

HOOVER PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK 2021-2022



West Branch Community School District
148 N. Oliphant
West Branch, IA 52358
643-7211 ext. 115
updated August 15, 2020

Welcome!

Welcome to the Hoover Preschool Program. We are planning an exciting year full of fun learning experiences and we are looking forward to working with you and your child!

The purpose of this handbook is to give you an overview of the preschool program, our philosophy and explain some of the policies and procedures in place to support your child's learning experiences. Please read it and keep it for future reference. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Communication between home and school is very important to your child's successful experience!

Please let us know if you need/would benefit from receiving this information translated into another language. (That includes all assessment information – etc.) (7.B.02)

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West Branch School District Mission (1.A.02, 1.A.01, 10.A.03, 10.A.05, 2.D.01, 3.B.12)

The West Branch Community School District creates a collaborative partnership through students, family, teachers, staff and community, while providing appropriate learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students so they can become effective community members.

West Branch Community School District Beliefs

1. A quality school system is responsive and accountable; and requires fair treatment, honesty, and respect.
2. Learning and teaching are the responsibilities of every individual in the community.
3. All students are valued and important.
4. All students are able to learn.
5. It is important to have positive relationships among students, staff and parents because it is a critical role in meeting the learning needs of all students.

National Accreditation (NAEYC)

The Hoover Preschool is a Nationally Accredited program. We earned the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation in 2009. Being accredited means that this program has demonstrated a commitment to providing the highest quality program for young children and their families. A big part of our success is your input! Please let us know if you have any concerns/ideas/etc!

Philosophy

1.A.02, 2.A.01, 2.A.02, 2.A. 03, 2. A. 04, 10.A. 01, 2.A.07, 2.D.01, 3.B.12)

We believe children learn best by being actively engaged through play in an enriched environment. We create a safe environment in which children are free to explore and learn. We believe all aspects of children's development are important – social, emotional, physical, academic, etc. Our number one goal is building language and using it in positive social interactions because all future learning experiences are based on language. We believe communication between the program and home is essential to supporting your child's development.

OPEN DOORS! (7.A.11)

We have an open door policy. Please visit and share your talents and ideas with us!

Goals (2.A.05, 2.A. 06, 10.A.01, 1.C.03, 1. D. 04, 2.A.03, 2. A.10-12)

We strive to provide the best developmentally appropriate program possible to meet each child's unique needs. Our goals are based on meeting these needs:

- To provide a stimulating child-centered environment which recognizes play as the best means for learning about self, others, and the world.
- To encourage children's learning through play by providing activities that engage children in planning, observing, exploring, pretending, questioning, and evaluating.
- To provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum that promotes cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional growth.
- To provide a balance of:
Child and teacher initiated activities Individual and group activities
Structured and unstructured play Active and quiet time

By meeting these goals, we increase the opportunities to help children:

- Develop safe and healthy habits
- Develop positive self-esteem
- Foster positive self-esteem
- Experience opportunities for creative expression
- Develop language and social skills
- Stimulate cognitive problem solving skills
- Strengthen communication skills necessary for listening, reading writing, and speaking
- Build fine and gross motor skills



Admission Requirements

Children must be 3 years old by September 15 and fully potty trained to attend Hoover Preschool. Placement is determined according to the following priorities:

1. Students with academic or behavioral Individualized Education Programs (IEP).
2. Four-year-old children who live in the West Branch Community School District or whose parents plan to complete open enrollment papers for kindergarten.
3. Four-year-old children who do not live in the district.
4. Three-year-old children living in the school district or whose parents plan to complete open enrollment papers for kindergarten.

To Register you must submit:

- The completed registration form
- \$25 Registration fee for 3 year olds **ONLY**

Your child is not considered “registered” for preschool and will not be awarded placement until the completed form is turned in.

Enrollment Forms (1.A.02, 5.A.01, 5.A.07, 7.A, 10.D, 05)

- Physical exam-signed and dated by a doctor
- Certificate of Immunization – signed and dated by an appropriate health official (Required immunizations are listed on the certificate of immunization)
- Medical emergency release with signature, phone numbers, and insurance information, including who has access to your child’s health information. (Paper copies to be maintained in the preschool files, per NAEYC requirement.)
- School permission forms, enrollment forms and transportation forms. (Paper copies to be maintained in the preschool files, per NAEYC requirements.)
- Transportation form – indicating how your child will get to and get home from preschool.
- Register on Powerschool for the district.

* All information is kept confidential. You will be asked to update your child’s information at parent teacher conferences and at the semester.

What your child will need each day for preschool:



Clothes appropriate for the weather (jacket, coat, boots, etc.)

A BIG backpack

Change of clothing

No flip flops!

In boot weather, children will need a pair of shoes for the classroom (no boots in the classroom)

In winter, children will need coats, snow pants, boots, hats and gloves/mittens.

We do not have room to store your child’s belongings at school, so having a backpack large enough to carry his/her change of clothing and anything made at school will be important!

Fees and Tuition

Our fees are based on funding from the State of Iowa's Voluntary Preschool Grant and the Shared Visions Tuition Assistance Program. Final determination of what we charge could change if our funding sources adjust their level of support. We hope these guidelines help you plan.

2020-2021 Fees and Schedule *Based on funding sources

4 year olds

No fee

Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday 8:10-3:10
Alternating Wednesday 8:10-1:45

3 Year Olds (\$25 registration fee)

2 morning sessions (8:10-11:10)

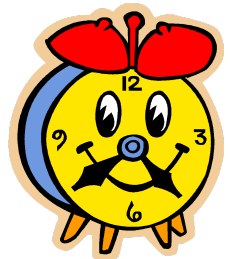
\$80 a month

Monthly tuition payments are due the first of each month, September through May. Checks should be made out to "West Branch Community School District". They can be dropped off in the preschool room by the Information Station, or mailed/taken to Angie Klinkkammer in the school district's Central Office. You can also pay through the online payment system. A link can be found on the West Branch School's home page. If you have any problems with payment, please discuss them with Angie.

Tuition is based on the entire year, and is due in 9 monthly payments. Our costs remain the same whether or not your child attends on any given day. Since we have budgeted very tightly in order to keep the fees as low as possible and saved a space for your child, we are not in a position to refund for absences or weather related cancellations.

Days/Hours of Operation

The Hoover Preschool program follows the West Branch Community School District calendar. We start a few days after the elementary school district starts because we do home visits with each family and we typically end one or two days before the elementary school.



Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday classes meet from **8:10 until 3:10** and Wednesday class meets **8:10-1:45**. You may drop off your child any time AFTER 8:00 in the morning. Please pick up your children on time. If you are delayed because of an emergency, please call the school so we can let your child know you are on the way.

Cancellations, late starts or early dismissals because of weather will be announced on local radio and television stations. **If school is delayed on Wednesday, preschool will go to 3:10.**

Transportation

4-year-old preschool children may ride the existing elementary school bus routes to preschool in the morning and home from preschool in the afternoon provided they have an older sibling or other “bus buddy” to get them to and from the classroom.

The district does not provide transportation for 3-year-olds students.

Parent Drop Off

Parents bringing their preschooler to school may use the parking spaces on the east side of Hoover Elementary. For the safety and well-being of our students, we ask that cars be shut off and not left idling.

Class Sizes

Class sizes are based on the measurement of the classroom and the ages of the children in the classroom. The preschool class in room 101 will have no more than 17 children with a teacher and a paraprofessional. The preschool classes in room 113 will have no more than 20 children with a teacher and paraprofessional.

Daily Schedule (2.A.07, 2.A.10-12, 3.D.01, 3.F.02, 5.A.06)

The daily schedule changes when preschool has indoor recess to accommodate open gym times. A schedule might look similar to the following.

MT TF	Activity	W	Activity
8:10	Arrival Sign In, Table Activity, Breakfast (if requested)	8:10	Arrival Sign In, Table Activity, Breakfast (if requested)
8:30	Circle time – stories, calendar, songs and fingerplays based on the theme of the week.	8:30	Circle time – stories, calendar, songs and fingerplays based on the theme of the week
8:50	Recess	8:50	Recess
9:15	Circle/Guidance/Library	9:15	Circle(Officer Cathy or WBPL Storytime)
9:45	Centers	9:45	Centers
10:30	Circle (Math Focus)	10:30	Circle
10:45	Lunch and Recess	10:45	Lunch and Recess
11:45	Circle (Journals/Literacy)	11:45	Circle
12:15	Quiet Time/Table Toys	12:15	Quiet Time
12:45	Centers	12:45	Centers
1:15	Circle/Guidance/Library	1:45	Dismissal
1:50	Recess or Music and Movement or if we are unable to go outside		

2:15	Snack		
2:30	Circle		
2:45	Recess if we can go outside or Music and Movement		

Attendance Policy

It is very important that all children try to be at school each day. Please let us know about any changes in your child’s attendance (late arrival, absence, etc.) **PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL YOUR CHILD’S CLASSROOM IF HE/SHE IS NOT GOING TO BE AT SCHOOL FOR ANY REASON.**

If a child is absent two weeks without notice of illness, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss a plan of action for continued involvement in the program.

Please remember, as a parent/guardian, you decided that you wanted your child to attend preschool. Instead of asking your child “Do you want to go to preschool today?” you might say, “Today is a preschool day. Let’s get dressed so we won’t be late.” Please let the teacher know if your child worries about preschool so we can make sure to do our best to create the most comfortable atmosphere for him/her.

Clothing

Your child will have active days and do messy activities as part of his/her hands on learning. Please send your child in play clothes that wash easily and fit comfortably. One complete change of clothing should be in your child’s backpack for emergencies. Shoes and socks are important for running, climbing and jumping and are better suited for our activities than sandals or dress shoes.



We will play outdoors every day (weather permitting). Your child needs winter clothing (hats, socks, mittens, boots, coat, and snow pants) each day through the winter season. If you need assistance obtaining these items, please let the teacher know and we can help you with this. Everything must be labeled with your child’s name!

Snacks and Birthday Treats (5.B.01, 5.B.02, 5.B.03, 5.B.05, 5.B.14, 5.B. 25, 5.B.16)

Each day a snack including fruit or vegetables, crackers or other grain based food and milk is served. Parents will be asked to contribute fruit or vegetables **AND** a 16 ounce box of crackers or another healthy grain like bagels, little sandwiches, etc. on a rotating basis. All foods must be prepackaged and commercially prepared. Milk and water are provided by the school.



For children with documented special feeding needs (intolerance, allergy, or health concerns) parents may be asked to provide an approved snack for their child. If parents with special feeding needs, want documentation of what their child eats, please let the teaching staff know in writing.

We try to celebrate your child's birthday on the closest day to the actual day. For children with summer birthdays we will celebrate their half birthday. Children have the same nutritional requirements regardless of the daily celebration, so fruit/vegetable and a healthy grain is still required on those days. However, you can also send a pre-packaged treat as well – like packaged cookies, Little Debbie treats or snack mix.



Lunch

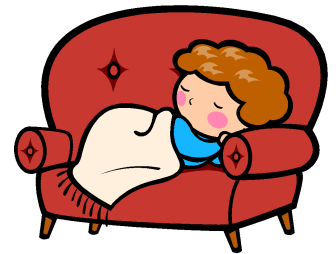
When children are here full day, they have the option of bringing a sack lunch from home or purchasing a school lunch.

Medication Policy (10B.19)

Before any medication can be given at school, parents must speak with the school nurse and appropriate forms are filed out. Non-life saving medication needing to be given at school will be kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office. Life saving medications (inhalers and epi pens) will be kept in an easily accessible and child proof area in the classroom.

Illness (10B.19)

Children who do not feel well do not learn well. Please do not send your child to school when s/he is ill. Symptoms of illness are vomiting, diarrhea, rashes, and/or fever. Please notify the school of illness. Informing us of your child's illness helps us keep the group healthier because we can notify parents about the illnesses going around.



If your child becomes sick at school or develops a fever, we will contact you. **Your child must be symptom free without the assistance of fever reducing medications for 24 hours before returning to school.** Please make sure we have your current contact information as well as the information to reach your emergency contacts.

Safe Arrival and Departure (10D.9)

You or your child's bus buddy will accompany your child to and from the designated area each day and help him/her get settled. Routines are an important part of the preschool experience and help children know what to expect. Every day the children will hang up their coat and backpack, wash their hands, and hang up their name tags. Please help your child through that process. This is a great opportunity to teach your child good hand washing techniques. It is helpful if you can help them refer to the hand washing diagram that is located above the sink. Please remember that preschool doesn't start until 8:10.

When you enroll your child, you provide a list of people who have permission to pick

up your child. If anyone other than the regular person will pick up your child, please write a note and give it to the teacher. People picking up children for the first time, may need a photo ID so we can ensure your child's safety.

Building security (10B.19)

For your child's safety, the district utilizes a security system with entry doors being locked during the school day. To gain entrance, you must come to the north door (gym entrance). You will need to press the buzzer to the superintendent's office to state your purpose for needing into the school. If you are entering to drop off or pick up your preschooler at normal drop off and pick up times, you do not need to sign in. All other times, you will need to sign in and out at the office. Sign-in is required in the central office before going anywhere else in the building. During the designated "locked door times," all guests/visitors will be required to sign-in and wear official visitor ID's. If you are planning on visiting the program, please stop in the Central Office to sign in and get a visitor's badge. For your child's security, we have cameras installed at the school entrances. These are monitored in the elementary school office.



For practical reasons, at the beginning and end of days, doors will be unlocked to accommodate parent drop-off and pick-up. Please support staff members who may respectfully request that you follow these procedures or redirect you to designated entry doors and building offices. The District has had ongoing discussions regarding common safety protocols. We are in consultation with "first response" providers as part of our ongoing, comprehensive review of all Crisis Management Plans as well. Your cooperation regarding all aspects related to student safety is appreciated.

Confidentiality (7.C.08, 10.B.08, 10.D.05)

The information contained in your child's file is kept in a file cabinet in the room. Copies of your child's physical and immunization form are given to the school nurse to keep with the rest of the school's forms. All information in your child's file including assessment information is kept confidential. If we believe your child would benefit from additional early childhood services, we will contact you for permission to share the information in the file. People who always have access to your child's file are the classroom teacher and principal.

Abuse Investigation Procedures (6A.10)

It is the policy of the West Branch Community School District that school employees shall not commit acts of physical or sexual abuse, including inappropriate and intentional sexual behavior, toward students. Any school employee who commits such acts is subject to disciplinary sanctions up to and including discharge.

It is the policy of the West Branch Community Schools District to respond promptly to allegations of abuse by school employees by investigating or arranging for full investigation of any allegation, and to do so in a reasonably prudent manner. The processing of a complaint or allegation will be handled confidentially to the maximum extent possible. All employees are required to assist in the investigation when

requested to provide information, and to maintain the confidentiality of the reporting and investigating process.

The West Branch Community School District has appointed a level-one investigator and alternate investigators and has arranged for a trained, experienced professional to serve as the level-two investigator. The investigators are:

Level-One Investigator – Marty Jimmerson – 643-7213

Alternate Level-One Investigators – Jess Burger – 643-7211
Sara Oswald – 643-5324
Melissa Hocking – 643-7216

Level-Two Investigator – West Branch Police Chief – 643-2222

Parent Participation

Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Collaboration between school, home and the community is an important piece of your child's preschool experience. Please let us know if you have an idea to share or if you would like to volunteer in the program. We encourage parents to visit the program to experience what your child does in school!

We ask you to complete a family survey at least once a year (Sometimes more often). The information you share is very important to us as we continue to meet your needs! Parents are also asked to participate in parent teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

Another important way parents participate in the program is by completing 2 family surveys a year. We ask you to complete them in the fall and spring after parent teacher conferences.

Communication (10B.20)

Communication is an important part of our program. You will receive a weekly parent letter that contains information about the activities for the week and information about upcoming events, conferences, etc... Please make it a habit to check/clean out your child's backpack each week. We appreciate having your email address. Sometimes that is the fastest and most efficient way to contact everyone about events or schedule changes. Please let us know if you need the information translated into another language or you need a translator. We will try to work something out!

We appreciate hearing your comments or concerns about preschool. Occasionally, children will express a concern at home that s/he won't share with his or her classroom teacher. Please pass these along to us so we can help him/her adjust to the program. If after speaking to the teacher about the concerns, you are not satisfied with the



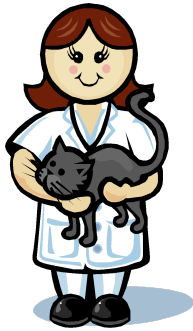
outcome, you may request to meet with the teacher and principal to negotiate a resolution.



Safety (10B.19)

Safety drills like fire and tornado and other emergencies are practiced as required by state law. Practicing these drills helps your child be more comfortable and aware of the process involved.

Field Trips



We occasionally go on field trips with the children. Usually, these involve walking to and from a destination in town. If it rains and we can get a school bus, we will still take the trip. If we can't get a bus, the trip will be cancelled or postponed. You will be alerted to these in the weekly newsletter. Each child has to have signed permission before s/he can go on a trip. Parents are encouraged to help by walking with us! Teaching staff take first aid kits, a list of children's emergency contacts and a cell phone on all trips.

Discipline

Concern and respect for each other is the basis for discipline at Hoover Preschool. Children usually learn to regulate their own behaviors in acceptable ways with the positive guidance and modeling of adults. Our rules are based on the 5 senses – we use our eyes to watch out for each other, our ears to listen to each other, our mouths to speak nicely to each other and our hands to help each other. Teachers use redirection and ask children to stop and think to help teach children appropriate behavior. We want children focusing on solving their own problems as long as they are developmentally ready. By focusing on “solving the problem” for discipline, children learn that everyone has problems but everyone is also capable of fixing those and when we cause a problem for someone else, it's our responsibility to fix it. Research shows that responsibility and self-esteem is built through this process. Physical punishment (spanking), psychological abuse (bullying) or coercion (use of force or threats) is never used when disciplining a child. (1B.8, 1B.10, 10B.18)

Family Programs

It is important for preschoolers to be recognized in the context of their families. Our family programs are organized by a group of volunteer parents and are designed to help us get to know each other. After all, the parents you meet now are the same parents you will be sitting beside at graduation! Please take advantage of the family activities scheduled throughout the year. Everyone in the family is invited!



Creative Curriculum



Our preschool program is based on the Creative Curriculum program. The preschool room is arranged into learning centers for block play, dramatic play, stories, puzzles, games, science, manipulative materials, sand/water and other sensory play, art material exploration, and creative storytelling through puppetry. In these areas, the children work and play with whatever they desire. During their play, the teachers interact with the children and encourage the children to interact with each other. By engaging the children in play, we build language, communication, social and other skills.

Please remember – the goal of preschool is not producing artists or fantastic finished products. We are focused on providing a variety of experiences designed to let your child explore and develop their interests and skills. Each child is influenced by his/her own interests, abilities, and moods. In preschool, we focus on the process used to create – not the product created. Your interest in their creations and displaying them in a place of honor helps children gain confidence in their skills.



Leader in Me

Hoover Elementary is a Leader in Me School. The Leader in Me is a school-wide leadership development process for both students and staff based on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. The Leader in Me develops leadership into the school culture by integrating the 7 habits into the daily activities and language.

The 7 Habits are:

1. Be proactive – You are in charge
2. Begin with the end in mind – Have a plan
3. Put first things first: Work first, then play
4. Think win-win: Everyone can win
5. Seek first to understand, then be understood: Listen before you talk
6. Synergize: Together is better
7. Sharpen the Saw: Balance feels best.

Conferences and Assessments (4A.1, 4A.2)

The information you share with us is valuable in helping us provide the best preschool programming we can! Assessing the children's progress helps us know how to design the curriculum to meet the needs of the individual child as well as the needs of the whole group. This allows each child to progress as far and as quickly as s/he is ready.

We use a program called Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum Gold Online. All assessment information is uploaded onto a secure website and is accessed only by the classroom teacher and principal. Classroom data is also gathered by the Iowa State Department of Education. Information on the assessment program we used can be found at: <https://www.teachingstrategies.com/page/FamilyConnection.cfm>

Assessments are used to:

- Track and describe the developmental progress and learning of each child
- Arrange for developmental screening and/or referral for diagnostic assessment
- Identify children's interests and needs
- Improve the curriculum and adapt both teaching practices & the environment to meet children's needs
- Plan program improvement
- Communicate with families
- Report program effectiveness to the State of Iowa's Voluntary Preschool Grant Board

During our daily preschool activities we gather information. We use a variety of methods including: information shared by parents, observations (made by the teaching staff in the classroom), samples of student's work, videos, and checklists. We have 3 "checkpoint dates" during the year when all information put into the on-line system is analyzed to show where each child appears on a developmental continuum. If a situation arises between checkpoints where we have questions or concerns about a child, we contact families so we can discuss them (instead of waiting for the checkpoint date). Children are given the Brigance, a developmental screener, by the classroom teacher within the first 3 months of preschool. Screens are useful because they can show discrepancies in a child's developmental progress and can indicate if more formal testing might benefit the child. Formal testing is done only with parent permission when we suspect a child may need additional services not found in the general preschool classroom. Trained Grant Wood AEA staff does this formal testing to determine if a child needs specialized services. Formal assessments are norm referenced. (4C.3)

In addition, we use the IGD (Individual Growth Development Indicator) screen to check for areas of concern associated with early literacy. This is done 3 times a year: in the fall, winter and spring by the classroom teacher. Results are shared with you at conferences and on the winter progress report.

Teaching staff are trained through professional development, online modules sponsored by the state and/or Teaching Strategies, and screening/assessment manuals. (4E.4)

We have 2 formal opportunities to share that information during our fall and spring parent teacher conferences. In the fall, we typically talk about how your child is adjusting to preschool. In the spring we talk more about academics. You will receive 2 written progress reports a year.



Celebrations

(1.A.02, 2.A.03, 2.A.04, 3.F.03, 1.A.01, 1.A.03, 1.D.01)

Celebrations are a wonderful addition to a preschool program. We want to celebrate our uniqueness and each other! If you have a cultural holiday or activity you would like to share with us, please let the teacher know! If it is important to your child and family, it is important to us! Currently, we celebrate: birthdays, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Winter, Spring, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and May Day. Parents are asked to help with school celebrations by providing special snacks, activities and volunteering in the classroom.



Treasures from Home

Candy and gum should not be brought to school. Toys are acceptable if they are for "Sharing Time" in which case they should remain in your child's backpack until sharing time. No weapons are permitted! (No toy guns, knives, swords etc....even with Halloween costumes!)

Keeping Records Updated

Please make sure you keep the school informed about any family changes – including family phone number & address, emergency contact phone number, child care phone numbers etc.

You will be asked to review your child's file at fall and spring parent teacher conferences as well as at the semester.

Support Services (7.C.06, 7.C.05, 8.A.01-5, 10.B.08, 10.B.10)

Grant Wood Area Education Agency

Hoover Preschool works with Grant Wood Area Education Agency to provide supplemental programs/support for children as deemed necessary in their IEP or through GWAEA's CART or Early Access Program. We are happy to assist you with the referral process and work with them as part of your child's preschool experience.

Other Services:

In addition, we keep a list on file of other resources available in our community. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, the school, nurse, or principal if you have needs for any services (health, mental health, educational, etc.)

Specialized Plans

If your child requires any sort of Individual Education Plan (IEP, IFSP, Behavioral), you will be an important partner in the decision making process. We follow the Iowa Department of Education guidelines. More information can be found here:

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/special-education/iowas-guidance-quality-individualized-education-programs-ieps>

Annual Evaluation (10.F)

We do an annual evaluation of our services and program effectiveness that includes family surveys, input throughout the year from families, staff and administrators. That is shared with the stakeholders at the end of the year.

Next steps – What’s after preschool? (10.B.14)

Your child’s teacher and you will discuss what would be best for your child after his/her year in preschool. Sometimes a child isn’t developmentally ready for kindergarten and the best option is to wait another year. West Branch elementary does offer Early Kindergarten for students who are age eligible for Kindergarten, but not quite ready.