

Island Park UFSD
Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Program
Parent Handbook
2023-2024



Island Park, New York 11558
www.ips.k12.ny.us

(To switch the website from English to Spanish or to any other language,
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The district's UPK program meets eight standard areas as required by Chapter 56, Part CC, Section 1 of the Laws of 2014 of the Statewide Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten grant. They are: 1) curriculum; 2) learning environment, materials and supplies; 3) family engagement and support; 4) staffing patterns; 5) teacher education and experience; 6) facility quality; 7) physical well-being, health and nutrition; and 8) partnerships with non-profit, community and educational institutions. The Parent Handbook explains how we accomplish this.

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Island Park Schools' Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program! This begins a wonderful school-year experience for you and your child. It also begins a very meaningful relationship between home and school that will last for ten years from pre-kindergarten through grade 8 in Island Park.

ELIGIBILITY

Island Park residents with a child who turns four years old on or before December 1 are eligible for UPK. Registration packets are available at the FXH Elementary School, 100 Radcliffe Road, Island Park, NY 11558. At the present time, the district accepts ALL age-appropriate children who are legal residents of Island Park into the program. However, should numbers increase significantly (of over 60 students), a random selection process would be established. This is consistent with the UPK Grant agreement that we have with the NYS Education Department.

HOURS

UPK is a full-day program with hours from 8:50 AM - 2:10 PM. Daily attendance by students is required.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Please visit the District Website for the School Opening Plan.

STANDARD 1: CURRICULUM

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN (UPK)?

The term *universal pre-kindergarten (UPK)* means that a pre-school program is available to all *eligible* children in our community. Funding is provided entirely through a competitive New York State Education Department (NYSED) UPK Grant; it is not supported with local tax dollars from property owners. Without this funding, the district would not have the money to run its own pre-kindergarten program. We are grateful to NYSED for the UPK grant, and we are committed to following all UPK regulations to ensure compliance. For more information, go to: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/regulations.html>.

WHY PRE-KINDERGARTEN?

Research shows that children benefit enormously from pre-school education. The benefits are both short-term and long-term. Young children who participate in high-quality pre-k programs enter school more ready to learn than their peers who do not. The transition to kindergarten, which focuses on the development of socialization skills, ability to follow directions, and understand routines, is facilitated for children with pre-school experience. Studies show that children who participate in high-quality early care education programs are far more likely to read at grade level and graduate from high school¹ and that quality full-day prekindergarten programs, in particular, are credited with producing significant increases in student performance in math and reading for participating students by the second grade as well as

¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts (2010). *The Costs of Disinvestment: Why States Can't Afford to Cut Smart Early Childhood Programs*. April 2010.

decreasing the rates of grade retention.² Research indicates that as much as one-half of the achievement gap is already established before students enter the first grade.³ Investing in high-quality prekindergarten programs has been demonstrated to have a positive long-term impact on children's life outcomes, narrow the achievement gap between poor and affluent youth, and provide benefits to children and taxpayers that outweigh their cost. High-quality prekindergarten programs, especially those that provide full-day services, will help those students stay on track to graduate from high school and, over the long term, significantly reduce costs for remedial education, social services, health and criminal justice programs.⁴ In addition, existing research supports the idea that early, high-quality exposure to multiple languages results in enhanced child language outcomes across each of the languages.⁵

WHAT PHILOSOPHY DRIVES THE DISTRICT'S UPK PROGRAM?

Island Park UFSD has a creative and innovative approach to its UPK program for four-year olds that is grounded in the Reggio Emilia philosophy and approach to teaching young children. "This approach puts the natural development of children as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment at the center of its philosophy. The foundation of the Reggio Emilia approach lies in its unique view of the child. In this approach, there is a belief that children have rights and should be given opportunities to develop their potential. Influenced by this belief, the child is beheld as beautiful, powerful, competent, creative, curious, and full of potential and ambitious desires. The child is also viewed as being an active constructor of knowledge." Hence, children are empowered to explore through a variety of activities (dramatic play, speaking, listening, blocks, computers, manipulatives for math and science, art, writing, music, etc). Moreover, rather than being seen as the target of instruction, children are seen as having the active role of an apprentice. This role also extends to that of a researcher. Much of Reggio Emilia instruction in schools takes place in the form of projects where children have opportunities to explore, observe, hypothesize, question, and discuss to clarify their understanding. Children are also viewed as social beings, and a focus is made on the child in relation to other children, the family, the teachers, and the community rather than on each child in isolation.

² Ackerman, D., and Barnett, W.S., 2006. Increasing the Effectiveness of Pre-K Programs. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, National Institute for Early Education Research.

³ David T. Burkam and Valerie Lee, "Inequality at the Starting Gate" (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2002); U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Entering Kindergarten: A Portrait of American Children When They Begin School: Findings from the Condition of Education" (Washington, DC: U.S Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000); Nicholas Zill and Jerry West, "NCES 2001-35" (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001).

⁴ Haskins, R. & Rouse, C. "Closing Achievement Gaps" *The Future of Children*. Policy Brief: Spring 2005.

⁵ Kovelman, I., Baker, S.A., and Petitto, L.A., 2008. Bilingual and Monolingual Brains Compared: A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Investigation of Syntactic Processing and a Possible "Neural Signature" of Bilingualism. *J Cogn Neurosci*. January; 20(1): 153-69.

WHAT CURRICULUM IS UTILIZED in UPK?

The primary purpose of our UPK program is to meet the health, nutritional, developmental, social, and educational needs of four-year old children. We accomplish this by providing learning experiences in which children play, listen, talk, sing, share and cooperate as well as develop individual interests and academic foundational skills in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts. The curriculum follows the **NYS Next Generation Standards for Early Learning** curriculum (www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/standards/). We also use the **New York State Early Learning Guidelines**, which are designed to help all early childhood professionals help improve the quality of early childhood education and the lives of young children by enhancing students' knowledge and skills with the resources recommended. **The New York State Early Learning Guidelines:**

- Lists the developmental milestones children attain between birth and age 5.
- Serves as a resource to refer to when there is a need to know how children develop.
- Provides sample strategies to help bridge one's knowledge of child development and practice.

Circle Time

Circle time provides time to share information about each other and to read aloud to students. Introducing children to the printed word, richly illustrated picture books, and well-written stories instill a lifelong love of reading. Children begin to understand the rhythm of language, the timing of appropriate dialogue and story comprehension when adults read aloud to them daily.

As children begin to understand the basics of printed language, they become emergent readers. Children learn left to right and top to bottom tracking so that they understand that print is read from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page. Activities help students understand that letters are symbols, which stand for different sounds, that sounds can be blended together in specific sequences to create words, and that several words in a string make a sentence. While this may all seem very simple to an adult, for a child these discoveries are important milestones in their becoming successful independent readers. We often label things in the classroom to help children learn to identify items/places/centers. We encourage parents to do the same at home.

Reading Activities

Teachers provide an environment rich in print to help children become emergent readers. We ensure a solid foundation in the basics of reading and literacy. The Wilson Reading System, **Fundations**, is introduced (Level 1); this is continued in Kindergarten. Through the first two units of *Fundations* decoding (reading) and encoding (handwriting/ writing) skills are taught. Our **Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ (FPC)** is a cohesive, multi-text approach to literacy instruction for all students in grades PreK. The System is designed to support whole-group, small-group and independent learning opportunities including: interactive read-aloud, shared reading, phonics/spelling/word study lessons, guided reading, book clubs, and independent reading collections. We also use:

- Interactive LED Board and iPads
- Classroom Reading Center and Library with Big Books, Picture Books, etc.

- Flip Charts
- Board Games
- Computer and Online Literacy Games
- Nursery Rhymes and Poems Across the Curriculum
- Leveled Books to Practice Reading

Mathematics

NY State Math Modules are used which emphasize hands-on preschool math activities to help preschoolers get acquainted with counting, patterns and more.

Science and Social Studies

The UPK program includes six units of study in science and social studies that focus on exploration and problem solving using the Reggio Emilia approach. They are: 1) Me and My Family, 2) Me and My Friends, 3) Wind and Water, 4) Wonderful World of Color, 5) Shadows and Reflections, and 6) Things that Grow.

ESL - A number of our curriculum guides contain ESL components:

- *Get Set for School Language and Literacy*
- *Get Set for School Readiness and Writing*
- *Get Set for School Numbers and Math*
- *Wilson FOUNDATIONS*

The Arts

There are many opportunities for students to participate in movement activities in gym, outdoor play, indoor play. Students are also invited into the Steven L Foster Auditorium of the Lincoln Orens Middle School to attend special concerts and play performances.

Report Cards

Parents receive Progress Reports during the fall, winter, and spring. Progress Reports align to the Standards in the *NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core* curriculum as follows:

- Domain 1: Approaches to Learning
- Domain II: Physical Development and Health
- Domain III: Social and Emotional Development
- Domain IV: Communication, Language and Literacy
 - Communication
 - English Language Arts and Literacy
 - English Language Arts and Literature
- Domain V: Cognition and Knowledge of the World
 - Mathematics and The Arts
 - Science, Social Studies, and Technology are also integrated into instruction; however, UPK students are not formally assessed in these areas on the Report Card.

HOW IS A TYPICAL DAY IN UPK ORGANIZED?

Sample Daily Schedule

The day is 5 hours and 20 minutes. Approximately one-third of the day provides time for child-initiated activities.

*This is a sample schedule that is subject to change based on students' needs and special opportunities to accommodate visiting artists and enrichment programs.

8:50 am	Arrival Hang up Outerwear; Wash Hands
8:50 - 9:15 am	Breakfast Attendance; Free Time at Tables Child-Initiated Activities, e.g., Books, Puzzles, Manipulatives, etc.
9:15 - 9:30 am	Circle Time Greetings; Morning Message; Calendar/Weather; Introduction/Review of Theme; Word Wall; Interactive Read Aloud
9:35 - 10:15 am	English Language Arts Reading Readiness and Handwriting Activities
10:15 -10:55 am	Center Time – Focus on Theme and Socialization Child-Initiated Activities, e.g., Blocks, Dramatic Play, Technology (iPad Apps, Listening Station), Fine Motor Manipulatives in Math, Science, Music, Writing, Creative Arts Centers
10:55 -11:30 am	Mathematical Practices Numbers, Counting and Cardinality, Introduction to Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Measurement and Data Collection, Geometric Shapes
11:30 am -12:00 pm	Wash Hands, Lunch and Socialization (Child-Initiated Conversation)
12:00 -12:30 pm	Recess with Outside Play/Inside Play (Child-Initiated Selection of Equipment)
12:30 -12:45 pm	Quiet Time Child-Initiated Selection of Quiet Time Area
12:45 -1:00 pm	Fountas and Pinnell Shared Reading
1:00 - 1:30 pm	Reggio Emilia-Inspired Creativity and Imagination Projects Theme-related Problem Solving Activities in Social Studies and Science through the Arts in Small and Large group (s) (Q1, Q2, Q4).....
1:30 - 1:45 pm	Wash Hands/ Snack and Child-Initiated Selection Free Play
1:45 - 2:00 pm	Music & Movement/ Physical Movement/ Yoga & Stretching Child-Initiated Activities and Songs, e.g., Puppets, Finger Plays, Nursery Rhymes and Physical Movement Activities Physical Education (twice every four days Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
2:00 - 2:10 pm	Prepare for Dismissal Pack up; Line up

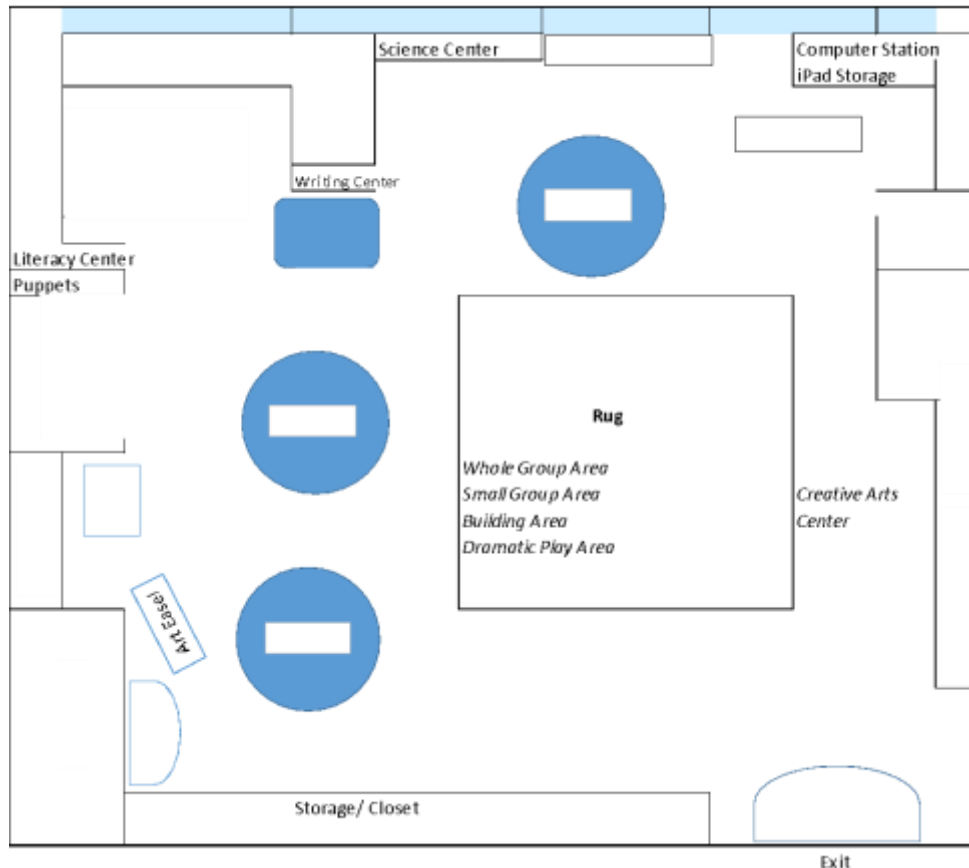
Teachers and Teacher Assistants greet children as they disembark the bus to enter school, hang up their coats, and settle in. Children begin with table-top activities of their choosing until breakfast is served. Afterwards, there is circle time and a read-aloud. Play is outside, weather permitting. Otherwise, it is in the classroom where games and movement exercises take place. A Sample Daily Schedule is provided above. The schedule may change due to students' needs and programs from visiting artists.

STANDARD 2: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

WHAT DOES THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT LOOK LIKE?

There are three UPK classrooms with equally cheerful, child-centered learning environments. Each classroom has a similar layout. Technology is fully integrated into teaching and learning; there is an interactive LED Board in each classroom along with iPads. Every classroom has its own lavatory.

Sample Classroom Floor Plan



WHAT MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES ARE USED?

The equipment, materials, and supplies in our UPK classrooms are organized for whole group, small group, individual, and center work. Equipment includes but is not limited to: tables, chairs, bookcases, whiteboards, LED Boards, iPads, playhouse kitchens, etc. Materials include but are not limited to: artifacts, books, big books, workbooks, easels, art media, musical instruments, sand/water tubs, building blocks, math manipulatives, letter manipulatives, etc. and all necessary resources for center activities. Supplies include but are not limited to: paper, drawing and writing tools, paints and paintbrushes, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, stickers, etc. All UPK classes have similar equipment, materials, and supplies.

STANDARD 3: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

WHAT IS THE UPK CALENDAR?

The program operates according to the district's calendar (185 days). Classes are 5 days per week throughout the school year except where holidays are noted. (See district website. To switch the website from English to Spanish or to any other language, go to the pull down menu in the lower right corner of the page and "Select Language.") Children MUST attend every day and participate in school on a full-time basis. A monthly activity calendar is distributed to parents on Flyer Friday (see below) preceding the new month. It is also posted on the district website. The calendar lists major activities, events, and parent meetings for the month as well as the monthly Reggio theme. Please read the calendar carefully and talk to your child about the goings on in his/her classroom.

ARE UPK CHILDREN EXPECTED TO ATTEND DAILY?

Research shows that students who are chronically absent in both pre-k and kindergarten often continue to be chronically absent in later years and are more likely to be retained and have lower achievement.⁶ Thus, parents of UPK students must take attendance seriously and make every effort to have their child in school; only illness constitutes a reason for absence. You will be called by the school nurse if your child is absent. A note from the parent or doctor must be provided concerning a child's absence/illness when he/she returns to school.

IS TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED?

The district provides bus service to all Pre-K students; booster seats are used. It is the district's preference for students to ride the bus to and from school. If parents choose to drive or walk students to school, they must use the Audubon Blvd traffic circle on Audubon Blvd behind the Lincoln Orens Middle School. Pre-K students have their own entrance and do NOT enter at the main entrance at the front of the building on Trafalgar Blvd; the main entrance is for middle school students.

If your child will be arriving to school on bus but going home by car with a parent or the parent of a friend for a play date, children MUST have a note to this effect in the morning and present it to the class teacher. We expect children to travel home the way they arrive; NO CHILD WILL BE PERMITTED TO GO HOME USING A DIFFERENT FORM OF TRANSPORTATION WITHOUT A WRITTEN NOTE FROM A PARENT/GUARDIAN that given to the class teacher upon arrival. If your child does not use the bus each day, he/she will not be permitted to use it occasionally. Please take advantage of the bus service!

⁶ Connolly and Olson. "Early Elementary Performance and Attendance" (2012).

HOW DO ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS?

Communication between school and home as well as home and school is of paramount importance to us. District administrators, teachers, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), and Public Library communicate with parents in a variety of ways. These include:

- District website: www.ips.k12.ny.us
- Public Library website: <http://www.islandparklibrary.org/>
- Electronic signs outside each school building and the Island Park Public Library
- Weekly letters, notes, memos, and flyers distributed on Flyer Friday in hardcopy and electronic formats; electronic formats of all communications are on the district website and in email blasts to parents' email accounts and/or to their smart phones
- Monthly UPK Newsletter (hardcopy and electronic format)
- Annual UPK Parent Survey

Also, letting a teacher know about any changes in your child's sleeping, eating, or behavior patterns can really make a difference in the teacher being able to manage how a child may interact with friends and/or any activities that are planned for the day. Remember, we are partners in making each day at school the best it can be. Please call the teacher or write the teacher a note, if you have important information to share. Our district has many professionals who are also available to you. These include a psychologist, social worker, ESL teacher, speech teacher, occupational therapist, etc, to name just a few.

DOES THE DISTRICT WEBSITE HAVE A PRE-K QUICK LINK? (www.ips.k12.us)

Yes! Pre-Kindergarten has a quick link on the home page that takes you directly to the Pre-Kindergarten webpage and hyperlinks such as:

- Approved Classroom Snacks
- Daily Schedule
- Pre-K Lunch Menu Calendar
- Pre-K School Calendar
- Pre-K Newsletter
- The ABC's of Universal Pre-K (UPK) ppt.
- Welcome to the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program
- Universal Pre-Kindergarten Parent Meeting and Student Registration
- Student Wellness Policy
- Parent Workshops: Ways to Support Your Pre-K Child
- UPK Parent Survey

WHAT PARENT ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS SHOULD I PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN/ATTEND?

There are several meetings throughout the year to support parents in their efforts to provide the best prekindergarten experience possible for their four-year old child. These include but are not limited to:

- UPK Student Registration (February)
- Parent Meeting for Students Entering Pre-K in September (March/April)
- Back-to-School Parent Meeting for UPK (September)
- Parent Workshops: Ways to Support Your Pre-K Child (See website.)
- Parent-Teacher Conferences (Fall and Spring)

- Kindergarten Parent Orientation for Pre-K Parents (June)

PTA membership is open to all parents/guardians who are interested in the education, health, and welfare of their child. Becoming an active member of PTA benefits both you and your child. PTA supports parents' efforts to create a home environment that encourages learning while nurturing their child's physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. The PTA sponsors many parent meetings, parent workshops, and fundraising events. Monies raised support field trips, special activities, and cultural arts programs for all students, including some for UPK. For more information, see the PTA webpage on the district website.

WHAT IS "FLYER FRIDAY"?

All communications with parents from the teacher or the principal are given to the children to take home with them in a folder every Friday. This same correspondence is available electronically on the district's website. Parents can sign-up on the website to have all communications distributed electronically in an email blast that can be sent via email on a smart phone. Contact our webmaster, Mr. Martin, for this.

IS THERE A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO PRE-K PARENTS?

Our teachers (Ms. Giarratano, Ms. Nappie, and Ms. Williams) alternate writing the monthly UPK Newsletter and capture the goings on that are common to all three classes. Information is shared about teaching and learning. Special features include a quote that is consistent with the mission and philosophy of the program to help you grow in your understanding of the values and objectives embraced by the district and its UPK teachers. There is also a Parent Tip of the Month as well as a special word of Thank You to a member of our community who has made a difference to the lives of our UPK children during the month.

HOW DO I CONTACT ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS? (<http://www.ips.k12.ny.us>)

If you have any questions, as you begin this experience, please refer to our website for contact/directory information (go to Quick Links and select Pre-K) or refer to the table below:

Person	Role	Telephone	Questions About ...
Mrs. Linda Quigley	Secretary	434-2670/71	Registration
Mrs. Kelly Angelo	Transportation Director	434-2607	Bus
Mrs. Rachel Brosokas	School Nurse	434-2635	Medical Form, Vaccinations, Food Allergies, Illness/Attendance
Mrs. Nancy Marracolla	Food Service Manager	434-2622	Dietary Needs

Mrs. Allison Janofsky	Social Worker	434-2640	Attendance and Family Matters
Mr. Jacob Russum	Director of Pupil Personnel Services	434-2620	UPK Program/Special Education Needs
Mr. Michael Martin	Webmaster	434-2617	Electronic Telephone or Text Messages
Ms. Alexis Giarratano Ms. Jeanie Nappie Ms. Melissa Williams	Teacher Teacher Teacher	434-2670/71	Class Issue, Change in Bus Pick-up or Drop-off, Curriculum Question
Ms. Allison Lynch	Speech Teacher	434-2630/31	Speech Concerns
Ms. Stacy Berkowitz	ESL Teacher	434-2670/71	English Language Support Services
Mr. Adam Frankel	Principal, FXH School	434-2670/71	UPK Program
Dr. Alison Offerman-Celentano	Assistant Superintendent	434-2600	UPK Grant/UPK Program

WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK MY CHILD NEEDS SERVICES?

All children are formally screened during the first 4-6 weeks of school. Screenings assess developmental indicators: motor (gross/fine), concepts, language, self-help, and social development) using the DIAL for preschool; language (receptive and expressive language, language content, speech articulation) using the CELF for preschool; cognitive ability/maturity using the DAP as well as eyesight and hearing. Parents are notified if their child demonstrates a developmental delay and may benefit from support services.

However, **parents do not have to wait until their child is screened.** If you are concerned about your child's development, you can contact the teacher, principal or the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and arrange to have your child further evaluated. If further evaluation is necessary, it is free of charge; the District wants to ensure the well-being of its resident children.

HOW ARE CHILDREN TRANSITIONED FROM PRE-KINDERGARTEN TO KINDERGARTEN?

The school district's administrators, teachers, and support personnel help parents and students prepare for this important period of change. Building relationships, partnering, and collaborating are extremely important to facilitate the transition of prekindergarten students to kindergarten. This is a time of great change for children, parents, families, and teachers in which new relationships, new expectations, and new competencies must be developed. The district has a comprehensive plan for supporting its pre-kindergarten students and their families as they transition into a K-8 system. Some of the transition events that are planned for students include:

- UPK Information Meeting for Parents (April/May)

- UPK Teachers' Visit to Kindergarten Classes (April/May)
- Kindergarten Teachers' Visits to UPK Classes (April/May)
- UPK Students' Visit to Kindergarten Classes (May)
- Kindergarten Parent Orientation for UPK Parents (June)
- UPK and Kindergarten Teacher Meeting to Create Kindergarten Classes (June)
- Stepping Up Ceremony for UPK Students and Families (June)

In addition, the Island Park Public Library summer reading program helps those who have attended the Pre-K program retain all that they learned during the year over the summer; the librarian visits in June and registers all children in this program, which is free of charge.

STANDARD 4: STAFFING PATTERNS

WHO ARE THE PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH MY CHILD?

Each class has a teacher and two paraprofessionals (NYSED Teacher Assistants). The district has a full-time Director of Pupil Personnel Services with support services provided by a social worker, behavior therapist (BCBA certified), one psychologist, one speech pathologist, counselor, and two adaptive physical education teachers. Part-time support services are provided by an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. A full-time school nurse that will provide health support to UPK children and their parents. A district physician (MD) is employed by the district on an as needed basis. All these professionals are committed to planned collaboration efforts with the class teachers and parents to ensure UPK children progress according to developmental and social expectations and standards as well as to provide high quality academic programming. On occasion, district professionals may change; however, the district ensures that continuity remains for the children.

STANDARD 5: TEACHER EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

WHAT ARE THE CREDENTIALS OF THE TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS?

The Island Park UPK teachers have college degrees and hold dual NYSED certifications: Childhood Education Birth-Grade 2 and Students with Disabilities Birth-Grade 2; they also have early childhood teaching experience. Our three teachers are: Alexis Giarratano, Jean Nappie and Melissa Williams. The paraprofessionals are Certified NYS Education Department approved Teaching Assistants (Level 1, 2 or 3). Certification requires they pass the New York State Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills test (NYSATAS), have two years of college education with a concentration or major in education, psychology, or social work, have successfully completed the Child Abuse Identification, School Violence Prevention and Intervention, and Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) workshops.

Island Park UPK teachers and Teacher Assistants see themselves as learners and researchers. They are involved in prekindergarten research to better understand their students. The most effective action research results in opportunities to improve learning and engagement. Thus, the goal is to collect and

analyze data from several sources in the school environment (indoors and outdoors) and then develop instruction that is driven by evidence. In this way, teachers are always improving their teaching and the students' learning.

In addition, teachers work from the ***Core Body of Knowledge: New York State's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators***. This provides guidance to professionals working directly with young children and any others so that they may elevate and improve the quality of early childhood education. Teachers have Individual Professional Performance Plans and are observed teaching by administrators who utilize the Robert J. Marzano Framework for Teacher Evaluation.

STANDARD 6: FACILITY QUALITY

WHERE IS THE UPK PROGRAM LOCATED?

The UPK program is coordinated through the Francis X Hegarty (FXH) elementary school under the supervision of the principal, Mr. Adam Frankel, in the Village of Island Park. If you have any questions, for any reason, whether or not school is in session, call the FXH School, (516) 434-2670/1. The UPK program, however, is housed within the Lincoln Orens Middle School (LOMS) building at 150 Trafalgar Blvd, Island Park, NY 11558; this is in the Barnum Island section of the Island Park community.

WHAT PROTOCOLS DOES THE DISTRICT FOLLOW TO ENSURE FACILITY SAFETY?

The district meets all applicable fire safety and building codes and any applicable facility requirements of NYS and Nassau County. At all times, it maintains building and classroom space in a manner that ensures and protects the health and safety of its students. Building and fire inspections are conducted annually as are air quality assessments. The district conducts requisite fire drills, evacuations, sheltering off-site, lockdown drills, and lockout drills.

STANDARD 7: PERSONAL WELL-BEING, HEALTH AND NUTRITION

HOW DOES THE VISITOR POLICY MAINTAIN PERSONAL SAFETY?

All visitors, including parents, must sign-in at the main entrance of the building with the security aide. Parents and visitors are NOT allowed to enter the building through the student entrance on Audubon Blvd. The district has a visitor management system that requires visitors to show formal identification such as a driver's license. Personal Safety is taught in school so that children remain safe at all times. They are also taught how to respond to situations in which they do not have parental permission to participate or to adults with whom they are not familiar.

The LOMS School Nurse, Mrs. Rachel Brosokas, attends to the needs of the UPK children. Parents should call Mrs. Brosokas if their child has a medical issue to discuss this with her. Parents must have their child's physician complete the district's Medical Form and return it to the class teacher who will give it to

Mrs. Brosokas. The district also has a Food Service Manager, Mrs. Nancy Marracolla. If your child has a food allergy, please write a note and/or schedule an appointment with both Mrs. Brosokas and Mrs. Marracolla. The district has a Student Wellness Policy that addresses 1) Foods and Beverages Available in School, 2) Students and Adults with Severe or Life-Threatening Allergies, 3) Use of Epinephrine Auto-Injector Devices (Epi-Pens) in the School Setting, 4) Physical Activity, and 5) Nutrition Education. Please go to the district website (www.ips.k12.ny.us; select District and then Policies/Procedures).

HOW ARE EMERGENCY CLOSINGS HANDLED?

If severe weather conditions or any other emergency force a delayed opening or closing of school, announcements are made on the district website <http://www.ips.k12.ny.us> and on television (channels 12 and 61). You are also notified via ConnectEd, our telephone messaging system, if you have provided your home and/or cell phone telephone number(s) on the Emergency Contact Information Form. Text and email notifications are also possible; however, please check that your cell phone plan includes these as there may be fees for which you will be responsible.

ARE MEALS AND SNACKS PROVIDED?

Meals are provided for UPK children. These include breakfast, lunch, and snack. Breakfast is served upon arrival each morning. Lunch is served at 11:45 AM. Students may NOT bring their own food to school. We eat nutritionally balanced, wholesome foods for both meals and snacks. These are consistent with the district's Student Wellness Policy. See the district website (District, Policies/Practices) <http://www.ips.k12.ny.us/policiespractices>.

Students will engage in “family style” mealtimes. Teachers and food service helpers encourage children to eat the variety of foods offered. Teachers and/or Teacher Assistants eat with the children in the classroom. Children and adults use this time to share their experiences with each other. Manners are taught and practiced during this time as well. Please notify the school nurse of any food allergies or restrictions your child may have. The district's food service coordinator, Mrs. Nancy Marracolla, meets students' dietary needs. A monthly calendar of meals is posted on the district website.

<http://www.ips.k12.ny.us/prek>

IS MEALTIME AN INSTRUCTIONAL TIME?

Teachers and paraprofessionals participate in mealtime by sitting with the children at the table; participating, facilitating and guiding in conversations; modeling appropriate mealtime behavior and facilitating problem solving and turn taking. The mealtime setting allows for conversations between adult/child and as child/child in guided topics of interest; relaxing conversations about books that encourage new vocabulary; and accommodations for children with special needs.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD IS ILL OR HAS AN ACCIDENT WHEN PLAYING?

If your child is ill or has an accident while playing, your child will be escorted by the Teacher Assistant to the school nurse's office, and you will be called. It is essential that you provide emergency contact information to the teachers with the two names and current telephone/cell phone numbers of family members or close friends who can collect your child from school in either one of these events, should you not be available. Be sure these people know that you have given their contact information to the school.

STANDARD 8: PARTNERSHIPS WITH NON-PROFIT, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

IS THERE AN AFTER-SCHOOL/CARE PROGRAM?

The Friedberg JCC in Oceanside offers an organized after-school program running until 6PM each day. At dismissal, UPK children can take the school bus to this program located at the F.X. Hegarty Elementary School, if parents have contracted for this fee-based after-care program.

WHAT DOES THE ISLAND PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY HAVE TO OFFER?

The Island Park Public Library (<http://www.islandparklibrary.org/>) has a wonderful children's room and offers many programs including story hours, special activities, book clubs, visiting authors, etc. While the library has an extensive collection of fiction and non-fiction books for children, like most libraries these days, it is a community center with many multi-media resources for children and their families. Island Park residents also enjoy free admission passes to museums throughout Long Island and New York City by taking advantage of the public library's Museum Pass Program. To make use of the program, individuals must have a valid Island Park Library card in good standing. To check availability of the passes, please call the Library (516) 432-0122. In addition, the children's room librarian visits our pre-school classes in the fall to acquaint the children with the public library and again in the spring to introduce and register them for the Summer Reading Program. The district provides summer reading lists for all children and coordinates with the Public Library to ensure that these books are available for children to borrow. We encourage you to obtain library cards for yourself and your child.

WHAT IS PARENTS FOR MEGAN'S LAW (PFML)?

Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victims Center of Long Island is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the prevention and treatment of child abuse. Violence directed against victims is an abuse of power, often directed at our most vulnerable. Parents for Megan's Law is committed to delivering education programs aimed at protecting children. The Island Park school district works with representatives from PFML and provides educational programs to parents (annual January PTA meeting) and students that are coordinated with the school social worker and health teacher.

WHAT DOES THE ISLAND PARK RECREATION DEPARTMENT HAVE TO OFFER?

The Island Park Recreation Department provides opportunities for pre-kindergarten children to participate in special events, free of charge. These events include, but are not limited to, the Fall Family Fun Festival, Halloween Parade, Egg Hunt, etc.

DOES THE DISTRICT COLLABORATE WITH OR HAVE A PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS?

The district collaborates with Molloy College (Speech, Language and Hearing Center). Professors and graduate students help teachers enhance their knowledge of speech and language development in young children.