

Arlington County Department of Parks & Recreation

Creative Preschool Program



PARENT HANDBOOK



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
AND RECREATION

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Creative Preschool Important Numbers

Registration & Information..... (703) 228-4747
Habla Español (703) 228-4747
Inclusion Support..... (703) 228-4736
Volunteer! (703) 228-4724

Program Phone Numbers

Madison Preschool.....(703) 228-5316
Langston Brown Preschool(703) 228-4770
Carlin Hall Preschool.....(B)(703) 379-1390
Gunston Preschool.....(703) 228-6981
Fairlington Preschool(703) 228-6430

Early Childhood Unit Staff

Kimberly Baldini, Unit Manager.....(703) 228-4742
kbaldini@arlingtonva.us
Carly Moser, Programmer.....(703)228-7394
cmoser@arlingtonva.us

Or find us online at:

parks.arlingtonva.us
Search: Tots



ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
AND RECREATION

Department of Parks & Recreation
Early Childhood Unit
300 North Park Drive
Arlington, VA 22203
PreSchoolPrograms@arlingtonva.us

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is our pleasure to welcome your children to our Creative Preschool Programs. Our programs offer a safe environment for children to Learn, Grow and Play.

We are also committed to continuing our efforts on nurturing all children's developmental assets through a variety of recreational experiences. In our Creative Preschoolers program children learn through play!

We have caring, responsible staff that make it all happen. They are fully committed to our mission and to making your child's experience positive.

Thank you for choosing our programs and we look forward to a great school year!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Baldini

Kimberly Baldini
Early Childhood Unit Manager

National Accreditation



The Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation is one of 100 agencies nationwide to have received national accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). National accreditation requires park and recreation agencies to meet 144 standards representing elements of effective and efficient park and recreation operations. The Commission is comprised of representatives from the National Recreation and Park Association, the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, and the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials.

Arlington County Vision

Arlington will be a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community with secure, attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important.

Department of Parks and Recreation Vision

Arlington will be the happiest, healthiest place to live, learn, work and play!

Early Childhood Unit Vision

Parks & Recreation Early Childhood Services will be the happiest, healthiest place for kids to **L**earn, **G**row and **P**lay!

Early Childhood Unit Philosophy

The Creative Preschoolers Program is a recreational-social program. The ratio of staff to participants is 1 to 8.

Our philosophy is that children learn best at this age through play. Our programs provide opportunities for children to explore art, music, literature, science, social studies and nature organized around a weekly theme. We believe that children at this age learn through hands-on exploration of their world, so we will provide a safe and stimulating setting in which to do this.

They benefit most when given the opportunity to discover, imagine and express their original ideas in an environment where the individual's personal contributions are highly cherished. Our ultimate goal is to develop your child's self-confidence and decision making skills. We look forward to a successful and challenging year.

Program Information

Hours of Operation

The program hours are 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Parents are requested to respect these hours. Due to the responsibilities of the staff, children may not be dropped off before the opening time or kept later than the scheduled hours. In the morning, your child's transition will be easiest if arriving on time with classmates. Likewise, when the door opens at 12:30 p.m., your child will be looking for you, so please do your best to be prompt. If you have an emergency, please contact us right away, we will never leave your child alone.

Sharing or Show & Tell

(*varies according to location)

Your child will have an opportunity to show and tell about a special item that they bring from home. Some weeks we will suggest a type of item that fits with the theme of the week, but anything your child wishes to share with the class will be welcome. Please have your child put the item in his/her cubby when you arrive so it will be a surprise at sharing time. If your child forgets to bring something he/she can share a short story about a favorite vacation, their pet or their breakfast that day. This is an opportunity for your child to express themselves verbally with the group. No one has to share if he/she doesn't wish to.

Birthdays

You are welcome to bring in a special treat to celebrate your child's birthday. Please let us know in advance.

Typical Daily Schedule

(*Varies according to location)

9:30 –10:20 a.m.

Sign-In and Centers

Children will choose from several “centers” or toys available.

10:20 –10:30 a.m.

Clean Up Time

10:30 –10:50 a.m.

Circle Time

A time to talk about our weekly theme, read stories, sing songs, music, movement, do finger plays and post numbers on the calendar.

10:50 –11:00 a.m.

Bathroom and Hand Washing

11:00 –11:20 a.m.

Snack Time

11:20 –11:50 a.m.

Outdoor Play

Alternative indoor activities will be offered if outdoor play is not possible due to inclement weather or Code Red/Purple.

11:50 –12:15 p.m.

Group Activities

A time for art, science, music and special visitors.

12:15 –12:30 p.m.

Closing Circle

A time to review our day, talk about tomorrow and sing our goodbye songs.

Parent Information

Signs will be posted to identify the program location within the Community Center.

Each program will have a parent information area where participants/parents sign in and out. Posted at this site will be notices, permission slips, flyers and reminders for parents. Field trip locations will be posted and visible at the program site.

At the beginning of each month, a calendar of activities will be distributed at each program site, as well as emailed to parents/guardians who provide email addresses on the PIR form. Parents/guardians are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the monthly activity calendar so they are aware of field trip dates, special events and reminders.

Diapers and Potty Training

Please let us know if your child is potty training. Your child should be reliably trained before you send him/her to class in underpants. If you are potty training we can assist by offering your child several opportunities throughout the day to use the toilet. We suggest that any training or recently trained children be taken to the potty in the classroom as part of the morning arrival routine. Pull-ups or pull-ups with underpants over them are acceptable at any time. Once your child can stay dry all day at home, you may bring him/her to class in underpants and **let us know** your child is not wearing pull-ups or diapers. If a child has a lot of accidents in class, you may be asked to revert to pull-ups during class time *depending on how and why the accidents happen, and your child's apparent comfort level with our bathroom at school.* Potty training is an individual process and we will consult with you and treat each case individually.

What to Bring & Wear to the Program

Your Child's Clothing

There will be daily outdoor activities, weather permitting. Children should wear comfortable, seasonally appropriate clothing and closed-toe athletic shoes (tennis shoes, sneakers, etc). In the warmer months, please no flip-flops or sandals. Please be sure to mark your child's name on all coats, hats and mittens.

All art materials are water-based, but sometimes may stain clothing. We have smocks, but sometimes accidents happen. The County is unable to replace or reimburse for soiled clothing.

Your Child's Cubby

Please bring in an extra set of clothing for your child to stay at the program. Also bring diapers and wipes if needed. Remember to change clothes seasonally. Check your child's cubby each day for completed crafts and artwork.

Items from Home

If your child wants an object from home to feel more comfortable in class, such as a blanket or stuffed animal, you may bring one. Please let your child know that the other children may want to touch it as well, or that it may get dirty. Also, your child will be responsible for his/her own belongings on the playground if they are taken outside with us. Experience has taught us that most children do not need transitional objects at school, but we want to express our support for those children who do need them.

Arrival and Attendance

Arrival to the program

Please wait outside of the preschool door until it is opened at 9:30am. Every day your child must be brought inside the building and signed in by a designated adult.

Parents/Guardians must sign your child in each day, even when the parent is staying onsite for the day.

Attendance

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform program staff when your child won't be attending the program or will be late to the program. Please communicate this information in a timely manner.

Pick Up and Departure

Pick Up/Sign Out

Please pick up your child/ren no later than 12:30pm. Parents/guardians are required to sign participants out. Staff members will release children only to those authorized individuals who are listed on the PIR forms.

Early Pick Up Policy

There may be situations that arise when your child will need to be picked up early. Some situations include but are not limited to: the child is sick and displaying symptoms described in the "Children's Health" section, the child is exhibiting aggressive behaviors that are a safety concern to himself/herself or other participants, the child has been injured, etc.

In the event that your child must be picked up before the end of the program, staff will contact you directly and request you pick your child up early. It is the responsibility of the parent to be available for these phone calls and to pick up your child promptly. If you cannot be reached, staff will call the child's emergency

contact to come pick up the child. The “Late Pick Up Policy” will apply to parents who do not pick up their child as requested.

Unauthorized Individuals

Staff will not honor verbal instructions given to them by an unauthorized individual who may arrive to pick up your child. If you have an emergency, please send a signed note with your child, or call the program location and speak directly with the program Teacher or Assistant Teacher regarding who will be picking up your child. Staff will require the adult picking up the child to show proof of ID that matches parent instructions.

Late Pick Up Policy

We ask that children be picked up promptly at the end of the program day (12:30pm). Program staff are not paid to remain after the program ends and they cannot transport children in their own vehicles. If you are running late please call the program location and let the staff know what time you will arrive.

- Parents will receive a warning letter after the first late arrival.
- Parents who are late again will receive a second letter which will serve as a final warning.
- If a parent is late after receiving the second letter, the child will be suspended from the program for 3 days.
- Continued delays in picking up your child may result in your child being removed from the program and/or a referral to Child Protective Services.

Children's Health

We care deeply about the health and welfare of your child and of all the children who are in our care each day. It is our responsibility to safeguard all of them and to do what we can to protect them and prevent the spread of disease.

A child shall not be allowed to attend a program for the day if he/she has:

- A temperature over 100 degrees
- Recurrent vomiting or diarrhea
- A Communicable Disease (see pg. 23)

Your child should be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child has any of these symptoms or conditions while at the program, the staff will contact you and ask you to take the child home until the child is healthy enough to return to the program. If you cannot be reached, staff will call your emergency contact to come and pick up your child.

Food Policy

The children should bring a nutritious snack from home each day to include food and drink. **According to state mandated regulations, your child's name and the current date must be posted on the box or bag every day.** Feel free to send as small or large a snack as you wish for your child to eat at this time. We will try to make sure that the leftovers get packed up in the lunchboxes so you can see how much your child is eating. We encourage the children to develop independence by having them retrieve their lunchboxes from their cubbies, try to open the packages of food themselves, and then clean up their personal space and the whole snack area when snack time is over

Please inform the Teacher and Assistant Teacher of any food allergies or special dietary restrictions your child has. We want to ensure all our children remain safe and healthy while participating in our programs.

Inclement Weather Policy

For updates on DPR programs and cancellations, please call the Inclement Weather Hotline (703)228-4715 or go to www.arlingtonva.us/dpr, keyword search: weather closings and delays. Please do not call the community center or teacher.

When the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has issued a **Code Red or Code Purple** advisory;

- Preschool Programs will cancel outdoor activities when Code Red/Purple is in effect. Alternative indoor activities will be offered.
- For more information regarding Code Red please visit the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments webpage at: <http://www.mwco.org/environment/air/forecast>



Gift Giving Policy

The Arlington Code of Ethics applies to all employees. We must ensure that no favors, gifts, gratuities or benefits are received for actions taken by any DPR employee. A letter of recognition for an employee is an acceptable gesture of recognition.

Access and Inclusion

The Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to promoting positive participation by providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities upon request. We believe in providing opportunities in settings where people of all levels of ability can recreate and interact together. Access and Inclusion services are designed to promote the idea that all community members; regardless of physical, intellectual and/or emotional abilities, can have an enjoyable, safe and successful recreational experience.

We proudly endorse the National Recreation and Park Association's Position Statement on Inclusion of 1999. We are dedicated to the four inclusion concepts of:

- Right to leisure for all individuals
- Quality of life (enhancements through leisure experiences)
- Support, assistance and accommodations
- Barrier removal

How we determine the type of support provided:

- Classroom observations
- Observation of participation in recreation programs/classes Identification of needs based upon communication with the individual/parents/guardians
- Type of program (structure, number of participants, goals of the program)
- Staffing levels
- Knowledge, skills, and abilities of the staff providing the program

Access and Inclusion

(Continued)

Accommodations We utilize a variety of approaches to provide access to facilities, programs, and services. Accommodations are based on individual needs and may include the following:

- Adapted equipment and techniques
- Technical support to staff
- Sign language interpreters
- Assistive listening devices
- Accessible facilities, parks and playgrounds
- Large print and Braille brochures
- Additional staff to provide program support

***Please note: To provide high quality service, it may be necessary to change a participant's placement if support, assistance and accommodation can best be provided at an alternative site.**

For assistance in coordinating access to facilities or inclusion in recreation/camp programs, please contact the Therapeutic Recreation Office two weeks prior to an event, activity or registration deadline.

Therapeutic Recreation

Office: 703-228-4740

TTY 711

Email at TRInfo@arlingtonva.us

Code of Conduct

We strive to provide a welcoming, safe, supportive and enjoyable environment for program participants. We are committed to promoting positive participation to ensure a successful and fun recreational experience for all.

Behavioral expectations for all program participants:

- ☺ Respect staff and other participants.
- ☺ Respect property.
- ☺ Follow directions.
- ☺ Make new friends and try new activities.
- ☺ Stay within program boundaries.

Unacceptable behavior and actions involve:

- ☹ Intentional verbal abuse including teasing/taunting, harassment and/or profane language
- ☹ Hitting a person - fighting
- ☹ Intentional damage to property
- ☹ Possession of instruments either construed as a weapon or known as a weapon (knives, blunt objects, sticks, etc.)
- ☹ Inappropriate sexual touching
- ☹ Creating a risk of contagion or illness
- ☹ Any action which exposes participants or staff to danger
- ☹ Consistent disregard of program procedures (i.e. not following directions, consistently picking up a participant late from a program)

Discipline/Consequences

Staff will make every effort to encourage positive participation and utilize strategies in response to undesired behavior. In situations where consistent behavior needs occur, a Behavior Agreement is written with the parent/guardian, and is implemented by staff with the ultimate goal of positive participation.

Consequences shall be related to behavior, respectful and reasonable, and administered relative to the degree of unacceptable behavior.

SUSPENSION

- For remainder of day or the next day if a Behavior Agreement needs to be written

REASSIGN

- To another program

REMOVAL

- From an activity for a short period of time, with staff supervision
- From the program for behavior resulting in extreme disruption, or intentional harm to self or others

(No refund will be given if child is removed from program.)

Administration of Medication

- All medication must be labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage amount and the times to be given. Keep all medication in the original container with the prescription label or direction label attached. All medication will be kept in a locked container and the key will not be accessible to the children.
- If possible, avoid bringing medications to programs by arranging the time of the dosage so the child receives the medication at home. Parents can speak to their child's doctor regarding time release medications or dosages that can minimize the need to give medication during the program.
- All Teachers may administer prescription, and non-prescription medication. This also includes sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Written permission is required from parents on the **Authorization for Medication Form** before staff can administer any medication, sunscreen or insect repellent to children. A parent signature is valid only for short term medications that are taken less than 10 days
- A physician's signature is required on the Authorization for Medication Form for long term medication administration required for longer than 10 days and for any "as needed" emergency medication such as inhalers and Epi Pens.
- No outdated medication will be accepted by the staff.

Sun Screen and Insect Repellent

Use of sun screen or insect repellent requires written parent authorization on the **Authorization for Medication Form** noting any known adverse reactions.

Staff may administer sun screen and insect repellent in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Sun screen and insect repellent will not be kept or used beyond the expiration date of the product.

Sunscreen and insect repellent must be in the original container labeled with the child's name.

Staff members can apply sunscreen to children under age 9 accompanied by written authorization from parents. Children ages 9 and older can administer their own sun screen with staff supervision.

Reporting Communicable Disease

The parent/guardian must inform the program staff within 24 hours or the next business day after his/her child or any members of the immediate household have developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately. DPR staff will consult the Arlington County Public Health Division if there is a question about the communicability of a disease.

If a communicable disease is reported and confirmed by a doctor, DPR staff will contact the parents/guardians of all the children in the program within 24 hours or the next business day to make them aware of the presence of the illness in the program. Parents/caregivers will only receive notification after the first case is reported and will not be notified if there are any additional cases. Confidentiality will be maintained; staff will not reveal the name of the child or member of the immediate household.

The “Virginia Reportable Disease List” describes the communicable diseases that must be reported to staff as required by Virginia and Arlington County Licensing.

Virginia Reportable Disease List

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)	Diphtheria
Amebiasis	Diseases caused by an agent that may have been used as a weapon
Anthrax	Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis
Arboviral infection (e.g., dengue, EEE, LAC, SLE, WNV)	Escherichia coli infection, Shiga toxin-producing
Botulism	Giardiasis
Brucellosis	Gonorrhea
Campylobacteriosis	Granuloma inguinale
Chancroid	Haemophilus Influenzae Infection, Invasive
Chickenpox (Varicella)	Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome
Chlamydia trachomatis infection	Hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS)
Cholera	Hepatitis A
Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease if	Hepatitis B (acute and chronic)
Cryptosporidiosis	Hepatitis C (acute and chronic)
Cyclosporiasis	Hepatitis, other acute viral

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection
Influenza (report INFLUENZA A, NOVEL VIRUS immediately)
Influenza – associated deaths in children <18 years of age

Lead, elevated blood levels
Legionellosis
Leprosy (Hansen disease)
Listeriosis
Lyme disease
Lymphogranuloma venereum
Malaria
Measles (Rubeola)
Meningococcal Disease
Monkeypox
Mumps
Mycobacterial Disease (Including AFB), (Identification of Organism) and Drug Susceptibility
Ophthalmia neonatorum
Outbreaks, all (including but not limited to foodborne, healthcare-associated, occupational, toxic substance-related, and waterborne)
Pertussis
Plague
Poliovirus Infection, including Poliomyelitis
Psittacosis
Q Fever
Rabies, Human and Animal
Rabies treatment, post-exposure

Rubella, including congenital rubella syndrome
Salmonellosis
Sever Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
Shigellosis
Smallpox (Variola)
Spotted fever rickettsiosis
Staphylococcus aureus infection, invasive methicillin-resistant (MRSA) and vancomycin-intermediate or vancomycin-resistant
Streptococcal disease, Group A, invasive or toxic shock
Streptococcus pneumoniae infection, invasive, in children <5 years of age
Syphilis
Tetanus
Toxic substance-related illness
Trichinosis (Trichinellosis)
Tuberculosis (TB), active disease
Tuberculosis infection in campers <4 years of age
Tularemia
Typhoid/Paratyphoid Fever
Unusual occurrence of disease of public health concern.
Vaccina, Disease or Adverse Event
Vibrio Infection
Viral Hemorrhagic Fever
Yellow Fever

In addition to the above, please notify us about the following communicable diseases that are particularly common in young children.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
Fifth Disease (Erythema Infectiosum)
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackievirus)
Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Program Registration and Fees

Payment Information

To make payments more affordable to parents, a monthly option is available. First payment is due at the time of registration, and the nine additional payments are due the 1st of every month. Customers are strongly encouraged to enroll in our new auto-debit option that will automatically charge the monthly payment to a personal credit card on the due date.

Reduced Fees

Fee reductions are available on a sliding scale and they **are not retroactive**. Parents must apply and be approved for a fee reduction prior to enrolling in any program. Once enrollment is processed, Registration staff cannot change the fees. For application qualifications and guidelines, please contact the Registration Office.

Cancellations

Fees are not based on attendance. Parents are responsible for cancelling the program writing, **two weeks** in advance. To cancel, please email the Registration Office at registration@arlingtonva.us or mail a letter to 3700 South Four Mile Run, Arlington, VA 22206. All cancellations are subject to a \$20 administrative fee, and the cost per day will be prorated based on the number of days of service.

Please note that **all cancellations must be processed only by registration staff**, not through the teachers or other Program staff.

Late Enrollments

Even though this program runs all school year, we accept late enrollments based on availability. Participants enrolling later than the first day of the program must complete and submit all paperwork to registration office prior to attending the program. The registration office will issue a "Program Ticket" to participants that enrolled once the program started. It is responsibility of the parent or guardian to take this document the first day of the program; otherwise, the participant will not be allowed in the program. Please note that all late enrollments must be processed only by registration staff, **not** through the Creative Preschool Program staff.

Program Registration and Fees

(Continued)

Refunds

No refunds or credits will be processed if a child is not allowed to attend the program for illness, injury, County holidays, or if the program is cancelled due to inclement weather. Payments made in cash, check or money order will be refunded via check and will take up to 45 days; payments made with credit cards will be refunded back to the credit card within 5 business days.

Late Payments

Arlington County provides many alternatives to make payments affordable to every household. Registration staff is qualified to provide payment plans, and reduced fees upon request. Once the payment schedule and fees are agreed upon, parents must make the payments on time or the following measures will apply:

- A) For accounts 15 days past due, a \$15 late fee will be assessed to the account.
- B) For accounts 45 days past due, outstanding balances will be sent to the Treasurer's Office for collection and the Department of Parks and Recreation will no longer receive payments towards the balance. In addition to that, accounts with Arlington County Parks and Recreation will be made inactive and all enrollments blocked.
- C) For accounts 60 days past due, the participants will be dismissed from the program.

Please note that an assessment fee of \$50 will be charged for returned checks.

Registration Contact Information

Email : registration@arlingtonva.us

Mail-In: 3700 S. Four Mile Run, Arlington, VA 22206

In person: 3700 S. Four Mile Run (Main Registration Office). Monday-Friday, **8am-5pm**

Emergency Procedures

Injury to a Child

If a child is severely injured or ill and needs emergency treatment, 911 will be called. Parents will then be notified. If a child must be transported to the hospital by ambulance, a staff member will take the child's PIR form and will accompany him/her to the hospital. The Teacher at each Preschool is trained in First Aid and CPR to respond in the event of an emergency. For minor injuries, parents will be notified by phone call or at the end of the day.

Shelter in Place Procedures

In the event of a natural emergency, i.e. tornado, severe storms or hazardous airborne chemicals outside the program facility, the children, staff and other occupants of the building will shelter in place in a prearranged designated safe location in the building. The building will be locked and secured. Water and food supplies will be available. Shelter in Place may last hours in order to isolate people while the effects of the incident dissipate.

Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an immediate area threat (i.e. bomb threat, fire, flood, other major building problem, etc.) the children, staff and other occupants will leave the building and gather at a predetermined location within walking distance. If there is a more widespread threat such as a chemical spill, or widespread fire, it may be necessary to transport children by County vehicle further away from the building or to a mass shelter determined by the Arlington County Government.

What You Can Do

Please make sure your PIR form is kept up-to-date with current emergency contact numbers and addresses and the list of those adults authorized to pick up your child/ren!

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect

Employees of the Department of Parks and Recreation are mandated to report both via telephone and written documentation, any suspected abuse or neglect to children enrolled in summer programs, preschool programs and after school programs to the Arlington County Division of Social Services, Child Protective Services and to the Virginia State Department of Social Services 703-228-1500. Professionals in those offices will determine the validity of the complaint and whether or not further legal action is necessary.

Parent Feedback

Parents are welcome to visit programs during operational hours and we welcome feedback about our programs, staff, facilities, and anything else regarding our services.

The Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation appreciates your assistance in evaluating your child's experience in our programs. Your feedback will help us improve our services!

Parents have several options:

- ✓ Paper/pencil surveys can be picked up at program locations, completed and returned to the program location.
- ✓ Take an on-line survey automatically sent through direct email at the **mid-year point** and at the **end of the school year** if you provided your email address.

For more information or to request a survey, please contact the Early Childhood Unit Manager, **Kimberly Baldini**.