

DeForest Area School District



Get Together for Kids

Program Handbook
2020-2021

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| DASD Staff and Collaborative Sites | 3 |
| Get Together 4 Kids | 5 |
| Mission and Values | 5 |
| GT4K TAG | 6 |
| Eligibility | 6 |
| Program Placement | 6 |
| Supply List | 6 |
| Program Days and Hours | 7 |
| Family Outreach Program | 7 |
| Curriculum of Together 4 Kids | 7 |
| Assessment & Parent-Teacher Conferences | 8 |
| Attendance Procedures | 8 |
| Snow Days/Emergency Closings | 9 |
| Snacks at School | 9 |
| Volunteers | 9 |
| Custodial/Non-Custodial Parents | 10 |
| Change of Information | 10 |
| Student Records | 10 |
| Student Nondiscrimination | 11 |
| Student Services Personnel and Programs | 11 |
| Transportation | 12 |

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Sue Esser, Treasurer & Governance Officer

Keri Brunelle, Director

Brian Coker, Clerk

Gail Lovick, Ambassador

Linda Leonhart, Ambassador

Collaborative Partner Sites:

A Growing Place Preschool

Director: Stephanie Pertzborn

520 E. Holum St., DeForest—Holum classroom—842-6570

615 Jefferson Street—office & St. Olaf location

846-9400 agrowingplacepreschool@gmail.com

Country Creek Learning Center

Co-Owners/Directors: Sara Hagen & Candy Page

6187 Portage Road, DeForest

244-3626 cclckids@hotmail.com

Gingerbread House Preschool & Childcare

Owner: Denise Kuehl

505 E. Holum Street, DeForest

Director: Denise Latham

846-5433 gingerbreaddeforest@gmail.com

Gingerbread House-Windsor Crossing

Owner: Denise Kuehl

6685 North Towne Road, Windsor

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DeForest Wishing Well Childcare and Preschool

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Get Together 4 Kids (GT4K)

Get Together for Kids (GT4K) is a community-based preschool program for 4-year old children residing within the DeForest Area School District. Children are enrolled in the DeForest Area School District's GT4K program but taught in a local community preschool/childcare location. Children are taught by qualified Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction licensed teachers. Children participate in a developmentally appropriate program that provides rich learning experiences through play and active, hands-on exploration of the environment. Children gain skills in several areas of development including: social-emotional, cognitive, motor, language/communication, creative expression, early literacy and self-help skills. The GT4K program includes a strong focus on parent-school communication with regular family outreach workshops, activities and opportunities. The program is tuition free with a \$10 activity fee.

Mission and Vision

Mission

The mission of the DeForest Area School District is to provide an excellent education by engaging, challenging, and inspiring all students to pursue their full potential.

Vision

The DeForest Area School District is committed to a culture that honors knowledge, respects individuals, demands excellence, fosters life-long learning, and supports relationships that strengthen individuals, families and community.

GT4K Vision/Mission Statement

We believe that every four-year-old in the DeForest Area School District has the right to a high quality, developmentally appropriate educational experience in a safe and nurturing environment to foster life-long learning.

Guiding Principles

The "Get Together 4 Kids" program will:

- recognize that all children are capable of learning in a play-based environment that supports social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.
- provide strong collaboration between school, home and community.
- respect each child's individuality.
- provide opportunities for family supports.
- embrace diversity.
- engage educators in ongoing professional development and best practices.

Policies and Regulations

GT4K will follow the administrative regulations and policies of the DeForest Area School District.

GT4K TAG

DeForest Area School District's four-year-old Kindergarten program-Get Together for Kids (GT4K) provides experiences that are challenging and meaningful for the whole child in all developmental areas.

This will be accomplished by the following:

- Provide materials of high interest
- Provide reading materials appropriate to reading and social/emotional developmental levels
- Pose complex questions and problem-solving opportunities
- Frequent school-home communication

Eligibility

A child must be four years old on or before September 1st to participate in the *Get Together 4 Kids* program. There will be no early admission to the program. A four-year-old who resides outside of the district will be able to apply through the Open Enrollment process if his/her home district offers a DPI-approved four-year-old kindergarten program. The student would need to meet all the criteria for Open Enrollment in order to be accepted into the program.

Program Placement

Children are placed at 4K partner sites based on the following criteria: wrap care needs, Head Start enrollment criteria, transportation need, legacy to a program, and parent request.

Supply List

Two Elmer's Glue Sticks-large
Two 4 OZ. Bottle Elmer's Glue **white or clear*
One box Kleenex
One Standard sized backpack (~14 x 11) w/ name (no wheels please)
One heavy duty plastic pocket folder w/ name (any color)
Two packs Crayola Pipsqueak markers (16 count)
1 box Crayola Crayons (16 or 24 pack)

**these supplies will be shared as a class.

Wrap care families are not expected to provide listed supplies!

Program Days and Hours

The program has to meet DPI requirements of a minimum of 437 instructional hours and 87.5 hours of parental involvement in the GT4K program. Most programs will operate Monday-Thursday (and some Fridays), except when noted on the calendar for training dates, vacations, in-services, etc. A calendar is provided on the district's website. All sites will follow the DeForest Area School District calendar.

These times are subject to change for the 20-21 school year. Pending district plans.

Wishing Well Preschool and Childcare-DeForest

8:05-11:10 a.m.

12:00-3:05 p.m.

Gingerbread House Preschool and Childcare-DeForest

8:05-11:10 a.m.

12:00-3:05 p.m.

Gingerbread House -Windsor Crossing

8:05-11:10 a.m.

12:00-3:05 p.m.

A Growing Place Preschool-Holum Education Center

8:05-11:10 a.m.

12:00-3:05 p.m.

A Growing Place Preschool- St. Olaf location

Tuesday & Thursday or Monday & Wednesday 8:15 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Country Creek Learning Center

7:55-11:00 a.m.

11:50-2:55 p.m. & 11:50-2:55 p.m.

Yahara River Learning Center

8:25-11:30 a.m.

Family Outreach Program

An important component of *Get Together 4 Kids* is the family outreach program. The focus of the program is to provide parents and children opportunities to grow as a family. Throughout the year, activities and presentations will be open to all families. Examples include, but are not limited to, family fun nights, potluck dinners, training workshops, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and parent newsletters. Each family is encouraged to participate in the activities and trainings.

Curriculum

All sites offer the same curriculum, provided by the DeForest Area School District. The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards is used as a guide for all curricula. DASD supports Creative Curriculum foundations/framework for our classroom structure and philosophy. Houghton Mifflin Pre-K BIG DAY will be utilized at all sites to support our curriculum foundation. Houghton Mifflin Pre-K provides a rich, comprehensive, integrated curriculum that takes advantage of young children's natural curiosity about the world around them. Phonemic awareness will be supported by the Pre-K curriculum Heggerty. Handwriting without Tears will also be utilized to support early writing skills. A strong emphasis on social and emotional development and independence will be a focus of the 4K programming. Second Step Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning Curriculum supports this learning.

For more information about our program, go to www.deforest.k12.wi.us and click on **Schools-GT4K (4 year old Kindergarten)**

Assessment & Parent Teacher Conferences

All families who have a child age eligible for 4K may be asked to complete a parent questionnaire called (ASQ-3) Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3. This screening tool is used to identify potential areas of developmental concerns. Families may be asked to complete this form before or during the school year.

Children enrolled in GT4K will receive a progress report on a trimester period. Families can review progress via Skyward-Family Access. This assessment (progress report) was developed from Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the De Forest Area School District Learning Targets aligning with Kindergarten goals. Parent/teacher conferences will be held in the fall and winter. The purpose of the conference is to provide an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and special needs with his/her teacher. These conferences are a very important part of the school year and an effort should be made to attend. Teachers are available during a block of time and families are assigned a specific conference time.

It will help you and the teacher if you come to the conference prepared with a list of specific questions that you would like addressed. The short time that you spend in a conference may prove to be the most valuable time you spend at school. By attending a parent-teacher conference, your child will see the importance you have placed on education and how valuable it is to obtain a good education. End-of-the-year Progress Reports for the students will be shared with the respective 5-year-old kindergarten home schools.

Attendance Procedures

It is an expectation that children enrolled in the *Get Together 4 Kids* program will attend school every day school is in session. School attendance laws of the State of Wisconsin require that children must attend school regularly. By state law, regular school attendance is the joint responsibility of the parents and the school. School authorities must enforce the law as cited in Statute 118.15.

Reporting an Absence

Prompt notification of absences helps keep the record keeping accurate. **Please call your child's GT4K school site by 7:00 a.m. each day if your child will not be able to attend school or will be late.** Please inform the person answering the phone of your child's name, the length of and reason for the absence, and that the child is attending the GT4K program. Your call is important to help us protect the safety of your child and to ensure accurate attendance records. If a student is absent and we do not receive a call from home, we will call your home/work or emergency contact numbers to verify the absence as part of our safe arrival policy. Attendance is taken at the host site and sent to the school district every day.

Excusing Children Early

If it is necessary for a child to leave school early, parents or guardians need to make arrangements with the site office for the child's release.

Students will only be released from the office to a parent or a person designated (in writing) by the parent. If the adult is unknown to office staff, identification must be presented.

Children will never be released directly from the classroom or allowed to wait in front of the school for pick up. If your child returns from an appointment before the end of the school day, please sign in the child at the school site office.

Changes in Dismissal Arrangements

To ensure student safety and clear communication, please call the office before dismissal time or send a note with your child if there is a change in transportation on a given day. Students will follow their normal dismissal procedure unless a call or note is received.

Snow Days/Emergency Closings

The decision to close school will be made by the Superintendent of DeForest Area School District. In the event that school would be canceled, delayed, or dismissed early due to inclement weather, please listen for announcements on local radio and television stations, visit the district's website of www.deforest.k12.wi.us, or call the district's hotline at 842-6668.

Canceled or delayed school information will be available beginning at 6:00 a.m.

In case of early dismissals, parents are asked to have arrangements in place, in advance, for the care of their children if school should be dismissed before the end of the day. The plan should be discussed with your child so that they are prepared. Be sure to remind your child of this plan on days when ice or heavy snow are predicted. The school must always have a current emergency phone number for your child.

Snacks at School

Each site will vary how snack break is handled during the GT4K program. GT4K sites will follow childcare licensing regulations or established guidelines for snack. The DeForest Area School District recognizes that good health is related to student performance, growth, development, readiness to learn and overall physical well-being. Healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity are essential for students to achieve their full academic and life potential. If parents send food to school, the food items should be nutritious in value and

respectful of allergies within the classroom. Allergy alerts will be shared with all families at the start of school.

Volunteers

Volunteers share their time, skills, and interests with the students and teachers at school. These partnerships become a continuing exchange of information and are activities that benefit all children.

The safety and well-being of the students, staff, and volunteers of the district are important. Therefore, the district shall conduct criminal background checks on all volunteers who will be working with and/or have access to students. Please pick up a volunteer application from your site's director or 4K teacher. Each approved application will be valid for a period of four years through your child's education in the DeForest Area School District.

Custodial/Non-Custodial Parents

In most cases, when parents are divorced, both mother and father continue to have equal rights where their children are concerned. If you have a court order limiting the custody, communication or visitation rights of one parent, please bring a copy to the GT4K site director. The order will also be shared with the school district. Unless the court order is on file, we must provide equal rights to both parents.

Change of Information

Please let your child's GT4K site know as soon as possible if at any time during the school year your family has a change of:

- Address
- Telephone numbers
- Email address
- Emergency contact (change of person or telephone numbers). Please let the people you choose as emergency contacts know that you are listing them as emergency contacts.
- Health needs
- Child care arrangements
- Guardianship
- Transportation needs

Student Records

The cumulative record is an individual report on each student, required by law. The records may be viewed by the school staff and parents or guardians, in the presence of the designee. Only appropriate GT4K staff, the child's parents/guardians, and law enforcement officers on certain occasions may see the record unless the court subpoenas it.

Every family has the right to their privacy being respected and enforced. Each agency will help maintain privacy in the following manner:

- Student records will not be left out for others to view.
- Parents and staff are not allowed to discuss children and families with other parents.
- Staff will not discuss children and families with other staff unless there is a direct benefit to the family or child involved.
- Parents are asked not to talk about incidents observed in the classroom or at any other activities that involve children other than their own.

Student Nondiscrimination

It is the policy of the DeForest Area School District that no person be denied admission to any public school in this district or be denied participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any curricular, extracurricular, pupil services, recreational or other program or activity because of the person's sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability as required by section 118.13 of the state statutes.

This policy also prohibits discrimination under related federal law, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (handicap) and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability). Children of homeless individuals and unaccompanied homeless youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) residing in the district shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including comparable services, as provided to other children and youth who reside in the district. Homeless children and youth shall not be required to attend a separate school or program for homeless children and shall not be stigmatized by school personnel.

Students who have been identified as having a disability, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act, shall be provided with reasonable accommodations in educational services or programs. Students may be considered disabled under this policy even if they are not covered under the district's special education policies and procedures. The district shall also provide for the reasonable accommodation of a student's sincerely held religious beliefs with regard to examinations and other academic requirements, in accordance with Board policy. The district encourages informal resolution of complaints under this policy. If any person believes that the district or any part of the school organization has failed to follow state or federal law or in some way discriminates on the basis listed above, he/she is directed to follow the district's complaint procedures. Please contact Student Services Director, DASD, 842-6500 for further concerns.

Student Services Personnel and Programs

Services Offered to Children with Special Needs

Children who have been identified as having a need for special education services are included in the GT4K classrooms. In partnership with the DeForest Area School District Special Education Department, GT4K is able to offer a wide range of services for students. To receive services the child must have a need that is identified on the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Special Education Referral Process

If you have concerns regarding your child's development you should talk with your child's 4K teacher. Students who may be demonstrating possible developmental delays can be recommended for further screening by the DeForest Area School District's Early Childhood Program. You or your child's teacher (with your permission) can contact Tonya Teeter, Administrative Assistant for the Department of Student Services, at 842-6527 to reach the appropriate DASD staff to address your concerns.

Services Offered to English Language Learners

An English Language Learner (ELL) is any child who has significant exposure to a language other than English in a home or care environment. The child may or may not speak the home language, but will understand when another person speaks that language. Children who have been identified as having a need for ELL services will be included in the GT4K program. ELL services will be delivered on a consult basis.

Social Work

GT4K sites will have access to a social worker employed by DASD on a consult basis.

School Nursing

GT4K sites will follow licensing regulations or established guidelines for nursing/health care issues. Immunization records are required by all children enrolled in the program. School Nurse Services will be provided on a consult basis.

Transportation

Transportation is provided for the GT4K program. Transportation is available during the hours of the GT4K program, but not for "wrap-around" or extended care. Transportation will be provided based on determined 4K zones. Such zones are defined by existing elementary bus routes and the number of student placements available per site. Most transportation is being offered in the a.m. with minimal p.m. transportation. Please refer to the DASD transportation handbook found on the district's website for more specifics.