

Community Consolidated School District 62

Early Learning Center Description of Programs





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The Early Learning Center (ELC) is part of Community Consolidated School District 62 in Des Plaines. The ELC is a new, state-of-the-art educational facility. Our mission is to provide a safe, secure environment where children can grow physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. While stressing these developmental areas, the staff gears the activities to meet the needs and interests of children.

The following programs and services are offered at the ELC:

- **Special Needs Preschool:** The Special Needs Preschool (SNP) programs provide developmentally appropriate classrooms for eligible preschool children with moderate to severe developmental delays. These delays may occur in the language, social/emotional, gross motor, fine motor or school readiness areas. SNP classes are taught by certified teachers with expertise in early childhood and special education. Services to support the child's educational program may include: assistive technology, occupational and physical therapy, school nursing, school psychology, social work, speech and language therapy, and vision services. Opportunities are structured for students to learn and play with peers in the other programs at the Forest ELC.



- **NSSEO Preschool** - The NSSEO Early Childhood Program is for children ages 3 and 4 who are deaf or hard of hearing. To meet their unique needs, NSSEO has two early childhood classes housed in the ELC. In the oral classroom, the children are led by an experienced, orally trained teacher of the deaf and an assistant, who is also an orally trained teacher of the deaf. In the total communication classroom, the class is led by an experienced teacher of the deaf and assistants, who use spoken English and sign language. Classes are small, usually between four and seven students. The NSSEO students are joined by hearing students two days a week, who serve as language models and communication partners. NSSEO students also participate in field trips and other school events with general education students.
- **STAR Preschool For All Classes:** The STAR (State-at-Risk) preschool program is funded by the State of Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant for students who meet program criteria. The goal of this program is to provide quality preschool classes for at-risk students who may not otherwise attend preschool. These classes are taught by certified teachers. The program supports the students' social, academic, language and motor development and prepares them with the skills they need to be successful in kindergarten. This is a 2.5 hour program, 5 days per week, with both morning and afternoon sessions. Students must turn 3 by September 1st, and meet eligibility requirements before they can be enrolled.
- **STAR Preschool Transitional:** These classes are for dual language learners and are taught in English. D62 staff that holds English Language Learner (ELL) endorsements support the students.
- **STAR Preschool Bilingual Spanish:** Students placed in this program have been assessed as being Spanish language dominant. These classes are taught in Spanish, and have a portion of their day taught in English to facilitate English language development.



- **STAR Preschool Blended**: These classes are comprised of twenty students, five of whom have documented delays in development. A special education teacher works directly with all of the students in these classes.
- **Learning STARS**: These classes are enrichment programs that add an additional 3.5 hours of instruction for children who attend SNP or STAR classes. Children may attend before or after their SNP or STAR classes.
- **SPARK Preschool** - The SPARK preschool program is designed to provide a positive beginning school experience for the 3 year old child. The students are able to participate in a variety of activities, giving them the chance to develop their social, fine and gross motor, and problem solving skills in a context rich in verbal and linguistic stimulation adapted to their general and individual developmental needs. This is a NAEYC accredited, half-day, tuition-based program.
- **SPARK Preschool Plus** - This is the same program as the SPARK Preschool but is offered for the full day. This is a tuition-based program.
- **Jr. Kindergarten** - This program is designed keeping in mind all the physical, emotional, social, and educational needs for the 4-year-old child. This program is based on the developmental understanding that the 4 year old can benefit greatly from socialization and readiness activities in a preschool setting. While stressing the developmental areas, the program strives to gear its activities and environment to meet the needs and interests of the individual child. This is a NAEYC accredited, tuition-based program.



- **Extended Day Kindergarten (EDK)** - The EDK program has been developed for the child who attends half-day kindergarten. This program provides theme curriculum to go along with the district kindergarten programs. This is a 4-hour, tuition-based program.
- **Mini STAR/Baby Talk Book Times**
This is a prevention initiative program for at-risk families that provides stimulation for children who are birth-3. The family must meet eligibility requirements before they can be enrolled. The child must attend the class with a parent. The goal of this program is to positively impact child development and nurture healthy parent-child relationships during the critical years. The classroom is equipped with a variety of age appropriate equipment and materials. The class has a simple routine for the child to engage in free play, finger play, sing-a-long, dancing/movement, rhymes, and a story. The class ends with a group discussion and an informational handout. This program takes place at the ELC and the Rosemont Community Center, for District 62 families.
- **Mini School** - This program is designed for children who turn 2 years old between September 1 and January 1. Mini School is held twice per week. It is designed for young 2-3 year-old children who miss the cut off date for fall preschool registration. Children enjoy free play, art, singing, stories, and a snack. This is a tuition-based program. As long as the child turns 2 within the September - January time frame, the child may start the program at the beginning of the school year.
- **Baby Book Times** - This class is designed for families with children from birth to 2 years old. The class has a simple routine for the child and parent to engage in free play, finger play, sing-a-long, dancing/movement, rhymes, and a story. This class ends with a group discussion and an informational handout. Baby Book Times takes place at the Des Plaines Public Library, at the ELC for District 62 families, and the Rosemont Community Center.



- Book Time for 2's - This program is designed for parents and the 2 year old child. The child must turn 2 before December 31. The child may start the program at the beginning of the school year, but it is preferred that the child is 2 when they start. Space is equipped with a variety of age appropriate equipment and materials. This is a tuition-based program held once a week.
- Preschool Speech Services - Speech and language therapists work with eligible District 62 preschool children not enrolled in an ELC program who have delays in speech or language.
- Adult Education/Childcare - The ELC in collaboration with Oakton Community College coordinates a variety of adult education classes that may include citizenship, family literacy, ESL, GED, and computer classes. Childcare is provided during class time. Classes are held during the day or evening at various District 62 schools including the ELC. There is no charge for this service.
- Teen Parent Program - District 62, in conjunction with Township High School District 207 offers the Teen Parent Program. Teen moms and pregnant teens meet together on a bi-weekly basis in the high school they attend. Currently this program is offered at Maine West and Maine East High Schools. This group offers the young teen guidance and support during this complicated time. The goal of this program is to learn to be an effective parent. The group meetings cover topics from pregnancy to parenting.
- Health Services, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Social Work - The ELC offers the following services: nursing, OT and PT, and social work services.
- Learning Links Library - Learning Links is a family centered, literacy rich environment offering a variety of literacy experiences and materials that can be checked out for use at home. There are over 200 literacy boxes that are geared for 2 - 6 year olds. These kits contain books, games, puzzles, toys, and crafts along with the directions.



Additional Services provided - The ELC works in conjunction with the following agencies to connect families to the appropriate services:

- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- Northwest Compass (an agency that supports single parent families)
- We assist families in obtaining Kidcare health insurance.