

Pre-K in RSU #16

Excellence in Early Childhood Education



Poland Community School
1250 Maine Street
Poland, Me 04274
207-998-4915



Minot Consolidated School
23 Shaw Hill Road
Minot, Me 04258
207-346-6471



Elm Street School
129 Elm Street School
Mechanic Falls, Me 04256
207-345-3381



Dear Families,

We are delighted that you have decided to enroll your child in RSU 16's Pre-K program. Pre-K is a wonderful opportunity to provide our four year olds with a foundation they need for Kindergarten and a lifetime of learning.

Our highly skilled and passionate Pre-K staff have created safe and structured classrooms. Your child will learn important skills, like how to work with other children, ask questions, solve problems, and how to become an active learner in a classroom.

In this handbook, you will find important information about what you and your child can expect from Pre-K.

We wish you and your child the best as you join the RSU 16 educational system.

Sincerely,

Tina Meserve

Tina Meserve
Superintendent of Schools

Kim Spencer

Kim Spencer
Minot School Principal

Rick Benoit

Rick Benoit
Poland Community School Principal

Ryan W. Patrie

Ryan Patrie
Elm Street School Principal

Pre-K Philosophy:

“Play is the fundamental force in early childhood; it carries the greatest power to support development” (NAEYC, 2017). Play fosters all aspects of the child's development: emotional, social, intellectual, linguistic, and physical. In the earliest stages, children use play to practice known actions, experiment and explore new learning, and learn about their bodies in relation to their environment. As they grow, so to does their play and the extensions of their learning, experiences, and knowledge. Social play offers children the opportunity to practice perspective taking and explore the wonderful world of friendships.

Through thoughtfully designed learning experiences, programming aligned with The Maine Early Learning and Development Standards, and principles of best practice, the RSU 16 Pre-K programs create integrated and nurturing learning environments that support and celebrate the unique learning needs and interests of all children. Our programs foster a love for learning and promote young children's school readiness as they begin to know their school community.

Mission:

Our mission is to foster the development of the “whole child”-social, emotional, cognitive and physical development, to build strong parent partnerships and to provide the community with a Pre-K program founded in offering excellence in early educational programming.

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning.”

Mr. Rogers



Guiding Behavior

Guiding children's behavior is a complex and evolving process, but when it is balanced with patience, thoughtful attention and proactive strategies, it is a process that will help children to develop a positive self concept.



With the focus on the development of the child and by providing children with meaningful choices, outlets to release natural emotions, clear rules and expectations, positive guidance that promotes self regulation skills, teaches responsibility and helps children make thoughtful choices. Through conflict resolution, redirection, modeling appropriate behavior, encouraging language skills, providing choices, using positive reinforcement, and exploring natural and logical consequences, our goal is to assist children in developing a positive sense of self and to encourage pro social problem solving techniques. Common rules regarding safety, kindness, respect for others and property are consistently reinforced and children are active participants in the process of problem solving and the development of rules and expectations.

For more information on supporting positive guidance strategies and parent resources please see:

Conscious Discipline: Dr. Becky Bailey: https://consciousdiscipline.com/about/dr_becky_bailey.asp

The Responsive Classroom: <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org>

General Information

Transportation

RSU #16 will provide transportation for the children in the Pre-K program on the school buses that already run to each school. Since the start times and end times will be the same for Pre-K, this will allow us to more efficiently transport students. There will be a middle of the day run to take the morning children home and bring the afternoon children to school. To see specific pickup and drop off times and additional bus information, please visit the RSU 16 website, <http://rsu16.org>



School Calendar

All Pre-K programs will be in session Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and will align to the elementary school calendar (see RSU website for calendar). Wednesday is a day for staff to complete curriculum development and connect with families. There are two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Each session is just under 3 hours a day. The anticipated start date will be about a week after K-12 students begin. This allows teaching staff an opportunity to meet with parents and children to complete basic development questionnaires.

Child Development Services: (CDS Opportunities-16 Madison Avenue, Oxford, ME 04270)

P: 207-743-9701

F: 207-743-7063

If your child has special needs and requires speech, physical, or occupational therapy services, CDS will provide those services. Your child's teacher will work with you to support your efforts to obtain services and/or continuation of services.

Birthday parties:

Birthday parties are an exciting time in any child's life and we want to help celebrate that. If your child is having a birthday party, we ask that invitations are not distributed at school unless all children in the class are invited. Also, if you want to send in a special treat for class, **please make sure that all items brought into the classroom include an ingredients label.** Each year we have children who have allergies or intolerances. We also ask that you us know ahead of time, at least two days, if a treat will be sent in that accommodations can be made for any child who cannot have what is provided.



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Health and Medical

Wellness Policy:

We ask that parents use reasonable judgment when their child is not feeling well. If your child is not well enough to fully participate in all aspects of his/her program (including outdoor time) please keep him/her home.

If a child develops signs of illness during the day, the teacher will refer him/her to the school nurse, who in turn, will evaluate symptoms and determine course of action.

Below are some general guidelines outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics. You may also call our school nurse to discuss any questions you may have about your child attending school.

Your children should be kept home if he/she has the following symptoms:

- ★ A fever in excess of 100 degrees. The child may return to school if they have been fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours.
- ★ Two or more consecutive instances of diarrhea
- ★ Vomiting
- ★ Pronounced or persistent coughing
- ★ Unexplained rash



Please keep your child home if they have any symptoms of a communicable condition, including but not limited to: flu, respiratory infection, chicken pox, measles mumps, conjunctivitis, strep throat, infectious rash, etc.

If you have any medical concerns with your child, please contact the school nurse as soon as possible.



Things to Bring and Consider Each Day

What to Wear:

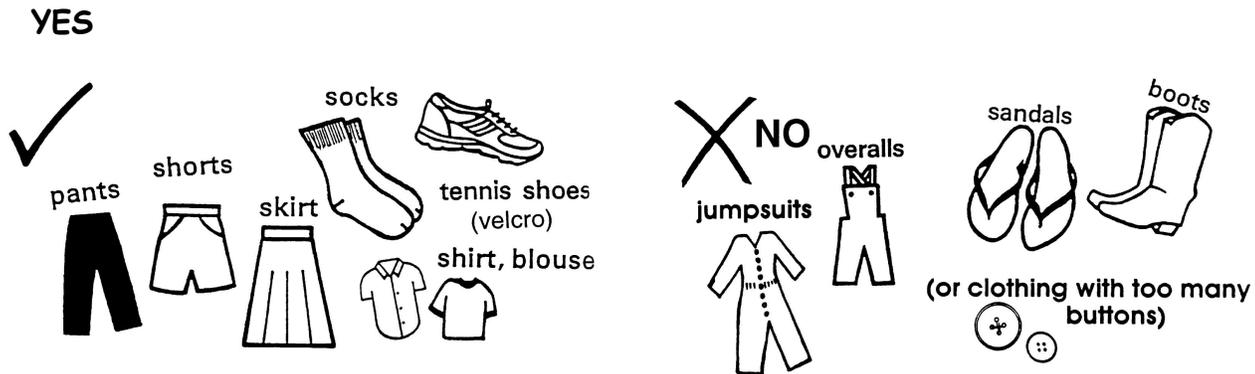
Pre-K students are involved in activities that require jumping, running, and crawling on the floor. Students will also be cooking, painting, using markers and glue, working with play-doh and other "messy stuff". Please select clothing that is both comfortable and appropriate for these activities. Clothing should be easy for your child to remove for bathroom purposes and that encourages independence.

Outdoor Play:

Outdoor play is an important part of the Pre-K program. Each day we enjoy outside recess, unless it is raining or extremely cold. Please see that your child's clothing and footwear are appropriate for the weather conditions and for active play.

Safe Playground Shoes:

Please send your child in shoes that tie, fasten, buckle or strap to their feet. Preschoolers are active runners, climbers, and jumpers and we want to give them opportunities to build their skills safely.



Extra Clothing:

Occasionally accidents do happen, so please send in a change of clothes for your child (underwear, pants, shirt, and socks). Place these items in a large zip lock bag with your child's name clearly written on the outside of the bag. Please remember to replace items to reflect seasonal changes and as clothing items are used.



Backpack

Your child needs to bring a backpack everyday. The backpack must be large enough to fit a 9 X 12 size folder and lunchbox. Keep in mind that in the winter, your child will need room in their backpack for a folder, lunchbox, as well as snow pants, and sneakers. **Please empty your child's backpack and folder everyday.** Please discourage students from bringing toys to school unless your child's teacher has designated a day for show and tell.

Home School Folder:

Your child will be provided with a home school folder that should be brought to and from school each day. This folder will be used to send school information, projects, and notes to and from the teacher.

Snacks:

Please provide a daily snack and drink for your child. Acceptable snacks include fruit, vegetables, crackers, pretzels, water, and juice boxes. You may also send in a labeled water bottle for their use.



Additional School Supplies: Your child's teacher will send a list of additional materials and donations that may be needed for the classroom.

Please label articles of clothing that your child brings to school. It is extremely important to label items such as ski pants, boots, and mittens.

Toys:

Our Pre-K Programs provide many choices of materials including art media, building blocks, manipulatives, scientific tools, dramatic play materials, cuddly stuffies, and much more. **Toys from your home should remain at home.** Exceptions will be made for occasions when a thematic item has been

requested from home. We ask that you make sure that items brought in are labeled with your child's name and please remember that things can get lost or broken and items of a valuable, breakable or irreplaceable nature should stay at home.

Safety and Security Information

Attendance:

Your child's regular and on time attendance is an important factor as we are learning important educational, social and emotional skills that will lay the foundations for school success. Most Pre-K learning activities are group oriented and involve interactions with classmates. Please view school as a priority and see to it that your child attends everyday, except in cases of illness or emergency. Please see Wellness Policy for additional information. If your child is absent, please call the school secretary.

Arrival and Dismissal:

You will receive details from your child's teacher regarding arrival and dismissal procedures. When picking up your child from school you must sign him/her out in the office. If someone other than the child's parent is picking up the child, they must have parent permission as well as a photo id for identification.

Volunteering:

Parents and families can be great resources in the classroom. Throughout the year we may need volunteers to help with a variety of projects and activities both in and out of the classroom.



- ★ Read a book to the class
- ★ Play a game with a small group
- ★ Share a special interest/craft with the class
- ★ Prepare materials (cutting, sorting, etc.)
- ★ Bulletin board help
- ★ Send in items for a classroom celebration

For the safety of our students, all schools require a background check and to be cleared in the office to volunteer. While volunteering, all information regarding students is confidential and should only be discussed with appropriate school staff. In order to maintain the respect and privacy of others, photographs will not be taken of other children. All volunteers must check in at the office and wear a volunteer badge at all times.

A Typical Day in Pre-K

An organized daily routine is important for your child's educational experience. Each day will follow a specific routine, the following is an example of a schedule:

- ★ Arrival/Welcome - Children are welcomed and then join in a variety of independent activities.
- ★ Circle Time - Some activities include calendar, weather, graphing, games, reading of a message, and other math and literacy focused activities.
- ★ Small Group Activities - The teacher will lead a small group of child in a variety of activities that focus on a specific skill or task that reinforce the concepts being taught.
- ★ Free Choice/Pull Out - The children will engage in meaningful play activities. Children will choose from a variety of areas in the classroom in which to play. Areas include kitchen, blocks, dress up, games, puzzles, reading, cars and trucks, sensory table, science, and art. During this time, teachers will pull children out of play to work on academic tasks individually or in small groups as needed. Such tasks include name writing, story dictation, or to participate in a game.
- ★ Story Time - A story will be read to the children daily. During this time, literacy skills will be the focus. Such skills include a book's structure, predicting, and phonemic awareness.
- ★ Playground - Each day, weather permitting, we will spend time outside on our playground. The children will learn how to use the equipment appropriately as well as participate in organized games.



Parent Teacher Partnerships Better Together

Parent participation is an integral part of our programming and is a vital part to the success of children in our school community. We strongly encourage parents to become involved in our program and we offer many opportunities for parents to engage in our learning community. From volunteering, being a guest reader or sharing your talents, to simply sharing your thoughts and ideas-there are many ways to becoming involved and if you are interested please let us know. Your child's teacher will also send out information outlining ideas that your support could be best used in your child's classroom.

Communication:

We are very excited to share in your child's learning journey and to build a strong foundation through our parent-teacher partnerships. There are a variety of ways that you and your child's teacher will communicate throughout the school year and you can work with your child's teacher to find a way that best meets your needs.

Here are some of the communication strategies you may see in your child's classroom:

- ★ E-mail-This is a quick and easy way to get information to you child's teacher and is usually responded to within 24 hours.
- ★ Newsletters-Weekly and Bi-weekly updates on classroom happenings
- ★ Home School Folder- Your child will have a folder system in his/her class and sending a note in your child's folder is a great way to update the teacher on changes in pick-up/drop off routines, send a home highlight, or share additional information. Your child's teacher will also use this folder to share work, newsletters, and information with you, so please make sure to check your child's folder daily.
- ★ Classroom Share Sites- Bloomz, Shutterfly
- ★ Classroom Website- Each teacher has a classroom website. You can access this via the RSU 16 website and/or your child's teacher will also provide you with a link.
- ★ Phone Calls-Your child's teacher may or may not be available via phone, however, you may always leave a voicemail. Your child's teacher will return your phone call within 24 hours.
- ★ Pick up and Drop off times-A quick message or question may be shared/asked during this time, but for more lengthy conversations, please connect with your child's teacher to schedule a time that is mutually convenient.
- ★ Parent Teacher Conferences-There are 2 Parent teacher conferences scheduled throughout the school year and teachers are also available to meet with parents outside of these times.

- ★ Wednesday Meetings-Teachers have time set aside to meet with parents on Wednesdays.
- ★ School-wide Communication-School-wide information is communicated through a variety of formats, such as monthly newsletters or a school Facebook page.

Parents Supporting Learning

Children Love to Learn!

Preschool years are an exciting time for you and your child. Their growing curiosity about the world around them, developing friendships with peers, and their ability and interest in doing many things independently are all exciting milestones to enjoy with your preschooler!

Here are a few tips to help prepare your child for Pre-K and support learning at home:

- ★ Read, Read, Read! Share books with your child, have them read to you (read the pictures), take a trip to the library, tell stories that you make up...Build a Love of Literacy!
- ★ Get out there and explore with your child: Learning is everywhere!
- ★ Cooking with kids: Think math, literacy and bonding time with your child!
- ★ Play with your child: Play is how children learn best!
- ★ Limit screen time: According to AAP, media and digital time should be engaging and support responsive parent child interactions.
- ★ Encourage good health habits: Hand washing, using a tissue, eating a variety of healthy foods, brushing teeth-"Healthy Body, Healthy Mind."
- ★ Encourage exploration of different art media: Get creative with your child! Drawing, cutting, creating, and imagining new ways to use materials supports problem solving, early writing, creative expression and a strong sense of self!

Growing Independence: Tips for Parents of Young Children

Children from 4 to 6 years old are:

- ★ Beginning to develop their independence and form real friendships.
- ★ Learning rules to more difficult games.
- ★ Developing important life skills.

Encourage Independence in Bathing and Dressing

At first, this may take a little more time than helping your child get dressed or take a bath, but it is time well spent. Independence comes with practice and positive parental guidance.

If you get the clothes ready the night before, the morning routine will involve only getting dressed. This way, your child can focus on just one thing. Your child may need to be reminded of all the steps.

Also keep in mind that choosing clothing items that are easy for you child to do all by themselves helps support their success and "Can Do" attitude (pants with elastic waist, velcro shoes or slip on shoes). As they show readiness, continue to add in more challenging tasks at home, such as buttons, snaps, and tie shoes...remember to practice at home;-)

"In the morning, when you get up,
First, use the bathroom,
Then, take off your PJs,
And then, put on your clothes."

Praise your child's efforts and successes:
"You did a great job getting yourself ready for school today!"



Help Your Child Become a Good Friend

Four to six year olds are learning what it means to be a friend. They will have fun times as well as arguments and hurt feelings. Guide your child to solve problems. With your help, your child can learn how to solve social problems.

Help your child understand the other child's point of view. "I guess Suzie wants a turn too."

Teach your child the following:

- Stay calm
- Do not hit, grab, or shove

Use words:

- "I get upset when you talk to me like that."
- "I'm sad you don't want to play with me."
- "I'm angry you took the ball from me."

Stand close by and watch as the children solve their problem. Being close by puts the children on their best behavior. This is how they begin to develop the confidence and skills to communicate honestly, calmly, and politely with others.

For more information on supporting your child's leap into Pre-K please see the resources below.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Growing-Independence-Tips-for-Parents-of-Young-Children.aspx>

Source

**We are Better Together!
Family Connections**

RSU 16

<http://www.rsu16.org>

Poland Community School

998-4915 Fax: 998-4998

Nicole Patenaude

Rebecca Ducharme

Elm Street School

345-3381 Fax: 346-6224

Sue Littlefield

Minot Consolidated School

346-6471 Fax: 345-9535

Sarah Jamo

CDS:

CDS Opportunities

16 Madison Avenue

Oxford, ME 04270

P: 207-743-9701 F: 207-743-7063

RSU #16 Transportation Information

Tom Kelley-Transportation Director

TKelly@rsu16.org

207-998-2727 ext. 107

Parent Teacher Organizations:

PCS: PTA - Meets the second Tuesday of every month

MCS: Community Club - Meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm

ESS: PTO - Meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:00pm

Additional Links

★ National Association for the Education of Young Children-

★ <http://families.naeyc.org/>

★ Scholastic-<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/>

★ PBS Parents-<http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development/>

★ Zero to Three-

<http://www.zerotothree.org/early-care-education/early-language-literacy/writing-and-art-skills.html>

★ Handwriting Without tears-<http://www.hwtears.com/hwt>

- ★ Starfall (Math and Literacy)-<http://www.starfall.com>
- ★ Bed Time Math-<http://bedtimemath.org>

Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Health & Human Services - March 2015

Research and practice are constantly informing the field of education and Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS) reflects the most current knowledge to date. This document can be used within and across a wide range of early learning settings-public preschool, Head Start, and informal care settings (both family and center based), nursery school, home visiting, specialized services and informal care settings. The Maine Early Learning and Development Standards is designed to promote greater collaboration and consistency across systems by aligning with and creating a continuum of practice from birth through third grade.

The document is intended to target early learning and development from a holistic approach and is divided into 9 areas of learning and development:

- ★ Social and Emotional Development
- ★ Approaches to Learning
- ★ Creative Arts
- ★ Early Learning and Language
- ★ Reading Standards for Literature
- ★ Physical Development and Health
- ★ Math
- ★ Science
- ★ Social Studies

The MELDS connects the learning that occurs in preschool years (age 3 through Kindergarten entry with the essential learning and development that occurs both before and after this age span). We encourage families to take an opportunity to explore this document and feel free to contact your child's teacher with any questions.

If you would like a hard copy of the MELDS you can contact the Maine Department of Education at:
Maine DOE
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0023
Voice: (207) 624-6600
Fax: (207) 624-6700

TTY: 1-888-577-6690

“Children are not a distraction from more important work; They are the most important work;”
C.S. Lewis

Notes