

HAYES CENTER Preschool

STUDENT-PARENT

HANDBOOK

2026-2027



Hayes Center Public Schools

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Hayes Center, Nebraska 69032
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Hayes Center Preschool student/Parent Handbook 2026-2027 School Year

Intent of Handbook

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents, and staff as a guide to the rules, procedures, and general information about this school district. Students and their parents must become familiar with the handbook, and parents should use it as a resource and assist their children in following the rules contained in it. The use of the word “parents” refers to any adult who has the responsibility for making education-related decisions about a child, including, but not limited to biological parents, adoptive parents, legal guardians, and adults acting in loco parentis.

Although the information in this handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, it is not intended to be all-encompassing or to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during a school day or school year. This handbook does not create a “contract” with parents, students, or staff, and the administration may make decisions and rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration is responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. If a situation or circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based on applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

Members of the Board of Education

Name	Position
Toby Cox	President
Dexter Lacey	Vice president
Andrea Richards	Secretary
Nick Cox	Treasurer
Megan Messersmith	Board member
Michael Messersmith	Board member

Administrative Staff

Name	Position	Contact Information
Kris Freeland	Superintendent	kfreeland@hccardinals.org
Megan Soundy	PK-12 Principal	msoundy@hccardinals.org

Elementary Teaching Staff

Name	Department	Grades
Vanessa Peligrino	Music	K-12
Cheyenne Jeffers	Elementary	1 st
Ellie Marquardt	Elementary/JH	5-8 ELA
Brin Martin	Special Education	K-12
Hannah Brott	9-12 ELA & Title I	K-12
Aaron Gallegos	K-12 health, PE, ELL, AD	K-12
Andrea Neal	Preschool, Fine Arts, Yearbook	PK-12
Kory Rhode	Elementary	5-6 Math and Social Studies
Leah Anderjaska	Guidance	PK-12
Dove Lacey	Elementary	K
Kitty Loomis	Elementary	3 rd
Angela Christner	Elementary	4 th
Rachel Peter	Librarian, Technology, 5-6 science	K-12
Sherri Freeland	Elementary	2 nd

Support Staff

Name	Position
Bob Littrel	Bus Driver
Travis Soundy	Transportation Director and Head Maintenance
April Carroll	Office Manager/bookkeeper
Nanci Mintling	Para-educator--Preschool
Jessica Perez	Custodian
Tammy Dow	Food Service Director
Alicia Dimas	Para-educator
Peggy Messersmith	Para-educator and bus driver
Les Johnson	Bus Driver
Blanca Fichtner	Custodian
Ashli Cox	High School Secretary
Alissa Gubbels	Elementary Secretary
Abbie McMillen	Para-educator

Brenda Anderjaska	Para-educator, Media
Jay Robinson	Bus Driver
Ray McDaniel	Bus Driver
Cindy Robinson	Para-educator

Preschool Advisory board

Hayes Center Preschool will meet with an advisory board quarterly to discuss the program's past, current, and future progression as well as the coordination of services and transitions. The advisory board will be composed of school administration, the preschool teacher, preschool para, kindergarten teacher, parent representatives, community representatives, and other specialists as seen fit for the given year or agenda. These meetings are open to anyone in the public who would like to attend. The agenda for Preschool Advisory Board meetings will be available in the Preschool classroom and the minutes will be posted on the school website after the completion of a meeting.

Hayes Center Preschool Calendar and hours of operation

- For the 2026-2027 school year, Preschool will meet in 2 sections
 - Children in their first year of preschool eligibility (3-4 year olds) will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:55 AM-3:35 PM.
 - Children in their second year of preschool eligibility (4-5 years olds) will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:55 AM-3:35 PM.
- Junior kindergarten will meet 7:55-3:35 Monday and Wednesday and every Friday from 7:55-3:05 for the 1st semester. For the second semester, Junior Kindergarten will meet Monday-Thursday 7:55-3:35 and every Friday 7:55-3:05
- For the 2026-2027 school year, the first day of school will be:
 - Junior Kindergarten: Friday, August 14th
 - 2nd year eligible preschool students (4-5 year olds): Monday, August 17th
 - 1st year eligible preschool students (3-4 year olds): Tuesday, August 18th
- For the remainder of the school year, Hayes Center Preschool will follow the same school calendar as Hayes Center Public Schools K-12. This can be found on the Hayes Center Public school's webpage: <https://www.hccardinals.org/>

Hayes Center Public Schools Mission

To prepare students to be lifelong learners and productive, responsible citizens.

Hayes Center Preschool is composed of staff, families, and students who all work together. We all have the responsibility of modeling and teaching students skills from all learning domains. The students are provided a variety of hands-on, play based experiences that will foster their development. We strive to use each student's own unique strengths and abilities to make each one successful. It is through a partnership between home and school that we can best support students. By our caring, hands on, play based environment it is our mission to have students feel safe and encouraged to learn.

Goals for Hayes Center Preschool

Students:

1. Children will cultivate a joy and yearning for learning
2. Children learn how to think, reason, question, and experiment critically
3. Children will gain problem solving skills
5. Children will connect experiences between home, school, and the community
6. Children will gain respect for others and positive self-concept
7. Children will gain experience with creative self-expression in a process over product manner
8. Children will gain receptive and expressive language skills through verbal communication with peers and adults and hands on experiences as well as through developmentally appropriate pre-literacy experiences
9. Children will gain experience with safety, health, and nutrition
10. Children will continue to grow in their understanding of and use of social and emotional skills
11. Children will gain understanding of mathematical principals including time, space, and quantity
12. Children will gain skill and ability in both their fine and gross motor skills through hands on, exploratory play experiences

Parents/families:

1. Families will become actively involved in the education of their child(ren) through

activities including (but not limited to):

- Family literacy events, monthly literacy bags, parents engagement activities held a minimum of three times during the preschool year, home visits, volunteering in the classroom, engaging with Seesaw, parent/teacher conferences, etc.
2. Families will become equipped with tools to help their children continue to grow and develop in the home setting
 3. Families will value the education their child(ren) is receiving

The community:

1. Members of the community will become actively involved in the education of the young people in the community
2. Members of the community will see the importance of the education of young children

Staff:

1. Will continue to grow in their knowledge of educating young children
2. Will respect the diversity of children and families
3. Will serve as a facilitator in the learning environment, fostering play in a language rich environment
4. Will create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment for children
5. Will help children manage behavior through the use of positive reinforcement, redirection, and anticipation of problems
6. Will promote family involvement in the education of students

Hayes Center Preschool Teaching Philosophy

For young children, education is a process of personal and intellectual growth achieved through the mediums of exploration, play, and active participation. Education should provide a way for young children to learn to think reflectively and abstractly in order to solve problems as well as cultivate a sense of individuality in each child.

Hayes Center Preschool staff believes that all children can learn if they are given the opportunity to actively explore and manipulate their world in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. Every child has unique strengths and abilities and it is the staffs' responsibility to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster each child's social,

emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Development is promoted by practices that support independence, interdependency with peers, creativity, and respect for self and others.

The first few years of a child's life are developmentally important and greatly significant. During these years, children have very important work that needs to be done: play. Hayes Center Preschool is a firm believer that play is a child's work. Through play, children can explore their interests, and continue to develop their imagination, language, social skills, cognitive, and motor abilities. Play gives children the opportunity to work through and make sense of their past experiences and it also serves as a way for children to express their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

In order for children to receive the most benefit out of their education, play and learning experiences must align with the children's interests. This requires the staff to get to know the children and what they find most interesting. Children are also active learners creating knowledge and learning through their daily experiences with materials and people. Once the children's interests are known, it is important for staff to encourage the children to perform experiments about their interests, assist in the researching of interest topics, as well as to provide lessons and activities that coincide with the children's interests.

Appropriate behavior is fostered by helping children learn to control their behavior and work out their conflicts with others rather than relying solely on adults to manage their behavior and intervene in disputes. Positive discipline places emphasis on preventing problems by attending to the room arrangement, having age-appropriate expectations, providing interactive activities for play learning, and active adult monitoring and supervision.

An atmosphere of mutual respect among staff and families is important for all who interact with children. Staff work as partners with parents but parents are the ultimate decision-makers in planning and setting goals for their children. Information from teachers based on current research and recommended practices provides support to families in their decision-making process. The advocacy efforts of staff and families are important for improving the lives of all children.

Hayes Center Preschool Curriculum

Hayes Center Preschool uses an eclectic curriculum approach. Our curriculum pulls together practices from varying curriculums and tailors these practices to meet the needs of the children on a more individualized basis. The guiding factor in our curriculum is that children learn best through the median of play and hands on experiences. With this in mind, Hayes Center Preschool provides an ample amount of time for both structured (teacher facilitated) and unstructured (child facilitated) play. These play experiences use components of loose parts play, thematic play, large and small motor play, sensory play, dramatic play and more. Whether the play is structured or unstructured, each play experience is thought out in advance and is based around the interest of the children and the skills that the children are currently working on at the given time. Hayes Center Preschool also utilizes the "Plan, Do, Review" process. Within our curriculum, there is an emphasis on using real-life experiences to build on a child's knowledge. We strive to provide an array of language rich opportunities through multi-sensory medians to

build on a student's understanding of the world around them. Every child's timetable is unique, and is viewed as an active and interactive process where children learn most effectively from their own discoveries. Our curriculum is guided by and based around the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3-5 as well as Teaching Strategies GOLD authentic on-going assessment process.

To promote play based learning and child directed learning, the Hayes Center Preschool classroom is arranged into "interest areas", which we call centers. These areas provide an array of open ended materials that children can use based on their individualized current developmental stage. These areas include:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| • Dramatic center | • Reading center | • Art center |
| • Sensory center | • Block center | • Music center |
| • Literacy and writing center | • Math center | • Science center |
| • Fine motor (manipulative) center | • Magnet center | • Social/emotional center |

Utilizing the "interest area" classroom design encourages growth and development of children in a number of different ways and through and number of different skills:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Measurement | • Letter formation |
| • Size/shape | • Sharing ideas |
| • Geometry | • Ways of communicating |
| • Small and large muscle control | • Meaning of print |
| • Problem solving | • Print concepts |
| • Sharing and turn taking | • Observation skills |
| • Cause and effect | • Predictions |
| • Hand/eye coordination | • Questioning |
| • Positional words | • Reasoning |
| • Social skills | • Planning |
| • Classification | • Drawing conclusions |
| • Language acquisition | • Spatial awareness |
| • Creativity | • Tactile experiences |
| • Color concepts | • Cognitive development |
| • Emotional expression | • Pre-reading skills |
| • Self-confidence and self-expression | • Book appreciation |
| • Visual perception/discrimination | • Information gathering |
| • Negotiating | • Phonemic awareness |
| • Emotional regulation | • Rhyming |
| • Sustained attention | • Building comprehension |
| • Idea representation | • Auditory discrimination |
| • Abstract thinking | • Direction following |
| • Risk taking | • Event sequencing |
| • Delayed gratification | • Memory development |
| • Self-regulation | • Motor control and awareness |
| | • Task completion |

- Cooperative play
- Acceptance of differences
- Number recognition
- Comparisons
- One to one correspondence
- Counting
- Estimation
- Time and space
- Flexible thinking
- Social problem solving
- Letter discrimination
- Sorting and ordering
- Patterning
- Graphing
- Quantity

Developmental domains:

a. Social-emotional development- Staff will provide children with experiences that help children:

1. recognize their own and other's feelings
2. regulate their emotions, behaviors, and attention
3. develop a sense of competence, positive attitudes towards learning, and learning to help
4. resolve conflicts in constructive ways
5. learn from one another
6. interact positively, respectfully, and cooperatively with others
7. learn to understand, empathize with, and take into account other's perspectives
8. develop a positive self-concept

Throughout the course of the day, children will be able to interact with staff who:

1. are attentive and responsive
2. facilitate social competence
3. facilitate the ability to learn through interacting with others
4. Provide consistency to foster self-regulation and attachment

b. Physical-Physical development involves the development of large and small muscles. The environment of Hayes Center Preschool is arranged in a way that promotes and allows children to move freely and begin to achieve mastery of their muscles through self-initiated activities. Children will be given ample experiences using their hands and fingers.

Activities that may be used to develop fine motor skills can include, but are not limited to:

1. using pegboards
2. learning to fasten clothing such as zippers, buttons, shoelaces, etc.
3. using writing utensils such as crayons, markers, colored pencils, paint etc.
4. using puzzles
5. fingerplays
6. using tongs and grabbers
7. using pipettes
8. beading

Children will also have numerous opportunities and experiences to assist in the development of their gross (large) motor skills. These experiences can include, but are not limited to:

1. dancing (movement and music)
2. climbing
3. crawling
4. running
5. balancing
6. bouncing

c. Language- Hayes Center Preschool strives to integrate language learning (verbal and written) into multiple areas and interactions throughout the day to create a language and literacy rich environment. This language model provides opportunities for children to see and hear print and language that is found in their everyday lives-also known as environmental print. These print materials are then integrated into every learning area in Preschool. The Preschool will also provide an ample amount of books strategically placed around the classroom to enhance exposure to language. The staff will also ensure that the children have many experiences listening to stories whether this is done via a group story time when the teacher reads or through individualized story reading at the request of the child. In order to build both receptive and expressive language skills, verbal communication will also be encouraged by having the children:

1. respond to questions
2. verbalize needs, thoughts, and experiences
3. describe things and events

4. Think, reason, and question critically

Integration of key content areas:

a. Early literacy-Throughout the course of the day, children will have the opportunity to be actively involved in making sense of print and having the opportunity to become familiar with and recognize print that is available in the classroom. This will be enhanced by:

1. labeling items belonging to children with the child's name
2. labeling other materials throughout the room
3. using print (connected to meaningful pictures) to describe rules and routines
4. staff helping children connect spoken and written words via brainstorming charts, KWL charts, can/have/are charts, in child created artwork, etc.

In relation to print materials, children will also be provided with the opportunities to:

1. be read books in group and individual settings
2. explore books on their own and have a quiet place to do so
3. have access to various types of books that include storybooks, non-fiction books, rhymes, alphabet books, picture books, etc.
4. be read the same book on repeated occasions
5. retell and reenact events from a story with puppets, stuffed animals, felt board stories, etc.
6. identify the parts of the book

In relation to writing, children will have the opportunities to:

1. readily access writing materials in all learning centers
2. create various types of writing including scribbling, letter-like marks (mock letters), and developmental (inventive) spelling
3. write or dictate ideas
4. recognize and write letters
5. see staff model the functional use of writing
6. be given the support they need to write on their own
7. access the alphabet and other printed words related to current interests

b. Early mathematics-children will be provided with opportunities and materials to:

1. build an understanding of numbers, number names, and their relationships to quantities and symbols
2. categorize by one or two attributes such as shape, size, and color
3. Encourage the integration of math terms into everyday life
4. understand the concept of measurement of both standard and non-standard form
5. understand basic concepts of geometry such as naming and recognizing 2 and 3 dimension shapes and describing these in their own words
6. build an understanding of time in the context of their lives, schedules, and routines
7. recognize and name repeating patterns
8. Understand and explore size and quantity relationships
9. understand, use, and explore spatial relationships

c. Science- children will be provided opportunities and materials to:

1. learn key concepts and principles of science such as:
 - a. differences between living and non-living things
 - b. life cycles
 - c. physical properties of objects and materials
 - d. changing of objects, people, animals, materials, etc. over the course of time
2. use their five senses to observe, explore, and experiment
3. use simple tools to observe objects and phenomena: magnifying glasses, tweezers, tongs, etc.
4. collect data
5. represent and document findings
6. encourage thinking, questioning, and reasoning about observed phenomena
7. encourage the discussion scientific concepts in everyday conversation

d. Creative Expression-Creative expression will allow children to gain an appreciation of, new concepts of, and vocabulary related to the following categories:

1. art
2. music
3. drama
4. dance

These experiences are geared to stimulate creative expression in children in a process over product environment.

f. Health and safety-children will be provided with opportunities and experiences that:

1. encourage good health practices such as good nutrition, hand washing, and brushing teeth
2. promote nutritional learning, including
 - a. identifying food sources
 - c. preparing healthy food
 - d. eating healthy food
3. increase awareness of safety rules in classroom, home, and community
4. provide practice with safety procedures

g. Social studies-children are provided learning opportunities to:

1. foster positive self-concept
2. become part of the classroom community and gain a sense of belonging
3. explore social roles in the family and workplace through play
4. learn about the community in which they live
5. engage in discussion about
 - a. fairness
 - b. friendship
 - c. responsibility
 - e. differences
6. learn about physical characteristics of local environments
7. learn how people affect environments

8. build a foundation for understanding economic concepts
9. explore change related to people and places over the course of time

Assessment

The Nebraska Department of Education requires that students who receive early childhood services (birth-5 & preschool) participate in Teaching Strategies GOLD for an on-going, authentic assessment of each child's growth and development. This system assesses the growth of children in developmental domains (social/emotional, physical, language, and cognitive) as well as in content learning (literacy, mathematics, science, technology, social studies, and the arts). The purpose is to help teachers become more efficient and effective in getting to know each student-what they can do as well as their strengths, needs, and interests. With this knowledge, the teacher will better be able to guide a child's learning and plan engaging experiences that meet the individual needs of the child as well as the group needs of the class. Teaching Strategies GOLD is a confidential online documentation system. This authentic ongoing assessment system has the ability to use pictures/videos/audio recordings of students and students work. This system is meant to help teachers be more effective and efficient when working with children "capturing the moment" so it can be reviewed in more depth after the moment has passed and a clearer more accurate assessment of the situation can be completed, which leads to more accurate usable data on levels of growth and development. Only administration, the preschool teacher, and the preschool para will view these materials.

Hayes Center Preschool Enrollment

- Hayes Center Preschool offers preschool to children 3-5 years old. In order to attend preschool, a child must turn 3 on or before July 31st and must not turn 5 on or before December 31st.
- Hayes Center Schools offers a Junior Kindergarten class for those students whose parents have chosen to add a transitional year between full time preschool and full time kindergarten. The purpose of Junior kindergarten is to provide an extra year of growth and development for children in all areas of learning: social, emotional, language, physical, cognitive, literacy, and more. It is meant to provide an extra year for children to mature and gain skills that will help them have a greater amount of success in Kindergarten as well as all throughout their educational careers. Any child who meets the Kindergarten eligibility age is eligible to participate in Junior Kindergarten. The Preschool and Kindergarten teachers will meet with parents to discuss participation in this program, but the parent will make the final decision on Junior Kindergarten participation. The make-up of this program will be as follows:
 - Children who are Kindergarten eligibility age will enroll in Kindergarten
 - For the 1st semester of the school year, these children will attend school on Monday, Wednesday, and every Friday. They will spend the morning in the

preschool room (7:55-12:45) and the afternoon in the Kindergarten room (12:45-3:35)

- For the second semester, these children will come to school every day of the week. Still spending the morning in the preschool room and the afternoon in the kindergarten room.
- Enrollment forms, for Preschool and Junior Kindergarten, are available at the Hayes Center Elementary of High School office or by contacting Miss Neal.
- The school will also need a copy of the child's birth certificate and immunization records.

Tuition

Hayes Center Preschool offers school at no cost. We want everyone to have an equal opportunity at learning.

Parent involvement and communication

At Hayes Center Preschool, parents are viewed as fundamental assets to the successful operation of the preschool program. Parents are valuable partners in the education of their children. This is why we have an "open door" policy at Hayes Center Preschool. Parents are welcomed into our program at any time throughout the course of the day. We also want to collaborate with parents to improve the functioning of the program by having parents actively volunteer.

Parents are encouraged to bring any concerns, questions, or ideas that they have to the teacher. We want to provide the best education we can for the children and to keep parents as informed as we can, so parents are welcome at any time to come in and talk with the teacher about the progress and education of their child.

We strive to keep the lines of communication open between the school and the parents via parent-teacher conferences twice a year, home-visits twice a year, hosting an open house, hosting special events with specific family involvement, having open advisory board meetings, monthly newsletters, postings on Seesaw, etc. We also host a number of events that parents are invited to attend. These events include (but are not limited to): gingerbread house decorating, Donuts with Dad, family literacy and STEM nights, Muffins with Mom, and more.

As stated in the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 11, home visits are a required part of an early childhood program. Home visits provide the teacher with a greater insight into the children and their families, gives the families a greater opportunity to get to know the teacher, show how important families are to the program, and adds a personal touch to the child and family's preschool experience. There will be two home visits offered a school year, one at the beginning of the year in July/August/ September and one at the end of the year in April/May. The teacher will contact families with potential times and dates to complete each home visit.

There will also be parent/teacher conferences held two times a year. These conferences will be a time to discuss the development of each child with his/her parents, discuss any concerns and questions related to the preschool program of the child, and to continue to foster open and honest communication between the school and the families.

At the beginning of each new month, the preschool teacher will post a monthly newsletter on Seesaw. This newsletter will contain current articles related to early childhood education and development, important dates to keep in mind, and reminders. It will also include the monthly theme. This will give a brief overview of what we will be discussing over the course of the next month and possible activities and play scenarios children will be involved in. All of these are just suggestions and are open to change as the students show interests in different facets of the topics. The newsletter will also include a list of books that we will be reading or that will be available in the classroom that month in case families have these at home or want to read these outside of the school setting to make further connections with the learning process. A list of songs and fingerplays that we are using will also be included. A highlight from the last month of learning with a brief description and pictures will make an appearance as well.

This year, Hayes Center Preschool will again be utilizing Seesaw. This is a platform for Hayes Center Preschool families to stay connected and up to date with the growth, learning, and new discoveries their children make throughout the school day. It is a platform to celebrate the children's achievements and to gain an understanding of how the children learn! It is also a platform that will allow the teacher to send out reminders to families about various special activities, changes in schedule, or other preschool or school wide happenings. Seesaw is a classroom website that also has an App and can be used on any device. For those students who are new to preschool, if Miss Neal has a parental email, she has already sent out an email invitation for you to join your child's Seesaw class. QR codes and explanation sheets will also be sent home with each child as another way to connect to your child's Seesaw class. We would love for families to be a part of this group with us.

Privacy

- This group is meant to share information with all the preschool parents about what the children are learning and doing throughout the school day. Please respect the privacy of all of the families and do not share what is posted in this group publicly.

Literacy Bags

As a means to foster the importance of literacy, family literacy, family involvement, and home school connections, your preschooler will periodically be coming home with literacy bags. These are thematic bags that contain books related to a theme and then games/activities that relate to the theme that can be done as a family. The goal is to send a book bag home with students at least once a month. Bags will be sent home on the last day of school for the week (Wednesday/Thursday) and will need to be returned by the next Monday/Tuesday. Please try to keep all of the parts of the book bag together. Each game has its own folder to store the materials and we would greatly appreciate if these were utilized to keep everything together so that it will be there for the next student to use.

Bathroom Routines

When students enter preschool they are to be already toilet trained. Now with the change in environment, the hustle and bustle of many kids, getting used to new adults, etc. accidents happen. This is one reason we ask that you ALWAYS have 2 changes of clothes in your child's backpack that includes shirts, pants, underwear, and socks. If your child comes home in the spare outfit, please remember to put a new spare outfit in their backpack. We do have a limited number of spare clothes at the school. If your child is sent home in clothes that are not his/hers, please send these back to school so that they can be used again as needed. If your child does have an accident at school, we will send home an "oops report" that will let you know why they are in a change of clothes (wet slide, messy paint play, did not make it to the bathroom in time, etc.).

We have bathrooms inside our classroom and the children are free to use these at any time they need. As a means of teaching self-regulation, decision-making, and independence, we do not have specific times that we go to the bathroom as a group. Throughout the day, the teacher will give reminders and ask the group if anyone has to use the bathroom, but it is up to the child to make the choice to go.

Behavior management

At Hayes Center Preschool, we do not use physical punishment. Rather, we believe in using positive forms of behavior management that help guide and teach the students more acceptable ways of controlling their feelings and behaviors. Hayes Center Preschool regularly employs the use of Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline strategies. These strategies focus on helping children make positive and healthy choices throughout the day. They also provide children with healthy, positive, and safe strategies to manage their emotions focusing on self-control and self-discipline. Specific strategies that teachers and children will employ for behavior management include (but are not limited to):

- Giving children choices that still accomplish what the teacher is asking of them. This gives children power of what they do while what they are doing is still in the purview of what the teacher is asking
- Respecting each child and understanding why they displayed the behavior instead of just getting upset by the behavior. This will show the children that it is not them that is not appreciated, simply the behavior displayed.
- Ignoring undesirable behavior unless it is harmful to others. There are times children show behaviors to get attention and a reaction. If the attention and reaction is taken away, the behavior will be as well over time.
- Being fair and consistent
- Using positive reinforcement and eliminating negative reinforcement
- Using redirection, anticipation, elimination of potential problems, and encouragement
- Focusing on building and fostering positive relationships with each child

We also employ the use of some of the concepts and ideas from NCPMI: The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (formerly known as CSEFEL: Center on the Social and

Emotional Foundations for Early Learning). We have adopted the use of having a “safe place” within our classroom for students to go to when they are having strong emotions or feel like they would like some time alone. We have also adopted the use of “Tucker Turtle”. Tucker is a turtle puppet that we have and that we meet at the beginning of the school year. He has a book that discusses that Tucker has strong feelings and it teaches the kids how tucker handles these feelings. Tucker is in our safe place and the kids learn that anytime they have strong feelings they can tuck themselves into their shell like tucker, stop, and breath. They are free to talk and use Tucker at any point throughout the day that they feel they need to. We have also adapted the use of having a ‘solutions kit’. This is a collection of picture cards that each represent a specific strategy that can be used to help solve social problems. Each strategy is strategically introduced one at a time and practiced in a group setting. There are a variety of other resources that are utilized from NCPMI including: the 4 steps to problem solving, explicitly teaching about and naming emotions, deep breathing, emotional thermometers, scripted stories, mini lessons connected with specific books and more.

Part of early childhood education, includes the explicit teaching of social and emotional behaviors and norms because children are still acquiring these skills at early ages. With this in mind, we have a structured 10-15-minute small group social and emotional learning time that gives the children explicit instruction and guided practice with social and emotional skills that build on each other throughout the course of the year (we call this our “superfriends” time). These mini lessons take kids on a step by step, hands on learning process of social and emotional skills starting from day one of school and going through the entire year.

To learn more about Becky Bailey and Conscious Discipline, you are free to research at the following website:
<https://consciousdiscipline.com/>

To learn more about NCPMI, you are free to research at the following website:
<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/index.html>

To explore some of the materials we utilize from NCPMI, you can explore the following website:
<https://www.challengingbehavior.org/implementation/classroom/practical-strategies/>

To learn more about CSEFEL, you are free to research at the following website:
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html>

Recess

Spending time in the outdoor environment is a vital component of Early Childhood Programs. It is a time when children develop language skills, large motor skills, social/emotional skills (cooperation, turn taking, games with rules, self-regulation, decision making, etc.), respect for the environment, science skills (weather, observation making, predictions, living/non-living, life cycles, etc.), cause and effect, and much, much more. Before going outside, we will check the weather to ensure that temperatures are within safe ranges for the students (feels like of 10 or

warmer).

With this being said, Hayes Center Preschool will be going outside in ALL kinds of weather including rain, snow, cold, hot, etc. We take the time to change in and out of appropriate outdoor gear each time we go outside, so sending snow pants, boots, gloves, etc. is a wonderful idea. Parents will be responsible for providing appropriate clothing attire which includes:

- Cold weather/snow: hats, gloves, boots, heavy coats, snow pants, warm socks, and extra changes of clothes in case clothing gets wet. If no boots or snow pants, children will still go outside, but they will be asked to stay on the paths that have been scooped.
- Rain weather: boots, coats, umbrella if desired, change of clothes incase get wet.
- Hot weather: cool clothing

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure their children have whatever protective gear may be required for that day. The preschool does have a limited supply of clothing that children can wear but we do not guarantee that the clothing will fit the children or that we have the proper clothing for the current weather.

School Day

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

The school day typically begins at 7:55 a.m. and ends at 3:35 p.m. Students are to leave the school grounds after dismissal. School staff will provide supervision for students on school grounds 10 minutes before the school day begins and 10 minutes after the school day ends. There will be no supervision provided by the school before or after these times. Parents must arrange for their children to leave school promptly at the end of the day.

Food services

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

The school district provides a food service program that is designed to provide adequate nutrition and an educational experience for students.

Breakfast

The school will serve breakfast daily from 7:30 a.m. until 7:50 a.m. Students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch also qualify for free or reduced-price breakfast. The school district charges students \$1.90 and adults \$2.95 for breakfast.

Lunch

Lunch prices depend on the federal funding that the program receives. Lunch for K-6 is \$3.05. Lunch for 7-12 lunch is \$3.20 for students and \$4.40 for adults.

Payment for Meals

Students are encouraged to pay for meals several weeks in advance. Payment should be made to the bookkeeper in the office.

Family Style Dining

In an effort to promote social and emotional growth, independence, language skills, and more Hayes Center Preschool will eat lunch in what is known as “family style dining”. Throughout the course of the meal, the teachers and students will be engaged in conversations in an effort to enhance and extend language use and acquisition as well as to learn social and emotional norms. Family Style Dining in the preschool years also teaches etiquette such as how to sit at the table, chewing with mouth closed, not talking with food in mouth, appropriate voice level at the table, cleaning up your spot when you are finished, serving and scooping your own food, clearing your tray when finished, and more.

Snack

Throughout the course of the school day, the children will receive 2 snacks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The snack will be offered as an option during each self-exploration time. Snack is always offered, but it is the student’s choice whether to accept. We strive to provide a varied snack menu that has healthy components. Each snack provided by preschool will have nutritional components from a minimum of 2 different food groups. A monthly snack menu will be provided to each family for the morning and afternoon snack via the Seesaw communication platform.

Transportation

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

Transportation Services

The district operates school buses as a convenience for students and parents. They represent a substantial investment, and students are expected to care for and respect them.

Transportation to school

Students who ride the bus to school will arrive in time for them to eat breakfast at school. Parents must contact their bus driver if a student will not ride the bus on a given day. Bus drivers endeavor to adhere to their schedule, and will wait for riders only a short period of time so as not to jeopardize the time remaining for the rest of their schedule.

Non-resident or option enrollment students may ride the buses, but they will be charged a fee to be established by the board of education. The Superintendent will schedule bus routes, and questions concerning them should be directed to that office.

Bus Regulations

Riding school vehicles is a privilege, not a right. The bus drivers have the same authority as teachers while transporting students. Students must comply with the following rules and all school conduct rules and directives while riding in school vehicles. In addition, students must also comply with the student code of conduct while riding in school vehicles. If misconduct is recurring, the student will not be allowed to ride the bus.

a) Rules of conduct on school vehicles:

- 1) Students must obey the driver promptly.

- 2) Students must wait in a safe place for the bus to arrive, clear of traffic and away from where the vehicle stops.
- 3) Students are prohibited from fighting, engaging in bullying, harassment, or horseplay.
- 4) Students must enter the bus without crowding or disturbing others and go directly to their assigned seats.
- 5) Students must remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear while the vehicle is moving.
- 6) Students are prohibited from throwing or passing objects on, from, or into vehicles.
- 7) Students may not use profane language, obscene gestures, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substance on the vehicles.
- 8) Students may not carry weapons, look-a-like weapons, hazardous materials, nuisance items, or animals onto the vehicle.
- 9) Students may carry on conversations in ordinary tones, but may not be loud or boisterous and should avoid talking to the driver while the vehicle is in motion. Students must be absolutely quiet when the vehicle approaches a railroad crossing and any time the driver calls for quiet.
- 10) Students may not open windows without permission from the driver. Students may not dangle any item (e.g. legs, arms, backpacks) out of the windows.
- 11) Student must secure any item or items that could break or produce injury if tossed about the inside of the vehicle if the vehicle were involved in an accident
- 12) Student must respect the rights and safety of others at all times.
- 13) Students must help keep the vehicle clean, sanitary, and orderly. Students must remove all personal items and trash upon exiting.
- 14) Students may not leave or board the vehicle at locations other than the assigned stops at home or school unless approved prior to departure by the superintendent or designee.
- 15) Video cameras may be placed on buses, at random, to monitor student behavior on the bus

b) Consequences

Drivers must promptly report all student misconduct to the administration. These reports may be oral or written. Students who violate the Rules for Conduct will be referred to their building principal for discipline. Disciplinary consequences may include a note home to parents, suspension of bus riding privileges, exclusion from extracurricular activities, in-school suspension, short-term or long-term suspension from school, and/or expulsion.

These consequences are not progressive, and school officials have discretion to impose any listed punishment they deem appropriate, in accordance with state and federal law and board policy.

c) Records

Records of vehicle misconduct will be forwarded to the appropriate building principal and will be maintained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of

serious misconduct may be forwarded to law enforcement.

Requests to be dropped off at a point **not** on the regular route will not be accommodated, unless extenuating circumstances arise and the request is approved by the transportation director or administration.

Students who are not regular route riders may not ride the bus home with a friend, unless the parent of the non-route student presents written permission to the bus driver ahead of time. The written permission should include the date, the non-route rider's name, the signature of the non-rider's parent, and the place approved for drop off. Such requests may not be granted if they cause overcrowding of the vans or buses (Vans-10 riders only, plus driver).

Weather-Related School Closings

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

The Superintendent will occasionally announce an emergency early school dismissal, late start, or cancellation of school due to extreme heat, snow, or ice. School closings will be announced on the school messenger system, the school Facebook page, and our school website. Parents should assume that school is open and a regular schedule is being followed if there is no announcement concerning the school district. Please do not call the school or individual staff members to find out whether school is being canceled. Parents who do not believe it is safe to transport their students to school may keep their students home after contacting the district office.

In most cases, if schools are closed due to severe weather conditions, all after-school activities will be canceled.

Student Illness

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

Students who become ill at school will be sent to the building office where the school nurse or other school employee will determine the appropriate response. When a child is too ill to remain at school, a school employee will contact the child's parent(s) and arrange for the child to be picked up or sent home. If an illness or injury requires immediate medical attention, school officials shall attempt to contact the child's parent(s) regarding treatment for the child. If the parents cannot be contacted, school officials may have the child treated by an available physician. Students who show symptoms of a contagious disease may be sent home, and the district may require a physician's statement before allowing such students to return to school.

Medications

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

Whenever possible, parents should arrange medication schedules to eliminate the need for giving medication during school hours. When it is necessary for school personnel to administer medication to students, the school district will comply with the Nebraska Medication Aide Act, the requirements of Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 59, (promulgated by the

Nebraska Department of Education and entitled *Methods of Competency Assessment of School Staff Who Administer Medication*), and all state and federal regulations. Parents and guardians who wish to have their child receive medication from school personnel must comply with the following procedures:

Prescription medication: (1) Parents/guardians must provide a physician's written authorization for the administration of the medication. (2) Parents/guardians must provide their own written permission for the administration of the medication. (3) The medication must be brought to school in the prescription container and must be properly labeled with the student's name, the physician's name, and directions for administering the medication.

Non-prescription medication: (1) Parents/guardians must provide written permission for the administration of the medication. (2) The medication must be brought to the school in the manufacturer's container. (3) The container must be labeled with the child's name and with directions for provision or administration of the medication.

The district reserves the right to review and decline requests to administer or provide medications that are not consistent with standard pharmacological references, are prescribed in doses that exceed those recommended in standard pharmacological references, or that could be taken in a manner that would eliminate the need for giving them during school hours. The district may request parental authorization to consult with the student's physician regarding any medication prescribed by such physician.

Immunizations

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

All students must furnish one of the following to school officials:

- Proof of adequate immunizations for mumps, measles, rubella; diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus; polio; and hepatitis B series; or
- A signed parental statement of refusal to provide the immunization history. Homeless students who are in need of immunizations will be referred to the homeless coordinator, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or medical records

Provisional enrollment: Students who meet the statutory requirements for provisional enrollment shall be allowed to attend school for sixty days without the necessary immunizations.

Students who are excepted from the immunization requirement may be excluded from school in the event of an outbreak of any contagious disease in the school population.

Head lice

Taken from the 2026-2027 Hayes Center Student Handbook

Students found to have live head lice or louse eggs will not be permitted at school and will be sent home. Upon discovering the presence of any indication of lice or louse eggs the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified, and if appropriate will be asked to pick up the student from school

immediately.

Students will not be permitted to return to school until the district finds that no live lice or eggs can be detected. The parent(s) or guardian(s) will be required to treat the student and accompany the student to school to be examined.

The student cannot ride the school bus until the district has cleared the student to return to school.

Nap time

Each day that preschool is in session, there is a nap time scheduled for after lunch. Students are never forced to sleep, but this is a time for students to rest their bodies and they may choose to sleep or lay quietly. A nap mat will be provided to each student and these will be sanitized daily and thoroughly cleaned once every 4 sleeps. Students are welcomed and encouraged to bring a blanket, pillow, and/or a special stuffed animal from home to use during rest time. All nap items will be kept at school (unless parents request otherwise) and sent home every 6 sleeps to be washed and then returned to school. While stored at school, each child's nap items will be placed in a separate bag, clearly labeled with his/her name and will then be placed in a storage container when not in use.

During nap time, Miss Neal will be out of the room teaching a class at the high school. Mrs. Mintling will stay with the children throughout the entire nap time. If a problem arises during nap time or more hands are needed, Mrs. Mintling will let the office know. Miss Neal will also always be readily available for assistance or to return as needed.

Transitional Plan

In order to make the transition from preschool to kindergarten as smooth and seamless as possible, the Preschool and Kindergarten teachers will be in constant contact with each other. The Kindergarten teacher is a member of the Preschool Advisory Board and is kept up to date on curriculum and assessment information. The Preschool teacher will also provide the Kindergarten teacher with finalized data from the GOLD assessment system for those students entering Kindergarten. The Preschool and Kindergarten teachers are also in constant contact about the skills that are focused on in preschool and how these align to Kindergarten skills and need to know knowledge.

In order for the students to become acquainted with the Kindergarten classroom and teacher, there will be a "Kindergarten Transition Day", for the 4 year old preschool and Junior Kindergarten class, each school year in either April or May. On this transition day, the Preschool and Junior Kindergarten students will eat lunch with the Kindergarten class in order to experience walking through the lunch line, salad bar, and dumping their trays at the window. The Preschool and Junior Kindergarten students will then proceed to recess with Kindergarten. After recess is over, the Preschool and Junior Kindergarten students will spend the afternoon in

the Kindergarten classroom where they will engage with a variety of different activities, planned in collaboration by the Preschool and Kindergarten teacher, that have the purpose of allowing students to explore the classroom, become acquainted with the teacher, and experience what a day in Kindergarten may be like. The Preschool teacher and paraprofessional will be present in the Kindergarten room during this transitional day to provide support as needed.

In order to support the families of the upcoming kindergarten students, the school will also host a back to school night, where students and families can come and explore the classroom, ask questions, and meet the Kindergarten teacher prior to the first day of school.

“Junior Kindergarten”

What is it:

- A transitional year between full time preschool and full time kindergarten.

Purpose:

- To provide an extra year of growth and development for children in all areas of learning: social, emotional, language, physical, cognitive, literacy, and more. It is meant to provide an extra year for children to mature and gain skills that will help them have a greater amount of success throughout their educational careers.

How to determine use:

- The use of the Junior Kindergarten program is 100% parent choice. We want parents to be able to make an empowered and informed decision about what will be best for their child. All children who are Kindergarten eligibility age and their parents will have the same opportunity to make an empowered decision about Junior Kindergarten. The preschool and Kindergarten teacher will be available to meet with the parents to provide them with specific information and answer any questions that the parents have in order for the parents to make an informed decision. The Preschool and Kindergarten teacher will support the parents in the decision making process, but the decision is left to the choice of the parents.

What will the program looks like:

- To begin the school year, any child who is Kindergarten eligibility age and is completing the Junior Kindergarten program will be enrolled in Kindergarten
- For the first semester, these children will come to school on Monday, Wednesday, and every Friday. They will spend the morning in the preschool room and the afternoon in the Kindergarten room for the entire first semester
- For the second semester, these children will come to school everyday day of the week. They will still spend the mornings in Preschool and the afternoons with Kindergarten.
- The specific content of the JK program will be created around the unique make-up of this class each year and the developmental abilities that each child brings to this class.

Screen Time

When looking at research, it is seen that too much screen time in the younger years can have negative effects on a child's development. In relation to screen time, one must also look at the educational value behind the screen time and how it will enhance the knowledge and learning of the child. With this research being known, preschool children at Hayes Center Preschool will have limited access to "traditional screens". This means, that all of the screen time that we use will be on a limited basis and will be things outside of television, video games, ipads, etc. Educational videos may be used to show a phenomenon that cannot be experienced hands on, such as observing an octopus swimming in the ocean or watching a time lapse video of a plant life cycle, etc. We will also use technology intertwined in our play such as an overhead projector to make lights and shadows for puppet play or an overhead projector to display a picture and for children to trace and design using larger muscle movements. All of the screen time and technology that will be used in preschool will be on a limited basis and will have sound educational purpose behind their use.

Birth Certificates

As stated by the Nebraska Department of Education in Rule 11, all students entering preschool must have a copy of a birth certificate on file at the school. The parents/guardians of the child need to provide the school with a copy of their child's birth certificate within the first 30 days of school starting.

Coordination of Services

Each school year, Hayes Center Public School administrator will call the nearest Head Start agency, along with any other local programs meeting state requirements, to coordinate services as needed.

Staff Development Plan

Each school year, both the preschool teacher and the preschool paraprofessional will participate in 15 clock hours of early childhood training that is supported by the Nebraska Department of Education. The goal and purpose of these trainings are to help the teacher and paraprofessional continue to grow in knowledge and understanding of child development and best practice in order to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment and educational experience for those students enrolled in preschool. The preschool teacher will be responsible for locating trainings on the NDE training calendar that align with DAP, learning environments, and educational experiences and registering both the teacher and the para for these trainings. Each year, the teacher and para will review their training courses ensuring 15 hours have been met and important content to remember.

In addition, each year the classroom teacher will select a self-development goal from the

Marzano Teacher Evaluation Framework to work on bettering throughout the current school year. This professional development goal will then be formally reviewed with the administrator once each school year, after a formal observation has been made, as well as periodically throughout the school year when walk through observations are conducted or the teacher seeks advice and feedback from the administrator.

Acknowledgement of the use of GOLD

I _____ acknowledge that Hayes Center Public School District will use images (photo or video), audio recordings, works/performances (artwork, musical recording, writing samples) and other such information for documentation on the Teaching Strategies GOLD system for my child _____.

Please initial the following statements:

___ I understand that GOLD only allows the video, audio, or pictures to be uploaded to the GOLD data system

___ I understand this acknowledgement is for the entire time services are provided in the birth-5 program

___ I understand that these forms of documentation and information will be used by only servicing teachers and administrators

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Date of consent _____

Parent Handbook Signature Form

I _____ (enter name) verify that I have read, understood, and will abide by the policies, procedures, and regulations that have been outlined and defined in this Hayes Center Preschool Handbook and that I will be held responsible for knowing and following these policies, procedures, and regulation

Parent/guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____