



Vinton-Shellsburg CSD

Tiny Vike's Preschool

Parent Handbook

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our preschool program will offer:

- Morning or afternoon preschool free of a tuition charge
- Highly qualified preschool teachers with a college degree specializing in early childhood education
- Highly qualified teacher associates (Paraeducator Certificate, Associates/Bachelor Degree, 2 years of college, or CDA credentialed).
- Classrooms that align with the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.
- The state approved *Creative Curriculum* and assessments.

MISSION STATEMENT

Tiny Vike's Preschool exists to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for preschool age children. Our focus is to provide a stimulating educational experience which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to be life-long learners.

PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

We believe:

- All children can learn but often at different rates.
- Children learn best by doing.
- Children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking).
- Play provides the foundation for academic or "school" learning. It is the preparation children need before they learn highly abstract symbols such as letters and numbers. Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children.
- Every child deserves a caring, secure, and supportive environment.
- Students, staff, family and community should be partners in education as they experience life-long learning.

GOALS

- *Social* - To help children build trust in their new environment, feel comfortable at school, make friends, and be a part of a community.
- *Emotional* - To help children express their feelings with words, being able to develop a full range of emotions, and being able to appropriately cope with those emotions. Experience pride and self-esteem and have a positive, healthy attitude toward life.
- *Cognitive* - To help children become confident learners by providing them with problem solving activities in the classroom and letting them try out their own ideas, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- *Physical* - To help children strengthen their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

- *Language* - Provide children with many opportunities to engage in conversations, model new vocabulary, and explain meanings of new words.

CURRICULUM

The preschool program uses the *Creative Curriculum*, a research- and evidence-based comprehensive curriculum designed for birth through kindergarten aged students. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways: through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening, and storytelling. Suggestions for modifications and adaptations are an integral part of the curriculum.

Assessment information ([IOPPS 4.2](#)) will be shared formally with families during Parent-Teacher Conferences in the Fall and Spring. In addition, the "Tiny Vike's Preschool Progress Report" will be sent home at the end of the first, second, and third trimester. The preschool teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENT OF CHILDRENS' SKILLS

Your child will be assessed using a variety of tools throughout the year with the purpose of:

- Guiding teachers in providing the activities and environment that will assist each child to progress in their development in all areas (social, cognitive, language, and motor skills).
- Identifying social/emotional skills that children possess and can be strengthened at home and at school.
- Giving teachers and parents information about each child's progress throughout the year.
- Guiding staff in developing program improvements, professional learning, and classroom supports to assist classroom teaching staff and student learning.

The assessment tool that will be used throughout the year is:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD* - Classroom staff will collect data that shows how your child is progressing in all developmental areas (social, intellectual, motor, and language). This happens every day in the classroom. Classroom staff will record the data they collect in the online system (GOLD), and they will finalize all data three times a year (Fall, Winter, and Spring).
- Teachers will conference with you twice during the year (Fall and Spring). You will see how your child is developing over time and see the types of activities in which your child has been involved.
- You will be invited at both the Fall and Spring conferences to share insights into your child's development. You and your child's teacher will work together to determine goals for your child's continued learning.
- At the end of the school year, a final reporting period will be completed, and an updated written report will be placed in your child's cumulative record as well as sent home.

In addition, there are other instruments that may be used to help determine your child's level of development.

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3)* – This instrument is a comprehensive screening and monitoring program. It is made up of 21 questions and is designed to be filled out by a parent or teacher. The questionnaire covers five areas of development: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social. There is also a section for you to write down any concerns that you have about your child.

Preschool staff members receive ongoing training using various assessment tools, best practice gathering data, and are given instruction on how to use the results to guide their programming. This leads to activities that are planned for each child at his/her own level and pace. Each tool uses specific methods to assess your child. Teachers understand the purpose of each tool and how best to administer them. Assessment tools include, but are not limited to, observations, anecdotal records, checklists, photos, videos, and work samples such as drawing or writing.

Teaching staff take into consideration how long they have known your child, how your child relates to others in a group, and observe how your child develops over a broad range of skills and situations.

Please feel free to ask your child's teacher for more specific information about any assessment instrument used.

The teacher will ask you questions about your child, your family's culture and needs, and your goals for your child so that you may work together to best meet your child's needs. The Tiny Vike's Preschool program will begin each school year by visiting homes where this information will be initially discussed.

Information that is gained through assessing your child will be kept confidential. Sometimes other members of the building team, such as the principal or counselor, need to be informed of your child's level of development so that we can best meet his/her needs. If this is the case, the teacher would let you know that such a meeting is taking place. If other professionals are asked to assist with plans to meet a specific child's needs, then you would be asked to sign a release of information form. This would allow the building staff to work with only those professionals listed on the release form.

The Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District (VSCSD) also requires anyone deemed legitimately eligible to view a child's assessment(s) and official records to sign a Privacy Act Checkout Record stating their name, position, date, and reason for viewing the file. Parents are able to access their child's file at any time and may have a copy of their child's file upon request. Such requests can be made through the Vinton-Shellsburg Central Office or your child's school office.

A child's screening results and assessment information will be used for teacher instructional planning, sharing with families, and it could be used for research and state reporting purposes.

ADMISSION

Children enrolling in the [Statewide Voluntary Program Four-Year-Old Program](#) (at no cost to families) must be four years of age by September 15th of the current year in order to register.

Three-year-old children being registered for the tuition program must be three years of age by September 15th of the current year in order to register. Three-year-old children being registered for the program will be charged a \$75 monthly fee to attend. The exception would be three-year-old children who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), in which case, tuition is free of charge.

Pre-registration for the next school year takes place in January and February of that calendar year. Since sessions have limited space, spots will be filled on a first-come first-serve basis. VSCSD will try to honor parent requests, if possible.

Three-year-old registration spots are limited. If the program is full when you register, your child will be put on a waitlist, and you will be notified if and when an opening occurs.

Parents will receive a packet of information with enrollment forms to be completed and returned to the Tiny Vike's Preschool Center prior to the start of the school year.

FEES

The intent of the [Statewide Voluntary Program Four-Year-Old Program](#) is to create high-quality early learning environments for four-year-old children whose families choose to access such programs. To this purpose, state funds are made available to assist local school districts in the implementation of the voluntary preschool programs.

SCHEDULES

Tiny Vike's Preschool at Tilford Elementary

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

12:10 p.m. - 3:10 p.m.

Tiny Vike's Preschool at Shellsburg Elementary

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

TRANSPORTATION

The Vinton-Shellsburg Community Schools will provide school bus transportation for preschoolers who have three (3) or more registered preschoolers at one location. Parents or legal guardians may request transportation at enrollment, indicating the pick-up and drop off address, the name of the responsible person at that address, and emergency contact information for all parties involved.

Parents or legal guardians will be asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the school secretary. Children attending the afternoon preschool session may ride the bus home with older siblings on the regular bus route.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN

Parents or legal guardians must either accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day or leave their child in the care of one of the teaching staff. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult. Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior authorization will be allowed to pick-up a child from the school.

In the interest of students' safety, individuals must report directly to the office when picking up a student prior to the end of the session, rather than going to the child's classroom. Likewise, when a student returns to the building following an absence during the school day, the adult must stop in the office and sign-in the child.

ATTENDANCE

Children who are enrolled for classes in the Tiny Vike's Preschools are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Children are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Please call the elementary office to report an absence prior to 8:30 a.m. if your child attends the morning session and prior to 12:30 p.m. for the afternoon session. For the sake of safety, if a child is absent without notification, the school secretary will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

ILLNESS POLICY AND EXCLUSION OF SICK CHILDREN

Keep your child home if the child has:

- a fever of 100° or higher. The child must be fever-free for 24-hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- vomited the evening before.
- diarrhea the evening before.
- been diagnosed with a bacterial infection such as streptococcus or staphylococcus. The child must follow the fever guidelines and not return to school until 24-hours after the first dose of antibiotic was given.
- a persistent cough and runny nose which is not related to allergies.

Medications (IQPPS 5.8)

The purpose of administering medications in school is to help each child maintain an optimal state of health to enhance his or her education. The administration of prescription medication by school personnel to children in school shall be done only with written authorization and direction of the physician. A "Parental Authorization and Release" form shall be filled out and signed by the physician and the parent/guardian. Prescription medication must be in the original containers with

the pharmacy label attached. Over-the-counter medications must also be in the original containers and will be administered as recommended on the label. Students are only allowed to take medication in school when it is given to them by school nurse/health associate in the health office. Exceptions would be when written permission is given to students with asthma to carry an inhaler with them.

Immunizations: (IQPPS 5.1 & 5.13)

It is the policy of the Vinton Shellsburg School District that all students enrolled must be in compliance with the State of Iowa Immunization Code. All non compliant students will be excluded from school. A valid certificate must be submitted to the school per the Iowa law. Emergency contact information for each student is kept on file in the main office and shared with the nurse's office. It is especially important to keep the school office informed of any changes in telephone, address, employment, etc. so that we may contact the appropriate person in a timely manner.

Health Records:

Proof of your child's date of birth, proof of residency, a recent physical and an up-to-date immunization record is requested to attend our early childhood programs. In addition, a child must have the following items on file to attend school: Student Registration Form, Home Language Survey. These can be given to the school prior to the first day of class.

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. Files are kept current by updating as needed. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Toileting (IQPPS 5.5)

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. While toilet training is encouraged, it is not required for a child to attend our preschool program. For children who are enrolled in our program, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, i.e., the bathroom adjacent to the classroom. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 5.

For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the program makes sure that:

- For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.
- Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

Staff checks children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces

- at least every two hours when children are aware and
- when children awaken
- diapers are changed when wet or soiled
- staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility
- each changing area is separated by a partial wall or at least three feet from other areas that children use and is used exclusively for one designated group of children
- at all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.

In the changing area, staff

- post changing procedures and
- follow changing procedures
- these procedures are used to evaluate teaching staff who change diapers
- surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding
- containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can)
- containers are kept closed and
- are not accessible to children.
- staff members whose primary function is preparing food do not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed for the day

All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Hand Washing (IQPPS 5.19)

All staff, students, volunteers, and visitors (including parents) must wash their hands upon entering the preschool classroom.

Universal Precautions (IQPPS 5.19)

All staff in our program are trained on an annual basis on Universal Precautions and Bloodborne Pathogens. Items used in our classrooms are made of products that are easily cleaned or disposable. This training and equipment ensures that staff are knowledgeable on how to clean and sanitize surfaces, spaces and items to keep all stakeholders staff and reduce the spread of infectious disease.

Cleaning and Sanitation (IQPPS 5.18 & 5.19)

Classrooms are cleaned and sanitized using the NAEYC Cleaning, Sanitation and Disinfection Frequency Table.

Air Quality (IQPPS 5.19)

Our program does not utilize sprays, deodorizers, diffusers, or other methods to alter air quality of the classroom. This is to reduce reactions due to airborne irritants such as asthma, allergies, or sensory aversion.

EARLY DISMISSALS/INCLEMENT WEATHER

Preschool will follow any V-S school cancellations, late starts or early dismissals due to weather. If there is a late start due to weather, there will not be A.M. preschool, but we will have P.M. preschool, If there is an early dismissal due to weather, there will not be P.M. preschool.

School delays or cancellations will be announced on the following radio and TV stations: KCRG (9), KWWL (7) and KGAN (2) television stations and Shellsburg and Vinton Cable stations. WMT (AM/FM), KQMG, KHAK, KDAT, KRNA, KZIA, KXEL, KOEL (AM/FM) and KCCK radio stations. You may also call the Vinton Shellsburg information line at 436-4728 ext. 6.

SNACKS (IQPPS 5.13)

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, physical growth, ability to learn, and overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form. The preschool serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered. A snack is provided each day for the children in preschool. If your child has an allergy or cannot eat a particular food, please inform the classroom teacher. (IQPPS 5.13) Students will receive the option of milk or juice each day along with snack

CLOTHING

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name.

OBJECTS FROM HOME

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

WEAPON POLICY

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. A zero tolerance policy on dangerous weapons (real or toy) is in effect; i.e., gun, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy grenades and other similar items knives, etc. Violation may result in a student suspension/ expulsion.

ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Live animals will not be allowed in school district facilities except under special circumstances and must be present for an educational purpose. Prior permission from the teacher will be required of anyone wishing to bring an animal into school district facilities. Appropriate supervision of animals is required when animals are brought into the school district facilities.

The person bringing the animal must furnish transportation for the animal brought to school. Animals will not be allowed to travel to and from the student's attendance center on the school bus.

It shall be the responsibility of the classroom teacher to determine appropriate supervision of animals in the classroom.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT (IQPPS 10.15)

Our program conducts a family survey, at least once a year, to collect information on parent perception and feedback. The results of this survey are shared out with families digitally and at our Spring Parent Conferences. Parent/guardian feedback and input is used and considered when making program improvements and decisions.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will communicate with families on a weekly basis. This may include personal notes or a classroom newsletter. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being.

HOME VISITS

Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family. This experience will help to create a partnership

between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like to address. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator.

Tiny Vike's Community Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

FIELD TRIPS

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The Vinton-Shellsburg School District buses are used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter and signs posted in the classroom well in advance,

CHILD GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

Large and Small Group Activities

Self-directed Play

Snack

Story Time

Skill Groups

Learning Center Activities: Art, Literacy, Games, Drama, Blocks, Writing, Science and Math

Outdoor Activities

Individual Activities

CONTACT INFORMATION

Tilford Elementary School
308 East 13th St.
Vinton, Iowa 52349
319-436-4728 Ext. 5800 Building Secretary

Shellsburg Elementary School
203 Tomahawk Trail
Shellsburg, Iowa 52332
319-436-4728 Ext. 5900 Building Secretary

District Equity Statement: The Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District provides equal educational and employment opportunities and will not illegally discriminate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, marital status or disability. Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District shall take affirmative action in recruitment, appointment, assignment and advancement of women and men, minorities and disabled. Inquiries regarding compliance with equal educational or employment opportunities and/or affirmative action shall be directed to the Equity Coordinator, Vinton-Shellsburg CSD, 1502 C Ave, Vinton, Iowa 52349, Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, or the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education in Chicago, IL.

Revised 5/2/13