

# Circle of Friends Preschool

## Full Day Preschool at Jeffers Pond Elementary

### *Parent/Student Handbook*



### **THE MISSION OF THE PRIOR LAKE - SAVAGE SCHOOLS:**

*Our mission is to educate all learners to reach their full potential as contributing and productive members of our ever-changing global community.*

Independent School District 719  
Dr. Teri Staloch, Superintendent  
Web: [www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us/ew](http://www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us/ew)

## Early Learning Mission

The mission of PLSAS Early Learning Programs is to provide a safe environment where young children of all abilities can grow and experience success, and their families can be partners in learning.

## We Believe

- Children learn through active, hands-on engagement with their environment.
- Children's learning is a cooperative effort by home, school and community.
- Children grow in self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-image through interactions with others.
- Children develop a positive attitude toward lifelong learning opportunities by being encouraged to try new ideas, experiment and use materials creatively.
- Families are key to bridging the worlds of home and school and are an integral part of the educational process.
- Children are unique and deserve the respect of an individualized education.



# Staff Contact Information

## Full - Day Preschool at Jeffers Pond Elementary

Preschool Teacher	Anna Dutke <a href="mailto:adutke@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">adutke@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Preschool Teacher	Annie Thoraldson <a href="mailto:athoraldson@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">athoraldson@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Early Learning Coordinator	Rebecca Richardson (925) 226-0908 <a href="mailto:richardson@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">richardson@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Kids' Company Coordinator	Kelly Vossen (952) 226-0092 <a href="mailto:kvossen@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">kvossen@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Payment & Kids Company Questions	Lisa Kraft (952) 226-0090 <a href="mailto:lkraft@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">lkraft@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Circle of Friends Questions	Jenna Johnson (952) 226-0956 <a href="mailto:jenjohnson@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">jenjohnson@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Websites:	<a href="#">Circle of Friends Preschool Webpage</a> <a href="#">Kids' Company Webpage</a> <a href="#">Early Learning Facebook Page</a>
<b>Early Childhood Special Education:</b>	
Secretary	Rachele Gunter (952-) 226-0980 <a href="mailto:rgunter@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">rgunter@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Coordinator	Ryan Kasl <a href="mailto:rkasl@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">rkasl@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>
Website:	<a href="#">Early Childhood Special Education</a>

### E-Mail

All staff can receive communication via e-mail. District e-mail addresses consist of the staff member's first initial, last name @priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us.

(Example: [lkraft@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](mailto:lkraft@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us))

## Tuition & Payments

Families are contracting to attend weekly and registered for 2 days (Tuesday, Thursday), 3 days (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) or 5 days per week. Tuition will be charged weekly at \$90, \$135 or \$225 per week and is based on the days that you are contracted to attend. The cost of the program has been divided into 40 weekly payments. Automatic payment (Auto Pay) using credit cards or ACH accounts is preferred. Payments are not accepted at the site but can be mailed or dropped off at the Community Education Services Office at 4540 Tower Street in Prior Lake. Please contact Lisa Kraft at 925-226-0090 with any billing or tuition questions.

## Holidays-Program Closed Dates

Circle of Friends Full – Day Preschool will start September 5, 2017 and will end June 7, 2018 and will be open daily from 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. with the exception of 11 holidays. The program will be open every day except November 22, 23, 24, December 25, 26, 29, January 1, February 19, March 15, 16 and May 28.

## Emergency Closings

The security of the children comes first, so if the district cancels, starts late or releases early because they feel there is a threat to safety, the Full - Day program will follow the same procedures. If Prior Lake - Savage Area Schools are closed due to weather, we will also be closed. If there is a 2 hour late start, the Full– Day program will open at 8:30 am. If school is released early, we will also close early. Information will be provided to families through email and automated phone messages.



# HEALTH & SAFETY

## Accidents/ Emergencies

We make every effort to maintain a safe environment for children. Staff are trained in CPR, First Aid and general emergencies (i.e. fire, tornado). Please be sure to fill out and keep current all required emergency information.

## Absence/Illness

If your child will be absent from school, please inform the classroom teacher as soon as possible. If your child becomes ill during the day, the child will rest in a separate quiet area until a family member or emergency back-up person can be contacted to pick up the child.

According to District Policy, the following symptoms indicate the need to remain at home or be sent home:

- If the student has had a fever of 100 degrees or more, the student should stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without medication.
- If the student has vomited or had diarrhea, he/she should stay home until 24 hours after the last episode.
- If the student has any rash that may be disease-related or the cause is unknown, check with your healthcare provider before sending him/her to school.
- If the student has open/draining skin sores, or inflamed/draining eyes or ears the student should stay home until it's either resolved or seen by your healthcare provider.

If we call because your child has become ill, please make arrangements for your child to be picked up within one hour. Please visit [www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](http://www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us) and click on Parents and then Health Services for more information.

## Clothing & Personal Belongings

Children's play can be messy so be sure to send your child in comfortable clothing they can play in. Please send your child in shoes that are appropriate for running and climbing. An extra set of clothing will also be necessary in case of accidents, spills or messy outdoor play. We encourage your child not to bring toys from home, however if there is something, i.e. blanket or stuffed animal that your child likes at rest time, please label it and send it along.

## Field Trips

We will inform you in advance of all field trips and transportation will be provided using district school busses and drivers. Field trip costs are included in your tuition fees.

## Pick - Up Authorization

For your protection, the only people authorized to pick up a child are those designated by the parent/guardian on the contract. We can accept a written note or phone call in the event that someone other than those listed is taking your child home. The adult picking up your child will be asked to show a photo ID if they are not familiar to staff. If the person picking up your child is not authorized, or you have not contacted us, we will not release your child to them.

## Health Records

Immunization records and health forms signed by your child's physician must be turned in during your Meet the Teacher/Open House Event prior to school beginning. Emergency Action Plans, when needed, must be submitted prior to your child attending school.

## Medical - Emergency Action Plans

If your student has a chronic or potentially life-threatening health condition (i.e., asthma, severe allergy, bee sting allergy, diabetes, seizures) please request an Emergency Action Plan form from the Circle of Friends secretary to ensure that appropriate health/safety measures are developed and implemented for your student.

## Medication

When necessary, the school nurse will administer prescription medications. Medications must be kept in the original prescription bottle and a Medication Release Form must be completed and signed. No over-the-counter medication will be administered to children. If your child has special medical needs, please set up a time to meet with staff to determine necessary training to administer treatment.

## Outdoor Activities

Outside time is an integral part of children's developmental learning, health and well - being. Children must be prepared to go outside everyday. Staff will assess the current weather conditions to determine whether the children will go outdoors.

# PROGRAM SPECIFICS

## Curriculum & Assessment

The Circle of Friends Preschool curriculum is designed to prepare preschoolers to enter kindergarten excited and ready to learn. Students are encouraged to try new ideas, to experiment with their environment and use resources creatively. We combine numerous curriculum tools to develop a well-rounded, age appropriate, integrated curriculum. All of our content areas incorporate our district commitment to Environmental Education and stewardship. The below chart explains the alignment of our 4-Star Parent Aware rated curriculum to the MN Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. Teachers utilize the below packages, but are not limited to them. We encourage teacher facilitated learning environments tailored to each classroom's unique group of students, which may require additional resources.

### Curricular alignment to MN Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

Curriculum Package	Social Emotional	Approaches to Learning	Language & Literacy	Creativity & Arts	Cognitive	Physical & motor
Zoo-phonics		x	x	x		x
Second Step	x	x		x		
High Scope Numbers Plus		x			x	
4 Seasons at a Nature Based Preschool	x	x	x	x	x	x

## Assessment

The preschool staff utilizes the Desired Results Developmental Profile assessment tool (DRDP 2015), which is tied to our 4 Star Parent Aware rating. Results are shared with families at parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring of each year. We do, however, welcome your questions or concerns at any time. Please feel free to consult with staff whenever you wish. Our staff will work hard to keep you informed of your child's progress throughout the year.

## Assessment and Referral

If you have concerns about your child's development (i.e. learning, playing, hearing, talking, moving, seeing, etc.) please speak with your child's teacher. Questions and concerns staff members have about your child will be addressed with you.

## Screening

Early childhood years are an important time of rapid learning and growth. Early Childhood Screening is a quick and simple check on how your child is doing. It identifies possible health or learning concerns at an early age.

Early Childhood Screening is a necessary enrollment component of Circle of Friends Preschool. All children need to be screened within the first 60 days of school. To Schedule an appointment, call 952-226-0975 or e-mail [ecscreening@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](mailto:ecscreening@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us).

## Family Involvement

Families are a valuable resource for our program. An Open House will be offered prior to the start of the program. Parents are invited to visit the classroom at anytime

**Parenting:** Love, safety, discipline, healthy food and a good night's sleep are all things that you have done from the very first moment with your child. These are important but also difficult! That's why we will be providing the following opportunities: Family Fun Nights, Parenting workshops and seminars, ECFE classes, and special events.

**Communicating:** One of the benefits of families and teachers working together is the extra set of eyes by which to see each child. We see things in a classroom situation that you would not witness at home. You have information about your child that we don't know. When we each share what we know we will have a more complete picture of how your child learns. We utilize the following technologies to share information: Schoology, SeeSaw, Email, Facebook, Twitter, Photo sharing sites

**Volunteering:** It is very helpful to have an extra set of hands at school. Your presence also sends a strong message to the kids that we all agree that education is important.



# NATURE EDUCATION



**"Children are born naturalists.  
They explore the world with all of their senses,  
experiment in the environment, and communicate  
their discoveries to those around them."**

*~ Audubon Nature Preschool*

## What is a Nature Based Preschool?

A nature based preschool brings Environmental Education (EE) into Early Childhood Education (ECE) in order to create meaningful outdoor experiences that are developmentally appropriate.

Combining EE and ECE is a natural! Within Minnesota, Early Childhood Education focuses on several important developmental domains: Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy Development, Creativity and the Arts, Cognitive Development, and Physical and Motor Development. The outdoor environment naturally provides authentic and engaging learning opportunities to support children's development in each of these areas.

## Outdoor Experiences

Children are outside every day unless the weather is dangerous. Dangerous means lightning, severe cold, etc. The district cold weather restrictions will be used to determine severe cold. When the "feels like" temperature is below -5 degrees Fahrenheit, we will not be going outside. All schools use Kare 11 to determine the "feels like" temperature. These daily outdoor experiences are essential for connecting children to the natural world around them, so please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

Note: when dressing your child for outside, be sure to check the current temperature as it often doesn't reach the high temperature for the day during our outdoor time. We may be outside for at least 45 minutes per day unless dangerous.

## What to Bring Each Day:

All items should be labeled with your child's name:

- A backpack (labeled with your child's name) large enough for an 8 ½ x 11 folder
- Appropriate outdoor clothing (see chart below)
- Tennis shoes
- A change of clothing
- A \*reusable cloth or canvas bag - this is used for carrying winter clothing to/from school.  
\*Please do not rely on plastic grocery bags, they are not durable. Reusable totes also reduce the amount of plastic bags ending up in landfills, an important concept of our class!

## Clothing

There is a saying that goes, ***"There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."***

We will be going outside daily, unless weather is dangerous. The duration of our time outside is temperature and weather dependent. The following clothing is required to ensure your child is

able to be comfortable and able to enjoy our outdoor learning experiences. Make sure ALL clothing is labeled with your child's name.

FALL:	WINTER:	SPRING:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rubber boots (rain boots)</li> <li>● Jacket/sweatshirt</li> <li>● Rain jacket with hood</li> <li>● Rain pants (or one piece rain suit)</li> <li>● Mittens</li> <li>● Hat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm, water-resistant winter coat</li> <li>● Snow pants (or one piece snowsuit)</li> <li>● Waterproof mittens</li> <li>● Facemask</li> <li>● Hat/ear covers</li> <li>● Insulated Boots (snow boots)</li> <li>● Wool/fleece socks</li> <li>● Long underwear top &amp; bottom</li> <li>● Gloves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rubber boots (rain boots)</li> <li>● Jacket/sweatshirt</li> <li>● Rain jacket with hood</li> <li>● Rain pants (or one piece rain suit)</li> <li>● Mittens</li> <li>● Hat</li> </ul>

## Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Parent(s) are responsible for applying sunscreen and bug spray (as needed) to their children prior to arrival at preschool. Sunscreen should be applied at least 1/2 hour prior to going out in the sun. We'll go outside at the beginning of our day. Full Day program staff will support Full Day preschool children to reapply as needed.

Other recommendations for protecting your child from the sun:

- Supply a hat for your child to wear while outside
- Inform staff if your child burns easily
- Inform staff of any medications that may counteract with the sun

## Ticks

During our outdoor explorations, your child may be exposed to ticks (in the fall up until the first frost and starting again in the spring right after the snow melts). Please check for ticks EVERY DAY when your child returns home. This can be a routine that you do with your child while he/she is taking a bath or getting ready for bed. Deer ticks are very small, but can be noticed on light clothing.

## Animals & Plants in the Classroom

As part of further expanding our study of the natural world inside the classroom, we will have several animal and plant visitors throughout the year. Please inform staff of any known allergies.

## Safety

When outside, children will be with the group and supervised by staff at all times. Prior to engaging in outdoor explorations, children will be taught what it means to “Be Safe.” This includes understanding what it means to keep themselves safe as well as making sure others around them are safe.

During outdoor explorations, children will be encouraged to fully explore the areas and natural materials around them, while keeping the expectations of “Be Safe” in mind.

- **Climbing:** During our outdoor explorations, children will have the opportunity to explore logs and rocks. Staff will determine safe climbing exploration areas and will support children, as needed to ensure children’s safety.
- **Sticks:** Children may use sticks or any natural object for imaginative play or as a tool, but not as a weapon (real or imagined). If a child is using a stick or other object in an unsafe way even after reminders, they will not be allowed to use it until the teacher thinks it is safe to allow the child to practice useful exploration once again.

Staff will always have a first aid kit on hand during our outdoor excursions. Staff will also be in constant contact with office staff via radios and by cell phone.

## Additional tips for dressing your child:

**Rain boots:** These aren’t just for rainy days. Often the grass is wet or the ground is muddy in the fall and spring, so wearing rain boots during our hikes will help ensure your child has dry, clean shoes for the classroom.

**Gloves versus Mittens:** We recommend mittens versus gloves as mittens are easier for children to put on/take off independently. In addition, we highly recommend mittens with a zipper as it makes it easier to put them on. They also typically go over the child’s coat sleeves, creating a barrier from the snow. We recommend having at least two pairs of mittens/gloves to ensure your child has a dry pair each day. *DO NOT send your child in thin, knit gloves/mittens.* These get wet quickly and as a result will not keep your child's hands warm for the duration we'll be outside.

**Winter Boots:** Get a winter boot that is one size larger than your child’s foot. This creates a “dead-air space” to assist in insulating the foot. The best insulations for feet are wool socks with water-proof boots.

**One piece rain suits and/or snowsuits:** These are very popular for children in nature preschools across the world and are a great option for ensuring your child stays warm and dry. When choosing a size, make sure you think of what clothing your child will be wearing underneath as well as allow room for your child to grow into it. If you don’t have rain or snow gear yet, these are an option worth considering.

**Dressing in layers** is the key to ensuring your child stays warm. It also allows your child the option to remove layers if he/she becomes too warm. We will be very active outdoors but will also spend some time sitting for circle time and observation activities. On wet and cold days, pay close attention to the layers close to their skin. Clothing made from materials such as poly-propylene or capilene, fleece or wool takes moisture off of the body and transfers it to other layers, rather than soaking through. This is called “wicking.” Cotton however holds moisture close to the body and makes a person cold and damp.

**Tennis Shoes:** Your child must bring tennis shoes **every day** for wearing inside the classroom. Sandals with closed toes and heel straps are only acceptable for warm weather. Flip flops and Crocs are not acceptable for safety reasons.

Our activities outside and in the classroom requires freedom from restrictive clothing. This includes tight clothing, fancy dresses and costumes that get in the way during active play. Children will likely get messy, so wearing clothing that can get dirty is essential!

All children must have a labeled change of clothes to be kept in their backpack for emergencies and in situations when their other clothes get wet or muddy. This should include underwear, pants, shirt and socks. This extra set of clothes should change with the seasons and be appropriate for the expected climate.

## Where to find proper gear:

<http://www.ollieandstellaoutfitters.com>: Rainsuits, jackets, and pants. Snowsuits, jackets, and pants

[www.rei.com/outlet](http://www.rei.com/outlet) has great deals on: SmartWool socks, base layers, waterproof mittens, one piece snowsuit, limited winter boots and hats

[www.llbean.com](http://www.llbean.com): Cold Buster Snow Suit, Kids or Toddlers Discovery Rain Pants, Puddle Stomper Boots, rain jackets, winter parkas, waterproof mittens,

[www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com): Rain pants, rain jackets, winter gear, rain boots

[www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com): Winter jackets, snow pants/bibs

[www.fleetfarm.com](http://www.fleetfarm.com): A more affordable option for rain boots, limited waterproof insulated winter gear

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com): 1 or 2 piece rain and snow suits, rain and snow boots, waterproof winter hats and mittens

For other good deals, check:

- Once Upon a Child
- Goodwill
- Savers
- Garage Sales and Community Garage Sale Websites

**If obtaining appropriate clothing for your child is difficult, please let us know.** We may be able to connect you with local resources or provide you with clothing we keep on hand for just such a purpose. We are also always looking for gently used cold weather clothing to serve as extras for students who have forgotten their hats/gloves/snow pants/boots. As the year goes on, if you have any gear you wish to donate, just let us know.

## Student Conduct Expectations

All children are entitled to a pleasant, harmonious and safe environment. It is our goal to promote a positive approach to all children and the management of behavior issues.

If a child demonstrates behavior which has a negative impact on the child or others, the staff will utilize one or more of the following strategies:

- **Prevention:** Every effort will be made to make reasonable adjustments to the program to accommodate the unique needs of each child. Adjustments may be made in these four areas:
  - Environment
  - Grouping of children
  - Activities
  - Staffing
- **Positive Redirection:** Staff will help the child identify acceptable alternatives to unacceptable behavior and help the child understand the impact of his/her behavior on self and others.
- **Modeling:** Staff and peers provide positive modeling of appropriate behavior. Children learn to take responsibility for their actions.
- **Setting Limits:** Simple behavioral expectations are established for the site. Staff will:
  - Tell children what is expected of them in a positive, yet firm manner.
  - Make sure children understand what the expectations mean.
  - Apply expectations consistently and appropriately.
  - Use natural and logical consequences (loss of privileges, apologies etc.)

### **Behavior considered harmful/inappropriate:**

- Behavior which directly or indirectly threatens a person's right to be safe
  - Any form of aggression.
  - Verbal threats, disrespectful language or harassing behavior.
  - Inappropriate touching of a person's body or belongings.
  - Inappropriate gestures.
  - Bullying or bullying-like behavior.

- Behavior which keeps staff from fulfilling their ability to be available for all children
  - Removing self from group or program area without staff approval.
  - Demonstrating lack of self - control with anger.
  - Blatant disrespect or absolute refusal of staff person in charge.
- Behavior which intentionally causes destruction of property

**In the case of harmful/inappropriate behavior, we will:**

- Inform parent of extreme or continuous inappropriate behavior.
- Temporarily remove the child from the program.
- Work with guardian/parent and school staff to create a behavior plan.
- If the behavior persists, or guardian/parent is unwilling to work with staff towards behavioral improvement, we may indefinitely remove the child from the program.

**Harmful/Inappropriate Behavior on Field Trips:**

If a child displays harmful/inappropriate behavior on a field trip, the child's parent or guardian will be called immediately to pick up the child at the field trip or school site and arrange alternative care.

**Children with Special Needs:**

Staff will make reasonable changes in programming in order to accommodate the physical and behavioral needs of children. There may be times when it is not reasonable to accommodate the needs of a child.

- **Accommodations**
  - The Circle of Friends Full - Day program is not designed to provide long term and/or intensive 1:1 assistance for students.
  - If a child receives student support in a classroom, has an identified special need or has a behavior plan developed, it is the responsibility of the parent to identify their child's needs on the appropriate forms.
  - An individual conference may be necessary before enrollment is processed. If your child has a special need, his/her start date will be determined by the program's ability to accommodate the needs of your child.
  - Children whose limitations create a safety issue of unreasonable risk, harm to themselves, others or property may not be accommodated.



# Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

According to Minnesota Statute 121.882, (1984) the school board of any district establishing or expanding an early childhood family education program "shall appoint an advisory council for the area in which the program is provided. A majority of the council shall be parents participating in the program. The council shall assist the board in developing, planning and monitoring the early childhood family education program. The council shall report to the school board and the community education advisory council."

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the council is to advise and support the Early Learning Programs staff and Administration in identifying, developing, planning and evaluating programs and services to meet the early education needs of families of children birth to kindergarten. To support, promote and advocate for the early childhood programs and functions within and outside of the facility.

## General Functions

- Be present
- Be generous with your time and energy
- Be visible and connected
- Be a voice
- Be resourceful
- Be positive

## For information

**How to join the this advisory council:** [Edgewood.AdvisoryCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:Edgewood.AdvisoryCouncil@gmail.com)

**Follow them on Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/EdgewoodCouncil/>