



CHARLOTTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS



Family Calendar Handbook
2023 - 2024



"Together we fly"

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Welcome to the Early Childhood Programs family. We look forward to working together to give you and your child the very best early education experience possible. This calendar/handbook will help you get to know the programs and what to expect each day. We hope you take advantage of the many opportunities that you will have to get ENGAGED IN and be INVOLVED WITH your child's learning!

Sincerely,

The ECP Staff

Who's who in the Early Childhood Programs?

NAME	TITLE
NICOLE HANSEN	Coordinator
CLEO PRESLEY	Manager, Education & Disabilities
NICKY JAMES	Manager, Family & Health
MARISA DOHERTY	Fiscal Specialist
KATHY BUBIN	Education Specialist
TRACY HIETPAS	Education Specialist
DAWN THOMPSON	Education Specialist
CHRISTY WAKELEY	Education Specialist
MONICA MILLER	Mental Health Specialist
KELLY MONTELEONE	Confidential Secretary

My child's teachers are _____

My family advocate is _____



Regular School Calendar | 2023-2024

JULY '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
3	4	5	6	7		
10	11	12	13	14		
17	18	19	20	21		
24	25	26	27	28		
31						

4 Independence Day

JANUARY '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
1	2	3	4	5	90	102
8	9	10	11	12	95	107
15	16	17	18	19	99	111
22	23	24	25	26	104	116
29	30	31			107	119

1 New Year's Day/Pd Holiday
2,3 Winter Break Continued
4 HMU #3 Students/Teachers
5 HMU #2 Students/Teachers
8 Students/Teachers Return
15 M.L.K. Day

AUGUST '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
	1	2	3	4		3
7	8	9	10	11	2	8
14	15	16	17	18	7	13
21	22	23	24	25	12	18
28	29	30	31		16	22

2 First Day for Teachers
2 School PD Day #1
4 District PD Day #1
3, 7-9 Teacher Work Days and
 1 School PD Day (#2)
10 First day for students

FEBRUARY '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
			1	2	109	121
5	6	7	8	9	114	126
12	13	14	15	16	118	130
19	20	21	22	23	122	134
26	27	28	29		126	138

5-9 Survey Window
16 HMU #1 Students/Teachers
19 Presidents' Day

SEPTEMBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
				1	17	23
4	5	6	7	8	21	27
11	12	13	14	15	26	32
18	19	20	21	22	31	37
25	26	27	28	29	36	42

4 Labor Day

MARCH '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
				1	127	139
4	5	6	7	8	132	144
11	12	13	14	15	136	149
18	19	20	21	22	136	149
25	26	27	28	29	140	154

14 End of Qtr 3
15 Teacher Work Day
18-22 Spring Break
29 Good Friday/Pd Holiday

OCTOBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
2	3	4	5	6	41	47
9	10	11	12	13	46	52
16	17	18	19	20	50	57
23	24	25	26	27	55	62
30	31				57	64

9-13 Survey Window
13 End of Qtr 1
16 Teacher Work Day

APRIL '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
1	2	3	4	5	145	159
8	9	10	11	12	150	164
15	16	17	18	19	155	169
22	23	24	25	26	160	174
29	30				162	176

NOVEMBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
		1	2	3	60	67
6	7	8	9	10	64	72
13	14	15	16	17	69	77
20	21	22	23	24	71	80
27	28	29	30		75	84

6 District PD Day #2
10 Veteran's Day observed
22-24 Thanksgiving Break
23 Thanksgiving Day/Pd Holiday

MAY '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
		1	2	3	165	179
6	7	8	9	10	170	184
13	14	15	16	17	175	189
20	21	22	23	24	180	194
27	28	29	30	31	196	

24 Last day for Students/
24 End of Qtr 4
27 Memorial Day
28 Teacher Work Day
29 District PD Day #3
29 Last Day for Teachers

DECEMBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
				1	76	85
4	5	6	7	8	81	90
11	12	13	14	15	86	95
18	19	20	21	22	90	100
25	26	27	28	29	90	101

21 End of Qtr 2
22 Start of Winter Break
 For Students
22 Teacher Work day
25 Christmas Day/Pd Holiday

JUNE '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
3	4	5	6	7		
10	11	12	13	14		
17	18	19	20	21		
24	25	26	27	28		

 Grading Period Dates	 Everyone Off/Unpaid
 Students Off/ Teachers Work	 Everyone Off/ Paid Holiday



EHS School Calendar | 2023-2024

JULY '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
3	4	5	6	7		
10	11	12	13	14		
17	18	19	20	21	4	5
24	25	26	27	28	9	10
31					10	11

4 Independence Day
17 Teachers 1st Day
18 Students 1st Day

JANUARY '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
1	2	3	4	5	103	112
8	9	10	11	12	108	117
15	16	17	18	19	112	121
22	23	24	25	26	117	126
29	30	31			120	129

1 New Year's Day/Pd Holiday
2-3 Winter Break Continued
4 HMU #3 Students/Teachers
5 HMU #2 Students/Teachers
8 Students/Teachers Return
15 M.L.K. Day

AUGUST '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
	1	2	3	4	12	15
7	8	9	10	11	17	20
14	15	16	17	18	22	25
21	22	23	24	25	27	30
28	29	30	31		31	34

3 School PD Day #1
4 District PD Day #1

FEBRUARY '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
			1	2	122	131
5	6	7	8	9	127	136
12	13	14	15	16	131	140
19	20	21	22	23	135	144
26	27	28	29		139	148

5-9 Survey Window
16 HMU #1 Students/Teachers
19 Presidents' Day

SEPTEMBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
				1	32	35
4	5	6	7	8	36	39
11	12	13	14	15	41	44
18	19	20	21	22	46	49
25	26	27	28	29	51	54

4 Labor Day

MARCH '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
				1	140	149
4	5	6	7	8	145	154
11	12	13	14	15	149	159
18	19	20	21	22	149	159
25	26	27	28	29	153	164

14 End of Quarter 3
15 Teacher Work Day
18-22 Spring Break
29 Good Friday/Pd Holiday

OCTOBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
2	3	4	5	6	56	59
9	10	11	12	13	61	64
16	17	18	19	20	65	69
23	24	25	26	27	70	74
30	31				72	76

9-13 Survey Window
13 End of Quarter 1
16 Teacher Work Day

APRIL '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
1	2	3	4	5	158	169
8	9	10	11	12	163	174
15	16	17	18	19	168	179
22	23	24	25	26	173	184
29	30				175	186

NOVEMBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
		1	2	3	75	79
6	7	8	9	10	79	84
13	14	15	16	17	84	89
20	21	22	23	24	84	90
27	28	29	30		88	94

6 District PD Day #2
10 Veteran's Day observed
23 Thanksgiving Day/Pd Holiday
20-24 Thanksgiving Break

MAY '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
		1	2	3	178	189
6	7	8	9	10	183	194
13	14	15	16	17	188	199
20	21	22	23	24	193	204
27	28	29	30	31	195	208

24 End of Quarter 4
27 Memorial Day
28 Teacher Work Day
29 District PD day #3

DECEMBER '23						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
				1	89	95
4	5	6	7	8	94	100
11	12	13	14	15	99	105
18	19	20	21	22	103	110
25	26	27	28	29	103	111

21 End of Quarter 2
22 Start of Winter Break
Students
22 Teacher Work Day
25 Christmas Day/Pd Holiday

JUNE '24						
M	T	W	Th	F	SD	TD
3	4	5	6	7	200	213
10	11	12	13	14	205	218
17	18	19	20	21	207	221
24	25	26	27	28		

18 Students last day
19 Teachers last day

 	Grading Period Dates	 	Everyone Off/Unpaid
 	Students Off/ Teachers Work	 	Everyone Off/ Paid Holiday

Being at school every day is important, no matter what age!

Attending a high quality early learning program strengthens school readiness and long term academic performance. Regular attendance is critically important for children to become successful life-long learners. Not only will good attendance help build good habits for the children, it can also help prevent academic problems later on. If young children are regularly absent, they may not be fully prepared for "big" school. Preschool is a time for building necessary social, emotional, cognitive, and language readiness skills and children who attend regularly have much better outcomes.



How can you help your child succeed???

- Work with your Family Advocate to always provide required documents, including immunizations. Missing certain ones may lead to exclusion!
- Avoid letting your child stay home unless he or she is truly sick. If you aren't sure, the school nurse can help you decide.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor or another parent. If you have ongoing transportation issues, let your advocate know.
- Avoid scheduling medical appointments, vacations and trips when school is in session.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES:

1. CALL THE SCHOOL AS SOON AS YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD WILL BE OUT.
2. DCF REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT PROGRAMS MAKE CONTACT, WITHIN ONE HOUR, WITH THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF EACH STUDENT THAT DOES NOT ARRIVE AT SCHOOL WHEN EXPECTED.
3. FOLLOW SITE SCHEDULES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO LATE ARRIVAL AND MEALS.
4. LET THE PROGRAM KNOW IN ADVANCE ABOUT UNAVOIDABLE OR PRE-

Program Sites & Contact Information

Baker Center

311 East Charlotte Ave
Punta Gorda, Florida, 33950
Ph: (941)575-5470 fax: (941)575-5474

Pumpkin Patch

18300 Cochran Blvd
Port Charlotte, Florida, 33948
Ph: (941)255-7545, ext 1137 fax: (941)255-7514



Program leadership partners with school administrative teams to provide support and guidance to staff & families.

Deep Creek Elementary School

26900 Harborview Road
Punta Gorda, Florida 33983
941-255-7535 FAX 941-255-7541

Myakka River Elementary School

12650 Willmington Blvd.
Gulf Cove, Florida 33981
941-697-7111 FAX 941-697-6326

Meadow Park Elementary School

750 Essex Ave.
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948
941-255-7470 FAX 941-255-7477

Neil Armstrong Elementary School

22100 Breezeswept Avenue
Port Charlotte, Florida 33952
941-255-7450 FAX 941-255-7456

Liberty Elementary School

370 Atwater Street
Port Charlotte, Florida 33954
941-255-7515 FAX 941-255-7519

Kingsway Elementary School

23300 Quasar Blvd.
Port Charlotte, Florida 33980
941-255-7590 FAX 941-255-7591

Family Engagement

Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Head Start recognizes the parent-child bond as the child's most significant relationship. Children learn from what parents say, do, believe and value. The relationship between staff and family is based on respect for family cultures and life circumstances. Studies show that the most successful students have families that are involved and engaged in their children's education. **The program provides a number of experiences and opportunities for family participation:**

- Family Literacy & Book Checkout Centers
- Harry Chapin Food Bank
- Backpack Kids
- Holiday/Cultural family meals & events
- Black History Parade
- Helping Hands—Parent engagement incentive shop
- Volunteer Training & professional development opportunities for prospective employees
- Parenting Classes
- Kindergarten Transition & Graduation Events
- Parent Committees
- Policy Council



Family Self Sufficiency & Empowerment

Family Goals: Each family has the opportunity to participate in developing a family action plan called the Family Partnership Agreement. This plan will identify family needs, interests, strengths and goals. Each family receives support from their Family Advocate throughout the year to meet these needs and goals.

Parent Leadership: Parents of Head Start children will be encouraged to give input into the program through their participation in the Parent Committee and Policy Council. These leadership roles can be mentioned on resumes!

Child's Education: Head Start will invite each family to be involved in their child's education by participating in curriculum development, by participating in the family reading program and by volunteering in classrooms.

Child's Health & Well-being: All family members are encouraged to participate in the care of their child by attending medical, dental and developmental screenings offered by the program. They will be also be invited to attend training opportunities that address early childhood health and development.

The Early Childhood Classroom, Learning & Growing Every Day...

Families work together with teachers to plan learning for each child, using the Frog Street Curriculum. The AIM Assessment tool will be used to track children's learning and progress. Children work to meet individual goals throughout each day during.. the following parts of the day:

Meals—Social and nutritional learning, twice per day during breakfast and lunch

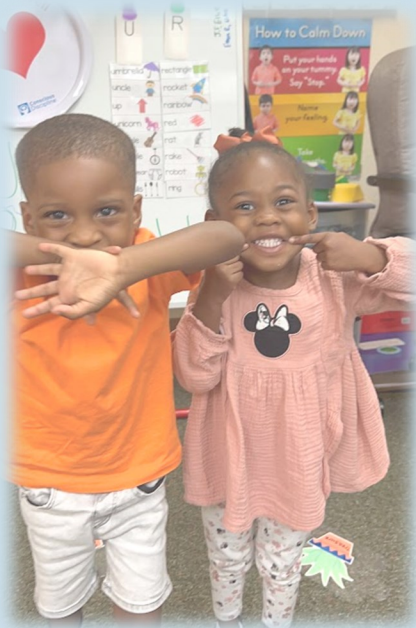
Outdoor Learning—The same educational value as the classroom, often with a focus on gross motor or sensory play

Gathering—For older children, a time to have large group discussions, share stories and practice skills such as listening and turn taking

Small Group—Teacher-directed activities with 2-5 children, offering more focused learning and assessment opportunities

Center/Work Time—Child-directed activities, throughout the classroom in areas such as Dramatic Play, Writing, Science, Art, Library, etc.

Personal and Hygiene Routines—Children work toward self-care independence, completing tasks such as toileting, handwashing, toothbrushing, etc.



Staying Healthy at School: Clinic & Nutrition Services

The program's Family & Health Services Specialist works with site clinic nurses, advocates and community partners to implement and maintain health and safety standards at each school or center. General guidelines and instructions related to day-to-day student health services are provided below. More detailed information is provided at enrollment and orientation. Family members are also encouraged to check the school district's website under student health.

Clinic nurses at each site may:

- Triage student health concerns
- Assess physical and emotional issues
- Provide nursing diagnosis, including when a child may or may not be excluded from school
- Provide primary healthcare to students and staff (first aid and chronic condition care)
- Counsel families on health issues
- Administer medication as needed
- Refer health issues to healthcare providers for further treatment
- Provide health screenings
- Write emergency and individualized healthcare plans
- Act as a liaison between home/school and medical service providers
- Maintain health related documentation



Program staff work in coordination with school district food services personnel to meet the nutritional needs of all students. All recommended nutritional requirements for breakfast and lunch are offered to children each day, free of charge. To align with Head Start guidelines, **it is the program's policy that NO food items may be sent to school, this includes your child's breakfast and lunch.** All special dietary needs are met by Champ's Café. Additionally, food may not be sent to school to share. This includes "treat bags" or the similar, intended to go home with other children. The program's curriculum includes cooking and nutrition education, and encourages healthy celebrations involving food and socially appropriate mealtimes. Please be advised that any food sent to school with your child will not be accepted into the classroom. Let your child's teacher know if you would like to be included in classroom cooking experiences!




Mental Health Services

The Early Childhood team, including the Mental Health Specialist, works closely with staff and parents to meet the mental health needs of children and families. For young children, good mental health means being able to develop secure, trusting relationships, to express emotions appropriately and to interact with others in socially acceptable ways.

Each child goes through a two part mental health screening. The ASQ-SE is administered followed by the completion of program-wide classroom observations by the Mental Health Specialist. Along with input from staff and families, these screening methods help identify children in need of further evaluation and support. In the event that more intensive mental health services are indicated, services and support may be provided to both families and classroom staff by the consultant. Referrals to outside agencies may also be generated. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to share concerns about their children's behavior or emotional well-being with program staff.

The program's Mental Health Specialist is also available to assist parents and families as they navigate the stresses of day-to-day life. Support is available for parents facing emotional challenges such as personal trauma, post-partum depression or other emotional struggles.

Finally, the Mental Health Specialist offers trainings, socializations and support groups to help families with some of the most challenging parts of parenting very young children. Topics are specific to the needs of the families enrolled in the program, and participants are encouraged to make suggestions for additional events.



Mental Health Support

Just a phone call away...

If you or your child ever need mental health or wellness assistance, call our Mental Health Specialist at 575-5470.

Conscious Discipline®

Charlotte County Early Childhood Programs use **Conscious Discipline**, created by Dr. Becky Bailey, as the framework for classroom and behavior management. This program, which is based on current brain research and sound knowledge of child development, focuses on helping children feel emotionally safe and connected with teaching staff and with their friends at school. This school readiness approach is helpful for children to be more cooperative; to be able to remember what they have already learned; and to be better able to learn new things. The program works toward these goals by creating healthy **School Families** within our classrooms, centers, and work spaces. **Conscious Discipline** views all conflicts and problems as opportunities to learn and teach.

Through **Conscious Discipline** each child in the **School Family** has the opportunity to learn the skills needed to successfully manage life challenges as they occur throughout the daily routine. Loving guidance is provided by ALL program staff, in addition to classroom teachers. Family members will notice many classroom structures and strategies that are used to help children learn and use the **Conscious Discipline** philosophy throughout all learning environments. In fact, children often take the language of **Conscious Discipline** from the classroom and use it at home. You may hear your child use the term **Be a S.T.A.R.**; they may **“wish you well”** or they may talk about getting their name on the **Kindness Tree**.



There will be information about **Conscious Discipline** sent home to families in newsletters and articles throughout the school year. Additionally, parenting classes will utilize the philosophy and cur-

DISCIPLINE/INTERVENTION POLICY GUIDING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPING SELF-REGULATION SKILLS

Utilizing the Conscious Discipline philosophy, Early Childhood Program staff support the development of self-esteem by expressing respect, acceptance, and comfort for children, regardless of the child's ability to self-regulate. Developmentally appropriate guidance demonstrates respect for children and helps children develop self-control and find solutions to classroom conflicts/crises.

Staff behaviors that are NEVER acceptable toward children include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Abusing, endangering or neglecting children
- ◆ Utilizing cruel, harsh, unusual, or extreme techniques
- ◆ Utilizing any form of corporal punishment
- ◆ Delegating children to manage or discipline other children
- ◆ Using physical restraints on a child
- ◆ Restraining a child by any means other than holding for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, or safe carry of a very young child, so that the child may regain control
- ◆ Screaming in anger
- ◆ Neglecting or isolating a child
- ◆ Inflicting physical or emotional pain
- ◆ Criticizing a child's person or family by ridiculing, blaming, teasing, insulting, name calling, threatening, or the use of frightening or humiliating punishment
- ◆ Withholding food or liquids or educational activities, including outdoor time

Children learn self-control when they are treated with dignity. ECP staff use child guidance techniques such as:

- ◆ Setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior (indoors and outdoors) & reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed
- ◆ Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- ◆ Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity
- ◆ Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- ◆ Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children solve their own problems
- ◆ Modeling desired behavior
- ◆ Focusing on appropriate behaviors

If staff consistently demonstrates the strategies mentioned in this section but still must deal with frequent disruptions or an occasional severe behavioral problem, the following five-step method may be used:

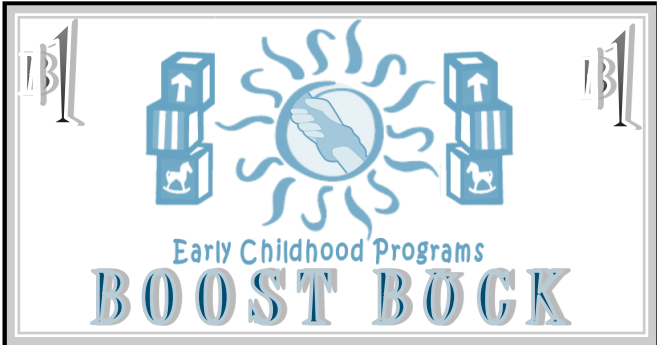
1. Tell the child the behavior that is expected.
2. Assist the child in getting to the classroom "safe place" to help the child gain self-control or, if necessary, accompany the child into the hall.
3. The adult will assist the child in gaining self-control by utilizing Conscious Discipline® techniques.
4. Once the child has calmed down, the adult will acknowledge the child's feelings and help the child problem solve what he/she can do differently.
5. Once the child is ready to rejoin the group, the teacher will assist the child to be successful in doing so.

Occasionally, behavior interventions are unsuccessful due to an individual child's needs. In these instances, staff will work together with families to create and implement individualized behavior plans, make referrals, schedule testing and access or provide services as indicated.



Helping Hands Family Market

Helping Hands is a family engagement & self-sufficiency program dedicated to helping participants be able to provide for their families regardless of income. Families are able to “purchase” basic household, health, hygiene, personal & child-related items by becoming actively involved and engaged in their children’s early education. Volunteering, sitting on committees and completing at-home learning activities are all ways that family members can earn BOOST Bucks to spend at the Family Market!*



The Helping Hands program is available to ECP families across the county with stores at Baker Center in Punta Gorda and Pumpkin Patch in Port Charlotte!

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

An important factor in providing quality care to young children is ensuring their health and safety by protecting them from abuse and neglect. Child abuse occurs as a response to stress. Meeting the many needs of young children can naturally trigger this stress. In addition, financial strain, isolation, illness, work, and lack of resources can contribute to the stress of adults who care for children. Anyone can report child abuse and neglect by calling the hotline 1-800-96-ABUSE. School staff is required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the proper authorities. Failure to do so may result in a fine or imprisonment.

Grievance Policy

The following procedures are instituted to assure parents of having their grievances processed. All grievances are kept confidential as is provided by law. Informal discussion – In the event you believe that there is a basis for a grievance, you should first discuss the matter with the persons involved, and try to solve the problem informally.

- ◆ Level 1 – If a grievance is still believed to exist following the informal discussion, you should discuss the problem with the School Principal or the Program Manager and try to once again solve the problem informally.
- ◆ Level 2 – If the grievance is still not resolved, you may take the grievance before the Head Start Policy Council or contact the district school board office.



Everyone is
welcome
here...

