

Gates County NC Pre-K Preschool Program



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Mission Statement:

To increase a child's readiness to learn, The Gates County Preschool Program will provide quality educational experiences that are developmentally appropriate and that will enhance self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity, self-discipline, and preacademic skills.

Goals:

Promote a positive self-image and individualism.

Promote growth in the following developmental areas:

- Language

- Cognition

- Motor

- Self-help

- Social/emotional

Promote educational readiness

Hours of Operation:

The Gates County Preschool Program (GCPP) operates on the Gates County Public School schedule except that we may be closed five additional days for staff development. The GCPP will follow the elementary school schedule, observing all holidays, teacher workdays, early release days, make-up days . . . The GCPP will also follow all school closings, late entries, and early releases as prescribed by the school system for inclement weather or emergencies. The announcement of such closures that are not reported on the school calendar will be announced by:

TV Stations - Channel 3 - WTKR, Channel 10 - WAVY, Channel 13 - WVEC

You may also get a call from Gates County Schools' automated calling system alerting you to scheduled and unscheduled school closing. It is important that you keep an updated phone number in your child's record. **However, please do not wait for a telephone call. Please watch the news.**

Operational Policies

As Gatesville Elementary Preschool is operated by Gates County Schools, the program will follow the policies of the county school system and adhere to the policies established by DCDEE for Child Care. This includes following the established Criminal History Record Check requirement as established by **Rule 10A NCAC 09 .2703 CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK REQUIREMENTS**. Generally, this rule states that each staff member will submit to a criminal background check that includes fingerprinting.

Preschool Enrollment Process

A Gates County Preschool Program (GCPP / NC Pre-K) application must be completed in its entirety before submitting it to the GCPP / NC Pre-K. To be considered for this program, your child must be 4 years of age by the Kindergarten cutoff date (usually August 31st).

Each application will be rated according to the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten guidelines. Proof of residency and income will be required. Documentation such as tax records, paystub(s), or a letter from an employer is required. In the case that you report/claim “no income”, you will be required to complete and sign a statement indicating that you have no income. Depending on circumstances, certain documentation may be required, i.e. statements from the Department of Social Services or the person(s) supporting you and your child. These statements will be considered legal documents/declarations of your income. Not every child that applies for the NC Pre-K Program will be accepted. Some children will be unable to attend because their family’s income is too high. Others will not be chosen because the child is too young. All applications received by a predetermined date that is established annually will be evaluated together and the children deemed most “at risk” (as defined by the State of NC) will receive the first chance to attend the program. On request, the NC Pre-K rating worksheet can be shared with you for your child only.

At the time of application or enrollment into the preschool program a State approved screening will be administered to all children to assist in the determination of areas of strength and needs. On-going progress monitoring is achieved by following the State’s approved curriculum progress monitoring procedures.

When a teacher, parent, or other involved person has significant developmental, sensory, or behavioral concerns about an NC Pre-K child, he/she shall notify the local school system for assistance. The following steps shall be followed:

1. If, as a result of information gathered through the screening process, or from experience working with a particular NC Pre-K child, a teacher has significant concerns about a child and the program’s ability to address his/her needs, the program shall notify the local school system’s Preschool Exceptional Children Program for assistance.
2. The NC Pre-K administrator, teacher, and parent, in consultation with the school system’s Preschool Exceptional Children Program and other available resources, shall work together to develop a coordinated plan to support the NC Pre-K child’s placement in the NC Pre-K program. Every effort shall be made to maintain the child’s enrollment and participation.
3. If efforts to access the consultation needed to develop a coordinated plan of support prove unsuccessful, the NC Pre-K program shall contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education for assistance.
4. The Division of Child Development and Early Education must be notified if the NC Pre-K child’s continued enrollment and participation becomes impossible due to chronic disruptions or concerns for the safety of that child or others, and it becomes necessary to find another placement for that child.

Eligibility and Transition Into The Preschool Program

NC Pre-K Eligibility and Priority

The NC Pre-K Contractor, i.e., Gates County Schools, determines eligibility for the NC Pre-K program. The person designated to determine eligibility is the Preschool Coordinator.

Eligibility is determined by following the procedures set forth in the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program Requirements. A copy of these will be provided upon request or you can download the manual from:

<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/DCDEE-Sections/North-Carolina-Pre-Kindergarten-NC-Pre-K>

In summary, a child that is 4 years old by August 31st is eligible for NC Pre-K Program if the child meets one of the following criteria: gross family income is at or below 75% of the State Median Income level, the child has an IEP, the child has Limited English Proficiency, the child has a developmental or educational need as indicated by performance results on an approved developmental screening, the child has a chronic health condition as indicated by a health care provider diagnosis, or the child has a parent/guardian in the armed forces of the USA or the North Carolina National Guard or other military force. Determination of child eligibility does not guarantee placement in the NC Pre-K Program. Placement is impacted by available funds and the priority rating that is applied to the child's application. The priority rating is below.

Priority Requirements to Serve Children Who are “At-Risk”

The priority of NC Pre-K is to serve eligible children who are “at-risk”. For the purposes of determining eligibility priority for the Gates County NC Pre-K program, children will be given priority in the following order:

- First Priority:** Child was previously served as a 3-year-old by the NC Pre-K Site AND continues to have a developmental/educational need AND meets the income requirements.
- Second Priority:** Child is from a family whose gross income is at or below 75% of the State Median Income AND the child has an IEP.
- Third Priority:** Child is from a family whose gross income is at or below 75% of the State Median Income AND the child has a developmental or educational need identified by an approved screening.
- Fourth Priority:** Child is from a family whose gross income is at or below 75% of the State Median Income AND has another “at risk factor” (Limited English Proficiency, Chronic Health Condition, Military).
- Fifth Priority:** Child is from a family whose income is above 75% of the State Median Income AND was served by the site as a 3-year old, AND has an IEP.
- Sixth Priority:** Child is from a family whose income is above 75% of the State Median Income AND has an IEP
- Seventh Priority:** Child is from a family whose income is above 75% of the State Median Income AND has an identified “at risk factor.”

**Exception Rule: Children of military families can be served regardless of income and they do not have to be counted in the 20% over-income group. However, children that are income eligible must be served first. If slots are still available after all income eligible children are served, then military families can be served regardless of income.*

(Only 20% of the children served by NC Pre-K can come from families that are considered “over-income.”)

Another factor that is considered in child selection is whether or not the child is currently being served by a 4 or 5-Star facility and whether or not they are receiving subsidy. Our program strives to serve unserved children first.

Transition Into Preschool

To help with the transition **from home to preschool** the following procedures will be followed:

*The parent will be contacted by a school official advising the parent of the child's acceptance into the program and of any needed documentation from the parent to hold the child's slot. The application cover letter lists the documents needed to determine eligibility and documents that are required by the school system. These documents may include: Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, proof of income, immunization record and health assessment report. However, if these items were not supplied at the time of application, a checklist of needed documents will be sent home in the packet of information that is sent home upon acceptance into the program.

*A packet of information including the program guidelines, procedures and forms that need to be completed will be provided to the parent on their acceptance of the offered slot.

*Home Visits **may be** offered to the family but are not mandatory if the parent refuses.

*Days for parents/children to meet the teachers and for the families to receive additional information about the program may be scheduled. These days will be stated in the letter sent to the family when the child is accepted into the program.

*Developmental Screenings will be offered prior to entry into the preschool program if the parent applies by the advertised deadline. All children registered by the screening date are invited to attend. At this screening the following areas *may* be screened: developmental/educational screening, i.e., DIAL-4 or Brigance, speech-language, hearing, vision, dental, and height/weight. Shot records are also reviewed. Screening results will be reviewed with the parent on the day of the screening and, if indicated, an appointment will be made for a referral meeting with the Exceptional Children's Preschool Coordinator for possible evaluation of areas of concern. A preschool teacher will be invited to attend the referral meeting, eligibility meeting, and the IEP meeting if applicable. If a child does not attend the scheduled screening prior to entry, they will be screened within 90 days of when they enter the program.

*If a child that has an IEP is accepted into the program the assigned preschool teacher will be alerted to the identified needs and to the student's IEP goals. Parents will be invited to meet with the teacher and the Exceptional Children's service provider when the IEP is reviewed.

*Staggered Entry into the Preschool Classroom will be held. On the first 2 days of attendance for preschool (Day 1 and Day 2), one half of the children will come to preschool for a half day and then go home. The second half of the children will attend the next two school days (Day 3 and Day 4) for a half day and then go home. On Day 5 of school, all students will attend for a half day. Full days will begin on Day 6. This allows the teachers to

spend more time with each student to help ease their entry into the program and supplies time to talk with parents at departure.

Transition to Kindergarten

Current information regarding each NC Pre-K student's strengths and needs will be provided to the receiving school's principal to aid in student placement. A copy of each student's final progress report will be sent to the school to be added to the child's record.

Transition to Kindergarten is often stressful, especially for students with special needs. To help with this transition, IEP meetings will be held with the receiving school.

The child's cumulative record that was started in the preschool program will be passed to the receiving school prior to Kindergarten Registration. This record will contain a copy of the child's Proof of Age, Social Security Card (if provided), Affidavit of Residency/Legal Guardian, completed progress reports and the last health assessment report / immunization record provided to the preschool program by the parent.

The Preschool Staff will alert the families to Kindergarten Registration dates, times, and procedures for each elementary school.

Depending on student need as decided by the preschool staff, individualized transition plans may be established for some students, i.e., students with unique needs.

Parent Fees

No parent co-payment shall be imposed.

NC Pre-K Program Fees

Breakfast School rate unless free or reduced as determined by the **Free and Reduced Lunch Application** process*

Lunch School rate unless Free* or Reduced*

***Must** complete Free and Reduced Lunch application

Snack FREE

Trips FREE

Materials for learning - Provided by the GCPP (crayons, paper, scissors . . .)

Materials provided by parent: We ask that you provide us with a change of clothing and naptime items such as crib sheet and a towel or 2 towels. Please do not send pillows and stuffed animals. A book bag is suggested, but not required. Donations are accepted. Please see your teacher.

Transportation

For children only funded through the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program, transportation to and from the preschool will be the responsibility of the parent. If a child's preschool placement is funded by other funding sources that allow for transportation, an NC Pre-K student may receive transportation services through that funding source. Any child enrolled in the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program will be assessed for all available funding sources and transportation will be offered to any student that ~~are~~ is eligible for transportation through the alternate funding source.

The Gatesville Elementary Preschool Program recognizes that some families may have difficulty with transportation to and from the school. Our program has identified other transportation sources for families to explore.

- **Gates County Inter-Regional Transportation System, GITS**, is the coordinated public transportation program for the County of Gates. If interested in this service, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact GITS and complete the GITS requirements. GITS' phone number is (252) 357-GITS (4487). They are located at 714 Main Street Gatesville, NC 27938. There is a fee for this service. Many families use this service to transport their children to and from school but there are a limited number of slots available. If interested, parents are encouraged to contact GITS as soon as possible. Please note that the GCPP has no authority over GITS. GITS is a separate county agency with its own policies and procedures.
- Family/Friends
- Car Pool with other NC Pre-K families from the same neighborhood

Parent Meetings With Staff

Both the teacher and the parent may schedule meetings. If you have a concern, or would like to discuss your child's performance and abilities, please contact your child's teacher. She will be willing to schedule a meeting. You are welcome to bring other people to the meeting with you; however, we request that you let us know if you are bringing others so we may make appropriate accommodations. Your teacher may invite other school personnel to be involved in the meeting, i.e., Preschool Coordinator, Administrator, or Principal . . .

Required Documentation for all Preschool Students

Policy Statement - You must read, and sign a statement that you have read and will abide by the policies outlined in this handbook.

Proof of Date of Birth - Required **BEFORE** entry into the program. The GCPP is **not** allowed to waive this requirement. Proof of date of birth can be made by giving the school a copy of the Birth Certificate (preferred method) or by showing documentation of the date of birth on medical records.

Immunization Record - North Carolina law requires that immunization records be kept up-to-date. You will be required to update your child's file as needed. If your child is found to be out of compliance, you will be required to obtain the immunizations within 30 days of enrollment or provide a doctor signed schedule of immunizations. In the event that your child has a religious (**requires a statement of religious objection including the name, date of birth of the person of whom the exemption is being requested**) or medical exemption from receiving the required immunizations, we must have a statement from his/her physician.

Health Assessment - A health assessment is required to be on file at the NC Pre-K site within 30 days after a child enters the NC Pre-K program and must have been conducted within 12 months of program entry. The health provider is responsible for making appropriate referrals as indicated by the health assessment. The health assessment must include:

1. Physical examination
2. Updated immunizations
3. Vision screening
4. Hearing screening
5. Dental screening

On review of the Health Assessment, if a hearing screening or vision screening, was not completed the Gates County Preschool Program will complete this screening free of charge; however, if your child fails these screenings it will be the responsibility of the parent to schedule follow-up screenings/evaluation with your child's doctor. In addition, the GCPP will attempt to schedule a dental screenings on-site. You will be alerted, prior to the screenings, by the Gates County Preschool Program. If a dental screening cannot be scheduled by the GCPP or your child is not present on the day of the dental screenings it will be the responsibility of the parent to have this screening completed.

Developmental Screening - All children enrolled in NC Pre-K must receive a developmental screening using an approved screening instrument, unless the child has an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP). Children must be screened within 90 days after the first day of attendance in the program or within 6 months prior to the first day of attendance.

Proof of Income is required if a child is funded by NC Pre-K dollars.

Student Personal Data Form: This form will be provided to you on the day of enrollment or prior to the day of enrollment. It must be completed in its entirety and given to your child's teacher by the first day of enrollment. **It is YOUR responsibility to inform the GCPP on the first day of attendance or before of any developmental, physical, mental, or medical needs that your child may have.** Food allergies, hearing problems, medications . . . need to be given to your child's teacher **in writing before your child's first day of school or before you leave the premises on the first day of enrollment.** (Also see Medication Administration) The easiest way to do this is by completing this form before leaving your child on his/her first day. **It is your responsibility to keep this information updated in your child's record.**

Other "school" forms will need to be completed, i.e. Permission to Video, Travel and Activity Authorization, Transportation Policies, signed Discipline and Behavior Management Policy, Affidavit of Parent/Legal Guardian, Free and Reduced Lunch Application,

Permission to Release Student from School, and Permission to Participate. As school policies change or new needs arise, more information/forms may be necessary.

Sick Child Policy for all GCPP Students

Your child may not attend preschool if they have:

Temperature of 100 or greater
Pink eye
Diarrhea or vomiting
Head Lice – Live or Nits
Sore throat
Any communicable illness

Your child should be fever free *without medication* for 24 hours before returning to school. Your child should not return to school if they have had bouts of vomiting and/or diarrhea in the past 24 hours.

If your child has a cold, without a fever, and is able to participate in group activities, he/she will be allowed to attend. **However, if school policy changes, the GCPP will follow Gates County School health and safety policies.**

If your child becomes ill while in preschool, you will be contacted and required to **make arrangements for your child to be picked-up as soon as possible**. Your child will be isolated from the group in a designated, monitored sick area until you arrive. Please keep your contact and emergency information current. *Please be aware that our preschool program follows school policy and if the school changes the stated temperature/fever rule, our preschool program will follow the school policy.*

Medication Administration for all GCPP Students

The GCPP will administer medication to your child with the following requirements:

- Medication **MUST** be brought to school in its original container and labeled with the child's name, name of the medication, date and dosage times and frequency.
- Authorization form **MUST** be signed by the doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- If medication, amount, frequency or any other change is made a **NEW** authorization form **MUST** be given to the school.
- A permission to administer medication form must be completed by you before any medication can be given to you child. (Diaper cream and sunscreen are considered medications).
- Parents/guardians are required to transport all medications to and from school and to sign the Medication In and Out Log. (INSERT MEDICATION POLICY AND AUTHORIZATION FORMS)
- Medication not picked up at the end of the school year will be disposed on the last teacher workday. Another staff member will witness this process.**

Accidents

Children are very active and have a potential risk for injury. All safety precautions will be used to protect your child from harm. In the event that your child suffers an injury while attending preschool, you will be contacted. If we are unable to reach you, we will call the emergency contact numbers you listed for your child. There will always be a staff person on site who is certified in CPR and First Aid, who will be responsible for performing first aid and CPR, if needed. All emergency information will be kept in the children's records, as well in an easy access/easy carry manner, i.e. key ring, index card box, traveling file folder.

In the case that your child has to be transported to the hospital, Gates County Rescue Squad will be contacted via 911 for transportation to the hospital designated in your child's medical records. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital until a family member is available. Roanoke Chowan Hospital located at 500 Academy Street, Ahoskie, NC will be the hospital and emergency room used, unless another preference is stated. The phone number is 252-209-3000. ***Gatesville Elementary School's nurse will serve as the GCPP's medical consultant.*** An incident report will be made and shared with the parent for any injury received at school. If offsite medical treatment is needed the incident report will be filed with the Division of Child Development for all accidents/injuries requiring medical attention.

Attendance

Attendance Policy - As the mission of our preschool program is to promote growth in all areas of development, it is vital that children attend preschool regularly. Regular attendance promotes confidence, learning, social skills, and increased development in all areas. Inconsistent attendance makes it difficult for the child to adjust to the preschool program AND they miss learning opportunities! Of course, we understand that there will be times when the child is absent more than others. The GCPP is willing to work with you. Please keep in contact with your child's teacher so that we know what is happening.

Attendance Policy for NC Pre-K classes - Children attending an NC Pre-K class must attend regularly. After 3 consecutive absences the teacher will contact the parent about the student's status. Repeating patterns of absences will be investigated and if found to be "unexcused" will put the child's slot at risk. Your child's slot can be given to another if it is felt by the NC Pre-K staff that your child is not truly benefiting from enrollment due to the absences. As a general rule, your child must attend at least 10 days per month. Excused absences are not counted against the student's slot. A parent note explaining why the child is absent is required. Without a note or a verbal explanation, all absences will be counted as unexcused.

Arrival and Departure Times for Preschool Students-Gatesville Elementary Preschool operates on the same full day schedule as Gates County Schools. However, as the majority of the teacher directed instruction occurs prior to lunch it is expected that children will arrive at school by **9:00** a.m. so they are able to benefit from the part of the day that is focused on the instructional activities of the classroom. As stated previously, the staff of Gatesville Elementary Preschool is aware that there are circumstances which may prevent arrival before

9:00 a.m. and we are happy to accept children into the classroom after 9:00 a.m. when the child had to be late due to events such as scheduled doctor's appointments. However, ***on-going* / consistent** (25% or more) late arrivals, after 9:00 a.m., are a concern as the children are missing the instruction planned by the teachers. If your child's arrival time becomes a concern, the preschool teacher and preschool coordinator will schedule a meeting with the parent to help the parent resolve this issue. After the late arrival has been addressed, if the arrival time does not improve the child's situation will be discussed with the NC Pre-K Committee and possibly the staff at the NC Pre-K office at the Division of Child Development and Early Education. A decision will then be made as to whether the child is benefiting from placement. If the team decides that the child is not benefiting from placement, the child may be exited from the program.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The Gates County Board of Education requires all employees who have reasonable cause to suspect the abuse or neglect of any child less than eighteen (18) years of age, to report the case of such child to the Director of the Gates County Department of Social Services in compliance with provisions of the Child Abuse Reporting Law. The law permits these reports to be made orally, by telephone, or in policy on reporting suspected abuse will be followed.

Custody Disputes

If your child is involved in a custody dispute, a copy of the court order must be provided to the preschool in effort for us to follow its direction.

Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions describes the infectious control precautions recommended by the Center for Disease Control to prevent the spread of blood borne pathogens. The GCPP will practice Universal Precautions. Children, as well as staff, will be expected to wash their hands at the recommended times. (See hand-washing policy)

Cleaning Schedule

A cleaning schedule addressing the frequency of cleaning and sanitation of classroom and childcare areas will be posted on the bulletin board.

Drop off and Pick up Policy

You will be required to sign your child in and out when you drop them off or pick them up. The Sign In/Out form is kept in a designated location. Please send a note if someone other than you or the contracted transporter will be picking up your child. If the preschool staff is unfamiliar with the person, we may ask them for identification. Please understand this is for your child's safety. The Gates County School System does not provide after-school care for children in preschool. Please be prompt in picking up your child at the end of the school day as the preschool teachers have other duties in the school and will be unable to routinely keep

your child after the designated pick-up time. If you have an emergency and cannot get to the school by the designated time, please call the school so arrangements can be made for the supervision of your child. The drop-off and pick-up locations will be explained to you by your child's teacher.

Smoking and Tobacco Products Policy

The board of education promotes the health and safety of all students and staff and the cleanliness of all school facilities. The board believes that the use of tobacco products on school grounds, in school buildings and facilities, in or on any other school property owned or operated by the school board, or at school-related or school-sponsored events is detrimental to the health and safety of students, staff, and school visitors. To this end, and to comply with state and federal law, the board adopts this tobacco-free policy that prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products as follows. For the purposes of this policy, the term "tobacco product" means any product that contains or is made or derived from tobacco and is intended for human consumption, including all lighted and smokeless tobacco products, as well as electronic cigarettes, vaporizers and other electronic smoking devices even if they do not contain tobacco or nicotine.

Rest Time

All children will be required to rest after lunch. They will not be punished for not sleeping; however, they will be expected to lie quietly on their mats/cots, which are provided by the preschool program. Towels that you supply for cover will be sent home weekly for washing, or more if needed.

Daily Activities

A daily schedule will be posted. All activities will be age-appropriate and stimulate your child's overall development.

Children will be taken outside everyday unless prohibited by weather. Indoor play times that encourage large/gross muscle movement will be provided when outside play is prohibited.

Nutrition

The GCPP utilizes the food program offered by the Gates County Child Nutrition Services. Portions and nutritional requirements described in the US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (USDA) will be followed. However, if you choose to pack your child's meals we do not "evaluate" what you send ***if you OPT OUT of the supplement program. Please be aware that if you OPT-OUT, you will be required to supply all the food for your child unless they get a school-lunch. This means that you will also have to supply the snacks.***

We, as a staff, believe that healthy meals enhance development and increase the chances of a happy, healthy, and successful life and encourage you to use the food services at school or provide a *healthy* meal for your child.

- If you choose to OPT OUT of the supplemental food you must sign and submit the OPT OUT form.
- If you want the preschool program to continue to supplement what you send as we do now, please indicate that choice on the attached form.
- If an OPT OUT form is not received, we will assume that you want us to supplement the packed meal and, depending on your free/reduced status, the cost may be passed along to you.
- **Please understand that if you OPT OUT, you are responsible for providing all of your child's food for the day. For example, if you send breakfast but not lunch our program is still responsible for providing a USDA approved breakfast as you did not provide all the meals for your child that day. Expenses may incur.**
- Even if you choose to OPT OUT, there are a few items that will not be served by our program, even if you send them to school. Sodas are not allowed! Please do not send sodas and other high sugar foods to school.

Field Trips

Occasionally, children will be taken on field trips. Transportation will meet the requirements set forth by law. Child/staff ratio will be maintained on field trips. Parents are encouraged to accompany their child on a field trip when able. It is expected that parents will follow the field trips agenda and stay with their child. You will be notified in advance on any planned field trips. A permission slip must be signed before your child can participate in the trip. Please be aware that parents are not allowed to ride the bus.

Family Involvement and Communication

The NC Pre-K Program faculty and staff strive to provide meaningful opportunities for families to be involved in their preschooler's education. Shared decision-making through interactive partnerships with parents will be used to help ensure that each child's needs are being addressed appropriately. To this end the following will occur:

- A Home Visit by a preschool teacher prior to the first day of attendance may be offered to each child's family. At this meeting and at the direction of the Site Administrator the following may be discussed: preschool staff, required documentation, student handbook, program requirements/regulations, school calendar, daily schedule, transportation policy, sick policy, drop-off/pick-up policy, special programs, and family concerns.
- Days for families to meet with the teacher to ask questions and submit paperwork will may be scheduled prior to the first day of school. This is in addition to the Home Visit dates.
- At the direction of the Site Administrator, formal parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled at least twice per year and then as needed. Attendees to the meeting will be the child's preschool teacher and the parent. Other attendees may include any of

the child's service providers such as speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist. Others from the preschool program that may attend include the teacher assistant, preschool coordinator, and principal/site administrator or designee. The parent is able to invite others to the meeting if desired. Prior notice of others attending is requested so that appropriate accommodations for seating and space may be made. The preschool student's progress will be reviewed and teacher/parent concerns regarding progress and overall developmental level will be discussed. If the parent or teacher has significant concerns a referral to the Gates County School's Exceptional Children's program will be made. At the referral meeting the following school members will be present: child's preschool certified teacher and a Local Education Agency (LEA) representative. The parent will be strongly encouraged to attend the meeting and to be an active member of this team. The parents will be informed that they can invite anyone they wish to the meeting.

- The health assessment report from the child's medical provider will be reviewed by the Site Administrator or designee. If the doctor did not perform all of the required screenings and there is not a record of these screenings being completed elsewhere, the preschool program will work with the parent to get the screenings completed. The hearing and vision screenings may be conducted by the school system. The parent will receive a *Health Assessment Status Report* from the NC Pre-K program. This report will indicate if any concerns were noted. If no concerns were noted, NO FOLLOW-UP NEEDED will be checked on the form and a parent conference will not need to be scheduled as the child's health provider should have shared the health information. If concerns were noted on any part of the health assessment a parent will be contacted to discuss the best course of action needed to meet the needs of the child. If a parent conference is schedule to discuss a health issue, the school nurse will be invited to attend the meeting.
- After the required developmental screening is complete the parent will receive a written report from the NC Pre-K program indicating the results of the screening and the recommendations based on the screening results. The following possible recommendations may be made:
 - NO FOLLOW-UP NEEDED
 - PARENT CONFERENCE IS NEEDED TO DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING
 - A statement on the bottom of the form allows the parent to request a meeting even if a meeting was not deemed necessary by the NC Pre-K program.
- At least one parent workshop will be offered, or supported, during the evening hours to help working parents attend. These workshops may be sponsored by other agencies, i.e., Smart Start. Parent requests will be considered.

- As our program recognizes that families are busy, we will use technology to communicate with families as agreed upon by the families. For example, we may use Class Dojo, email, virtual platforms such as Zoom, and/or texting in addition to the more traditional phone calls and notes.
- Family education session **may be** offered via Facebook, YouTube, TeacherTube, School Website or other similar site.
- Students and their families will be invited to attend functions hosted by the school. These activities may include: Fall Festival, Movie Night, book fairs, field trips...
- As consistent communication is important each child will be provided with a “communication folder.” Teachers will put important papers such as Permission Slips for Field Trips in this folder as well as notes about the child’s day, progress, and/ or concerns. When returning/sending forms, notes, and parent comments ***please use the communication folder.*** Forms dropped in the book bag are easily overlooked and may be lost which may cause miscommunication and conflicts. ***PLEASE USE THE COMMUNICATION FOLDER.***
- Parents are invited to visit and help children with classroom activities as they are able. The NC Pre-K classrooms have an open-door policy, indicating that parents are welcome to visit at any time. On special occasions and holidays, the NC Pre-K program would like parents to assist with parties and activities if possible. Due to sanitation and health standards, home prepared foods are not allowed. Packaged cookies or treats and unopened juices are acceptable. Please consult the teacher if you wish to send treats at any time. No invitations for activities/parties held outside of the preschool will be distributed unless all children are invited.

Working with Children/Families with Limited English Proficiency

The faculty and staff at Gatesville Elementary Preschool understand the importance of working with families with limited English proficiency. Effective communication with families is required to help students grow to meet their potential. However, communicating with families with limited English proficiency can be challenging even when both parties (school and family) strive to communicate with the other party. To increase communication effectiveness with families with limited English proficiency the following steps will be used.

When possible, an interpreter will be provided, if needed, to aid non-English speaking families in communicating with the preschool staff. Written information will be provided both in English and in the family’s native language. Translation devices/apps such as Google Translate and Speak & Translate will be used.

In the classroom, items will be labeled both in English and in the native language of the student with LEP. Speaking translation apps such as Speak & Translate will be used in the classroom to help clarify messages. The family will be consulted on their preferred support devices/apps.

A Community Resources sheet will be shared with the family. The resource sheet will attempt to address the following areas:

- School Contacts
- Government Resources
- Community Resources

Plan for Addressing Challenging Behaviors

Belief Statement

We, the faculty and staff at Gatesville Elementary Preschool, believe that preventing the suspension and/or expulsion from the Pre-K Program is necessary to be able to address persistent and challenging behaviors that may interfere with the child's ability to learn in our educational system. Research clearly shows that children with persistent and challenging behaviors are at high risk of school failure and that behavior problems in preschool is the "single best predictor of delinquency in adolescence, gang membership, and adult incarceration." (www.challengingbehavior.org). In addition, it is reported that if these behaviors are not changed by the end of the third grade, the behaviors will become chronic behaviors and will cost more to remediate. Therefore, we must work to maintain a child's placement in our program, not "in spite of their behavior" but because the behavior exists. Preschool has the best chance of making a lasting impact as we can address these behaviors before they become deep-rooted

What is *persistent and challenging behaviors*?

Gatesville Elementary Preschool has adopted the definition of *persistent and challenging behavior* provided by the *Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI)* which can be found at <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/explore/glossary.htm>

[Persistent and] challenging behavior is defined as any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults. Challenging behavior is thus defined on the basis of its effects. While some children's challenging behaviors are developmentally normative and effectively addressed by adult vigilance and the use of appropriate guidance procedures, [other children need more targeted intervention to address the persistent and challenging behaviors.]

TACSEI offers these examples of persistent challenging behaviors for preschool children :

- 1) physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects forcefully, pinching, pushing, and biting.

- 2) climbing on things in the classroom that are not permitted
- 3) destroying property, including another child's work
- 4) taking toys from other children forcefully
- 5) running that poses a safety risk for the child or others
- 6) running from the class
- 7) violent tantrums
- 8) verbal aggression including saying bad words, yelling at other children, making threats
- 9) ordering adults to do something
- 10) persistent and prolonged crying that is loud or disruptive and interferes with child's engagement in activities.
- 11) verbal or physical refusal to follow directions
- 12) inappropriate touching, stripping, and other behaviors that are hurtful, disruptive, or dangerous to self or others.

Plan

Addressing challenging behaviors in preschool requires three tiers of prevention and intervention, as outlined in the NC Preschool Pyramid Model in North Carolina:

- Tier I: Implementing universal practices/strategies
- Tier II: Collecting data and implementing targeted strategies
- Tier III: Planning the Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Support Plan.

Implementing strategies at each tier of the model with fidelity greatly decreases the occurrence of behavior that is out of control.

Plan of Action - First Steps:

First ask- Does the child with the persistent and challenging behavior have an IEP? Is the IEP being followed? If the child does not have an IEP continue to follow this plan. If the child does have an IEP, contact the Exceptional Children's Preschool Coordinator and consult with the IEP team. If the child has an IEP, the IEP team must be involved once challenging behaviors persist so they can follow established guidelines and procedural safeguards for reviewing and updating the IEP accordingly.

Then ask- Have the parents been contacted? Parents need to be contacted and included in all stages of planning for their child. Initially, the teacher can speak in general terms about problem behaviors and ask for the parent input. The parents need to be aware that the preschool coordinator will be visiting the room to observe *the classroom* so additional *classroom* strategies may be developed to support the child, if needed. Reassure the parent that they will be kept informed and their participation in specific strategy development for their child will be sought. Parent engagement needs to continue through all TIER interventions until the persistent challenging behavior has been addressed successfully.

Tier I: Implementing universal practices/strategies:

The first tier involves establishing universal practices to support and promote emotional and social development for all children. Practices include: promoting positive relationships, setting up supportive environments, and providing instruction on emotional literacy, regulating emotions, and problem solving.

Tier I Plan of Action:

As it is recognized that following a tiered approach is the best way to reduce behaviors, the teacher, once he/she has identified the need for behavioral support, will complete a self-assessment using the NC Preliminary Pyramid Assessment (PPA) checklist (See attached: *NC Preliminary Pyramid Assessment*) to ensure that universal strategies that promote positive behavior is routinely implemented in the classroom. Teaching staff will also consult with the SEFEL trained preschool coordinator for additional support in Tier I strategies, if needed. The Preschool Coordinator will work with the teaching staff to develop a **precision statement** of the challenging behavior and schedule time to observe the classroom using the PPA checklist. (Attached: *Developing Precision Statement for Problem Behavior.*) (Note: *At this level, the Persistent Challenging Behavior Precision Statement is based on general observation and is not yet necessarily data driven.*) A precision statement of challenging behavior is developed to clearly define and communicate the behavior that needs to be addressed. After the observation, the Preschool Coordinator will develop a plan for support which may include training, coaching support, consultation, or other strategies and will follow up to determine the effectiveness of the support in 10 to 15 school days. The Preschool Coordinator will also review and discuss the **Classroom Behavior Record** (Attached: *Classroom Behavior Record.*) and the **Early Childhood Suspension Report** (Attached: *Early Childhood Suspension Report.*) with the teaching staff. The Classroom Behavior Record is used to record data for children who have been identified as needing Tier II interventions. It is used to help measure the occurrence of challenging behaviors and to track the progress of the student once targeted strategies are implemented.

Tier II: Collecting data and implementing targeted strategies. The second tier involves targeted support for children with emotional and social developmental delays or other risk factors who need more practice and assistance in order to understand emotions and learn and apply social skills. At the second tier, teaching staff and families work together to gather data to describe children’s challenging behavior in order to identify specific skills and situations that require more attention and specific strategies to improve behavior.

Tier II: Plan of Action:

The second tier involves providing targeted support to children who need more practice and assistance with learning and applying emotional and social skills. The children who tend to fall within the second tier usually have emotional and social developmental delays or have other risk factors that lead to displaying challenging behavior. At the second tier, teaching staff and families, in conjunction with the Behavior Specialist, work together to gather data on challenging behavior in order to identify specific skills and situations that require more attention and specific strategies to implement in order to improve behavior. Teaching staff will implement and assess effectiveness of strategies for improving challenging behavior for a period of at least two weeks. As part of data collection, teaching staff should continue to use the Classroom Behavior Record and Early Childhood Suspension Plan Report to document persisting behavior and strategies used to address behavior. Other forms to collect observational data may be used. The Preschool Coordinator and the Behavior Specialist may ask that specific data forms be completed. The Behavior Specialist or the Preschool Coordinator will provide the forms. Families can help with data collection by noting occurrences of challenging behavior and strategies implemented in the home and community settings and by tracking any progress or changes. Families can be valuable resources when

developing strategies to address behavior by providing examples of what works in the home and community, including motivators and the child's preferences and strengths. The Preschool Coordinator will consult with the teacher as she is collecting the requested data to help monitor behavior and to offer support and suggestions to the teacher. After 10 days of strategy implementation the teacher will share the data collected with the Behavior Specialist. If the behaviors are improving, the plan will continue as is or with modifications as needed. Data collection will continue for another 10 school days. The data again will be reviewed by the Behavior Specialist and if the strategies have been successful in modifying the challenging behavior the team may decide to no longer meet or to continue to monitor the situation as the behavior warrants. If the child's behavior is not changing the team may decide to revise the plan and monitor the behavior for another 10 days or move to Tier III. If the child has an IEP, the IEP team must be involved so they can follow established guidelines and procedural safeguards for reviewing and updating the IEP accordingly.

Tier III: Analyzing Behavior Purpose Form and Developing a Behavior MAP (Make A Plan). When children continue to exhibit challenging behaviors after the first two tiers of practice have been implemented to fidelity Tier III strategies will be implemented. At the third tier, a behavior support team assembles to analyze the behavior including a review of the data collected at the second tier and other information that describes the antecedent, contextual events, and consequences of persistent challenging behavior. With this information, the team develops a Behavior MAP which includes specific strategies for replacing the challenging behavior, assuring that the challenging behavior is not inadvertently rewarded, and eliminating or decreasing triggers associated with the challenging behavior.

Tier III: Plan of Action

The child's parent will be contacted, in writing, and informed that the Behavior Specialist and/or Preschool Coordinator will observe the child in the classroom. The parent will sign a form giving permission for this observation to occur. After the *Analyzing Behavior Purpose* form is completed, the data gathered on the Analyzing Behavior Purpose form and the information gathered in Tier II will be analyzed by the Behavior Support Team members with the Behavior Specialist taking the lead. The Behavior MAP will be developed the Behavior Specialist after the analysis is complete. The parent will be contacted and the Behavior MAP will be reviewed with the parent. Family strategies to address the behavior will be explored with the parent(s). Community mental health resources available to the child and family will be explored and shared with the family. The Preschool Coordinator and the county's Behavior Specialist will assist the teacher and families throughout the process of developing individualized intensive interventions for children in need of a Behavior MAP. If the child has an IEP, the IEP team must be involved once challenging behaviors persist so they can follow established guidelines and procedural safeguards for reviewing and updating the IEP accordingly. As part of data collection, teaching staff should continue to use the Classroom Behavior Record to document persisting behavior and strategies used to address behavior and/or use other forms provided by the team to document specific behaviors. The success of the plan will be monitored by the Preschool Coordinator and at least one other member of the Behavior Specialist. Adjustments will be made as necessary to try to increase success; however, if the behaviors are not decreased, a referral to the Exceptional Children's Program will be made.

Even with the implementation of strategies at each tier, it is possible that very serious, violent, out-of-control behavior can occur. When this happens, the safety of all children must be protected by attempting to deescalate the violent, out of control behavior.

Crisis Response Procedures

Definition of a crisis situation: A crisis situation occurs when a child is at risk of hurting themselves or others. Examples would include:

- When a child is having a tantrum; child violently head bangs
- Child throwing hard objects at teachers/peers.
- Attacking others with scissors.
- Attacking others in general; biting, scratching, punching.
- Attempting to escape the classroom, lunchroom, or playground.

Procedures:

While maintaining a calm demeanor and using a supportive and calm tone of voice:

1. The teacher moves to intervene for safety.
2. The teacher attempts to establish eye contact.
3. The teacher gives short clear instructions on what the child should do next
4. The teacher can use her body to shield other children from hits, kicks, and thrown items.
5. In the event of teacher attack, a large pillow or other large, soft material in the classroom could be used as a buffer between child and teacher. The teacher while maintaining her position between the child and other children can lead the child to another, less populated area by slowly backing away from the child. Teacher B should be engaging the other children to keep them occupied and help them to understand the situation. Possible relocation of the other children may be necessary.
6. If more than one teacher is needed to support the child in crisis; Teacher B will call the Preschool Coordinator or other teacher for assistance.
7. All doors between classroom and main exit will be shut to ensure safety and a teacher will be positioned near the exit door/gate. If a child is climbing the playground fence the teacher will position themselves to prevent the child from going over the fence and another teacher will go outside of the fenced area to quickly stop the child from running into dangerous areas if the child does make it over the fence.
8. For a student that is harming themselves; objects will be removed as quickly and safely as possible. If head banging; teacher will try to insert a pillow.

*Physical restraint will not be used unless immediate physical harm is likely to the child or to others. However, a child may be removed from a harmful situation to a safer environment. In doing so; two staff members will support the move. Physical restraint is allowed if it is part of a behavior plan that has been developed by a team, i.e. IEP Team. Extensive efforts to include the parent in the plans will be made.

In very severe cases, when a child persists in exhibiting serious challenging behavior that is likely to harm himself or others even after the above strategies have been implemented over time, the behavior support team will review the information noted on the Early Childhood Suspension Report document and discuss whether or not suspension or expulsion is necessary. If the child has an IEP, this discussion should include the IEP team which will then decide how to proceed. These cases should be rare. Before this suspension or expulsion occurs DCDEE will be contacted for support.

Toys in Preschool

We have plenty! Since all children love all toys it is strongly suggested that you do not allow your child to bring a toy to class unless it is for Show and Tell. Toys are easily broken and lost. Let's avoid a potential problem by leaving toys at home except on designated days. The NC Pre-K Program will not be held financially responsible for any lost or broken toy.

Appropriate Clothing

When dressing your child for school, please remember the following:

- Your child is climbing and running on the playground. The best shoes are shoes that easily stay on a child's feet, i.e., sneakers. High heels, flip-flops or sandals without a strong back-strap, limits a child's ability to run and play with his/her friends.
- Your child needs to be able to toilet as independently as possible. Please send your child to school in clothes that he/she can manipulate independently. As cute as little overall are, these straps easily dip into a toilet and are hard for children to fasten and unfasten, especially when they are in a hurry! Please do not send your child to school in clothes that your child has difficulty pulling up/down when going to the toilet, i.e., back buttoning one-piece outfits.
- We are required to go outside! Please dress your child appropriately for the weather and send adequate outside wear such as coats, hats, and gloves in the winter.
- **Due to time restraints it is not feasible to change your child's shoes when going to the playground and when returning to the classroom. Your child will go to the playground in the shoes that they wear to school.**

Grievance Procedure

If you encounter a problem with the preschool program, you should notify your child's teacher. She will work with you on a resolution. In the event that resolution cannot be achieved the problem should be taken to the Principal of the school or the Preschool Coordinator. If your problem is not resolved, you would then follow the appeals process outlined in the policies of the Gates County School System.

Fire Drills, Tornado Drills, and Lock Downs

The GCPP participates in safety drills as required by DCDEE.

Religious Activities

Activities, instruction, or communications which promote religious beliefs shall not be directed toward children participating in the preschool classroom.

Other

Please do not send chapstick, make-up, hand lotion, bug spray, suntan lotion, sunscreen, or other similar items to school with your child. We are not allowed to use these items in preschool without written permission from a parent or a doctor's order. Appropriate forms must be used. See your teacher for the form.

For the safety of all children, **balloons**, of any kind, **are prohibited**. This is per NC Child Care Rules. Please do not ask to bring balloons to school, even for parties. If they are brought to school, they will not be allowed in the classrooms. We do understand that balloons are fun and exciting and that they often are used to express important sentiments such as *Happy Birthday, I love you, Happy Valentine's Day*, but NC law no longer allows them to be in the classrooms. Thank you for your understanding.

VERY IMPORTANT
FOR YOUR REFRIGERATOR

Sick Policy

Your child may not attend preschool if they have:

- Temperature of 100 or greater
- Pink eye
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Head Lice – Live or Nits
- Sore throat
- Any communicable illness

Your child should be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Your child should not return to school if they have had bouts of vomiting and/or diarrhea in the past 24 hours.

Please keep your contact and emergency information current.

Drop off and Pick up Policy

You will be required to sign your child in and out when you drop them off or pick them up. You must sign them in and out even if you transport them every day. The Sign In/Out form is kept on top of the cubbies. Please send a note if someone other than you or the contracted transporter will be picking up your child. If the preschool staff is unfamiliar with the person, we may ask them for identification. Please understand this is for your child's safety.

Our preschool program follows the school schedule. As we do not provide before and after school services we will not be able to take your children before the official start of the school day.

Breakfast and Lunch Fees

Unless the Gates County Nutrition Office has approved you for Free Lunch, you are responsible for the price of your child's breakfast and lunch.

If you choose to send lunch for your child it must meet the USDA guidelines. If the lunch you send does not meet the USDA guidelines the lunch will be supplemented from the cafeteria at your expense. This is an NC Daycare requirement.

Medication Administration for all GCPP Students

The GCPP will administer medication to your child with the following requirements:

- Medication MUST be brought to school in its original container and labeled with the child's name, name of the medication, date and dosage times and frequency.
- Authorization form MUST be signed by the doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- If medication, amount, frequency or any other change is made a NEW authorization form MUST be given to the school.

-A permission to administer medication form must be completed by you before any medication can be given to your child. (Diaper cream and sunscreen are considered medications).

-Parents/guardians are required to transport all medications to and from school and to sign the Medication In and Out Log. (INSERT MEDICATION POLICY AND AUTHORIZATION FORMS)

What is considered medication? Everything – chapstick, play make-up, lotion, over-the-counter medicine, prescription medication. . .If you have a question, ask your child’s teacher.

-Medication not picked up at the end of the school year will be disposed of by the school nurse on the last teacher workday. Another staff member will witness this process.

Attendance Policy

As a general rule, your child must attend at least 15 days per month. Excused absences are not counted against your child. Repeating patterns of absences will be investigated and if found to be “unexcused” will put the child’s NC Pre-K slot at risk. Please keep us informed!

Appropriate Dress

Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. We all like to see our children dressed nicely; however, our students play outside, climb, slide, jump, run, dig in the dirt, paint, color, make sand castles ... Please send your child in clothes that can withstand this fun-style of learning and growing. Shoes are important. **Please send your child in shoes that will stay on their feet. Please – no flip-flops or flip-flop style shoes.** When little girls wear dresses, please let them wear shorts under the dress. We often sit “criss-cross applesauce” which makes it difficult to maintain a child’s modesty when wearing a dress unless shorts are worn underneath.

Please do not send chapstick, make-up, hand lotion, bug spray, suntan lotion, sunscreen, or other similar items to school.

Balloons

For the safety of all children, **balloons**, of any kind, **are prohibited**.