



Lechner Early Education Program (LEEP) Parent Handbook, 2023-24



**Romona School
600 Romona Rd
Wilmette, IL 60091**

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**Wilmette School District 39
Early Childhood Program**

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I – Philosophy and Guiding Principles

The Lechner Early Education Program focuses on preparing children to succeed in District 39's Kindergarten Curriculum. The program is designed to support all children's social, language, pre-academic and motor development.

The Lechner Early Education Programs mission is to provide a developmentally based preschool program in a nurturing, language-rich environment. The collaborative team of Early Childhood Specialists utilizes a curriculum customized to each child's potential. Staff members work together to develop individualized programming. The program's inclusive model promotes learning, acceptance, and self-esteem within a diverse population.

The Lechner Early Education Program is aligned with District 39's philosophy of inclusion, whereby children with special needs are integrated, or included, in a classroom together with typically developing children. Under this model, the program makes it possible for children with special needs to participate in all classroom activities, with modifications as needed. This helps typically developing children become more accepting of people with disabilities and act as role models for the children with special needs. Additionally, all children benefit from the guidance of a team of Early Childhood Specialists.

In order to achieve effective preschool integrated settings, the team is sensitive to the environment, materials and, most importantly, the child. Early Childhood Specialists share respect for the child. The staff's keen observational skills monitor developmental progress and individual achievement. At the Lechner Early Education Program, the focus is on choice and autonomy in a child-oriented setting, full of interesting and functional materials.

II – Curriculum

We utilize the Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold throughout our program. This program is based on monthly study topics that expand and change as children develop specific interests and curiosity about topics. Typically, study topics are related to simple, everyday objects or ideas that children come in contact with on a daily basis. Our curriculum emphasizes the development of social competences, learning through play, fostering independence, self-confidence, and self-esteem. The curriculum exposes children to a variety of pre-academic skills and concepts with an emphasis on multi-sensory teaching. Activities are taught cooperatively with the Speech and Language Pathologist to develop the child's communication skills. Multi-sensory experiences are provided in the context of play in order to motivate the child to work on skills that build muscle tone, perception, attention and coordination. Gross motor activities are incorporated into the day to develop balance, strength, and coordination. Students are assessed in the natural environment by data observed throughout their daily routines. Teachers, therapists and paraprofessionals gather data by taking photos, recording observations or using work samples of our student's work. This authentic assessment is stored in an online portfolio which allows us to align skills with the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

For more information on Teaching Strategies Gold, please click here: [A Parent's Guide to Teaching Strategies Gold](#)

Related Services

Services for children with speech and language and/or occupational disorders include:

- Providing services in the typical educational setting
- Using the natural environment to provide opportunities for peer interactions, motor therapy and functional skills
- Integrating interventions within the classroom curriculum and activities to facilitate generalization of new skills
- Collaborating with families, teachers, parents and others
- Bringing related services to the child rather than taking the child to a separate treatment room
- Teaching all team members strategies to facilitate skill development throughout the child's day

III – Lechner Early Education Program

Enrollment and Registration Process

The classrooms are designed to provide differentiated instruction for all children, integrating typically developing children and children with special needs. **All families must complete and return the preschool questionnaire before class assignments are made in order to ensure a successful preschool experience.**

In order to enroll in the Lechner Early Education Program, you must present the following items to Julie Baumann at the Mikaelian Education Center.

- An original birth certificate
- Current immunization and physical form (*must be received within the first 30 days of school*)
- The required residency information and appropriate affirmation of legal residency forms (*found on the district website*)
- The home language survey

After completing the enrollment process, you will be mailed a password so that you may complete your online registration. Please complete this as soon as you are able. This provides teachers with the most updated contact information and email for important program information. The online registration process will need to be updated each year or as anything changes throughout the year (email, phone number, etc).

Tuition Fees and Schedules

All of our classrooms are located at Romona School, 600 Romona Rd in Wilmette.

We have the following options available to families.

- 5 days per week, AM half day classroom
- 5 days per week, PM half day classroom

Hours and Days of Attendance

5-Day Schedule (AM)

Monday-Friday: 8:45-11:05 am

5-Day Schedule (PM)

Monday-Friday: 12:10-2:30 pm

Tuition Payments Options

There is no tuition for students receiving special education services.

Tuition is as follows:

5-day program: \$4,665

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is required at time of application. The deposit will be subtracted from the balance due.

Tuition payments may now be made online by using [the District 39 website](#). You can access this site by going through the Lechner Early Education Program Parent Corner or through the D39 website.

Administration & Classroom Staff

The Lechner Early Education Program's team of professionals is led by certified early childhood teachers who lead each class, assisted by speech/language pathologists and occupational therapists who develop and facilitate weekly groups in their areas of specialty. Staff members practice an integrated team approach based on collaborative assessment and planning for every child on a regular basis.

LEEP Student Services Coordinator

[Kristin Johnson](#)

Mikaelian Education Center Administrators

[Dr. Kristin Swanson](#) – Administrator for Special Services

[Taylor Harvey](#) – Assistant Director for Special Services

Communication

One of the most important features of the Lechner Early Education Program is communication between home and school. This year we will once again be using classroom websites as well as blogs and emails to communicate with parents. All classroom teachers will have a website which will allow you to see weekly updates related to the classroom. You may email teachers and therapists for more individualized communication. If you do not have Internet access, please contact your child's teacher in order to set up a regular communication system.

It is important that staff and families communicate and keep each other informed on a regular basis. Through frequent communication, staff will help each child by initiating and facilitating conversation with him or her when he or she is unable to. This process will ensure the best educational experience for each child. For example, parents should let staff know if they did something special over the weekend so their child's teacher can ask the child about it. Staff will keep parents aware of activities at

school so that parents can ask appropriate questions, beyond "How was school today?"

If parents have any concerns with something related to the classroom, please contact the teacher first. This may help to clear things up right away. If you are in need of further assistance, please contact Kristin Johnson, Coordinator for Lechner Early Education Program at 847.512.6463 or johnsonk@wilmette39.org.

Supplies

In the appendix is a list of supplies for each child to bring to school. Staff will use the supplies daily to make learning a hands-on and fun experience for the children. The supplies will be shared and used by all the members of the classroom. This is a voluntary donation. Please note that there are different lists for both the ½ day integrated and the full-day classrooms.

Drop-off/Pick-up

In order to alleviate parking congestion, there is a drop-off and pick-up service. Please refer to the appendix for more information. For those of you who will have others picking up your child, please see the appendix.

AM drop-off time: 8:45-8:55 am

AM pick-up time: 11:05-11:10 am

PM drop-off time: 12:10-12:15 pm

PM pick-up time: 2:30-2:35 pm

Bus Service for children with IEPs

Only students with special education needs are eligible for transportation within the Early Childhood program. North Shore Transit is our service provider for students who have been identified as having special needs and are currently receiving services at Romona. Please note that parents are encouraged to use the service on a daily or multiple day basis. Bus service is not available as an "as needed" service. Families are responsible for contacting North Shore directly if their child is either ill, goes home from school ill, or will not be using the service. The number for North Shore is 847.677.9700. Our District transportation liaison, Michelle McGregor, can assist with bus issues if they arise. She will be in the office from 8 am-5 pm and can be reached at 847.512.6024 or via email at mcmgregom@wilmette39.org. If you are interested in this service and your child has a current IEP, please contact Kristin Johnson.

Confidentiality

Staff cannot release any academic information to anyone for which there is no documented approval. If parents would like staff to speak to other professionals, staff will need written permission from the parents. The child's teacher can supply parents with the appropriate form.

Absence and Tardiness

If a child will be absent, call the safe phone at 847.512.6450 to report the absence and give the reason for the absence. Upon returning to school, please send a note with the child explaining the absence to the teacher. If parents are going away and leaving the child in the care of someone else, please supply a note to the child's teacher stating the name of the child, the name of the person picking the child up

and the dates that they should be released to this person. Please be aware that this person will be asked to supply identification.

Security

All doors of the schools will be locked during the school day. All visitors are expected to enter through the office and check in with the school secretary. Our visitor management system requires that you provide a driver's license or state ID on your initial visit in order to print a visitor name tag. Once you have provided this, staff will be able to print your visitor name tag by your name.

Romona School has fire drills, severe weather drills, bus evacuation drills and lockdown drills during the school year. We want to be prepared. For any questions/concerns about your child regarding drills, please contact your teacher.

Health

If a child is not feeling well, please keep him/her at home. A child should not be brought to school if he or she has vomited, had diarrhea the previous day, or had a fever in the past 24 hours. The child should not come to school if he/she has a sore throat, unidentified rash, fever, heavy nasal discharge, or a constant cough. A child should not return to school until he has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication or until his physician has provided medical clearance.

Toilet Training

A child does not need to be potty trained prior to attending the program. Staff members work on all areas of development including self-help skills. If a child is not potty trained, parents need to provide diapers and wipes (see supply list). Please mark the packages with the child's name. Please discuss any toileting routines with the child's teacher. Staff members are happy to consult on, or support, a parent's toileting routine.

Separation

A child may cry or be worried about parents leaving him/her the first day. The following suggestions may help: Stay a few minutes to help the child settle into an activity. Parents should let the child know they are leaving, where they will be, and when they will return. Give a hug and kiss and leave quickly. If a child does have difficulty separating, try to work through it with the teacher.

Social-Emotional Assistance

The role of the social worker and psychologist in Early Childhood is to assist students, families and staff in the process of helping children further develop socially and emotionally. In addition, they can help identify, assess and resolve any social emotional challenges children and families may be experiencing which may interfere with their attendance, adjustment and achievement at school. If a child is experiencing emotional stressors that may impact him/her in the school setting please feel free to discuss these concerns with staff members and they can assist in getting you to the appropriate professional.

Parent Participation/Observations from Private Providers

Parent participation is encouraged in the preschool program. Parents are encouraged to participate in field trips, holiday parties and as classroom volunteers including Guest Readers. If parents are interested in volunteer opportunities, they should contact their classroom teacher. If parents are interested in observing or having a private therapist observe the classroom, they should contact Kristin Johnson to schedule an appointment. **In order to request an observation from a private provider, parents must submit a request for a private provider observation form and have a consent to share information form on file. Forms are available here: [Parent and Private Providers Observation Request Form](#).**

Field Trips

Throughout the school year we typically have 1 or 2 field trips where parents accompany us. We love to have parents join us but would like to provide you with a few reminders about expectations for both children and adults.

- Please limit cell phone/texting while on the trip. If you need to take a call, please notify a staff member so that we may watch your child and step away from the group.
- Please assist us by watching your child on the trip. If you are in need of some assistance with your child, please notify a staff member.
- Please participate in the activity. If your child sees you joining in and having fun, they will follow suit.

Room Parents Role and Responsibilities

One of the primary roles and responsibilities of the Room Parent is to work closely with the teacher and PTA Representatives to organize parent volunteers for the classroom and the PTA. This may include coordinating volunteers for participation in classroom or PTA-sponsored school events.

EC/PTA

We are fortunate to have excellent participation in the PTA. Parents are encouraged to join the PTA and become involved. This organization pays for enrichment activities such as assemblies and provides supplemental materials and equipment. They often host teacher appreciation activities and organize family activities at the schools. They support and organize services such as the Book Fairs, Picture Days, weekly school newsletters and MUCH MORE! The PTA has extensive volunteer programs and there is always a way for parents to become involved. Please consider joining and take a minute to check out the PTA links, which can be accessed via the school website.

Access to other families contact information

One of the benefits of becoming a PTA member is gaining access to the school online directories. Please note that we are not permitted to share parent contact information with you. The only way to access other parent's information for play dates, birthday parties, etc, is to have access to the directory. Of course, you must give permission to be included in the directory as well.

Vision and Hearing Screening

In accordance with the Illinois School Code all children in the preschool program will participate in vision and hearing screened annually. If concerns are identified parents will be notified by the school nurse.

Special Medical Issues

When a child has special health issues, including allergies, it is important to communicate them to the school and provide all relevant documentation from the child's doctors including the physical forms. Students with allergies, epi-pens and other specific medical needs will be provided a 504 or health care plan. If your child has any specific medical issues, please contact the nurse at 847-512-6402.

IV – Lechner Early Education Program Day

Typical Daily Activities May Include:

- Greet and welcome
- Fine motor/table time activity
- Whole group meeting/language group
- Facilitated free choice/center time
- Story time
- Music and movement and outdoor Play
- Farewell

Studies

Every year the children will participate in several studies. Each child's teacher will provide parents information about the activities that the students are participating in during the course of the study and the skills that they are learning.

Snack

About once a month, staff will put a reminder in their newsletter asking each child to bring two kinds of snacks to share with the class. We would love to have commercially prepared fresh fruit and vegetables. If you are interested in sending these items as a snack, please make arrangements with your child's teacher.

Please note that any food brought into the classrooms should be commercially prepared or prepared by licensed food vendors. Pre-packaged foods should list all ingredients on the labels. In some cases there are children in class who have food allergies. In these cases the teacher will contact the parents and make them aware of any limitations that exist. **Please, no nuts or peanut butter items in class. If your child is on a special or restrictive diet, please work with the teacher to supply individual snacks.** Lechner Early Education Program staff likes to give the children a choice of two or three items at snack time. Choice helps to facilitate conversation and allows the children to become more independent. Snack-time is a fun, social time of the day that everyone looks forward to.

Indoor/Outdoor Activities

Early learning is active and sometimes quite messy. Preschool is fun and often unpredictable, and children should wear casual and comfortable clothes. Loose clothing that allows children to dress themselves is a good choice (sweat suits, elastic waist pants, etc.). Closed-toe, tennis or gym shoes are the best choice for children, as they are accessing the playground and climbing equipment on a regular basis. Layering clothes in winter (a tee shirt under a sweatshirt) allows staff to adjust a child's clothing as classroom conditions warrant. Hats, mittens, and a warm jacket are essential during winter. Snowsuits and boots are necessary under snow weather conditions. **It is extremely important to label all of your child's coats, boots, folder, and backpack. Sometimes a coat will be found and children may be unable to identify it as their own. Please assist us by labeling everything.** Please send a complete change of clothing, including underwear, pants and a shirt that are seasonally appropriate. Also include diapers or pull-ups for children not yet toilet trained.

Birthdays and Special Events

District 39 and Lechner Early Education Program practices ask that you provide alternate methods for recognition of birthdays other than food treats. Birthdays can be celebrated by sharing stickers, a book, or healthy snack during our regular snack time. Some possible non-edible alternatives are school supplies, pencils, stickers, notepads, donate a book in your child's name for his/her classroom or school library, a parent or family member read to his/her class in honor of the event, or donation of a game or activity to his/her classroom. All celebrations should be kept simple. Balloons and other large decorations are not allowed. Parents should check with the teacher if they are unsure about what is preferred.

V – Extended School Year (ESY) Summer Program

School District 39 provides a five-week summer program for children with Individualized Education Plans. This program is only available to children with disabilities or identified developmental delays who demonstrate regression and limited recoupment after extended breaks in school (summer break, winter break, spring break). All recommendations for the ESY program are made by the IEP team and school service providers.

VI – Transition to Kindergarten

Each elementary school in District 39 hosts a kindergarten orientation night. More information about these meetings will be sent home in each child's backpack or via email. We typically offer a morning parent coffee in the fall for families of children who will be going to Kindergarten next year. Keep an eye out for information on that event.

For children with Individualized Education Plans, an informational meeting will be scheduled in January. In addition, individual transition meetings will be scheduled in the spring. **All students going to Kindergarten in the fall must register at their home school, regardless of attendance in the EC program.** In early February, registration packets will be available at all of the elementary schools.

VII – Frequently Asked Questions

Why Choose Lechner Early Education Program?

- Illinois State Board of Education certified Early Childhood Teachers with endorsements in Early Childhood, Special Education and English Language Learning.
- Small class with a minimum of three well-trained adults in every room
- Classes held at D39 elementary schools
- Operates on District 39 calendar
- Extras that only a school district can provide, such as large and versatile facilities, field trips and assemblies, access to gym and playground facilities, and story times in the library.
- Caring and well-trained assistants along with specialist support in speech/language, occupational and physical therapy
- Differentiated instruction designed to meet the needs of every child.

What should I do if I have someone other than myself picking up my child?

- If the **primary person** picking your child up will be different on any given day we are requesting that you provide a photograph as well as the name of the individual. If you have a new sitter or regular pick up or drop-off person, please add them to your child's emergency form via your online registration. Please make sure adults picking up your child have their driver's license with them or another official form of identification.
- You may send photos via email or backpack **to your child's teacher** on the morning of pickup or ahead of time. We will be storing the photographs and names in a file for future record. Therefore, you will only need to send the picture once. Feel free to send pictures of several people ahead of time. We will use the photographs in lieu of asking for an individual's identification. However, if we do not have a photo on file, we will continue to ask for identification. We are hoping that this procedure will allow us to more quickly dismiss students rather than hold up the car line getting identification. At no time will we allow children to go home with someone if we do not have your permission.
- If there is a last minute change or a change on the day of, please continue to notify your child's teacher **prior to the start of the school day** via phone message or email. If it is after the start of the school day, please contact the Romona school office at 847.512.6400 and your child's teacher will be notified of the changes. **Please note that teachers will not be checking email or phone messages during the time they have your children in class.**

When you ask me what I've done at school today,
And I say, "I just played"
Please don't misunderstand me
For, you see, I'm learning as I play
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work
I'm preparing for tomorrow
Today, I am a child and my work is play.

(By Anita Wadley, Gateways to Learning, Edmond Oklahoma)

2023-24 Lechner Early Education Program (LEEP) Supply List

AM students only...

- 1 package baby wipes
- 1 bottle of dish soap
- 2 bottles of shaving cream
- 1 box of sandwich Ziplock baggies

PM students only...

- 1 bottle of Elmer's glue
- 1 8 oz. bottle of hand sanitizer
- 1 sponge
- 1 box of quart size Ziplock baggies

All LEEP students...

- 1 box of tissue
- 1 box of gallon size Ziplock baggies
- 1 bottle of hand soap
- 2 package of bleach wipes
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- 6 glue sticks
- 1 box of Pip Squeak markers
- 2 packages any type of stickers
- 1 two-pocket plastic folder
- 1 binder (*1 inch*)
- 1 standard-sized backpack

One change of clothes with each item labeled with your child's name, placed in a gallon sized baggie. Please label the bag with your child's first and last name. Diapers and wipes for children who are not yet toilet trained.

Two store-bought, family-sized snack items (ex: pretzels, veggie sticks, pirate's booty, goldfish, graham crackers, raisins, etc.)

****More snack items will be requested as needed throughout the year****

ROMONA SCHOOL

Lechner Early Education Program Drop-off/Pick-up

Please review the following procedures for drop-off and pick-up.

NOTE: Romona Rd. is a one-way street from north to south during school arrival and dismissal times.

All cars must display the preschool drop-off/pick-up sign on their driver side visor.

Drop-off procedure:

- Cars should enter Romona Road from the north with a line forming from north to south.
- Parents or guardians who arrive by car early should stay at the curb north of Regina Dominican High School to avoid adding congestion to the entrance procedure of the Romona school-aged children.
- No cars should enter the circle drive more than five minutes before the start of school (8:40 am for the morning program and 12:05 pm for the afternoon program).
- Cars should enter the circle drive and **pull forward to the end** of the circle drive.
- **Please be sure to pull forward so that we can get several cars in the circle drive.**
- Cars should form a single file line on the left-hand side of the circle drive.
- All children should be seated on the driver's side of the car and will exit the car on the driver's side.
- Parents should remain in the car. If possible please unbuckle the child and have them wait in the car with the door closed. At no time should a child be left outside the vehicle alone.
- A staff member will open the door and help the child exit the car.
- The children will then be escorted inside to wait with their teacher and classmates.
- After the child has exited the car the car should continue south and exit the circle drive by turning left on Romona Road.
- **Please use caution when passing on the right side of the cars in the circle drive.**

Pick-up procedure:

- Cars should enter Romona Road from the north with a line forming from north to south.
- Parents may enter the circle drive five minutes before the end of the program (11 am for the morning program and 2:25 pm for the afternoon program) and pull forward to the area in front of the doors.
- **Please be sure to pull forward so that we can get several cars in the circle drive.**
- Cars should form a single file line on the left-hand side of the circle drive.
- Children will be escorted and helped into the cars.
- Parents or guardians are responsible to buckle the children into the car seat. They should pull forward in the pick-up lane before buckling their child so that other children can be loaded. **Staff members are not allowed to buckle the children.**
- Cars should then precede south turning left out of the circle drive area.
- You must attach the provided name tag on the driver-side visor, positioned to be seen from the outside.

Parents have the option to park and bring their child/children to the building. Parents choosing to park **may not** park in the circle drive or on Romona Road in the drop off pick up zone. To avoid receiving parking tickets, please park in the designated parking areas on Central Avenue or on Romona Road south of the school.

Things to remember:

- This area is a fire lane. At no time are parents to leave their cars or children unattended in the circle drive.
- It is important that staff members are supervising the children. This is not a time for conferences.
- **Please do not block the crosswalks.**
- If you are bringing your child to the front doors for pick up or drop off please be aware that there are safety concerns with vehicles pulling into the drive. Please watch your children carefully during this time.
- Children who utilize the bus service will be dismissed first and paras will be taking them to the vehicles before all other children are dismissed. Please be aware that when you see these children coming out, the "official" process may not have started yet.
- Please note that we will not begin to dismiss students until all classes are seated and ready to dismiss. Teachers do their best to arrive for dismissal on time. However, please remember that we are working with little ones and things often happen at the last minute! Thanks for your patience.

With your cooperation we can all get to school safely!

WILMETTE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 39
EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM (LEEP) EC CALENDAR

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

2023

August

21	Monday	Teacher Institute Day
22	Tuesday	Teacher Institute Day
23	Wednesday	"Meet and Greet" Day for LEEP class - AM Classes times 9-9:30 am - PM Classes times 10-10:30 am - Half-Day attendance for rest of D39
24	Thursday	First Full AM/PM session

September

4	Monday	NO SCHOOL (Labor Day)
22	Friday	NO SCHOOL (Teacher Institute Day)
25	Monday	NO SCHOOL (Yom Kippur)

October

31	Tuesday	Early Release Day NO AM/PM CLASSES (School Planning)
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November

16	Thursday	NO SCHOOL (Parent-Teacher Conferences)
17	Friday	NO SCHOOL (Parent-Teacher Conferences)
20-24	Monday-Friday	NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Break)

December

25-29	Monday-Friday	NO SCHOOL (Winter Break)
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2024

January

1-5	Monday-Friday	NO SCHOOL (Winter Break)
8	Monday	School resumes after Winter Break
15	Monday	NO SCHOOL (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
18	Thursday	Meeting for parents of all children with IEPs transitioning to Kindergarten 6:30-7:15 pm @ Romona
26	Friday	Early Release Day NO AM/PM CLASSES (School Planning)
31	Tuesday	LEEP registration opens for 2024-25

February

19	Monday	NO SCHOOL (Presidents Day / Possible e-learning day if necessary)
20	Tuesday	NO SCHOOL (Teacher Institute Day)

March

21	Thursday	NO AM/PM LEEP CLASSES (Parent-Teacher Conferences; K-4 have Early Release Day; Full day attendance for Grades 5-8)
22	Friday	NO SCHOOL (Parent Teacher Conferences EC-4)
25-29	Monday-Friday	NO SCHOOL (Spring Break)

April

22 Friday NO SCHOOL (Possible e-learning day if necessary)

May

27 Monday NO SCHOOL (Memorial Day)

June

5 Wednesday Last day of LEEP regular attendance

6 Thursday LEEP Preschool Park Day

- AM classes 9:00 – 9:50

- PM classes 10:00 – 10:50

Last day of school for all other students in District 39

Early release day (if no snow days are used)

June 7-10 are reserved as school attendance days in event of emergency closings during the school year.