



Taft Early Learning Center Integrated Preschool

Parent Information Packet

Program Operations

Taft Early Learning Center Integrated Preschool

16 Granite St. Uxbridge, Ma

Preschool Coordinator- Ms. Laura Newhall, lnewhall@uxbridge.k12.ma.us

Director of Pupil Services- Ms. Jennifer Toth, jtoth@uxbridge.k12.ma.us

Taft ELC Principal- Mr. Mark LaBossiere, mlabossiere@uxbridge.k12.ma.us

Preschool/Main office Administrative Assistant- Ms. Christine Veneziano, cveneziano@uxbridge.k12.ma.us

Taft ELC School Nurse- Kelly Carvalho, kcarvalho@uxbridge.k12.ma.us

Tuition Questions- District Business office @ 508-278-8643

Taft ELC Main office: 508-278-8643

District website: www.uxbridgeschools.com

Preschool website: <https://www.uxbridgeschools.com/domain/216>

Hours of Operation

Taft Early Learning Center is a PK-3 building and the school day is from 8:35-3:00 pm Monday-Friday.

Taft ELC Integrated Preschool sessions and schedules are as follows:

- *Full Day Program (M-F, 8:35 am-3:00 pm) *Some students may attend a half day session within a full day classroom
- M,W,F Sessions (AM 8:35 am-11:05 am) & (PM 12:30 PM-3:00 pm)
- M-F Sessions (AM 8:35 am-11:05 am) & (PM 12:30 pm-3:00 pm)

(The Taft ELC Integrated Preschool follows the Uxbridge Public Schools calendar.)

Orientation to our Program

Our Philosophy

Taft Early Learning Center (ELC) Integrated Preschool is operated by the Uxbridge Public Schools. It is housed within the Taft Early Learning Center (grades Preschool - 3). Taft ELC Integrated Preschool Program is a program designed to meet the needs of our early childhood students who require specially designed instruction and qualify for special education preschool services and/or supports. However, we also welcome and accept a limited number of children who do not require special education services to participate in our preschool program to serve as community peers, or role models. This offering promotes overall growth and development of all students, especially in the areas of language, social, motor, cognitive, and pre-academic skills. In addition, the program serves as a preparation for entering Kindergarten by following the Massachusetts State Frameworks.

We believe that all children grow and develop at their own pace and our goal is to provide a safe learning environment where kids can simply be kids while making progress towards goals and objectives. Play is essential to a child's well-being, development and learning. Our dual certified teachers and highly trained support staff provide strategic play activities/areas to offer challenging, interesting play and learning choices at a range of developmental levels. We balance play with many structured activities such as table time, circle time, art activities, music, snack, clean up etc. We feel it is important to help each child succeed at his or her own level and adjust projects to meet and challenge their current level of development. Teachable moments provide learning opportunities every day. We believe social and self-help skills are essential for each child to develop and we reinforce this through modeling responsibility, acceptance, caring, sharing and respect for all children and adults. We are sensitive to each child's social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs. We strive to meet their individual needs as well as the group's needs as a whole.

Staff

Our Integrated Preschool Teachers are certified in Early Childhood Education as well as Special Education. Teachers work alongside Paraprofessionals and Applied Behavior Analyst Technicians within the classrooms. In addition, we have the following related service providers who support Preschool consultation, evaluations and services as needed: Speech Language Pathologist, Speech Language Assistant, Occupational Therapist, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, School Adjustment Counselor, School Psychologist, and other services as needed through area contract agencies.

Program Skill Areas

Social Skills- manners, kindness, playing cooperatively, taking turns, compassion, respect, handling emotions.

Self-help skills- washing hands, dressing self, handling bathroom needs, cleaning up toys, taking care of their possessions

Gross Motors Skills- climbing, running, hopping, jumping, balancing, catching and throwing balls

Fine Motor skills- puzzles, Lego's, blocks, manipulative toys, lacing beads, drawing, coloring, writing, cutting, play dough.

Math Skills counting, patterns, simple addition/subtraction, number recognition, shapes, measurement, and one to one correspondence. We use a wide variety of manipulative activities and incorporate math during our daily activities and circle time.

Literature-based Activities circle time, stories, charts, finger plays, songs, letter recognition beginning phonics, reading and writing skills.

Letter and Number Explorations activities including letter books, fun tactile activities, games, and a rich print environment.

Science hands on explorations about our environment, animals, and nature

Social studies learning about our community

Art Media Discovery a variety of painting techniques, markers, glue, scissors, collage materials, beads, stencils, rubbing plates, play dough.

Preschool Open House

Prior to starting the school year, a Preschool Open house will be held. This will be an evening where you (a maximum of 2 adults) can attend with your child to be welcomed to the program. Due to the size of the program, your child's classroom will be assigned to attend either session 1 or session 2. This is an opportunity to meet your child's teacher, explore the classroom, and even meet some classmates/other Preschool families. Additionally, if your child will need an alternative time to see their classroom in a less busy environment, please contact your teacher to set up a day and time.

Teacher Placement Letters

Prior to the Preschool Open House, you will receive a teacher placement letter. This letter will outline who your child's teacher will be, their contact information, what Preschool schedule your child has been assigned to, and what session you will attend for the Preschool Open house.

Separation Anxiety

Starting in a new setting is an exciting experience for a young child, however it can also be a difficult one initially. Even children who are very excited about "starting school" may suddenly realize that you are not going to be there. The apprehension that accompanies that realization is a normal reaction.

We would also like to offer several suggestions to help your child with the adjustment process to Preschool.

- Relax! Children will sense your apprehension; therefore, it is important that you feel comfortable with the routine. If you have questions or concerns, please ask us.
- Come and visit with your child before the first day of attendance (Open House) and take photos of the different areas of the classroom/building
- Learn the names of your child's teacher, staff and classmates.
- In their first days, use the photos as a conversation starter with your child. What do you think you would like to do there? What did you play with today? Did you like the ____? etc.
- Rather than ask vague questions like "How was your day?", Ask "What did you play on outside?" Or "What did you eat for a snack?" Actively listen to your child as (s)he talks about their day. This will give insight to help the next day. If you know they like the blocks, that might be a great direction to get them thinking about the next morning.
- Establish a "goodbye routine" and even practice it at home when leaving your child with a grandparent or spouse who typically doesn't drop off. Try for example a special phrase like "see you later alligator", "one hug and two kisses". Try not to get trapped in the "one more hug, kiss etc." Kids are amazing at this game! Unfortunately, it usually just makes a tough goodbye, tough for an even longer period of time.
- Figure out what works best for your child. For most children a quick departure is best. It doesn't prolong what they are dreading (you are leaving). Usually by the time parents have pulled out of the driveway, a crying child has stopped and is involved in playing.
- If you are wondering how they are doing, please call or email to see how they are coping. We don't want you spending the day worrying about them and totally understand how difficult this transition is on parents as well as children.

Parent Communication

The primary mode of day to day communication with your preschooler's teacher and school will be the Parentsquare App. Once your child is in the district's system, they will be enrolled in the App. We encourage you to sign up for notifications via the app to receive all of the up to date information regarding Taft ELC news and updates. Teachers can also communicate via email.

If you email or call the school during the school day, please know that your child's teacher will not be able to return your email or call until the end of the school day. Texting or calling staff on their personal cell phone is not permitted.

Preschool Weather Related School Closures

Notifications of weather related school closings will be decided by and announced by the Superintendent of schools. This announcement will be sent via email, Parentsquare, TV/news, and social media.

- In the event of a Taft ELC school closure due to weather, all Preschool sessions will also be closed.
- In the event of a 1 or 2 hour delay, there will be no 1/2 day (AM) Preschool Program. Full Day programs will run with a 1 or 2 hour delay and open at 9:35/10:35a.m. Afternoon sessions will start at the regular start time of 12:30.

Absences

If your preschooler is going to be absent or will be arriving late, you are required to call the Taft ELC Main Office at: (508)-278-8643 and leave a message with the Main Office. It is also a good idea to alert their teacher via email or Parentsquare as well.

Classroom Schedule & Curriculum

During the first few weeks of school, the daily routine will be adjusted to make the transition into preschool a little easier. Our typical day will vary between programs. Activities may include: Arrival/Project, Table-Based Activities, Circle Time, Snack, Music, Storytime, Lunch and Rest (for full day students), Centers, Clean Up, Playground/Gross Motor Activities and Dismissal.

Our daily activities focus on play-based learning while targeting developmental skills and individual goals and objectives. We incorporate various curricula throughout our day. We are currently using the following:

- A. Learning Without Tears ® curriculum, which encompasses Language and Literacy, Readiness and Writing, Numbers and Math, Oral Language, and Science and Social Studies.
- B. Handwriting Without Tears ® handwriting program, which teaches proper letter formation from the start, yet in fun, easy ways designed for preschoolers to develop good fine motor skills.
- C. Lively Letters® program, which is a research-based multisensory supplemental phonics program.
- D. Second Step® and We Thinkers® are used to support social emotional learning skills
- E. Heggerty® Phonemic Awareness Program for Pre-Kindergarten, which emphasizes oral and auditory activities to help children learn to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words, which is crucial for later reading and writing success.

Student Supply Lists

Daily Supplies 1/2 Day Program (AM and PM)

Please send your preschooler to school everyday with the following:

- A. A standard size backpack (not toddler size) that can fit their school issued folder, notes and artwork along with the following items **LABELED** with your preschooler's name:
- B. A **LABELED** small lunch bag or box for snack
- C. A **LABELED** small water bottle IN ADDITION to any other drinks you may want to pack (i.e. juice or milk)
- D. A **LABELED** extra change of clean clothes (pants, shirt, underwear, and socks)

Daily Supplies Full Day Program

Please send your preschooler to school everyday with the following:

- A. A standard size backpack (not toddler size) that can fit their school issued folder, notes and artwork along with the following items **LABELED** with your preschooler's name:
- B. A **LABELED** lunch bag or box for snack and lunch
- C. 2 snacks (morning and afternoon snack)
- D. A packed lunch if your preschooler is NOT buying school lunch
- E. A **LABELED** small water bottle IN ADDITION to any other drinks you may want to pack (i.e. juice or milk)
- F. A **LABELED** extra change of clean clothes (pants, shirt, underwear, and socks) to keep in your preschooler's backpack
- G. *A **LABELED** toddler nap mat OR a blanket and crib sheet (if you'd like your preschoolers rest mat covered)
- H. A **LABELED** single stuffed toy or lovey to snuggle that can be left at school for the week
- I. Rest/quiet time items should come into school with your preschooler at the beginning of every week, and will be sent home at the end of every week for washing.

*During our Full Day program, we have all preschoolers participate in a rest/quiet time. Many of our students require a nap. Preschoolers who do not nap still benefit from quiet time to rest and recharge for the remainder of the day. We will provide a Rest Mat for all students.

Toys and Personal Items in the Classroom

Please do not allow your child to bring any toys to school unless agreed upon by your child's teacher as we recognize that some students may need a transition item from time to time. Often, these transition items are left in backpacks/cubby area once the student is in the classroom. Toys brought to school often cause added tension and toys could be easily lost or broken and special toys are difficult to share/replace. All young children practice taking turns and sharing, however, it may be much harder for your child to share his or her favorite toy. We

often have special days throughout the school year where your child can bring in something from home, such as teddy bear day.

Food in the Classroom

In addition to snacks and lunch (school lunch offerings are for full day programs only), your child can obtain breakfast in the morning. However, if your child requires breakfast, please contact your child's teacher to provide permission for your child to have breakfast at school from the school cafeteria.

Our classrooms are also nut safe. Please send your preschooler to school with nut-free food and drink in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack daily. Food should be fully prepared at home (i.e. pre-heated, pre-cut, and in the containers they will eat and/or drink from). We do not have access to refrigerate, heat, or cut up student food items. Please no soda or glass containers. Students can keep water bottles in their cubbies if they are thirsty. Please send in foods and drinks your preschooler can open with maximum independence. Please practice opening those containers with your child prior to sending them into school with them.

What to Wear to School

Please have your Preschooler come to school in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing. This includes footwear that is appropriate to access the climbing structure (i.e. sneakers). We have a lot of fun in preschool, and we get messy on occasion. We go outside as weather allows, so please dress your child accordingly. During inclement weather and your child is wearing rain boots or snow boots, please send in an extra pair of sneakers to wear inside the classroom.

Using the Bathroom at School

Although our community peers serve as role models in all areas within our programs, we believe that potty learning is different for each child and each child will exhibit signs of readiness at different ages. Because of this, we do not require your child to be trained before starting preschool. We have experience and training in potty learning and we will be glad to assist with established potty training routines with the understanding that it will only work if we work together. When your child is showing signs of readiness and as you work with your child at home, we will assist to carry over strategies and routines with them here. Children should have some consistent success at home before we start with them at school. This typically means several days with only one accident and interest in staying dry. If your preschooler is in diapers, please send in a labeled bag of diapers and labeled wipes to be used at school.

Birthdays/Celebrations

Due to the increasing number of life-threatening food allergies we encounter, we do not celebrate student's birthdays or other celebrations with food. We will be happy to recognize each child's birthday in their class with their friends. We cannot send home class lists or family contact information. Celebrations are frequently preplanned with student's families to provide a "party in a bag" where each student brings their own special snacks provided from home.

Safety Drills

Your preschooler's class will participate in at least 2 scheduled fire drills per year along with other safety drills.

Transportation

Parents and families provide transportation for drop off and pick up for Preschool students unless a student requires specialized transportation or to access their services as part of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). See below for more information regarding the drop off and pick up routines.

Taft Arrival and Departure Routines

Preschool age children must be accompanied by a parent or other authorized adult. (Authorized adults must be listed on your child's registration form.) All children are encouraged to take care of their own belongings as they are able (carry their own backpack). This develops self help skills, sense of ownership, and overall independence.

To maintain student safety, each child will be provided with a backpack tag with the child's classroom color as well as their teacher's name. This will assist staff in recognizing what students are Preschool age.

(MORNING ARRIVAL)

Preschool Parent Drop Off/Arrival Procedures for 1/2 Day a.m. and Full Day program students (8:25-8:35 a.m.)

-Taft ELC Preschool participates in a rolling drop-off in the mornings in the parking lot on the right (closest to the cafeteria entrance). **This is the preferred method of arrival for all preschool students.**

-All parent drop-off cars will line up to get into the turn around space of the Taft parking lot. Each car will "queue up" behind the next. Please leave a space to not block the Taft entrance or

driveway. Drop off commences at 8:25am and ends at 8:35am. After 8:35am, your child is considered LATE.

-For the safety of your child, please do not unbuckle any seatbelts prior to having your car parked and ready for staff assistance. Staff will assist with seatbelts and help with any car seat/booster. No need to get out of the car.

-Staff will assist on any side of the car, however, moving your car seat/booster to the passenger side of the car is most desirable, as it is much safer to have your child exit closer to the building.

-Students will be escorted to door #9 (Cafeteria) and greeted by the staff at the door and escorted to their class table. **No parents/families are allowed inside the building at this time.**

-If you would like to walk your child to the door, please have the Taft ELC Preschool Parking Permit displayed (provided at Open House) and park in the middle of the circle facing the building. Walk your child to door #9 (cafeteria). **Again, no parents/families are allowed inside the building at this time.**

-If you are late for drop off (past 8:35 a.m.), please bring your child to the main office entrance (to the right of the ball field) and check in with the main office.

-All Preschool students will wait with their class in the cafeteria prior to walking to the classroom as a class.

(Mid-day ARRIVAL)

Preschool Parent Drop Off/Arrival Procedures for 1/2 Day p.m. program students (12:25-12:35 p.m.)

-Park in the lot on the right (closest to the cafeteria). Please have your Preschool Parking Permit displayed (provided at Open House)

-Students will be escorted by their families to door #9 (Cafeteria) and wait outside the door for the arrival time. Students will be released to the staff at the door and escorted to their class table. **No parents/families are allowed inside the building at this time.** However, please be mindful of the classrooms along the side of the building and keep a distance from the doors and windows to allow learning to continue.

-If you are late for drop off (past 12:35 p.m.), please bring your child to the main office entrance (to the right of the ball field) and check in with the main office.

-All Preschool students will wait with their class in the cafeteria prior to walking to the classroom as a class.

Mid-day and Afternoon DISMISSAL

Preschool Parent Pick Up/Dismissal Procedures

1/2 Day AM, 11:05 am

1/2 Day PM and Full Day Program, 3:00 pm

-Park in the lot on the right (closest to the cafeteria). Please have your Preschool Parking Permit displayed (provided at Open House)

-Families should gather outside the cafeteria door. However, please be mindful of the classrooms along the side of the building and keep a distance from the doors and windows to allow learning to continue.

-When your child's teacher sign/color is hung on the door, **families will line up at the door to retrieve their child.** Students will not be released until a family member comes close to the door to retrieve their child due to safety concerns.

-Staff at the door will be checking ID's with their approved pick up list

-All students will have a teacher assigned/color sign with their name on it, please bring this sign to pick up your child for the first month of school as well as when your child's teacher is absent. This aids your child's safety during the dismissal process.

Health & Medication

Your child's health is important to all of us. Please inform us of any special health precautions, medications or other concerns you may have about your child. Taft ELC Preschool shares the school nurse with K-3 students within the building.

In accordance with state law Immunization records as well as a most recent physical must be on file at the school. If you choose not to immunize your child, we must have a written record of this for our file. Please update records after each immunization.

Authorization for medical treatment must be completed and signed by a parent and be kept on file for each child enrolled in our program.

Illness: Parental cooperation is necessary to promote a healthy environment for all the children attending our program. Please do not send your child to school if they show signs of illness in the morning. Please adhere to the Uxbridge Public Schools Health Policies for more information.

If your child requires medication while they are attending school, the medication will need to be provided directly to the school nurse with a copy of the prescription/doctor's orders.

Tuition

Tuition is due by the 15th of every month and should be processed through your personal account through UniPay. The secure UniPay payment portal can be accessed by creating your own account at: <https://unipaygold.unibank.com/customerinfo.aspx>. Please note that invoices will not be issued by the district. All tuition related questions should be directed to the Uxbridge Public Schools business office at 508-278-8643.

Donations

If anyone is interested in donating supplies for the class, the following items are always needed and appreciated: Clorox/Lysol wipes for tables, paper towels, tissues, gallon zip top bags, sandwich ziploc bags, napkins, plastic utensils, and plastic cups. We are always looking for extra pull-on underwear, pants, socks, shoes, shirts (sizes 3-6).

How to Get Involved

There are lots of ways to get involved!

We often have opportunities for families to volunteer in the classroom, such as mystery readers. If you are interested, please inquire with the front office for an application to get fingerprinted and CORI checked.

Additionally, we have an active Taft PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) and SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Committee) in our school that has done great things for us, and they are always looking for help. Inquire at the main office.

***Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to get to know you and your children! Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.
Thank you in advance for helping us to make this year a very special year for your child!***

Sincerely,

The Taft ELC Integrated Preschool Team

Uxbridge Public Schools

