

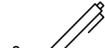


Mountain Iron-Buhl Early Childhood Parent Handbook

Est. 2024



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(sign and return) 	

Our mission

ECFE (Early Childhood Family Education):

Parents are the first, most important teachers in their child's life. ECFE works to support the parents in strengthening the family and building a strong sense of community. Our goal is to create an environment where all parents are equipped to provide the best possible learning and development opportunities for their child. ECFE includes a parent-child play time, a large-group learning experience, and a separation time that includes parenting time with the parent educator while the children eat a snack time and play with their peers.

School Readiness 3:

The goal of our 3-year-old classroom is to introduce the school setting in a fun, educational way. We focus on social-emotional skills and practice classroom routines and expectations. Academics are introduced in a developmentally-appropriate, engaging manner that allows the students to learn through play. This class runs 3 half days. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30-12:30. Free breakfast and lunch is offered. ***Transportation is NOT provided. Parents transport students to and from school.***

School Readiness 4/Optional Friday Class:

The goal for our 4-year-old classroom is to shape students into successful, enthusiastic learners. Our days are structured with a variety of large and small group experiences, play time, meal time, music and movement activities, rest time, gym, and outdoor play. Teachers use research-based Pyramid Model strategies to teach children social-emotional, self-regulation, and friendship skills. Free breakfast and lunch is offered. ***Transportation is available.***

Early Childhood Screening:

Early childhood screening is a quick and simple way to check your child's progress between the ages of three and four. It will help to identify, at an early age, any overall developmental concerns. If your child needs extra support to get ready for kindergarten, you will be contacted by the school district and other community services to support your family. ***It is a requirement that early childhood screening be done before your student enters kindergarten, however, completing screening around the age of 3 1/2 years old is optimal.*** Please contact Courtney Johnson at cojohnson@isd712.org or 218-735-8271 x1055 for more information.

Enrollment

Registration:

Typically opens at the beginning of March. To be placed on the School Readiness 3 or 4 mailing list, please email Dawn Koski at dkoski@isd712.org or call at 218-735-8271 x1020. Please include the child's *full name, DOB, parents' name(s), address(es), phone number(s), and email address(es)*.

Eligibility:

- **School Readiness 4:** Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of the school year in which they are enrolling. ***IF PARENTS PREFER THEIR 5 YEAR OLD TO REPEAT SR4 OR ATTEND SR4 INSTEAD OF KINDERGARTEN, ARRANGEMENTS WILL NEED TO BE MADE THE PREVIOUS SPRING. ADMINISTRATION WILL MAKE THE FINAL DECISION. THERE MUST BE A COMPELLING DEVELOPMENTAL REASON. ALL DECISIONS ARE FINAL.***
- **Friday Class:** A 5th day option for SR4 students only. There is a fee for this class (see table on page 4).
- **School Readiness 3:** Children must be 3 years old on or before September 1st, of the school year in which they are enrolling. There is a fee for this class (see table on page 4). ***NO 5 YEAR OLDS WILL BE PERMITTED TO ENROLL IN SR3.***

- **ECFE:** Any family with children ages 0-5. There is a [sliding fee scale](#) for ECFE.

Student and Parent Responsibilities & Expectations



Student Expectations (The 3 "Bees")

Be Safe
Be Respectful
Be Kind

Parent Responsibilities

Keep an open line of communication with your child's teacher
Be a positive role model
Empty your child's backpack/folder



Classroom Assignments

Classroom assignments are typically determined in August. Parents will be notified of classroom assignments via email or USPS mail at that time. We will try to honor requests for specific student classroom/teacher assignments. **However, these requests are not guaranteed.**

While we do our best with student placement and matching student personalities with teachers, classroom dynamics, and other potential students in a class, *we reserve the right to move students throughout the year in order to balance classrooms and to create the best learning environment possible.*

Payment Options

CLASS	SCHOOL READINESS 3	SCHOOL READINESS 4	FRIDAY OPTION	ECFE
DAYS/TIME	M, T, Th/8:30-12:30	M-Th/8:15-2:45	F/8:15-2:45	Varies
LINKS	SR3 calendar MIB SR sliding fee scale	SR4 calendar	Friday calendar MIB SR sliding fee scale	ECFE calendar ECFE Sliding fee scale
AGES SERVED	3	4	4	birth-5
FEES	Registration fee (due with application) \$120 a month * (*\$3/hr x 4 hrs/day)88 days \$1,056 ÷ 9 months=\$117.33)	No registration fee SR4 is paid for using state VPK funding from MDE that can be braided with other funding sources when applicable.	Registration fee (due with application) \$70 a month* (*\$3/hr x 6.5 hrs/days)33 days ÷ 9 months=\$71.50)	No registration fee \$75*/trimester Reduced or waived fees are available

Preschool Registration Fee:

This is a one time \$50 *non-refundable* fee (\$25 for reduced fee/\$0 with fee waiver) for the SR3 and Friday class. This fee is collected upon approval of your School Readiness 3/Friday contracts. **Refunds will not be granted if the parent chooses another program.**

School Readiness 3 and Friday Class Tuition:

Tuition was calculated using current childcare center hourly rates in the Quad Cities area. **School Readiness 4 is funded by the State of MN through [VPK](#) grants.** (However, School Readiness 4 families may be asked to complete scholarship paperwork to braid funding sources, if applicable.)

School Readiness 3 and Friday class are NOT funded by the state. Tuition payments will be due on the first day of each month (September payments will be due at SR3 & Friday orientations. Since Friday class will not have its own orientation payments can be made at the SR4 orientation.) Registration fees (SR3 and Friday ONLY) are due with application paperwork in the form of a check made out to "ISD 712/School Readiness". *Checks will be returned if the child is not enrolled in the class.*

ECFE Tuition:

ECFE tuition payments are due on the first day of class each trimester. A [sliding fee scale](#) is available.

Early Learning Scholarships:

MDE has scholarships available for qualifying families that attend **School Readiness 3 & 4**. Pathways II Scholarships will be part of the School Readiness application paperwork. **ALL** School Readiness parents will be required to provide proof of household income to the program coordinator. Beyond this, we will continue to work with families to arrange feasible payment plans as needed.

Sliding Fee Scales:

The sliding fee scales are available to all [SR3/Friday](#) class and [ECFE](#) families and can be accessed through the links provided or via paper copy upon request. If you qualify for reduced or waived tuition for **SR3 or Friday class**, you will be required to provide proof of household income to the program coordinator. **ECFE** families are not required to provide proof of income.

Withdrawing from program:

If you choose to withdraw from our program, please contact the program coordinator within 2 weeks of the end of services. Tuition will continue to be charged until withdrawal confirmation is received. Refunds may be issued on a case to case basis. Registration fees are non-refundable UNLESS child does not become enrolled. Then checks will be returned.

Transportation

Transportation to and from school on a bus is an option for families who attend **School Readiness 4/Friday class** only. All transportation to and from **School Readiness 3** and **ECFE** will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Procedures/expectations for the School Readiness 3, 4, and Friday classes.
Please read the following carefully.

Arrival and Departure

School Readiness 3 and 4:

- Due to the young age of the children there will not be drop off like in the elementary buildings. While attending preschool, *it is the family's responsibility to park and walk their child into the building (Merritt Door #1) where the teachers will greet them.*
- No child will be released to an unknown person without prior written authorization and a photo ID. Make sure that all authorized pickups are included on the child's registration paperwork.
- School Readiness classroom doors open at 8:15 a.m. Enter and exit the building through Door 1 at Merritt at the beginning and end of the school day. Pick up and drop off will be located in the commons area/outside Door 1.
- Children will be offered breakfast around 8:50. Adults need to inform the staff if the student needs breakfast or not.
- Doors will be locked during school hours. Anyone coming in after 8:30, please check in with the main office secretary.

Late Pick-up

- If a child is not picked up by **3:00** for School Readiness 4 or **12:45** for ½ day School Readiness 3, the teacher will contact all emergency persons listed on your account.
 - Please be sure to update your **Emergency Contact Information** with the teacher. We require 3 emergency contacts OTHER than parent/guardian.
-

Attendance and Sick Policy

- We ask that all families report all potentially communicable health conditions to the school office within a 24 hour period. If your child will not be at school due to illness or injury please report all illnesses and health conditions.
- If a child comes to our preschool classes with any of the following symptoms or develops any symptoms during class, the staff will send the child home from school.
 1. If your child has a fever of 100.4 within the last 24 hours.
 2. Vomiting
 3. Rashes
 4. Sore throat
 5. Cold like symptoms: runny nose, heavy coughing, sneezing, etc.
 6. Diarrhea
- Children must be fever and symptom free for at least 24 hours *WITHOUT the use of ibuprofen or tylenol* before returning to the classroom.
- Please contact your child's teacher or call the school when your child is absent or late.

Unexcused Absences:

- Should your child miss 15 consecutive days unexcused (no phone call, email or text) from class they will be considered for removal from class [Sec. 126C.05 MN Statutes](#).
 - If a student has excessive excused absences, the program will schedule a meeting with the family to discuss options.
-

Toileting and the Preschool Classroom

While we understand and expect accidents to happen, we encourage all students to be potty trained/wearing underwear prior to attending our preschool **School Readiness 3** program. **School Readiness 4** students are **required** to be potty trained/wearing underwear to school. Our programs provide frequent opportunities and positive reminders to use the bathroom. Our early childhood area is equipped with child-sized restrooms and students are allowed to use them at any time. When accidents happen, students will be encouraged (under supervision) to take care of their needs independently.

At the beginning of the school year the child's teacher will request an extra change of clothes in case of an accident or an extremely messy day. Should an "accident" occur, the child will change with the additional clothing that has been supplied by the parent. We understand that each child develops these skills at different ages and there may be special circumstances in which we can accommodate. Please reach out to your child's teacher if you have any concerns.

Meals

- Free breakfast and lunch will be available to all **School Readiness 3, 4, and Friday** students. Even though meals are now free we will still need all families to complete a *Benefits form* (previously the free/reduced lunch form) during enrollment.
 - You may choose to send your child with a bag lunch from home. All lunches and snacks brought to school will be stored at room temperature. If the food needs to stay cold, parents are to provide an ice pack. If you would like to order a milk for your child, please let your child's teacher know. There is a fee of \$.65.
 - Afternoon snack time will be held in **School Readiness 4** and it is requested that families supply their child with a snack from home. In the event that a snack is forgotten, the classroom will have a limited supply of snacks for the students. Teachers may ask families for snack donations to have on hand.
 - If your child has a special dietary requirement or allergies, please let the teacher know. *There are official forms to fill out for the school nurse and they will keep all medications required.*
-

Safe, Healthy, and Secure Environments

- Children will be supervised by staff at all times! Exceptions to this may occur during parent/child time in ECFE and special events, when parents are responsible for their child's safety.
- If an accident occurs and a student is injured, the main office or school nurse will notify the parent/guardian.
- Please make certain your student's emergency contact information is up to date. If any information changes during the course of the year (name, phone number, address, contact people, etc.) be sure to send that information to school as soon as possible.

Immunizations:

ALL early childhood programs are required to have a current immunization record on file for each student. This includes a physician or notary signed exemption form for those who choose not to vaccinate. MDE requires immunization documentation be on file within 30 days of attending a school ([Sec. 121A.15 State Statute](#)).

Medications:

Medications are kept in the nurse's office and administered by a trained individual. *Please do not send medication with your child. Parents need to bring meds directly to the nurse.*

Allergies:

Parents must notify the school of any allergy that may affect the child's health/safety at school. Ex: food allergies, bee stings, airborne allergens. Parents will provide necessary allergy medications and they will be stored at the school (ex: EpiPen). School staff will post all known allergies clearly for all staff who work with the student. In cases of a food allergy or sensitivity, a special diet statement will be required to make breakfast and lunch accommodations for the child.

Emergency Drills:

We conduct the following emergency drills in conjunction with the elementary school. (Fire Drill, Tornado Drill, Lockdown Drill). All of which look very different for our youngest learners. We strive in conducting all of these essential drills and explaining them at a developmentally appropriate level to each individual child's needs.

Secure Building:

All doors are locked during school hours. Please enter through the main doors (door #4) and check in at the main office or call your child's teacher to coordinate.

Mandated Reporting:

It is our legal responsibility to report any behavior we consider abuse, neglect, or endangerment as all staff that work for the Mountain Iron- Buhl Public schools are Mandated Reporters.

Accidents/Incidents:

Accident reports will be completed following any occurrence in which first aid is used. Parents will be notified of the occurrence.
Parents will acknowledge that they have adequate insurance protection for the pupil while participating in this program.

Rest Time:

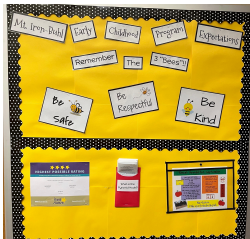
Students that attend a **School Readiness 4/Friday** program will have approximately 30 min of rest time daily. This is a time to calm our bodies and relax after a busy morning so the students can recharge for the afternoon. During rest time the lights will be turned down and soft music will be played.

Outdoor Play:

- Parents are reminded to have their children dress appropriately so that they can comfortably spend time outdoors throughout different times of the day. Please make certain to send your child to school dressed appropriately for the weather (boots, mittens, hats, snow pants). Please label boots, hats, mittens, snow pants, and coats with permanent marker. We have MANY pairs of black snow pants in the winter!
- The children will go outside every day unless the temperature and windchill combination is below 0°. If that happens, the children will have recess time indoors.
- If the playground conditions are unsafe due to water or ice the children will also stay inside. Please have your child dress for the weather and wear comfortable learning clothes as we know how busy young children can be.
- **Weather/Closings:** MIB Early Childhood will be closed whenever Mountain Iron-Buhl School District is closed. Closures are communicated on local TV (WDIO, KBJR), radio stations, and social media outlets. There will be no refunds if class is canceled by the district.

MIB Early Childhood Behavior Guidance

Our goal is to create a nurturing, consistent environment where preschoolers can learn and grow. When students know what to expect they learn to trust their surroundings and teachers. Behaviors and anxieties decrease. We use the *Pyramid Model Social-Emotional Framework* (<https://challengingbehavior.org/>) to teach our students friendship and regulation skills. The Pyramid Model is aligned with PBIS which is used by grades K-12 in the MIB district. Teachers are consistent in their delegation of these rules and expectations so students realize their importance. We help children learn self-control by setting limits, creating routines, redirecting, reinforcing the positives, and encouraging cooperation.



OUR PROGRAM HAS DEVELOPED A SET OF 3 EXPECTATIONS WHICH ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR CLASSROOM RULES. FOR EXAMPLE, STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT THAT THE REASON THAT **"USE WALKING FEET"** IS A RULE IS BECAUSE OUR EXPECTATION IS FOR EVERYONE TO **"BE SAFE"** AT SCHOOL. IN OTHER WORDS, RULES TELL THEM **WHAT** TO DO AND THE EXPECTATIONS TELLS THEM **WHY**.

The following rules are taught for our large group (circle) time.

All preschool classes learn one of the following fingerplays.



"Give Me Five"

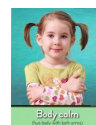
Give Me Five (hold up hand with fingers outstretched)
Body still (fold pinky finger down)
Mouth quiet (fold ring finger down)
Ears listening (fold tall-man finger down)
Eyes on the teacher (fold pointer finger down)



"Whole Body Listening"



Eyes are watching (point to eyes)
 Ears are listening (point to ears)
 Voices are quiet (point to mouth)
 Bodies are calm (point to feet)



THERE ARE A SET OF RULES FOR EVERY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT WITH VISUAL CUES TO HELP OUR NON-READERS UNDERSTAND THEM. RULES ARE TAUGHT AND RETAUGHT IN EACH OF THESE AREAS:
 BATHROOM, HALLWAY, CAFETERIA, PLAYGROUND, LIBRARY, GYM, ETC.

WHEN STUDENTS KNOW THE EXPECTATIONS/RULES STUDENTS' ANXIETY AND BEHAVIORS DECREASE DRAMATICALLY.

Teachers use the following approach when problems arise:

1. Coaching...

- The student is coached about the appropriate way to play with materials provided and/or on their interactions with another student/staff member. We use the problem solving steps and/or solution kit to help the student be successful.

2. A reminder

- A reminder is given if there is occasional forgetfulness.

3. Redirection

- *Next, a student is redirected away from problems and into a constructive activity that offers acceptable alternative behavior.*

4. Follow through

- A private discussion takes place one on one between the student and the classroom teacher. The teacher re-explains the rule and expectation and how it was broken. They then stress that the behavior was unacceptable, *not the child*. Students are assured during every difficulty that the teacher cares for them and wants to help them remember the rules/expectations. If the student needs assistance with calming down, the teacher or assistant will sit with him/her and do an activity together or the student may choose to go to the calm down area which enables them to develop self-regulation skills.

5. Return to play

- As soon as possible, the child is encouraged to get right back into interaction with peers so conflict resolution skills can continue to be practiced.

Home and school communication is the *key* to reinforcing positive behaviors. You are a vital partner because you know your child best. We encourage you to share with us what is happening at home that might affect your child's day at preschool. Teachers will share with you any out of the ordinary difficulties your child might be having in the classroom. Working together benefits everyone. If you are uncomfortable sharing with us you can just say "He/she needs a little extra TLC today" and we will know that they are having a difficult day.



Early Childhood Special Education

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) provides free, professional assessment and educational programming for children with delays in their developmental milestones. If you are concerned please call 218-735-8271 x1023 or use this link to refer a child- [Help Me Grow](#).

Please know that the staff is here to accommodate all children. If your child has any special needs such as hearing impairment, limited mobility, developmental delay, vision concerns, etc. please contact staff.

Communication

Take Home Folders: Your child will be provided a communication folder. All official school notices will be sent home in your child's daily folder to keep you informed of events/concerns within our schools and in each classroom. Please review the contents of the folder each day and return the following day. This is an extremely important tool used to communicate with parents on a weekly basis.

Seesaw app:

MIB Early Childhood uses the Seesaw app for our online parent communication tool. Make sure your contact information and phone number is current. If either of these change, you must immediately contact your teacher to keep your info current.

Conferences:

Conferences are scheduled in November. If you wish to have a spring conference please let your child's teacher know. There will be no conferences held for the Friday class.

Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated in school. Students may bring a store bought treat. Please check with your child's teacher about any possible allergies. Summer birthdays are acknowledged by teachers, as well.

Photos

Photos of students will be taken at school promoting their involvement in the participation of various activities. If parents wish that their child not have in their child's photo displayed for the public or on Seesaw, please indicate that on the photo permission form included with the enrollment paperwork.

Supply List

A supply list is available on the [MIB school website](#) or by request at dkoski@isd712.org. If you have financial concerns and are unable to provide supplies please let us know and we can help.

Donations

Your child's teacher may have a "wish list" for extras. They also often set up wish lists on Amazon. Please reach out to her if you are interested in donating.



District Policies

- Please visit The [MIB school website](#) to view school policies.
- ***ALL classroom/field trip volunteers will need to fill out a background check. Background checks are valid for one calendar year. There is no fee.***

Program Policies

- District families have priority in placement.
- ***5-year-old students must meet certain requirements to repeat School Readiness. Enrollment will be decided on a case by case basis. Arrangements MUST BE made in April/May of the year prior. Each case will be reviewed and either approved or denied by the superintendent. All decisions are final.***
- School Readiness 4 students must be potty trained/wearing underwear (unless on an IEP).
- School Readiness 3 students need to be working on potty training/wearing underwear (at least).
- ***NO 5 YEAR OLDS WILL BE ENROLLED IN SR3 (unless stated in an IEP).***
- All participating families must read the ***Mountain Iron-Buhl Early Childhood Parent Handbook*** and have a ***MIB Early Childhood Parent Handbook Signature Page*** on file with the EC coordinator.

Preparing For Preschool (4-year-olds)

As you prepare your child for preschool, please use this information as a guide. Practicing these skills at home will help your child be successful in school.

Self Care Skills:

- Parent and child can separate from one another easily.
- Child can dress themselves independently.
 - can put on own clothing
 - can put on own outerwear
 - can put on and remove shoes and boots (*slip-on or velcro shoes makes independence easier for preschoolers*)
 - is beginning to use buttons, snaps, and zippers
- Child handles toileting independently
 - Can clean themselves
 - Can pull up and fasten own clothes
 - Can wash their own hands
- Child can use tissue to clean own nose
- Child respects and cares for classroom environment and materials
 - cleans up after self
 - uses materials in appropriate ways
- Child is responsible for organization of backpack and personal belongings



Social Emotional Skills:

- Child asks adult for help when needed
- Child uses words to express self when angry or upset
- Child is able to share time, attention, and materials with others
- Child can sit quietly and pay attention to others for 5 minutes
- Child can say first name

- Child follows a one step direction nearly all of the time
- Child shows respect for others in actions and words
- Child exhibits patience in "waiting" situations
- Child can transition from one activity to another without becoming upset
- Child is able to accept redirection without becoming upset

Classroom Skills:

- Child moves purposefully from place to place with self-control
- Child has self control skills fairly well in place (i.e. inside voice, walking feet, keeping body to themselves)
- Child working towards holding a pencil with thumb and 2 fingers
- Child has experience with scissors and glue sticks

Pre-academic Skills:

- Child can count by rote up to 5
- Child can name colors red, blue, and yellow
- Child is able to sort objects by one property (i.e. color or shape)
- Child has experience with basic positional words (i.e. up, down, on, over, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front, behind, near/far, below, middle, end)
- Child has a beginning knowledge of basic shapes (i.e. circle, square, rectangle, and triangle)
- Child is beginning to recognize first name in print
- Child attempts printing letters in their name (first letter upper-case and the rest lowercase). Typical letter height for preschool writing is 1 ½ to 2 inches in height.

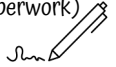
We will work on these skills all year, but your child's familiarity with these skills *prior* to preschool will help their transition into school immensely. ***Additional practice at home will give your child the tools and confidence he/she will need to be successful in school.***

As a parent, you can ease your child's transition to school by:

- giving your child social opportunities with other children (i.e. storytime at the library, church or community events, sports, playgroups, ECFE classes, gym nights, birthday parties, etc.)
- reading with and to your child
- letting your child retell stories to help them develop the learning technique of recalling "beginning, middle, and end"
- encouraging age-appropriate independence. *Let them learn how to do things for themselves.*
- encouraging math skills (i.e. take a "shape walk", read numbers off of road signs, ask them to switch the channel on the TV by telling them which buttons to push, or practice your phone number by making it into a tune).
- giving your child opportunities to use scissors, glue, and writing utensils.
- providing fine motor activities (i.e. picking up small objects, using scissors, drawing pictures, squeezing eye droppers or tweezers).
- providing large motor opportunities (i.e. climbing at the park, jumping with 2 feet together, hopping on one foot, galloping, balancing).



MIB Early Childhood Parent Handbook Signature Page (please return with registration paperwork)



Student Name: _____ Teacher: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In order for us to do our job (teach) and for your child to do their job (learn), it is very important that you read, understand and review with your child the information contained in our handbook. Please sign this form and return to your child's teacher. Any questions concerning the handbook are to be directed to Dawn Koski, early childhood program coordinator, at dkoski@isd712.org.

I, _____, have *read, understood, and will abide by the information contained in this preschool handbook.*

I, _____, acknowledge I have read and will abide by the *attendance and discipline policies* and agree to *abide by them* throughout the year.

I, _____, acknowledge that I have *adequate insurance protection* for the pupil participating in the program.

Signature

Date

Print name

Please return to:

Dawn Koski, Early Childhood Coordinator
Mt. Iron-Buhl Public Schools
8659 Unity Drive
Mt. Iron, MN 55768
dkoski@isd712.org | 218-735-8271 x 1020