Eligibility

All 3 to 4 year olds are eligible, but priority will be given to those children who may be at risk for academic failure. Risk factors are determined using a formal screening process and parent interviews. Examples of risk factors can be, but not limited to: family income, English as a second language, single parent home, lack of social/academic experiences, etc.

Cost

Early Bird Pre- Kindergarten is a grant program with funding provided for by the Illinois State Board of Education. Therefore, there is no cost to the family. However, parents are expected to be actively involved with their child's education and volunteer in the classroom.

Program Contact Information and Times

Reagan Middle School

Pre-K Wing, Door 11

620 Division St.

Dixon, IL 61021

815-285-8722

Mon. – Fri

AM Class 8:00 - 10:30

PM Class 11:45 – 2:15

New Opportunities For Learning and Play

Indoors, our classrooms have been fitted with Smartboards. A Smartboard is an interactive whiteboard that the teacher and the students use to solve problems, play games, write stories, or find information.

Also available in the preschool wing is our Gross Motor Room. Large muscle activities are essential for children's health and well-being. Children need time each day to hop, jump, slide, climb and throw and catch a ball. Our Gross Motor Room is equipped with a 1" thick foam floor to make sure children are safe while doing these activities.

The time children spend outdoors is just as important to their learning as the time spent indoors. Physical activities wake up the brain for learning and our newly installed outdoor playground provides these opportunities. The students are able to play in a 5000 sq. foot fenced in area filled with slides, obstacle course, playhouse, and climbing caterpillar.

Early Bird Pre- Kindergarten Program

The Early Bird Preschool's mission is to collaborate, cooperate, and communicate with parents, community resources, and staff members to create a safe and caring environment in which all students learn.

Dixon Public Schools

Unit 170

Staff Qualifications

All teachers hold a Bachelor's of Arts in early childhood education and a current state teaching certificate. All assistants hold a current paraprofessional certificate. Both are required to participate in ongoing professional development.

Philosophy and Curriculum

Early Bird teaching is based on an education that encourages learning through guided play. Our classrooms are settings rich with activities and developmentally appropriate challenges.

Teachers use the Creative Curriculum to divide the classroom into a balance of active and quiet endeavors. Creative Curriculum is also aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards for 3 and 4 year olds, developed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

When enrolled in our program, children will exercise all their capabilities from the experiences prepared for them: large and small motor skills, problem solving, language, and general understanding.

Teachers use a research based developmental continuum to assess each student's growth and development. For older students, additional monitoring is done using the Get It, Got It, Go! assessment tool which links with Dixon School District's AIMSweb progress monitoring system.

Purpose

Children who receive a high quality preschool experience are more likely to succeed in school and in life.

Early Bird provides these experiences by instituting developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom. Two of the skills the program focuses on are early literacy and early numeracy.

Early Literacy skills include:

- Discussing events in sequence
- Developing memory and attention skills
- Retelling information from a story
- Recognizing name in print
- Printing name
- Identifying letters of the alphabet
- Identifying rhyming words

Matching beginning sounds of words

Early Numeracy skills include:

- Matching and naming size, shape and patterns
- Counting forward and backward
- Recognizing numbers
- Identifying more and less of a quantity

Naming location words: in, on, under, in front, behind

By fostering these skills as well as the social, emotional, and physical skills needed in early childhood, this program helps prepare students to be successful in their school career.

Home Visits/Conferences

One home visit is completed with each family. This usually occurs at the beginning of the year. This provides the child the opportunity to meet the teacher in his/her own environment. It also provides an opportunity for the parents and the teacher to discuss the child's needs, fears, habits, etc. Additional home visits are available upon request from either the teacher or the parent. In addition, a parent or teacher can request a conference to discuss the student's progress throughout the year.

Parent Resource Center

The Parent Resource Center is open to all parents of Early Bird Pre-K students. The center is located in Room 2 of the Pre-K Wing. Toys, games, parenting books and other resources are available to check out. The center is staffed by the Early Bird Parent Coordinator, who is available to assist all parents with parenting needs.

Parent's Rights & Responsibilities

A parent is the first and most important teacher. You have the right and responsibility to be involved in your child's education. You can support your child's school experience by:

- Welcoming the teacher to your home.
- Attending parent/teacher conferences.
- Volunteering in the classroom.
- Making sure your child is on time for school and does not miss school.
- Participating in family nights, parent education meetings, and field trips. Reading to your child daily.