

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

2011– 2012 HANDBOOK



Edina Public Schools
5701 Normandale Road
Edina, MN 55424
952-848-4236

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Handbook

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Early Childhood Special Education

Mission Statements

Early Childhood Special Education Mission Statement

The mission of the Edina Early Childhood Special Education program is to promote active, meaningful learning in a safe, positive environment while respecting the diverse strengths and needs of each child and family.

The Early Childhood Special Education Program is part of the Edina Public Schools.

Edina Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the Edina Public Schools, working in partnership with the family and the community, is to educate individuals to be responsible, lifelong learners who possess the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and ethical values necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society.

Creating the Future has four areas of focus:

We will work in partnership with the community to increase student assets.

We will work in partnership with the community to welcome and support diversity.

We will develop and implement programs and practices that will address gender differences in student performance and other measures of success.

We will maximize the achievement of all students by developing a clearly articulated curriculum and appropriate research based instructional strategies implemented by highly qualified staff.

Early Childhood Special Education

Message Line Number: 952-848-4236
Fax Number: 952-848-4239

Coordinator:	Kathryn Hagen	848-4223
Secretary:	Sue Kemper	848-4232
School Nurses:	Lori Lee	848-4962
	Mary Willette	848-4962
Parent Educator:	Kelly Dritsas	848-3973
Director of Special Services:	Penny Kodrich	848-4899
Bus Transportation:		848-4979
Edina Public Schools District Office:		848-3900

Team members working with my child (for a quick reference, write in names and phone numbers of the staff working with your child this year):

ECSE Teacher: _____

Paraprofessional(s): _____

Speech / Language Pathologist: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Physical Therapist: _____

Other: _____

Early Childhood Special Education Staff
Early Childhood Family Education Team Teachers

Kathryn Hagen – Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator
Sue Kemper – Program Secretary
Patricia Bowe – Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Jan Fritze – Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Anne Lukoskie – Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Jamie McCoy – Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Megan Schneider – Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Kate Strand – Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
Dawna Finnern – Early Childhood Family Education Teacher
Molly Harrington – Early Childhood Family Education Teacher
Mary Streier – Early Childhood Family Education Teacher
Dayna Anderson – Speech / Language Pathologist
Catherine Fenlason – Speech / Language Pathologist
Sara Lakso – Speech / Language Pathologist
Pam Muus – Speech / Language Pathologist
Cheryl Parish – Speech / Language Pathologist
Jan Dahl – Physical Therapist
Joan Boyd – Occupational Therapist
Becky Galen – Occupational Therapist
Anne Gant – Occupational Therapist
Amy Fairweather – Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant
Jean Miller, School Psychologist (Long-term sub for S. Pokladnik)
Sara Pokladnik – School Psychologist
Lori Lee – Licensed School Nurse
Mary Willette-- Licensed School Nurse
Sarah Bergstrom – Autism Consultant
Jennifer Duncan – Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing
Kelly Dritsas – Parent Educator
Kelly Bellingham – Educational Assistant
Kelly Carolan – Educational Assistant
Annie Christman – Educational Assistant
Susan Hopfner – Educational Assistant
Beth Kimball – Educational Assistant
Derrick Lidstone – Educational Assistant
Cindy Ostberg – Educational Assistant
Andrea Sollie – Educational Assistant
Tia Smythe – Educational Assistant
Shoshana Worman – Educational Assistant

District #287

Sue Schmidt, District #287 – Teacher of Physically Impaired
Sue Weiland, District #287 – Educational Audiologist
– Teacher of the Blind & Visually Impaired

Help Me Grow (formerly South Hennepin Interagency Early Learning and Development)

Barbara Reilly - Public Health Nurse
Cindy McInroy – Speech/Language Pathologist

The Early Childhood Special Education Program Overview

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) is an Edina Public Schools program that provides early intervention to young children, ages birth to kindergarten, who show developmental delay in some or all the general areas of speech and language, large and fine motor skills, social and emotional behavior, functional and adaptive skills and cognitive skills. ECSE also serves young children with hearing or vision impairment or diagnosed physical or mental condition or disorder that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.

After your child has received a formal evaluation to identify specific needs, trained early childhood special education teachers and other specialists work with you and your child to develop his/her greatest potential. From birth through age two, these Special Education services are delivered primarily in your home. From age three to kindergarten, your child receives these services primarily at the ECSE center, located at 5701 Normandale Road in Edina.

ECSE Program

The Early Childhood Special Education staff includes Early Childhood Special Education Teachers, Speech/Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, a Physical Therapist, a School Nurse, an Autism Specialist, a Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, a Psychologist, a Parent Educator, a Coordinator and a Secretary. Special education para-professionals work in each classroom.

In addition, a Vision Specialist, Audiologist, and Teacher of the Physically Impaired are available through a special education co-operative called District 287, which is supported by numerous suburban school districts in the west metropolitan area.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement, education, and support are important aspects of the Early Childhood Special Education program. The ECSE process guarantees parental involvement every step of the way. From birth through age two, your child's education is outlined in the "Individual Family Service Plan," or IFSP. After that, your child's educational goals and objectives are spelled out in his/her "Individual Education Plan," or IEP. You are a key team member in putting together the IFSP and IEP. The ECSE program also works with families through parent education programs, support groups, and family events.

It is helpful when you keep us informed about your child's health history, illnesses, injuries, or other important family circumstances so that our staff can be aware of your child's needs. Please inform us when your child develops a new health problem, communicable disease, or is injured so we can continue to work together to provide the best possible service.

Edina Early Childhood Special Education Program

Note: The following descriptions apply to the programs in place during the 2011-2012 school year. Each spring programs are designed for the following school year based upon the needs of the children receiving Early Childhood Special Education services. Thus, specific classroom designs for particular age groups may change from year to year.

Birth through Two

Early intervention services are available for young children ages birth through age 2 years 11 months who meet criteria established by the Minnesota State Department of Education. A service coordinator facilitates service delivery as written in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), developed by parents and service providers.

Services are based on each child's individual needs and may include assessment and evaluation, early childhood special education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language pathology services, vision and hearing services, assistive technology, autism consultation, and parent education. Referrals for Hennepin County social services and public health nursing consultation through Bloomington Public Health may also be provided.

Services and support are typically provided in the home, but can also involve other natural environments such as childcare and Early Childhood Family Education settings.

Services from ECSE staff through home visits are intended to assist families in guiding and supporting their young child's development. Parents and other family members are most often the best teachers and therapists in a child's life, encouraging skill use through daily activities and play. The following suggestions are intended to help families and staff members make the most of these services:

- **Parent Participation**

Parents are encouraged to actively participate in home visits as directly as possible. This involvement allows for input from the parent relating to skills or behaviors observed in the home and ways in which the ECSE staff member can help work through challenges in the family's daily routines. It also allows parents to observe and practice techniques or strategies modeled by the ECSE staff member. Parents should also feel free to invite others involved in their child's life (such as grandparents or caregivers) to attend home visits.

Three to Kindergarten

Early Childhood Special Education services are available for children from age three to kindergarten entrance who meet criteria established by the Minnesota State Department of Education. Services follow an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed by parents and service providers.

Services are based on each child's individual needs and may include assessment and evaluation, early childhood special education, early childhood family education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language pathology services, vision and hearing services, assistive technology, autism consultation, parent education, Hennepin County social services, and licensed school nurse health services.

Service options for the Three to Kindergarten age range may include:

- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) inclusion classes: Children in these programs participate in an ECFE classroom led by an ECFE Teacher with specialized adaptations and services provided by an ECSE teacher who is in the classroom at all times. The inclusion classes meet three half-days per week and the children who are on IEPs meet for one additional small group class one half-day per week.
- "Hand-in-Hand" classes: Children in these programs participate in an integrated class, team-taught by teachers from Early Childhood Special Education and Early Childhood Family Education (Edina Family Center). The integrated classes meet two or three half-days per week and the children who are on IEPs meet for additional small group day(s) one or two half-days per week.
- "Explorers" Classrooms: These classes take place four half-days per week. Integration opportunities are scheduled as appropriate with Early Childhood Family Education classes.
- "Speech Buddies": These classes are for children receiving speech/language services only. Classes take place two mornings or afternoons per week.
- Other services: An ECSE teacher, speech/language pathologist or other ECSE specialist may provide small group, individual or consultative services according to student needs.

Extended School Year (Summer Programming)

- Birth through 2 years, 11 months:

Services for students under age three will be determined on an individual basis through their IFSP team. Extended School Year rules do not apply to children at this age level; children on IFSPs automatically receive services in the summer.

- Three Years to Kindergarten

On an annual basis, your child's IEP team considers whether or not Extended School Year (ESY) services are needed. Extended School Year services mean special education instruction and related services are provided when school is not in session for all students, particularly during the summer months. The purpose of ESY services is for the child to retain specific skills over the summer break. It is not a continuation of the entire program or all special education services as written in the IEP.

Minnesota State rules have specific guidelines that help the team determine whether these services are needed for an individual child. Parents or staff alone cannot determine the need for extended year service. The IEP team needs to agree on this issue as on other programming and service issues.

A student meets the requirements for needing ESY through the categories of Regression/Recoupment, Self-Sufficiency, and/or Unique Needs. The ECSE staff members working with your child will explain these categories and the ESY process at an IEP meeting.

A brief explanation of the categories taken from the Minnesota Rules follows:

- Regression and recoupment: because of the summer break there will be significant regression of a skill or acquired knowledge from your child's level of performance on an annual goal that requires more than the length of the break in instruction to regain.
- Self-sufficiency: services during the break are necessary for your child to attain and maintain self-sufficiency because of the critical nature of the skill addressed by an annual goal, your child's age and level of development, and the timeliness for teaching the skill.
- Unique needs: the IEP team otherwise determines, given your child's unique needs, that ESY services are necessary to ensure that he or she receives a free appropriate public education.

Edina's Early Childhood Special Education Program typically provides ESY services through a four-week program in July to early August. The specific length and dates of ESY may change each year based on needs. Depending upon individual needs, children may attend all or part of the program, or a different program may be designed. Many students who attend the Early Childhood Special Education program during the school year do not receive ESY services.

Transitions

- Transition between Birth-through-Two and Three-to-Kindergarten Services

Between three and nine months prior to your child's third birthday, the IFSP team will meet to discuss the transition between Birth-through-Two services and Three-to-Kindergarten services. The conclusions from this meeting will be reflected in the IFSP and will describe the steps and the responsibilities of the ECSE staff and you as parents in preparing your child for the transition between services in the home and services at the ECSE center.

For many children preparing for this transition the process will include an evaluation for Three-to-Kindergarten services. In addition to the differences in focus between home-based and center-based services, the programs for Birth-through-Two (Part C) and Three-to-Kindergarten (Part B) also have different rules for eligibility. Your service coordinator will discuss the eligibility requirements and your team will determine whether an evaluation is appropriate. In some instances, special education services will end at the child's third birthday and the service coordinator and/or other team members may make suggestions for developmentally appropriate activities in the community.

- Transition between ECSE and Kindergarten for children receiving services from an ECSE teacher

In the fall of the year prior to your child moving from ECSE to kindergarten (or at a team meeting near that time), your child's case manager and/or the IEP team will discuss the transition process. This includes delineating the steps and responsibilities of the ECSE staff and you as parents in preparing your child for the transition between services through the ECSE Program and services in kindergarten. ECSE also offers a parent-only evening event in October to provide information and insights into this transition process. This event includes a panel discussion with kindergarten teachers and elementary special education teachers. The broad spectrum of services available at the elementary schools will also be explained.

In the spring of the year prior to kindergarten, a conference will be set up at your child's future elementary school which will be attended by you (parents), your ECSE case manager, and special education and regular education staff from the elementary school. It is a great time to describe your child's strengths, interests and needs. At that conference you, the ECSE case manager and the elementary school teams will develop a specific plan for any needed special education services in kindergarten. This service plan will be reflected on your child's IEP with a start date of the first day of kindergarten.

- Transition between ECSE and Kindergarten for children receiving services from a Speech/Language Pathologist only

At an IEP meeting during the school year prior to kindergarten, you and the speech/language pathologist working with your child will develop a plan for any needed speech/language services in kindergarten. This service plan will be reflected on your child's IEP with a start date of the first day of kindergarten. In the spring prior to kindergarten, your speech/language pathologist will share these service recommendations and any other pertinent information with the speech/language pathologist serving the kindergarten class in your child's elementary school.

- Kindergarten Registration

In the fall of the year prior to kindergarten, parents will receive information from the school district regarding open houses at the elementary schools and the kindergarten registration process. Parents are responsible for the registration process for their child. ECSE sets up the special education transition meetings with the elementary schools but is not directly involved in registration.

- Early Childhood Developmental Screening

Edina Public Schools offers early childhood developmental screening for Edina children who are 3, 4 or 5 years old and who have not previously participated in an early childhood developmental screening or have not received a thorough evaluation through the ECSE program (see below). Screening is offered four to five times per month throughout the calendar year. This screening is required prior to starting kindergarten in all Minnesota public schools. The purpose of the screening is to help identify speech/language, vision, hearing, motor or general developmental problems of pre-school children.

Many children being served through Edina's Early Childhood Special Education Program have received an evaluation of developmental skills which is more in-depth than a screening. When a child has had an evaluation of this type, this automatically takes the place of screening and the family will not be contacted to make a screening appointment. Children who have received an evaluation in the speech/language area only will be contacted for screening since the state requires screening of many developmental areas.

If your child has had a developmental evaluation and thus is exempt from screening but you are still interested in having him/her go through Early Childhood Screening, please contact Sue Kemper at 952-848-4232.

Classroom Management

The ECSE classrooms are organized to balance individualized learning and exploration with the structure and consistency of expectations that children need to feel safe. The staff provides an environment in which developmental activities are planned to help children learn to get along with others, enjoy peer interactions, and understand the standards for appropriate classroom behavior.

As children test the limits of appropriate classroom behaviors, it is the staff's responsibility to teach social skills in a number of ways. Our discipline policy is positively based; the staff models and praises appropriate behaviors and efforts towards them. Staff members will redirect a child to alternate activities or play groups and also demonstrate appropriate social behaviors and language.

The teachers communicate the classroom rules to the children in an understandable way. Behaviors that are not acceptable are addressed immediately by a staff member with reminders, instruction on appropriate behavior, and other positive intervention techniques. Although these rarely occur in ECSE, unacceptable behaviors would include any bullying or intimidation.

A child may be removed from a group situation if they are endangering themselves or others, or significantly disrupting the activity. This is done to provide safety for all children, as well as to allow the child to regain a level of appropriate behavior and rejoin the group. Any behavior intervention that is needed on a regular basis or that is different than those typically found in an early childhood classroom will be discussed with the parents. In some situations, specific behavior intervention plans may be added to an IEP or IFSP through the team process.

Assignment of Staff

Assignment of staff to work with individual children and specific classrooms is a complex task. As children receive services over their early childhood years, the individual staff members providing these services will most likely change.

Each ECSE staff member is well trained to meet the needs of your child. The ECSE staff members bring a broad range of experience and expertise to our program. Their active participation in workshops, conferences and ongoing formal education helps them maintain a level of excellence despite rapidly changing and expanding fields of knowledge.

Teaming

Teaming is a key concept in Edina's Early Childhood Special Education program. When a child in Early Childhood Special Education receives services from more than one staff member, the staff members' ability to work closely together helps the child achieve his/her goals and objectives. Each discipline (e.g., ECSE teacher, speech/language pathologist, and occupational or physical therapist) teaches, models, and discusses intervention techniques for the other team members. This provides the children and families with an integrated approach to the child's development. Time is set aside three to four times per month for teams to meet together and plan for the children's needs.

Early Childhood Special Education General Procedures

Attendance

Early Childhood Special Education starts on the same day as the half-day kindergarten program, two days following the first day of school for 1st - 5th grades. After school starts, ECSE follows the 1st - 5th grade school calendar. (Refer to Program information on page 9 for information on the Extended School Year.) Refer to page 32 for a school calendar listing.

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the Early Childhood Special Education Message Line at 952-848-4236 as early as possible. Do not call your child's teacher to report an absence. If there is a substitute teacher, the message will not be retrieved from voice mail. Leave your message on the Message Line and it will be forwarded to your child's teacher.

If your child rides the bus, it is also your responsibility to notify the Bus Garage at 952-848-4979 prior to the time of your child's pick-up. See additional information under Transportation.

If you need to cancel a home visit, please call the service provider(s).

Regular attendance at school or maintaining your home visit schedule is important to the education and growth of your child. With the exception absence/cancellation for health or medical reasons, please have your child receive their services as regularly as possible.

Emergency Information

Emergency contact information will be collected at the start of each school year, or when your child enters the program if it is after the start of the year. Please notify us immediately when there is a change in any of the following: family status, address, telephone number, place of employment, child care provider, or other emergency information.

Building Security and Office Hours

ECSE's school security procedures are similar to those in the elementary school buildings. The doors on either end of the classroom hallway will be open during classroom drop off and pick up times, but will be locked at other times of the day.

If you are late in dropping off your child or you need to pick him/her up early please stop at the Early Childhood Special Education office to be let into the classroom hallway. In addition visiting parents and other visitors need to stop at the office to sign in and be escorted to the individual classroom or conference room. Visitors will be given a guest badge.

The Early Childhood Special Education office is open from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Please make prior arrangements if you need to meet with staff members before or after office hours.

Student Privacy

During the course of the school year, in classroom and individual sessions as well as home visits, we may photograph/videotape the children and parents in Early Childhood Special Education. The photographs/videos are used for educational purposes, the ECSE Newsletter, school brochures, photo displays, flyers and catalogs. In addition, traditional school pictures are taken of every classroom student, along with a group classroom photo with the classroom teaching staff.

Classroom teachers also provide Class Directories that include the student names, parent names and home phone numbers. The directory is for use only by ECSE parents and it not to be used for the purpose of solicitation or circulated to other parents.

At the end of this handbook is a "Prohibition to Release Information" form. If parents choose not to have their child photographed and/or listed in the Class Directory, they must fill out the form and return it to their child's case manager.

Information Privacy

It is of utmost importance that each child and family's privacy related to special education issues and services be maintained to the highest degree possible. Consequently, staff members will request that they not be asked to discuss confidential information about an individual child in a public setting such as Open House, Parent Days, Family Fun Nights and when parents are dropping off or picking up their children. Please refer to the Communication section of this manual for various communication methods with your child's staff that would maintain your privacy and that of your child.

Likewise, when parents are visiting their child's classroom, it is important that each parent recognize and respect the privacy of other children in the program.

Parent Visits

Parents are welcome visitors in the classrooms. Because classroom schedules may vary daily with support staff, outdoor/gym time and/or snack time, please call your child's teacher a day in advance of your visit to schedule an appropriate time to be in the classroom.

Parents are welcome to plan a special activity, share a talent or interest, or bring things to share with the children. When visiting your child's classroom, please remain with his/her group. Go to the ECSE Office when you arrive to be escorted to the individual classroom.

School Closings

If winter storms or other emergency situations cause the Edina Public Schools to close school for the day, delay the start of school, or close school early, we will notify our community through:

- Edina Public Schools Website: See the district homepage for announcements and links to specific information, www.edina.k12.mn.us.
- Edina School Messenger: Automated calls will be placed to all families with phone numbers registered in the system.
- ECSE Message Line: An updated message on status of classes and programs will be on the ECSE message line, 952-848-4236.
- The news media: WCCO TV (Channel 4) and Radio (830 AM); KARE TV (Channel 11); KMSP TV (Channel 9); KSTP TV (Channel 5)

When to Look: 6:00 a.m., or as soon as the decision is made if the need arises during the day.

- If school is cancelled for a day, all ECSE activities are cancelled including home visits. Edina Family Center activities and Community Education Programs are also cancelled.
- If the school start is delayed in the morning, the morning ECSE classes and programs are cancelled including home visits. Morning Edina Family Center and morning Community Education Programs activities are also cancelled.
- If school is dismissed early, the afternoon ECSE classes and programs are cancelled including home visits if they have not begun. Afternoon Edina Family Center activities and Community Education Programs are also cancelled if they have not begun.

Communication

Phone Calls

Though we encourage close communication between staff and families whenever possible, phone calls to your child's teacher should be made outside of classroom hours. The best times to call are between 8:00 and 9:15 A.M. and 3:45 and 4:00 P.M. This will prevent disruption of classroom activities. You may, however, call and leave a message any time on voice mail.

Urgent Messages

If you have an urgent or emergency message for a staff person, do not leave a voice mail message. Please contact Sue Kemper (952-848-4232), Kathryn Hagen (952-848-4223) or the school nurse (952-848-4962) and speak with someone in person. It is imperative that emergency messages not be left on voice mail.

E-Mail

Many parents find e-mail to be a convenient way to communicate with their child's ECSE staff. Even though we have not encountered problems with this communication method in the past, the nature of e-mail is that we cannot guarantee confidentiality of messages that go outside of the school district's secure network. If you would like to use e-mail to communicate, please complete the blank form at the end of this document and give it to your case manager.

Folders and Communication Forms (3 to 5 year old classroom settings)

Communication is encouraged between home and school. Your input is very much appreciated. For children in some of the 3 to 5 year old classroom settings, the district will provide a folder to go between school and home on a daily basis. Please write your comments whenever possible and the staff will do likewise. These folders are the property of the school district and must be returned to the case manager at the end of the year. Other classrooms use Communication sheets that share information about your child's school day.

Newsletters

Newsletters will be sent via e-mail or hard copy periodically. If you would like to share information or have any ideas for items that we might include, please contact the program secretary. The newsletter is to serve your needs, so we appreciate your input.

ECSE Web Site

Edina's Early Childhood Special Education Program has a web site that contains information about the program and electronic copies of the newsletters and information regarding special events at ECSE. You can access the site at www.edina.k12.mn.us. Click on Support Services, then Special Education and finally Early Childhood Special Education.

Transportation Information: Busing

If your child uses Edina Public School transportation services, an adult must be present when your child leaves or arrives home. "Hand to Hand" transfer is used for all children in ECSE.

The vehicles are either mini-vans or mini-buses. Routes are scheduled by the Transportation Department. Vehicle size is determined by the number of children on the daily routes.

Occasionally transportation services are contracted through Adams Services (also known as St. Louis Park Services) due to district-wide needs for specialized busing.

- Home Pick up

The driver will sound the horn twice and will wait a maximum of THREE (3) minutes. If your child is not outside by that time, the driver will continue with the scheduled route.

- Home Drop off

The driver will not leave a child until an adult appears. If there is no adult at the stop and a parent cannot be immediately located, the child will be returned to the ECSE school.

- Arrival at school

ECSE staff members meet the buses as they arrive and escort the children to their designated classroom.

- Departure from school

At the end of the school day, the bused children are escorted to their buses by an ECSE staff member.

Cancellations

You must call the BUS GARAGE at 952-848-4979 if your child is not going to be riding an Edina bus at his/her scheduled time(s) to and/or from school. This applies to illness, doctor appointments, or planned absences from school. Please call as early as possible as the ECSE bus routes are individualized to meet our daily needs. Also call the ECSE message line (952-848-4236) so staff is aware of temporary transportation changes. If your child rides with Adams Transportation, the ECSE office will call Adams and relay the information.

If you need to cancel a bus ride home and have made special arrangements for a person unfamiliar to our staff to pick up your child, please call the ECSE message line (952-848-4236) and leave the name and phone number of that person. Also, tell the person picking up your child that one of our staff will ask them for a photo ID before releasing the child to him/her.

Permanent Changes

To make any permanent changes to your bus schedule, call the ECSE Secretary at 952-848-4232.

Car Seat Policy

Mini-vans All children will use a car seat or booster seat.

Mini-bus Children up to age four will use a car seat.

Children age four or older will use a lap seat belt.

Some children may need additional equipment based on their individual needs.

Do not permit your child to take food or candy to eat on the bus.

Any time you have questions or concerns about your child on the bus, please call the Early Childhood Special Education office at 848-4232.

Transportation Information: Parent Transport

Although many of the children attending the various ECSE classrooms ride the bus, some parents transport their children to and/or from the ECSE center. The following information is for parents who transport their children:

Parent Drop-off and Pick-up

It is recommended that parents park in the Center Parking Lot near Door 5 on the east side of the Community Center. The hallway doors will be open five minutes prior to the start of class. Bring your child to his/her locker, and then bring into the classroom at the class start time. One of the staff members will be waiting in the classroom for the children. At the end of the school day, the hallway doors will be opened five minutes before the class end time and parents will go to the classrooms to pick up their children.

The drop-off and pick-up times are quite busy, with buses, parents, staff members, and most importantly children. Each child's safety and a smooth, efficient transition are our priorities.

The following are guidelines to help make the process as smooth and safe as possible:

- a) With many buses and parents transporting their children, staff members have multiple responsibilities at pick up and drop off time. While home-school communication is one of the foundations of our program, please limit conversations with teachers at these times. Contact your team members at a time that works for both parties (see Communication below).
- b) We are aware that parking at pick-up and drop-off times can be challenging! There are multiple "15 minute" parking spots and Handicapped Parking spots when appropriate. Please use these spots or other regular spots in the parking lot. Do not park or stop at the apron in front of Door 5 as this blocks the traffic flow for buses and cars. Also, do not park in the bus-only lane. Buses need that entire lane for safety purposes.
- c) Please arrive on time to drop off or pick up your child. Routine and consistency help young children feel secure, so arriving and leaving at the same time as classmates contributes to a smooth home/school transition. If you arrive late, bring your child to the ECSE Office and a staff member will provide access to the locked hallway.
- d) If you have made special arrangements for a person unfamiliar to our staff to pick up your child, please call the ECSE message line (952-848-4236) and leave the name and phone number of that person. Also, tell the person picking up your child that one of our staff will ask them for a photo ID before releasing the child to him/her.

Please note the following safety reminders:

- Never leave children unattended in the car when dropping off and picking up other children. Not only is it a safety concern, it is also illegal. We recognize it is difficult to get young children, particularly sleeping young children, in and out of the car, but leaving them unattended is a safety issue.
- The ramp/wall area outside of Door 5 is a tempting place for children to run down and climb upon, but this too is a safety issue. Please have children walk down the ramp and do not allow climbing or jumping from the wall.

Mileage Reimbursement

Mileage reimbursement is available for the miles from home to school for drop-off, and from school to home for pick up (not round trip both ways). Mileage information sheets will be provided for parents transporting their children at the beginning of each school year. Please note that each trip needs to be recorded on a mileage sheet based on attendance. Mileage is determined on the shortest route to/from school per Mapquest.com. The reimbursement rate is set by the U.S. Government. Parents are responsible for submitting the completed mileage reimbursement request to their child's case manager at the close of the regular school year in June. We cannot provide reimbursement for requests submitted after that time.

Health / Illness

Center-based children

It is a priority in ECSE is to keep our children and staff members healthy! Many of our young students have compromised immune systems and are at severe risk when exposed to contagious disease.

The following information is intended to help parents decide whether to keep their child home from school:

- If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or more he/she should stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without the use of fever –reducing medicine.
- If your child is vomiting or has diarrhea, he/she should stay home for 24 hours after the last episode.
- If your child has a sore throat, he/she should not be in school until the symptoms are gone or until they have been treated with medication for 24 hours.
- If your child has a rash that may be disease-related or the cause is unknown, check with your physician before sending your child to school.
- If your child has yellow or green nasal discharge that may be related to an infection, he/she should not be in school until checked by a physician and treated with medication for 24 hours if an infection is present.
- If your child has a communicable disease, please call the health office to report the illness and discuss when your child can return to school.
- If your child has head lice, he/she needs to stay home until treatment has occurred and no live lice are seen. Nits are *not* considered live lice. For directions on how to control the spread of lice at home, follow this link: <http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/treatment.html>

If symptoms occur while your child is at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child as soon as possible. Sick children will not be sent home on the bus.

Students diagnosed with chronic health conditions should provide the school with a physician's recommendations for any special limitations or restrictions at school. Some children may have an Individual Health Plan attached to their IEP.

School Nurse

Two Licensed School Nurses share a position to serve the ECSE center-based students as needed. They participate in health evaluations and program planning and are available for consultation regarding special health concerns.

Medications at School

Whenever it is imperative that a child receive medication at school, the following is required: the original container, an order signed by the physician, and written permission from the parent. A copy of the permission form can be found at the end of this handbook. Medication forms can also be downloaded from the Edina Public Schools Health Services web site on the Internet.

Immunizations

In order for children to attend ECSE parents must show that their child is in compliance with Minnesota State Immunization Requirements (see Minnesota Department of Health for more information). A copy of your child's current immunization record must be on file at school. Immunization forms will be given to you upon your child's enrollment in a center-based ECSE program and at the yearly open house. Immunization forms are also available on ECSE's website.

Allergic Reactions

Each year there is an increased number of children and staff in ECSE who have allergies with different levels of severity. The allergies can interfere with school performance or can be a safety issue for individuals with allergies. For example, perfume or cologne can cause migraine headaches or an exposure to nuts can cause a life threatening, anaphylactic reaction. Please support children and staff by promoting a safe school environment. The following are ways that you can assist:

- Do not send snacks or party treats to school that have peanuts or tree nuts or peanut oil.
- Parents and children should not wear perfume and cologne to school. There have been situations at school that have resulted in a severe reaction to a fragrance.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these potentially serious conditions and your respectful response for these individuals with allergies. If you have any questions please call the school nurse at 952-848-4962.

More school health information is available under "Health Services" on all school web sites at www.edina.k12.mn.us.

Health / Illness

Birth thru Two – Home Visits

It is a priority in ECSE is to keep our children and staff members healthy! Many of our young students have compromised immune systems and are at severe risk when exposed to contagious disease.

Staff members may visit several homes in one day. They take health precautions which include frequent hand washing and bleaching of toys and materials. However, there can be some risk of spreading infections from home to home if extra care is not taken. Parents should inform visiting staff prior to a visit if any family member in the home has a contagious illness. Home visits will not take place if there is a risk of spreading germs among families.

The following information is intended to help parents decide when to cancel a home visit:

- If anyone in your home has a fever of 100 degrees or more, there should not be a home visit until 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- If anyone in your home is vomiting or has diarrhea, there should not be a home visit until 24 hours after the last episode.
- If anyone in your home has a sore throat there should not be a home visit until the symptoms are gone or until they have been treated with medication for 24 hours.
- If anyone in your home has a rash that may be disease-related or the cause is unknown, check with your physician before the teacher comes for a home visit.
- If anyone in your home has yellow or green nasal discharge that may be related to an infection, cancel the home visit until the ill person is checked by a physician and treated with medication for 24 hours if infection present.

If you need to cancel a home visit, please call the staff person scheduled to visit as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please call the ECSE school nurse at (952)848-4962.

Parent Conferences and Open House

All children have annual IEP/IFSP formal reviews based on their last IEP/IFSP annual meeting date. Additional conference times are scheduled in November and March of each school year. Because of the IEP/IFSP conference process, not all families will have conferences during the district-wide conference periods. However, the Early Childhood Special Education staff is available to meet with you as needed.

In addition to formal conferences, an Open House is held prior to the start of each school year to allow children and families an opportunity to meet their teacher, visit the classroom and meet other classmates.

Informal conferences, to be held prior to the start of school, will be scheduled at the Open House. These will be short conferences allowing you to meet with your child's teacher/therapist(s) and share important information about your child.

Playground and Gym

ECSE children enjoy the use of an outdoor playground and indoor gym (room 130) that have been designed for preschool age children and are shared with Early Childhood Family Education and kindergarten Kids Club.

The ECSE classrooms are scheduled to go outside or to the gym for a short period each day of class. In certain situations, a specific classroom may schedule large motor time in the ECSE motor room with the occupational or physical therapist, but this is the exception.

The decision to go outside or to the gym depends upon the weather and air quality guidelines. Your classroom teacher/case manager will provide more specific information about going outdoors in the winter months.

Movement Class

Some of the ECSE classrooms participate in Movement Class with Christine Calkwood two times per month. The goal of this enrichment class is for all children to have fun, explore movement and music, try some new skills and find new ways to express themselves using movement, props and play-dancing. This enrichment class is provided through Parent Volunteer Association (PVA) funds raised in the previous school year.

Field Trips

Field trips for children in pre-kindergarten classes may be planned in some classrooms to appropriately coincide with units or concepts being studied. Parents will be notified in advance of any field trip. Signed Parent Permission Forms are required for a child to participate in a field trip. A small fee may be charged, if necessary, for admission. Scholarships are available to make certain all children can participate. Parents are encouraged to attend and help on our field trips.

Clothing

Please dress your child comfortably. Suitable shoes for indoor and outdoor play are important. Be sure to provide your child with a hat, coat, boots, and mittens during cold weather, and sunscreen as appropriate.

Early Childhood learning can be messy and clothing inadvertently may get wet or dirty. All children who attend ECSE classes should have a change of clothing to be kept in their backpack or placed in their lockers. Please label all articles of clothing with your child's name.

If your child wears diapers or pull-ups, please supply us with diapers or pull-ups and wipes. Your teaching team will let you know when more supplies are needed.

Birthdays and Other Special Occasions

Parents may choose to send a special treat to be shared with classmates on their child's birthday. The health department requires that treats must be purchased from a store and in their original wrapper. Also, no tree nuts, peanuts or peanut products can be used because of children with health-threatening allergies. We suggest healthy snacks or non-food treats like stickers instead of high-sugar or high-fats foods.

Please check in advance with your teaching team before sending treats.

In consideration of all children's feelings, it is a policy that invitations to birthday parties held outside of school not be passed out at school or placed in the children's lockers.

ECSE Family Fun Nights and Other Special Events

ECSE and the PVA offer a number of evening or Saturday special events for parents and families throughout the school year. These include Family Fun Nights, speakers and a Spring Carnival. Parents and families of all children in the ECSE program, from birth – kindergarten, are encouraged to join in the fun and educational opportunities. These events will be publicized in the newsletter, flyers and /or the ECSE Website.

Play and Stay for Families in the Birth to Three Program

Play and Stay is a special opportunity for children in the Birth to Three Program and their parents to have fun together in a safe and accessible environment and have the opportunity to connect with other families. Child care is provided for siblings and the program is held on various Saturday mornings during the school year. ECSE staff members plan and facilitate the event. Play and Stay is funded through a generous and anonymous donation from a family that wanted to assist families with children birth to three years of age, with an emphasis on providing connections between families.

Site Council

The purpose of the Early Childhood Special Education Site Council is to serve as an advisory body to the coordinator and staff of ECSE. The Site Council meets five times per year. Childcare is provided while parents attend Site Council meetings.

The parent body of the site council is represented from the following groups: parent of child between the ages of birth and three, parent of child between the ages of three and kindergarten, parent of a child receiving speech only services and a parent of a kindergartner that received ECSE services the prior school year. The Parent Volunteer Association also sends a representative to the meetings.

Staff on the site council consists of a home visitor, classroom teacher, service provider (speech or OT), parent educator and coordinator.

Parent Volunteer Association (PVA)

The purpose of the Early Childhood Special Education Parent Volunteer Association is to support and enhance the educational programs at ECSE and to strengthen the relationship between home and school.

The PVA was created by parents and plays a significant role in organizing and running special ECSE activities and fundraising events. Each family is invited to join the PVA. If you have any ideas you would like to try, please let us know.

Parent Group

Parents have the opportunity to meet with other parents to share the joys and challenges of parenting a child with special needs through the ECSE Parent Group. Meetings are held two times each month in the ECSE conference room and are facilitated by the Parent Educator. Child care is provided. Meeting dates will be listed in the newsletter, flyers and on the ECSE website.

Parent Library

A Parent Library is maintained in the ECSE office with books and videos available for parents to check out. Topics include child development, discipline, general special education, specific disabilities and disorders, speech and language, parenting, grief and loss, and sign language. New books and materials are added on a regular basis. A complete listing of our library books can be seen on the ECSE web site.

Parent Resource Center – For Birth through Two Families

The ECSE program maintains a lending library of books, toys, videos, assistive technology and communication resources. From time to time staff may offer to leave items for your child's use. Materials may be offered because they provide a unique way of addressing a specific skill your child is learning at the time, because they allow for a trial of materials families may be considering purchasing, or because they encourage and promote interaction between the child and others. We do ask that the materials be kept by families for no more than one to two weeks, that they be used in the home with supervision and with the children receiving service, and that they be returned to the program in good condition.

Parent Education Opportunities

If you have questions or concerns about parenting or family relationships, a Licensed Parent Educator is on staff to help you and can be reached at 848-3973. Parent education opportunities for all Edina families are available through the Edina Family Center. The Family center also can provide assistance in locating resources beneficial to your family.

Family Needs

Children require a safe, nurturing environment for them to grow, learn, and feel accepted. For children to grow and feel good about themselves, they must have the following minimal requirements: good nutrition, shelter, medical care, clean clothes and body, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love, and a feeling of importance. When these needs are not met, a child is not able to really grow and learn.

If you have difficulty providing for your child's emotional or physical needs, you are encouraged to ask our staff for help. We will gladly review your needs and help you find a community resource that can offer assistance. In addition, several 24-hour community resources are available to help you when you find that you are experiencing more stress than you can cope with at a given time.

Safety Plan

As in all Minnesota public schools the ECSE program has specific plans for staff and children to follow in the case of situations such as fires, severe weather or other safety emergencies. Practice drills are held as part of these safety plans. In ECSE the practice drills are explained and practiced at a level appropriate for the children. The likelihood of an emergency is very minimal, but it is important to have a plan in place in case there is a fire or a tornado or a safety threat. State legislation determines the number and type of safety drills conducted in schools. These include fire drills, severe weather drills and lock down drills.

During fire drills, the children and staff move to the entry way at Door 5/6 or 2 as appropriate to their classroom location. During severe weather drills, children and staff stay in the internal hallway, away from windows and doors. The lock down drill simulates what would happen in the case of an intruder. In ECSE, these drills are called “safety practice” (the other Edina Schools call them “stay put drills”) and they entail sitting quietly together for a few minutes in a part of the room that is away from the windows or doors.

Another important safety measure in place is that the ECSE classroom area is locked with the exception of the beginning and end of classes when parents of children who are not on buses drop off or pick up their children.

Edina Public Schools has a Weapons Policy and Harassment Policy. These policies state:

Weapons Policy

Students and non-students, including adults and visiting youths, are forbidden to knowingly or voluntarily possess, store in an area subject to one’s control, handle, transmit or use any instrument that is considered a weapon or “look-alike” weapon in school, on school grounds, at school activities, at bus stops, on buses, or at school events.

The procedure for any student found to be in possession of a weapon is as follows:

1. Confiscation of the weapon or “look alike”
2. Notification of the superintendent
3. Notification of the parent/guardian
4. Disciplinary action as stated in Rights and Responsibilities for Student Management.

A student who finds a weapon on the way to school, on school property, or in the school building and takes it immediately to the principal’s office or to an adult staff member will not be considered in possession of a weapon. Appropriate measures shall be taken in these cases.

Harassment Policy

The Edina School District prohibits discrimination, harassment or violence on the basis of sex, race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or public assistance status. Among the acts prohibited by this policy are sexual harassment and sexual violence. (A complete copy of the District Harassment Policy can be obtained from the Coordinator.)

COMMUNITY RESOURCE LIST FOR ECSE FAMILIES

This list is provided as a service for ECSE families. The ECSE staff does not recommend or endorse any particular agency or service. If you are aware of any resource not listed here, please give the information to the ECSE Coordinator so it can be added to this list.

Adaptive Recreation and Physical Education

Adaptive Recreation Supervisor
City of Edina
4801 West 50th St.
Edina, MN 55424-1394
952-826-0433
www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/L4-32_AdaptiveRec.htm

Classes and program offerings specifically for children with special needs.

ARC – Greater Twin Cities

2446 University Avenue W., Suite 110
St. Paul, MN 55114-1740
952-920-0855
www.arcgreatertwincities.org

ARC is committed to securing for all people with developmental disabilities the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work and play. The organization helps to strengthen families by providing information on developmental disabilities and resources, individual and public policy advocacy, individual and family counseling, support group for families, individuals and siblings, workshops, training and locating recreation opportunities.

Autism Resource Network

5757 Sanibel Drive
Minnetonka, MN 55343
952-988-0088
www.autismshop.com

Classes, workshops, and resource information.

Autism Society of America

www.autism-society.org

Autism Society of Minnesota

2380 Wycliff Street, # 102
St. Paul, MN 55114
651-647-1083
www.ausm.org

Edina Family Center

5701 Normandale Road
952-848-3980
www.edina.k12.mn.us/community/familycenter

A part of Edina Public Schools Community Education Program, the Edina Family Center provides Early Childhood Family Education, pre-school opportunities, parent education, child care, school readiness and school age parenting information.

Edina Resource Center
5701 Normandale Road
952-848-3936
www.edina.k12.mn.us/community/erc

Fraser
2400 West 64th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55423
(612) 861-1688
www.fraser.org

Fraser is a Minnesota nonprofit organization serving children of all abilities and adults with special needs. This human service organization provides direct services, information and support in the areas of education, housing and health care.

Metro ECSU/Metro SPLISE Project Library
3055 Old Highway 8, Suite 302
St. Anthony, MN 55418
612-638-1500
www.ecsu.k12.mn.us

Provides a lending library of videos and books on a wide variety of topics for parents of children with special needs. Videos can be checked out for two weeks, books for one month. They will be sent to you; you are responsible for returning the materials. Call for a listing of available materials.

Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health
165 Western Avenue North, Suite 2
St. Paul, MN 55102
651-644-7333
www.macmh.org

Newsletter and information for families.

Minnesota Parents Know (MN Department of Education)
www.MNParentsKnow.info

Parenting information, resources and activities to help your children grow, develop and learn from birth through high school.

PACER Center
8161 Normandale Blvd.

Bloomington, MN 55437
952-838-9000
www.pacer.org

PACER, the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights, is founded on the concept of parents helping parents. PACER strives to improve and expand opportunities that enhance the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities and their families. PACER offers educational workshops, projects, and volunteer opportunities. It also has a Catalog of Publication, available upon request, as well as newsletters including the Early Childhood Connection published three times a year.

Park Nicollet Alexander Center

8455 Flying Could Drive, Suite 205
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
952-993-2498
www.parknicollet.com/clinic/Specialties/Alexander_center/index.htm

Offers occasional classes and workshops on child development and behavior. Call for a schedule of upcoming presentations.

St. David's School for Child Development and Family Services

3395 Plymouth Road
Minnetonka, MN 55305
952-939-0396
www.stdavids.net

St. David's mission is to promote the development and well being of children and their families. It also publishes a newsletter and sponsors a variety of programs for parents and families.

We Can Ride

952-934-0057
www.wecanride.org

The We Can Ride program offers therapeutic horseback riding to disabled children and adults. Locations in St. Paul, Minnetonka, Delano and Marine on the St. Croix.

West Metro Learning Connections, Inc.

355 Second Street
Excelsior, MN 55331
952-474-0227
www.wmlearningconnections.com

Serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and related conditions.