



## Learning Ladders Preschool 2023-2024

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Welcome to Learning Ladders Preschool! The following information is designed to better acquaint you with the policies, procedures and philosophy of Learning Ladders Preschool. This document may come in handy throughout the year, as it explains items that will be encountered in the near future and later in the school year. Please do not hesitate to call or email if you have any questions or concerns at any time.

### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

#### **Preschool Meet n' Greet: Wednesday, August 30, 2023**

The annual Learning Ladders Preschool Meet n' Greet is held before the school year begins. This event gives our new and returning students the opportunity to get acquainted with their teachers and the classroom. **If you cannot attend during your class time slot, feel free to attend another class's time.**

5:30 pm – 6:00 pm     Sedgwick Park: Little Lions  
Recreation Center, Room 103: Playful Penguins

6:00 pm – 6:30 pm     Gilbert Park: Black Bears  
Sedgwick Park: Leaping Lizards

6:30 pm – 7:00 pm     Sedgwick Park: Eager Eagles

### **Important Forms:**

1. Emergency & Permission Form
2. Car Pool/Pick Up Permission Form
3. Child Photo Safety Form
4. Medication Waiver & Dispensing Form
5. Copy of Immunizations

The emergency form, car pool form, child photo safety form and copy of immunizations can be completed & submitted on ePact. **\*Please note: THESE FORMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AT THE FRONT DESK. If forms are not turned in during the first week of classes your child will not be able to attend class until the forms are on file.**

**Preschool Year:**

September 5, 2023 – May 3, 2024

**Preschool Locations:**

Gilbert Park Building  
41<sup>st</sup> Street and Gilbert Avenue

Sedgwick Park Building  
10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 48<sup>th</sup> Street

Recreation Center  
536 East Avenue

**Important Phone numbers:**

(708) 354-9091	Learning Ladders Preschool, Gilbert Park
(708) 354-2205	Learning Ladders Preschool, Sedgwick Park
(708) 352-1762	Learning Ladders Preschool, Recreation Center-Room 103
(708) 352-1762	Kevin Miller, Director of Recreation
(708) 352-1762	Brandon Diaz, Recreation Supervisor

**OUR CLASSES:****GILBERT PARK**

**Black Bears:** (2 ½ - 3 Year Old Program)

Day: Tuesday & Thursday

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**RECREATION CENTER**

**Playful Penguins:** (3 – 4 Year Old Program)

Day: Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Time: 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

**SEDGWICK PARK**

**Little Lions:** (2 ½ - 3 Year Old Program)

Day: Tuesday & Thursday

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Leaping Lizards:** (3 – 4 Year Old Program)

Day: Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Time: 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

**Eager Eagles:** (4 – 5 Year Old Program)

Day: Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Time: 12:15 – 2:45 p.m.

**PRESCHOOL PAYMENT PLAN:**

A \$150.00 **non-refundable** deposit is required at the time of registration and will be applied to your tuition. Upon registration for Learning Ladders Preschool, you agree to the auto debit payment plan. A credit/debit card or checking account payment authorization will be required. Payments for tuition will be charged in eight monthly installments from August 2023 - March 2024 on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, and all payment receipts will be issued via email.

**CLASS TUITION FEES:**

(R) = Residents of La Grange & Countryside

(NR) = Non-Resident

(NN) = Neighborhood Network (Includes all communities that border La Grange which include Western Springs, La Grange Park, Brookfield, La Grange Highlands and McCook. Proof of residency is required.)

Black Bears Monthly Fee:	\$115 (R), \$172 (NR), \$127 (NN)
Little Lions Monthly Fee:	\$115 (R), \$172 (NR), \$127 (NN)
Leaping Lizards Monthly Fee:	\$196 (R), \$292 (NR), \$216 (NN)
Playful Penguins Monthly Fee:	\$196 (R), \$292 (NR), \$216 (NN)
Eager Eagles Monthly Fee:	\$196 (R), \$292 (NR), \$216 (NN)

**AUTO DEBIT DATES:**

<u>Payment 1</u>	August 15, 2023
<u>Payment 2</u>	September 15, 2023
<u>Payment 3</u>	October 15, 2023
<u>Payment 4</u>	November 15, 2023
<u>Payment 5</u>	December 15, 2023
<u>Payment 6</u>	January 15, 2024
<u>Payment 7</u>	February 15, 2024
<u>Payment 8</u>	March 15, 2024

**NO CLASSES:**

October 09, 2023	Columbus Day
November 20 – November 24, 2023	Thanksgiving Break
December 18, 2023 – January 3, 2024	Winter Break
January 15, 2024	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 19, 2024	Presidents Day
March 25 – 29, 2024	Spring Break Week

***\*Classes cancelled due to weather conditions will not be made up.***

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Learning Ladders has been designed to meet the physical, social, intellectual, and creative needs of children ages 2 1/2 to 5. It is based on the premise that children learn through play. Play serves as a “child’s work”, a time when new discoveries and friendships are made. Through play, children learn to communicate with words, express feelings, explore, create, problem solve, make decisions, and much, much more.

In addition to creative free play there will be a balance of teacher directed group activities as well. Introduction and exposure to letters, numbers, colors, shapes, and other beginning concepts occurs. Our teaching staff creates and implements lesson plans based on Illinois Early Learning Standards.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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

- \*Develop a sense of security in group situations.
- \*Develop respect for others.
- \*Establish routines, patterns and sharing behavior.
- \*Learn problem-solving skills.
- \*Learn correct use, respect and responsibility for materials and equipment.
- \*Explore the surrounding environment.
- \*Provide a fun, happy and safe environment for all participants.

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. Our Learning Ladders Preschool 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 Kevin Miller, Director of Recreation, at (708) 352-1762, or your preschool teacher.

## **STAFF**

All Learning Ladders staff members are warm, loving, and patient people who enjoy working with children. They all have the knowledge and caring attitude to give your child a wholesome and positive experience. All staff is certified in First Aid and CPR. Our teaching staff creates and implements lesson plans based on Illinois Early Learning Standards. Staff also receives development training throughout the school year, which keeps them on the cutting edge of teaching practices.

## **CHILD ELIGIBILITY**

By the first day of class, your child must be of age, even if they enter the program midway through the year. We reserve the right to request a birth certificate to verify age/guardianship for any student. The Learning Ladders staff will **NOT** change diapers. If a child comes to class in a diaper and it needs to be changed, the parent or a person noted on your approved list will be called to do so.

## **SCHEDULE**

The Park District of La Grange Learning Ladders classes are a blend of open ended and structured modes. Upon arrival, the children are allowed to circulate throughout the room choosing which activities to partake in. The following schedule is flexible and may change to accommodate additional activities.

### **CLASS ACTIVITIES AND GUIDELINES**

Class time is moderately structured.

A typical day at Learning Ladders may consist of the following:

## **FREE PLAY**

The class begins with creative free play. The children have an opportunity to choose from a variety of individualized to small group activities including play dough, puzzles, books, table games, building blocks, free art, dress-up, transportation play, kitchen play, and other miscellaneous play equipment. Activities may include:

Easel painting  
Art center  
Sand/water table  
Dramatic play  
Puppetry  
Manipulative toys

Computer center  
Block play  
Gross/Fine motor play  
Book corner  
Music appreciation  
Listening center

## **CIRCLE TIME**

This is an important time, during which the children meet as a group to discuss the calendar, weather, and other exciting happenings of the day. Appropriate classroom behaviors and listening skills are introduced at this time. Circle time also consists of songs, finger plays, stories, and games. The project for the day is explained at this point, and a brief period of show and tell will occur.

### **LISTENING CENTER**

Throughout the school year the children also use a listening center. The listening center allows students to listen to books on tape and follow along with the book. This activity helps students to build their sight vocabulary, models phrasing and fluency, and helps to improve listening skills.

### **MUSIC AND MOVEMENT**

The children will have an opportunity to explore music and rhythm through songs, finger plays, musical games, records, tapes, and parachute play. Large muscle movement such as hopping, jumping, skipping, stretching, and running in place, etc., may also occur at this time.

### **ARTS AND CRAFTS**

The children will have an opportunity to create projects that reflect a theme and develop fine motor skills such as cutting, gluing, pasting, tearing, painting, coloring, and cooking. We believe that it is the process of “doing” that is important, NOT the final product. Ask your child to tell you about the finished piece of work. Not all of these projects can or will be brought home. Some may be used as samples and/or decorations at school.

### **BOOK CORNER**

In our classroom we have a wide variety of books for the children to sit and read. Sometimes they may be too young to actually read the story, however, pictures allow the imagination to explore. It is amazing to hear some of the stories they can come up with just from simple images. Children learn to read to themselves, dolls, or even other classmates.

### **SAND/WATER TABLE**

In our everyday learning environment we have found that children learn a variety of socialization skills while participating at the water table. It's common for two and three year olds to involve themselves only in parallel play, which is the beginning of making friends and group play. Often times the children will be playing the same game, but there isn't any interaction involved. Within time, the children start communicating with each other. Eventually all children are sharing ideas, turns and equipment. Within this activity children are introduced to things such as water temperature, measuring, pouring, volume and weight. They experience textures, floating, sinking and other necessary information pertaining to water and sand.

### **EASELS**

Within our classroom we have a variety of easels for our participants. Throughout the week we will put out different tools to be used. The materials we have available include things such as crayons, markers, watercolors, chalk and a variety of paint. This area not only involves art experience, it also allows children to use their imagination and creativity.

## **DRAMATIC PLAY**

Pretending provides a way for young children to learn more about the adult world. It helps them increase social and language skills by interacting with other children. Dramatic play gives children the avenue to act out real life situations or to depart into the world of fantasy. Our loft provides children a great chance to interact and demonstrate strong social skills.

## **PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT**

Our playground equipment is a great source for developing gross motor skills. The children start to develop more language skills by socializing around the playground. The climbing, hopping, and swinging provide another great avenue to opening children's imaginations. Soon, to the children, the mulch isn't just pieces of wood...it is now an ocean and the equipment becomes a boat!

## **COOKING TIME**

During class, children may have the chance to experience what it is like to measure, pour, and stir ingredients in efforts to make a great snack. These hands-on skills are important to build large and small motor skills. After completing a project, children get the opportunity to feel the success of creating something they can enjoy.

## **SNACK TIME**

This is a favorite part of the children's day. Each child/parent is asked to provide snack time goodies, juice or milk, cups, and napkins for the entire class (class maximum is 12 students). These snack times are on a rotation and will be assigned by the teacher and will be listed on the monthly class calendar. A recommended snack may be a nutritional, simple to eat snack and light colored/clear juice or milk (juice boxes or water bottles are preferred).

**Due to peanut products causing severe allergic reactions in some children, we have become a "Nut Free Environment". We also require that all snacks be packaged, not home baked. Please note that we will not serve home baked goods, items containing nuts, or red colored juices. This includes special occasions and holidays. Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.**



## **GENERAL POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

### **FIRST WEEK OF CLASS**

Throughout the years, the preschool staff has found that most children adjust to class quicker when their parents are not present. There may be a few children who will have a difficult time with the transition and will want their parent to stay with them for a while on the first day. Our teachers will work with you and your little one to make the transition as easy as possible.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

We love to celebrate birthdays! Special attention will be made to coordinate your child's birthday and snack day when at all possible. Please do not send frosted snacks (i.e. cupcakes or cake) because they can be difficult to handle as well as being potentially messy. Instead, cookies or mini-muffins are just as fun and easier for the children to eat. Please see your child's teacher if you would like to coordinate special birthday plans.

### **SPECIAL VISITORS**

Throughout the year we will bring special community helpers and miscellaneous outreach programs into the classroom. This will be a great learning experience for the children. Possible visitors may include a La Grange Fire Fighter, La Grange Librarian, La Grange Police Officer, SEASPAR Eagles, dentist, bus safety, and water safety.

### **SHOW AND TELL**

Each class has a different schedule for show and tell. Please check the monthly newsletter for more information.

### **INDOOR PLAYGROUND**

During the winter months, preschool classes occasionally plan their classes to meet at the Recreation Center, 536 East Avenue. During these special "Rec Days" the children use the indoor playground, and the toddler playtime gym equipment. It's a great way to get the kids moving during the cold winter months!

### **CLASS PARTIES / HOLIDAYS**

Holidays such as Halloween and Valentine's Day will be celebrated with a special activity and/or party. Each student will be notified before the event in regards to what they need to bring or wear to class that day. Our school day off schedule is listed on page 5. A monthly newsletter will contain the upcoming dates when classes are not in session.



## SCHOLASTIC BOOKS

As an added benefit of your child being enrolled in the program, you and your child will have an opportunity to order Scholastic Books throughout the year. The books are of great quality and are reasonably priced. **There is no obligation to purchase them.** If you choose to place an order, you may do so by filling out the book order forms your child will receive in class. Please enclose a check made payable to Scholastic with your order. Allow 2-4 weeks processing time. We will hand deliver the books to you as soon as we receive them.

## DISCIPLINE

Keeping early childhood development in mind, discipline will be a constructive learning experience for the child. First attempts will be to use positive reinforcement. If the behavior continues, the child will be redirected to another activity. Finally, if the behavior continues through the second stage, a 3-5 minute 'time-out' may be issued.

**NOTE:** *The use of discipline shall not be humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful. If disruptive behavior continues to occur, or our staff has concerns about your child's development in the program or the ability for other students to develop in the program, we will be forced to reevaluate your child's enrollment and recommend another Park District program more suitable for your child.*

## Park District Code of Conduct

To ensure enjoyable and safe programs for all participants, the Park District of La Grange has developed a Code of Conduct for all participants. Participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Participants are expected to:

1. Show respect to all other participants and staff.
2. Take direction from staff.
3. Refrain from using abusive or foul language.
4. Refrain from causing bodily harm to self or others.
5. Show respect for equipment, supplies, and facilities.

Additional rules may be developed for particular programs and athletic leagues as deemed necessary by staff. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in removal from the program or event without refund.

## **Preschool Behavior Management Plan**

### **Expectations for Students**

- Keep hands and feet to self.
- Talk to others (students and staff) with respect.
- Listen attentively when spoken to.
- Treat all Park District material and property with care and respect.
- Be safe while having fun.

### **Discipline Procedure**

1. When a child has trouble following the expectations of our preschool program, Park district staff will verbally request that the behavior be discontinued. If behavior continues, staff will remove the child from the activity for “quiet time.” “Quiet time” allows the child to reflect on his/her behavior, and will be appropriate for the child’s age, ability, and the severity of the inappropriate behavior.
  - a. A parent will be notified at the end of the day if a child needed “quiet time” during the class. Due to this, it is important that staff document each time a student has “quiet time.” On the behavior management log, staff needs to document who the student was, why the student needed “quiet time,” what activity the student was participating in, and what the staff’s response to the behavior was. If a child is removed from the group three times in one day, a parent will be called immediately by the Assistant Superintendent of Recreation and asked to remove the child from the program for the remainder of the day. Park District staff documents all removals and phone calls to parents.
2. If a child has difficulty following preschool expectations on a daily basis, a parent will be contacted. Next, a meeting will be scheduled between the parent, child, preschool staff, and Assistant Superintendent of Recreation. A written report will be filed after this meeting by the Assistant Superintendent of Recreation. It will state the unacceptable behaviors previously demonstrated by the child and expected changes for the next program meeting date. It is also to be stated that one more incident of unacceptable behavior may result in the child’s permanent removal from the program or for a specific period of time. This report is to be signed by a parent and program staff member. One copy remains at the Park District, and the parent will retain another.
3. If a child continues to have trouble following the preschool’s expectations, and the above procedures have been followed, a parent will be contacted and immediately

requested to remove the child from the program for the designated period of time determined at the parent conference meeting.

*\*In extreme cases of unacceptable behavior in which there have been physical threats to other participants or staff, the Park District reserves the right to immediately remove a participant from a program. There will be a Zero Tolerance policy if there are any verbal threats or actions toward the physical well-being of other students or staff. This behavior will result in the immediate dismissal of the student.*

*\*\*No refunds will be issued if your child has been removed from the program for disciplinary reasons \*\*.*

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

It is important to drop off and pick your child up from class on time. Children are more secure when they know a parent/guardian will be there to pick them up. If someone who is **not** noted on your child's car pool form will be picking your child up, please notify your child's teacher in writing ahead of time. Important announcements are also made before the children are dismissed so it is extremely important to be on time.

**NOTE:** *ID's will be checked throughout the year if staff does not know or recognize who is picking up your child. Learning Ladders reserves the right to check any and all ID's of persons picking up program participants, until staff members are familiar with the participants' caregivers.*

### **CARPOOLS**

If you wish to carpool, you will be responsible for making your own arrangements and telling other parents any important information given out that day regarding the program. You must also fill out the car pool form and return it to your child's teacher. Driving groups are not recommended the first weeks of class.

### **HEALTH AND ABSENCES**

If your child is experiencing any of the following please keep him/her at home:

- \*Experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- \*Any fever within the previous 24 hours
- \*Has vomited or experienced diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- \*A new cold less than 3 days old
- \*A constant/disruptive cough or heavy nasal discharge
- \*If your child is in the first 48 hours of taking an antibiotic
- \*Is cranky, fussy, and generally not himself/herself
- \*Has a symptom of a possible communicable disease or contagious condition

Please notify us at once if your child fits into this category. Conditions that fit into this category would include chicken pox, measles, head lice, pink eye, etc. For any condition of this type, notices will be sent home to all program participants.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Your child should be up to date on all shots prior to the first day of class. Although physical or specific shots are not required, a copy of your child's immunization record is. This must be on file by the first day of class in order for your child to continue attending classes.

### **MEDICAL, INFORMATION, AND AUTHORIZATION FORMS**

Filling out all Emergency Medical forms is a requirement of the Park District of La Grange. This form aids us in contacting you in case of an emergency, recognizing the authorized people to pick up your child and getting to know your child a little better. Please let us know if your address or telephone number (home or business) changes at any time throughout the year. The park district should also be notified of any and all changes with emergency persons and those authorized to take your child from the facility. If your child will be deviating from his/her usual pick-up/drop-off schedule please put it in writing whenever possible or call your preschool location.

### **MEDICATION AND DISPENSING FORM**

If your child needs to take medication while at class, you will need to fill out the Permission and Waiver to Dispense Medication Form. We will not dispense medication to a child until those forms have been completely filled out by a parent or guardian. Under normal circumstances, the head preschool instructor will be the one responsible for dispensing the required medication(s). These forms are located in the pocket of your parent manual.

### **PARTICIPANT SAFETY**

At the beginning of each class, entrance/exit doors will be unlocked. When the majority of children have arrived, the doors will be locked and you will need to knock to be let in. You will be required to sign your child in upon arrival and sign him/her out when departing for the day.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

During the year there will be opportunities for parents to help out with special projects, events or class parties. If you are interested in helping out or have a special hobby, talent, or career that you would like to share with the children, please let your teacher know at any time during the year.

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Due to the recreational nature of our program we do not require individual conferences. If at any time during the course of the year you have a concern about your child's development, please feel free to approach the teacher before or after class time.

## PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

Skills assessments are done twice during the school year, once in November and again in April. The areas that are assessed include: gross and fine motor, interpersonal interactions, work habits, self-help skills, language/listening, and readiness skills (for children heading to kindergarten in the upcoming fall). Please remember this assessment is **not** a report card. You will have the opportunity to discuss the assessment results with your teacher and/or Early Childhood Supervisor.

## BATHROOM

Bathroom breaks are taken midway through each class, however, we ask that your child use the facilities prior to entering class. If your child needs to use the facilities prior to, or after the 'scheduled' break, they only need to notify their teacher. Please urge your children to speak up if they need to use the restroom.



## NEWSLETTERS

A monthly newsletter will inform you of any upcoming events, vacation days, special visitors, etc. that will be happening in the month ahead. This is an important means of communication that keeps you aware of your child's experiences in the program. The newsletter may include a calendar, articles from various publications, do-at-home activities, and program/classroom highlights.

While every reasonable attempt is made to keep all participants and their families informed of scheduled activities and important dates through the use of newsletters, memos, parent board, etc., it is your responsibility as the parent/caregiver to keep up with what is going on in the program to avoid any confusion. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher with any questions, comments, or concerns.

## ONLINE

Looking for information as the school year progresses? Visit our website, <http://pdlg.org/programs/preschool> Our webpage is updated with class announcements, newsletters and calendars.

## CLOTHING

The children should wear comfortable play clothing that can get dirty and that they can manage **alone** in the bathroom. Even if your child is toilet trained, we understand that accidents may occur. Please provide a spare outfit should an accident occur in class. Shoes should be comfortable and easy to move around in. Gym shoes are encouraged. **All removed articles of clothing should be labeled with your child's name. These include coats, hats, mittens, shoes, boots, etc.**

## INCLUSION OF SPECIAL NEED PARTICIPANTS

The Park District of La Grange will make every effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The A.D.A. requires our district to make reasonable accommodations in offering recreation programs and services, in the most integrated settings appropriate for those with special needs. The Park District of La Grange is a member of the South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation (SEASPAR). Through a cooperative agreement, SEASPAR provides leisure services for individuals with special needs. When situations dictate, the park district may recommend that the parents contact the LaGrange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE). In February/March of each year, the school district in conjunction with LADSE, conduct preschool screenings. This service is available, should you feel it is necessary to have your child evaluated. If you have any questions regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act, SEASPAR, LADSE, or the inclusion of participants with special needs, please contact the park district office at (708) 352-1762.

## WITHDRAWAL

As stated in the Park District of La Grange brochure, refunds will not be issued after the first class meeting, unless the park district receives a written document from a physician or the participant moves from within the district boundaries. However, if a child is not ready to attend Learning Ladders Preschool (discretion of teacher and Assistant Superintendent of Recreation) at the beginning of the year or midway through, then a pro-rated refund will be issued.

## EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

Please check our website [www.pdlg.org](http://www.pdlg.org) or [emergencyclosings.com](http://emergencyclosings.com) for weather related/emergency closing information.

### **ADDITIONAL CHILD DISCOUNT**

If your family signs up two or more children (from the same family) they will receive a 10% discount for the second child as well as any subsequent children within the family. Please notify the Park District of La Grange when registering.