



**BARLINA HOUSE  
PRESCHOOL**

CRYSTAL LAKE PARK DISTRICT

# PARENT HANDBOOK



705 Barlina Road  
Crystal Lake, IL 60014  
815.477.5403

[crystallakeparks.org](http://crystallakeparks.org)

# Introduction

The Crystal Lake Park District Preschool opened in September of 1986 at Veteran Acres Park. Classes began at Barlina House in the fall of 1997. It offers a well-rounded curriculum and ongoing academics in line with early childhood learning standards issued by the Illinois State Board of Education. The children in the program meet two to five times a week. Children must be toilet trained and at least three years of age prior to September 1 to participate. Our preschool is open to participants, regardless of cultural, religious, or ability differences.



Barlina House complies with the rules of the **McHenry County Health Department** regarding preschool centers and is licensed through the **Illinois Department of Children and Family Services**.

Barlina House Preschool provides children with opportunities to participate in activities that promote development of physical, social, emotional and intellectual skills.

Through play and a semi-structured schedule, the children can engage in language, literacy, math and science activities along with art, music and dramatic play for self-expression.

We welcome you and your child to Barlina House Preschool. The following information gives an overview of the program and may answer questions.

# Mission Statement

Barlina House Preschool is dedicated to:

- Providing a safe, nurturing environment for all children, encouraging social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth through play and planned activities;
- Assisting all parents, families and caregivers by developing trust, respect, and support during their children's early years.



## Goals

The main goal of the program is to provide children with the opportunity to participate in activities which develop them socially, emotionally, and intellectually into a self-assured child. Activities are planned to meet the changing needs of 3 to 5 year olds with the following goals in mind:

- To develop a strong feeling of self-worth;
- To interact with a peer group;
- To attain self-control and self-responsibility;
- To stimulate his creativity and imagination;
- To initiate an interest in learning and discovery;
- To help families by providing developmental information and resources to support the well-being of both the child and their family.

## Birth Certificates

We are required to have a birth certificate on file for every child. The Missing Children Records Act and DCFS Standards mandates a certified copy be provided. We are required by law to notify the IL State Police or local law enforcement agency if proof of the child's identity is not received.



## Confidentiality

Records are considered confidential and therefore written parent/guardian permission is required for any request to share information, other than for preschool staff needs or before DCFS inspections.



## Please Note....

The Department of Children and Family Services requires us to have available for parents and caregivers various information regarding licensing rules, caregiver qualifications, child abuse, and resource and referral agencies in our area. This information is available in pamphlet and summary form for you to review in the preschool office.

## Curriculum

The Barlina House curriculum includes a blend of teacher and child directed classroom activities. The staff implements developmentally appropriate activities which include cognitive (thinking) and manipulative (hands-on) choices, as well as, various creative experiences.

Number, letter, shape, color and name recognition along with practice with small and large motor skills are incorporated in the classroom activities. General social skills and problem solving skills are also emphasized. The preschool believes the latter is a very important part of our curriculum, as it is a primary factor in building good self-esteem. With the 4 and 5 year olds, we continue to expand and build on kindergarten readiness skills in reading, writing, math and science.

Play is an important part of each preschooler's day. Through play children learn to make choices, use and develop their imaginations, build on their social skills and self-esteem. We are convinced that a child who feels good about him/herself will be a child who will accept challenges, get along with his/her peers, develop a desire to learn and be a child who will succeed to the best of his or her ability. Building self-esteem is our greatest challenge and our number one goal for all of the children we have at Barlina House Preschool.

## Typical School Day

**Group Time:** A time for sharing information: calendar and weather discussion; a short group learning time.

**Free Choice/Art:** Table and Center Activities provide practice with fine and large motor skills along with cognitive functions. Included in these areas are games, puzzles, toys, building blocks, dramatic play, art, math, science and literacy areas.

**Cleanup Time:** Cooperating as a group.

**Story, Finger Plays, Music:** Direction, listening and memory skills.

**Snack:** Healthy opportunities to try new foods.

**Large Motor:** Indoor and outdoor group games, equipment play (climbers, tricycles, scooters) and organized activities.



## School Calendar

Barlina House Preschool observes all major holidays in accordance with District 47. Calendars will be handed out and available online each month of school. Themed days, special days, and school holidays will be noted.



Please be sure to keep these calendars handy for easy reference each week. In addition to the calendar, a short monthly letter help the parents stay informed of recent or upcoming events and special school projects will be sent home and available on the Crystal Lake Park District website.

## Staff/Ratio

The 3 & 4 year-olds have a maximum ratio of one adult per 10 children. Staffing includes qualified teacher(s) and aide(s). The director is on premises at all time and can be present in the classroom.



## Parent Visitations

The Preschool believes that parent visitations are an important part of this program. It allows parents an opportunity to observe how a child is progressing in the school setting. Parent visitation also communicates to children that how they are responding to school is important.

During your visit, please feel free to discuss any concerns your have with the staff. Visits must be scheduled in advance in case another appointment has been already scheduled.



Month-to-month calendars will be available for sign-up.

If you feel that a separate conference is necessary, the staff would be happy to schedule an appointment.

## Assessment

Throughout the school year, staff members will be documenting the children's progress and collecting notations reflecting their abilities. Staff will be creating portfolios which will include samples of work, photos, and/or dictation indicative of each child's development skills.

## **Progress Reports/Developmental Screenings**

Progress reports will be completed and sent home twice during the school year. In addition, development screenings, which help identify children's strengths as well as any areas where support may be needed, are conducted in the fall and spring. However, any developmental/behavior concerns may be addressed at any time during the school year.

## **Discipline Policies**

Barlina House classrooms are designed to be developmentally appropriate for children between the ages of 3-5, which helps promote positive behaviors. The staff's role is to help each child build self-discipline and self-direction using the following methods for behavior management:

- 1. Establishing reasonable and consistent rules.**
- 2. Use of encouragement to engage in appropriate behavior.**
- 3. Teaching (modeling) problem-solving conflict resolution skills to the children.**
- 4. Redirection to a different area or activity.**
- 5. Use of logical and natural consequences to encourage cooperation and self-regulation.**
- 6. A log will be kept with any behavioral situations that occur in the classroom and a resolution that was made to help solve the problem.**
- 7. Communicate with parents about the behavioral situation and discussed with parents the resolution that was used.**

If a child's behavior is such that he/she is not responding to the above techniques the following steps will take place:

- 1. Conference with the parent or guardian.**
- 2. Written incident report.**
- 3. Implement a behavior plan with detailed strategies and results of the strategies.**
- 4. Behavioral plan must be documented, and results must be written and shared with parents and teachers/directors.**
- 5. After three incident reports, suspension from the program for an appropriate amount of time.**
- 6. If the behavior continues, removal from the program.**

Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates the inability to benefit from the type of curriculum offered in our facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from the facility. Observations by Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association (NISRA) staff, and referrals for school district screenings will be discussed with parent when staff believes a child would benefit from these services.

## Personal Belongings

Please be sure that your child is dressed in comfortable clothing. Closed toe shoes are recommended for outdoor play. Each child will have a hook for hanging up outerwear, but please mark clothing with their name. Toys and other personal belongings should not be brought to school.

## Sharing Time

We feel an important part of a preschoolers development is to feel comfortable expressing themselves with their peers. Teachers schedule children to take turns bringing a book, or to share ideas on a classroom project or take-home activity. These opportunities foster language growth, self esteem and listening skills.

## Snacks

Snacks are served every day. We ask that parents help with this program by occasionally bringing in a commercially made snack and 100% juice or milk to drink. A note with menu ideas and portion sizes will be sent home when it is your child's turn. The preschool provides the cups and napkins. Please remember that this is an opportunity to encourage good eating habits. We encourage the children to taste every snack as they are exposed to a variety of foods. **Due to current concerns regarding nut allergies, we ask that nut products be avoided, including any food processed on equipment exposed to nuts.** *Please do not be offended if your snack is denied due to an allergen listed on the label.*



## Birthday Celebrations

Traditionally, classes will sing the Happy Birthday song to honor the child. Due to the concerns regarding allergies and our no-nuts policy, food items as birthday treats may not be brought to share with classmates. Parents may choose to send a non-food item such as stickers which your child can share with classmates.

## Special Events

Field trips are planned at the discretion of the preschool staff for all students. Prior to the trip, permission slips will be sent home for parent signature if needed. A parent will be encouraged to go along on trip. Special quests and entertainers are scheduled during the year for all preschoolers to enjoy.

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## Arrival and Dismissal

Except for the first day of class when we ask parents to come in and join us for a shortened class, parents can drive up and remain in their vehicles. Please note the one way signs in the driveway. We ask parents to enter the driveway west of the barn and follow it around where staff members will escort the children to and from the car. For the safety of all, cell phone usage while in the pick up line is not recommended. We will be using our vehicle identification form to be sure children are securely dismissed to the proper vehicles. As the dismissal procedure takes approximately 15 minutes, please stagger your arrival at dismissal time to avoid waiting excessively. You are welcome to park and walk your child in or out of school if desired; however, please be cautious of the traffic.

A late fee of \$10 per occurrence will be assessed if your child is not picked up at preschool within 30 minutes of the scheduled dismissal time and \$1 for each additional minute thereafter. You will be required to sign a late arrival form that will be forwarded to our bookkeeping department.

The safety of your child is our main concern. Therefore, it is imperative that we have appropriate information for at least two emergency contact people on file in the event of an emergency. These are in addition to parents and/or legal guardians. If we are unable to contact both parents and emergency contacts after 30 minutes, the Park Police will be called to assume custody of your child. The Park Police will assist in reuniting you with your child in the event of a vehicle crash or emergency disaster situation. Utmost discretion will be used to avoid fear or guilt on the part of the child or children involved. **Please do not drive around a car if a child is taking longer time to be put in the car. A teacher will instruct you to go around if necessary.**

If at any time we feel a driver is not able to safely transport a child we will call an emergency contact and/or notify the Crystal Lake Park District Police.



## Weather Days

Be sure to listen to the local radio station 105.5 FM if you are in doubt about attending preschool due to inclement weather. If District 47 does not hold classes, preschool will be cancelled. In the event of a thunderstorm at arrival or dismissal time, a sign indicating a lightning bolt will be placed at our drive up. Parents and/or guardians will need to escort children in or out of Barlina House. A thirty minute indoor safety period is required. For additional weather information, sign up for alerts and messages at [RAINOUTLINE.COM](http://RAINOUTLINE.COM) or call 815-410-4475.



## Outdoor Activities

We aim to provide outdoor playtime daily when the temperature is over 20 degrees "wind chill included." Sunscreen and/or insect repellent should be applied at home. Any requests to apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent must be in writing, accompanied by the product.

## Park District Green Policy



The Park District Maintenance Department uses all green products for cleaning Barlina House. Additionally, the Illinois Department of Public Health now requires that we notify you of our coordinated pest management program in the Park District. Pesticide use is highly avoided due to the possibility of any inhalation or sensitivity with children or staff. However, if found necessary, pesticides would not be applied while children are present, nor would they be used within a two hour period before a class. If you need notification of any pesticide use, please contact us in writing.

## Class Lists

Sometimes special friendships are formed in preschool and children wish to have their friends visit their homes. In an effort to assist parents, we ask permission to release class lists including addresses and phone numbers. We will process the list during the first month of preschool based on information you would like included.

## Health Information

A certificate of health examination is required to be on file for every child, completed no sooner than six months before the start of school. A registration form is also kept on file with your specific instructions and information. These forms will be given to you at registration or mailed with the preschool welcome letter in the summer. They are kept confidential.

**Please do not send your child to Preschool if they display any of the symptoms below:**

- **Temperature above 100° F in the morning.**
- **Diarrhea, where more than one abnormally loose stool has occurred in the last 24 hours.**
- **Vomiting anytime after 6 pm the preceding evening.**
- **Severe coughing where the child gets red or blue in the face, or the child makes a high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after he or she coughs.**
- **Difficult or rapid breathing.**
- **Yellowish skin or eyes.**
- **Pinkeye (conjunctivitis), evidenced by tears, redness of eyelid lining and irritation, followed by swelling and discharge of pus.**
- **Infected skin patches that are crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy.**
- **Any contagious disease like chicken pox, measles, mumps, mono, etc.**
- **If an antibiotic has been given for an ear infection or sore throat, wait 24 hours before sending a child back to school**
- **Severe itching of the body or scalp could indicate the presence of lice.**
- **Constant running nose.**

Please call the preschool to advise the teachers of the absence. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately. You will also be notified immediately of any head injuries. Minor scrapes are treated by a first aid-trained staff member. Any medicine that must be administered at school should be sent in its original container with a completed medication request form signed by your physician.

Health insurance and accident insurance are not available through the Crystal Lake Park District for program attendees. If your child does not receive immunizations due to religious beliefs, a document from your religious organization must be submitted and kept on file in the preschool office. However, the Crystal Lake Park District reserves the right to pursue traditional medical treatment for children exempt on religious ground in the event of an emergency and parents cannot be contacted.

## **Radon Testing**

Barlina House Preschool has performed radon measurements to ensure the health and safety of the occupants. Test measurement results are posted in the facility. Upon request, a copy of the report can be obtained.

## **Registration**

Registration is taken at the Administration Office or online. A non-refundable registration fee is required. Please refer to the Crystal Lake Park District Seasonal Program Brochure for information about class times and schedule. The brochure is available at the Crystal Lake Park District Administrative Office, 1 East Crystal Lake Avenue, Crystal Lake or online at [crystallakeparks.org](http://crystallakeparks.org).

## **Tuition**

Tuition is due the first of each month and paid through the Administrative Office. Bills are sent electronically to the primary email address on the household account. The bill generates from our office as "vsmail.com." You may sign up for auto debit, where the tuition will be charged to your credit card the day bill is generated (typically the 15th of each month.) If an account becomes two months past due, your child will not be able to attend preschool until the tuition is paid.

## **Withdrawal**

Notice of withdrawal should be given at least two weeks in advance, so possible refunds may be processed. Please notify the Administrative Office as well as your teacher or director.





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