

Geneva Area City Schools

2015-2016



Preschool Handbook for Parents of Children with Disabilities

**Geneva Area City Schools
135 S. Eagle Street
Geneva, Ohio 44041
(440) 466-4831**

Preschool Staff

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How to Contact the Staff

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Geneva Preschool Disabled Program Mission Statement

Recognizing that “all children are ready to learn, relationships are influential, environment matters, and communication is critical,”* the mission of the Geneva Preschool Disabled Program is to provide our preschool disabled students a developmentally appropriate learning experience that stresses the child’s personal discipline; social development and emotional well being; recreational skills; and health and safety skills. Recognizing that parents are the primary teachers of their children, we believe we must educate, support, and encourage parents to become actively involved with their child’s education.

*Ohio Department of Education’s Office of Early Learning Early Learning and School Readiness

Position Statement:

The Geneva Preschool Disabled Program will:

- provide a safe, enriching and nurturing learning environment
- promote the physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development of children
- provide an age appropriate curriculum aligned to the Ohio Early Learning Standards
- respond to the needs of parents and families
- meet the specialized needs of each child we serve (individually appropriate)
- involves child initiated and direct play
- embrace an understanding and acceptance of diversity among individuals.

In accordance with the *NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs serving Children from Birth through age 8* and the *Early Learning Content Standards* developed by the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Early Learning Early Learning and School Readiness.

The program is developed in accordance with *Rules For School Child Care Programs Operated By Public Schools, County Boards Of Mental Retardation And Developmental Disabilities And Eligible Chartered Nonpublic Schools Chapter 3301-32 ORC*

Parent Involvement:

Parents are the primary teachers of their children. Parents are the most influential part of any child's life and the most influential in their development. All parents have the right and the responsibility to become involved with their child's education and to be an integral part of that experience. The Geneva Area City Schools and its preschool staff fully supports parental involvement in the program and provides various opportunities for parents to become involved. Parents are encouraged to:

1. Visit the program at any time. Any parent wishing to do so must follow board adopted visitation policies. For the safety and security of all school personnel and students, all visitors are asked to report to the school office before going to the preschool room.
2. Parents should plan on being involved in the preliminary screening and orientation during the initial identification and enrollment process that occurs before your child begins preschool disabled program.
3. Parents are encouraged to participate as active members of Multi-factored Evaluation/Evaluation Team Report (MFE/ETR) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members.
4. Two times per year, a written report of each preschool child's progress will be sent to parents.
5. Two parent-teacher conferences will be held per year. (One in the fall and one in the spring.)
6. Parent may initiate additional conferences with teachers by calling the PS teacher or the Director to set up an appointment.
7. Parents are encouraged to join the school-parent association.
8. Parents are encouraged to attend all school activities open to the public.

The Preschool Program

The Geneva Preschool Program is designed to meet the individual and unique needs of the disabled preschool children it serves ages 3 through 6. Preschool professional staff will select age and individual developmentally appropriate materials for classroom use, design classroom space, and develop learning activities appropriate for all participants. Teachers will organize schedules to best meet the needs of each and all participants.

Assessment of each child's present levels of performance and progress will be achieved through data and information gathered by parents, teachers and related professionals

through observation, interaction and appropriate diagnostic instruments. The district personnel will utilize diagnostic instruments and assessment tools accepted as appropriate for the identification and screening of disabled preschool children. Parents will be advised of all assessment and will receive a written report or summary of the results (may be in the form of an MFE/ETR) of any assessment used for the identification of preschool disabled children in accordance with all applicable state and federal rules and laws for this process.

Orientation/Schedule:

The Geneva Area City Schools will operate two separate but related programs for serving the needs of our preschool disabled population. Both an Itinerant and Site-based Preschool Disabled (PSD) programs have been established. The determination of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for each child is the function of the IEP team. The appropriateness of both options will be considered and discussed with parents during the IEP process.

1. Site-Based Program

Some disabled children and their families are more appropriately served in a PSD Site-based program. Site-based Services involve a pre-school disabled teacher and possibly another appropriate related service provider (Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, etc.) working with disabled preschool children in a group setting within a location other than home. This level of service is determined by the IEP team.

- The district will run two half-day programs each day four days per week, Monday through Thursday.
- Each class is limited to 8 children per class. This ratio of 8 children to 1 teacher may be increased only with the ODE approval. (see **Preschool Staff Ratios** below)
- Individual class schedules including days and times will be available to parents when their child is enrolled.
- The days of service will follow the district's annual school calendar.
- In case of inclement weather, parents are asked to listen to TV and radio announcements for school cancellation. If the district cancels school or Austinburg School is closed, NO preschool classes will be held that day.
- If a parent or designated adult brings their preschool child to school, the parent or designated adult must remain with the child until preschool class begins. *No child may be left alone or unattended on school property and must be delivered to the preschool room.*

- Parents transporting their own children should plan to arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before the preschool class begins.
- The school will provide appropriate transportation for children in the program.

2. Itinerant Program:

Some disabled children and their families are more appropriately served in an Itinerant program. Itinerant Services involve a pre-school disabled teacher and/or another appropriate related service provider (Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, etc.) working with the child and parents at home, at a child care provider setting, at a private pre-school, or in the kindergarten class. This level of service is determined by the IEP team and provides the child four (4) hours of contact per month.

Admission and Withdrawal/Removal:

Parents residing in Geneva School district who suspect that their pre-school age child may have a qualifying disability and wish to initiate a referral to the program, may contact Kaye Haskins, Austinburg Principal and PDS Program Director at Austinburg School, 440-275-5392.

Parents will be instructed how to proceed.

Parents will be asked to complete the following forms should their child qualify for the PSD program at Geneva Schools and must bring the following information or documents to the school at the time of enrollment:

1. Birth Certificate
 2. Immunization Records
 3. Social Security Card
 4. Child's physical form
 5. Custody or Guardianship records
 6. Evidence of residency in the Geneva District
- (Parents may contact the school at 275-5392 for an explanation of each item)

A child will be accepted into the Geneva Preschool Disabled Program if eligible as defined by the *Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools Serving Children with Disabilities* and *Model Procedures For The Education Of Children With Disabilities*.

Failure to complete all required forms, including the medical form, or chronic unexcused absence may result in the withdrawal of a child from the program.

Attendance:

A daily report of each child's attendance will be kept by the classroom teacher. Children are expected to attend all scheduled daily classes. Exceptions to this include:

- personal illness,

- quarantine at home,
- and observance of religious holidays.

If a child is absent, parents are asked to contact Cheryl Sedmak at Austinburg Elementary School. (440-466-4831 ext. 6001)

Illness and Communicable Diseases:

If a parent suspects their child is ill, they are asked to please keep the child at home.

State regulations require that the following precautions and/or procedures be followed for any children suspected of having a communicable disease.

1. A staff member shall immediately notify the parent /guardian/or other approved contact of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of an illness.
2. A child with any sign of illness or disease shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent /guardian/or other approved contact.
 - a. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within 24 hour period)
 - b. Severe coughing which causes the child to become blue or red in the face or makes a "whooping" sound.
 - c. Difficult, labored, or rapid breathing
 - d. Yellowish skin or eyes
 - e. Conjunctivitis ("pink eye")
 - f. A temperature of 100 degrees F taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other symptoms of illness
 - g. Untreated infected skin patches
 - h. Unusually dark urine or a gray or white stool
 - i. Stiff neck
 - j. Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
 - k. Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
3. Any child with these symptoms or signs of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some time during the day shall be determined by the principal and/or nurse and the parent/guardian will be informed of this decision. The child while isolated at the school shall be carefully monitored for symptoms described in number 2 above.
 - a. Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
 - b. Unusual spots or rashes
 - c. Elevated temperature
 - d. vomiting

Any isolated child suspected of any communicable disease will be cared for in a room or portion of the room not being used by the preschool program. They will be in sight or hearing of an adult staff member or school staff member at all times. They will never be without adult supervision. Any such child will be made comfortable until discharge to his/her parent /guardian/or other approved contact. Any bedding used by the child will be cleaned before it comes into contact with another individual. Any furniture used by the child will be disinfected. The nurse and staff will follow all procedures for dealing with communicable diseases.

Annual Physical Examinations

All preschool children are required to have an annual physical and provide the school with documentation of the physical (*Child's Health Information Form* signed by the physician).

Administration of Medication:

If possible, all medication should be given by the parents to their child at home.

When in such cases as this is not possible, the Geneva Board of Education has adopted a written policy for dispensing and administering prescribed and over-the counter medication to students in school. This policy and the aligned procedures will be followed. This policy and procedures are available through the school nurses office. Parents may contact the school nurse at 275-5392. Procedures for the administration of medicines is as follows:

- The school nurse or a person designated by the principal can only administer medication to students at school.
- Any medication or drug, whether over the counter or prescription only will be administered with the written orders of a physician/dentist. The nurse may contact the physician/dentist if necessary.
- All medication must be in the pharmacy package (with dosage/administration information). Any medicine not properly labeled will not be administered.
- The appropriate school *medication authorization form* must be completed and signed by 1.) the parents/guardian and 2.) physician/dentist requesting that the Geneva Schools comply with the physician's request to administer said dosage of *each* medication and this form must accompany every/all medication for students.
- All medications must be kept in the secure/locked medicine area of the school clinic or office.
- Should any changes occur regarding the administration of this medication to the child change, the parents must immediately submit a revised statement regarding dosage/administration to the school nurse.
- No person authorized by the Geneva Schools Board of Education to administer a prescribed drug and who has a copy of the most recent physical/pharmacy statement, and written parental permission to administer said drug would be liable

for civil damages for administering or failing to administer the drug, unless he/she acted in a manner that would constitute “gross negligence or wanton or reckless misconduct.”

Emergency Treatment:

Parents are required to complete an emergency medical form for each child in the preschool program.

In case of an accident or emergency the parents will be immediately notified using this form. In case the parents cannot be reached immediately the school will contact an alternate responsible adult as listed by the parents on that form. Please advise those listed as alternates to be available for the call during school hours. The parents are strongly advised to provide the number of a person who resides in the district and who can respond more immediately to an emergency situation involving their child..

In case no one listed on the form can be reached, the school will abide by the directions in the form or call emergency medical services should they be needed.

Accident/Unusual Incident Reporting

In case of any accident (emergency and non-emergency) or other incident deemed “unusual” by the preschool staff involving a child, an incident report will be completed by the teacher or other preschool staff member describing the incident. Parents will be notified of the incident either in person, by phone, or receive a copy of any such report. Any completed incident report will be placed in the preschool child’s school file.

Transportation:

The Geneva Schools will provide transportation for preschool disabled children participating in the site-based program at Austinburg School. Transportation will be provided in accordance with the Ohio Pupil Transportation and Safety Rules and Regulations of the Ohio Department of Education. The nature and extent of the transportation services provided each student will be determined by the IEP process. Any parent wishing to transport their child or have another responsible adult transport their child to the preschool and home must complete out a **Preschool Authorized Pick-up Form** available through the director.

Snacks:

The Geneva Schools will not provide lunch to preschool students.

The Geneva Schools will provide a nutritious snack daily for each classroom session.

Any parent of a child with nutrition or dietary issues/concerns should contact the school and make such concerns known.

Parents may supply their child with his/her own snack. This should be discussed thoroughly with the Preschool teacher and Director prior to initiating such a snack.

Children's Dress/Clothing:

Preschool curriculum and experiences involve lots of play and activities involving pasting, painting, coloring, etc, Parents should dress their child appropriately in play clothes and be sure to dress them appropriately for the weather of the day. The children will go out and play year round. In the winter, children must have appropriate outdoor clothing including boots, winter outerwear, and hats, gloves. Parents should label clothing to avoid any mix ups.

Parents should send a set of emergency clothes to place on their child should he/she soil themselves. Each parent must send a plastic bag with their child's name on it with these emergency clothes in it.

If a child is not yet potty trained, parents should supply enough diapers for the week, each week.

Behavior Management:

Learning acceptable behavior in the classroom and other social settings is vital to the success of every child. Behavior management techniques used by the preschool staff should encourage a child to gain self-control, self-reliance, and to respond positively to others. Positive reinforcement of proper and acceptable behaviors should be used as not to destroy a child's self-esteem and to promote acceptable social interaction with peers as well as adults children have contact with. A positive proactive approach including prevention, redirection and praise is the preferred intervention model.

Positive Model for Behavior Management includes:

- Rewarding desired behavior with praise.
- Consistent and persistent responses to a child's appropriate and inappropriate behaviors
- Redirection to appropriate behaviors.
- Modeling appropriate behaviors
- Easing transitions with precautionary statements of transition activities
- Having a number of rules for children's behavior to the minimum and make them simplified and meaningful.

When positive behavior management strategies are not applicable in a severe or crisis situation, other steps will be employed. These occasions should be rare and used only when absolutely necessary for the well-being of the child, other children, or to maintain the educational integrity of the classroom. These more negative methods should not be

used as punishment, but rather to allow the child a short time-out to gain self-control or to protect the child by removing him/her from a potentially dangerous situation.

A crisis situation should be defined as those situations when a child has lost self-control, will not respond to positive redirections or prompts, the child is potentially endangering him/herself or others. Responses to the crisis may include a short time-out in the classroom, removal of the child from the classroom setting for a short time, and suspension from the program should also be considered an option. Other responses may be developed via a meeting with the parents and teacher or an IEP team review.

If dangerous behaviors continue occur and persist, the preschool teacher will meet with parents to develop a written behavior intervention plan (BIP) and crisis plan focusing on eliminating the negative behavior and replacing it with positive behaviors. The plan may include a review of the IEP in certain situations or if the parent requests such a review.

Mediation, Complaints and Due Process:

Situations may arise where parents or other family members believe a school has violated federal or state law. The Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) and the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness (OELSR) encourages parents and family members to work with schools to resolve differences. However, if a resolution cannot be made at the local level, such complaints can be made to the following address:

The Ohio Department of Education
Office for Exceptional Children
Procedural Safeguards Section
25 South Front Street
Mail Stop 202
Columbus, OH 43215
Toll free: 1-877-644-6338
Local number: (614) 466-2650

*Preschool complaints must be submitted to the Office for Exceptional Children at the address above. The preschool complaints will, however, be investigated by The Office of Early Learning and School Readiness in collaboration with the Office for Exceptional Children.

Early Childhood Program License and Program Compliance Report

Copies of the early childhood program license and program compliance report are available upon request. The phone number for Geneva Area City Schools Board of Education is (440) 466-4831. The phone number for the Geneva Schools Preschool Director is 440-275-5392. The Ohio Department of Education is (614) 466-0224 and may be used to report a suspected licensing violation.

Other Resources For Parents Of A Child With A Disability

1. *Whose Idea Is This?* – A resource Guide for Parents Of Children With Disabilities Parent ; Notice of Procedural Safeguards developed by the Ohio Department of Education
2. ODE of Education Office of Early Learning and School Readiness website:
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/ece/>
3. *Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools Serving Children with Disabilities and Model Procedures For The Education Of Children With Disabilities*
4. Northeast Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center website:
www.neoserrc.k12.oh.us



Model Policy and Procedures Adopted August 25, 2003