



2026 - 2027
Parent
Handbook



Administration Office
44 W. Golfview Drive
Northlake, IL 60164

Executive Director
William J. Otte

Commissioners
Thomas D. Olson, President
Ronald Boscaccy, Vice President
Diane Sampson, Secretary Mary
Copher, Treasurer
Theresa Nardiello

Welcome to Veterans Park District's Building Blocks Preschool! The following information is designed to better acquaint you with the policies, procedures, and philosophy of our Building Blocks Preschool.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Veterans Park District Building Blocks Preschool is a recreation program designed to meet the physical, social, intellectual, and creative needs of children ages 3 to 5. It is based on the premise that children learn through play. Through play, children learn to communicate with words, express feelings, explore, create, problem solve, make decisions, and much, much more. Our curriculum, based on Illinois Early Learning Standards, balances creative free play with teacher-guided activities, introducing children to letters, numbers, colors, and shapes.

GOALS

Our primary goal at Veterans Park District Building Blocks Preschool is to assure that children learn through socialization and play. Our secondary goal is that children are exposed to reading readiness skills, ABC's, 123's, shapes, and colors. To see that we follow through with these goals, we seek to accomplish the following objectives:

- Cultivate a sense of security and respect in group settings.
- Establish routines and encourage sharing behavior.
- Develop problem-solving skills.
- Promote responsibility for materials and the environment.
- Ensure a fun, safe and positive learning experience.

We have a variety of play areas and materials to help us accomplish these objectives. A child's first social experience should be positive and enjoyable. Veterans Park District Building Blocks Preschool program is a happy and safe place for these first experiences to begin. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the program at any time, please contact Greg Stanczyk, Program Director, at (708) 731-5290.



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Veterans Park District Building Blocks Preschool
2026-2027 Calendar

August 31	M/W/F Students First day of Class
September 1	Tu/Th Students First day of Class
September 7	Labor Day **No Class**
September 18	October Tuition Due
October 12	Columbus Day **No Class**
October 19	November Tuition Due
November 11	Veterans Day **No Class**
November 26-27	Thanksgiving Break **No Class**
November 19	December Tuition Due
December 18	January Tuition Due
December 21-January 1	Winter Break **No Class**
January 4	Preschool Classes Resume
January 18	Martin Luther King Jr Day **No Class**
January 19	February Tuition Due
February 15	President's Day **No Class**
February 19	March Tuition Due
March 19	April Tuition Due
March 26	Commissioner's Day **No Class**
March 29 – April 2	Spring Break **No Class**
April 19	May Tuition Due
May 6	T/Th Students Last day of class
May 7	M/W/F Students Last day of Class
May 12	Preschool Graduation (details will be forth coming)



PROGRAM REGISTRATION OFFICES & HOURS OF OPERATION:

Grant Park Recreation Center	44 W. Golfview Dr. Northlake 60164	708-343-5270	Monday-Friday 8AM-6PM
George A. Leoni Complex	800 N. 17 th Ave. Melrose Park 60160	708-716-4822	Monday-Friday 8AM-6PM
Cimbalo Fitness Center	1203 N. 24 th Ave. Melrose Park 60160	708-343-5151	Monday-Friday Sat & Sun 6AM-8PM 8AM-2PM

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Greg Stanczyk Program Director	Bulger Park Community Center 1601 Hirsch Melrose Park 60160	708-731-5290	Monday-Friday 8AM-4PM
Ms. Gladys Ortega Lead Teacher	Building Blocks Preschool 1601 Hirsch Melrose Park 60160	708-538-0101	Monday-Friday 8AM-1PM

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The Veterans Park Preschool accepts children ages 3 through 5. All children must be **COMPLETELY** potty trained (pull-ups or diapers are not allowed.) Children must be 3 years of age on or before their first day to attend preschool. Parents must read, sign, and date **all forms** in their entirety in the preschool application before a child can register. Once a class is filled, a waiting list will be established, and families will be contacted to fill any openings. The following checklist is due at registration for your child to be admitted to the preschool program.

- Completed Preschool Application
- Child's Birth Certificate
- Medical Form: An Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination must be completed and dated no older than 6 months before the first day of class. Current immunizations, TB and Lead test is required. Parents must complete the Health History and sign the statement giving permission for information to be shared with appropriate personnel for health and educational purposes.
- An I.D with your current address and a bill with your name and address
- Non-Refundable Registration Fee and First Months Tuition required
- All forms must be handed in by the required date or your child will not be able to begin preschool.



TUITION INSTRUCTIONS

- Tuition payments are due monthly on **the 19th of every month, unless otherwise noted.** Tuition payments are made in advance for the month of service that is starting. If a payment is due during a Holiday Break, check to see which park locations are open for payment or you may pay before the break begins. See due dates for the school year below.
- The fees are based on a full **9-month** program tuition and are broken up into monthly payments.
- Payments can be made in advance, however if a payment is late, **an additional \$30.00 per child** will be assessed every week payment is not made.
- A child will be placed on Pause (see pause procedure below) after **2 weeks** of non-payment, unless a payment plan is approved by the Assistant Director of Recreation, Director of Recreation and Executive Director.
- NO credits or refunds are given for absences, holidays, emergency closings, vacations taken by families, moving out of the area, weather, days missed due to illness or discontinuing in the middle of the school year. There are no tuition refunds given for partial attendance.
- Payments can be made with Cash, Check or Money Order (made out to Veterans Park District ONLY). We also accept Visa, MasterCard, AmEx or Discover.
- You may stop by any of the preschool registration offices (see Registration Requirements section) to pay in person or call to pay over the phone. **It is strongly suggested you call before stopping in as hours and days open can vary per location.**

The 19th of every month is your TUITION DUE DATE, unless otherwise noted"

The tuition due dates for the **2026-2027** school year will be as follows:

September Tuition & \$100 Student Registration Fee	DUE AT REGISTRATION
October Tuition	Due by Friday, September 18 *19th falls on Weekend
November Tuition	Due by Monday, October 19
December Tuition	Due by Thursday, November 19
January Tuition	Due by Friday, December 18 *19th falls on Weekend
February Tuition	Due by Tuesday, January 19
March Tuition	Due by Friday, February 19
April Tuition	Due by Friday, March 19
May Tuition	Due by Monday, April 19

LATE PAYMENTS

A **\$30.00** per child late charge will be applied to tuition every week payment is not made. Please make sure you make payments by the due dates and that you receive a receipt.



LATE PICK-UP

It is important you or your designated pick-up person be on time. Parents/guardians/designee who is late picking up their child/children will be charged \$5.00 for the first 10 minutes from time of dismissal and \$2.00 for each additional minute.

If you are running late, please notify your child's teacher or the Assistant Director of Recreation/Program Director. If no call is received, the teachers will call the child's parents and if no contact is made, we will proceed with those on the emergency list. If within 45 minutes the preschool staff does not get in contact with a parent/guardian or persons on the emergency list, outside authorities such as, the child abuse hotline, police, and so forth will be contacted.

Please Note: The Veterans Park District Preschool reserves the right to suspend, refuse or discontinue service to any family with *three or more* late pick-ups within a one-month period.

PAUSE PROCEDURE

A child will be placed on pause after **2 weeks** of non-payment unless a payment plan is approved by the Assistant Director of Recreation/Program Director, Director of Recreation and Executive Director. After a child is paused from the program, full tuition payment is required up to the last day the child attended, including any late fees accrued. It is at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Recreation/Program Director, Director of Recreation and Executive Director to re-instate a child after a Pause procedure has occurred and full payment has been made. Please make sure you receive receipts of all your payments and late fees for your records. There is NO credit given for school holidays, power outages, vacations taken by families, moving out of the area, weather, days missed due to illness or discontinuing in the middle of the school year. There are no tuition refunds given for partial attendance.

GRADUATION & REINSTATEMENT

I acknowledge and understand that my Preschool Balance must be paid in full by the final tuition due date in April. If my balance is not paid in full my child will not be able to participate in the preschool graduation. Any family who has an unpaid balance will not be allowed to attend the upcoming school year or register for any park programs in the future (this includes ALL family members in the household).

DISCONTINUING FROM PROGRAM

Should at any time, you need to discontinue from the program please contact the preschool director. We require a 2-week WRITTEN notice given to your child's teacher or emailed to the Assistant Director of Recreation/Program Director. This will allow us to transition the child out of the program properly. If notification of withdrawal is not given, billing will continue. If you would like to return to the program after withdrawing and space is still available, you must wait 6 weeks after your child's last day and re-register with a \$100 registration fee and first month's tuition.



EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Veterans Park District preschool will hold all scheduled classes and times under normal circumstances. However, some things are beyond our control, such as power outages, lack of heat, lack of water, and/or severe weather conditions. In case of an emergency that necessitates the closing of the preschool during hours of operation, parents will be contacted to come pick-up their child immediately.

In the event of inclement weather conditions or other emergencies where the preschool will be closed, the preschool director will send an email to all families informing them of the closure. Parents can also check the Veterans Park District Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/vpdparks> for information on preschool closings. There is no refund or credit for these unforeseen closures due to facility issues or inclement weather.

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

All children arrive and depart through the designated preschool entrance for each location. We ask that you accompany your child into the school in the morning and enter the school for pickup. Please follow these safety guidelines when dropping off and picking up:

- We ask that you drive **slowly** both when dropping off and picking up your child. Please pay close attention to children in this area. We ask that parents and guardians hold their child's hand when walking to or from the entrance or parking area.
- **NEVER** leave children in vehicles or leave vehicles running.
- Preschool begins at 9:00AM each day. Please pull all the way forward, as far as possible to allow other cars behind you. Please do not park in the drop-off area for more than 5 minutes after the preschool classroom door has opened for drop-off.
- Please be considerate of others during drop-off and pick-up.

ILLNESS PROCEDURES

In an effort to maintain a safe environment and to keep all children healthy and free from contagious disease, we request assistance from parents on the following:

- All children attending preschool must be in good health. If symptoms of illness are present at home, you should not bring your child to class.
- Please notify the preschool when your child is ill, so we can be alert to similar symptoms in other children. Contact your preschool site and leave a voicemail or email message for your child's teacher.
- Children may be sent home for the following symptoms or conditions and a physician's note may be necessary to return to class:
 - Fever with a temperature of 99 degrees or higher or change in behavior (Must be fever free for 24 hours to return).
 - Loose stools (diarrhea) with two or more episodes.
 - Vomiting with two or more episodes within the last 24 hours.



- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) with discharge
- Rash (sometimes) associated with other signs of illness.
- A specific contagious disease such as whooping cough, strep throat, scabies, chicken pox, mumps, measles, ringworm, impetigo, scarlet fever, etc.
- Head Lice
- A child who has received stitches
- A child who has a broken bone
- A child underwent surgery of any sort or who has injured his/her teeth.
- Any illness or injury, which prevents the child from participating comfortably in preschool activities.
- The preschool will notify all families in writing of any illness that may be present in their child's classroom. We will specify the date of illness, symptoms to watch for and the incubation period.

PROVISIONS FOR EMERGENCIES

By signing and agreeing to the Emergency Care Release in the Preschool Application you hereby authorize the Veterans Park District, their employees and agents to provide emergency medical assistance or to arrange for and consent to on your behalf immediate medical treatment by a licensed or certified physician or other medical personnel for your child whenever the authorized Park District personnel believes such emergency medical assistance is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of your child. Please be sure you provide us with accurate and all information regarding your child's medical needs and health conditions.

In case of a non-medical emergency the preschool staff will contact parents/guardians. In case parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the Emergency Contacts persons will be contacted. **Please update phone numbers, emails and emergency contacts by notifying the preschool director.**

Our preschoolers will use all the play equipment and participate in all the activities of Preschool. By signing the policy in the registration packet, you grant permission for your child to leave the preschool/park grounds under supervision of preschool staff members for a neighborhood walk and visit.

MEDICATION

The preschool only administers medication for life maintenance purposes, such as an epi-pen for a specific allergic reaction or an inhaler for asthmatic. The following is required for medications:

- A written physician note confirming such condition with details including proper dispensing of the medication, schedule, directions for administering the medication and possible side effects should be noted.
- A Medication Permission Form must be signed by parent and will remain confidential in the child's file.



- Depending on the child's medical condition and type of medication, parents may be required to participate in a meeting to train the teachers on proper administration of the medication.
- Medications must be in its original container and clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, name of the clinician, expiration date, and manufacturer's instructions.
- Medications that are vital to a child's health, such as asthma inhaler or epi-pen for severe allergic reactions are kept in the classroom secured in the first aid bag, in a locked cabinet or a lockbox in the refrigerator if necessary. Medications can only be administered by the staff in amounts and at times listed on the labels.
- Staff will keep a medication log detailing date and times that the medication was administered.
- **Please Note:** All other medications will not be administered by staff, which includes all over the counter medication as well as prescription antibiotics. Please consult with your physician regarding alternative medications, such as 12-hour antibiotics or suspension liquids that do not have to be taken during school hours.

TOILETING PROCEDURES

Children that are not potty trained will immediately be sent home until the parent feels confident that the child is properly potty trained. This includes being able to use the toilet by him/herself, cleaning him/herself after a bowel movement, and washing their hands after using the urinal or toilet.

If your child has an accident:

- Parents will be required to pick up their child immediately.
- The child will not be admitted back into class until he/she has been taken home, cleaned, and dressed in dry, clean clothes and shoes.
- If there are repeated accidents, parents will have a meeting with the preschool director and the child's instructor. It will be determined at that time if your child will be sent home until they are toilet trained or some other intervention is taken.
- No refund will be given for days due to bathroom accidents. While accidents happen, it is expected that your child is able to take care of their toileting needs before they are registered for preschool.
- Diapers or pull ups are not allowed.

FIRST AID

If a child incurs minor cuts, bumps, bruises, scrapes, etc., the staff will administer basic first aid and completes an accident report. Basic first aid procedures consist of soap, water, band-aids and ice packs only. All staff in the preschool is certified in First Aid/CPR/AED.

Any topical product such as sunscreen or insect repellent, requires a consent form signed by the parent.



FOOD & NUTRITION

All children enrolled in the half-day preschool program will receive a mid-morning snack. Daily snack is served with juice or water. All food is provided by Veterans Park District.

No outside food is allowed unless there is a Medical Exception Statement for Food Substitution form filled out and signed by your physician (see Preschool director for form.) The physician note must state a legitimate reason as to why the child cannot have the snack or lunch served by the preschool. An alternate food must be provided by the parent and clearly labeled with the child's name and cannot be shared with other children. It is important that you inform your child's teacher if your child suffers from a food allergy.

CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES

If your child has an allergy, please inform the teachers and director. A Medical Exception Statement for Food Substitution form must be signed by your child's physician before an alternative food or beverage can be brought from home. Reasonable accommodations will be made to maintain areas used by children who have allergies to dust mites or to furnishings or supplies according to the recommendations of health care professional. If it is determined that the child cannot successfully participate in the program without altering the essentials of the program, the parents will be advised, and appropriate referrals will be made.

Please Note: Veterans Park District is a PEANUT SAFE ZONE. We do not serve peanuts and peanut products are not allowed into the program. It should be recognized that this will reduce but not eliminate the risk of accidental exposure.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

In consideration of our preschool participants with food allergies or sensitivities and to support the fight against childhood obesity, we ask that all in-class birthday celebrations be non-edible. We will celebrate your child's special day with a birthday crown, poster, and/or special card and the group will sing the "Happy Birthday" song. Optional non-edible birthday celebration suggestions: donate a favorite book to the classroom with your child's name inside; donate an educational game or toy to the classroom; or send bubbles, stickers, pencils, erasers or party favors.

Please note: Any homemade cakes, cookies, or candies will not be accepted for distribution in the classroom and will be returned to the parent.

INSURANCE

Veterans Park District carries Legal Liability Insurance in the amount of \$8,000,000 per each occurrence.



PRESCHOOL DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR POLICY

Preschool plays an important role in teaching social skills and how to interact appropriately with each other. Teachers incorporate these skills in the curriculum by modeling good manners and showing children how to respect each other. They work hard at preventing behavioral problems by arranging the classroom environment, so children are able to work in small groups and have large choice of activities. Teachers are also trained to direct behavior along appropriate channels and give ample praise for appropriate behavior. All parents and staff members sign a statement of understanding in regard to the Veterans Park Preschool Behavior Policy, included as part of your child's enrollment packet, so that a clear understanding exists between both parties. Therefore, our behavior policy is as follows:

1. The teacher will give a **verbal reminder** of the rules and explain to the child why their behavior is not appropriate.
2. If the behavior is demonstrated again, the child will be **re-directed** to another activity.
3. If that does not deter the repeated behavior, the child will be directed to a quiet area of the classroom to **"sit and think"** about what they have done (not to exceed one minute per year of the child's age.)
4. If the action or behavior is repeated after sitting out, a behavior report will be written, and the parent/guardian will be notified of their child's behavior, which must be signed at pick-up.
5. After **three behavior reports** are made, a meeting with the parent/guardian will be scheduled and an action plan will be drafted by the Director of Early Childhood and the child's classroom teacher(s). The parent/guardian is required to attend this mandatory meeting with the Assistant Director of Recreation/Program Director and teacher(s) to discuss the behavior(s) and how to implement the details of the action plan.
6. If the inappropriate behavior(s) continue(s) after the meeting and the action plan is implemented, resulting in **two more behavior reports** being written, the child **will be paused from Preschool** under the direction of the Assistant Director of Recreation/Program Director, Director of Recreation and Executive Director
7. If the inappropriate behavior(s) continue(s), another mandatory meeting with the parent/guardian will be held to discuss additional resources available to assist the child's behaviors. The child may be transitioned out of the program and given referrals and resources to other agencies or facilities based on the recommendation of the Executive Director.



PEST CONTROL

Pest Control will be performed by a licensed pest control technician employed by the Illinois Department of Public Health on an as needed basis. Children will not be present at the time of pesticide applications.

PHOTOGRAPH AND VIDEO USE

Photographs and video footage are periodically taken by Veterans Park District Staff or contracted photographers of persons, including children, participating in Veterans Park District programs, activities, attending Park District classes and events, or using District facilities or property. It shall be the policy of the Park District that by registering oneself or by registering one's child for a program, class, or participation in an activity, attending an event, or using Park District facilities or property, the participant expressly authorizes the Park District to use photographs and video footage of that person(s) for promotional purposes in District publications, advertising, marketing materials, brochures, event flyers, the Park District's website and social media (including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media sites that may be operated or utilized by the District), without additional notice or permission of those persons and without any compensation. All photographs and videos shall be the property of Veterans Park District. Photographs and videos of children, including preschool children, shall not include the child's first and last name with the express consent of the child's parent or guardian. Photographs and videos shall never be taken in bathrooms or changing areas.

Persons not wanted to be photographed or videotaped, or not wanting their children to be photographed or videotaped, must inform the photographer, videographer, instructor or other Park District staff member of their desire not to be photographed or videotaped. Notification of the Park District Photograph and Video Policy and participant's consent shall be included in all Veterans Park District brochures.

For the safety and protection of the children, each classroom is equipped with and utilizes surveillance cameras.

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

At the time of enrollment, you must sign a statement of understanding indicating your intent to read and adhere to all policies in the parent handbook, and any subsequent amendments. From time-to-time policies are reviewed, added or changed. If so, the change will be issued to all families to attach to their existing handbook.

