



**Parent Handbook
2018-2019**

Early Childhood Program Purpose and Objectives:

To provide a quality early childhood learning program for children.

Johnston Community School District Mission:

We commit all district resources to guide the learning of each student, to graduate as confident learners with character, knowledge and the skills to excel in any endeavor they pursue.

The Johnston Community School District Vision:

Creating a culture of excellence where students come first.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Johnston Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, 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 the district's Equity Coordinator, Associate Superintendent, 5608 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, Iowa 50131, (515) 278-0470.



EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY

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Staff, Location and Phone Numbers

Johnston Community School District Early Childhood Programs

Joy Duea Palmer, Early Learning Director
6207 NW 62nd Ave. Johnston, Iowa 50131
Phone – 515-727-JELA (5352)
Email - jpalmer@johnston.k12.ia.us

JOHNSTON EARLY LEARNING STAFF

Joy Duea Palmer – Director of Early Learning
Cheryl Henkenius – Office Administrative Associate
Patrick Jackson – Office Administrative Associate/Preschool Associate

Tracy Borgmeier - Preschool Provider Associate
Chris Bowser - Preschool Associate
Janan Burns - Preschool Associate
Angie Butler - 4-year-old Preschool Teacher
Gretchen Camp - 4-year-old Preschool Teacher
Allie Carenza - 4-year-old Preschool Teacher
Katie Cross - Preschool Provider Associate
Juli Dodd - 4-year-old Preschool Teacher
Kristen Fleenor - 3-year-old/4-year-old Preschool Teacher
Kate Gee – 4-year-old Preschool Teacher/Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Abbi Grace - 3-year-old/4-year-old Preschool Teacher
Kodi Grogan - Preschool Associate
Lisa Hattel - Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Jill Herrera - 4-year-old Preschool Teacher/Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Stephanie Judd - Preschool Associate
Shellie Kreps - Preschool Provider Associate
Amy Luers - Preschool Associate
Shelley Merritt, 2-year-old/3-year-old Preschool Instructor
Jessica Miller - 4-year-old Preschool Teacher/Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Kari Perry – 3-year-old Preschool Instructor
Jill Puk - Early Childhood Special Education Associate
Megan Sampson – Preschool Provider Associate/Preschool Associate
Lynne Shoop – Early Childhood Special Education Associate
Chris Werner - Preschool Provider Associate
Kathy Wilson - Preschool Associate
Roberta Wendelboe, Early Childhood Special Education Associate
Robyn Zaegel - Early Childhood Special Education Associate
Dana Zahn - 3-year-old Preschool Instructor/Preschool Associate



EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY

Community Partner Sites

America's Children of Oakmoor – 4731 Merle Hay Road

Phone – 270-222

Robin Vannausdle, Preschool Director

Allison Lee, 4-year-old Preschool Teacher

Cadence Academy - 5623 NW 86th Street Suite 100

Phone 276-9247

Brandy Melton, 4-year-old Preschool Teacher

Westside Early Education – 4300 Beaver Avenue

Phone 490-3441

Carolyn Hinchliff – Director/4-year-old Preschool Teacher



**Mark Your Calendars!
Preschool Dates for 2018-19**

August 22, 2018 - Meet the Teacher for All Johnston Early Learning Academy
12:15-1:00 for morning classes and 1:15-2:00 pm for afternoon classes

August 27, 2018 – JELA Parent Only Meeting at Wallace Auditorium from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

August 31, 2018 – Start of school for 4-year-old students

September 3, 2018 – No School- Labor Day holiday

September 4, 2018 – Start of school for 2-year-old and 3-year-old Preschool

October 5, 2018 – No School – Professional Development Day

November 2, 2018 – No School – Professional Development Day/Work Day

November 8, 2018 – No Preschool – Conferences/2 year olds **will have** school

November 15, 2018 – No Preschool – Conferences/ 2 year olds **will have** school

November 21, 2018 – No School – Conference Comp Day

November 22-25, 2018 – No School – Thanksgiving holiday

December 24-January 2, 2019 – No School – Winter Break

January 21, 2019 – No School – Professional Development

February 18, 2019 – No School – Professional Development/Work Day

February 28, 2019 – No Preschool – Conferences/ 2 year olds **will have** school

March 5, 2019 – No Preschool – Conferences/ 2 year olds **will have** school

March 18-22, 2019 – No School – Spring Break

April 26, 2019– No School – Conference Comp Day

May 24, 2019 – Last Day for 2 and 3-year-old preschool

May 27, 2019 – No School – Memorial Day holiday

May 31, 2019 – Last day of Preschool

June 3-7, 2019 – Reserved as potential make up days



EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY

Payment Schedule 2018/19

Dear Parents:

There are nine payments for two and three-year-old preschool classes. Payment will automatically be deducted from Eleyo unless another payment plan has been established with the family.

The following late fee policy will be in effect:

Payments are considered late if received 7 days after the due date. At that time, accounts will be charged a \$10 late fee for that week and each following week. Each week a payment is late a \$10 fee will be added. One warning per year will be given without a late fee.

Payments may be made in the following ways:

- 1) Directly paying online with a Visa/Mastercard (see enclosed letter for details) at Eleyo <https://johnston.ce.eleyo.com/>
- 2) Dropping off cash or a check to the preschool teacher or to the Community Education office, 6600 N.W. 62nd Avenue. Please make checks payable to Johnston Community Education.
- 3) Calling the Community Education office at 515-278-0552 and paying with Visa/Mastercard.

Payments for preschool are:

Little Explorers 2-year-old classes - \$175/month

Three-year-old classes:

Two days/week classes - \$185/month

Three days/week classes - \$235/month

Four days/week classes - \$285/month

Scholarships for qualifying families are available. Families must live in the Johnston Community School District. The scholarship includes preschool tuition and family literacy events. Call Joy Palmer at 727-(JELA)5352 for an application or more information.



Attendance Procedures

Regular attendance is very important for your child's school success.

Occasionally, it becomes necessary for a child to be absent from school; therefore, we are requesting your continued help and full cooperation with our attendance policy. If your child is absent or tardy, we will require the following:

1. Call us to leave a message each day your child is absent or tardy.
2. For your convenience, we have installed a digital answering device on our telephones, which will allow you to call early regarding your child's absence. When our recording asks you to leave your message, please indicate the following: your name, your child's name, classroom teacher's name, and reason for the absence or tardiness.

Johnston Early Learning Academy – 727-JELA(5352)

3. If your child's teacher reports him/her absent or tardy, and the school has not received prior information or a phone call, an attempt will be made to contact you to verify the reason for the absence.
4. Children who are tardy must check in at the JELA office before going to the classroom studio.

Remember to update the school if you have any change in address or phone number.

Enrollment and Health Policy

Before your child enters preschool, we must have the following forms on file:

- Registration in Eleyo
- Registration in Infinite Campus
- Physical Examination Form (must be turned in **BEFORE** your child's entry date) **The date of the physical examination report shall be no more than 12 months before the first day of attendance at preschool. Annually thereafter, a statement of health shall be submitted.**
- Certificate of Immunization – must be signed by health official on the Iowa form.
- Health Review – must include insurance name and number in case of emergency.



Our program will make reasonable accommodations for children requiring special accommodations, if requested. Let us know if your child has any special needs. If your child has an epi pen or other medication that is kept at school, please pick this up at the end of the school year. Make sure you check the expiration date!

Children play outside every day weather permitting. Children enjoy being active and getting dirty. Please be sure to dress your child in play clothes that are comfortable and are easy to clean.

Suggested winter wear: hat, coat, mittens, boots, snow pants. We will follow this recommended winter wear for snowy/cold weather, and the children cannot leave the blacktop at the playground if they do not have this gear on. Children should wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.

For sunny days, dress your child in sun protective clothing and/or apply sunscreen with sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. If your child needs sunscreen or insect repellent, you must apply these before entering the preschool classroom. Staff will not be able to apply these.

Nutrition Policy

The children are served a snack each day provided by our district nutrition program during the preschool class. Snack time is an extension of our learning time. Menus are posted for your information.

Exceptions are allowed for reasons of allergies, medical conditions, religion, etc. If your child is not able to participate for a health reason with our snack program, we will need a doctor's note stating they cannot and why, or substitutions that can be made. **Please notify us in writing of these special needs, and we will do our best to meet them.**

If your child has an allergy/food exception, please fill out the Allergy/Food Exception Statement for your child's allergy. Ask your child's teacher for a copy of this form. A parent and a health care practitioner must sign the statement. We will give a copy to your child's teacher and the Wallace Elementary school nurse, as well as the district's nutrition coordinator. All foods and beverages brought from home are labeled with the child's name and the date. This is only in the event of a food allergy. If your child has a food allergy, we will post this information in the classroom for staff to be aware of it. **Please inform your child's teacher if you do not want your child's food allergy posted.**



For special treats, such as birthdays, we encourage you to visit the classroom – read their favorite story to the class, or have them share something special that day. If you choose to bring food to be shared among other children, it must be commercially packaged foods in factory sealed containers.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedure

Please use the parking lot or drive up parent pick up lane. Be sure NOT to park in the bus lane or on the west side of the building in the bus parking spots.

Families will be assigned a star at meet the teacher of the times of day you are free to pull up and sit in the south or west parent pick up lane. Families will also be assigned the lane they need to line up to deliver and pick up their child safely. If you choose to come into the building to pick up your child, you will need to park in the parking lot in the front of Wallace or west of the bus parking in the west lot of Wallace Elementary. There will not be any unattended cars allowed in the drop off and pick up line at arrival or dismissal.

There are 3 entrances into the Johnston Early Learning Academy. They have been assigned and marked as the PURPLE 1, Silver 2 and GOLD 3 entrances. Each child will be assigned a door to enter and exit every day. The assigned doors are below with teacher assignments. If students are brought to school after the start of the day and visitors need to enter through the main Purple 1 Door.

Purple DOOR 5

Mrs. Gretchen Camp
Ms. Juli Dodd
Ms. Kristen Fleenor
Ms. Shelley Merritt

GOLD DOOR 6

Ms. Dana Zahn
Ms. Allie Carezza
Ms. Kari Perry
Ms. Abbi Grace

SILVER DOOR 9

Ms. Angie Butler
Ms. Kate Gee
Ms. Jill Herrera
Ms. Jessica Miller

Please see the map below



Important – If Someone Else is Picking Your Child Up

If someone else is picking up your child, you must notify the teacher of this **in writing**. That person's name must be on the "**Permission/Consent Form**" that we keep in your child's file. The teacher may ask that person to show an ID identifying him/her as the person on the permission form.

Late Pick Up Policy

If your child is picked up late from preschool, you will be given one written warning with no fee. There will be a charge for any future occurrences at the rate of **\$5 for the first 5 minutes late**, and an additional \$5 for each additional 5 minutes late if your child is in the two-year-old or three-year-old class. If your child is in a four-year-old class and are late 3 times, you will be called by the supervisor and arrangements will be made to ensure children are pick up on time for their safety.

Visiting the Classroom

Parents are welcome to visit the classroom at any time.

Please check in at the office. In compliance with the Raptor Visitor Management Software, all visitors (including parents) should report to the main office to sign/check-in. If it is your first time in your child's school, provide the office staff with your valid state-issued ID or driver's license. The bar code will be scanned and run through the Raptor system for a possible match on the sex offenders' list. All visitors will then be issued a date-sensitive visitor badge containing their identification information that must be worn while on school grounds. Minors that do not have a valid state-issued ID will be allowed to visit, as long as an adult that has checked in with our procedures accompanies them.

Once you have registered within our electronic sign-in procedure, you will not need to provide an ID each time you visit. However, you will still need to check in at the JELA office to receive a visitor badge containing your personal information. All visitors will be required to check out through the JELA office when you leave the school.

If you are bringing a pet to visit, you will need to set this up ahead a time with the classroom teacher. Bring documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Reptiles are not allowed in the classroom because of the risk of salmonella infection.



District Policy 606.3 Animals in the Classroom

Live animals will not be allowed in school district facilities except under special circumstances and only for an educational purpose. Use of animals in classrooms can assist students to learn appropriate care of animals, enhance investigative and observational skills and reinforce curriculum and well being objectives. These guidelines provide direction to staff in the healthy and safe management of animals maintained in classrooms and visiting school facilities. [Read the full policy here.](#)

Discharge Policy

If a situation arises such as failure to meet our policies, failure to pay, or inability of the child to adjust to the group experience, a child may be discharged from the program. The early childhood coordinator and/or teacher will discuss the situation with the parents and a mutually beneficial solution will be sought. The parent can appeal the decision to the Early Childhood and Family Education Advisory Council and the Council will discuss the matter at the next meeting.

Medical and Dental Emergencies

In case of an emergency, we will secure such emergency medical care as your child might require by calling 911. The staff will notify parents and/or the child's physician or dentist, **as listed on your health review form.** If it is necessary to have the child transported to a hospital, we will call an ambulance to take the child to the hospital listed on your child's information form or the nearest hospital, unless instructed otherwise by the physician or parent. The parent will be charged for the cost of the emergency medical care. Should this ever happen, a staff member would ride along in the ambulance with your child, and the parent would be contacted. The staff member would take the child's file in the ambulance (with health care information and numbers on it), and stay with the child until the parent/guardian arrives. The staff member remaining in the classroom will call a supervisor who will arrange for a substitute in the classroom and a ride back for the staff member who rode in the ambulance.

Field Trips and Transportation

Field trips are occasionally a part of our preschool program and are an important part of our curriculum. Parents will be notified in advance of the field trip, and given a permission form describing the trip and requesting signed parental permission. **Children who do not have a signed permission form will not be allowed to go on the trip.** If you do not want your child to go on the trip, let us



know, and please make other arrangements for your child for the day of the field trip as we do not have staff to stay with your child in the classroom.

Health and Safety

If your child will be absent from preschool, please call and let us know. Phone numbers are listed in this handbook. If you cannot reach your child's classroom by phone (many have voice mail now 24/7), please call 727-JELA(0552). If your child is ill, please let us know the type of illness. If your child visits the doctor due to the illness, please get a note from the doctor with a diagnosis so if it is a contagious disease, information can be posted for the other families. (Your child's name will not be mentioned.)

Criteria for excluding sick children:

- The child's disease is highly communicable and previously unexposed.
- The child does not feel well enough to participate.
- The staff is not able to adequately care for sick and well children at the same time.
- The child has active diarrhea or vomiting.
- The child has a temperature of 100 degrees F or above.
- The child has unexplained abdominal pain, skin eruptions or rash, or severe cold/cough, or swelling, redness, tenderness or discharge of eyes.

Staff will contact you if your child becomes ill at preschool. If we are unable to reach a parent or guardian, we will contact the emergency contact names you have given us. Please get permission from these people so that they are available to pick up your child. Also, include their names on the **Permission/Consent Form** in your child's file.

Before returning to preschool, your child should be fever-free for 24 hours. Also, your child should be symptom-free (diarrhea, vomiting) before re-entry to preschool.

Your Child's Records and Sharing Information

Parents may have access to their child's records upon request. The information in your child's file will not be released to anyone else other than our licensing agencies. The children's files are kept locked in the classroom. If your child transfers to another class in Little Dragon Preschool or moves on to kindergarten in the Johnston Community School District, we may transfer information from his/her file to your child's new teacher.



The preschool staff cannot share information about your child with anyone other than the parent/guardian. If it is ok with you for the staff to share information with others, for example a grandparent, please let the staff know, as there is a section for you to sign on the enrollment papers to allow us to do this. (See the Permission/Consent Form.)

Assessment Plan

Purposes:

One of the purposes of assessments at preschool is to guide lesson planning and increase learning. Before beginning preschool, the family receives an enrollment packet, which includes a Family Information form that asks about the child's interests, strengths, preferences, and also asks about the family's goals for their child. The teacher reviews this information and then conducts a home visit (4 year olds) to become acquainted with the family.

Another purpose is to identify any special needs and then if necessary to make a referral for further assessment.

Procedures:

The children are assessed upon entering preschool in several ways. The Creative Curriculum provides a developmental continuum for preschoolers for each of the developmental areas – social/emotional, cognitive, physical, language, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition. The child will be placed on the continuum for 32 of the 38 objectives in the developmental areas. For example, in the area of literacy, one objective is “demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet.” The child can be placed on the continuum anywhere from the skill of “recognizes and names a few letters in own name” to a higher-level skill, “identifies and names all upper and lowercase letters when presented in random order.”

In addition, some children in the four-year-old classes are assessed on the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs).

The preschool teachers have received training on assessment procedures.

Conditions under which children will be assessed– Children are assessed in the classroom by the teaching staff, sometimes one on one, and sometimes in a small group setting. Assessments may be administered in the hallway or a nearby room to decrease distractions.



Timelines associated with assessments – The developmental continuum is completed 3 times/year. IGDIs assessment is completed 3 times/year – fall, winter and spring (4-year-olds only).

Confidentiality of individual child records – Assessment information is confidential information and is shared only with the persons given permission by the parent or guardian.

Methods to communicate assessment information to families – Parent/teacher conferences are conducted twice yearly in the fall and spring. Parents may request an additional conference at any time. In addition, a home visit will occur for our four-year-old students where information is shared.

Developmental screening and referral– Children can be referred for diagnostic assessment as needed after a process of observation and assessment in the classroom if parents and educational professionals feel it would be beneficial. Heartland Area Education Agency staff collaborates with the early childhood staff to help problem solve, consult or offer additional support and evaluation when necessary.

Uses of Assessment Results:

Children with **special needs can be identified** before attending kindergarten. If assessment results indicate a need for developmental screening, or a referral for further assessment, the ECAT (Early Childhood Assessment Team) meets to discuss the issue and make an action plan. The ECAT is made up of members of the Johnston Early Learning staff and Heartland AEA 11 staff. Children who have Individual Education Plans or other individualized plans are supported by Early Childhood Special Education staff to work toward objectives agreed upon with parents.

- Teachers use assessment information to **plan lessons and activities**
- Teachers use assessment information to **identify children's needs for further instruction**, and topics they are interested in to promote learning.
- The assessment information is used to **describe the development of the individual child** in the developmental areas of our curriculum; language, physical, cognitive, social/emotional, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition.



- Teachers use assessment information to **evaluate their lesson plans, implemented strategies and room arrangement** to see what is effective and what is ineffective when delivering instruction and fostering learning.
- Teachers use assessment information to **make suggestions to improve the program's curriculum**. For example, how might we improve our math curriculum by changing how we use a calendar with the children?
- Assessment information is **shared with parents** with suggestions for activities to do at home to further progress.
- Preschool staff uses a variety of assessment tools, including Creative Curriculum objectives, anecdotal notes, and a Phonological Awareness Profile (for the 4's classes), and this may be shared with parents at conference time. If concerns do arise, staff will contact parents and if agreed upon by parents, results of the screening would be shared with Heartland AEA staff, or the support team of Little Dragon Preschool, as well as the early childhood coordinator. The results of the screenings will help the classroom teachers prepare lessons to strengthen the weak areas the children presented in the screenings as well as build on and expand their strengths.

Assessment Methods that are used in the preschool are sensitive to the child's culture, experiences, abilities and disabilities, and home language.

- Assessment methods may include:
- Observation and anecdotal records
- Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum
- Work sampling for child's portfolio and children's journals
- Phonological Awareness Profile and Individual Growth and Development Indicators

Parent/Teacher Conferences/Communication

Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice yearly. However, please let us know at any time if you have a concern. Our goal is to work collaboratively with you to find mutually satisfying solutions to any concerns you may have. Let your teacher know if you would like to have a translator attend the parent/teacher conference with you. We will make every effort to provide a translator, or you may bring one. Teachers will be providing a newsletter about the preschool class activities sent with the child in a backpack or available via phone or email



and/or website. Parents may email or call a teacher at any time at their school phone number or email address.

Good communication and good attendance at preschool will lead to great results this year for your child at preschool!

Bringing Things from Home

Please bring a set of extra clothing for your child to leave at preschool, or in their backpack. Place the clothing in a large zip lock bag labeled with your child's name.

It's ok to bring books to share, special photographs, and other special items from home. Make sure that your child's name is on each item. We ask that you do not let your child bring food items, candy, gum, toys, or money to preschool. You may need to check your child's pockets or backpack! Check with your child's teacher for specific questions.

Please do not ask staff to pass out party invitations if only part of the class is invited.

For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, please provide disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use. In this event, we must have documentation from a health provider concerning the medical reason.

Internet Policy

Access to the Internet may be available to preschoolers and will be permitted unless a written request is made by the parent or guardian to deny such access at school. The district is in compliance with the Federal Communications Code concerning the Children's Internet Protection Act through the implementation of a Children's Internet Protection Act compliant web filter. The filter provides blocks to Internet sites that are deemed inappropriate in content, graphic, message or intent. Although the filter is continuously updated, it is not a guaranteed security from all inappropriate sites.

Corporal Punishment, Restraint, Physical Confinement and Detention Policy

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use "reasonable and



necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parents.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education’s web site: www.iowa.gov/educate.

Early Childhood Iowa/Project Ready for School

Early Childhood Iowa/Project Ready for School is a scholarship program for qualifying families living in the Johnston Community School District. The program provides preschool tuition and family literacy activities for the purpose of helping children get ready for kindergarten. Children can attend the preschool of the family's choice with available space. Call the Johnston Early Learning office for an application at 515-727-JELA(5352).