



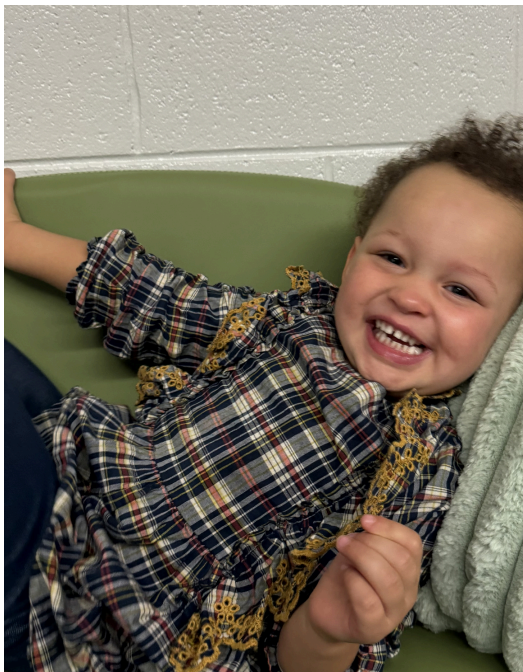
**HARRISONBURG PARKS  
AND RECREATION  
PRESCHOOL  
PARENT HANDBOOK  
2025-2026**



**Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center  
305 South Dogwood Drive  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
(540)433-2474**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Philosophy and Program Information</b>	.....	<b>3</b>
<b>Registration, Administration</b>	.....	<b>4</b>
<b>Hours of Operation, Arrival and Departure Procedures</b>	.....	<b>5</b>
<b>Daily Schedule, Food Policy, Inclement Weather</b>	.....	<b>6</b>
<b>Behavior Management, Teacher Training</b>	.....	<b>7</b>
<b>Medication, Sick Child Policy</b>	.....	<b>8</b>
<b>Playground Safety Plan, Injury Prevention, Suspected Child Abuse</b>	.....	<b>9</b>
<b>Emergency Preparedness Plan</b>	.....	<b>10</b>
<b>Emergency Phone Numbers, Asbestos Statement, Licensing Information</b>	.....	<b>11</b>



## OUR PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

The City of Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation is proud to offer a quality and affordable half-day-preschool program to our city residents. At Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool, our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for young children where they can learn meaningfully through discovery and play. Through both self-direction and small group lessons, the program promotes the healthy social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of each child. We use a Montessori-inspired approach to early learning by offering mindfully prepared and inviting spaces where children can engage with their peers, explore their surroundings, and learn at their own pace. We follow a daily schedule that incorporates language arts, STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), art, music and movement, practical life skills, and gross motor activities through developmentally appropriate lessons and ample opportunities for self-guided play.

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool is staffed by trained preschool teachers and is fully licensed by the Virginia Department of Education. These licensing standards can be reviewed by any parent upon request and can also be found online on the Virginia Department of Education website.

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool program is offered to City residents' children who are or will be three years of age by the start of the current school year for entry into the 3-year-old program and to children who are or will be four years of by the start of the current school year for entry into our 4-year-old program. All children must be fully potty trained to attend preschool. This includes the ability to pull up / pull down pants, sit independently on the toilet, and use appropriate wipes.

The cost for the 4-year-old program is \$75 a month (\$675 for the entire year) with students attending Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00am-12pm.

The cost for the 3-year-old program is \$50 a month (\$450 for the entire year) with students attending Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00am-12pm.

### **2025/2026 School Year Dates:**

First day of preschool (4-year-old class): September 8, 2025

First day of preschool (3-year-old class): September 9, 2025

## REGISTRATION

All children must be registered before admission to the program. Registration is held on an ongoing basis starting on February 10th for new participants and February 24th for returning participants. Registration will continue throughout the upcoming school year or until the program is full. Payment for the first month is due upon registration.

The following information is required for entry into Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool:

1. Birth certificate (Due at registration)
2. Completed registration form (Due at registration)
3. Completed health and immunization record (Due before the first day of attendance)
4. Payment of fee (Due at registration)

## ADMINISTRATION

Contact information for the administration is as follows:

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation

305 S. Dogwood Drive

Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

Phone (540)433-2474 **Select option 4 to be connected to the youth services desk**

Fax (540) 433-9169

Recreation and Special Events Manager:

Matthew Little

[Matthew.Little@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Matthew.Little@harrisonburgva.gov)

Youth Services Supervisor:

Amber Craig

[Amber.Craig@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Amber.Craig@harrisonburgva.gov)

Youth Services and Preschool Coordinator:

Chelsea Shenk-Taylor

[Chelsea.Shenk-Taylor@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:Chelsea.Shenk-Taylor@harrisonburgva.gov)



## HOURS OF OPERATION

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool follows the Harrisonburg City Public School year calendar. We are closed when they are closed. This includes teacher workdays, scheduled breaks, and all inclement weather-related closures.

### **4-year-old Preschool Program:**

September 9th, 2024 – May 16th, 2025

Monday / Wednesday / Friday school days

9:00 am – 12 noon

### **3-year-old Preschool Program:**

September 10th, 2024 – May 15th, 2025

Tuesday / Thursday school days

9:00 am – 12 noon

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Please take your child to use the restroom and wash their hands upon arrival to preschool. Children must be brought to the classroom by a parent or other adult. Children will be released to their parent/guardian or other approved adult at 12:00 PM. If there are changes to your child's approved pick-up list, please notify staff in writing. A picture ID will be requested to confirm the identity of unfamiliar pick-up adults.

Each child has a cubby where their personal items and a spare set of clothes are kept. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to assist their child with storing their belongings in their cubby as part of their drop-off routine.

Parents will sign their child in and out on the attendance sheet located on the family bulletin board outside our classroom upon arrival and departure.

The Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation program ends at 12:00 noon with late pickup ending at 12:15 pm. If a child is not picked up by 12:15 PM, we will begin calling the numbers listed on the child's registration form.

A late-arriving child may locate the group by checking the posted schedule outside of the classroom or asking a staff member at the reception desk.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00- 9:20	Arrival and free play
9:20-9:40	Circle Time
9:40-10:40	Center time with featured art activity
10:40-11:00	Group Time
11:00-11:20	Snack time
11:20-11:50	Outside or gross motor play (playground, gym, or tumble room)
11:50-12:00	Closing Circle Time
12:00	Dismissal

## FOOD POLICY

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool provides a daily snack that follows the nutritional requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). A monthly snack schedule will be posted outside the classroom.

If parents would like to bring a snack on birthdays or for other special occasions, they should inform the teachers ahead of time. Parents are also welcome to provide an alternate snack if they choose to. **Our preschool is a strict nut-free facility.**

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool will not meet when Harrisonburg City Schools are closed due to inclement weather. Please listen to local radio or television stations for announcements of school closings.

In the event of a delayed opening, if the city offices open at 10:00 am or later, preschool will be closed.



## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Behavior management at Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool takes place in the form of positive guidance. This means that we take a proactive approach to managing behavior in the classroom with measures such as preparing the environment so as to minimize conflict, reflecting feelings, redirection, and enforcing logical consequences. Care for self, the environment, and others is woven into our everyday activities at preschool, and we believe that challenging behaviors are often teachable moments to reflect on these values. We understand that an intricate piece of early childhood learning is learning how to appropriately express feelings, and we understand and expect that challenges will arise.

We also understand that more serious behaviors can sometimes also occur. In the event that certain behaviors begin to cause significant disruptions, or if we have concerns, the following steps may be taken:

1. Parent / guardian notification
2. Conference with parent and staff to try to remedy the situation
3. Possible suspension from the program with a referral to other programs better suited to the child's needs.

We forbid the use of any disciplinary actions outlined by the Virginia Department of Education Standards for Licensure.

## TEACHER TRAINING

All staff at Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool are required to complete a criminal background investigation every five years.

All staff maintains current certification in First Aid and CPR at all times.

Staff is subject to random drug and alcohol testing by professional staff as required by Harrisonburg City.

All staff are mandated to completed sixteen hours of training annually that is related to childcare, curriculum, safety issues, programming, and supervision of children.

Periodic training in Daily Health Observation, Medication Administration, and Mandated Reporter Training is also required of all staff.

## MEDICATIONS

We are only authorized to keep parent/guardian provided emergency medication on hand. Emergency medications include medication for an allergy or asthma only. Our staff is trained to administer epinephrine injections, inhalers, and oral allergy medication. In order for us to keep these types of medications at preschool, we require written permission to administer the medication signed by both the parent and physician. We also require that the medication is in its original packaging with the original prescription label affixed. The dosage written on the permission form must also match the dosage on the prescription label.

Medications will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Youth Services office. Any medical authorization note will be kept with the child's personal file.

Only prescription medicine will be given. Teachers do not apply things such as sunscreen, bug spray, or lotions of any kind. If parents wish for their child to have something of this nature, they may apply it before they arrive to preschool.

## SICK CHILD POLICY

If a child becomes ill while at preschool, our staff will contact the child's parents and/or other emergency contacts to pick the child up as soon as possible. The child will be separated from the group in a quiet and comfortable spot until they are picked up.



Children may not attend preschool or will be required to be picked up if they have:

- A temperature over 101°F
- Recurrent vomiting or diarrhea
- A communicable disease

Children may return to preschool when they are 24 hours symptom-free without the use of fever reducing medications.



## PLAYGROUND SAFETY PLAN

When taking children to the playground, there will always be a ratio of one teacher per ten children with at least two teachers present. Teachers will place themselves at various stations on the playground to enable them to be within sight and sound of all children.

The playground area is maintained and checked by the Parks and Recreation Maintenance staff, our certified playground safety inspector, and by preschool teachers on a regular basis.

## INJURY PREVENTION

Sight and sound supervision is maintained for all children at all times. Head counts are taken on an ongoing basis throughout the day and at all thresholds.

Injuries will be reviewed on a regular basis and prevention measures will be put into place.

The condition of all preschool rooms is maintained with safety in mind. Floors are always dry, electrical outlets are covered, and children are reminded about moving safely through our indoor and outdoor spaces. All safety regulations outlined in the Virginia Department of Education Standards for Licensure are followed.

An injury requiring medical attention will result in the parents being contacted. If parents cannot be reached, the teachers will contact the emergency contacts listed on the registration form. In case of emergency medical treatment being required, the parent will be instructed to meet the staff at the appropriate medical facility, and the teachers will bring the registration form with “authorization to obtain care”.

## SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Any childcare professional is required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Training is available from many sources in identification, procedure, and treatment. Professionals are protected from litigations. Teachers have received instruction in daily health observation of children as well as mandated reporting procedures.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The staff will practice procedures for various types of emergency evacuations throughout the year. These include fire drills, shelter-in place drills, and intruder evacuations.

Evacuation plans will include the following:

1. Assembly points based on the type of emergency
2. Essential documents (e.g., attendance sheets, phone numbers, medications, etc.)
3. Communication with two-way radios or cell phones
4. Flashlights, fresh batteries, and battery-powered radio when applicable

Emergency evacuation routes are posted in each room and open areas of the building. They depict primary and secondary routes of egress. They also depict shelter-in-place rooms in the building.

In the event of fire, Security Concepts will contact the Emergency Operations Center.

The preschool teachers will conduct a **Fire Evacuation Drill** each month with the children. A mock alarm will sound, and the children will proceed to the main entrance for preschool and sit at the end of the sidewalk while teachers take attendance.

The teachers will also conduct **Shelter-In-Place drills** each semester (tornado, earthquake, hazmat, other emergency as applicable). They will sound a mock alarm and take the children to the craft room which is location in the interior of the building and has no windows. Teachers will communicate with other staff by means of two-way radios or cell phone.

For an **intruder drill**, the teachers will sound a mock alarm and gather the children in the corner of the classroom nearest the closet. The location is not visible from the door. The door will be locked, and the lights turned off. Teachers will communicate with other staff by means of two-way radios or cellphone.

If an emergency occurs and the children must evacuate the grounds, they will be taken to Thomas Harrison Middle School. Teachers will then call parents from cell phones to pick up their child. Harrisonburg Transportation will pick up the children and take them to Thomas Harrison Middle School.

A detailed emergency preparedness plan is available upon request.

## EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Teachers will keep this list of numbers with the First Aid Kit:

Harrisonburg Police Department: (540)434-4436

Thomas Harrison Middle School: (540)434-1949 \*This is our designated relocation site

Transportation Department: (540)432-0492

Community Activities Center: (540)433-2474

Parks and Recreation Athletics Office: (540)433-9168

## ASBESTOS STATEMENT

The Community Activities Center was built in 1977 and contains some building materials that have been identified as containing asbestos. In 1995, these materials were identified in ceilings and floors and have been removed, encapsulated, or action was taken to abate any risk to human health. Periodic surveillance by a licensed operator is conducted.

## LICENSING INFORMATION

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Preschool is licensed under the Virginia Department of Education Child Care Licensing guidelines (sometimes referred to as VA DOE in this handbook). VA DOE began the transition from the Department of Social Services in Fall 2021. Their new website is listed here: <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/cc/> You may contact the licensing coordinator in charge of our program through this website for further questions not answered in this handbook

