

*Riverside  
Local Schools*



*Preschool Family Handbook  
2025-2026*

[www.riversidelocalschools.com](http://www.riversidelocalschools.com)

*One Community Pursuing Greatness and Getting Better Every Day*

Updated 8/11/2025



# Riverside Local Schools Preschool Classes

Melridge Elementary  
6689 Melridge Dr.  
Painesville, OH 44077  
Phone: 440-352-3854

## Preschool Hours... Monday - Thursday

AM classes 8:30am - 11:00am

PM classes 12:30pm - 3:00pm

**Early Childhood Assistant Principal:** Julie Weber

Email: julie.weber@riversideschools.net

**Preschool Administrative Assistant:** Emily Baehr

Email: emily.baehr@riversideschools.net

## Preschool Staff

Bailey Brainard	bailey.brainard@riversideschools.net	Lori Bell (classroom assistant)
Julia Douglas	julia.douglas@riversideschools.net	Susan Nelson (classroom assistant)
Lauren Howard	lauren.howard@riversideschools.net	Beth Congrove & Abigail Overall (classroom assistant)
Alexa Matejka	alexa.matejka@riversideschools.net	Lisa Baluch (classroom assistant)

**Psychologist:** Kayla Johnston

Email: kayla.johnston@riversideschools.net / Phone: (440) 352-3854

## Speech and Language Pathologists:

Lora Lavelle - lora.lavelle@riversideschools.net

Janet House - janet.house@riversideschools.net

**Physical Therapist:** Darci Warmuth - darci.warmuth@riversideschools.net

## Occupational Therapists:

Ashley Konczal - ashley.konczal@riversideschools.net

Jennifer Cunningham - jennifer.cunningham@riversideschools.net

## Preschool Health Aide:

Chris Ricci - chris.ricci@riversideschools.net

## **Program Overview**

### **Philosophy**

Children are curious about their world and full of wonder making preschool a crucial time of learning. Early childhood education fosters independence and creativity in all areas of learning so that young children may know the true joy of discovery. Through a prepared environment, preschool can offer a broad spectrum of experiences that spark the imagination of children and alert them to the vast possibilities that their world presents. Exploring together with other children provides an opportunity for children to understand their own needs as well as the needs of others.

The Early Childhood Program has definite objectives and goals. The teaching staff accepts all children as valuable and unique individuals. Therefore, it is a goal of every teacher to help the children develop a healthy self-concept so that they feel confident and excited about learning. When children are happy and confident, they are better able to accept and appreciate the uniqueness of others.

The learning environment is designed to accommodate the individual developmental needs and ages of the children. This is accomplished with interest centers, small and large group activities, and one-on-one learning experiences. It is the goal of these experiences to foster self-motivated learning. Play is viewed as another essential component of a positive preschool experience. Play is a natural arena in which children inquire, explore and gain an understanding about their world. In this balanced approach children have many daily opportunities to grow socially, cognitively, physically and emotionally. A balance between free choice and structure fosters responsibility, intrinsic discipline, and confidence. All children, with or without a disability, are seen as children first. The Early Childhood Program applies the same positive learning principles to all children in the program.

Several studies have indicated that both disabled and non-disabled children benefit from integrated education. In 2004, the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Act mandated that children with disabilities be included with their peers as much as possible. We believe that children with special needs/disabilities should be integrated as much as possible with their typically developing peers. A child with a disability is a child first. Preschool children are much more "alike" than they are different. We encourage the growth of all children to be lifelong learners.

## Curriculum

The Riverside Preschool utilizes the Creative Curriculum which is a research based curriculum aligned to the Ohio Early Learning Content Standards. It consists of 38 Learning objectives for Development and Learning highlighting the following:

- **Social Emotional:** The program focuses on establishing and sustaining positive relationships with peers and adults. The children will be encouraged to participate cooperatively while managing their emotions and behaviors.
- **Physical:** The program will provide opportunities for students to develop and grow in the areas of fine and gross motor skills.
- **Language and Communication/Speech:** The program will provide a language rich environment that gives students opportunities to develop communication skills. Students will work on articulation, phonology, developing social language skills to engage in conversations, expand their vocabulary, listening skills, and use language to express their feelings & ideas.
- **Cognitive:** Students' curiosity, motivation, flexibility, and persistence will be developed through engaging experiences.
- **Literacy:** The program will immerse students in a literacy and print rich environment.
- **Math:** The program will develop number concepts, spatial relationships, comparing, and developing knowledge of patterns.
- **Science & Technology:** The program will encourage students to inquire and use tools to perform tasks.
- **Social Studies:** Students will develop a knowledge of self and explore change in people and places where they live.

Early Learning Content Standards can be found on Ohio Department of Children and Youth webpage [content standards](#)

## Bridge to Kindergarten

Our program exposes students to the following curricula that is also used in our elementary classrooms:

**Fundations:** Early letter sound awareness

**Heggerty:** Phonemic awareness

**Eureka:** Early number sense and pre-math skills

*The goal of the Riverside Preschool is to create a rich and engaging environment that promotes development and learning.*

## **Ohio Department of Education Compliance**

The Riverside preschool is required to meet Ohio Department of Children and Youth compliance guidelines. Site reviewers will visit programs once per year to assure compliance and will issue compliance reports to the program director and Superintendent. All inspection reports of the program are posted in a conspicuous site near the posted license at each program.

The Early Learning Program's license is available upon request. The phone number for Riverside Local Schools is (440) 352-0668. All complaints and reports concerning the operation of programs regulated by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth may be reported to the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (877)-302-2347.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Space is limited in the Riverside Preschool Program. To register for the preschool program, parents should call the registrar's office at (440) 358-8204 to check class availability prior to registering your child online. Children are placed in classrooms based on the age/needs of each child. If you choose to withdraw your child for any reason, please notify the classroom teacher and program supervisor via phone or email.

The following documents will be required as part of the registration process:

- Enrollment form

- Birth Certificate

- Parent Identification

- Medical Statement (examination Form & Immunization Record signed by a physician)

- Medical Emergency & Allergy Forms

- Emergency Transportation Authorization

- Authorization for Release of Information (for doctors, school system, etc.)

- Parent Interview

- Proof of Residency Forms

- Dentist contact information

- Two persons to be contacted if parents cannot be reached

## **Days and Hours of Operation**

Riverside Preschool is in session Monday - Thursday. The preschool will follow the RLSD calendar with regard to holidays and days in session.

Hours are as follows:

morning session - 8:30am - 11:00am

afternoon session - 12:30pm - 3:00pm

Please remember, class will begin and end promptly at the times listed above. In order to allow teachers to adhere to their schedules, we would appreciate that you respect this time schedule for the benefit of all students.

## **Tuition**

If your child is enrolled as a typical student, the annual tuition is \$1,125. A payment of \$125 per month must be made by the 15th of each month. Tuition checks may be made out to Riverside Local Schools and sent into school with your child. Tuition is asked to be on time, if this is not able to be made, unfortunately students will be withdrawn from the program.

## **Attendance**

When your child is unable to attend school, please notify your child's school prior to the start of the school day. If your child has a communicable disease, please make the school aware of this information. Please contact the preschool administrative assistant at (440) 352-3854 or [emily.baehr@riversideschools.net](mailto:emily.baehr@riversideschools.net).

## **Emergency Release**

In accordance with state regulations, children are released only to a custodial parent, guardian, or person authorized by the custodial person. If a person other than those noted will pick up a child, written documentation must be provided to the child's teacher stating the person's name, relationship to the child, date, and time of pick-up. The person must report to the school office and will be required to provide a photo ID when picking up the child. Please relay this ID policy as this is a requirement for pick-up.

## **School Closing Information**

The preschool is closed when Riverside Local Schools are closed. Parents must have a current phone number/email address on file in order to receive automated messages from the district. The district will also post the information on Twitter (@RLSD Beavers) and Facebook.

## **Arrival and Departure Procedure**

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school. Riverside Local Schools is responsible for transporting some preschool children. Our transportation department coordinates transportation, and it is much appreciated if the child is not going to be riding the bus for any reason, the parent should contact the transportation office at (440) 357-5571.

### **Arrival:**

Riverside Preschool is asking parents to park their car and walk their child to the entrance of the school. A staff member will meet the parent/guardian at the drop off location and escort the child to their classroom. The person dropping off will not be entering the building. Daily attendance will be taken once in the classroom. If your child is utilizing district provided transportation, they will also be escorted from the bus at the beginning and end of each class by a staff member.

### **Dismissal:**

Riverside Preschool is asking parents to park their car and pick their child up at the building entrance. A staff member will walk the students to the building entrance at the end of the class session to meet the parent. Persons picking up the child must be on the authorized list. If there is a change in pick-up, parents must supply written documentation (see emergency release).

Both parents' right to pick up: Under the laws of the state of Ohio, both parents have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right. The enrolling parent, who chooses not to include the child's other parent on the authorized pick-up list, must file an official court document (e.g., current restraining order, sole custody decree, divorce decree stating sole custody). Absent that document, the program may release the child to either parent, provided that parent documents his paternity/her maternity of the child.

## **General Class Information**

### **Snack**

Nutritious snacks and beverages will be provided by parents on a voluntary basis. When providing a snack, we ask that you strictly adhere to the requirements provided by the teacher. Teachers are aware of allergies in the classroom, and will ask for only certain snacks. Additional snack information will be provided by your child's teacher that pertains to your child's class.

## **Supplies**

The following list of supplies is needed with your child on the first day of preschool:

1. Book bag large enough to accommodate a folder and art projects.
2. A complete change of clothing (pants, shirt, socks, underwear). Please label each item and send in a plastic ziplock bag labeled clearly with your child's name.
3. Teachers will provide a list of consumable supplies needed for the classroom.

## **Toys From Home**

Please do not send any toys, candy, gum or money with your child. These items can pose a safety risk to other students. If special items are needed, you will receive notification from your child's teacher.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips could be scheduled throughout the year by the preschool staff. Parents will be notified in advance of the field trip date, time, location, and purpose. Each child will be required to have a permission form signed by the parent/guardian for each individual field trip. Children who are **not** attending the field trip will **not** be able to attend class for the day due to all staff attending the scheduled field trip. (\*\*Please note that programs are often brought into the school rather than traveling to a location.)

## **Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled twice each year. Your child's classroom teacher will contact you to set up a conference time. Parents of children who have Individual Educational Plans (IEP) will receive invitations prior to IEP meeting dates.

## **Class Rosters**

A roster of names and phone numbers is available upon request. Parents may decline to have their name and contact information included in this roster. Information will come home regarding the roster from your child's teacher

## **Parent Involvement**

We believe that a successful preschool program is built upon a strong foundation of cooperation between parents and teachers. Parents will be kept informed of school events by means of calendars and teacher correspondence. It is important that you check your child's folder and book bag daily for important information. There will be two conferences per year for all students.

The Ohio Department of Education inspects our preschool program a minimum of two times throughout the school year for licensing. The compliance and licensing reports that result from these visitations are posted in the preschool classrooms.

If a parent needs assistance with a problem or has a concern/complaint regarding the preschool program, their first communication should be with the teacher. If the problem is not resolved, please contact the preschool supervisor. Although we do not anticipate any problems which cannot be resolved by Riverside teachers or administrators, Ohio law requires that parents be informed of an Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can be contacted to file a complaint. Parents may call the Ombudsman through the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, 246 N.High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215 or [info@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov](mailto:info@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov).

### **Class Size**

The Riverside Preschool serves students ages 3-5. The preschool staff member/child ratio must be maintained at all times.

Preschool special education programs shall meet the child/staff ratio requirements of one teacher for six children with IEP's and an additional staff member when seven or more children are enrolled. Maximum group size shall not exceed sixteen children including eight children with IEP's.

### **Daily Schedule**

- Arrival and toileting/handwashing
- Classroom meeting - greeting, songs and fingerplays
- Stations/centers - Individual and small group work of choice of activities including sensory, blocks, dramatic play, math manipulatives, art, book corner, manipulative play, writing, and science/discovery
- Clean up, toileting, hand washing
- Snack
- Gross motor - Indoor/outdoor play, music, or creative movement
- Table top learning - Foundations, Eureka, small group work, language, storytime
- Departure Activities - preparing for departure (independence is fostered while putting on coat, boots, backpack, etc.)

## **Health Policies**

Children are required to be up to date on all immunizations. A medical certificate verifying immunizations must be furnished by your family physician and a copy kept on record by the school nurse. A physical examination by a physician is required. The medical statement may be provided by a physician, physician's assistant, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse.

Parents of a child enrolled in the program shall be permitted access to the school during the hours of operation to contact their child, evaluate the care provided by the program, the premises, or other purposes approved by the director.

Good health is more important than perfect attendance. Parents are asked not to bring children to school when they have signs of illness. Symptoms of communicable disease to watch for include:

- Temperature of 100 or more
- Nausea
- Sore throat
- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Red, swollen eyes
- Rashes
- Earache/infection
- Severe coughing

### **Readmission Policy**

Upon returning to school, one of the following should apply:

- Treatment by prescription medication for 24 hours
- Obtain a note from a physician that they are no longer contagious
- Fever or symptom-free for 24 hours without the aid of any medication

### **Communicable Disease**

Preschool staff is trained in first aid and communicable disease. A fully supplied first aid kit is available at school and taken on field trips. The following procedures shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

- Preschool staff will immediately notify the parent/guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of an illness.
- Students with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness will be immediately isolated to the clinic and the parents will be notified to pick up the child:

- Diarrhea (more than 1 abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or making a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Conjunctivitis
- Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit taken by the axillary method in combination with other signs of illness
- Untreated, infected skin patch(es)
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation

A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated in the school clinic and within sight and hearing of an adult at all times:

- Vomiting
- Elevated temperature
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
- Unusual spots or rashes

The child will be made comfortable on a cot. The parents will be immediately contacted and decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time of the day shall be determined by the teacher and parent/guardian. The child, while isolated at the program, shall be carefully observed for signs of additional symptoms and/or worsening symptoms. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. The cot shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent. If soiled with blood, feces, vomitus, or other bodily fluids, the cot shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent.

All parents in the program will be notified when children are exposed to communicable diseases such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox, or lice.

### **Medication Policy**

The medication policy complies with state guidelines to ensure the health and safety of all students requiring medication in school. ALL medications (including inhalers, antibiotics, pain relief products, cough and cold products, etc.) require both parental and physician approval. Medications must be supplied by the parent, transported to and from school by the parent, and be in a properly labeled container. For children requiring medication during school hours, additional information/forms are required by the Riverside Local School and can be found on the district website under the parent tab - parent resources section or by contacting the preschool.

All accidents will be reported to the teacher/health aide and logged in Infinite Campus. Parents will be informed of any injury a child has received.

A written description of the school's safety policies has been explained and distributed to all staff. In addition, emergency phone numbers and procedures are posted in preschool classrooms.

### **Child Abuse Recognition**

The Preschool Supervisor and all employees are mandated reporters. They are required to report all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Job and Family Services. All preschool staff has completed required trainings in child abuse.

### **Medical or Dental Emergency**

In the event of a medical or dental emergency, the Preschool staff will immediately take the following steps:

- Immediate first aid administered by trained staff.
- Contact the Rescue Squad if necessary
- Notify parents of accident or injury and inform them that an ambulance has been contacted
- One staff member will accompany the child with the child's records, in the ambulance if the parent is not present
- Parents will meet the child and staff member at the emergency treatment center if they were unable to accompany their child

## **Safety Policies**

No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised either in the classroom or at the outdoor play area at any time for any reason. The parent or guardian is responsible for keeping the information on the emergency form up to date. At least two emergency numbers are required. Parent contact information must be kept up to date (contact phone numbers and address). Please contact the school secretary to update this information.

Fire emergency and weather alert plans are posted in the classrooms which explain action to be taken during a drill and in case of emergencies. The plan includes diagrams showing evacuation routes. Routine drills will be performed.

## **Nuclear Emergency Procedure**

The Riverside Preschool, in conjunction with the Lake County Emergency Management Agency has developed plans to protect students should an emergency at the Perry Nuclear Plant require protective response by the Riverside Preschool. Riverside Preschool has plans for accomplishing sheltering or evacuation protective actions.

The following table demonstrates the four classifications of an emergency at the Perry Power Plant in order of severity:

- **Unusual Event** - We are notified.
- **Alert** - We are notified upon full activation of the Lake County EOC; call in additional staff if needed and monitor EAS (Emergency Alert System).
- **Site Area Emergency** - We begin calling parents to pick up children if recommended by the Lake County Emergency Operations Center.
- **General Emergency** - Protective actions issued. Action may be shelter or evacuation.

As you can see from the table above, we will notify students' parents well in advance of a protective action being recommended. There is no danger to the general public at **SITE AREA EMERGENCY**. We will release students **only** to a parent, legal guardian or adult designated by the parent. This is to ensure that the parent(s) or guardian(s) know exactly where their child is at all times and that the child is safe and being cared for.

If a protective action of **SHELTERING** is recommended for our area, please **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD**. Both you and your child are safer indoors. Sheltering is normally in effect for 2-3 hours. Your child will be cared for at all times. **In the event of an evacuation, the Riverside Preschool will be evacuated to: Andrews Osborne Academy.**

## **Discipline**

All staff employ least intrusive, positive strategies to reduce behaviors of concern. The preschool staff avoids negatives, threats, or bribes. Physical punishment is never used under any circumstances. We believe in the reinforcement of positive behaviors on a meaningful/regular basis. The preschool's ultimate goal is to develop within the child a positive self-worth and self-control.

According to the Ohio Preschool Licensing Rules(3301-37-10): “A preschool staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline.” Actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premise and hold the following restrictions:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal or unusual punishments.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toileting use.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child’s age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Teachers are available to discuss any questions or comments about the discipline policy.

If you have further questions about the Riverside Preschool program please contact:

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(440) 352-3854 x8889  
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