

# ♥ Welcome to Preschool!

Dear Parents,

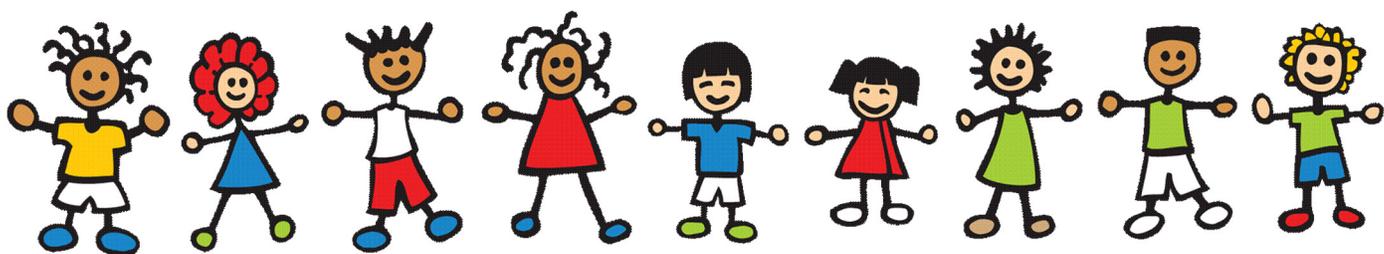
Congratulations on the decision to enroll your child in our Preschool and/or Kindergarten Program at Herman Norcross Community School! Research shows children have rapid brain development between the ages of 2-4, so you are giving your child a wonderful opportunity to grow and learn! We are excited to have you join our great school, and we look forward to a terrific year!

In this handbook you will find information regarding the Herman Norcross School Readiness Program. Please review it and feel free to ask questions. You can reach me at the school, or by emailing at [mpahl@hncs.k12.mn.us](mailto:mpahl@hncs.k12.mn.us).

My name is Mary Pahl and I am the Preschool and Kindergarten teacher, and ECFE Coordinator at HNCS. I graduated from the University of Minnesota, Morris with an elementary education degree. I have taught here for six years and am excited to begin my seventh year knowing most of my students! I feel fortunate to be in such a great community and school. I have previously taught multiage (K-2) and looping (1-2) at Hanover Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> grade and kindergarten at Upsala Elementary, and was a teaching specialist at the University of Minnesota Morris for one year. I am passionate about education, and I look forward to helping your child grow, learn, and develop in a nurturing environment. I am excited about the chance to work together for a successful and rewarding year! We believe in building a strong foundation for future learning!!

Sincerely,

Mary Pahl  
PreK/Kindergarten Teacher  
Herman-Norcross School  
320-677-2291  
[mpahl@hncs.k12.mn.us](mailto:mpahl@hncs.k12.mn.us)



### **A Little Bit About Preschool....**

Preschool is a special time each week designed for ALL children who will be eligible to attend Kindergarten the following school year. We have also chosen to open our program to those children who were 3 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, **and potty trained.** There are no special requirements or income guidelines needed to qualify for the program. The purpose of Preschool is to provide children with an environment that will prepare them to begin school.

Its focus is readiness oriented. This includes self-help skills, social skills, health and safety issues and other skills as identified by our school district. Although parents are not required to attend with their child, we feel that parent participation is an important component of this program. After our routine is established, parents are welcome and encouraged to help out in the classroom.

### **Our Philosophy...**

We believe that young children learn by doing and that children's learning is a result of the experiences they have with their world. Knowledge is gained through physical and social interactions, through play, objects and people. It is something that cannot be forced. Part of our curriculum includes alphabet and number recognition, and pre-math and pre-literacy skills. We learn how to print first and last names correctly. We use puzzles, games, centers and stories to get ready to read. Fine motor and large motor skills are practiced, and we experience science and art activities as well. It is our responsibility to prepare the environment to provide stimulating materials and activities that challenge children and encourage them to think. This provides a good solid foundation for a child's school experience.



**Preschool Goals: Our overall goal is to foster a joy of learning and discovery that will serve children for a lifetime. Other goals include:**

1. Strengthen families.
2. Help parents understand the development of preschoolers.
3. Guide young children as they develop physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially.
4. Realize the capabilities of young children.
5. Help prepare children for kindergarten and the transition that comes with that experience.
6. Develop children intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically (be well-rounded).
7. Stimulate curiosity, encourage creativity, and promote problem solving skills.

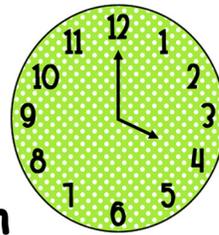




## GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

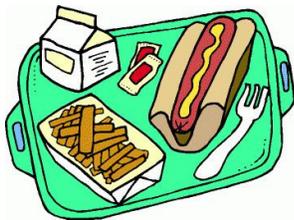
Our Preschool Program is offered through Herman-Norcross Community Education. We are funded through Parent Fees. There are also scholarships available to those who qualify through Pathway I and II learning. Please visit with Tracy Perry or Mary Pahl to learn more.

Our room is located in the Elementary wing of the Herman-Norcross School, at the end of the hall.



### Hours and Days of Operation

Those students eligible for Kindergarten next school year will meet on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday that there is regular school. 3 1/2 year olds will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays that there is regular school. When school is not in session (ie. teacher workshop day or vacation day) we will NOT have preschool. A yearly calendar will be sent home the first day. Hours of class are from 8:00-12:00 p.m. Please try your best to have children dropped off no earlier than 8:00 and picked up by 12:00 at the latest.



### Breakfast and Lunch

The students will be going to breakfast as soon as they arrive at school in the morning. **Breakfast will be free** to each of our preschool-elementary students. At approximately 11:25 the students will go to lunch. A menu will be handed out at

the beginning of each month. It will also be posted weekly in the newspaper. Lunch is currently \$2.35/regular or free according to your qualification for free/reduced lunches. There is absolutely NO CHARGING allowed, so lunches need to be paid in advance. Most people pay for 20 lunches at a time, and the office notifies by means of a note home, when lunches get down to 5 and under. If you would like to join your student for lunch, adult meals are \$3.75 (**these prices may be subject to change before the first day of school**).

## **Fees and Payments**

The fee for preschool is on a sliding fee schedule based on family income. We use the same guidelines that are used for the school lunch program. There is an income eligibility form available in the office if you are interested in filling it out. We can confirm your eligibility the same day the form is completed. The fee may be paid in full at the beginning of the year or you may follow the payment plan we have set up. We will send notices home when your payment is due, for those of you who choose the payment plan. **Fee Schedules are based on free/reduced lunch qualification:**

### **Yearly Fees- 4 days/week**

### **Payment Plan**

Schedule A- Regular

\$675.00  
\$225/\$225/\$225

Schedule B- Reduced

\$455.00  
\$152/\$152/\$151

Schedule C- Free

\$330.00  
\$110/\$110/\$110

### **Yearly Fees- 2 days/week**

### **Payment Plan**

Schedule A- Regular

\$338.00  
\$113/\$113/\$112

Schedule B- Reduced

\$228.00  
\$76/\$76/\$76

Schedule C- Free

\$165.00  
\$55/\$55/\$55



## Classroom Volunteers

We ask that parents, grandparents, special friends, etc. volunteer in the classroom. Feel free to contact me with any times you have available to help out. Helping in the classroom is an enjoyable learning experience for both the volunteer and the children. It is also a way to make your child feel extra special! I especially need help during our holiday parties. Notes are sent home in advance of these parties. Please let me know if you are interested. In order to get the students accustomed to their routine and separating from parents easier, I request no volunteers until the end of October. ☺



## Transportation

The school district allows the preschool children to ride a bus to school if you live on an existing route. If you have questions on this, please contact the school.

**Getting HOME FROM preschool is the ultimate responsibility of the parent.**

However, if we can help you to connect with others looking to share rides or car pool we would be happy to do so. It is very important that the teacher knows if your child will be riding the bus to school, and also who will be picking him/her up after school. It is also good to let the teacher know which bus number your child rides, or if he/she rides with an older sibling. If we are in doubt of where your child is to go, and we haven't been contacted by you, we will keep them here and try to contact you for further instructions, so please be courteous and keep us informed.



## Parent Information

Throughout the year, newsletters and handouts will be sent home with your child. These will include parent topics, activities to do with your child, book orders and different school related information. Please take a few moments each time to read through this info, and as always feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.



## Snow Policy

If Herman-Norcross School has a late start of 1-2 hours, preschool class will be canceled for the day. If school is canceled for the day, there is also no PreK or K.

If Herman-Norcross School closes early, preschool will also close early if it's in the morning, the students will go to the regular places they are to go to (ex. Daycare, home on the bus, etc.), unless you let us know otherwise. A snow home is requested on the Emergency Care Form in case buses are ever unable to get out on routes.

\*\*Please listen to KMRS radio and watch KSAX TV for weather related announcements.



## Clothing

Please dress children in clothes that are comfortable for play and work. We use washable paints and try to make sure all children wear paint smocks when doing those messy projects. However, there are times when children may get paint or other things on their clothes that may not wash out, so please take this into consideration when choosing clothes for school. It is very important to provide an extra set of pants, shirt, socks, and undergarments, just in case we have an occasional accident. These things can be marked with your child's name on them and we will keep them in a bag for them in the classroom closet. We do have clothing available in our lost and found, but sometimes it's less traumatic to the

child if they have their own clothing to change in to.

Shoes- Tennis shoes are required. They are the safest for both the classroom and the playground. We will also occasionally use the gym and tennis shoes are required in there. It is school policy that our students wear shoes at all times.

Winter Dress- We will try our best to get outside each day, even on winter days. Please dress the children appropriately in the winter for outside play - hats, snow pants, mittens, boots. All students are required to go outside when we do.

***Please label as much of your child's outside gear as you can with their name....it keeps our lost and found items to a minimum!!***



## Health

Your child needs to be fever free for 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) before they return to school after an illness. If they have thrown up, the same rule applies: 24 hours before returning. You can help safeguard the health of your child as well as that of other children by:

1. Checking for:

Cough	restless night	skin rash
runny nose	earache	diarrhea
headache	upset stomach	sore throat
fever	inflamed eyes	

2. Keep your child home if she/he has:

persistent cough or runny nose		
sore throat/ headache	earaches	swollen glands
rashes or sores	pink eye	other contagious illnesses
nausea or vomiting	head lice	general signs of illness

3. Notify the school if your child is sick and won't be attending class that day. Also let us know if your child has a contagious illness so that other children may be watched more closely. This way, we can provide helpful information to the parents to prevent the spreading of the illness.

4. Teach your child good health habits. These especially include: when coughing/sneezing, teach your child to cough into their elbow. and proper hand washing techniques. Together we can keep our children healthy, which will make for a much more enjoyable preschool experience.

# ♥ Welcome to Kindergarten

Some key highlights of our kindergarten classroom:

**Social and Emotional Development:** I place a great deal of emphasis on social and emotional growth. Without a feeling of being safe and happy, students cannot learn to their highest potential. I follow the Responsive Classroom Approach, which focuses on building a strong classroom community, teaching kindness and respect, and doing it all by bringing together social and academic learning.

I am a strong believer that children learn best through play and semi-structured choice based activities. As a result, your child will be given opportunities throughout the day to engage in both structured and unstructured play with their classmates.

AND...we STILL get messy in kindergarten! 😊

**Language and Literacy:** Literacy is my "thing"! I absolutely love teaching children everything literacy, from basic sounds and letter identification to summarizing stories, writing our own stories and poems, and everything in between! I implement the Daily 5 in kindergarten, although in a much more manageable manner for kindergarten students. The Daily 5 components include:

- Read with a friend
- Read to self
- Listen to stories (through QR codes on the ipads)
- Word work
- Work on writing

A typical day of kindergarten language and literacy involves a connected activity during our Morning Meeting, followed by approximately 75-90 minutes a day of large and small group time, and Daily 5 opportunities. During Daily 5's, I meet with individual or small groups to work on specific skills at each child's level. Some of these meeting times may happen in the afternoon with just kindergarten, or during the morning time with our preschool friends.

Math: we use *Go Math!* As our math curriculum, and kindergarten students receive about 30-45 minutes of math time each day. In addition, we tie math skills in with morning meeting and during other parts of our day. Again, some of these opportunities for individual and small group learning opportunities will take place in the morning, and some in the afternoon. This will enable me to differentiate to all of my students' needs and abilities. Additionally, we work on end of the year outcomes such as counting patterns to 100 like: counting by ones to 100, 5's to 100, and 10's to 100. We also work to count by 2's to 20. Other skills we work on include:

- One to one correspondence
- Patterning
- Count and compare numbers to 100
- Writing numbers to 100 without a visual
- Addition and subtraction concepts
- Identifying and sorting shapes by attributes
- Identifying coins and their values

Social Studies/Science/Health: While I work hard to integrate this part of our learning into our math and literacy time, occasionally we take time out specifically for "theme time". Many of the science and social studies themes we do are generated by student interest, and state standards for kindergarten. This will likely be integrated into our mornings with our preschool class, or there may be opportunities to connect with the first and second grader as well. Some themes we have explored in the past include, but aren't limited to:

- All about me!
- Life cycles (plants, butterflies, tadpoles and/or baby chicks)
- Fall/apples/leaves/pumpkins
- Warm and cool colors and color blending/mixing
- Holidays and customs
- Seasons
- Continents
- Polar animals
- Water cycle
- Sink and Float
- Any others that students show an interest in!