

SLEEPY EYE
ECFE
EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION



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OUR PROGRAM

Whether you are a family who has never attended before, or one of the many returning for another class, we hope the time you spend in our Early Childhood Program will be a growing and enjoyable experience for you.



In our groups, children experience:

- a special time to be alone with their parent or guardian
- social opportunities to be with other children their own age.
- preschool activities and interaction with an early childhood teacher.

In our groups, parents experience:

- uninterrupted time playing with their child.
- social opportunities to meet other parents.
- discussion time to learn from a parent educator and other parents about the challenges and rewards of parenting young children.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION

The Sleepy Eye Early Childhood Family Education program is based on the statewide concept that recognizes the home as the child's first learning environment, and that the parents are the child's primary and most influential teachers. As a result, the central goal of ECFE is to enhance and support the competence of parents in providing the best possible environment for the healthy growth of their children.

GOALS

- To support parents in their efforts in raising children.
- To offer child development information and alternative parenting techniques.
- To help create effective communication between parents and their children.
- To supplement the discovery and learning experience of children.
- To promote positive parental attitudes throughout their children's school years.

FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION

The ECFE program is a service of Community Education. Funding comes from state aid and a local levy for ECFE. A small fee is charged to participants; however, if you are unable to pay, scholarships are available. Questions about payments may be directed to the ECFE staff.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND SESSIONS

Early childhood family education is designed for parents and their children aged birth through kindergarten enrollment. One parent is required to attend each session with their child; however, both parents are encouraged to attend. Another provider may come with the child when the parent is unable to attend. Siblings are also welcome to attend classes.

ADVISORY BOARD

Our ECFE program has an advisory council which is composed of parents, ECFE staff, and school representatives. The council meets throughout the year and provides input and guidance on such things as the needs of the district, outreach program evaluation, class schedules, and other issues as they arise. The advisory council is an essential link between program, staff, and parents. Siblings are also welcome to join! More information about the advisory council is available from the ECFE staff.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING

Our program offers early childhood screening twice a year, once in the Fall and again in the Spring. Each child must go through early childhood screening before entering kindergarten. Children are eligible for screening at the age of 3. The screening process checks each child's hearing and vision, immunizations, and the child's overall development. Parents meet with staff to discuss their child's development, while the child completes an assessment with a screener. Upon completion of all parts, the family will meet with a professional to review the results of the screening.



HELP ME GROW

Help Me Grow is an organization that supports Minnesota families with young children. The website provides information about developmental milestones, ways to promote development of skills, and a wide range of articles and resources that can benefit families who have children under the age of 5. If families have concerns about their child's development, they can also use the website to refer their child. This allows professionals to take a closer look at any possible concerns to determine the next steps. Help Me Grow can be accessed using the web address:
www.helpmegrowmn.org

HELP ME CONNECT

Help Me Connect is an organization that helps provide information and resources to families who are expecting a child and those who have children up to 8 years of age. Families can use the website to help find childcare, dental care, and even legal services. There are many more resources available to support families with a wide variety of needs. Help Me Connect can be accessed using the web address:
www.helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect

BROWN COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Brown County offers a variety of resources to families for young children. Families who qualify may receive assistance with:

- food and or/formula through the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program).
- free home visits with a public health nurse.
- family planning services.
- car seats and car seat installation.
- immunizations

For more information about these and other resources, visit the website address: www.co.brown.mn.us/children-family

DISCOVERY TIME PRESCHOOL:

- For children who are three years old by September 1.
- Classes go from August to mid-April.
- Classes meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- Morning or Afternoon Sessions available.
- Transportation is available within the city limits.
- Parent volunteering is required twice throughout the school year.
- Scholarships are available.

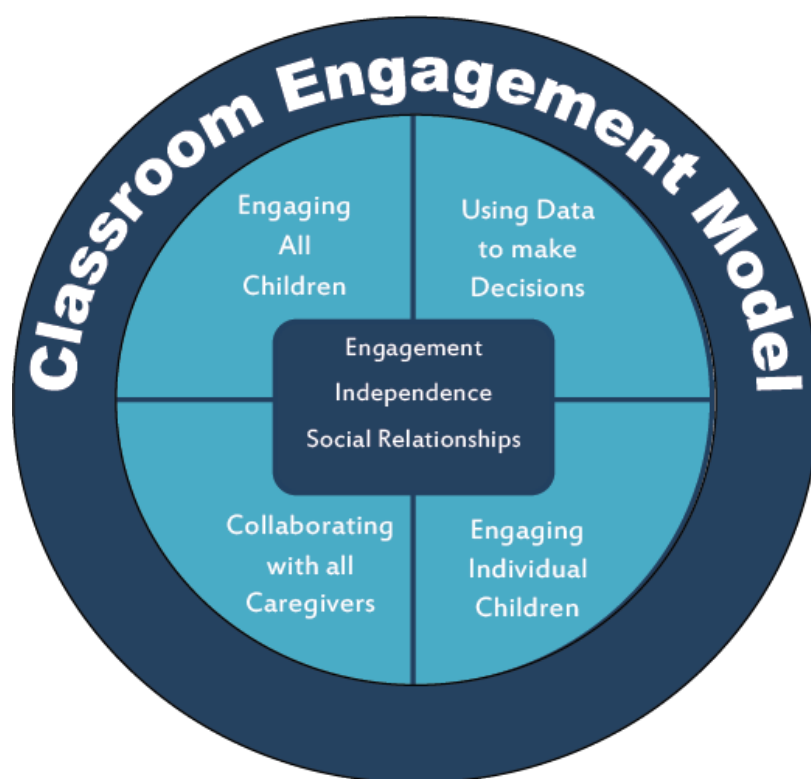
VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN (VPK):

- For children who are four years old by September 1.
- Classes go from August through May.
- Classes meet Monday through Friday.
- Morning or Afternoon sessions are available.
- Transportation is available within the city limits.
- Parent volunteering is required twice throughout the school year.
- Scholarships are available.

CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT MODEL (CEM)

The Classroom Engagement Model (CEM) is a framework for using research-based best practices to improve engagement, social relationships, and independence for children with and without disabilities and to promote full participation of every child in a classroom setting.

Through specialized training and coaching, our Early Childhood teachers are able to increase their ability to engage all children, learn strategies to engage individual children, generate ideas for teaming and collaboration, and expand the understanding of how to use data to drive instruction and intervention to best meet the needs of our children.



PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The Sleepy Eye ECFE program provides a variety of offerings to meet the needs of families in the community. The age of the child as of September 1 each year determines the class they should be enrolled for the full year, or both sessions of ECFE.

Infants:

Parent-child groups for children from birth to walkers.

Toddlers:

Parent-child groups for children who are walkers to runners.

2-year-olds:

Parent-child group for children ages 2 to 3 years old.

Mixed Ages:

Parent-child groups for children who are 3 to 5 years old.

Short Classes and Special Events:

These are unique one-time events, open gyms, speakers for daycare providers and parents, etc. They are advertised in the ECFE Newsletter and Community Education Brochure!

CLOSING POLICY ON ACCOUNT OF WEATHER

Announcements of cancellations are made on local radio stations: KNUJ (860 AM), SAM (107.3), and WCCO (830 AM). Cancellations will also be announced via: Class Dojo, automated phone calls and emails, and the school website and Facebook page.

- Classes are canceled anytime the district closes school or cancels evening events.
- Canceled sessions are made up at a later date whenever possible.

PARENT/CHILD PROGRAM STAFF

The ECFE teachers are professionals licensed by the State of Minnesota. Like all teachers, each must have a minimum of a 4-year degree with special training and a license to teach early childhood and/or parent education.

Our teachers are warm and friendly. They share a commitment to the goals of Early Childhood Family Education and enjoy their work with parents and young children.

DRESS

Dress comfortably! You will be playing on the floor with your child and sometimes sitting on small chairs. Art activities can often be messy, so it is best for parents and children not to wear their best clothes.

ARRIVAL TIME

The time before class is also a busy time for the educators. Therefore, it is appreciated when parents do not arrive early. Our schedules are flexible at the ECCE program. If you are late for a session, please feel free to come anyway. We are always happy to have you attend even if you need to be late.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

If it is your child's birthday and you would like us to acknowledge it, mention it to your teachers. We would be glad to give a birthday hug, sing to your child, and wish them a very happy birthday.

LENDING LIBRARY

Our lending library consists of books, puppets, puzzles, and videos/dvds. A selection of books is also available for parents about child development, parenting techniques, and other child and family-related topics. If you check out items, try to return them within two weeks following the class. You can do this by leaving it in the Community Education Office or bringing it to the ECCE class.



THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The teachers have many roles in the classroom. Some of the most important ones are:

- Provide safety for the participants.
- Model positive methods of guidance and communication with children.
- Plan a developmentally appropriate and inviting environment that includes a variety of activities for children.
- To recognize parents as the primary educators of their own children.
- To maintain a variety of resources for parents.
- Be a good listener to parents and provide ideas and assistance for a variety of situations.

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD

The children have many roles in the classroom. Some of the most important ones are:

- Engage in play! Children are active learners, and play is their occupation. Therefore, children are encouraged to engage in child-directed play that is sometimes adult-guided.
- Make simple choices! Children gain self-esteem when they are given the chance to make simple choices. Children will be given this opportunity and be positively reinforced when a choice is made.
- Let adults know your needs! Children are encouraged to let adults know what they need. Some needs may include: adults' undivided attention, a bathroom break, or leaving early (may be tired).

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT

Parent-Child groups are not like traditional school classes. Your adult needs and learning styles will be respected. In order to meet the goals of enhancing your family relationships and fostering your child's development, we need your cooperation with a few practical things.

- **PARTICIPATE!!!** Attend as regularly as possible. Call, message, or e-mail the teacher if you are unable to attend. If our group has a snack, remember to bring it when it is your turn.

- Focus on your child during the parent-child time. Please avoid excessive visiting with other adults or using your phone. This is a special time for you and your child to be together and enjoy each other.
- Let us know your needs. Use the parent discussion time to bring up specific parenting questions. Ask your parent educator to include your questions as a discussion topic or provide resources for you.
- Show respect and consideration for all the adults in the group. Everyone brings their own unique history to the group, and opinions need to be respected and heard. Try not to judge other parents on their parenting methods. A comfort level is achieved when confidentiality is regarded.
- Show respect and trust in your children's ability by allowing them to select their own activities. Avoid stifling creativity and learning by doing the children's work/play for them. Don't worry about the end product. The process is what is important for the children.
- Try to respect the child's choice. They usually choose what they are ready for and need. You can suggest ways to vary how the activity is done or notice when they discover something new in a favorite activity. When the children are ready to move on to something else, they will. They appreciate when adults trust them to choose the activity.

GROUP INTERACTION GUIDELINES

1. Be as open and honest in the group as possible.
2. Talk about your feelings as well as your thoughts.
3. One person talks at a time; avoid sub-conversations.
4. What is said in group should remain in the group.
5. Every one of us must share the responsibility for what happens in the group. Much of what you get out of this class will depend on how well you as a group function. Do you support one another? Do you allow everyone to have a turn to talk? Do you readily share without having to be called upon?
6. The leader will bring in knowledge based on research, studies, and past experiences with children and parents. Other parents are encouraged to share their expertise also.
7. It is most beneficial for group interaction and for the parents' and child's progress that attendance be on a regular basis. It is appreciated if you let the teacher know when you will not be able to attend.
8. Every group member needs a chance to be heard. Quieter members need to be drawn into the group discussion by both the leader and the class members.

9. No one should interrupt anyone else. Let everyone have a turn.
10. Remember there are lots of good ways to be parents...try not to judge other parents or their methods of parenting.
11. When a situation or problem of one family is brought up in group, it is usually helpful to the entire group to help them understand they are not alone facing these problems.
12. Do not be afraid to disagree with another parent's opinion. It is completely normal that parents in the group will have different ideas. Differences and disagreements in the group can be used as a stimulus for deeper understanding of ourselves and others.

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

It is our responsibility to families to provide a safe environment in order to prevent accidents. Toys for each age are carefully selected, and first aid materials are available in each room.

In the event of an emergency, phones are available to call 911. Parents are able to assist their child and make decisions about care, should an accident occur.

SNACKS

Parents in each class can take turns bringing a "nutritious" snack and/or beverage for the children. We will have cups and napkins available.

Nutritious Snacks for Toddlers and 2's

- soft fresh fruit
- quick breads (no nuts)
- cheese cubes
- crackers

Nutritious Snacks for 3-5's

- fresh fruits
- vegetables
- quick breads (no nuts)
- muffins (no nuts)
- raisins
- cheese cubes
- crackers
- granola bars
- trail mix (no sweetened cereal)

****Empty calorie foods provide only calories with no beneficial ingredients such as vitamins and minerals. Please check the product label if in doubt.**

Beverages: Milk or 100% fruit juice

Allergies: Please inform the teachers of any allergies your child may have.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

Please do not attend a parent/child session if you or your child:

- have a temperature above 98.6 degrees during the 24 hours before school
- vomits in the 24 hours before school starts
- have an undiagnosed or contagious rash (i.e., impetigo; hand, foot, mouth disease)
- have a contagious illness (measles, flu, etc.)
- have diarrhea during the 24 hours before school
- have inflamed/draining ears/eyes (pink eye)
- have a Streptococcal throat infection (stay home for 2 days after antibiotics are started)
- symptoms associated with COVID

Please be aware that when children first begin to associate with groups of children, they may develop more colds and flus until their resistance builds up. We try to minimize exposure to illness by providing the above guidelines.

MANDATED REPORTING LAW

State law requires that all school employees report child abuse and neglect to Brown County Social Services and/or the Sheriff's department. If that should become necessary, parents can get support from staff who will make referrals to other services when appropriate. We believe that parents do the best they can with their children. If anyone in the program is concerned that they may abuse their child, please contact a teacher for guidance.



ABOUT US

District #84 Early Childhood Family Education

Community Education Office

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CONTACT:

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Website: www.sleepyeyeschools.com/ecfe

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