

**EASTFORD ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL**
School Readiness Handbook



2024 - 2025

Eastford Elementary School
12 Westford Road, PO Box 158
Eastford, CT 06242
860-974-1130 www.eastfordct.org
Fax #: 860-974-0837

Welcome to Eastford Readiness Initiative

The Eastford Readiness Initiative provides a school readiness experience where parents/guardians, school staff, and children work together to develop a positive learning environment for learning at school and at home.

Children grow by encouraging them to explore their world and learn through experiencing a variety of play-based activities.

The Eastford Readiness Initiative is a preschool experience governed by the Eastford Readiness Council. Community members and parents/guardians of Eastford preschoolers are encouraged to join the Council.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, alienage, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status or gender identity or expression, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law. The Board of Education complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Eastford Elementary School recognizes and accepts the need to prepare students to live and work productively in an increasingly diverse society. This is an integral part of the school system's commitment to offer an educational program of excellence, which includes teaching students awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures and heritages that form our society. The school will not tolerate student behavior that insults, degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental condition or ethnic group.

The district has a policy of Non-Discrimination under Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, Age Discrimination Act, Title II of the ADA, and the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act.

It is the express policy of the Eastford Board of Education to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics such as race, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, alienage, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status or gender identity or expression, Equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups is also required. In order to facilitate the timely resolution of such complaints any student who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of these protected characteristics should file a written complaint with Charles Kernan, Director of Pupil Services.

Carole McCombe, School Principal, is the designated Eastford District compliance officer who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX, of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Charles Kernan, Director of Pupil Services, will act as the Title VI compliance officer of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

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Readiness Initiative Faculty and Staff

Mrs. Christine Kopplin	Readiness Initiative Teacher
Mrs. Lisa Hackner	Paraprofessional
Ms. Chelsea Friedmann	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Carrie Lagasse	Paraprofessional
Mrs. Carole McCombe	Readiness Initiative Administrator
	EES Principal
Dr. Donna Leake	Superintendent
Mr. Charles Kernan	Pupil Services Director
Mrs. Sharon Kozey Greene	Readiness Initiative Liaison
Mrs. Mary Seguine	School Secretary and Readiness Payment Coordinator
Ms. Kimberli Gaylor	Financial Assistant to the Superintendent
Mrs. Stephanie Schleicher	School Counselor
Mrs. Catherine Roto	School Nurse
Mrs. Jennifer Weinland	Art Teacher
Ms. June Burns	Music Teacher
Mr. Nick Cody	Physical Education Teacher
Ms. Jessica Garvie	Kindergarten Teacher
French River Associates	Speech and Language Pathologist
French River Associates	Occupational Therapist (EASTCONN)
French River Associates	Physical Therapist (EASTCONN)

To send an email to any staff member simply use their first initial and their last name followed by eastfordct.org. For example, to email the Readiness Teacher type in ckopplin@eastfordct.org



In April of 2010, The Eastford Readiness Initiative obtained initial accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This accreditation is renewed on a regular basis according to NAEYC requirements. The achievement shows that we are committed to providing a quality program to the children of Eastford. For more information on the process of obtaining this goal visit www.NAEYC.org

OVERVIEW

The Eastford Readiness Initiative (hereafter referred to as Eastford Readiness Program) is designed to service children who are 3 and/or 4 years old. Guidelines for acceptance into the program are established annually by the Readiness Council.* The acceptance priorities for the 2024-25 school year include servicing special education students and providing education to children from families who may not have access to or be able to afford quality preschool programs. When the number of registrations surpasses our allocated space, additional criteria are considered in determining enrollment. The program accepts three and four-year-old children for a full-day session, with a morning-only option available as space allows. The Readiness Council supports promoting enrollment of children from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

The Eastford School Readiness Program at Eastford Elementary School operates through funding provided by a School Readiness Grant from the State of Connecticut. This grant requires that when programs charge a fee, a sliding fee scale based on family income is used. The fee is determined by the family's size and combined gross income. More information about the setting of fees and payment is available in Appendix C. **According to the grant that supports the program, families that participate in the program are required to present income verification once a year (typically with registration).** This income statement should be given to Carole McCombe, the program administrator, and will be held in strict confidentiality.

The Readiness Program operates on a school year calendar. School begins at 8:42 AM and ends at 3:20 PM. Families that choose the partial day option, must pick up their children at 11:30 AM. The program follows the same school calendar as the Eastford Elementary School, which can be found in Appendix D of this handbook or online (www.eastfordct.org).

The Readiness Program is established as a home-school partnership. The program supports this partnership by providing parent education programs throughout the year. The Readiness Family Involvement Policy and other Readiness policies are included in this handbook. Assistance to families in accessing adult education programs, job training and the public library is provided through interagency cooperative agreements with EASTCONN and the Eastford Public Library. Activities to support families in interactive literacy activities are provided by both the Eastford Library and the Readiness Program. Examples of activities that have occurred in the past include a story hour at the library and Readiness Literacy programs for parents and children such as Books and Bagels, Winter Wonderland, Valentine's Celebration, Read Across America, and other cultural programs throughout the year to call upon various books and topics.

The Readiness staff is provided with opportunities to participate in a variety of professional development offerings to continuously improve their instructional skills and the effectiveness of the program.

***The By-laws for the Readiness Council are in Appendix B of this handbook.**

CURRICULUM

Guiding Principles

The Eastford Readiness Program has adopted the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards, (<http://www.ct.gov/oec/elds>) as the core document from which the curriculum goals and practices flow. The following principles guide planning and instruction:

1. Young children:
 - Are capable and competent.
 - Learn best when their basic needs are met.
 - Are unique in their growth and development.
 - Develop and learn within the context of their family and culture.
2. Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children and are critical partners in all early learning environments.
3. Early Learning Environments:
 - Support young children to learn in the context of relationships.
 - Reinforce the importance of the cultural context of young children, families and communities.
 - Provide opportunities for active exploration.
 - Provide meaningful inclusion of children with special needs.
 - Provide experiences that are relevant and integrated across domains of development.
 - Intentionally promote the development of skills and knowledge.
 - Provide opportunities for children to benefit from diversity.
 - Support children's language development in their primary language.
4. Communities:
 - Believe that all children deserve high-quality learning experiences.
 - Offer a variety of resources that support early growth and development.
 - Strategically plan to meet the needs of children and families.

5. Teachers use the curriculum to guide their planning and make individual adaptations based on student developmental needs as determined by assessment procedures.
6. The teachers use the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards to plan schedules and activities in a manner that allows for flexibility, supports transitions, includes indoor and outdoor play and acknowledges the children's need for activity and rest.
7. The Early learning and development domains are multidimensional and interrelated. Skills may be taught and observed throughout the domains of development. The curriculum addresses the following areas of development:
 - a. **Cognition** – Making sense of the world, staying with something, and working hard to solve problems.
 - b. **Social & Emotional Development**- Understanding yourself, your feelings and how to play with other people.
 - c. **Physical Health and Development**- Learning to take care of yourself and to do things with your body and hands so that you grow strong and healthy.
 - d. **Language and Literacy**- Communicating using your body, language, signs and written communication.
 - e. **Creative Arts**- Enjoying music, dance and art and expressing yourself in these ways.
 - f. **Mathematics**- Understanding numbers and how to use them, counting, patterns, measuring and shapes.
 - g. **Science**- Understanding the world around us, including living things, the earth and space and energy.
 - h. **Social Studies**- Understanding the world and knowing about the people in it. This starts with knowing about your family, then the community and world.

PHILOSOPHY

The Eastford Readiness Program recognizes that:

- Young children learn best through concrete experiences and active manipulation of materials.
- All areas of a child's development (social, personal, cognitive, physical, creative) are integrated.
- Positive self-esteem is the foundation for learning.
- Young children need a balance between self-selected high interest experiences as well as times with guidance and instruction.
- Play is a young child's natural way of working.

GOAL

The Eastford Readiness program utilizes the Essential Dispositions of the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS), to **foster competent learners** through supporting children to:

- Be creative
- Be inquisitive
- Be flexible
- Be critical thinkers
- Be purposeful and reflective
- Be social learners

OBJECTIVES

Cognition:

- Develop effective approaches to learning
- Use logic and reasoning
- Strengthen executive function

Social and Emotional:

- Develop trusting attachments and relationships with primary caregivers
- Develop self-regulation
- Develop, express, recognize, and respond to emotions
- Develop self-awareness, self-concept, and competence
- Develop social relationships

Physical Health:

- Develop gross motor skills
- Develop fine motor skills
- Acquire adaptive skills
- Maintain physical health and well-being

Language and Literacy:

- Understand language
- Use language
- Use language for social interaction
- Gain book appreciation and knowledge
- Gain knowledge of print and its uses
- Develop phonological awareness
- Convey meaning through drawing, letters and words

Creative Arts:

- Engage in and enjoy the arts
- Explore and respond to creative works

Mathematics:

- Understand counting and cardinality
- Understand and describe relationships to solve problems
- Understand the attributes and relative properties of objects
- Understand shapes and spatial relationships

Science:

- Apply scientific practices
- Engage in the process of engineering
- Understand patterns, process and relationships of living things
- Understand physical sciences
- Understand features of earth

Social Studies:

- Understand self, family and a diverse community
- Learn about people and the environment
- Develop an understanding of economic systems and resources
- Understand change over time

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Circle time: for introducing and expanding upon early learning concepts (i.e. days of the week, colors, shapes, the alphabet, and much more)
- Dramatic play: dress-up, kitchen area, doll house, work-bench
- Arts and Crafts: paint, color with markers/crayons, cut and glue
- Music: listen, sing, and dance
- Sensory: play in sand, water, shaving cream, play dough
- Literacy: listen to stories, explore books by discussing pictures and themes
- Build: blocks, construction, puzzles
- Social: make friends, take turns, and practice respecting self and others

REQUIRED FORMS FOR ENTRANCE

- ❖ Registration
- ❖ Completion of the Eastford School Health Form
- ❖ Health Assessment Record (Form ED 191)
- ❖ Emergency Contact Information
- ❖ Official (long form) copy of Birth Certificate
- ❖ Income Verification Form and Paystub



Parents are required to fill out an income form and provide verification of their income once a year. Acceptable forms of documentation are recent paystubs, W-2 forms, or communications from the State of Connecticut. Please contact Mrs. McCombe with any questions. This is a requirement of the grant that funds the program. This information is mandatory and is kept strictly confidential. Information should be given directly to the School Principal.

- ❖ Milk Order Form
- ❖ Welcoming Student Questionnaire
- ❖ Nutrition Survey

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURE



The partial and full day programs begin at 8:42 AM with students arriving between 8:25 AM and 8:35 AM. The full-day program ends at 3:20 PM and the partial-day program ends at 11:30 AM. Parents of partial-day students must provide their own transportation at dismissal. Preschoolers who are arriving or leaving at the same time as the K-8 students (8:42/3:20) should use the entrances and exits that all other students use. In the morning, all students are dropped off at the outside door at the far left end of the building as you face the front. An adult will escort preschoolers to the preschool classroom. Students should not arrive prior to 8:25 AM. At the 3:20 PM dismissal time, bus riders exit through the middle school door near the flagpole, and car riders exit at the door at the far left end of the building. Students who walk home remain in the foyer, near the office, with a staff member until a parent gathers them. Preschool students who are leaving at 11:30 AM will be picked up by their families at the main entrance and will need to sign out with the PK staff. If you are picking up or dropping off your child at any time not established with the administration (i.e. dentist or doctor appointments) please utilize the main office in order to sign your child in or out.

Please note that Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) 22a-174-18 prohibit vehicles of all kinds from unnecessary idling for more than 3 minutes and additionally, Public Act No. 02-56 (An Act Concerning the Idling of School Buses) gives ticketing authority to police who witness school buses idling for longer than 3 minutes.

ABSENCES

Preschoolers are to follow the same guidelines listed in the Eastford Elementary School Parent/Student Handbook regarding Attendance (see excerpt below): absences (excused and unexcused), release of students from school grounds, and tardiness. Additional copies of the Readiness and the Elementary handbooks can be obtained in the school office or online via the school website (www.eastfordct.org) by clicking the 'For Families' tab and then 'Handbooks.'



Parent/Student Handbook Page 3:

"Daily attendance is a key factor in student success; thus, any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after-school, weekends, and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the School Nurse prior to 9:30 on the day of the absence. The School Nurse can be reached via voice mail 24 hours a day. Dial 860-974-1130 and use extension 104 when school is not in session. If it is not possible to contact the school on the day of the absence, the parent is requested to send a written reason for the absence to the school on the date of the student's return. The student should submit the written reason for the absence to the School Nurse."

NO SCHOOL / DELAYS / EARLY CLOSINGS

Notification of NO SCHOOL is announced via an automated system that will send a voicemail, email, and text message to primary parents. Notification is also posted on the school website, www.eastfordct.org, and over WINY radio 1350 AM (Putnam). Announcements will also appear on WFSB and NBC. All students should follow the time adjustment given to the Eastford Elementary School (typically a 2-hour delay or a full closure for the day). **In the event of a delayed opening there will be no partial day session for those that typically leave at 11:30 AM.**

THINGS TO BRING FROM HOME

Students should bring:

- A backpack that is sufficient for carrying preschool sized papers and projects as well as the child's lunch box. It is our experience that backpacks are easier for the students to carry than other types of bags.
- Appropriate clothing and shoes in accordance with daily weather, i.e. coat, boots and snow pants, hats for sun or cold, etc.
- Two sets of spare clothes—send in seasonally in a sealed and labeled plastic bag.
- Rest time bedding, that remains at school during the week, a small lightweight blanket or sheet and pillow are suggested. These items are sent home on Fridays to be laundered.



Please label all items to help ensure there are no mix-ups.

CLOTHING



- Many preschool activities can get messy, so please remember to dress your child in preschool-friendly clothes.
- We also suggest that your child wear sneakers or shoes with covered toes to fully participate in all activities safely. Providing sturdy, flat-soled shoes can prevent twisted ankles and tripping. Shoes with hard or slippery soles, sandals, and slip-ons increase the risk of tripping or falling. This is especially important on days when P.E. is scheduled.
- In addition, sending in spare clothes will help your child feel more comfortable after a toileting accident or a milk spill. These spare clothes should be updated seasonally and as your child grows.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Children will have daily opportunities for outside play, weather permitting. If the weather is not conducive to outdoor play, other opportunities will be offered to ensure large motor skill opportunities during the day. The play area will meet all requirements of the American Disabilities Act and all school property, including the outdoor play area, are in a smoke-free zone. A fully equipped first aid kit will be readily available during outdoor play.

Staff will select material and equipment that will support the curriculum, help meet program goals, and foster the achievement of desired outcomes for children. Staff maintain developmentally appropriate staff to child ratios (1:10) for preschoolers during outdoor time.

In cold weather, the children will wear dry and layered clothing that will protect them from the cold. In hot weather, the children will be encouraged to play in the shade. Parents will be reminded to have the children wear appropriate sun-protective clothing and/or to apply SPF 15 (or higher) sunscreen. It is the policy of the Eastford Readiness Council to only apply sunscreen that has been provided by the parent and if it has been requested in writing. Sunscreen must be clearly marked with the student's name. The program follows Eastford School Board of Education's *Application of Sunscreen Policy and Regulation*, #5145.

The staff do not apply insect repellent of any kind. When public health authorities suggest it, the parents may apply it at home.

The children will be protected from excessive cold, heat, or other environmental or air quality issues. The school will use the local news agencies for regular monitoring of weather conditions. For extreme situations, the school will utilize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association alert system. For environmental air quality alerts, the local Department of Health or Fire Department will notify the school. The school principal will notify the teaching staff.

The program will ensure the facilities are free from trash, tripping hazards, harmful animals, insects, pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides are only used according to Eastford School Board of Education Policy #1610, *Pesticide and Pest Management*. Whenever possible, the least hazardous means are used to control potentially dangerous animals or plants.

Sandboxes will be constructed to allow for proper drainage. They will be covered when not in use. The staff will ensure that sand is clean and replaced regularly, so that sandboxes are at least half full of sand. Both children and adults wash their hands after touching sand or dirt.

If at any time water play is part of the program, all precautions are taken to ensure communal water does not spread infectious diseases.

- * Children will not drink the water.
- * Children with open sores on their hands will not be allowed to play in the water.
- * Fresh potable water is provided for each group of children.
- * After the activity has ended, the water will be drained.
- * Both children and adults wash or sanitize their hands after playing in water that is shared by two or more people.

The findings of an assessment by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector are documented and available on-site. The assessment documents that:

- * The equipment is safe and prevents children from ages 2 through kindergarten from injury.
- * Through remedial action, the program has corrected any unsafe condition, found in the latest assessment.
- * An inspection and maintenance program has been established and is performed on an ongoing basis.
- * The outdoor area accommodates the abilities, needs, and interests of each age group the program serves.

SNACKS/LUNCH AND NUTRITION

The Eastford Readiness Program allows time for a snack in the morning and the afternoon. Students are encouraged to bring a healthy snack for each snack time. Below are some suggestions for healthy snacks:

Applesauce, granola bars, bagels and cream cheese, veggies and dip, yogurt, fresh fruits

Milk is available for purchase. One school milk carton can be poured into a cup and split between snack and lunch, or two snacks if desired.

Please be sure to fill out and return the milk order form to the school office so that proper milk quantities can be ordered. If you prefer your child to have something other than milk at snack or lunchtime, you will need to provide that beverage and notify the staff.

Special Dietary Needs: It is important for school personnel to know if your child has any medical or nutritional concerns that need to be addressed at school. Please let the School Nurse know as soon as possible if there is a medical or nutritional concern that should be addressed with your child. On the medical form, please identify these specific nutritional needs regarding special diets, allergies and feeding needs. The school nurse is Mrs. Catherine Roto and she can be reached at 860-974-1130, extension 104 or croto@eastfordct.org.

Celebration Foods: The Readiness Program follows the Eastford Elementary School guidelines for the sharing of food and snacks. Due to an increase in student dietary sensitivities and allergies, students/families are not allowed to bring food in to share with others for birthdays or other special occasions. Many families opt to bring in small gift items such as pencils or stickers in lieu of sweets or other special treats. Please inform the teacher in advance of how you might celebrate your child's special day to avoid any disappointment on a child's special day.

CHOKING PRECAUTIONS

THESE PRECAUTIONS ARE APPLICABLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FOUR (4).

Children younger than four years old should not bring or eat foods that may be a choking hazard such as hotdogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat cut into larger than bite-sized pieces. If these foods are brought to school, they will be sent home and an alternative will be offered.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES



The Readiness staff is pediatric First Aid and CPR trained in case of emergencies. In addition, the School Nurse is on the premises all day and is available to the students in the Readiness Program. In cases of emergencies, parents will be contacted as soon as possible and emergency medical care will be provided. If a child becomes ill while at school, the student will be taken to the School Nurse and proper action will be taken. Action will be determined based on the nurse's assessment and parental consultation. If it is determined that the student is not well enough to continue at school, the child will remain in the nurse's office until a parent or other designated adult arrives.

When parents are determining if their child is healthy enough to attend school, please use the following indicators established by the National Association of School Nurses to make the decision.

Keep your child home if s/he has

- Vomited in the last 24 hours;
- Had a fever exceeding 100 degrees in the last 24 hours;
- A headache, body aches, earaches;
- Complained of excessive sore throat pain; or
- A colored discharge from eyes or nose.

Keep your child at home until his or her fever has been gone without medication for 24 hours. *Returning too soon may slow down the recovery process and expose others unnecessarily to the illness.*

Required Information

Families of children entering the Eastford Readiness Program will provide the following information to the school:

- Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (Form ED191) with up-to-date health information
- The name and address of the child's healthcare provider
- The name of the health insurance company, policy number and name of carrier, if the child has insurance
- A record of immunizations and information regarding whether the child has had a health screen pursuant to EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment)
- Documentation that the child will adhere to current state health regulations

The school nurse will coordinate consultation, training, and education for program staff and families on well-child care at least twice a year. Additionally, the school nurse will provide training to staff who work with students who may have specific medical needs that require regular monitoring or attention such as asthma, diabetes, feeding tube, etc. The school nurse will document and assist parents and/or guardians in identifying and assessing appropriate health, mental health, and medical services. The school nurse will conduct annual vision and hearing screenings. The Readiness Program will utilize the same agreement held by the school and its school physician. The school physician will visit twice a year to consult with the school nurse, observe and make recommendations about the program's practices and policies if necessary. The consultation will address physical, social-emotional, nutritional, and oral health, including the care and exclusion of ill children. Student health information is treated with the same level of confidentiality as all other student information. (Please refer to the Board of Education policy on confidentiality.) Families not having health insurance for their child will be provided with information about the HUSKY program and other insurance programs, and the school nurse can assist in the application process if needed.

Medication

Please see the Eastford Elementary Parent/Student Handbook for the proper protocol for the dispensing of medication during the school day.

COMMUNICABLE AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Students with any medical condition, which, within the school setting may expose others to disease, or contagious and infectious conditions (i.e., chicken pox, respiratory illness such as Covid-19 and flu) may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such a condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence or test results to indicate that the child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

If the situation calls for it, a letter will be sent home to all families informing them of the possible exposure and signs, symptoms and treatment for the disease.

Additional guidance for students and staff regarding illness and timelines for returning to school after an illness can be found in the Eastford Elementary School Parent Student Handbook in the Health Services section.

TOILET TRAINING

The Eastford Readiness Program does not require that children be toilet trained. However, being able to toilet independently is a good indicator for preschool readiness.

In order to be considered toilet trained a child must be able to:

- ❖ Recognize when he/she needs to use the bathroom
- ❖ Independently pull pants on and down
- ❖ Independently clean themselves

We encourage parents to dress their children in clothing that makes independent toileting more successful. Staff members can assist with difficult snaps or belts.

Children who have been admitted into the program and are not toilet trained will be guided towards that end goal, when it is developmentally appropriate and when supported by parents.

Our approach to child development allows and enables children to independently use toilet facilities when it is developmentally appropriate and when efforts to encourage toilet training are supported by parents.

Children who are being trained:

1. In the program, staff will consult with parents to make sure that there is a consistent approach to toilet training. Parents share information on how their child uses the toilet at home, words they use, frequency, etc.

2. Teachers and home visitors can assist parents by talking about signs that indicate a child is ready to be trained (such as staying dry for long periods, tugging at diapers, telling you they have to go, etc.)
3. Parents will be assisted in realistic toilet training goals and having realistic expectations through printed resources and or advice from knowledgeable personnel.
4. The environment will be set up to help children be successful with their toilet training and hand washing:
 - child size toilets and sinks or steps to allow child to reach the sink and turn on water
 - paper towels are close to the sink.
5. A supportive emotional environment will be created:
 - children are reminded consistently, but calmly
 - staff will express pleasure at successes, without overdoing it
 - staff will treat accidents calmly and matter-of-factly (I'll help you change your clothes).
6. Staff will communicate regularly with parents:
 - when accidents occur with frequency, staff will speak with parents about any changes or stresses that might be affecting the child
 - about clothing choices if the child is having difficulty (for example – overalls and jeans with belts and zippers are all more difficult for “beginners”; suggest pull-on pants)
 - about sending in a greater quantity of clothes to have on hand in case of accidents
 - regarding the children’s toilet habits throughout the week.

Disposable Training Pants:

The Eastford Readiness Program supports appropriate developmental toilet training practices. Therefore, “disposable training underwear” or “pull ups” will not be encouraged when children are actively toilet training. We ask that parents provide their children with cloth training underwear, which support the natural training process. We feel the idea of disposable training underwear can be misleading to the children during the training process. Certain exceptions may be made for students with special needs.

Children who are trained:

1. Based on staff observations and parent input, staff will determine how much assistance a child needs in toileting. For example, can the child undress him or herself, does the child need to be reminded, does the child wait until the last minute to tell an adult?

2. On the first day at the site, each child will calmly and matter-of-factly be shown the location of the toilets and sinks. Staff will explain expectations and demonstrate the routine.

3. If a child has a toileting accident, staff will calmly and matter-of-factly reassure the child and assist them as needed in changing. Children will stand up (not be laid on floor) to change. Staff will give the child as much privacy as possible.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. The signal for a fire drill is a constant blast on a special horn. When the alarm sounds, students are to proceed along the posted exit routes in a quick, quiet and calm manner. Students should not return to the building until the return signal is given.

Since 2009, schools are required to practice crisis response drills (lockdown drills) and may substitute a lockdown drill for one of the required monthly school fire drills once every three months. During a lockdown (Stranger Danger), teachers gather students on the floor, out of common view and away from doorways and windows. They will lock the classroom door and close windows and blinds. During a lockdown, children will be required to remain with the adult in charge and they will not be allowed to move about the building. Teachers will prepare students for fire drills and lockdowns and answer as many questions as possible. During fire drills and crisis response drills, students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be scheduled for educational, cultural, or extracurricular purposes. Parents will be notified in advance and permission slips will be sent home. Parent approval is required prior to participation in any field trip.

- At least one adult chaperone per every four children will attend each field trip. The number of parent chaperones sometimes has to be limited due to limited seating on the bus or limitations of the destination.
- Parent chaperones are given a Chaperone Information Sheet prior to the trip as well as the cell phone number of the coordinating teacher(s).
- The teacher will carry a cell phone on the trip and leave the number in the office in case of emergencies.

- The teacher will carry permission slips for each child that contains emergency contact and medical information.
- The school nurse is notified of all field trips so that appropriate medical arrangements can be made in addition to carrying the first aid kit.
- If transportation problems occur, the school will be contacted, and the bus company will provide a new bus according to contract.
- Children ages 3 and under will ride in an approved child restraint seat. Parents/guardians may request child restraint seats for children older than age 3.
- Following the field trip, teachers will complete a Field Trip Evaluation form. An evaluation form will also be given to all parents.

Some of the recent field trips have been to The Town Library, The Woodstock Academy Loos Cultural Center for the Arts, Eastford Fire Department, Buell's Orchard, and Southwick Zoo.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There are many opportunities to become actively involved in your child's school. Eastford Readiness Council, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Board of Education, Room Parent, Booster Club, or helping to organize special one-time events or activities, like an Earth Day Program or Read Across America activity. Talk to the teacher or the office staff if you are interested in any of these areas.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Families who are new to the program will have an orientation of the program and will be given a copy of this policy. Written communications will be given to the families at least weekly, sharing ongoing classroom activities and individualized information concerning their child. Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the program at any time with prior communication. Parent conferences will be held twice a year when the Eastford Elementary School staff holds their conferences. Parents are welcome to set up additional conferences whenever they have questions or concerns they would like to discuss with their child's teacher. A school nurse is available to the program at the school. In cases of emergencies parents will be contacted as soon as possible, and emergency medical care will be provided. For classroom volunteers please see highlights below from the Board of Education Volunteer Policy.

In accordance with Board of Education Policy 1111, *Community Relations, Communications with the Public, Parent Involvement*:

- Parenting skills should be promoted and supported.
- Communication between home and school should be regular, two-way and meaningful.
- Parents should play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Parents should be welcome in every school and their support and assistance sought.
- Parent input should be sought regarding decisions that affect children and families.
- Community resources should be made available to strengthen school programs, family practice and student learning.



COMMUNICATION

Communicating with the staff can be done through daily journals, email, telephone, or in person. Written communications, as discussed in the Family Involvement Policy, include the Seesaw Platform, a notebook/journal, or e-mail as well as a weekly class newsletter. Staff will provide login information to access the Seesaw digital platform at the beginning of the school year. If the journal method is selected, a notebook is sent home with the child and should be brought to and from school each day. **Parents may choose how they prefer to have their regular communication so that it is a useful and helpful tool and not a barrier.** These tools are used for communication on a regular basis in an effort to create a partnership between home and school. Notifying the staff of any changes in the home or routine can ensure that the staff is aware of your child's needs. The weekly newsletter is posted on Seesaw and sent home via email to give a more detailed description of what the class is doing that week, and for other general school and community announcements. Even if the journal is selected for regular communication, E-mail is always an effective way to communicate with the teacher (ckopplin@eastfordct.org). Phone calls can also be made but the teacher may not always be available to talk, due to her need to be with the students. The teacher's voicemail can be used and a call will be returned as soon as she is able.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS IN THE CLASSROOM

The teacher and children work together to develop a set of classroom rules to ensure safety inside and outside the school. These rules will be visibly posted in spaces that are used by the children. Such guidelines provide children with the reminder to make good choices and behave appropriately.

Preschool children are young in their learning of expectations and rules in the classroom, at home, and in the community. Children benefit from redirection, eye-level conversations, and positive reinforcement (“great job!” “thank you for _____”). Often children require reminders to participate in or complete an activity or specific task. These reminders are given at the child’s level by staff in a gentle, friendly voice.

We continue to use Second Step as a way to teach core social-emotional skills such as empathy, emotion management, and problem solving.

Class-wide behavior interventions include positive reinforcement through smiles, verbal praise, thumbs up, and high fives. Strategies, such as hand stamps and stickers, are utilized throughout the day for children following classroom rules and behaving appropriately. In addition, children who have demonstrated “super star” behavior (e.g., volunteering to help clean, assisting a friend in need, etc.) may also earn specific recognition.

When a child displays difficulty in following a rule, the teacher will discuss the issue with the child to gain an understanding of the child’s feelings and perspective and to explain that what the child does and says are important and affects others. They will work together to develop problem solving techniques to be used in future situations.

For children with persistent, serious or challenging behavior, a referral to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team will be made and the parents/guardians notified. The teacher should identify on the referral: events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that precede or predict challenging behavior. The MTSS team, made up of the teacher and other professionals, will review and analyze data relating to the student’s behavior. In conjunction with the family, the team will develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success in the classroom.

Please note: Teaching staff shall never use physical punishment and shall not engage in psychological abuse or coercion (see below for examples). Teaching staff will never use threats or derogatory remarks. They shall not withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. For further information regarding the school discipline policy, please refer to the Eastford School Parent Student handbook.

Examples of physical punishment: shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.

Examples of psychological abuse: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing out, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection, seclusion.

Examples of coercion: rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); physical restraint (forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down) except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

NOTE: The use of a physical escort as defined below and properly used when necessary to protect the child or others from harm is NOT coercion.

Mechanical restraint: “the use of devices as means of restricting a student’s freedom of movement: (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Physical escort: “the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Physical restraint: “a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move the individual’s arms, legs, torso, or head freely, except that such term does not include a physical escort, mechanical restraint, or chemical restraint.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Seclusion: “the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, except that such term does not include a time out.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

When a student causes harm to themselves or others, the student and class may be separated to keep everyone safe. Once the student is visibly calm, every effort is made to reunite with the class. Staff are trained in PMT (Physical and Psychological Management Training) and appropriate use of restraint for safety reasons is permissible.

The goal of this policy is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures. Exclusionary measures (see Board of Education Policy #5144.1 regarding Restraints and Seclusions) will only be taken after all possible interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that it is in the best interest of the child. Family members will be a part of the decision-making team. If exclusionary measures must be taken, assistance will be offered to families in accessing services and an alternative placement.

As a public school, we comply with all federal and state civil rights laws and work with families to provide each child with the services and programs they require.

This policy shall be shared with families upon the child’s entrance to school, is shared annually in the Preschool Readiness Handbook, and can be found on the school’s website.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Preschool students will be formally evaluated twice over the course of the school year to gain an understanding of the children's various skill levels per Readiness Grant Regulations. This information may be shared during parent conferences, which are held twice a year. This can be a great opportunity to see how your child is progressing over the course of his/her time in preschool. Specific dates for reporting, and dates and times for conferences, will be shared with all Readiness families.

Some of the skills that may be discussed at the conference are whether a child can:

- Recognize letters of the alphabet—letters in child's name and other familiar words;
- Count using objects—up to ten objects/fingers, count past ten;
- Use words to express emotions/feelings—words for self, others, phrases or sentences to describe ideas, feelings, actions;
- Identify self by name—first/last and gender;
- Care for self independently—toileting, hand washing, feeding, dressing
- Engage in physical activity;
- Demonstrate awareness of socially appropriate behavior—i.e. keeps hands/feet to self;
- Attend to stories—can retell information; and
- Ask questions about and comment on observations.

TRANSITION PLAN FOR CHILDREN ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

In an effort to ensure a smooth transition for children going into kindergarten after leaving the Readiness Program, regular meetings are held during the school year between the kindergarten staff and the Readiness Staff.

Orientation activities and support are provided to children and families in transitioning children to kindergarten. A formal kindergarten orientation will be held in the spring. There is also a visit scheduled for parents and children during the school year so that they can become familiar with the kindergarten teacher and the classroom. Other activities are planned throughout the school year to help ease the children into kindergarten. These may include recess time together, field trips, and special programs. The Readiness Teacher and the Kindergarten Teacher also do a series of classroom exchanges in the spring to allow the Kindergarten Teacher an opportunity to meet and familiarize herself with the upcoming students. Towards the end of the school year, the Kindergarten Teacher and Readiness Teacher will meet, upon request, with a family to discuss individual plans and goals for easing the transition process for a particular child if needed.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION: It should be noted that records of students in the Eastford Readiness Program are automatically transferred to Kindergarten at the end of the school year. No further registration steps are necessary.

Effective July 1, 2024, the Eastford Public Schools (Kindergarten entrance) shall be open to resident children five years of age and over who reach **age five on or before the first day of September of any school year**. For children who will not reach the age of five on or before the first day of September of the school year, the child's parent or guardian may submit a written request to the principal of the school seeking early admission to the District. Upon receipt of such written request, the principal and an appropriate certified staff member shall assess such child to determine whether admitting the child is developmentally appropriate. For decisions relating to early admission to the District, the decision of the principal and appropriate certified staff shall be final.

More information regarding the recent change in Kindergarten entrance requirements can be found in the Board of Education Policy #5105 found on the school website.

PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

The preschool uses a variety of formal and informal methods for assessing children. The results of assessments are used to inform teachers of the child's development and instruction. In addition, assessments inform parents about their child's development, strengths and weaknesses, guide programming decisions, facilitate intentional teaching practices, and determine the need for Early Intervention Special Education Services. Every effort is made to provide Special Education Services within the Readiness classroom. The staff will work to achieve consensus with families about assessment methods that will best meet the child's needs. All assessments occur with familiar staff, in familiar settings with consideration for time and group size. The classroom teacher conducts all assessments and communicates with families about their child's assessments. Communication will be sensitive to family values, cultural identity, and home language. Only the family, teaching staff, and administration will have access to the child's assessment results. All records are kept locked in file cabinets in the classroom and the school office, with access given only to those authorized to do so.

Qualified staff are trained in the use of assessment tools. Training consists of user manuals, online resources, webinars, and in-person training as available.

The following are the instruments used in the Eastford Readiness Program:

Early Screening Inventory – R (ESI-R) – Teachers administer the screening to new students within the first month of entry. The ESI-R “is a developmental screening instrument that provides a quick overview of a child's development in three major areas: Visual Motor/Adaptive, Language and Cognition, and Gross

Motor.” Teachers will use the information to plan goals for students and contribute to the report shared with the parents at conferences. This assessment is done 1:1, over several sessions if needed, by the classroom teacher.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Families of new students are given questionnaires within the first month of entry, to provide information about a child’s development including the social emotional domain. Families are encouraged to use the Sparkler App to access and submit questionnaires. Teachers will use the information to plan follow-up activities and make referrals for further evaluations as needed.

Teacher Made Assessment – Throughout the year, teachers use a variety of checklists, rubrics, and anecdotal records to establish baselines, monitor progress and guide instruction; they are administered at the teacher’s discretion. These assessments are sometimes done 1:1 but may also be conducted in a small group. They are completed over time by the classroom teacher.

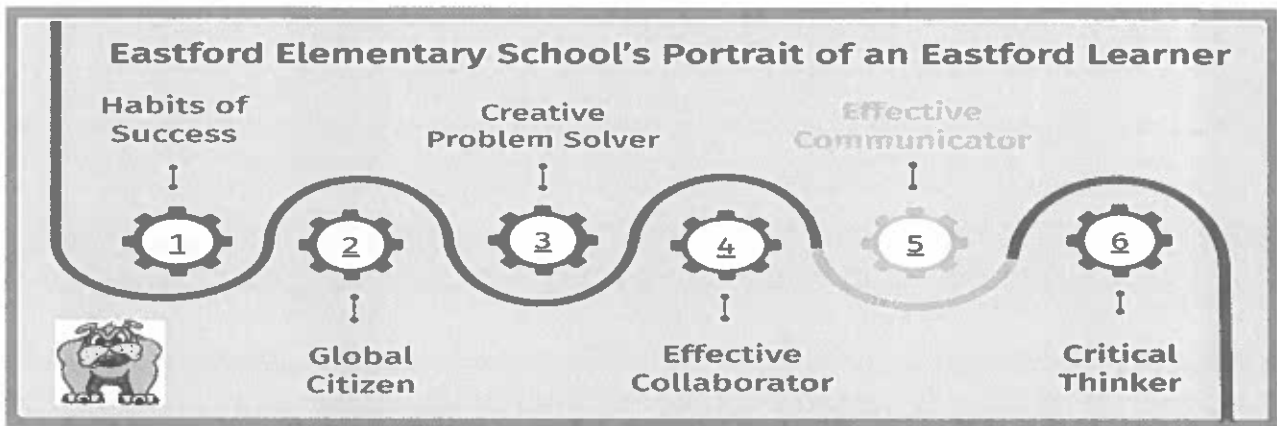
CT Documentation and Observation Teaching System (DOTS) – This is used as the primary assessment document for the preschool program. It is administered throughout the year, with two observation recording periods. Data is collected through observation, children’s work, family input and shared as necessary. Written reports are given to parents in January and in June. This is an ongoing observational tool, used over time by the classroom teacher.




Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development – Students receiving Special Education Services are given the Brigance within four weeks of entry and at exit from the program for the purpose of State data collection. If requested, parents are given an overview of the results.




Families with children receiving Special Education Services will receive Progress Toward Goal reports with grade-level report cards.

FOCUS ON INTER- AND INTRA-PERSONAL SKILLS

At Eastford Elementary School we believe strongly in developing the “whole” child. This includes academic and social-emotional development, but it also includes a focus on developing the skills or traits necessary to adapt to and be successful in a variety of settings and circumstances. We refer to this skill development as our vision or Portrait of an Eastford Learner. We have developed a graphic that adults and children can see around the building that shows what these skills or traits look like and what the expectations are at different levels. The Portrait of an Eastford Learner for Preschool and Kindergarten is included here for your reference.



Preschool Component	What it means	Examples	I Can Statements
Habits of Success 	Doing things that help us reach our goals, like being organized, managing our time, never giving up, and having a positive attitude.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting goals • being brave • trying new things • being patient 	I can set goals for myself. I can try new things. I can be patient when things are hard. I can keep trying even when it's tough.
Global Citizen 	Understanding that we are all connected in the world, being kind to everyone, learning about different cultures, and being a good friend to everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing, • being helpful, • learning about other countries 	I can be kind to everyone. I can share with others. I can learn about different places and people. I can be a good friend to everyone.
Creative Problem Solver 	Finding new ways to solve problems, being curious, trying different ideas, and not giving up when things are hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drawing, • building with blocks, • telling stories, • making up games 	I can try different ideas. I can be curious and ask questions. I can keep trying, even when things are tricky. I can use my imagination to make up new games, stories.

Preschool Component	What it means	Examples	I Can Statements
<p>Effective Communicator</p> 	<p>Talking and listening in a way that helps everyone understand each other, being a good friend, using our words to tell how we feel, and listening when others talk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing toys, • saying "please" and "thank you," • using kind words 	<p>I can use my words to tell others how I feel. I can listen when others talk. I can be a good friend to others. I can use kind words and manners when I talk to others.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Working together with others, taking turns, helping our friends, and doing things as a team to reach our goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playing together, • taking turns, • doing group projects 	<p>I can work with others as a team. I can take turns when playing games. I can help my friends when they need it. I can work on projects with others to reach our goals together.</p>
<p>Critical Thinking</p> 	<p>Thinking carefully and trying to solve problems, asking questions, using our imagination, and making choices that are best for us.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking "why," • making choices, • imagining different possibilities 	<p>I can ask questions when I don't understand. I can use my imagination to think of different ways to do things. I can make choices that are best for me. I can think carefully to solve problems.</p>

SERVING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

Parents with concerns regarding their child’s development may refer their child to the teacher or the school’s principal for a meeting. At this meeting the team will discuss if any evaluations are needed to determine eligibility for special education. The program will provide ongoing training to staff regarding serving children with disabilities.



The Eastford Readiness Program is committed to serving children with disabilities who have an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). In order to ensure that IEPs are effectively addressed in the Readiness Program, IEP goals and objectives will be established at Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings with the teacher, parents and specialist present. Specialists needing to serve a child and the teacher will have ongoing communication, updates and consultation with each other and the family. Children with disabilities transitioning to kindergarten will have a PPT prior to the end of the school year with the kindergarten teacher present to ensure a smooth transition.

The Eastford Readiness Program ensures that the percentage of children with an IEP in the School Readiness classroom is similar to the percentage of K-12 students enrolled in special education by the Eastford School district, the local education agency (LEA). All services provided to children with an IEP will be provided within School Readiness classrooms unless a PPT has determined that the services will not benefit the child unless they are in a separate location. The parent(s), the School Readiness Program, and the LEA will collaborate to plan a program best suited to meet the goals in the IEP in the least restrictive environment. All children with an IEP who are receiving special education and related services are entitled to all the School Readiness services as defined by the School Readiness legislation, regardless of space type.

STUDENT RECORD-CONFIDENTIALITY

Educational records will be kept for each student, which reflect the physical, emotional, social and academic aspects of a student's development. Safeguards shall be established by the school administration to protect the student and the student's family from invasion of privacy in the collection, maintenance, and dissemination of information, and to provide accessibility to recorded information by those legally entitled thereto. **Records are kept in locked cabinets in the classroom and the school office.**

For the purposes of this policy:

"Parent" means a natural parent, an adoptive parent or a legal guardian. If parents are divorced or legally separated the parent granted custody and the parent not granted custody of a minor child both have the right of access to the academic, medical, hospital, and other health records of the child, unless a court order prohibits access. Whenever a pupil has attained the age of 18 years or is attending an institution of post-secondary education, the permission or consent required of, and the rights accorded to, the parents or guardians of the pupil shall thereafter only be required of, and accorded to, the pupil.

"Student record" means any item of information directly related to an identifiable pupil, other than directory information, which is maintained by the school or required to be maintained by an employee in the performance of his/her duties whether recorded in handwriting, print, tapes, film, microfilm or other means. Pupil records include information relative to an

individual pupil gathered within or without the school system and maintained within the school system, regardless of the physical form in which it is maintained. Essential in this definition is the idea that any information, which is maintained for the purpose of second party review, is considered a pupil record.

"Student record" shall not include informal notes related to a pupil compiled by a school officer or employee, which remain in the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute. For purposes of this policy, "substitute" means a person who performs the duties of the individual who made the notes on a temporary basis, and does not refer to a person who permanently succeeds the maker of the notes in his or her position.

The school administration shall adopt regulations providing for the following:

1. Informing parents of their rights annually.
2. Permitting parents to inspect and review educational records, including at least, a statement of the procedure to be followed by a parent or an eligible student who requests to inspect and review the educational records, with an understanding that it may not deny access to educational records; a description of the circumstances in which the school feels it has a legitimate cause to deny a request for a copy of such records; a schedule of fees for copies; and a listing of the types and locations of education records maintained by the school and the titles and addresses of school officials responsible for those records
3. Not disclosing personally identifiable information from a student's education records without the prior written consent of the student's parent, except as otherwise permitted by administrative regulations; and a specification of the personally identifiable information to be designated as directory information.
4. Providing a parent with an opportunity to seek the correction of the student's education records through a request to amend the records or a hearing, and permitting the parent or an eligible student to place a statement in the education records of the student.
5. Guaranteeing access to pupil records to authorized persons within five days following the date of the request.
5. Assuring security of pupil records by giving access only to those who are authorized.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15b Access of parent or guardians to student's records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.

10-154a Professional communications between teacher or nurse and student. Surrender of physical evidence obtained from students.

10-209 Records not to be public

Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended, added by section 513 of P.L. 93-568, codified at 20 U.S.C. 1232g)

Regulations of the U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, published in 45 C.F.R. 99 (June 17, 1976)

CHILD ABUSE: MANDATED REPORTERS

Teachers, principals, coaches, paraprofessionals and all other school staff including social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect under Board of Education Policy # 4146/4246 and staff receive the required training in their use.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility that is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means, or injuries that are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatments such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, and cruel punishment are also considered child abuse.

Neglect means that a child has been abandoned, or is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally, or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being, or has been abused.

When school employees are suspected or accused of abuse, neglect, or sexual assault of a minor, necessary reports will be filed with The Department of Children and Family Services and with school administration. School employees may be placed on leave during an investigation by authorities or school administration. Care will be taken to reduce the number of interviews required with the minor victims to protect them from further trauma and all matters will proceed in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the minor and the accused staff member. More information regarding School Board Policies on Abuse and Neglect can be found in the Board Policy section of the school website. Policies 4146, 4146.1, 4246, 4246.1, and 5146 specifically refer to this topic.

EVALUATION and EFFECTIVENESS of the READINESS PROGRAM

The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and the Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (DOTS) are used as the basis for planning learning experiences, observing and documenting children's progress, and implementing teaching strategies. All curriculum used must align with the standards and benchmarks outlined in the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (DOTS).

The Eastford Readiness Program has received accreditation through the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC). This accreditation process includes collecting information on the quality of the program from many sources to assess the effectiveness of the program. One of the many tools used in the accreditation process is a family survey, which provides feedback from parents on the effectiveness of the program.

A report based on this survey is shared with the Eastford Readiness Council and published in the school newsletter, and public communications when available. It is also posted on the school website at <https://www.eastfordct.org>. The survey is given and tabulated each spring under the direction of the Readiness Council.

As an additional method to improve the quality of the program, each member of the Readiness staff writes professional development plans, which address goals toward increasing knowledge and expertise in early childhood practices. The purpose of this plan is to support the overall success of the program through providing and planning for the professional development (PD) of staff, to improve staff credentials and competencies. This plan is updated annually or as needed and is shared with staff at the beginning of each school year.

An orientation checklist is located in the Orientation Binder and is completed by each staff member; it includes information about program operations and policies, emergency procedures, abuse/neglect procedures, ethical conduct, classroom curriculum and routines, etc.

The overall plan for PD is based upon needs identified through individual staff evaluations and reflections, and our annual program evaluation which includes a variety of sources (family and staff surveys, community input, and other regulatory requirements). Ongoing discussion of ethical issues occurs as appropriate. Each year administrators and staff will meet to identify areas needing attention and the resources available to support staff. An individual professional development plan is created for each staff member with specific goals defined, taking into consideration the program's mission, principles of Early Childhood Education, and NAEYC Standards. This plan is used to document professional development training and to record requested supports. A copy of the certificate of completion of a workshop or course should be given to the program administrator for personnel files.

COLLABORATION POLICY and INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS

The Eastford Readiness Council shall maintain written interagency agreements or contracts with collaborating community agencies that detail the specific responsibilities of each. Interagency agreements shall be evaluated on an annual basis through a review of the past year's activities and parent satisfaction. Evaluation of collaborative agreements that have been found to be unsatisfactory will be reviewed with the agency involved with a written action plan developed to improve the unsatisfactory response.

Families identified as having a need addressed through a community agency shall be referred, if they agree in writing to the referral. Families needing assistance will be provided with an interpreter in discussing their needs and possible referral. All referrals to agencies will ensure and protect the confidentiality for families who request outside services.

Families will be asked to complete a survey when a community agency's service has been accessed to measure the process and the service provided.

The following committees or agencies have a current agreement with the Eastford Readiness Initiative for parental access:

Day Kimball Hospital: local healthcare and agencies

Access Agency: tools for employment, job fairs, job placement assistance

Eastford Public Library: local library

Eastford Recreation Commission: local family activities

Northeast District Department of Health: assistance with optimal physical and emotional health, education on health issues, nutrition

EASTCONN: professional development and monitoring of program

United Services: emergency mental and social health

Eastford Food Pantry: supply of necessities for those in need

Appendix A

Eastford School District Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention

The Eastford Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment, and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.

Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed a Safe School Climate Plan, consistent with state law and Board policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence and sets forth the Board's expectations for creating a positive school climate and thus preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying and teen dating violence.

For additional information and specific details on the Eastford Board of Education Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Safe School Climate Plan, please refer to Board of Education Policy #5131.911 which can be found on the school website under the Board of Education tab.

Appendix B

FEES For The Readiness Program

Sliding Scale: Fees for preschool services at the Eastford Readiness Program are based on a sliding fee scale. Fee calculations are reviewed with the parent/guardian. Parental signature is required on the fee calculation form and a copy of the form will be given to the parent.

Documentation: All families must submit financial documentation of gross income for a fee to be determined. The fee amount, taken from a sliding scale published by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), is derived from the amount of gross family earnings and family size. Income derived from self-employment shall be determined based upon six calendar months preceding the date of enrollment. For the 2024-2025 school year, and until further notice, Eastford Readiness Council has set the maximum fee at \$27.00 per day for school day school year students. The maximum fee per day for partial day school year students is set at \$13.50 per day. A review to determine program fees shall occur at least annually or when deemed necessary by the State. The school should be notified if there is a change in employment, family size or gross weekly income change of \$50.00 or more.

Payment of Fees*: Fees are assessed for a weekly rate for each child and billed monthly. Students who receive special education services, or related services through the school will have fees assessed for the non-service portion of time that they attend the Readiness Program. Payment may be made by check or money order payable to the town of Eastford, at the school or mailed to Eastford School at P.O. Box 158, Eastford, CT 06242, or by credit card. Fees are to be paid every month, for the full month, within two weeks, even if a child is absent during the month or if there are program closures due to severe weather or other conditions. Since the program runs on a school-year calendar, all "snow" days will be made up at the end of the school year and participants will not be expected to pay for the make-up days. Repeated late payments may result in dismissal from the program.

Non-payment of fees: If payment is not received, the School Administrator will contact the parent, identifying funds due. A meeting will be held between Administrator and parent to discuss reason for non-payment. If the fee is not received within two weeks, and no new agreement regarding payment of fees is established between the Administrator and parent, the child will not be accepted back into the Eastford Readiness Program until payment is made. If after one month, efforts have not been made to clear the past due payment balance and a payment plan has not been established, the child's name will be removed from the enrollment list. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing that this child and additional family members may not register until the situation is resolved.

Fee Waiver: During an absence of more than three days due to illness, fees may be waived. Documentation from the child's physician must be provided to the program in order for a fee waiver to be considered by the program administrator.

*** Assistance with childcare payments:**

Care 4 Kids helps low to moderate income families in Connecticut pay for child care costs. This program is sponsored by the State of Connecticut's Department of Social Services (DSS). Families with income below 50% of the state median income may be eligible for assistance. To learn more about **Care 4 Kids**, go to www.ctcare4kids.com or call 1-888-214-KIDS (5437) Monday-Friday, 8:00-5:00. If you need help with this process, please contact the school office.

Specific information about income guidelines used for determining eligibility for Care 4 Kids can be found at: <http://www.ctcare4kids.com/care-4-kids-program/income-guidelines/>

Appendix C
Eastford School Readiness Council
Administration and Coordination of the School Readiness Grant

The Eastford School Readiness Council membership will include:

1. The First Selectman or designee
2. The superintendent of schools or designee
3. Parents
4. Representatives from local child day care centers, group day care homes, preschool and nursery schools, and family day care home providers
5. A representative from a health care provider in the community
6. Other representatives from the community.

The First Selectman shall designate the chairperson of the Eastford School Readiness Council.

The Eastford School Readiness Council will make recommendations to the First Selectman *and* the Superintendent of Schools on issues relating to School Readiness, including any applications for grants pursuant to sections 10-16p, 10-16u, 17b-749 and 17b-749c of the C.G.S.

The Eastford School Readiness Council will assist in the identification of the need for School Readiness programs and the number of children not being served by such a program.

**By-Laws
Eastford Readiness Council**

Article I
Objectives and Purposes

1. The name of the organization in the By-Laws shall be the Eastford School Readiness Council. In all other policies it will be referred to as Eastford Readiness Council.
2. The Eastford School Readiness Council (SRC) is a collaborative network charged with planning to serve all 3- and 4-year old children in high quality programs.
3. The Council shall limit its activities to matters that directly concern the School Readiness Program.
4. It shall be the duty of the Council to:
 - A. Prepare and complete parent surveys and analyze results.
 - B. Develop and implement policies for the Eastford School Readiness Program.
 - C. Develop and update a Five Year Plan for early care and educational services.
 - D. Provide ongoing monitoring of the Eastford School Readiness Program.
 - E. Review annual School Readiness evaluations.
 - F. Develop a transition plan to kindergarten and make recommendations to school officials concerning the transition from School Readiness programs to kindergarten.
 - G. Foster partnership among local providers of School Readiness programs and exchange information with other SRCs and community organizations serving children and families.

- H. Establish and evaluate collaborative agreements annually and establish a process to improve collaborations that have been unsatisfactory.
- I. Report to the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education and Selectmen on the status of the Eastford Readiness Program at least annually and make recommendations on issues related to School Readiness including applications for grants.
- J. Comply with all Freedom of Information (FOI) regulations.
- K. Cooperate with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) in any program evaluation, use measures developed pursuant to section 10-16s of the C.G.S. for purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of School Readiness programs.
- L. Identify existing and prospective resources and services available to children and families.
- M. Facilitate the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families, including referral procedures and before- and after-school child care for children attending kindergarten programs.
- N. Encourage public participation.

Article II Meetings

1. Meetings of the Council shall be held monthly throughout the school year.
2. Additional meetings may be agreed upon by the Council or called by the Superintendent of Schools or his or her representative and the First Selectman or his or her representative.
3. Notices of meetings shall be emailed, where available, or mailed to all members not less than five days prior to each meeting.
4. Meetings shall not be more than two hours long, unless a majority of the members vote to continue a particular meeting for a longer time.

Article III Quorum

1. A quorum at any meeting shall consist of one third of the members.

Article IV Membership

1. Members of the Council are appointed by the First Selectman. The First Selectman and Superintendent of Schools will have a seat on the Council, which they may designate to their representative. Parents and

community members will be invited to join the council at least annually. Every effort will be made to have at least two parent representatives serve on the Council while their children are attending the Readiness Program. The Council will include a representative from a health care provider and from the local library. The Council will strive to include representatives from Head Start, family resource centers, nonprofit and for-profit childcare centers, group child care homes, prekindergarten and nursery schools, and family child care home providers. The Council must have the local homeless education liaison designated by the local board of education for the school district, pursuant to Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 11431 et seq., as amended from time to time. The Council will strive to have representatives from mental health, faith, business, childcare and other community organizations. The School Readiness Liaison shall be a non-voting member of the Council.

2. Meetings of the Council shall be open to the public.

Article V
Officers and Duties

1. The officers shall be a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, and a Secretary.
2. Officers shall be *nominated* annually by a majority vote of the members at the September meeting.
3. *The First Selectman will be responsible for accepting the officers selected or may appoint his/her own officers.*
4. *The Liaison may not serve as the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.*
5. The Chairperson shall preside at Council meetings.
6. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the chairperson in his or her absence.
7. The Secretary shall:
 - A. Prepare agendas with input from other officers and the Council.
 - B. Keep records of attendance at meetings.
 - C. Keep a record of discussions and recommendations.
 - D. Maintain a permanent record file
 - E. Record, post minutes on the town and school websites, and distribute minutes of meetings to members, Town Clerk, First Selectman and Superintendent of Schools.

Article VI
School Readiness Liaison

1. The Liaison is responsible for the coordination, program evaluation and administration of the School Readiness Grant and serves as liaison between the local or regional SRC and the OEC. One of the primary responsibilities is to recruit eligible programs for potential funding.
2. The Liaison shall maintain ongoing communication between the OEC, the local or regional SRC, the mayor (or designee), the superintendent (or designee) and the sub-grantees.
3. The Liaison serves as the Secretary and staff for the Council and shall be responsible for:
 - A. Meeting agendas
 - B. Meeting minutes
 - C. Completing reports, (e.g. unmet needs, utilization, fiscal, school readiness monthly reports, annual Quality Enhancement report and Connecticut School Readiness Preschool Program Evaluation System [CSRPPES])
 - D. Maintaining SRC membership
 - E. Communicating legislative requirements of the School Readiness Grant
 - F. Providing resources to and guiding, reviewing and updating policy and procedure development with the SRC.
4. The Liaison shall oversee the School Readiness and Quality Enhancement grant application processes using the OEC template and following local procurement processes:
 - A. Author the Community School Readiness and Quality Enhancement requests for proposals
 - B. Coordinate the development of the Letters of Agreement
 - C. Organize the review of proposals and submit program allocation recommendations to the SRC for approval
 - D. Manage the delivery of the award letter to the city for the local acceptance and approval process
 - E. Provide technical assistance to individual programs applying for School Readiness funds
 - F. Work with the local fiscal agent to ensure the proper expenditure of funds
 - G. Develop contracts with School Readiness sub-grantees as applicable.
5. The Liaison provides outreach to the community to assist families in the enrollment process for School Readiness and other early care opportunities.

6. The Liaison meets regularly with SR providers to provide a forum to:
 - A. Share information and best practices
 - B. Review and clarify policies
 - C. Disseminate information
 - D. Assess needs and set priorities
 - E. Problem solve
 - F. Share resources
 - G. Develop collaborative initiatives
 - H. Provide technical assistance on policies and practices related to the School Readiness Quality Components or seek those with expertise to provide assistance.

7. The Liaison conducts regular site visits to monitor compliance with all of the School Readiness Grant regulations and develop action plans as appropriate. The School Readiness liaison is responsible for monitoring individual sub-grantees. While monitoring activities may be subcontracted out, indicators related to the areas of curriculum and assessment must be assessed by someone with early childhood expertise and experience. The areas to be regularly monitored include:
 - A. Fiscal and policy compliance
 - B. Staff qualifications
 - C. Attendance
 - D. Family fees
 - E. Annual State Single Audits required for programs receiving \$300,000 or more of state funds
 - F. Curriculum and assessment
 - G. Accreditation and approval timelines
 - H. Licensing
 - I. Professional development activities
 - J. Program adherence to all School Readiness components.

8. The Liaison collaborates with local school systems and early care and education programs to develop and implement local transition to kindergarten plans.

9. The Liaison manages and archives records.

10. The Liaison attends OEC scheduled liaison meetings.

11. The Liaison responds to OEC requests for information.

12. The Liaison supports the development and ongoing implementation of the community's early childhood plan.

13. The Liaison represents the SRC in the community and across the state.

Article VII
Changes in the By-Laws

1. Members shall be notified of any proposed changes.
2. A copy of the proposed changes shall be sent to members at least five days prior to the meeting when a vote concerning the changes shall take place.
3. A two-thirds vote of members may change the By-Laws.

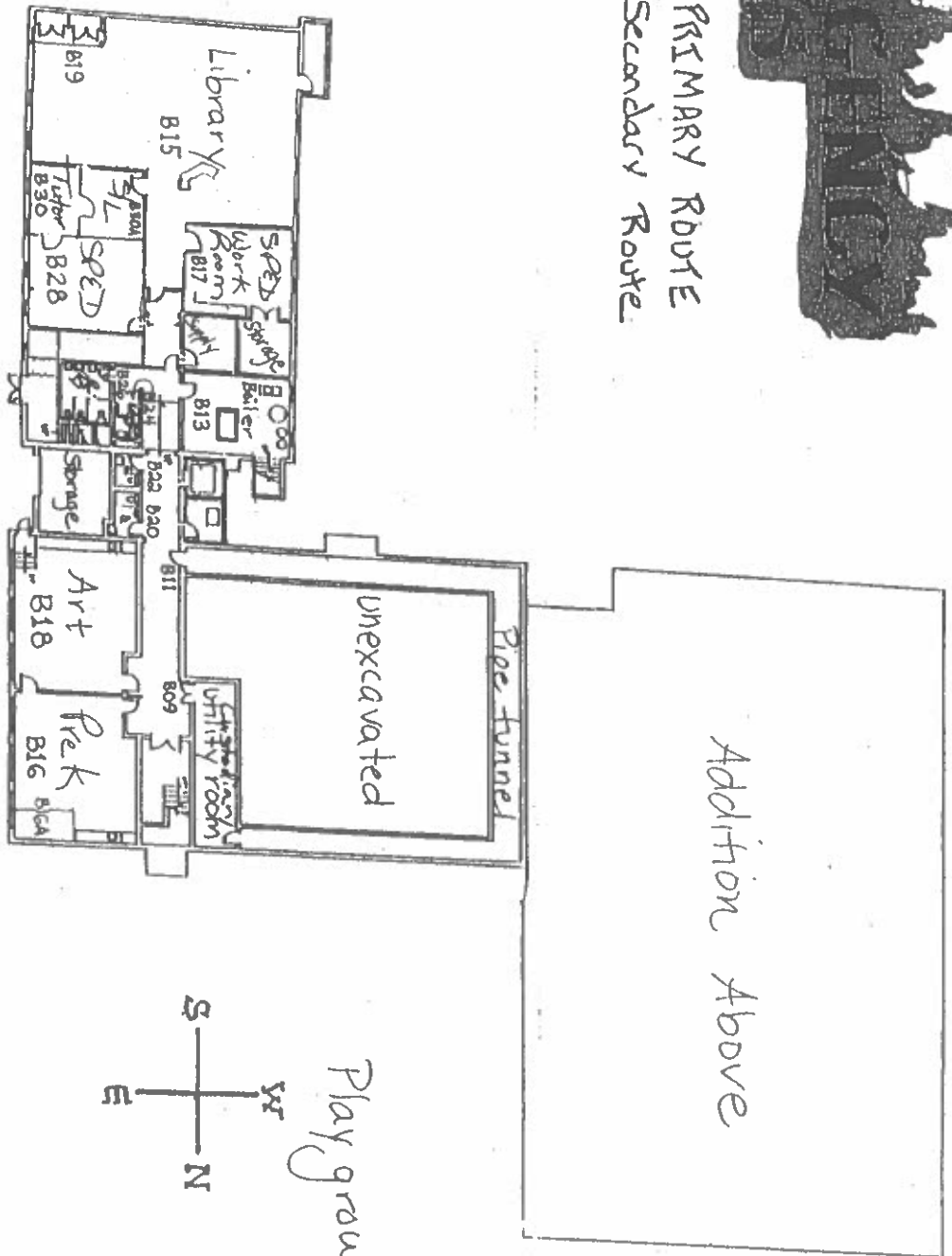
Members of the Eastford Readiness Council as of June 2024

Mrs. Ashlyn Ellsworth
Dr. Donna Leake
Mrs. Carole McCombe
Mrs. Sharon Kozey Greene
Mrs. Jacquelin Budd
Mrs. Christine Kopplin
Ms. Janelle Marengo
Mrs. Catherine Roto
Mrs. Beth Platt
Mrs. Lisa Hackner
Ms. Jessica Garvie

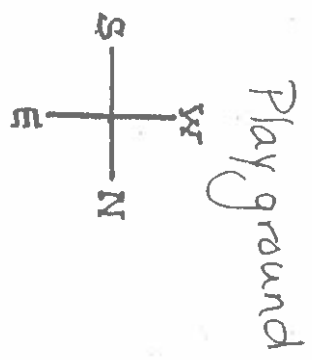
If you are interested in joining the Council please contact a member for more information.



→ PRIMARY ROUTE
- - - - - → Secondary Route



LOWER LEVEL PLAN



EMERGENCY EXITS

 PRIMARY ROUTE
 Secondary Route

