

On Track PreK Center Contact Information

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| GISD District Offices | 4950 McNutt Rd. Sunland Park, NM 88063 | 575-882-6200 |
| Jeanne Fields Director of Federal Programs | 4950 McNutt Rd. Sunland Park, NM 88063 | 575-882-6234 |
| Department of Special Education | 500 N. 4 th St Anthony, NM 88021 | 575-882-6221 |
| Estrella Burciaga PreK Director | 4950 McNutt Rd. Sunland Park, NM 88063 | 575-882-6234 |
| Silvia Lorenzo PreK Coordinator | 4950 McNutt Rd. Sunland Park, NM 88063 | 575-882-6426 |
| GAC On Track PreK | 4950 McNutt Rd. Sunland Park, NM 88063 | 575-882-6740 |
| Anthony On Track PreK | 609 Church St Anthony, NM 88021 | 575-882-1904 |
| Chaparral On Track PreK | 809 S. County Line Dr. Chaparral, NM 88081 | 575-824-5382 |
| La Mesa On Track PreK | 253 E. Chimuri La Mesa, NM 88044 | 575-233-3475 |
| Boone Transportation | 2102 Washington St Anthony, NM 88021 | 575-882-3613 575-882-3614 575-882-3615 |

Remote Learning Parent Handbook

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Dear On-Track Friends and Families,

Welcome to the GISD On-Track Early Childhood Program- we are all about learning!

The On-Track Early Childhood program has been in existence for over 15 years. We strive to give children the fundamental beginnings for a successful school journey. We firmly believe that early intervention and educational experiences make a difference in the lives of children and families.

This Family Handbook has been prepared to help answer any questions you might have specifically during this time of Remote Learning for Pre K. Teachers will review this document with you at your initial home visit. Our goal is that you become well acquainted with our program and all its benefits.

As we begin this new journey together, we look forward to working with you to develop your child's academic, social-emotional, and literacy skills. Please let us know how we can partner with you in meeting the needs of your child.

If you have any questions that are not answered, please feel free to call us at (575) 882-6426.

We look forward to partnering with you on your child's first learning experience.

Let's make it a great year together!

Sincerely,
Preschool Leadership Team

Gadsden Independent School District

On-Track Early Childhood Program

Family Handbook

Mascot

Pony

School Colors

Teal and Khaki

Philosophy

The Gadsden Early Childhood Program will provide the essentials your child needs for school success. A great emphasis is placed on helping students develop socially and emotionally so that they will be able to develop positive relationships with others. We also strive to help your child grow and develop early literacy skills building a solid foundation to prepare them for a successful school career.

Our goal is to help our students become confident, independent individuals. Through a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences, we will ensure that your child gains lifelong skills that will guarantee a “Winning Beginning”!

Goals

There are three main goals for the Gadsden On-Track Early Childhood Program:

- To provide a voluntary, quality Early Childhood Program that meets the physical, social-emotional, and cognitive needs of all students, through remote learning.
- Offer Early Childhood services that focus on increasing early literacy skills including oral language and school readiness in the home environment.
- Partner with parents to increase opportunities to engage children in appropriate activities to strengthen and reinforce best practices and

facilitate their child's learning at home.

Early Childhood Programs Eligibility

Preschool 3Y-Children that are 3 years old before September 1st of each school year

or

Children who have turned 3 years old and have been identified by a Part C agency such as New Mexico Family Infant, Toddler Program (NM FIT), various birth-to-three programs and/or agencies, or were identified through the district's Child Find process.

PreK 4Y-Children that are 4 years old before September 1st of each school year.

Children that live within the boundaries of Sunland Park, Desert View, Riverside, and Santa Teresa Elementary Schools will attend the GAC On-Track located at 4950 McNutt in Santa Teresa, NM the satellite Preschool centers at Sunland Park Elementary, Santa Teresa Elementary, Riverside Elementary or Santa Teresa High School.

Students that reside within the Berino, Gadsden, Loma Linda, La Union and Anthony Elementary School boundaries will attend the Anthony On-Track located at 609 Church St. in Anthony, NM or the satellite Preschool centers at La Union Elementary, Berino Elementary or Gadsden High School.

Children living in the Chamberino, La Mesa, San Miguel, Mesquite, Berino, and Vado areas will attend the La Mesa On-Track located at 253 Chimurri in La Mesa, NM.

Students that reside within the Chaparral, Yucca Heights, Desert Trail, and Sunrise Elementary School boundaries will attend the Chaparral On-Track

located at 800 County Line in Chaparral, NM or the satellite Preschool Center located at Desert Trail Elementary.

Satellite Gadsden Early Childhood Program Classrooms:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Preschool (3Y/4Y) | Sunland Park Elementary 305 Alta Vista Dr. Sunland Park, NM |
| Preschool (3Y) | Santa Teresa Elementary 201 Comerciantes Blvd. Santa Teresa, NM |
| Preschool (4Y) | Riverside Elementary 4085 McNutt Rd. Sunland Park, NM |
| Preschool (4Y) | Santa Teresa High School 9703, 100 Airport Rd. Santa Teresa, NM |
| Preschool (3Y) | La Union Elementary 875 Mercantile La Union, NM |
| Preschool (3Y) | Berino Elementary 92 Shrode Rd. Anthony, NM |
| Preschool (4Y) | Gadsden High School 6301 Highway 28 Anthony, NM |
| Preschool (3Y/4Y) | Desert Trail Elementary 310 E. Lisa Dr. Chaparral, NM |

Recruitment Procedures

In order to reach those most in need of early childhood services, the Gadsden Early Childhood Program has developed and implemented a recruitment process that is designed to actively inform all families with eligible children within the recruitment area. This process includes but is not limited to the following activities:

- Contact current Gadsden Early Childhood Program families with other age eligible children.
- Enlist current Gadsden Early Childhood Program families for referrals
- Contact current waiting list families to update their applications.
- Posting flyers within the community and replacing them as necessary.
- Work with district elementary schools to distribute flyers and other Gadsden Early Childhood Program information
- Partner with the *Gadsden Early Childhood Coalition*.

Selection

- The selection process is designed to ensure that the Gadsden Early Childhood Program enrolls children who are eligible and in the greatest developmental need of Preschool/PreK services.
- A developmental screening is utilized prior to enrollment to determine student strengths and needs in all areas of development. The Gadsden Early Childhood Program prioritizes by selecting students who display any delay in developmental abilities.

Enrollment Procedures

- Applications are taken continuously throughout the year online at:
 - http://www.gisd.k12.nm.us/gisd_registration_online
- In the event that the program is full, a waiting list will be made; if any slots should become available, eligible families from the waiting list will immediately be contacted by Gadsden Early Childhood office staff.
- During enrollment, families will make an appointment with front office staff to deliver required documents.

- Required documents are as follows:
 1. Proof of Age (or approved Affidavit)
 2. Proof of required immunizations
 3. Registration form
 4. Emergency card information
 5. Home Language Survey
- For disenrollment, parents or guardians are asked to complete a Disenrollment Statement to verify the child will no longer be enrolled in the program.

Procedures for Student Attendance/Release of Students

It is very important that you and your child login to our program's virtual learning platform - SeeSaw. Your daily login and participation ensure student attendance during remote learning. Each school day will include important skills that are essential for their future success. In the event that your child is absent (does not login) for multiple days each week, you will be contacted by a district representative to assist you with any difficulties you may be having. If persistent absenteeism occurs:

- Parents will be made aware of attendance policy during weekly check-in by teacher
- 3rd absence Instructional Specialist will contact family
- 4th absence a letter will be distributed to family
- 5th absence family will be referred to a social worker
- More than 5 absences a virtual conference will be conducted with parents, teacher, and Instructional Specialist

In the event that a campus has a waiting list, we may dis-enroll a student and put another in his place.

Days and Hours of Operation

The Gadsden Early Childhood Program offices will be open from 7:30am - 3:00pm daily (except Wednesdays). **Please be advised that in person visits are by appointment only.** To schedule an appointment, please call your Gadsden Early Childhood Program.

Curriculum

The Gadsden Early Childhood Program follows the FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality. FOCUS is the NM Public Education (PED) approved quality rating and improvement system that promotes high quality, inclusive programs and practices. The **New Mexico PreK Program Standards** and the **NM Early Learning Guidelines (ELGS)** serve as the foundation for our PreK curriculum.

Our program has currently adopted the SeeSaw learning platform during remote/hybrid learning. Teachers and Instructional Assistants will send videos and activities through this platform. An iPad will be provided to families for daily participation in remote/hybrid learning activities.

Accommodations may be made to ensure active participation. Materials will be available for pick up upon appointment.

PreK philosophy of teaching and learning is based on the notion of using Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). Using DAP the PreK day is centered around increasing areas of development through intentional planning and active participation on See Saw. Goals are made depending on student level of development, and teachers intentionally plan curriculum, develop strategies, and work with families to meet each students' needs.

Literacy Practices

The students are placed in a bilingual setting using English and Spanish. Stories, songs and games will be taught in both languages. Oral language

development, concept development and readiness skills will be taught in the child's native language throughout the daily schedule and routine.

Sample Remote Daily Schedule-4y Full Day

| Activity | Recommended Time | Platform |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| Morning Message | 15 min. | See Saw |
| Read Aloud | 15 min. (includes follow up activity) | See Saw |
| Outdoor Exploration | 30 min. | Link to GISD Pre K Website |
| Early Literacy | 15 - 30 min. (includes follow up activity) | See Saw |
| Creative Choice Time | 1 hr. | Link to GISD Pre K website |
| Caring & Sharing (Social Emotional Learning) | 15 min. | Link to GISD Pre K website |
| Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) | 15 - 30 min. (includes follow up activity) | SeeSaw |
| Music & Movement | 15 min. | SeeSaw |
| Lunch (Daily Conversation Starter) | 30 min | Link to GISD Pre K website |
| Creative Choice Time | 1 hr. | Link to GISD Pre K website |
| Outdoor Exploration | 30 min. | Link to GISD Pre K Website |
| Read Aloud | 15 min. | Child/parent choice |
| Snack | 15 min. | Child/parent choice |

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|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|
| End of Day Reflection | 15 min. | Child/parent choice |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|

Sample Remote Daily Schedule-3y Half Day

| Activity | Recommended Time | Platform |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| Morning Message | 15 min. | See Saw |
| Read Aloud | 15 min. (includes follow up activity) | See Saw |
| Outdoor Exploration | 30 min. | Link to GISD Pre K Website |
| Early Literacy | 15 - 30 min. (includes follow up activity) | See Saw |
| Creative Choice Time | 1 hr. | Link to GISD Pre K website |
| Caring & Sharing (Social Emotional Learning) | 15 min. | Link to GISD Pre K website |
| Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) | 15 - 30 min. (includes follow up activity) | SeeSaw |
| Music & Movement | 15 min. | SeeSaw |
| Lunch (Daily Conversation Starter) | 30 min | Link to GISD Pre K website |
| End of Day Reflection | 15 min. | Child/parent choice |

Assessments

There are many ways developmental growth and learning of each child is monitored. One tool for determining current levels of performance, known as **Ages and Stages Developmental Screening**, is conducted during the

first week(s) of school. This gives the instructional staff a reliable starting place for planning instruction. PreK teachers also use the **NM PreK Early Childhood Observational Tool (ECOT)** to monitor student progress. These assessments will be conducted virtually and are available in English and Spanish. The results of these assessments and observations are shared with parents during Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences.

Family/Teacher Conferences

Teachers and Instructional Assistants will communicate with families weekly during Remote Learning and share office hours indicating availability.

Three formal Family/Teacher conferences will occur throughout the school year. Families will be notified and will select a few preferred time slots. Teachers will try to accommodate families and set up an appointment with families on the designated Family/Teacher conference days. During the conference, teachers will share the Family/Teacher summary report and the family and teacher will discuss goals for the student. Teachers may share resources from NM PreK as students' goals are discussed.

Health Screenings and Procedures

The Public Education Department requires our students to have the following health screenings:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Dental
- Physical

The family must provide the office staff with evidence that your child has received these health screenings by a qualified provider.

Online/Safety

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends no more than one hour of screen time for preschool children. The recommended

activities being sent home should not exceed these recommendations. Please ensure that your child is always supervised by an adult when he/she is online.

Discipline

Our rules concerning discipline promote the health, safety, and well being of each child. We focus on making good choices, being respectful to our school, to others and to ourselves. A great emphasis is placed on teaching problem solving skills, dealing with feelings and emotions, and self-regulation.

Gadsden Early Childhood Program believes in positively promoting the social-emotional and behavioral development of ALL children. Any child enrolled at any Gadsden Early Childhood center will **NOT** be suspended, dis-enrolled, or expelled for any behavioral or disciplinary reasons. School personnel will work together with families in developing and implementing developmentally appropriate strategies to best support students. If concerning behaviors continue, school personnel and families may begin early intervention through the Child Find process .

During Remote Learning, Caring & Sharing activities will be included daily to support families in their child's social emotional development.

Family Engagement

Family engagement is a continuous process that increases active participation, communication and collaboration between parents, school and community with the goal of educating the whole child to ensure student achievement and success.

As a parent, you are encouraged to be involved with the Gadsden Early Childhood Program. Every day you have the opportunity to take part in your child's education.

These activities include:

- Virtual Home Visits- to meet the family and give an introduction to the Early Childhood program.
- Virtual Open House- Students and families visit the classrooms virtually
- Virtual Family/Teacher Conferences

There are many ways for families and staff from our Early Childhood program to communicate. Some forms of communication with your child's teacher include Seesaw, Remind and School Messenger.

Transition into Hybrid Model

The NM Department of Health (DOH) will determine when school campuses can reopen for Hybrid Model Instruction. Families will be notified 10 days prior to the transition to Hybrid Model.

Special Education Process of Identification

Gadsden ISD's Early Childhood program, works in collaboration with the district's Child Find Services in referring enrolled Preschool and PreK children for consideration for special education. The Early Childhood program provides inclusive settings for children with developmental delays and disabilities based on the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Screening All Early Childhood students will receive a virtual screening within the first three months of the school year using the Ages and Stages Developmental Screening. This screening includes developmental and social emotional screenings. Teachers will schedule a virtual meeting to conduct the Ages and Stages Developmental Screening and parent interview. The results of the screening will be reviewed during the first Parent/Teacher virtual conference in September.

Referral If parents and/or teachers have concerns regarding a student's development, referrals for further screenings may be made by calling the

district's Child Find office at (575) 882-6221. If a referral is made by someone other than the parent, parents will be notified.

Parents will also be contacted by district Child Find personnel to schedule a virtual appointment. Child Find Personnel will obtain written parent consent to conduct additional developmental screenings.

If screening results identify areas of concerns in any of the developmental areas, students may be referred for a comprehensive evaluation. Upon completion of the vision and hearing screening, Child Find personnel will obtain written consent to conduct a comprehensive evaluation from parents.

Evaluation Process Upon completion of a comprehensive evaluation by a diagnostician, parents will be contacted to schedule an eligibility meeting. At the eligibility meeting, the eligibility team (composed of parents, Early Childhood teacher, diagnostician and anyone who conducted an evaluation) will determine if the student is a student with disabilities. If the student is identified as a student with disabilities and is in need of special education services, an IEP (individualized educational plan) meeting will be convened.

IEP (individualized educational plan) meetings will be held by an IEP committee. An IEP committee may be composed of the student's parents/guardians, an early childhood teacher, the diagnostician as well as related service providers. If parents would like to have a translator or interpreter present, parents are encouraged to notify school staff as soon as possible to ensure availability of district personnel. The IEP Committee will work on developing goals for the student using the New Mexico Learning Guidelines and Essential Indicators.

Students who Enter with an IEP Traditionally students who enter our program with an IEP receive special education services in the least restrictive environment. Gadsden Early Childhood program believes in the Full Participation of EACH child. We believe every child brings diverse strengths. We will work to promote a sense of belonging, support positive social relationships, and work together with families to ensure success for every child.

Student Information/Records All student and family information within an IEP is considered confidential in nature. District staff who works directly with the student, will have access to a student's IEP. In order for anyone who does not work directly with a student to access student confidential information, written parent consent will need to be obtained.

The Early Childhood Program works with ancillary services (e.g. speech/language, physical and or occupational therapy) to provide services for students with an IEP. These services are provided to students as indicated on their IEP.

Meals at School

- Starting the first day of school, meals will be provided for pick up at any GISD Elementary campus. Students will be provided with an ID card to pick up student lunches at any GISD school from 11:00 AM-12:30 PM.

In Conclusion

The Gadsden Early Childhood Program values your commitment and ideas. We hope to build a positive relationship as you enter the Gadsden Independent School District. There are many ways for families to be part of our school community: become acquainted with the staff, attend virtual parent meetings, and participate in remote learning activities. Remember, you are always valued and appreciated.