



2023-2024
Program Handbook

Cordova Recreation & Park District
2197 Chase Dr.
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
916-369-9844

Welcome

Welcome to the Cordova STEAM Preschool! The Cordova Recreation & Park District (CRPD) strives to serve and meet the needs of its community by providing an affordable part-time preschool program and we are excited to have you here. To ensure the best possible experience for your child, we ask that you carefully review this handbook as it contains important information to help you prepare for preschool.

The Cordova STEAM preschool is a play-based program that integrates STEAM activities into our daily curriculum; STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. Our philosophies and curriculum are based on NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards and competencies for early childhood education. Our program aims to support all areas of development, including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic and aesthetic domains (critical elements of brain development: learning motivation, social interactions and play) while developing a love for STEAM activities. Our philosophy is to encourage playful learning that combines a child's interest with learning opportunities in the context of playful, intentional and enjoyable experiences.

Our staff provide joyful and meaningful curriculum for our program participants while instilling the principles of fairness and justice that reflect our goals of anti-bias education. Our teachers build on each child's unique set of individual and family strengths, cultural background, language, abilities and experience to equitably support each child's development and learning. Our playful learning approach includes child selected and directed play and exploration along with teacher guidance; teachers set up the environment and use open-ended questions and suggestions to encourage children toward a learning goal while still providing children with choices.

CRPD staff will follow local and state guidance and mandates to keep children and staff safe while participating at Cordova STEAM Preschool. Staff will continue to provide enhanced cleaning measures and handwashing during the preschool program. Additional information and modifications will be provided as necessary.

We hope your family enjoys their time in the Cordova STEAM Preschool. We are looking forward to the fun and joy, as we get to experience this year together!

Warm Regards,

Matt Zimmerling
Recreation Supervisor II

Registration

The Cordova STEAM Preschool program is designed for children ages 3-5. Children must be three (3) years old by September 1 and fully potty trained to enroll in any of our classes. Children must be four years old by September 1 to enroll in our Mega (M,W,F) class. The Cordova STEAM Preschool is a license-exempt, public recreation program. We offer class sessions that run 12 hours or less per week and are one-month sessions running from early September through early May. Children may be enrolled in consecutive sessions throughout the year. However, our program does not permit children to be enrolled in a combination of sessions that total more than 12 hours per week for each child.

Your initial registration into the program must be done with CRPD staff and is not available online. There is a \$55 nonrefundable administrative fee required when registering. The Student Information Form and verification of the child's Birth Certificate and Immunization Record also need to be provided with registration. Information collected includes, but is not limited to emergency contacts, individuals authorized to pick up, medical information and other relevant behavioral and health information.

We are unable to hold spaces without payment or verification of forms and may decline registration for safety reasons if the staff/child ratio has reached its maximum.

Program Information

The first day of school for the Tuesday/Thursday class is Tuesday, September 5, and for the Monday/Wednesday/Friday class it is Wednesday, September 6. Preschool graduation is scheduled for Friday, May 10. Please check the provided school calendar for additional dates, including break closures and special events.

We have three class options at the Cordova Steam Preschool.

Megas is scheduled for Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and is a great option for older/returning students who are comfortable attending school three days a week. Students registering for Megas must be 4 years old by September 1 to enroll.

Micros is scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday mornings and is a great option for younger students who have not attended any type of structured program.

Nanos is scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday afternoon and is perfect for families looking for a later start to the day.

The curriculum in Micros and Nanos will be the same, the curriculum in the Mega class will be structured to the needs/ability of the older children.

Program Goals

To be ready for kindergarten, we assist children in becoming socially competent, emotionally self-regulated, physically capable and cognitive critical thinkers with a love for learning.

How can we meet these goals?

1) Socially Competent

We can help children reach social competence by guiding them to:

- Practice problem solving skills
- Compassionately interact with peers
- Communicate and respond effectively
- Respect personal space and personal decisions

2) Emotionally Self-Regulated

We can help children to manage emotions on their own and recognize the emotions of others by providing opportunities to:

- Build self confidence
- Express their emotions
- Teach and demonstrate empathy
- Encourage a growth mindset

3) Physically Capable

We can help children be physically capable of success in kindergarten by encouraging the practice of:

- Fine motor skills (writing/cutting)
- Gross motor skills (running/jumping/balance)
- Independence by taking care of their own needs

4) Cognitive Critical Thinkers

We can help children's cognitive development and critical thinking skills by:

- Providing a routine of academics (ABCs & 123s)
- Asking open-ended questions (WHY?)
- Supporting language development

5) Love for Learning

We can help create a positive, memorable first experience in school by:

- Creating environments for discovery and reflection
- Using positive reinforcement
- Having fun; both teacher and child

Student Evaluations

The teacher will conduct student evaluations in the fall and spring. Only students who will attend kindergarten in the fall will be evaluated. Students who will be attending transitional kindergarten in the fall will be evaluated by grown-up request only. Please talk to Ms. Trish if your child is attending TK and you would like an evaluation conducted. The purpose of the evaluation is to help us individualize curriculum and set goals for each child.

Daily Schedule

Megas & Micros

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Activity</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 8:30 a.m. | Sign-in |
| 8:45 a.m. | Learning Lab Team Meeting |
| 9:15 a.m. | Indoor Discovery |
| 10 a.m. | Nutrition Break |
| 10:30 a.m. | Outdoor Exploration |
| 11:15 a.m. | Collaboration |
| 11:30 a.m. | Dismissal |

Nanos

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Activity</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 12:30 p.m. | Sign-in |
| 12:45 p.m. | Learning Lab Team Meeting |
| 1:15 p.m. | Indoor Discovery |
| 2 p.m. | Nutrition Break |
| 2:30 p.m. | Outdoor Exploration |
| 3:15 p.m. | Collaboration |
| 3:30 p.m. | Dismissal |

Arrival & Dismissal

Children must be accompanied by a grown-up at the start and dismissal of class. Arrival of students may begin at 8:30 a.m. (12:30 p.m. for Nanos) and pick up will begin at 11:30 a.m. (3:30 p.m. for Nanos) at the Cordova STEAM Preschool classroom.

Sign In

Children will practice writing their name once they arrive in the classroom. Their weekly journals are to help the child practice using a pencil and give them an opportunity to exercise their fine motor muscles. Though there are many exercises we may use to assist in the development of these skills, each child will learn to write at their own pace.

Learning Lab Team Meeting

This time includes music, dancing and storytelling. Children develop rhythm, social skills, gross and fine motor skills when learning a new song. Story time helps literacy development, a love for literature and fosters active participation. Stories teach the alphabet, colors, counting concepts, self-identity, culture, family dynamics and inter-personal relationships. Children also learn self-control as they wait to share their input during the team meeting. This time also includes discussion of the calendar and a brief instructional time about the current focus of study. Table experiments, investigations or activities will be introduced, and any questions answered.

Indoor Discovery

This is the time of day when children will have the freedom to choose their path of exploration. Each day the teacher will offer three distinct opportunities at the preschool tables to discover something new in addition to the play options that are present in our everyday classroom.

- 1) **Chemistry and Physics:** The chemistry discovery table will offer varied tactile/sensory experiences including but not limited to sand, water, orbeez, rice or playdough with various implements similar to measuring cups, marble tracks, funnels and toys. This gives children many new understandings of physics, density, spatial relationships, measuring, cause and effect, in addition it will lead to fine and gross motor development by exercising the hands and practicing skills such as pouring and grasping.

- 2) **Math and Engineering:** Math discoveries will include quantity, classification, number recognition, math operations and patterning. This will be done using a variety of materials, both with teacher support, and children working independently. Children will also learn about sequencing which builds the foundation for coding, as well as early reading and writing skills.

- 3) **Science:** This discovery table will include the opportunity to investigate a variety of natural items such as plant dissections, rock and mineral study, animal discards such as shed snakeskin and empty beehives. The classroom will conduct weekly experiments pertaining to the monthly theme; for example, if the class is exploring weather, the class will recreate rain clouds or make a tornado in a bottle. The children will learn the scientific method; learning how to originate and share their hypothesis, carry out the experiment, record their results and form their own conclusions. The class will also follow the engineering design process; this gives the children the ability to perform inquiries through observations and investigations as well as documenting and communicating their inquiries.

- 4) **Art and Technology:** This table will offer an opportunity to create something often related to the monthly theme, a book that we have read or a subject of interest to children. We will touch on subjects such as shapes, colors and spatial awareness which tie into early math concepts. This table will have a lot of variation throughout the year because it is used to dive deeper into the child-led discoveries.

In addition to the discovery tables daily curriculum, children will have the opportunity to explore dramatic play in the Imagination Station and create in the Art Lab. The Art Lab offers loose recycled items and a wide variety of crafting materials for open ended creations. We offer a variety of building materials at the Engineering Workshop and many toys on rotation. There is a cozy Research Library and a Recording Station to practice observing, writing skills and to sketch new ideas. The classroom Science and Math Lab offers many science and math materials that are readily available.

Nutrition Break

The Cordova STEAM Preschool Program is a peanut free zone.

Grown-ups are required to provide a healthy snack and beverage for their child. Fruit, vegetables, cheese, crackers, juice and flavored water are all options that are recommended. Sugary or salty treats should be brought for birthdays and special occasions only. Below you will find a chart with proper portion sizes for a growing child.

It is recommended that growing children consume two of the four components for a healthy snack:

| Food Components | Portion Size |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Fluid Milk | 1/2 cup |
| Fruit or Vegetable | 1/2 cup |
| Grains or Breads | 1/3 cup |
| Protein | 2 oz. |

Outdoor Exploration

When playing outside children develop gross motor skills, a sense of body limitation and self-direction. Outside play will be spent at the on-site playground and in the courtyard in front of the classroom, if weather permits.

Rainy Days

We will extend free play in the classroom or inside the larger building (Building 1) if the weather does not permit the class to go outside. Often, teachers will guide gross motor activities inside the classroom to give children the same learning opportunities as outside play.

Collaboration

In small groups the teacher guides the class to focus on a specific skill set or goal. At this time each child is involved in a lesson with others of a similar skill level. The teacher or aide will sit with each small group to ensure best practice.

Dismissal

At 11:25 a.m. the teacher will open the door to begin dismissal. Grown-ups must be on the authorized pickup list and have a photo ID available for staff to verify identity. This time can also be used to talk with the teacher regarding any important questions or updates.

Calendar and Monthly Themes

The teacher will create a monthly theme for the class that will relate to an area of STEAM and it will also include a program learning goal for that month. Activities throughout the week will tie into the current theme. The calendar and newsletter will also include any special subject matter the teachers want to convey to the grown-ups. This is a great tool to help you keep track of timelines, essential dates or special events for the program.

Communication: Bloomz

Families will be able to communicate via the Bloomz app. Bloomz is a great tool to have direct contact with the program; you'll be able to message staff, receive daily updates, share photos, and access the activity calendar. Families can sign up for Bloomz.net through an invite that will be emailed by the Recreation Coordinator.

Program Expectations

Preschool Rules

We have a few rules to keep children, staff, and our facilities safe. Rules will be discussed weekly with reminders throughout the week. Please review with your child prior to the start of program:

- Follow directions; listen to, respect, and cooperate with others
- Respect the park, facilities, and animals
- Wear shoes at all times while in program
- Do not bring toys or valuables from home
- No sharing of food with children or staff

Child Behaviors

We realize children will sometimes have a difficult day; they may become aggressive with others, have a difficult time listening, or make unsafe choices. Our first approach is always through positive communication to aid in problem solving skills, appropriate emotional behaviors, and healthier self-direction. When this proves ineffective, we have a three-step process that all staff follow.

- 1) Redirection: focuses on the intent of the behavior and allows the child to change course of their actions in a safe manner
- 2) Limited choice: if the behavior persists, the child is then given two appropriate choices from the staff. Each choice is a safe resolution to the problem at hand
- 3) Removal from the activity: if the child is still not able to make a safe choice, then the teacher will remove the child from the activity and refocus their energy until the child is ready to make safe and kind choices

In the event of a major disruption, the child's grown-up will be contacted and if necessary, a conference will be held to discuss a solution.

Medications

Children who take medication during program hours should bring it in a container inside their backpack. The container should be labeled with the child's name and the medication **must be labeled** with the child's name and content and **listed on their Student Information Sheet**. Children can be reminded to take medication, but they are responsible for doing so. If your child has any medical allergies, please make sure it is **listed on their Student Information Sheet and speak with your teacher immediately**. Teachers can store allergy medications/epi-pens in the classroom if the item is clearly labeled with a prescription in the child's name. The teachers are not permitted to administer any medications to the child under any circumstances. If an emergency arises teachers will assess the situation, seek medical attention, and contact the grown-up immediately. Children should be aware of their allergies, as well as, their medications and have a basic knowledge of administration.

We will make every reasonable effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If your child requires accommodations, please call us in advance at 916-369-9844.

Food Allergies & Restrictions

If your child has any food allergies, please make sure it is **listed on their Student Information Sheet and talk with your child's teacher immediately**. The teacher will then compile all class allergies to ensure food safety daily and inform the other families.

Illnesses and Communicable Diseases

Sick children and staff are asked to stay home and should not be allowed to participate in program. "Sick" is someone exhibiting, but not limited to, the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, nausea, loss of taste or smell, sore throat and/or vomiting. Should your child develop any of the symptoms above, please notify our Recreation Supervisor Matt at mzimmerling@crpd.com immediately.

If your child is exposed to lice or any communicable disease such as pink eye, measles, chicken pox, etc., please notify the site immediately so that incubation dates are verified and the health of all children concerned may be protected. Names of sick children will not be provided to families. Only the type of illness, possible symptoms and exposure dates will be shared as a courtesy so there is awareness of possible exposure. It also helps to reduce the risk of the spread of communicable diseases to ensure every child's health and safety. Some conditions that are contracted through person-to-person contact may require a doctor's release prior to the child returning to class. CRPD and our STEAM Preschool programs follow all state, county, and CDPH guidelines in place.

Children and staff who arrive sick or become sick while at the program will be sent home immediately. Grown-ups must be prepared to pick up as soon as possible should they receive notification that their child is showing signs of illness.

Please do not send your child to school if they are not feeling well.

Things to Bring

- **Play Clothes** - Children should wear clothes that can get dirty. Please feel free to pack a change of clothes for your child if needed. Appropriate clothing for the current day's weather is recommended.
- **Shoes** - Children must arrive with closed-toed shoes to be able to run in; please NO Crocs, we often play at the playground with bark.
- **Backpack** - Please ensure that your child's bag is light enough to carry. Your child's backpack should have a weather appropriate change of clothes and their snack. Two shoulder strapped bags are suggested.
- **Snack** - Children will eat morning snack near 10 a.m. Please provide a health snack that your child will enjoy.
- **Water** - Refillable water bottles are recommended. Water breaks are encouraged throughout the day to keep hydrated. Staff will assist with refilling of water bottles

What NOT to Bring

We are not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen belongings. Toys, valuables and electronics are not recommended.

Lost and Found

We ask that you label all your child's belongings so that we can do our best to return lost items to the right person. Staff will remind children at every transition to collect all their belongings and do their best to sweep the areas and identify/return missing items. All items not returned to children by the end of the session will be donated.

Restroom

Your child is required to be completely potty trained before the first day of school. **Pull-ups and diapers may not be used at preschool.** A child that is completely potty trained will be able to:

- Identify the specific signs from their body that it is time to use the restroom
- Make the decision to stop their current activity and go to the restroom
- Undress and dress themselves
- Thoroughly wipe and clean themselves after using the restroom

Teachers are available to assist with buttons and zippers. If a child needs help, the teacher can talk the child through the process, but they cannot enter the restroom stall with them.

Accidents

We understand that accidents can happen, and it is a natural, normal process during early childhood. We will talk them through removing their soiled clothing and then place the soiled clothes into a plastic bag and change into clean clothes. We do not always have spare clothes, so please send a clean pair of weather appropriate clothing for your child to change into in case of an accident. These clothes can be left in their backpack or cubby in a Ziploc bag with their name on it.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, staff have your child's safety as their top priority. If an emergency arises, all grown-ups will be notified and provided details as soon as possible. Authorities will also be contacted, and children will not be released to their grown-ups until the proper authorities have deemed the situation safe. The following will describe the actions taken during a potential emergency.

Lockdown

- Teacher will gather all children and perform a headcount
- Aide will escort children to the safest area of the room, away from all windows and doors
- Teacher will do a final search of the room and collect classroom keys, first aid kit, emergency binder and sign-in sheet

Fire/Evacuation

- Teacher will gather all children and perform a headcount
- Aide will escort the children to the safest area of the site
- Teacher will do a final search of the room and collect classroom keys, first aid kit, emergency binder and sign-in sheet

Special Events

We will have a few “come together” days where both classes will come together for a field trip or special event.

Birthdays

Birthdays are important days to children and our staff enjoy sharing this special celebration. We sing, “Happy Birthday,” to children during snack time and have a birthday sticker for them to wear. Children may bring a treat to share with their classmates to celebrate. We understand not all families celebrate birthdays, please speak with your teacher if you prefer not to have a classroom celebration. All treats need to be packaged with an ingredient list available. **Please do not bring treats with peanuts or peanut butter products.**

Field Trips*

Grown-up participation field trips are scheduled throughout the year and will be listed on the monthly calendar. Families are responsible for their own transportation to and from the destination and are required to stay the entire time. Notices will be given out the week prior to the field trip that will give specific information, fees (if any), directions and if siblings are able to join.

Special Days*

The school year includes special days such as a Harvest Festival, Winter Celebration, Pizza & Pajamas, an end of the year pool party and others to enhance and bring to reality our weekly curriculum. At the end of the year there is a graduation ceremony for all classrooms. Additional information is provided prior to each event along with sign-up sheets for donations of food and supplies. Check your child’s classroom for a sign-up list prior to the event.

Administration

Use of Photographs and Videos

Photos and video may be taken of the program for publication in our recreation activities guide, social media, website and other promotional use. Please note on the Student Information Form if you object to your child’s image being used.

Late Pick-Up Policy and Fees

Dismissal will begin at 11:25 a.m. and 3:25 p.m. from the classroom. There is a \$1 per minute late fee for children not who are not picked up by 11:35 a.m. or 3:35 p.m. *Example: Arriving at 11:45 a.m. will result in a \$10 late pick-up fee.* The fee will be added to your family account and children will be unable to return to program until fees are paid in full.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

By law CRPD staff working with children are required to report any suspicion of child abuse. This is done discreetly, within established guidelines, and with the help of Child Protective Services.

Removing Your Child from Preschool

We ask you provide a two week notice of your intent to remove your child from preschool. This allows for the teacher to gather any items or wrap up lessons in the classroom and gives the office staff time to determine if your preschool account is up to balance. If space allows and you decide to return to the Cordova STEAM Preschool you will need to pay an additional \$55 administrative fee to reenroll.

Vacations

You can take vacations at any time during the school year, but you are required to pay all installment payments in a timely manner. Delinquent accounts without prior notification or arrangements will result in the removal of the child from the program.

Payments

To pay in full, tuition is \$2,520 for the 3-day a week option (MWF) and \$1,876 for the 2-day a week option (TuTh). If you wish to make monthly payments, the payment is due the first Friday of each month.

Payments can be made in the office or by logging into your CRPD account, login information will be provided. Payments will be considered late if not paid by 5pm on the first Friday of the month and a \$10 late fee will be added to your account. If payment is not received by the second Friday of the month, your child will not be allowed to attend class until payment is received. If payment is not made before the end of the month your child will be administratively dropped from the program. If you would like to rejoin the program and space is available a new \$55 administrative fee will be required and updated paperwork must be submitted to restart the program. If you know your payments will be late or if extenuating circumstances arise, please contact the Hagan Community at 916-369-9844 to make arrangements.

Payment Schedule

| Tuition Payment | Amount Due 3 Days- MWF | Amount Due 2 Days- TuTh |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| September 8 | \$308 | \$224 |
| October 6 | \$364 | \$280 |
| November 3 | \$252 | \$196 |
| December 1 | \$196 | \$140 |
| January 5 | \$336 | \$252 |
| February 2 | \$308 | \$224 |
| March 2 | \$280 | \$168 |
| April 6 | \$339 | \$252 |
| May 4 | \$140 | \$140 |
| Total: | \$2,520 | \$1,876 |

Staff

Recreation Supervisor

The Recreation Supervisor is responsible for creating and/or implementing the program, the policies and the procedures necessary to ensure safety of staff and participants in addition to providing quality community enrichment. The Recreation Supervisor deals with administration and registration of the program along with customer service and satisfaction. The supervisor also organizes and conducts the hiring and training process for staff.

Recreation Coordinator

Under the direction of the Recreation Supervisor, the Recreation Coordinator is responsible for the daily operations of the program, safety and supervision of all staff and participants, proper opening/closing of facilities and maintaining a supply inventory, forms and records, as needed. They will assist in creating or improving themes, curriculum, policies, procedures and scheduling. The Recreation Coordinator will also address any customer service or staff related issues.

Preschool Teacher and Aide

The teacher and aide are responsible for facilitating, initiating and leading children's experiments, lessons and explorations. They work directly with children and are accountable for their safety and supervision throughout the day's activities. The teacher and aide are expected to create and maintain a safe, enjoyable and fun atmosphere for children, as well as be a leader and a role model for appropriate social and physical behaviors.

We are very proud of the quality of staff we have assembled for this program. Our staff is hired and trained specifically for these leadership positions. Candidates are screened through an interview process, a reference check and a Live Scan fingerprinting check for any criminal convictions. Our staff is certified in CPR and First Aid and undergo trainings which include mandated reporting, activity and games training, leadership, problem-solving, and handling behaviors. Our staff have been selected for their enthusiasm, love of children, and the unique skills and strengths they bring to the program.

Contact Information

You are always welcome to contact us at the Hagan Community Center, 916-369-9844, or by email with any questions, concerns, or comments:

Trish Schleeter, Preschool Teacher: tschleeter@crpd.com

Elizabeth Hall, Recreation Coordinator: ehall@crpd.com (day-to-day needs or questions)

Pam Wickens, Administrative Assistant: pwickens@crpd.com (billing)

Matt Zimmerling, Recreation Supervisor II: mzimmerling@crpd.com (overall questions or concerns)

Thank you for choosing Cordova STEAM Preschool for your early childhood educational needs. We look forward to a wonderful year with your child!