

Integrated Preschool Program Parent Handbook

High Bridge Elementary School

Table of Contents

Welcome

- ❖ Preschool Program Mission and Vision Statement, Philosophy, Guiding Principles & Core Beliefs
- ❖ Preschool Program Administration & Support Staff
- ❖ Preschool Staff
- ❖ District Calendar

Program Procedures and Activity Guidelines

- ❖ Arrival and Dismissal Procedures
- ❖ Example Daily Preschool Schedule
- ❖ Student Attendance and Illness
- ❖ Snack and Lunch Time
- ❖ Handwashing
- ❖ Toileting Guidance
- ❖ Rest Time
- ❖ Technology Guidance

Curriculum and Instruction

- ❖ The Creative Curriculum
- ❖ My Teaching Strategies
- ❖ Teaching Strategies GOLD - Online Assessment
- ❖ Classroom Management & Preschool Code of Conduct
- ❖ Home Language Survey
- ❖ NJDOE Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards

Measurements of Classroom Quality

- ❖ ECERS-3
- ❖ Creative Curriculum Fidelity Tool
- ❖ TPOT
- ❖ Early Screening Inventory

Preschool Support & Roles

- ❖ Preschool Instructional Coach
- ❖ Preschool Intervention & Referral Specialist
- ❖ Preschool Intervention & Referral Team
- ❖ Community & Parent Involvement Specialist

Helpful Links & Resources

- ❖ Teaching Strategies
- ❖ NAEYC - National Association for Education of Young Children
- ❖ NJAEYC - New Jersey Association for Education of Young Children'
- ❖ ERSI - Environmental Rating Scale Institute
- ❖ NJ DOE ECE - New Jersey Department of Education, Early Childhood Education -
Preschool

Welcome

High Bridge School District continues to be one of the school districts in New Jersey, afforded the wonderful opportunity to expand their preschool programs through the Preschool Expansion Grant/State Aid Program. All students receive free, full-day learning in a highly effective preschool program.

At High Bridge we follow the research on Early Childhood Education. We believe that a structured play-based environment is the foundation for becoming a life-long learner. It is our pleasure to meet the needs of our students and families by providing the elements of a highly effective preschool program. The Preschool Program implements the highly regarded and NJDOE recommended Creative Curriculum and Gold Assessment to support the learning of our 3, 4, and 5 year olds. To continue the growth of the preschool program, we have added a Preschool Instructional Coach (PIC) & Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS), who is a representative on the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT). Also part of the team is a Community Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS) partner with our families in the education of our preschool students.

The Preschool community believes that building relationships and collaborating with all district stakeholders is critical in supporting our community of preschool learners. We will exercise these beliefs by working together with community partners and developing connections that will support our students and their families. Our Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) meets throughout the year to review progress towards full implementation of a high quality preschool program. We will host parent workshops throughout the school year covering topics based off of survey feedback. ECAC also discusses educational opportunities, program updates, and collaboration on preschool events.

The funding from the Department of Education continues to assist us with this important district and community initiative, while providing an equitable opportunity for an increased number of students as they move forward with the continuum of educational programming. The district plans on applying for funding each year, allowing the district to continue to expand the preschool at no cost to our families.

Integrated Preschool Program Mission & Vision Statement

Integrated Preschool Program:

Our preschool classes are in session for a total of 6 hours daily, Monday through Friday. Each class can have up to fifteen students, some spaces which are reserved for students who may have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Each preschool class is instructed by a highly qualified teacher and one paraprofessional.

Mission:

The Tiny Toppers Preschool Program provides a safe, developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment that promotes social, emotional, cognitive, academic and physical growth, as well as a positive self image.

Vision:

The teachers and staff at HBES will work as a community to create an environment that fosters a love of learning and critical thinking.

Integrated Preschool Program Philosophy

The Tiny Toppers Preschool Program has a comprehensive approach to educating and enriching the whole-child. Our preschool curriculum is play based, as play is the most developmentally appropriate approach to learning. Our inclusion classrooms welcome and support the diverse academic, social, emotional and communication needs of all students. With experienced and highly qualified teachers, we can enable each child to reach their higher potential by supporting children wherever they are on their own learning path and timeline.

Guiding Principles & Core Beliefs

As we continue to expand our early childhood program, our guiding principles and core beliefs serve as the foundation.

- We believe that it is our ongoing mission to develop and align program standards, teaching, learning, and resources anchored to best practice and current research on early childhood development and learning and to implement these practices with fidelity.

- We believe that in order to meet the needs of all learners we must provide a school culture and climate that emphasizes positive, proactive, and preventive practices aligned to a student's sense of physical and emotional safety fostering optimal conditions for learning.
- We believe that in the ever-changing world, we will persevere in creating a productive learning environment that fosters and inspires all students to begin a lifelong love of learning.
- We believe that our dedicated commitment to an equitable and inclusive learning environment will help ALL children to learn.

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District Calendar

[2025-2026 Calendar High Bridge School District](#)

Program Procedures & Activity Guidelines

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

- **Regular Day Schedule:** The regular day schedule for preschool is 9:00am - 3:10pm.
- **Half Day/Early Dismissal Schedule:** On early dismissal days, the preschool schedule is 9:00am- 12:30pm.
- **Arrival Procedures:** All students and family members will wait outside the “cave doors.” Please have your child ready on their assigned line by 8:55am. Doors will be open promptly at 9:00am. A staff member will walk each class in one at a time. For safety purposes, all parents/guardians dropping off may not come past the orange cones unless specifically directed by a staff member. Any arrival after 9:05am when the doors are closed must report to the main office for late sign-in and drop off.
- **Dismissal Procedures:** Doors will be open at 3:10pm. Your child’s teacher will come outside to have you sign them out before they are dismissed to you. Any pick up after 3:20pm when the doors are closed must report to the main office for late pick up. Students will only be dismissed to approved individuals.

Example Daily Preschool Schedule

[Creative Curriculum Daily Schedule Example](#)

Each classroom teacher will create their own individual schedule, but are required to include all components of the curriculum throughout the day.

Student Attendance and Illness

[High Bridge Preschool Attendance Policy](#)

[State of New Jersey Department of Education Division of Early Childhood Education](#)

[Advisory: Preschool Attendance](#)

All families will receive a copy of the Preschool Attendance Policy to sign that they have read and understand the policy. Please be familiar with the school's procedures. Make every effort to have your child to school on time every day that he or she is healthy. It is in the best interest of your child and other children to keep your child home when they are ill. Your child needs to be healthy in order to actively participate at school. Children may ask to come to school even when they are ill. While your child might be disappointed, please keep him/her at home for the following reasons: contagious illness, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be asked to promptly pick them up.

Snack and Lunch Time

[Planning for Meal and Snack Times in Preschool Programs](#)

Daily Group Snack:

- Builds a community within the classroom
- Works on using manners (please, thank you, no thank you)
- Works on a variety of language skills (manners, Can I have more please? Asking for help) and self advocacy skills
- Introduces students to new foods they may not try at home
- They see their friends trying new foods
- Math and social skills: Asking someone to set the table, 1:1 correspondence, quantity concepts
- Works on fine motor skill (opening things, peeling a banana/orange)
- Cooking in Preschool: following directions, sequencing and self help skills, recipes for home

Lunch

- Lunch time will be held in the classroom. You may either provide your own lunch or order lunch options through the district's food provider service.

Whenever possible, meals/snacks served should meet [USDA Meal Guidelines](#) to ensure children are receiving nutritional meals throughout the day.

Handwashing

[The Importance of Hand Washing](#)

Handwashing or use of hand sanitizer is required throughout the day at the following times for both children and teaching staff.

Toileting Guidance

[Advisory - Toileting](#)

[Toilet Training Guidance from ERSI \(ECERS-3\)](#)

High Bridge Preschool Bathroom and Toilet Training Guidance

An important developmental milestone for preschool students is toilet training. Our toilet training procedures are used across all preschool classrooms. This researched based approach is used in our program to ensure success and confidence for your child.

Intervention consists of:

“(a) removal of diapers during school hours, (b) scheduled time intervals for bathroom visits, (c) a maximum of 3 min sitting on the toilet, (d) reinforcers delivered immediately contingent on expulsion in the toilet, and (e) gradually increased time intervals between bathroom visits as each participant met mastery during the preceding, shorter time interval” (Cocchiola, et.al.)

It is important to remember the importance of consistency at school and home. To set your child up for ultimate success in toilet training, school procedures should be followed at home. In addition to toilet training, it is also important you discuss and demonstrate to your child proper hygiene procedures while using the bathroom; such as: properly pulling down and up clothing, understanding how to wipe private areas when necessary, and always providing reminders to wash hands upon completion of the bathroom.

Rest Time

[Naptime](#)

The recommended amount of time to be allocated for Rest Time is 60 minutes. A consistent rest time provides children with opportunity to rest, relax and recharge.

Sanitary procedures maintained during rest time:

- Blankets, sheets & mats should be stored in children’s individual cubbies and teachers should take measures to ensure they are not touching the floor and/or other children’s belongings

- Children should be spaced out at least 3-feet apart (as possible) and positioned alternating head to toe.

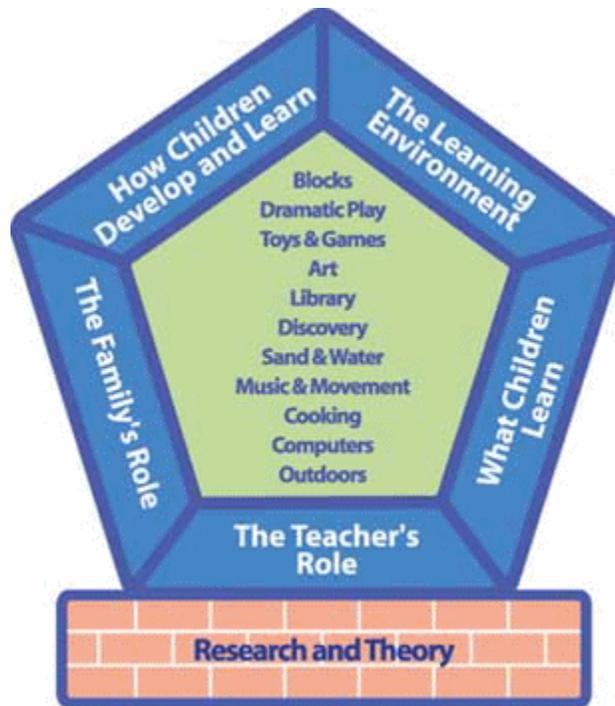
Technology Guidance

[Technology Guidance](#)

Instead of debating the pros and cons of technology in the early childhood classroom, we focus on how teachers can use technology to promote the goals of the curriculum. In addition to developing children's skills and abilities, a well designed program will engage children in thinking, creating, problem solving, questioning, critiquing, communicating and making connections. Technology and interactive media should not replace creative play, multi-sensory experiences, outdoor explorations or social interactions, but should be used as a tool to extend and support learning in the classroom. Screen time for young children should be carefully monitored and passive use of non-interactive technologies such as television and video should be avoided. Educators should provide a balance of interactive experiences with technology and hands-on exploration with traditional materials.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Creative Curriculum



The Creative Curriculum® System for Preschool is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum system designed to help educators at all levels of experience plan and implement a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

The System presents knowledge-building and daily practice resources in tandem, to create a cohesive system that supports teachers throughout the year. The knowledge-building curriculum volumes offer insight into the most current research and best practices for early childhood education. The daily practice resources contain step-by-step guidance to help teachers organize and manage every moment of the day, intentionally and effectively.

Based on 38 new objectives for development and learning that are predictive of school success and aligned with state early learning standards, *The Creative Curriculum® System for Preschool* helps teachers ensure that they are focusing on what matters most for

children at every age. The *System* components also include built-in support for all learners, with specific sections of guidance for working with English- and dual-language learners, advanced learners, and children with disabilities.

- The curriculum is aligned with the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards;
- Methods for inclusion of students with disabilities are provided;
- The content and teaching strategies are clear, and research-based;
- The curriculum content is taught with focus and integration;
- The curriculum relies on child initiation and engagement;
- All curriculum components are developmentally appropriate; and
- Show evidence of benefits.

Curriculum Resources for Daily Practice:

In addition to the six volumes of The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition, the curriculum includes a number of resources for **daily practice**. These resources provide teachers with detailed guidance on what to do each day. The resources include:

Six Teaching Guides that provide daily support for the entire school year, offering comprehensive, detailed plans that each span several weeks and guide teachers moment-by-moment through the day

- **The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 1: The Foundation**
 - ❖ Volume 1 presents the research foundation of the curriculum, five key aspects of the curriculum, and the information you need to set up your program
- **The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 2: Interest Areas**
 - ❖ Volume 2 applies the five key aspects of The Creative Curriculum to the interest areas. Each chapter describes materials that enhance children's learning in the 10 interest areas and the outdoors, as well as strategies for guiding children's development and learning
- **The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 3: Literacy**
 - ❖ Volume 3 prepares you with knowledge and tools that will help you inspire children to read, write and learn. This volume offers practical strategies for intentionally teaching critical language and literacy skills and for integrating rich and enjoyable literacy experiences into each interest area.
- **The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 4: Mathematics**
 - ❖ Volume 4 helps you fully understand the mathematical concepts and skills you will be teaching and shows you how to purposefully include mathematics learning throughout your day. The volume shows you how you can

incorporate mathematics into interest areas and shows you how to scaffold children's learning in each area.

- **The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 5: Science and Technology, Social Studies and the Arts**
 - ❖ Volume 5 expands on the content areas of Science and Technology, Social Studies and the Arts and shows how to make these subjects an integral part of the preschool day. This volume helps teachers plan for and support children's learning and explorations. Volume 5 also gives teachers a solid foundation to fully and effectively implement studies in their classrooms
- **The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 6: Objectives for Development and Learning, Birth Through Third Grade**
 - ❖ Volume 6 describes the 38 learning objectives in The Creative Curriculum for Preschool in detail. Based on an extensive review of the latest research and professional literature around early childhood education, these objectives are highly predictive of future school success and are reflective of state early learning standards.

Intentional Teaching Cards provide playful and engaging activities with directions to help teachers individualize each activity to meet the unique needs of every learner.

Mighty Minutes® that help teachers turn every minute of the day into learning opportunities, intentionally promoting language, literacy, math, science, social studies, and physical skills during “in-between” times.

The Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection, which features beloved classic tales, contemporary works by award-winning authors and illustrators, and original nonfiction titles for use during high-quality read-alouds.

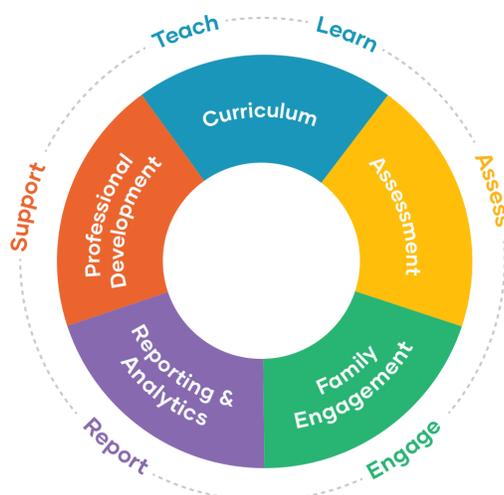
Book Discussion Cards explain how to read and talk about selected books in the Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection, helping teachers make the most of repeated, interactive read-alouds with children.

The Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection, which features English and Spanish titles

[Introducing The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition
Preschool Scope and Sequence](#)

My Teaching Strategies

MyTeachingStrategies™ brings together the digital classroom tools and resources that teachers need to support their most important daily activities.



Teach & Learn - Teachers have access to digital curricular experiences from *The Creative Curriculum*® that can be automatically linked with assessment data to support individualized instruction, and will also have robust support for lesson planning, including customizable weekly and monthly calendars.

Assess - Teachers and administrators have access to *GOLD*® our solution for authentic, ongoing assessment, with tools and resources that allow them to view and add documentation, complete checkpoints, and more.

Engage- Teachers can access support that is designed to engage and include families in meaningful ways, including family communication tools to help share information about children's learning and development and ongoing support for promoting regular dialogues between school and home.

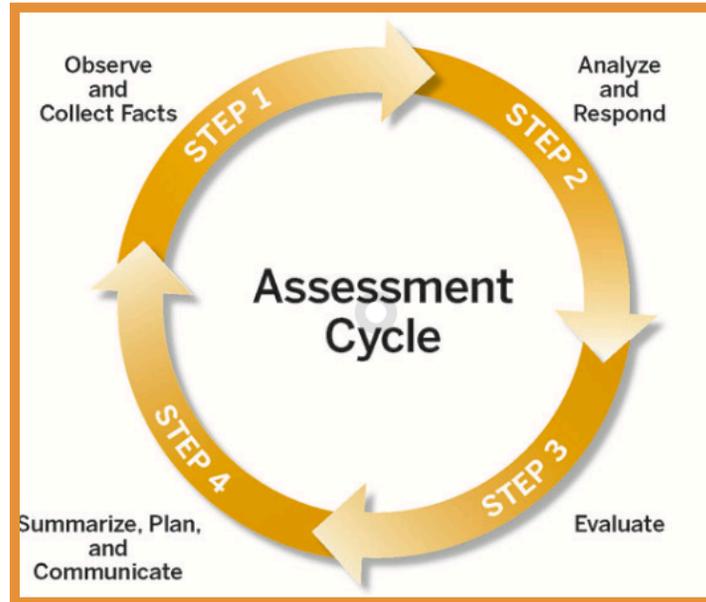
Report - Teachers can access interactive reports that help to bring data to life, telling a story about each child's progress and providing actionable information that helps teachers understand and report out on what the children in their program are likely to do next.

Support- Teachers will find support for growing their professional knowledge, refining their teaching practice, and strengthening their implementation, including brand-new,

CEU credit-bearing online professional development courses, Interrater Reliability certification, and free product training.

Teaching Strategies Gold Online Assessment

**Observing and Collecting Facts - Analyzing and Responding
Evaluating - Summarizing, Planning, and Communicating**



GOLD® assessment is an authentic part of instruction, not a disruption. Embedded in your everyday interactions with children in the classroom or at home, formative assessment is an effortless, organic part of your teaching day. You can easily capture, organize and store notes, photos, videos, and digital samples of children’s work in the moment to make observations authentic, objective, and easy to remember.

The assessment model using GOLD® follows widely held expectations for children birth through third grade and enables a whole-child approach to assessment. Color-coded progressions guide teachers toward selecting and adapting activities that support each child’s development and learning. Meaningful reports inform classroom practices and individualized instruction.

The objectives cover the following 10 areas of development and learning: Social Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, The Arts, English Language Acquisition.

[Objectives for Development & Learning](#)

[Alignment of Teaching Strategies GOLD](#)

Classroom Management and Preschool Code of Conduct

[Research and Evidenced-Based Strategies](#)

We understand that all behaviors, positive and negative, have a function. It is important to our teaching staff that we determine the reason for a child's behavior so that we can teach an appropriate replacement skill to help the child get his/her desired result.

As children seek to build relationships with each other, it is very normal for conflicts and hurt feelings to arise. The skills needed for resolving conflict effectively are complex. They involve managing feelings, communicating effectively, developing options, and making decisions. All caregivers, teachers, and families play a critical role in establishing positive guidance that teaches children the skills needed to resolve conflict effectively. We strive to ensure not only conflict resolution but lifelong skills for working with others are established. Our early childhood teachers will take the time to speak with students about their feelings that led to the inappropriate behavior. Preschoolers will be encouraged to use their words to express their feelings and solve their problems. Staff will help students verbalize their feelings and facilitate conflict resolution and problem-solving when necessary.

Preschool staff use a variety of age-appropriate, research-based behavior intervention strategies including:

- Maintaining realistic expectations of children
- Providing clear and simple limits
- Preventive practices
- Modeling appropriate behaviors
- Positive redirection
- Teaching of replacement skills
- Conflict resolution /Problem-solving techniques
- Providing logical and natural consequences for children's actions

Preschool teaching staff strive to maintain consistent and open communication with families regarding the progress of their students. You may be notified of minor behavioral incidents in the following ways: email, telephone, written communication or in person.

Should a child's behavior become a consistent problem, the parents/guardians will be contacted and referral to the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) for further assistance and intervention strategies may be required.

A disciplinary report will be required for more serious incidents. In this case, you may be asked to come in and discuss the incident with your child's teacher and the Director of Preschool. The connection between home and school is very important, and children must understand that we are all communicating and working together.

Home Language Survey

[Home Language Survey](#)

Any child who speaks a language other than English at home is considered a Dual Language Learner (DLL), in need of language support in the home language(s), even if he or she understands and speaks some English. The home language survey should be completed by the primary caregiver (with translators available, if and when needed). It is designed to help school administrators and teachers know how to best support the child and families. Information from the home language survey is entered into Teaching Strategies to determine whether students should also be assessed on English Language Acquisition objectives 37 & 38.

Additionally, as specified in N.J.A.C. 6A:15, Bilingual Education Code: "The district board of education shall also use age-appropriate methodologies to identify limited English proficient preschool students in order to determine their individual language development needs."

If the home language survey indicates the primary language is other than English, it should be followed up with an individual conversation between the teacher and the primary caregivers to develop a better understanding of the child's home language environment; and to help families understand the school district's linguistic, social-emotional and academic goals for the children. The home language survey and information captured from family conversations should also be used by preschool teachers to inform instruction that addresses the linguistic needs of each child.

NJ DOE Preschool Standards and Guidelines

- [Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards](#)
- [Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines](#)
- [Preschool Classroom Teaching Guidelines](#)

Measurements of Classroom Quality

ECERS-3, Creative Curriculum Fidelity Tool, TPOT, ESI

[Guidance on the Use of Structured Classroom Observation Instruments](#)

Guidance on the use of Structured Classroom Observation Instruments provides a lens for the examination of the many components of classroom quality from the nature of teacher-child interactions to the availability of materials and activities that support early learning and development. Using a set of criteria and a rubric for scoring, structured observation instruments allow teachers and administrators to evaluate a range of classroom features. These observations inform individual and program-wide professional development and serve as a means of tracking program quality from year to year.

→ **The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition (ECERS-3)** is a nationally recognized measure of preschool classroom quality. This instrument can be used to collect data for classroom or program improvement and as a comparative index across programs and over time. The Scale consists of 35 items organized into 6 subscales:

- Space and Furnishing
- Personal Care Routines
- Language and Literacy
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

The ECERS-3 Tool will be used for coaching; observation results allow coaches to deliver strength-based feedback to teachers through a coaching reflective cycle. *Our program also receives observations and evaluation results from the state.*

→ **The Fidelity Tool Teacher Checklist** helps teachers reflect on their practice as they evaluate their implementation of the Creative Curriculum and assessment resources. Some examples of the indicators being evaluated for fidelity include:

- Use of the Curriculum
- Physical Environment
- Classroom Structure
- Teacher-Child Interactions
- Family Involvement
- Assessment Procedures

The Fidelity Checklist will be used for coaching; observation results allow coaches to deliver strength-based feedback to teachers through a coaching reflective cycle.

→ **The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)** is an observation instrument that measures the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. This tool is used primarily for coaching classroom staff and secondarily for aggregating data to determine professional development or program improvement plans.

- [Preschool Education Pyramid Model Overview](#)

→ **Early Screening Inventory**

The Division of Early Childhood Education recommends using the Early Screening Inventory. This screening is a brief assessment procedure designed to identify children who might be at risk for a possible learning problem or delay. The screening takes place within the first 30-45 days of school. The screening looks at children by quickly sampling their skills across areas of social, language, reasoning, gross and fine motor development. This screening identifies children in three categories: 1) normal range of development, 2) rescreen range 8-10 weeks after initial screening or 3) refer range - demonstrating the need for discussion with the Child Study Team and teacher about possible referral for a diagnostic evaluation. The screening is reliable, easy to administer by the child's teacher, and it takes approximately 15 minutes.

- [Developmental Screening](#)

Preschool Support & Roles

The goal of the Preschool Program is to provide each child the opportunity to access a high quality preschool learning environment with the individualized supports needed for school success. High quality preschool programs also include classroom teachers who have established relationships with the child's family or caregivers, who are the child's "first teachers." Connections with families should occur from the first day of school or even before school starts, to share important information about the child or any concerns that may occur. Information from family and caregivers is vital to understanding an individual child's unique needs. When a child demonstrates learning or behavioral difficulties, it is up to the classroom teacher to closely observe and document the child's behavior. In order to support the child who is having difficulties, the teacher will attempt to adapt the activities and environment to meet the child's distinct learning or behavioral needs. Once the classroom teacher has used all the above resources, they then enlist the help of the Instructional Coach, Intervention and Referral Specialist, and the Referral Team.

Preschool Instructional Coach (PIC)

[The Role of the Preschool Instructional Coach](#)

The primary role of the PIC is to provide and maintain high levels of quality preschool programs by helping and supporting preschool teachers. They do this by visiting classrooms and coaching teachers using the reflective practice to improve instruction.

Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS)

The primary role of the PIRS is to provide support to teachers in their implementation of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Young Children, to enhance the use of this model in the classroom. As needed, the PIRS consults with a team of experts; the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team - also referred to as the PIRT, to provide strategies and possible interventions for the teachers to implement in the classroom to promote the success of all young children.

Responsibilities and Support:

- Conduct regular classroom visits to observe, model, provide feedback, and make recommendations about appropriate strategies, classroom modifications, and the selection of adaptive materials to address the needs of children with challenging behaviors or potential learning difficulties.

- Coordinate with school district special services departments and child study team members, when appropriate, to ensure seamless preschool programming.
- Refer children, when all other efforts have failed, to the school district child study team, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:14, Special Education.
- Bring professionals across disciplines together with families, as appropriate.

Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT)

Referral Services

In addition to the supports listed above, the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) is in place to assist preschool staff in addressing children's persistent challenging behaviors. Through the development and implementation of an intervention plan and positive behavior support plan (PBS), teachers are given strategies and interventions that address a variety of persistent challenging behaviors in young children (i.e. aggression and lack of socialization), behaviors that may otherwise prevent successful participation in general education classrooms.

Responsibilities and Support:

- Provide support and suggested interventions to teachers so that all children can succeed within the general education classroom.
- Consult with necessary professionals as applicable (i.e. classroom teacher, instructional coach, teacher, administrators, social workers, family workers, parents).
- Create and implement a PIRT intervention plan for each child for which an RFA is received.
- Conduct classroom visits as necessary to implement intervention plans. These visits may include observations, providing feedback regarding the child or support plan, providing recommendations and modeling strategies when appropriate.
- For children with persistent behavior-related difficulties develop and implement a behavior support plan.
- Evaluate the progress of referred students and if necessary facilitate a written referral to the school district Child Study Team as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

Community and Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS)

The Community and Parent Involvement Specialist enhances and supports family involvement in the preschool program. Through classroom activities, parent workshops, community resource family activities, and support groups, the CPIS strives to make each

family's preschool experience a positive and rewarding one. The CPIS also assists in the enrollment of new registrants and participates in preschool orientation activities to help families and children become acquainted with their new school environment.

It is also a role of the CPIS to chair the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). Within this committee, stakeholders collaborate to ensure that the community understands the importance of high quality preschool and that it is the foundation of lifelong learning. To foster this relationship, meetings occur throughout the year to review progress towards full implementation of a high quality preschool program. There are also offers of parent workshops throughout the school year covering topics based off of our Community Needs Assessment. ECAC also discusses and recommends improvements to the Preschool program.

Helpful Links & Resources

[Teaching Strategies](#)

[NAEYC](#) - National Association for Education of Young Children

[NJAEYC](#) - New Jersey Association for Education of Young Children'

[ERSI](#) - Environmental Rating Scale Institute

[NJ DOE ECE](#) - New Jersey Department of Education, Early Childhood Education Preschool