeal decisions made by the school regarding your child's diagnosis or placement.

If you desire additional information, please contact your child's principal.

Open Enrollment Deadlines

Preschool students are not required to comply with Open Enrollment Deadlines. The Iowa Department of Education recognizes Open Enrollment when a student enters kindergarten. At that time, the following guidelines apply:

Parents and guardians are required to send formal notification, on forms prescribed by the Department of Education, to the receiving district of their intent to enroll a child in another PUBLIC school district. The Forms may be filed any time throughout the school year, there are no deadlines.

For Open Enrollment application materials or if you have additional questions, please contact the Superintendent at (712) 324-2504.