



South Eastern Special Education

**ECE Parent/Student Handbook
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Kim Kessler, Director

618-455-3396 x228

Lisa McMorris, Classroom Supervisor

618-455-3396 x280

Cell-618-553-9457

Introduction

The South Eastern Special Education ECE program is for students found eligible for the program. Students participating in the SESE ECE program continue to be governed by their individual resident district policies. This handbook merely serves as a supplement to each student's resident district handbook. Each student is expected to also receive a copy of the resident district handbook.

The Early Childhood Education program is a half-day program with an a.m. and p.m. session, depending upon enrollment. The focus of the Early Childhood Education program is to teach and reinforce skills within the five developmental areas: cognitive/academic, communication, motor (fine- and gross-), adaptive behavior, and social-emotional development.

A typical ECE day is based upon the following routine: Greeting Time, Planning Time, Work Time, Cleanup Time, Recall Time, Breakfast, Lunch, or Snack Time, Small-Group Time, Large Group Time, and Outside (Gross Motor) Time. Throughout the daily routine, developmentally-appropriate activities are provided within the work or interest areas. Common work/play areas in the ECE classroom are the following: Large Group/Carpet Area, Art Area, Block Area, Dramatic Play Area, Computer Area, Book Area, Sensory Table Area, Writing Area, and Calming Area.

The ECE teacher works closely with related service providers who provide the services for which the child is eligible. These related service providers may include the speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, psychologist, physical therapist, social worker, hearing teacher, or vision teacher.

The ECE teacher will complete a daily home-school communication note in some form. Parents and/or guardians are also encouraged to communicate in writing, email, through any app established by the teacher (ie: Remind, Class Dojo, SeeSaw, etc.), or to call the classroom teacher with any questions or concerns regarding the individual student that come up or are not covered after receipt of daily communication. The best time to call is between the am and pm sessions. If the classroom teacher is unavailable during that time or any other time, parents are encouraged to leave a message, so that the teacher can return the call when available.

Annual Review/Meetings

Each child's IEP will be reviewed at least yearly to determine progress on the current IEP as well as to develop a proposed IEP. The newly developed IEP will be in effect for one full year from the day after the date of the annual review.

The following should be discussed at the Annual Review:

1. Pre-K, Head Start, Kindergarten progress (if student is dually-enrolled)
2. Overall progress and IEP progress on goals and objectives
3. Classroom assessment results
4. Attendance (Total number of days and days absent)
5. Student's Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
6. Student strengths
7. Parent Educational Concerns/Input
8. Proposed IEP Goals and Objectives
9. Educational Accommodations/Assessment
10. Educational Services and Placement
11. Extended School Year (ESY)
12. Other, if applicable (ie: functional analysis, behavior plan, autism considerations page, Early Childhood Outcomes progress)

Those children who will be of kindergarten age and who will be exiting the ECE program may have a domain meeting scheduled, if deemed necessary, to determine if further evaluation in any areas are needed. If the team determines that further evaluation (reevaluation) is needed, an eligibility meeting will be scheduled to review progress on current IEP goals and objectives, to review the formal and informal assessment results, and to develop a new, proposed IEP if the child is determined to have continued special education eligibility. This meeting will also be an annual review. The team will determine accommodations and educational placement for the next school year. At this meeting, progress within three areas will be determined through rating of Early Childhood Outcomes. Parents/guardians and general education teachers (if the child is dual-enrolled) will receive a questionnaire prior to the meeting to account for input across settings. For those children exiting who will not have further evaluation, a similar process as outlined above will be followed. The child's current IEP will have some proposed changes at this meeting but will not change entirely, unless it is also an annual review.

Annual Reviews will be arranged by South Eastern Special Education through contacting the Special Education Coordinator of the resident school district. The Home (Resident) District Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for sending all meeting notification to all participants. The Building Principal/LEA will attend the meeting.

If ECE students also attend Pre-kindergarten, Head Start, or Kindergarten or are involved in transitioning activities, the general education classroom teacher is required to attend and will be invited by the Special Education Coordinator to the meeting to share progress. For those students exiting Early Childhood, a Kindergarten teacher will be invited to the exit meeting, as well as District Speech and Language Pathologist, and a District Special Education Teacher.

Assessments

Universal Screening/Classroom Assessment

The Preschool Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage is utilized to assess skills within each of the following developmental skill areas: APPROACHES TO LEARNING, SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH LANGUAGE, LITERACY, & COMMUNICATION, MATHEMATICS, CREATIVE ARTS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL STUDIES, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING (ELL) (IF APPROPRIATE). The teachers observe the students throughout the day, record the actual observations, and assign ratings of 0-7 according to specific criteria per skill level. Each category is divided into specific areas of development, called Items, and each item is scored on an eight-level scale ranging from 0 (lowest) to 7 (highest), offering a detailed developmental profile for each child. The eight scoring levels of COR Advantage provide an overlapping continuum, so that children can be scored at the developmental and ability level appropriate for them. Thus, for example, infants and toddlers will generally be scored at levels 0–2, but it would not be uncommon for an older toddler to score a level 3 on some items. Likewise, preschoolers will typically score at levels 2–5, but may rate higher or lower on any given item. Based on the child’s age and developmental level, users are given a suggested starting point for scoring. **This system accommodates children with special needs and developmental delays, as well as those whose early learning may be more advanced in some content areas than others.**

IEP Tracking

The classroom teachers develop IEP tracking sheets on which to record data regarding the progress on IEP goals and objectives. The objectives are tracked according to the schedule specified on the IEP. Goals and objectives are tracked three times or more a quarter then progress is reported on the same grade reporting schedule as the district building in which the ECE classroom that your child attends is located (ie: quarterly, trimester).

Attendance

The ECE classroom teacher/staff reports attendance of ECE students to the attending district daily as well as to South Eastern Special Education, daily. If your child is going to be absent, please contact the building in which the ECE classroom is located and/or the ECE classroom, as well as the home district transportation.

Truancy does not apply to 3 -5 year olds in ECE. If students are absent 3 consecutive days or a total of 10 days per school year, then the ECE teacher will notify the Classroom Supervisor as well as the District Special Education

Coordinator. The District Special Education Coordinator is encouraged to contact the parents/guardian in order to determine the cause of the absences.

Bullying

Preventative measures are in place to prevent bullying of students within the ECE program. All ECE classrooms have access to school social workers and to school psychologists and district school counselors.

Crisis Procedures

Due to the nature and severity of the behavior and crisis situations of individual students within the ECE classroom, classroom and individual student crisis plans have been/are determined by the SESE administration and staff.

Discipline

Classroom

Proactive behavioral supports and behavior management strategies are implemented within the daily routine of the classroom. Individual classrooms have a classroom behavior management plan as well as a reinforcement system.

Time away is utilized within the classroom on a rare basis. Time away is not viewed as a punishment but as a way for students to calm and to regroup. Often proactive breaks, such as calm-down breaks, planned “jobs”, calming area breaks, are implemented for individual students.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A behavior Intervention Plan must be developed for all students who have behaviors which interfere with their learning or the learning of others. For example, those students who require the use of a restrictive intervention on more than one occasion in a thirty-day period. This plan is based on the information gathered during the Functional Behavioral Assessment. Data will be taken after a consent form is signed by the parent/guardian. The teacher will consult the ECE supervisor as well as the Special Education Coordinator to let them know of the concerns with the student’s behavior. All ECE teachers have a behavior packet, which includes the needed forms. If the child is dually-enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, data should also be taken within that classroom in order to figure out the reason for the behaviors in both settings and to then create a unified, applicable behavior plan.

In order to be able to complete a functional behavior analysis, the school psychologist will review all of the data and consult with the ECE teacher/staff to figure out the reason (function) of the behaviors and to determine positive

replacement behaviors. This information is then used to develop a behavior intervention plan. For those behavior plans that will be added to the current IEP, a separate meeting will be scheduled in order to review the functional analysis and to develop the behavior plan. Both of these forms will be attached to the current IEP. The Behavior Intervention Plan is in effect for one year.

For some students, data will be taken, but it will be used to develop a plan that will not be attached to the IEP. A signed consent form will be sent home by the teacher prior to taking data.

In- School suspension

This is not utilized with Early Childhood Special Education students.

Out – of -- School suspension

Out-of-school suspension has not been found to be effective with young children. This is not utilized with Early Childhood Special Education students.

Lunch delay

Some early childhood classrooms are served lunch and/or breakfast by the attending districts; whereas, some classroom teachers integrate a snack time, if lunch or breakfast is not served. Parents may be asked to contribute to the snack.

If a student's behavior is such that is preventing him/her from moving on to the scheduled snack, lunch, breakfast time, each of these is always offered. Due to the extent of the behavior, there may be a delay in the child receiving the snack, lunch, or breakfast, but staff do try to encourage the child to transition to and participate in these meal times.

Exclusion of non-academics

Proactive supports are discussed and put into place in order to ensure safety within all educational settings.

Only in the case of extreme safety issues (running from playground, bus, etc.), would recess outside be discussed for removal from the IEP, if it is currently designated on the IEP.

Early Childhood Outcomes Summary Form

Each state is required to submit early childhood outcomes data to the Office of Special Education (OSEP) each year. Each student, ages 3-5, with an IEP receives a progress rating yearly in the areas of positive social emotional

skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs. A parent questionnaire will be sent home in the Spring with each student in order to gain information from the parent in regard to the child's current skills at home and within the community within each of the three areas. A similar questionnaire will be sent to the regular education teacher (Pre-K, Head Start, or Kindergarten teacher) if the child is dually-enrolled, in order to gain input on progress across settings.

Emergency Services

CARES Hotline

When a student exhibits at-risk behavior for intent to harm himself, herself, or others, classroom teachers may need to call the CARES hotline to begin a risk assessment. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible. Safety concerns will be the first priority for all staff. When the agency arrives to complete the risk assessment, they will need a confidential area to meet with the student, teacher, and parent.

DCFS

All SESE staff are mandated reporters if abuse and/or neglect are suspected and are required to follow the procedures outlined in the SESE Staff Handbook. This means that staff are required by law to report to DCFS any suspected abuse or neglect.

Homework

Homework is not applicable at the Early Childhood Classroom age-level. Additional materials, work tasks, suggestions may be sent home during the summer for individual students by the classroom teacher, speech-language pathologist, etc. Activities and projects may be sent home to encourage home and school collaboration during the school year.

Mainstreaming Procedures

District Contacts

For Early Childhood students, as part of the IEP process (Educational Services and Placement), the team will discuss general education. This includes having knowledge of any general education programs that the child is currently enrolled in by the parent that are not district programs (licensed daycare, licensed preschool programs, Head Start) and consideration of district general education programs (District Pre-K programs, transition to kindergarten if kindergarten age).

Consideration is based upon the individual needs of each child. Usually mainstreaming/dual-enrollment is done in the resident school district with full-knowledge of the resident district and parent consent.

IEP Documentation

All general education time is listed on the student's IEP.

Parental Pick-up

All parents should report to the main office of the school to sign in and to receive a visitor's tag. When the parent arrives to pick up their student, the teacher is called to send the child to the office rather than that parent coming to the classroom. The ECE teacher or the classroom program assistant should then walk that student to the office. This is for the protection of both the students and staff.

Physical Aggression

Handling Physical Aggression

An Individualized Crisis Management Plan will be completed for each student that shows the potential for physical aggression. Safety Care is used to handle physical aggression. Physical restraint is only employed after other less intrusive approaches have been attempted unsuccessfully. Physical restraints are only used as a safety response when there is an imminent risk of harm to the student, other students, or staff members.

Early Childhood classroom staff always try to defuse the situation and to be proactive. At the Early Childhood level, many positive and proactive strategies are put into place to try to prevent the occurrence of unsafe behaviors.

Research Based Curriculum

Academic

The *High Scope Curriculum* is the curriculum followed within the Early Childhood Classroom. The focus of this curriculum is on child-directed learning, active

learning, and interest-based learning. Adults facilitate language and learning. The children are encouraged to plan or choose what they would like to do in work areas then to review what they did during the work time.

The Curriculum is based upon Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs), which are 58 skills organized under the five content areas of: Approaches to Learning; Language, Literacy, and Communication; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being; and Arts and Sciences.

The 3 essential components of early literacy development are oral language, phonological awareness and print knowledge. These components/skills are taught and reinforced within the daily routine of the classroom. The phonemic awareness skills of rhyming, blending, and segmentation are specifically targeted within lessons and throughout the daily routine.

The math curriculum in the classroom is the *Numbers Plus Curriculum*. The *Numbers Plus Preschool Mathematics Curriculum* is a comprehensive set of detailed plans for small- and large-group early childhood mathematics activities, with ideas for extending learning throughout the program day. What's special about *Numbers Plus* is that children's mathematical learning is sequenced within activities — each activity has a built-in progression so children of different developmental and ability levels can participate together and have a positive and meaningful learning experience. By actively engaging young children with materials and ideas, *Numbers Plus* builds on the latest knowledge from research and practice about early mathematics learning and how adults support it.

Aligned with the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and developed under a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, the 120 activities in *Numbers Plus* are divided into five content areas:

- Number Sense and Operations
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Algebra
- Data Analysis

The writing curriculum, *Learning without Tears*, incorporates child-friendly teaching strategies, such as using music and movement to bring lessons to life, and multisensory manipulatives to build fine and gross motor skills. Readiness and writing lessons teach body awareness, cooperation, taking turns, listening, crayon grip, drawing, building, letter and number recognition, capital letter and number formation.

Social/Emotional Development

Research based curriculum will be used to address social/emotional development through the direct teaching and modeling of social skills through targeted lessons delivered by the Social Worker as well as follow-up activities from the Classroom Teacher/Staff.

Adaptive Behavior

The Classroom Teacher/Staff focus on toileting skills and other adaptive behavior/ independent functioning skills within the program.

Physical Development

Both gross (large muscle) skills and fine motor (small muscle) skills are taught and reinforced throughout the ECE routine.

Communication

Language development is an integral part of the Early Childhood Program. The speech-language pathologist provides direct service within the classroom. The targeted skills are taught and reinforced by the classroom teacher and staff at other times when the Speech-Language Pathologist is not providing direct services within the classroom.

Technology**Hardware**

All technology and hardware in use in the SESE classroom is purchased by South Eastern Special Education. Technology is an integral part of the ECE classrooms. Each classroom has a whiteboard as well as a laptop for use with the Starboard. Computers with touch screens are available for individual student use. Each classroom has at least two IPADS.

Transportation

Transportation is provided by and documented by the District Special Education Coordinator on the student's IEP. All bus discipline is determined and administered by the resident district.

Early Childhood students must attend for at least 2 ½ hours per day.

Transporting Students

SESE staff are never allowed to transport a student in their personal vehicle. In case of an emergency, the program supervisor will be contacted.

Visitors Policy

Per policy, for parents/guardians as well as those who would like to observe the classroom for educational purposes (college observations, etc.), the SESE Handbook contains forms which require the Classroom Supervisor's signature. Often the Classroom Supervisor will schedule to be present in the classroom the day/time of the observation in order to answer questions so that there are minimal distractions to the routine. The form must be completed and submitted at least 24 hours in advance. All visitors should report to the school office to obtain a visitor's badge. Observation periods are to be scheduled for no more than for 50 minutes of duration.

For those children who have not yet been found eligible for Early Childhood Special Education, parent observations are not scheduled until after eligibility has been determined. Any observations will be scheduled with the Classroom Supervisor.

Volunteer Policy

SESE has a Volunteer Handbook. Volunteers must contact South Eastern Special Education in order to request to volunteer or talk with the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher is to contact the classroom supervisor. The classroom supervisor will review the handbook as well as required volunteer form with the prospective volunteer. The volunteer will complete the required forms.