

Neshaminy School District

Pre-K Counts Program

Family Handbook with a focus on *Attendance*



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Welcome

to the

Neshaminy School District

Pre-K Counts Program

The Neshaminy School District Pre-K Counts mission is to provide high quality, preschool education for our students and to help families develop skills to enable them to be their children's advocates throughout their school years. Our program is designed to promote the healthiest, safest environment in which children, families, and staff can thrive and reach their full potential.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents with basic information about the Neshaminy School District Pre-K Counts Program with a *special emphasis on the importance of daily, on-time attendance*.

Additional information about your Pre-K Counts experience will be given to you by our partner, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, whose staff will provide the educational service.

This handbook was designed be used as a resource guide for the program. If you have a question that cannot be answered in the Family Handbook, always feel free to contact your child's Pre-K Counts Teacher or Family Support Provider.

My child's PKC school is _____

Address _____

My child's PKC Teacher is _____

Email or phone number _____

My Family Support Provider is _____

Email or phone number _____



What can a PKC family expect from a Neshaminy Pre-K Counts classroom?

- Full day classes, *usually* from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Each location will notify families of the actual start/end times.
- Certified Teachers and CDA Certified Instructional Assistants with the education and expertise to teach young children;
- A curriculum that will help your child grow academically and socially
- Teachers will regularly review your child's progress and choose teaching and learning activities that are best for your child
- Staff will help your child and you adjust to pre-kindergarten and smoothly move on to kindergarten
- Small class size (17 students per one teacher and one instructional assistant)
- A daily schedule will be followed in each the classroom.
 - Each teacher is responsible for making sure that each parent receives his child's classroom schedule. Each child will receive breakfast and lunch as part of the Pre-K Counts program.
 - The daily schedule will include a variety of large and small group activities which will encourage growth and learning in social and emotional development, fine and gross motor development, language skills, self-help skills, and cognitive growth and understanding.
- Developing the whole child socially, emotionally, cognitively, physically, and creatively.
- Aligning our curriculum with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-K.
- Create learning strategies that work for the individual child.
- Encourage children's curiosity about the world around them through the classroom environment and materials.
- By being good role models
- Helping parents become advocates for their children
- Providing positive environments for children to learn and grow
- To build positive self-esteem in children and families
- Treating children and families with respect, by providing open and honest communication, and respecting cultural diversity.
- Encourage and provide families with opportunities to engage in their child's Pre-K Counts experience.
- Facilitating access for families and children to community resources and information, to assist them with kindergarten readiness

What do I need to do as a Neshaminy Pre-K Counts parent?

- Provide transportation to/from school each and every day
- **Daily attendance is mandatory except when a child is ill**
- Arrive promptly when dropping off your child and when picking him/her up at the end of the day
- Follow the arrival/dismissal procedures
- Provide completed forms to the teacher in a timely fashion
- Attend programs sponsored by the PKC teachers
- Participate in conferences about your child's progress

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Why Neshaminy School District–Pre-K Counts Cares About Attendance

Research shows that:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year.
- Children chronically absent in pre-school and kindergarten show lower levels of achievement in math, reading, and general knowledge during first grade.
- Daily attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or if they have to repeat a grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.

What must I do if my child will not be in school?

- If your child is going to be absent, you must contact your child's teacher or Family Support Provider (FSP) by 9:00 am to let them know that your child will not attend.
- If a staff member has not heard from you by 9:30 am, the FSP will call all phone numbers on the Emergency Authorization Form, until we reach someone who can assure us that your child is absent.
- If your child is absent for three (3) consecutive days, you must provide a note from the doctor
- If your child has a pattern of absences and you have not made contact with the program, someone from the program will contact you by phone or in person.
- If they can't reach you, they will send a letter asking you to contact the program within five (5) days of receiving the letter.
- If you do not respond within five (5) days, we will send an official letter to your home telling you that your child may be dropped from the program by a specific date.
- If you receive this letter, please respond to it immediately to keep your child in the program.
- If we do not hear from you, your child will be removed from the program and placed back on the waitlist.

When should I keep my child home from school?

Prompt and daily attendance is essential for learning. You should keep your child home from school only if one of the following situations exist:

- Fever - Oral temperature of 101 degrees (or higher) or axillary (forehead) temperature of 100 degrees or higher within the past 24 hours
- Sore throat
- Deep hacking cough or severe congestion
- Earache
- Severe pain or discomfort of joints, ears, or abdomen
- Acute diarrhea - watery or liquid stool that is not associated with changes in the diet
- Severe drainage from wound, nose, eyes, or ears
- Vomiting - more than two times in the past 24 hours
- A note of explanation must be sent to the teacher on the day the child returns to school.
- When a child is sick, he/she may not participate in activities.

What must I do if I want to take my family on a vacation or extended absence?

Attendance at NSD-PKC is regulated by law. When a family wants to take an extended vacation/time away, the parent must send a letter of explanation to the Teacher and Family Support Provider. The parent must describe the reason for the trip, the date of departure and the date of return.

If the absence, when added to previous absences is beyond ten days, the family support provider will meet with the family. If the time away is more than one month, the child will be removed from the program and their name returned to the wait list.

What happens when my child is absent?

When your child is absent, he/she misses an entire day of learning.

NSD-PKC is required to respond to every absence.

Our partners at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit will:

- verify attendance and enter any absences daily on *ChildPlus*.
- If a child does not arrive by 9:45, the Family Support Program will verify the absence with the classroom teacher and provide a reason for the absence if known. Once the absence is verified, the Family Service Provider will call the family and document in *ChildPlus*.
- If a child has three (3) or more consecutive unexcused absences, or monthly attendance falls below 85%, the Family Support Provider will contact the family to complete an Attendance Plan.
- If the FSP is unable to reach the family by phone regarding three consecutive unexcused absences, a home visit will be made. Results of the contact made will be documented in *ChildPlus* under the Attendance Tab (add Follow Up).
- If the Family Support Provider is unable to make contact with the family by phone or home visit, the Unable to Contact Letter will be sent home to the family. The family will be given up to two weeks from the date the letter is mailed to respond to the Family Support Provider.
- If the family does not respond within the time allotted on the Unable to Contact Letter, a child on the waiting list must be given the opportunity to enroll in the program and the child of the unresponsive family may be dis-enrolled.

- All attempts to contact the family will be entered in *ChildPlus* under attendance/add follow up.

Who should I contact if I have a concern about something?

Your concern will be taken seriously. If you have a complaint or concern, please make an appointment to talk with your child's teacher or Family Support Provider. In person is best but over the phone may be necessary. It's possible that the teacher or Family Support Provider may need to look into the matter and then return your call.

If the concern is not addressed in a satisfactory manner, the parent/guardian may request to speak to the Director of the BCIU-NSD-PKC program, Mrs. Patti Quick at 215 348 2940 x 8200.

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