



**City of Morgan Hill
RECREATION PRESCHOOL**

Parent Handbook

Updated July 2024



CONTACT INFORMATION

Offices

Preschool Location: Children's Pavilion at the CCC
Preschool Cell Phone Number: 408-612-1733
CCC Welcome Desk: 408-782-0008

Supervisor

Name: Andrew Aguilar
Phone Number: 408-310-4282
Email: andrew.aguilar@morgahill.ca.gov

Preschool Teachers:

Name: Kiana DiFrancesco, Director, Lead Teacher
Phone Number: 408-310-4294
Email: kiana.difrancesco@morganhill.ca.gov

Name: Jazmine Briones, Assistant Teacher (M/W/F AM & T/TH AM)
Name: Maribel Zamora, Assistant Teacher (M/W/F AM & T/TH AM)

Name: Frances Tallerico, Assistant Teacher (T/W/TH PM)

Preschool teachers are available for a half hour after class if parents need to ask any questions. Parents may email the preschool staff at any time. If there is an urgent need for parents to reach the preschool during class time, please call the classroom cell phone or CCC Welcome Desk listed above.

Parent Information

Program Philosophy

We believe a child's first school experience can set the foundation for a love of learning and success in school. Morgan Hill Recreation Preschool provides a safe and nurturing environment for your child's first school experience. We introduce a variety of materials and hands-on learning opportunities to engage active growing minds and bodies. We include art, music, language and literacy, math readiness, and music and movement. Our program is play-based, and we embrace the theory that children learn best through play.

We are also a part of Project Cornerstone working to build developmental assets one child at a time. Developmental assets are the positive relationships, opportunities, values, and skills that young people need to encourage growth and responsibility. These assets include adult role models, positive peer influence, caring school climates, and a sense that our community values youth. For more information visit www.projectcornerstone.org.

Program Goals

- Instill a love of learning and exploring.
- Provide age-appropriate skill-building activities that foster learning.
- Provide children with the building blocks needed to begin reading, to work on writing skills, and to provide a foundation in math.
- Give children a sense of self-worth by allowing them to succeed at their own level.
- Emphasizes language and beginning math concepts during Circle Time, while introducing new themes through stories and language.
- Encourage creativity and confidence through art, music, and motor-skill activities. Art activities build fine motor skills that prepare children to hold a pencil correctly, squeeze glue, tie shoes, use scissors, and cut in the correct motion.
- Build social skills that encourage sharing, problem solving, following directions, making choices, cooperation, being considerate, taking turns, and listening. We use positive guidance to help solve conflicts.
- Through outside play, students will gain proficiency in large motor skills such as balancing, hopping, skipping, running, and climbing.

Daily Schedule and Curriculum (time varies depending on age group)

Everything a preschool age child does is a learning experience. At preschool, it is our job to introduce children to as many different materials and hands-on learning opportunities as possible. The daily schedule will include free play, circle time, outside play, art, snack, and stories. The preschool curriculum includes foundational skills needed for kindergarten readiness. Our curriculum is recreation based and we embrace the theory that children learn best through play.

Sample Daily Schedule

Time	Activity
45-60 minutes	Free Choice Play and Art: This includes free choice time, free art (cutting, coloring, gluing), sensory exploration, creative and dramatic play, science, social play, manipulative activities, and blocks.
15-30 minutes	Circle Time: Students are involved in learning through theme-related topics, story time, calendar and weather, music and movement, songs, counting, colors, numbers, letters, science, language, and math concepts.
20-30 minutes	Snack: Students wash their hands and eat with their friends. Snacks are brought from home.
50 minutes	Project Time/Outside Play: The class breaks into smaller groups. Two groups go outside to play (gross motor skill development, social skills), while one group remains inside to participate in a more complex small group learning experience and project.
10 minutes	Goodbye song/Closing

This is a sample of how the teachers divide up a basic day. Class is adapted to meet the students where they are in their learning and development.

Potty Training and Bathroom Time

All children need to be potty trained before the first day of class. Diapers, pull-ups, and training underwear are not allowed in class. Sometimes a new class environment and the excitement of friends and activities can cause setbacks. We will work with each child to be successful, with frequent reminders and the teachers watching for signals.

If needed, preschool staff will escort children to the bathroom. *Staff are not permitted inside the restroom with children.* We can stand in the doorway with the bathroom door open, verbally coach the children through the toileting process, assist children with snaps and zippers and make sure that all children wash and dry their hands. Staff then escort the children back to class. A parent will be called to return to school to clean their child if the staff are unsuccessful in the coaching process or the child becomes upset. Our goal is for all children to be comfortable using the preschool restroom independently and without prompting by the first few weeks of school. Children need to be able to pull pants up and down, sit, and clean themselves independently. Please practice these skills with your child so they are comfortable.

If a child has a potty accident while at school, teachers will talk a child through changing into their extra clothes. In the event of a more significant accident, the parents will be contacted and asked to come and assist. If a child is still struggling after October 31st with accidents, we will need to put attendance on hold. Typically, we will place the child on the top of the registration waiting list. If potty training becomes more consistent and a vacancy opens the child can return to the class.

Parent Helper Days

A sign-up sheet will be available for 1-hour time slots to volunteer for the last hour of class. We ask that you sign up for no more than 3 slots. Masks are optional. If you feel unwell on your volunteer day, please notify us via our class cell phone and reschedule.

What to expect while volunteering:

- We are dedicated to giving our full attention to supervision and interaction. If you are volunteering, we ask that you put phones away as well. If you need to step away for a phone call, please do so away from class.
- Please follow the lead of the teachers and model behaviors. While in class, we work with children on classroom etiquette, sharing, and taking turns. Teachers also work closely with them on social skills, using words, and dealing with strong feelings. A child may have a difficult time and may need quiet time to calm down, while other times it's important for teachers to help them work through challenging behaviors.
- Most importantly, HAVE FUN! Our classes love parent helpers and learning should be fun and interactive. Expect to take part in helping during project time and interacting during outside time.

What to Bring

Please label all items from home including backpacks, lunch boxes, and water bottles.

Backpacks: Please send a small backpack that can hold your child's snack, water bottle and their projects to take home. *Large backpacks do not fit in cubbies so please keep them preschool sized.*

Clothing and Extra Clothes: Please dress your child in comfortable, play clothes that will allow them to participate to the fullest. Closed-toed sneakers are recommended to protect feet while playing. Please no shoes with heels or flip flops. Send a full set of extra clothes for your child in a plastic Ziplock bag with their name on it. We will keep it in their cubbies.

Snacks and Food Allergies:

Snack takes place after Circle Time in the morning so please be sure that your child has an adequate breakfast. We ask that each student bring a small snack and a labeled reusable water bottle each day. We encourage parents to provide nutritious snacks such as those on the list below. The development of positive attitudes towards healthy food sets a foundation for healthy diet patterns. **Morgan Hill Recreation Preschool is a nut-free school.** This includes food items such as almond butter, trail mix, crackers, cookies, cereal bars, etc. containing nuts.

If your child has food allergies, please list these on the Emergency Contact form upon registration and discuss them with your child's teacher before the start of school.

Protein	Carbohydrate	Fruits or Veggies
Cheese	Pretzels	Fruit (grapes, strawberries, oranges)
Yogurt	Bread Sticks or Crackers	Veggies with ranch or hummus
Cold Cuts	Unsweetened Cereal	
Cottage Cheese	Banana Bread or Muffins	
Hummus	Zucchini Bread or Muffins	

Please reserve sweets for birthdays or holiday celebrations only

Late Pick Up Policy

Please be on time for pick-up. It is important for your child's self-esteem and sense of security as well as being considerate to the teaching staff. Teachers have back-to-back classes some days and have scheduled breaks immediately after the morning session. If you have an emergency and cannot pick up your child on time, please call the preschool cell phone at 408-612-1733 or the Welcome Desk staff at 408-782-0008. Parents arriving for pick-up later than 10 minutes after class will be charged \$5.00 for every 5 minutes, they are late. The fee is payable by cash or check directly to staff when the child is picked up. Repeated late pick-ups may incur additional charges at the discretion of the program supervisor.

SICK CHILD POLICY

Please follow these guidelines and if your child has any of these symptoms, keep them at home:

1. Fever within the last 24 hours
2. Excessive wheezing or coughing
3. First 2 days of a cold, especially if the child is uncomfortable
4. Has a runny nose with yellow/green mucous or a persistent cough
5. Rash (not heat or allergy related)
6. Diarrhea
7. Vomiting within the last 24 hours
8. If your child is unable to participate in outdoor activities which are a regular part of our schedule. On rainy or very stormy days we will have activities inside the CCC in a different room, rather than outside.

Please be considerate of other children when deciding if your child is healthy enough to attend class. We thank you for your consideration.

IMPORTANT: Please contact the preschool staff immediately if your child has become ill with a contagious disease (lice, hand foot mouth disease, stomach flu). It is our responsibility to notify all parents of their child's exposure. We will not use any names or identifying information.

Participant Readiness

In the rare event that a student cannot participate productively in class, staff may contact a parent to pick up early. We would work on an action plan to help them be successful. However, if the behavior continues without improvement, we do reserve the right to unenroll a student. Examples include:

- Behaviors that are disruptive or dangerous to the child, other children, and/or teachers
- Excessive separation anxiety
- Consistently aggressive or disruptive behavior requiring excessive attention of the teachers

Payment Policy

A full month's tuition payment is required to hold your child's spot. Payment for the first month may be paid by check, cash, or Visa/MasterCard/ACH. Monthly tuition will be automatically charged on the **FIRST DAY OF EACH MONTH** beginning in October using a card on file or ACH. A bounced check fee is charged if payment does not go through.

Cancellation Policy

If you do not plan to have your child continue, we request that you notify your child's teacher and fill out the Preschool Cancellation Form and submit it to the program Supervisor at least two (2) weeks prior to your child's last day. This will allow us to stop your automatic payment on time.

Financial Aid

The City of Morgan Hill Community Services Department offers limited recreation scholarships on a first-come first-served basis while funds are available. They are available one month per season (Fall, Winter, Spring) per child only. Please contact the program Supervisor for more information.

Tax Forms

If you would like copies of your monthly tuition payments for tax purposes, please contact the Community and Cultural Center Welcome Desk at 408-782-0008. The Tax ID # is: 94-6000377

Tips for Parents

- For security purposes, the preschool classroom will remain locked at all times.
- Please make sure your child uses the restroom before coming to class.
- We ask parents to please keep cell phones turned on during school hours, in the event we need to reach you.
- Please be on time for class. The "free choice" time provides valuable socialization time.
- When picking up your child after class, please wait outside the gate, we will open the door when ready. Doors are locked during class so that no one enters or leaves the classroom without the teacher's knowledge. If you need to access class while in session, please knock call the class cell phone.
- ID's will be required for any adult the teacher does not recognize. Children will not be released to an adult if they are not listed on the child's emergency contacts.
- Teachers will communicate with caregivers after class if there are any behavior difficulties during class. We may document more serious injuries or accidents with a written report.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE IN EACH CLASS?

There is a maximum of 24 students in each class.

2. WHAT IS THE RATIO OF STUDENTS TO TEACHERS?

There is one lead teacher and two assistant teachers (8:1) in class.

3. WHAT EDUCATION DO TEACHERS HAVE?

Our teaching team exceeds our minimum requirements, and their full bios can be viewed at www.morganhill.ca.gov/preschool. Lead Teachers are required to have a minimum of 12 units of Early Childhood Education completed and a minimum of 2 years of experience working with children in a preschool environment. Assistant Teachers are required to have a minimum of 1 year of experience working with

children in a preschool environment and/or completion of Early Childhood Development classes. All preschool staff have completed a background check (fingerprinting) and TB screening. They are also CPR and First Aid certified, mandated reporters, and receive regular refresher training in recreation topics.

4. WHY ARE THE CLASSES ONLY 3 HOURS?

The time frame for these classes provides the young child with an initial preschool experience and an opportunity for socialization. It also offers more opportunities for learning and skill development. This is in preparation for Kindergarten. We feel this schedule allows for a rich balance of the home and school environment.

5. WHAT DO YOU DO ON RAINY DAYS?

We move the children to a room inside the Community and Cultural Center and provide fun and physical activities, mainly music and movement games. Children can express themselves and build their social and motor skills with movement activities, dancing with streamers and scarves, and by playing games.

6. WHAT DO YOU DO IN CASE OF AN EARTHQUAKE OR EMERGENCY?

During the school year we will do one to two drills where we teach children how to remain calm and how to evacuate the classroom safely. Children will be escorted by the Lead Teacher, the Assistant Teachers to the northeast corner (Fifth and Depot) of the CCC parking lot. Parents will pick up their children at that location or in the Children’s Pavilion if it is safe.

7. CAN I CANCEL AT ANYTIME DURING THE PRESCHOOL YEAR?

Yes. We require 2 weeks’ notice to have time to cancel your automatic draft. Please contact the Director or Supervisor if there are specific reasons why you are canceling enrollment. All cancellations must be confirmed by a signed cancellation form located at the Welcome Desk.



CURRICULUM

It Looks Like Play.....It’s Really Work

PAINTING.....develops.....	WRITING SKILLS
Using bright colors to create satisfying personal symbols. Movement of arms, wrists, hands and fingers.	Working with paints and crayons is relaxing and gives the thrill of accomplishment as well as providing practice in the use of hand and arm muscles.

SHARING PERIODS..... develops.....	LANGUAGE SKILLS
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Relating what has happened at home, e.g. the new baby.
Explaining a painted picture. Describing something constructed: the new car, a visit to a relative’s house or a ride on a train.

Speaking before a class, giving a recitation or a report, is sometimes difficult, especially for shy children. Telling stories helps overcome this difficulty.

RHYTHMS and SINGING.....develops.....
Hopping, skipping, and running in rhythm. Dancing like whirling leaves or gliding like an airplane. Singing of falling snow and growing trees.

SELF-EXPRESSION and COORDINATION
Children need to do things with others in harmony, where the help of all is necessary. They need to use words clearly to express thoughts and to express themselves through music and movement.

LOOKING AT BOOKS..... develops.....
Turning pages, looking at bright colored pictures. Telling others about them, making up stories about them. Showing others what is interesting or funny.

INTEREST IN BOOKS
Books become interesting and words in print tell a story.

LISTENING TO STORIES.....develops.....
Stories are read and discussed. Children tell of their experiences and share made-up stories.

LISTENING SKILLS
Listening to others isn’t easy in an age characterized by activity, but listening and thinking are necessary skills for communicating with others.

SHARING CLASS ITEMS.....develops.....
Taking turns with toys and games, with scissors and glue, letting others play and cut. Understanding how a group can have fun and get things done too.

SOCIAL SKILLS
At home, playthings are “mine,” in the school “ours.” It’s a hard lesson, but a necessary one for success in school and for living with others pleasantly.

CUTTING AND PASTING.....develops.....
Scrapbooks, Illustrations for a story. Pictures for a bulletin board display. Holiday decorations. Creating our own designs.

WRITING SKILLS
Cutting on a line is hard. Keeping paste within bounds takes concentration. Small hands and young muscles need training and development for finer writing skills.

41 Developmental Assets

Developmental Assets are the positive values, relationships, skills, and experiences that help children and teens thrive. These assets help young people grow up to be caring and responsible adults. The City of Morgan Hill and the Preschool Program strive to attain these assets in all programs we offer.

EXTERNAL ASSETS



1. **Family Support** | Family life provides high levels of love and support.

2. **Positive Family Communication** | Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other Adult Relationships** | Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring Neighborhood** | Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring School Climate** | School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent Involvement in Schooling** | Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.



EMPOWERMENT

7. **Community Values Youth** | Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as Resources** | Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to Others** | Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety** | Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.



BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

11. **Family Boundaries** | Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School Boundaries** | School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood Boundaries** | Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult Role Models** | Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive Peer Influence** | Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High Expectations** | Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.



CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17. **Creative Activities** | Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth Programs** | Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
19. **Religious Community** | Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at Home** | Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

INTERNAL ASSETS



COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

21. **Achievement Motivation** | Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School Engagement** | Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework** | Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to School** | Young person cares about her or his school.

25. **Reading for Pleasure** | Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.



POSITIVE VALUES

26. **Caring** | Young Person places high value on helping other people.

27. **Equality and Social Justice** | Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

28. **Integrity** | Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.

29. **Honesty** | Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."

30. **Responsibility** | Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

31. **Restraint** | Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.



SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

32. **Planning and Decision Making** | Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.

33. **Interpersonal Competence** | Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

34. **Cultural Competence** | Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.

35. **Resistance Skills** | Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

36. **Peaceful Conflict Resolution** | Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.



POSITIVE IDENTITY

37. **Personal Power** | Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."

38. **Self-Esteem** | Young person reports having a high self-esteem.

39. **Sense of Purpose** | Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."

40. **Positive View of Personal Future** | Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

41. **Positive Cultural Identity** | Young person feels proud of her/his cultural background.