

CHILD CARE HANDBOOK

SCHOOL YEAR 26-27



Early Education Center

1410 S. McKay Avenue, Alexandria MN 56308

Kaitlyn Sander | Child Care Coordinator

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Mindy Trunnell | Secretary & Billing

Phone: 320-762-3305 ext 4240 | Email: mtrunnell@alexschools.org

WELCOME TO APS CHILDCARE



We provide a warm, engaging wrap-around childcare program designed to support preschoolers throughout their entire day. Conveniently located in the same preschool wing your child already knows and loves, our program offers full-day care from 6:30 AM–5:30 PM, including before and after preschool as well as full-day care on days your child is not in preschool.

Each day is filled with enriching activities such as arts and crafts, storytime, music, and movement. We thoughtfully balance structured learning with plenty of free play to encourage creativity, independence, and social growth.

PROGRAM DETAILS



Registration Details

- **Opens:** February 17, 2026, at 9:00 AM (ONLINE)
- **Learn and Register:**
 - Preschool: www.earlylearning.alexschools.org
 - Cardinal Care: <https://alexschools.arux.app/child-care/6/2025-2026-alexandria-public-schools-preschool>
- **Eligible Classes:**
 - **3's and 4's Preschool Classes at the Early Education Center:**
 - M/W/F All Day
 - T/TH All Day
- **Location:** Early Education Center
- **Operating Hours:** 6:30 AM – 5:30 PM
- **Program Dates:** September 2, 2025 – May 29, 2026 (TBD ON SCHOOL CALENDAR)
- **Meals:** Breakfast and lunch will be served daily at no cost, provided by the Alexandria Public Schools Food and Nutrition Department.



REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Preschooler Requirements

To enroll, children must meet the following requirements:

- Be 3 years old by September 1 of the enrolling school year
- Be fully toilet trained and self-sufficient
- Be enrolled in one of the following Alexandria Public School Preschool Programs:
 - 4's Preschool (Monday/Wednesday/Friday – All Day)
 - 3's & 4's Preschool (Tuesday/Thursday – All Day)

Contract Approval Process

Please note that contracts are not approved instantly.

Approval notifications will be sent via email, so be sure to check your inbox regularly for updates.

Enrollment Duration

- Contracts are valid for the entire school year.
- If payment is not received, your contract may be withdrawn.
- If your child is no longer attending or is no longer enrolled in an Alexandria Public School Preschool Program, please contact us to request withdrawal of the contract.

Questions During Registration

If you have questions about registration, please contact:

Mindy Trunnell

Secretary & Billing

☎ 320-762-3305 ext. 4240

✉ mtrunnell@alexschools.org

PROGRAM GOALS

Program Goals for Children:

- **Foster Emotional Development:** Provide a nurturing environment where children feel safe, supported, and encouraged to express their emotions.
- **Encourage Social Skills:** Promote positive interactions with peers and adults, focusing on teamwork, sharing, and conflict resolution.
- **Support Physical Development:** Offer activities that improve gross and fine motor skills through play, movement, and hands-on experiences.
- **Stimulate Cognitive Growth:** Provide engaging activities that encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and critical thinking in a fun and supportive setting.
- **Promote Self-Sufficiency:** Encourage children to take on responsibilities such as personal hygiene, following routines, and making decisions.
- **Cultivate Creativity:** Provide opportunities for children to explore their creativity through art, music, and imaginative play.
- **Ensure Inclusivity:** Create an environment where every child's individual needs, abilities, and backgrounds are valued and celebrated.
- **Build Positive Relationships:** Foster positive relationships with both peers and adults, helping children build trust and a sense of community.

Program Goals for Families:

- To provide affordable care for children between the hours of 6:30 AM and 5:30 PM, including on days when school is not in session.
- To create a safe, healthy environment where children's emotional, social, and physical needs are met.
- To offer a high-quality program that complements the school experience.
- To maintain open, two-way communication between families and staff to ensure:
 - Families are well-informed about the program and their child's experiences.
 - Staff are informed about each child's home experiences and family values.
 - Families and staff work together as partners to meet the needs of the children.

POINT OF CONTACT

Brooke Edman, Classroom Teacher

Day-to-Day Questions, Schedules & Activities.

- 320-762-3305
- bedman@alexschools.org

Mindy Trunnell, Secretary

Contact for child absences, contract changes, and billing inquiries.

- 320-762-3305 ext 4240
- mtrunnell@alexschools.org

Kaitlyn Sander, Child Care Coordinator

Contact for questions regarding your child's class, program feedback, requests for accommodations, or general inquiries.

- 320-762-3310 x4273
- ksander@alexschools.org

Lynn Jenc, Director of Community Education

- 320-762-3310 x4271
- ljenc@alexschools.org



CHILD CARE CALENDAR

August/September

M	T	W	Th	F
31	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

October

M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

November

M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

December

M	T	W	Th	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

January

M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

February

M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

March

M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

April

M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

May

M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

Reference Guide

- # First & Last Day of School/Compass
- # PM only CLOSED for Compass Staff Training & Development
- # 2hr late start at the student's school site. Separate Registration is Required ONLINE*
- # Non-School Day at Lincoln Elementary. Separate Registration is Required ONLINE*
- # Non-School Day at Voyager Elementary. Separate Registration is Required ONLINE*
- # CLOSED at All Sites. We follow APS District Calendar and Holidays

*To remove any Non-School Days that you have registered for please call or email the Compass Secretary. Non-School Days CAN NOT be removed if they have already been invoiced. Please see the parent handbook for more details.

FINANCIALS & FEES

Location	Days	Time	Cost
Early Education Center	T/TH for 3's or 4's preschool + Wrap Around Childcare M-F	6:30 AM -5:30 PM	\$819 per month (Preschool + Childcare)
Early Education Center	M/W/F for 4's preschool + Wrap Around Childcare M-F	6:30 AM -5:30 PM	\$856 per month (Preschool + Childcare)

Additional Information:

All two-hour late starts, non-school days, and early dismissals are included in the monthly rate.

Late pickup fee: \$10 for every 10 minutes past closing time.

Late payment fee: \$25.

Standard Billing Information:

Child Care at Alexandria Public Schools is an optional, fee-based program. Payment is due on the first day of the month, unless an alternate payment plan is scheduled. Invoices will include future days of care and past accrued fees. We recommend autopay to help avoid late fees.

Late Payment Policy:

A late payment fee will automatically be applied the day after the due date if full payment has not been received. If payment is not received within 5 business days of the due date, the contract will be withdrawn. Parents will need to make alternative childcare arrangements. The late fee will accrue bi-weekly until the balance is paid in full.

Reinstatement Process:

Requires payment of the outstanding balance and submission of a new contract. Please keep in mind that reinstatement may be available, and placement on a waitlist may be required. A re-registration fee may apply.

Flex Spending Accounts/Tax Statements:

Invoices, receipts, and tax statements (Jan. 1) can be downloaded and printed from your online account. Parents who will be filing taxes separately should have separate online accounts/cards set up.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

When an inclement weather day occurs, the appropriate rate will be adjusted and applied to your next invoice ONLY if your child attends.

<u>Inclement Weather Procedures</u>	
If School is announced:	Cardinal Care is:
Closed prior to 6am	Closed
E-learning day	Closed
2 hours late	*Open regular hours
2 hours late, then schools closed	*+Open regular hours
Early dismissal	*Open regular hours
*Community Education reserves the right to close Compass early in the event of deteriorating or severe weather. +Community Education reserves the right to move students via District transportation. Parents will be notified prior to moving students.	

MEALS & SNACKS

Breakfast and Lunch are provided free of charge to all students through Alexandria Public Schools, MDE, and the USDA. Menus are posted on the school website. Meals are not provided on non-school days. Parents need to bring a cold lunch for their child on those days.

Breakfast:

If your child arrives after 8:30 AM, breakfast may not be available.

Lunch:

Children may bring a bagged lunch if preferred. Please note, if your child arrives after their designated lunchtime, lunch may not be available.

Snack:

We do a community snack. Parents are asked roughly 3 times a year to bring a snack in for the class.

HEALTH AND MEDICATION POLICY

School Nurse & Health Needs:

The school nurse serves all students of Alexandria Public Schools. Please communicate any health concerns, medical conditions, or medication needs to the front desk. If your child has a specific health plan, such as an allergy or asthma action plan, please ensure it is on file with the school.

Illness & Emergencies:

Children who exhibit a fever of 100.4°F or higher, diarrhea, vomiting, green nasal discharge, sore throat, an undiagnosed rash, or untreated lice within 24 hours of attending school must stay home. If a child develops any of these symptoms while at Cardinal Care, they will be allowed to rest in a quiet area, and first aid will be administered as needed. Parents or emergency contacts will be called for immediate pickup, and if necessary, 911 will be contacted for medical assistance.

Children may return to Cardinal Care once they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication. In cases of lice, children must be completely nit-free before returning.

Medication Administration:

Only trained and authorized staff may administer medication if it is necessary for a child to remain in school. Parents must complete an Authorization for Dispensing Medication form for any prescription or over-the-counter medication, including inhalers and EpiPens. Medications must be in their original packaging with clear dosage instructions. Prescription medications require a pharmacy label with the prescribing doctor's instructions.

Emergency medications, such as inhalers and EpiPens, may be carried by students only if a doctor's note and parental authorization are on file. If your child has a severe allergy, asthma, or another condition requiring emergency medication, an Emergency Action Plan must be submitted to the school.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

At Cardinal Care, we are committed to safeguarding the physical and emotional health and safety of every child and staff member. We strive to promptly, positively, and safely meet the needs of all children. However, behavior support and disciplinary action may be necessary when students engage in the following behaviors: Failure to follow the District Code of Conduct and policies outlined in this handbook.

- The Code of Conduct emphasizes the following values:
 - Respect: Be considerate of self, others, their beliefs, and property.
 - Honesty: Be truthful.
 - Kindness: Be caring, friendly, and helpful.
 - Responsibility: Be dependable and accountable.
 - Fairness: Be committed to the just treatment of others.
- Actions that cause destruction, damage to, or misuse of property.
- Behaviors that threaten the safety of children or staff, including but not limited to:
 - Physical acts (e.g., hitting, pushing, spitting, throwing objects).
 - Verbal threats.
 - Aggressive acts, derogatory remarks, or harassment toward others.
- Behaviors demonstrating a lack of self-control, such as:
 - Anger/outbursts or disrespectful refusal to follow directions.
 - Leaving the group or property without permission.
- Behavior compromising the emotional or physical safety of others.
- Behavior perceived as sexual harassment or intimidation, including verbal language, gestures, or physical contact.
- Any other actions or behaviors that are emotionally or physically harmful.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

The building administrator(s) or their designee will determine consequences or disciplinary actions on a case-by-case basis. Actions will be guided by the discretion of the Community Education Administration. If it is determined that accommodations to meet a child's needs fundamentally alter the program, or if the program is deemed inappropriate for the child or circumstance, the child may be required to change or discontinue participation. Cardinal Care will have a two-week trial period from August 31 through September 7 to ensure that the program is an appropriate and successful environment for each child. During this time, we will monitor each child's needs, participation, and overall experience to help determine whether Cardinal Care is the right fit.

Examples of disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal warning, loss of privileges, or time away from the group.
- Written discipline report and/or verbal communication with parent/guardian.
- Parent conference.
- Schedule change or removal from the program.
- Parent pickup may be requested.
- Consultation with other Alexandria Public Schools professionals.

In cases of ongoing behavior concerns, a determination may be made that a child is no longer eligible to participate in Cardinal Care. Our goal is always to work collaboratively with families to ensure a positive, safe, and enriching experience for all children in the program.



MISCELLANEOUS INFO

Recess:

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is dressed appropriately for all weather conditions during recess. Please make sure your child has the proper attire for outdoor play, including a jacket, hat, gloves, and weather-appropriate footwear.

Student Photographs and Names:

Parents/guardians may request that their child's photo not be published or used for marketing purposes by Cardinal Care. To opt out, please indicate this preference in your Cardinal Care contract.

Child Abuse & Mandated Reporting:

The safety and well-being of children are our top priorities at Cardinal Care. Under Minnesota State Law, childcare employees are mandated reporters and are required to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to Douglas County Social Services.

Daily Essentials:

To ensure your child has a successful day at Cardinal Care, please send the following labeled items:

A snack

A water bottle

Tennis shoes

Sunscreen

These items may be kept in your child's cubby during the day. Please note that Cardinal Care is not responsible for lost or stolen items, so proper labeling is essential.

Toys, Electronic Devices, & Personal Belongings:

Personal items that cause distractions, such as fidget spinners, trading cards, or electronic devices, are not allowed unless being used for an educational purpose.