

Piñon Elementary School

2022-2023

Parent & Family

Preschool Handbook



Ivanna Austell, Principal

Jennifer Kieltyka, Assistant Principal

Piñon Elementary School

90 Grand Canyon

Los Alamos, NM 87544

Main Line 663-2680

School Absence Line 663-2681

District Snow Line 663-2223

Transportation 663-2255

<http://laschools.net/Piñon>

Strategic Plan

Vision

“We prepare capable and confident life-long learners.”

Mission

We enable our students to become resilient and resourceful adults who are able to achieve their personal goals in an ever-changing world.

We Value

Student Well-Being	Leadership
Individual Growth	Teamwork
Integrity	Innovation
Respect	Transparency
Empathy	Diversity

Commitments

Students will achieve at least expected academic growth each year.

All students will attain skills, knowledge and abilities to succeed in 21st century society.

All schools and workplaces will be safe and civil.

LAPS will effectively communicate with parents, students, employees and the Los Alamos community.

Focus Areas

Student Well-Being
Student Learning
Teacher and Staff Excellence
Fiscal Responsibility
Quality Facilities
Innovative Leadership
Communications and Collaboration
Integrated Technology

Los Alamos School Board

Ellen Ben-Naim

Stephen Boerigter

Chris Bernstein

District 1

District 2

District 3

Melanie Colgan

Dawn Jalbert

District 4

District 5



2022-2023 Staff

Ivanna Austell – Principal

Jennifer Kieltyka, Assistant Principal

Amanda Babicke – 3Y Classroom Teacher – Room 406

Donica Fortin – NM PreK Classroom Teacher – Room 401

RaeAnn Harp – NM PreK Classroom Teacher – Room 402

Instructional Assistants – Cinthia Mares-Quintana

Emily Thacker, Janine Zambo,

Jennifer Kieltyka – IEP Contact Person

Michelle Jensen – Speech Language Therapist

Beth Ackermann– Physical Therapist

Betsy Stauffer – Occupational Therapist

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Piñon's Bell Schedule

School Hours

Office: 7:45 AM – 3:45 PM 663-2680

24 Hour Absence Line 663-2681

<http://laschools.net/pinon>

3Y Preschool Schedule – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

AM Class 8:20am – 11:20pm

8:20am School begins

11:20pm Dismissal

PM Class 12:30 – 3:30

12:30am School begins

3:20pm Dismissal

4Y Preschool Schedule – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

8:30am School begins

11:30am Lunch (provided)

3:30 Dismissal

Supplies 2022-2023 List



Please label the following with child's name:

- 1 face mask or shield, plus 1 spare
- 1 refillable water bottle*
- 1 large pencil box
- 4 pocket folders (2 for 3y classroom)
- 1 backpack with name on it (large enough to hold a pocket folder)
- 1 full change of clothing
- 1 Shelter-in-Place Kit (see below)

Name not needed:

- 1 package of washable markers
- 2 packages of washable watercolors
- 2 packages of 24 count box of crayons (PreK 4yr. old classes)
- 2 packages of 16 count box of jumbo crayons (3yr. old classes)
- 1 roll of clear packaging tape)
- 1 box zip-close plastic bags (quart size)
- 1 container baby wipes
- 2 containers of Disinfectant Wipes

A change of clothes (including underwear, socks, pants, and shirt or dress) in a zip-lock bag labeled with your child's name. We will keep this bag at school in case the clothes get wet. If the clothes get soiled, we will send them home for cleaning and please send them back to school. If your child still uses diapers or pull-ups, please send a supply to keep at preschool with an extra box of wipes

Shelter-in-Place Kit for Child's Classroom

As part of the School Safety Plan, all students and staff are expected to have a two-day supply of food and medications should a shelter-in-place incident occur.

Individual Shelter-in-Place Kit Recommended Contents (nothing that leaks or spoils):

In a gallon-sized, sealed Ziploc bag with student **name, teacher** and **grade**:

1 16-oz bottle water

1 juice box

4-5 non-perishable food items such as:

canned fruit, tuna, or pasta with pull-off lids, fruit snacks, granola bars,
beef jerky, cheese crackers, package cookies

Comfort item such as: family picture or note from parents

Special treat: candy or small toy that fits in zippered bag

1 light stick or small flashlight

1 solar blanket (space blanket) optional

Individual medications with doctor's permission form (medications they cannot be without for 2 days)

These items will be returned at the end of the school year if unused.



Important Dates

Class lists and cohort placement will be emailed home. A special Meet the Teacher will be held on Tuesday, August 10th at 230.

Attendance

Although there is no compulsory attendance for preschool age children, consistent attendance is important for learning. If your child will be absent please call the Absence Hotline at 663-2681, and transportation at 663-2698 if your child rides the bus. When possible, please also text or email your child's teacher.

- If you arrive after the official start time for class, please sign your student in at the office.
- If you pick-up your child early from school, you must go to the office first to sign him or her out. The secretary will call into the classroom to notify the teacher.
- We understand that emergencies and illness do occur but the guideline is to maintain attendance with no more than 10 days of absence per school year. If a child does not attend and there is no notice from the family, the parent will be contacted to check on the child's welfare.

Closures and Delays

If there is any delay in the start of school for Los Alamos Public School District, there will be no morning preschool. The afternoon will meet as scheduled unless the district calls for an early dismissal prior to afternoon preschool. Check the radio, television or Internet on snowy days

Transportation

If you plan on having someone other than yourself pick up your child, either make sure they are on your list of approved emergency contacts, or provide written authorization stating you give permission to release your child to the specific person. Anyone picking up your child MUST provide a photo ID and check in at the front office upon arrival.

Parents, if you are on campus during school hours, you **MUST** sign in at the office and get a visitor pass.

To ensure that all eligible students have access to their preschool programs, the following arrangements are available for preschool transportation. If the student or parent has unique needs or access issues

related to a disability that require curb to curb transportation for the student, school bus transportation to and from school will be provided. If the child requires bus transportation per the issues described above, the parent must complete the Transportation Emergency Card attached and return to Student Services as soon as possible.



For families who have made daycare arrangements with private preschool providers in the community, the district will establish bus stops at those locations to transport students to and from the programs. Transportation is only available to students who are placed in the program through an IEP or through the NMPREK program. The district does not have the space to transport fee-paying peers. If a child is attending a daycare and requires bus transportation, parents must complete the Transportation Emergency Card attached and return to Student Services as soon as possible.

For families who can drive their students to/from the preschool programs, the district will offer the option of a per capita feeder reimbursement at the rate of \$.40 per mile round trip. For a family driving both to and from the program, this reimbursement would cover two round trips per school day. If a parent wishes to request reimbursement, a per capita feeder agreement must be completed and submitted by July 15th along with copies of the driver's license of the driver and the auto insurance card. Submission of monthly mileage logs will be required for reimbursement throughout the year. Note that reimbursement is available only to and from the student's home and school.

If there are unique circumstances not covered in these options, parents may send a description of the circumstances along with the transportation requested for the child and the district will problem-solve options to meet transportation needs. It is the district priority to ensure that each eligible student is able to attend the program.

Family Engagement Activities

Individual appointments will be scheduled with families to review progress and share successes and concerns. An additional family conference is scheduled individually during the school year. For students with disabilities, this is an IEP meeting. For typically developing students, it is a family conference.



Additional family engagement activities are scheduled as listed below. Each of these activities relates to one or more of the seven Essential Indicators of the FOCUS program: Health and Well-Being; Literacy; Mathematics; Creativity; Scientific Inquiry; Self, Family and Community; Approaches to Learning.

TBD

A Typical Preschool Day

- Arrival: Parents will walk students to the front of the school at the start of preschool day to meet the teachers. If your child rides the bus to school, there will be an adult meeting those students and taking them to the appropriate classroom.
- Circle Time: The children will be working on writing and recognizing their names, counting, and talking about the weather. Our circle time will also include time for a story, game or other learning activity related to the current theme.
- Special Classes – All students will participate in an art, music, library, and PE class of 20–30 minutes each week.
- Outside time: We will have active times for climbing and running, so send your child in shoes that are safe for active play. (No flip-flops please). A hat labeled with your child's name is also a good idea.
- Center Time: For our students, work time means PLAY time. Each day your child will have the choice of going to Housekeeping, Blocks, Art, the Discovery Center, Reading Center, Hand toys, Water Play or Woodworking, as well as specials centers changed monthly.
- Clean Up: All the children are expected to work together to clean up the toys at the end of work time.
- Daily Meals: Los Alamos Public Schools will provide each child with a healthy morning snack and afternoon snack. Students will be provided with a free family style meal each day. All food is prepared by the district's food service provider, Chartwells, in compliance with the USDA nutritional requirements for preschool children. Information regarding individual food allergies or special nutritional needs is collected by the preschool teacher and provided to Chartwells. Family style meals are meals in which food is placed or passed around in small containers from which children serve themselves. Serving family-style meals is a great way to allow children the freedom to make decisions and develop their own personalities, as well as join in on conversation with peers and adult staff.
- Dismissal: We'll walk back out by the parking lot to meet parents or get on the bus.



Backpack Folder

We will put a folder in your child's backpack for daily correspondence. Please leave this folder in the backpack each day. Check the folder daily for any paperwork. If you have any notes or information for the teachers, please put it in the folder. This folder will help keep paperwork from tearing and help each of us quickly find any information that is coming home or to school.



Monthly Newsletter

Every few weeks you will receive a newsletter with information about our current or upcoming curriculum theme, skills, and concepts. These newsletters may also include important events and dates to add to your calendar!

Dressing for Preschool

Please dress your child in play clothes. Preschool can be messy. We use paint, glue, and other messy materials that will get clothes dirty. Although we use washable paint and use washable markers, we don't want to have any special clothes ruined in case stains don't wash out. We will have active times for climbing and running, so send your child in shoes that are safe for active play. (No flip flops please).

If possible, please label your child's clothing including jackets, coats, and hats. Children sometimes have trouble identifying their clothes, and often children have similar clothes.

Outside Playground

While the weather is warm we will be playing outside. Please put sunscreen on your child before school. In the winter, we will play outside if the playground is clear from snow and the temperature is above freezing. Unless it is currently snowing, your child shouldn't need boots, however, send a warm jacket.

Birthdays



We will celebrate birthdays at preschool by singing to your child, lighting and counting candles, and by letting your child pick out a small present. If you would like to provide treats for the class, please check with the teachers ahead of time to make sure you are bringing something the whole class can enjoy together. (Some children may have allergies).

Piñon Preschool Program Goals

Our goal at Piñon is to provide a well-rounded curriculum that helps each child grow in all areas of development. We help strengthen language skills through conversations, singing songs, circle-time discussion and daily story time.

We build on emotional and social skills through play in our house area, block area and art center. Children learn to wait their turns, ask for help and talk with each other to express their needs and interests. To support social and emotional learning, we use



the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. The Pyramid framework promotes social emotional competence in preschool children in the context of nurturing relationships with strategies to prevent and address the challenging behavior of young children. Staff participate in training to implement positive behavior supports to provide individualized interventions that address challenging behaviors as needed. The approach is to develop an understanding of why the child engages in the problem behavior and strategies to prevent occurrence while teaching the child new skills. This approach has been shown effective to address a range of behaviors from aggression, tantrums, property destruction and social withdrawal.

We strengthen thinking skills in our discovery center (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), through group games and experiments, and classroom discussion. We work to develop pre-literacy skills through our new curriculum, Frog Street Learning. Our Speech Therapist leads a weekly “Language Group” to build vocabulary and awareness of sounds.

We provide activities for children to strengthen the fine muscles in their hands by painting, drawing, cutting, and using sensory materials such as play dough. We offer time for large muscle play with climbing, balancing, swinging, and using balls and riding toys. We allow time for children to develop creativity through free-art choices and music/movement activities.

3Y Program



This program is available at the beginning of the year to students with disabilities who are three years old by September 1 of the school year and have an IEP. Students who have been identified with a disability, have an IEP and turn three during the school year will be enrolled in the program beginning on their 3rd birthdays. Typically developing peers who are three by September 1 of the school year are selected for the program during the week before school starts in August. A list of interested peers is maintained by Student Services beginning in September of the previous year. All students on the list receive a Child Find screening as part of the selection process. Those selected must enroll in the district through School Mint and provide proof of information before attending.

NM-PREK Program (4Ys)



New Mexico PreK is a voluntary program created by the Pre-Kindergarten Act of 2005 and is jointly administered by the Public Education Department (PED) and the Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD). The program has been available in selected communities in the state but this is the first program of its type here in Los Alamos. There is a maximum enrollment contingent upon state funding. Applications are part of a lottery process. The program is in session for 5 hours per day, Monday through Friday, during the school year.

- To participate in NM Pre-K, children must be 4 years old on or before August 31, 2018.
- Children must reside in Los Alamos County. This program is not eligible for Open Enrollment.
- Transportation is available to children attending Pre-K in their neighborhood school zone (Piñon School).
- Parents must transport their children to Pre-K classes not in their neighborhood school.

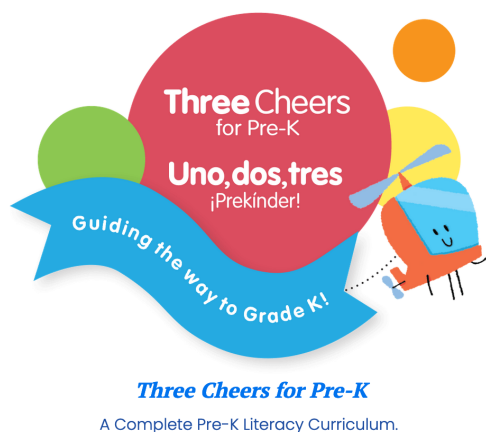
The process for application to the NMPREK program is advertised in local media, through PTO, through the district website, on Facebook, and through local preschools. Parents are directed to access the online application through the district website. If parents do not have access to a computer or internet, they are welcome to a school site to complete the application here.

The application goes live beginning in May and stays open for six weeks, closing in Mid-June. Participants are selected by lottery and those selected are notified by June 30th. A waiting list is maintained and vacancies are filled in the order students were placed by the lottery on the waiting list. Selected students are required to complete the registration process by August 1st to keep their place in the program, if they had not done so already.

Parent Conferences & Home Visits

We will have official parent-teacher conferences twice a year, as per the LAPS school calendar. If your child is on an IEP, we will meet at least annually for IEP meetings, or as requested by parents or staff (please refer to Parent Rights). However, anytime you have concerns about your child, you may email, call, or set up a time to meet in person. One home or family visit is required annually. Arrangements will be made with your preschool teacher.

Curriculum



We will utilize Three Cheers Preschool curriculums in our classrooms to provide structure and focus during circle time and center time. Three Cheers curricula are comprehensive, research-based programs that integrate instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. The program is engaging for both teachers and children and is

easy to implement!

Three Cheers offers learning experiences and materials that develop language and early literacy skills in the context of content areas, such as math, science, and social studies. The curriculum is organized around thematic units that include daily lesson plans for whole group activities, small group activities, and learning centers.

The Three Cheers Curriculum Aligns to Early Learning Standards.

Meet ***Three Cheers for Pre-K***. It's the all-new Pre-Kindergarten curriculum that helps you get young children ready for Grade K! Skills-based experiences and purposeful play initiate learning around quality children's literature. It's fun and effective with multisensory activities and amazing interactive digital content. A Family Engagement web portal includes learning games and helpful tools for parents and caregivers. The rich concept development activities in ***Three Cheers for Pre-K*** are mirrored in ***Uno, dos, tres !Prekinder!*** to support multilingual learners.

In addition to the Three Cheers Curriculum, all Pinon preschool teachers participate in the required FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality training including LETRS-EC Strategies, Intentional Teaching, ECERS, and New Mexico Pyramid Framework. To learn more about the components of these training programs, consult the website:

<https://families.ped.state.nm.us>

Finally, we will be utilizing Waterford- an online preschool learning program championed by Senator Mimi Stewart. Waterford was developed at the request of the Utah legislature to meet the needs of their rural children. The company has done research in NM, and the NM legislature provided funding. Waterford can be used in class as a center, or in a computer lab, but is designed to be done at home, 15 minutes per day, 5 days a week.

District Enrollment

It is critical to have current custodial and contact information for your child. When you move, change phone numbers or change emergency contact names, contact your school immediately.

Admission Requirements

Required documents to enroll:

- Proof of child's date of birth presented in person to the school secretary (Birth certificate, or Passport/Visa, or other legal/notarized identification)
- Proof of parent/guardian identity

- Proof of parent/guardian relationship or custody
- Current immunization record
- Proof of residency

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5100/5100R

Immunizations

According to New Mexico law, all students are required to provide proof of current immunizations prior to or at the time of enrollment. Students without current immunizations will not be allowed to attend class until the immunizations are current, or documentation is received that the child is in process of receiving the required immunizations. These immunizations include: Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis, Polio, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chicken Pox), Measles, Mumps and Rubella. Preschool aged students also require Haemophilus Influenzae type B, Hepatitis A, and Pneumococcal.

Documentation of required immunizations by a medical provider or public health official must be brought to the school nurse before a child may attend school.

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5141/5141R

Dental Exams

Beginning July 1, 2021 students new to the district cannot meet *initial* enrollment requirements until the parents provide evidence of an exam or sign a waiver. The Public Education Department (PED) adopted an amendment to 6.12.14 NMAC, COVID-19 School Reentry Requirements, March 24, 2021. The PED also adopted a new rule 6.12.13 NMAC, Student Dental Examination Requirements for Enrollment, effective April 20, 2021. Below please find a link to the published rules.

Link to 6.12.13 NMAC published rule: <http://164.64.110.134/nmac/nmregister/xxii/6.12.13.pdf>

Link to 6.12.14 NMAC published rule:

http://164.64.110.134/nmac/nmregister/xxii/6.12.14emerg_amend_xxii7.pdf?

Residency Verification

Assignment of students will be based on the residence of the student. Families shall provide proof of physical residency of students every year during registration and/or enrollment by May 1st. Acceptable documents to establish physical residency include any of the following:

- Current (dated within the last 60 days) utility bill, or
- Current (dated within the last year) rental/lease agreement for the residence, or
- Current (dated within the last year) property tax bill, or
- Current (dated within the last 60 days) mortgage statement, or
- Deed, or
- House Closing Statement for the residence.

LAPS Policy/Regulation 5100/5100R

Child Find Procedures

Parents who have a concern about a child's development may request a child-find screening by calling Los Alamos Public Schools Student Services at 663-2208. All preschool students, those with and those without IEPs, participate in a number of health and developmental assessments at the beginning of the school year. These include the Early Childhood Observational Tool (ECOT) as well as vision and hearing screenings. Speech pathologists, occupational therapists, school psychologists and physical therapists participate regularly in the preschool classes as they provide inclusive services to students with IEPs. There is a wealth of expertise on child development available to identify suspected developmental delays or disabilities. If there are concerns, the preschool teacher shares them with the parents at regular parent conferences along with the interventions that are being implemented to address the concerns in the classroom. Data is collected regarding the student's progress and if there is continued concern regarding a suspected disability, a referral for a full evaluation is made to Student Services.

Transition to Kindergarten

Family conferences are held in May for 4Y students preparing for transition to kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers from the receiving schools are invited to attend. Families also attend kindergarten orientation activities at receiving schools in April.



We look forward to a fabulous year with your youngsters!

Sincerely,

Piñon Preschool Staff