Prospect Heights

Park District

Parent Handbook

2026-2027

Welcome and thank you for choosing Creative Kids Preschool program.

2026-2027
School Year
September 8, 2026,
May 21, 2026

Class Schedule:

Class	Drop off	Class Time	Pick up
4's M-F	*8:45 am*	*8:45 am – 12:30pm*	*12:30pm*
4's M, W, F	*8:45 am*	*8:45 am – 12:30pm*	*12:30pm*
2.5/3's T, Th	*9:00 am*	*9:00 am - 11:30 am*	*11:30 am*
3's M, W, F	*8:45am*	*8:45am-11:45am*	*11:45am*

Teacher contact:

Please notify your child's class teacher if your child will be absent via phone.

Olive Room - (224) 248 - 9592 * 326

Pine Roon - (224) 248 - 9586 * 327

Laura Fudala, Supervisor of Recreation
lfudala@phparks.org

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Below you will find a list of supplies that your child will need for preschool. Please send all supplies with your child on their first day of class. Each child will be using their supplies during class and all supplies will remain in the classroom. *Please be sure to label all your child's supplies.*

2.5 & 3-Year-old supply list

- **School size backpack**
- **1 solid color folder with 2 pockets**
- **Crayola 24 count Crayons Pack**
- **1 pack Crayola washable Broad Line markers**
- **1 pack Crayola washable thin markers**
- **1 pallet washable Crayola water color paint**
- **1 Elmers school glue, white only**
- **4 Elmers washable glue sticks, large**
- **4 Elmers washable glue sticks, small**
- **2 boxes of gallon size zip lock baggies (no zipper please)**
- **2 Box/Pack of baby wipes**
- **1 Package of stickers**
- **2 boxes of unscented tissues**
- **2 dry erase markers any color**

4-Year-old supply list

- **School size backpack**
- **1 solid color folder with 2 pockets**
- **1 pack Crayola 24 count Crayons Pack**
- **1 pack Crayola washable Skinny Markers**
- **1 pack Crayola broad markers**
- **1 pallet washable Crayola water color paint**
- **1 Elmers school glue, white only**
- **4 Elmers washable glue sticks, small**
- **2 box of gallon size ziplock baggies (no zipper please)**
- **3 Box/Pack of baby wipes**
- **2 large boxes of unscented tissues**
- **2 dry erase markers any color**
- **Package of stickers**

**Optional - Preschool is always looking for card stock of any color or patterned seasonal paper.*

Visitor Check-In

Visitors will need to stop @ the front desk to sign in. They will receive a name badge.

Classroom Environment

The Creative Kids Preschool program provides an age-appropriate curriculum to develop a child's love of learning. Our curriculum is provided in a safe, nurturing environment which allows the children opportunities to grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically. Children participate in a variety of activities every day including art, math, science, Storytime, and group learning so that students can find their successes. Our curriculum incorporates Jolly Phonics, STEM, and Handwritting Without Tears. We strive to prepare children for kindergarten and our program is designed to give your child the tools and experiences they need to assure a positive transition.

The Curriculum emphasized throughout our two-year program is as follows:

- Recognition and printing of first and last names with upper and lowercase letters.
- Naming basic colors and shapes
- STEM
- Reciting numbers 1-20
- Counting by 2's, 5's, and 10's
- Letter recognition
- Number recognition
- Sounds
- Sights words
- Calendar and weather

Our teachers plan a simple curriculum to assess the mental and social development of their students. This helps children learn good work habits, follow directions, socialize, solve problems, think independently, play cooperatively, share, and establish self-direction. They help students and their parents prepare for the school years ahead.

The following concepts are introduced to the classroom:

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Problem-solving
- Listening skills
- Social skills
- Pre-writing skills
- STEM
- Early mathematics concepts
- Language and vocabulary
- Visual Perceptual skills
- Early science concepts
- Independence

Newsletters

A newsletter containing general information and reminders will be distributed monthly with the calendar. Additionally, they will also be posted the Prospect Heights Park District website phparks.org

Staff

The Creative Kids Preschool staff are highly qualified, caring, and compassionate people who truly enjoy working with children. All staff members have completed a national criminal background check (CORI) before being hired. Staff members are CPR certified.

Enrollment and attendance policies

To be eligible for enrollment, children must be 3 years old by September 1, 2026, for the 3-year-old program, or 4 years old by September 1, 2026, for the 4-year-old program. To register, a non-refundable $50 deposit and birth certificate are required. Unfortunately, we can't prorate your monthly payment due to vacation or illness. The annual preschool fee is broken down into equal monthly installments for ease of tracking. Monthly days of attendance will fluctuate. Please note that this is a nine-month program. Automatic billing to your credit card is available. Monthly payments are due on the first day of the month.

Late payment

Any payment received after the 1st will be considered delinquent and your account will be charged a $10.00 late fee. If your account becomes more than 30 days late, the Supervisor of Recreation will contact the responsible party to discuss bringing the account up to date. If you are not brought to a zero balance within 60 days, your child may be dropped from the program. The past due amount and current tuition payment will be due before your child can re-enter the program or any other Prospect Heights Park District program. Re-enrollment into the program will be an option only if there is an opening available.

Refund policy

Days missed due to vacation, sick days, or any other personal reasons will not be prorated, credited, or refunded. To balance the cost of running the building, the program, employees, etc. you are paying for your child's "spot" in the program for the school year. Regardless of the number of days your child is or is not present (due to vacation or sickness). No credit or refund will be given for school calendar changes or revisions. No credit or refund will be given if your child is suspended or expelled from the program.

Drop off & pick up procedures

Children must be accompanied to their classroom at drop-off. Please take a moment to help your child hang up their backpack and put their supplies at their seat. Only the parent/guardian of those listed on the child's emergency forms are authorized for pickup. A child will not be released to anyone who is NOT listed as an "Authorized for Pick-up". If your child will be picked up by someone not listed, a written note to staff with a phone call or email to Laura Fudala, Supervisor of Recreation, is required. Any individual picking up your child will be required to show identification if asked.

Reminder: Early drop-off before the start of the child's registration class is not allowed. The Prospect Heights Park District Before Care and After Care Program is available to children who are registered in the 4-year-old preschool program.

Late pick-up policy & procedure

Prompt pick-up of your child is required. Please contact us immediately if you realize that you are going to be late and provide us with an estimated time of arrival. The Prospect Heights Park District reserves the right to charge a late fee of $1 per minute for late pick-ups.

If a child has not been picked up by the end of their scheduled program, the following steps will be taken:

1. *5 minutes after the program's scheduled end time, staff will attempt to reach the parent/guardian by phone.*
2. *If unable to reach a parent /guardian, staff will call individuals listed on the child's "Authorized for Pick-up" list.*
3. *If after 30 minutes, parents are unreachable and authorized individuals are unreachable or are not able to pick the child up, the police will be contacted for their assistance.*

Before & aftercare programs

The Prospect Heights Park District offers before and after-school programming to Kindergarteners, First Graders, and any student enrolled in the Prospect Heights Park District's 4-year-old Creative Kids Preschool program. Our Before Care and After Care programs are designed to help parents with professional care, supervision, and structured recreation both before and after school. Our professional and responsible staff provides the support students need and provides an opportunity to enjoy free play, individual and group in a secure and safe environment. Children will enjoy a small snack, have time to complete their homework, and enjoy an assortment of activities: playing at the park or gym, playing in the classroom with our assortment of pretend play and STEM toys, sports, arts & crafts, games, music, movies, and more!

Absences

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the staff of any exceptions to their enrollment schedule. In the event your child will be absent from any program for any reason, including sickness, please call us before 9:00 AM. This assures the staff that your child is safe and allows them to effectively plan the day.

Teacher contact

Please notify your child's teacher if your child will be absent via phone.

Olive Room - *(224) 248 - 9592 * 326*

Willow Room - *(224) 248 - 9586 * 327*

Laura Fudala, Supervisor of Recreation *(847) 394-4878* or *lfudala@phparks.org*

Unscheduled & emergency school closings

Creative Kids Preschool follows the District 23 closures policy. If Prospect Heights School District 23 is closed due to weather, Creative Kids Preschool will not be in operation.

For additional information regarding school closing, please visit the Prospect Heights School District 23 website at www.d23.org

Parent communication

Open communication between the staff and parents is essential in providing the best care possible and it's vital to your child's success in our program. Please keep us informed of any changes at home or any issues at school so that we can support your child throughout the school year the best we can. When picking up your child, please feel free to have a brief conversation with your child's teacher.

Behavior management

Creating a safe, caring, and enriching environment is the goal of all our staff at the Prospect Heights Park District. Children and staff are expected to behave in a safe, responsible, and respectful manner and to adhere to the rules of conduct as delineated in the Prospect Height Park District's Behavior Management policy.

Rules of conduct

- Children will show respect to all participants and employees and take directions from staff.
- Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated, and children will refrain from using inappropriate language.
- Children will refrain from causing bodily harm to themselves, other children, or staff, and refrain from using hands or body forces aggressively.
- Children will respect all Prospect Heights Park District equipment, supplies, facilities, and property. This includes cleaning up all supplies to participate in the program.
- Children will remain within the designated program area.

Our staff understands how important it is for children to be heard. Their emotions, concerns, frustrations, and fears are treated with respect and understanding. To protect the welfare of all the children, inappropriate behavior must be addressed while in the program. Staff will inform parents of ongoing issues of concern and will document the associated behaviors. If this behavior continues to cause concern and is consistent, the

Supervisor of Recreation will request a conference with the parents/guardians. If the situation warrants, a behavioral contract between parents, staff, and child may be put into place. If a child's behavior is a hazard or may endanger him/her and/or others, he/she may be asked to leave the program.

The Prospect Heights Park District, its instructors, supervisors, and administrative staff reserve the right to suspend, expel or deny participation to any participant whose behavior is disruptive to the program and/or interferes with the rights and safety of others. Inappropriate conduct on the part of a parent/guardian may be grounds for the dismissal of the family from the program.

ADA and special accommodation

The Prospect Heights Park District has a cooperative agreement with Northwest Special Recreation Association. This team of therapeutic recreation professionals provides inclusion assistance for park district programs. If the teacher feels support is needed for a child, they will have a conversation with the parent/guardian to set up a time for observation from NWSRA.

Toilet training policy

All participants must be trained. Children must be wearing underwear with very few accidents. A child having accidents daily will not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull-ups is not considered toilet trained. Please contact Laura Fudala at lfudala@phparks.org with any questions.

A toilet-trained child can do the following:

- Communicate to staff that he/she needs to go to the bathroom BEFORE they need to go.
- Alert him/her to stop what he/she is doing, and to go and use the bathroom.
- Pull down his/her clothes and get him back up without assistance.
- Wipe him/her after using the toilet.
- Get off the toilet by him/herself.
- Wash and dry your hands by him/herself.
- Postpone going if bathroom stalls are full, they need to wait for a "buddy", and/or if we are away from the classroom.

Snack

Please send a small, healthy snack and a water bottle with your child every day for snack time. Please make sure your child's name is written on the water bottle and please only send water bottles that can be closed tight and not spill. All our preschool classrooms are peanut/tree nut-free! Please do not bring any items containing nuts or have labels that state it was processed with nut products.

Clothing

Students should wear comfortable clothes that can be worn for messy activities. Please dress your child in clothes that they can easily handle themselves when going to the bathroom. Please send your child dressed appropriately for the weather. Weather permitting, we may go outside for outdoor play at the park. When the weather does not allow for outdoor play, we go to the gym. Sneakers are required at the park as well as the gym.

All students **MUST** wear comfortable, well-fitting, age-appropriate shoes to school. We require that a complete change of clothing (pants/shorts, shirt, underwear, socks) be kept in your child's backpack. We will change the student into extra clothes if he or she requires them for any reason. Soiled clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag for you to wash. If a change of clothing has not been provided or is not available, a student may be changed into clothing from our spare clothing locker. Please wash and return all items lent to your student.

Wellness Policy (non-COVID related)

Under no circumstances may a child attend school if the child shows any signs of illness. Sick children will expose all children and staff members who they encounter, who can in turn expose the other staff members and children. Because the health of all our participants and staff is of top priority, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important.

In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent/guardian will be called to be picked up or make arrangements for prompt pickup. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to promptly pick the child up.

We ask that you strictly adhere to these standards, so all our preschool children and staff are protected.

- *Children who are at school are expected to be healthy and to participate in all indoor and outdoor activities with their class.*
- *Intending to maintain a qualitative program and protect all our children, no child will be accepted with indications of illness.*
- *If a child becomes ill during school, parents will be notified and must pick them up within 15 minutes. If a parent is unavailable, an emergency contact will be contacted to pick up the child. Please make sure those listed are available and within proximity to the class.*

Students will not be able to attend class if any of the following conditions apply:

- A temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher
- Any flu-like symptoms
- Vomiting
- Communicable diseases
- Consistent sneezing, cough, runny/stuffy nose
- Open sores
- Headache upset stomach/loose bowels
- Diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing
- or other signs of possible illness

Please note communicable diseases (strep throat, Hand, Foot Mouth, conjunctivitis, etc.) to the Supervisor of Recreation so a Health Alert Notice can be distributed to participants. Your child's name will remain confidential.

Please notify your teachers or Laura Fudala, Supervisor of Recreation if your child is absent from class for anything NOT RELATED to an illness.

Under the following conditions, children may return to the program when All of the following criteria are met:

- Temperature is normal
- Without the assistance of medication, for 24 hours.
- The child has not vomited for 24 hours, without the assistance of medication.
- A child can participate in regular program activities.

Emergencies

In the event of an injury requiring emergency care beyond ordinary first aid:

1. 911 will be called for paramedic services.
2. The parent/guardian will be contacted.
3. If the parent/guardian emergency contact is not at the park district before the ambulance leaves for the hospital, a staff member will accompany the child and remain at the hospital until the parent/guardian/emergency contact arrives.
4. The parent/guardian is responsible for the emergency medical charges for all services rendered. Your authorization for the program permits staff to secure emergency medical treatment for your child. Your commitment to pay for any extraordinary medical treatment is part of the registration agreement.

Ways Parents Can Help Each Day of Class

Parents often ask if there are ways that they can help their child have a successful preschool experience. Listed below are a few suggestions:

- *Make sure your child gets enough sleep and has a regular bedtime.*
- *Help your child build good health habits by providing good nutrition.*
- *Encourage self-reliance.*
- *Take an interest in what your child does in school.*
- *Label everything with your child's first and last name.*
- *Read, read, read!*
- *Cherish your child.*

Our Preschool Classroom

The preschool classroom is divided into several center areas designed to encourage learning through exploration, investigation, and problem-solving. To effectively stimulate and motivate children's curiosity, some center areas remain constant while the presentation of others will vary.

Reading Center

The Reading Center creates a comfortable space to explore and enjoy good books. Favorite books are displayed with space for reading alone or with a friend. Children will have an opportunity to hold and read a book that was shared in a whole group setting or choose a selection of their own. In the early stages of reading, young children will "pretend" to read. Next, children will tell a story and "sound" as though they are reading. Both of these stages support the development of decoding words. The emergent reading stages can be observed in an informal setting in the Reading Center.

Art Center

The Art Center is where creativity is enhanced, and social skills are formed. Children can explore a variety of media and materials. The Art Center is a busy production area. Here children are free to express themselves in any way they prefer. Children may work together or alone. Plans are made, problems are solved, and negotiations are developed. Children can choose from a wide variety of materials such as paints, crayons, colored pencils, and more. A child may start with a blank piece of paper on the easel and create a masterpiece! This is an area of complete self-expression.

Block Center

The Block Center is a construction area that provides children with interesting materials for designing and building. This center allows small groups of children to share materials and work together. Accessory pieces such as cars, trucks, animals, and dinosaurs help to make structures more realistic. Children learn about

shapes, sizes, measurement, balance, and more. One of the most important skills developed in this area is the ability to work in collaboration with others.

Math Center

The Math Center provides a place for children to explore a wide range of manipulative materials. Beads, puzzles, gears, one-to-one correspondence, and recognition of numbers are just some of the materials available to the children. Patterning, sequencing, size, and measurement along with computation help the child develop math computation skills. Research has found that the exploration of these many items helps children understand mathematical and logical thinking. When children are working together, they will also be observed using negotiating skills and reinforcing abstract thinking.

Science Center

The Science Center is designed to encourage learning through observation, exploration, and investigation. Children are encouraged to look and listen and use their senses to find similarities and differences. They will experiment with various materials and use language to discuss what they have observed. Children have the opportunity to explore concepts of balance using scales, magnets, and other equipment. Science allows children to become aware of the world around them. Discovering nature, technology, health, and the environment opens discovery of how we belong to our world and opens avenues for conceptual thoughts and ideas.

Dramatic Play

The Dramatic Play Center is the most social area of the room. Children engage in the many aspects and stages of play. Children are allowed to recreate roles they see in everyday life. As the year progresses the Dramatic Play Center will change and evolve to reflect various themes and interests of the children. Dramatic play is an area where children can act out fantasy combined with real-life situations. Language development is fostered along with social skills and communication. Problem-solving, sharing, and cooperative learning are fostered. Identifying community workers, as well as family role-playing, opens the doors to the world around the children.

Circle Time

Each day the children come together as a group for Circle Time. At this time a wide variety of activities are introduced. Songs, fingerplays, stories, number and letter concepts, math, and science are just some of the themes introduced. New ideas are explored through teacher and child-directed concepts. When children experience group activities, they are learning to wait their turn, learn and accept rules, share ideas and develop friends through name recognition.

Large Motor Movement in Gym & Playground

The preschool year is marked by advances in growth, strength, speed, and coordination. Muscular abilities contribute to growing self-confidence. Gym/playground activities are designed to aid in the development of large motor skills, promote coordination and encourage mobility. In addition to utilizing climbing equipment,

the class has the opportunity to use scooters, hula-hoops, different types of balls, a parachute, and more. Along with large motor development, other social skills are introduced. Sportsmanship, team spirit, taking turns, and trying your best are some of the concepts used. Having children feel part of a group gives a boost to self-confidence and concepts of friendship. Children will utilize the outdoors as much as possible, weather permitting. Please always make sure to wear appropriate clothing for these large motor activities and weather.

Music and Movement

Research indicates that children develop awareness and respond to music even before birth. Music opens up a new world of sensory experiences for children. The introduction of rhythms and sounds brings out creativity along with movement. Children are free to express themselves by exposure to many different types of music. Rhythm bands, with the use of simple instruments, stories put to music, the use of hands for clapping, and our voices to create sound and songs, are some of the ways to explore music and movement. The activities expand a child's attention span, increase motor control, improve memory with the use of songs, but most importantly entail FUN!

Thank you and we are looking forward to a successful 2026-2027 school year! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact: Supervisor of Recreation, Laura Fudala at lfudala@phparks.org or (847) 666-4878

Prospect Heights Park District Creative kids Preschool 2025-2026 Parent Acknowledgement

Preschooler's name:

I understand that the payment must be received no later than the 1st of the month for the next month of attendance and that any payment received after the 1st will be considered delinquent and my account will be charged a $10 late fee. I understand that if I have elected for automatic billing, my credit card on file will be charged on the 1st of every month.

I understand that I cannot drop my child off earlier than the start time of their scheduled program. I understand that I am responsible to pick up my child by the end time of their scheduled program.

If I arrive for pickup past the end of my child's registered program, my account will be charged $1 for every minute I am late. If I am late more than 5 times, my child may be removed from the program, and all fees that I have paid will be forfeited to the Prospect Height Park District. There is no refund if my child is removed from the program.

I understand that my child must adhere to the rule of conduct as delineated in Heights Park District's Behavior Management Policy. I understand that The Prospect Heights Park District, its instructors, supervisors, and administrative staff, reserve the right to suspend, expel or deny participation to any participant whose behavior is disruptive to the program and/or interferes with the rights and safety of others. Inappropriate on the part of a parent/guardian may be the dismissal of the family from the program.

I understand that my child must be toilet trained to participate in the program. I understand that it is my responsibility to keep all medical and allergy information on ePACT with the Prospect Heights Park District up to date.

I have read the above information and understand and agree with the Prospect Heights Park District Creative Kids Preschool format.

Parent Name: ***Phone number:***

Signature: ***Date:***

Anti-Bullying Procedures

Effective Date:

August 1, 2025

1. Purpose

The Prospect Heights Park District is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors. This policy is intended to prevent bullying in any form and outline clear procedures for addressing incidents if they occur.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals participating in or interacting with Prospect Heights Park District programs, events, activities, or facilities—this includes but is not limited to:
- Children and youth in camps, sports, and recreation programs
- Adult program participants
- Visitors to facilities and public spaces

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as any repeated, unwanted aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm. Bullying may include:
- Verbal abuse: teasing, name-calling, threats, intimidation
- Social exclusion: deliberate isolation or spreading rumors
- Physical aggression: hitting, pushing, or damaging property
- Cyberbullying: harmful communication via digital platforms
- Discriminatory harassment: based on race, gender, religion, disability, etc.

4. Prevention Strategies

- Staff and volunteers will receive training on identifying and preventing bullying behavior.
- Programs will promote respect, empathy, and cooperation.
- Staff will model positive behavior and encourage open communication.
- Clear rules of conduct will be shared with all participants and displayed at facilities.

5. Reporting Procedures

Anyone who witnesses or experiences bullying is encouraged to report it immediately to a trusted park district staff member. Reports may be made:

- Verbally or in writing
- Anonymously (though this may limit follow-up actions)

All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and confidentially.

A participant will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the park district's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, a person who is found to have falsely accused another or bullying, as a means of retaliation, as a means of bullying, or provided false information may be subject to consequences.

6. Investigation and Response

- A designated staff member will investigate reports of bullying within 2 business days.
- All parties involved will be interviewed to determine the facts.
- The parents/guardians of all minor participants involved in an alleged incident of bullying will be notified of such within 24 hours after a park district supervisor is made aware of the participant's involvement in the incident.
- If bullying is confirmed, appropriate action will be taken based on the severity of the behavior.

Consequences may include:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Removal from a program or facility
- Suspension or expulsion from participation
- Referral to law enforcement, if warranted

7. Consequences Appeal Process

Upon request of the parent(s)/guardian(s), a review of the consequences shall be conducted by the Executive Director or their designee. That review will be completed within two business days of the request and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the final decision.

8. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

9. Communication

This policy will be made available to all participants, families, and staff through registration materials and the park district website.

10. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as needed to ensure continued effectiveness and alignment with community needs and legal require