



# Early Childhood Family Education

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BUFFALO HANOVER  
MONTROSE SCHOOLS



## **ECFE and School Readiness Preschool Parent Handbook 2020-21**



301 2nd Avenue NE  
Buffalo, MN 55313  
763.682.8780 or 763.682.8770  
[bhmschools.org](http://bhmschools.org)





## Welcome to ECFE and School Readiness Classes

### ECFE and School Readiness Classes

- Parent/Child Classes for parents and children birth to 5 years
- Parent Only Discussion Groups
- Sibling Care
- Parent Coaching with Early Childhood Parent Educators
- Special Events
- Parenting 877
- Home Visits for families with children birth to 5 years by a Parent Educator
- Resource and Referrals for families
- Early Childhood Screening
- Spring Into Preschool for children 2.5-3.5 years of age
- Ready Set Grow Preschool for 3 and 4 year old children
- Ready Set Grow Preschool for 4 and 5 year old children

For a full description of these services see the current ECFE catalog, Community Education catalog  
or visit us online at **[bhmschools.org](http://bhmschools.org)**.

ECFE on Facebook: **BHM Schools Early Childhood Family Education**



## Mission and Goals of ECFE

The goal of ECFE is to enhance the ability of all parents/guardians and other family members to provide the best possible environment for their child's learning and growth.

Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose ECFE and School Readiness Preschool programs provide an opportunity for both child and parent learning and growth, across developmental domains.

## ECFE Parent Advisory Council

The ECFE Parent Advisory Council invites parents to join us to make BHM ECFE the best program possible for our families! We meet the first Monday of the month, October through May, from 6:00 - 7:15 pm at Discovery Center. Child care is provided with prior notification, for no fee.

### **Purpose:**

- To provide input regarding BHM early childhood programs and services.
- Raise funds for the ECFE and School Readiness programs.
- Inform parents, legislators, and community members about early childhood education, school district issues and community concerns that affect children and families.

**Note:** Advisory Council members receive a 10% discount on fees for Community Education and ECFE classes. Please contact Barbara Eckberg, ECFE Coordinator, [beckberg@bhmschools.org](mailto:beckberg@bhmschools.org) with any questions or if you are interested in joining!

## General Information

### **Illness and Accident Procedures**

1. If a child becomes ill at school the parent or emergency contact person will be called to take the child home. Please keep your child home if she/he has had the following symptoms within the last 24 hours or appears too ill to participate in class:

- fever over 100 degrees (before medication)
- vomiting/diarrhea
- excessive coughing (especially with whooping sound)
- untreated ear infection
- strep throat
- head lice until treated
- undiagnosed eye infections
- chicken pox
- other communicable diseases (ex., impetigo, hepatitis A, pink eye, etc.)

2. Antibiotic treatment for bacterial infections must be given for 24 hours **before** returning.
3. Please contact ECFE office if your child is confirmed with a communicable illness. This allows staff to monitor others for symptoms as well as tracking reportable communicable illness. In some instances, families will be notified of a confirmed communicable illness while respecting the privacy of all students.
4. In case of minor injury staff will give first aid and contact the parent. Please be sure your emergency contact information is up to date.
5. If the emergency is more serious, staff will call 911; call you and/or the contacts you have indicated on your registration materials.
6. Please call ECFE at 763.682.8780 if your child will not attend class due to illness.

### **Health and Emergency Information Form**

For classes where the parents are not onsite, students receive a blue health and emergency information form. This form provides the necessary contact information for the Health Office to reach parents. It is the parents' responsibility to update and return this form before class or during the first week of class. Parents will also receive a gold emergency card retained by classroom staff in an event of an emergency, and to carry along during walking or off-site field trips.

### **Emergency Information Changes**

Please call and let the ECFE office know when you have changes in phone numbers, work location, daycare providers and/or emergency contact persons so that you can be reached quickly in the event of an emergency.

### **Chronic and Potentially Life-Threatening Conditions**

When a student has a diagnosed chronic condition (i.e. asthma, diabetes, seizures, heart condition or severe allergies) it is necessary for parents to provide information on the health and emergency information form before beginning class. If appropriate, students will receive a medical management plan stating what steps typically will be taken if an emergency situation occurs. This plan will be developed in collaboration with the school nurse, physician, parent and child. Student health information will be shared with appropriate school personnel with respect to confidentiality.

### **Medications**

The MN Departments of Health and Education have legislation regarding medications being administered in school.

Before *prescription medication* can be given at school, the health office must have:

- Written permission from physician and parent indicating medication, dose, frequency, side effects and termination date.
- Medication in **original bottle** with correct student name and medication instructions

Before *over the counter medications* (Tylenol, Ibuprofen etc.) can be given at school, the health office must have:

- Parent signature indicating medication, dose, frequency of medication and why the medication is needed.
- Medication in **original container** with label that includes instruction for appropriate dosage. *Medications transported in baggies, envelopes, etc. will not be accepted.*

### **Potassium Iodide**

The Department of Homeland Security has recommended that facilities within a 10 mile radius of a nuclear power plant have potassium iodide (KI) available to all people in the event of a nuclear incident. Permission to administer KI is on the emergency/health form. No KI will be administered without the written consent of the parent/guardian.

### **Immunizations**

For each child enrolled in a class or in sibling care we must have a completed Registration form and an Immunization status form on file. Minnesota Statutes 1980, sec. 123. 70, requires that all children enrolled in a Minnesota Education program be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, Hib and Hepatitis, pneumonia and varicella. A notarized statement signed by a child's parent or guardian can be submitted to the program indicating that the person has not been immunized as prescribed in state statute 121A.15 because of the conscientiously held beliefs of the parent or guardian.

### **Affirmative Action**

The Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools Community Education Department complies with all Federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination. Religious, racial or sexual harassment is a violation of state law and school district policy. If you believe that you have been a victim of harassment or violence or have information about the harassment or violence of any adult or student, report it to ECFE staff.

### **Abuse/Neglect Reporting**

Staff members and volunteers are required by state law to report instances of observed or suspected child abuse or neglect. State Statute 626.556.

### **Fee/Scholarships**

No individual or family who resides in Buffalo Hanover Montrose will be excluded from participating in the ECFE program because of inability to pay. The parent/child ECFE classes have a sliding fee scale. Ready Set Grow and Spring Into Preschool have annual fees and the choice of one payment or 9 payments. The Ready Set Grow and Spring Into Preschool classes have financial assistance options for children, aged 3 years by September 1. If you are having financial difficulty, you are invited to discuss tuition support with the ECFE Coordinator, Barbara Eckberg, [beckberg@bhmschools.org](mailto:beckberg@bhmschools.org).

## Fire, Severe Weather and Safety Emergency Procedures

In order to be prepared for a building emergency:

- Ready Set Grow and ECFE classes will participate in fire drills, tornado drills, lock down and safety procedures as planned by the school building.
- Exit maps are posted in parent education and children's rooms by the exits.
- Staff in each area will escort children out of the building. The staff will be responsible for the evacuation and will make sure each child is accounted for.
- During a tornado, the building occupants will go to designated shelters as posted.
- During a lockdown, staff and children go to nearest secure room or location

## Latex

All latex balloons, band aides, gloves, and other latex products are prohibited in any school building due to health and safety reasons. Mylar balloons are allowed.

## Animals In School Setting

The purpose of the district policy is to coordinate a district-wide effort to improve indoor air quality by eliminating pets not directly used as part of the required District curriculum thus reducing the presence of animal allergens in the classroom. Animals may be used as an educational tool, when and where appropriate. However, alternative teaching methods should be utilized whenever possible. Animals will be prohibited from being brought into schools for any non-instructional purpose. A "Request for Animals in the Building" form must be submitted to, and authorized by, the building administrator prior to any animal being brought into the school setting.

## Student Guidance

Guidance techniques will be age appropriate and will include the following:

- Positive role modeling by the staff
- Redirecting behavior
- Planning for scaffolding and intentional teaching of socialization and problem solving skills
- Support of prosocial behaviors by the teaching team and parents, through goal planning, parent coaching, resource sharing and referral

## Pyramid Model

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations *ChallengingBehavior.org*



Research has shown that the skills your child needs to be successful in the future are social and emotional skills! The more socially skilled children are, the more likely they are to succeed in school. Because this is so important for your child, we are using the **Pyramid Model** in our program. The **Pyramid Model** is a framework for supporting the social and emotional development of our children. The goal of the **Pyramid Model** is to create an environment where every child feels good about coming to school. This is accomplished by designing classrooms that

promote engagement in learning and by building positive relationships among children, families, and staff. In our use of the **Pyramid Model**, our classroom staff will work together to ensure that all children understand behavior expectations, receive instruction in social skills, and those who are struggling receive individual support. To use the Pyramid Model, our program established a leadership team that will provide ongoing support to our staff and families. Our leadership team looks forward to sharing some of the important work we are doing, including teaching program-wide expectations, partnering with families, training staff in teaching strategies, providing classroom coaching to help teachers implement, and using data for decision-making. Stay tuned for ongoing updates about the Pyramid Model in our program.

### **MN Restraint Seclusion Law**

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 1125A.0942, Subd. 1, BHM School District has a public plan that discloses its use of restrictive procedures. This plan specifically outlines the list of restrictive procedures that the school intends to use; how the district will monitor and review the use of restrictive procedures, including post use debriefings and convening an oversight committee; and a written description and documentation of the training and staff that have completed the training. A copy of this plan is available upon request at each school principal's office.

### **Referrals**

If concerns regarding a child's development arise, ECFE teachers will document observations and discuss them with parent/guardian following the District referral policy. Parents must sign a release before a child is observed or assessed further by school or community professionals. Parents may request assessments by contacting Early Childhood Special Education at 763-682-8700.

### **Children Served by Early Intervention (Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE))**

ECFE staff request that parents of children being served by Special Education inform ECFE of their children's needs. Parents may be asked to sign a release for ECFE Staff to consult with ECSE staff, in an effort to best serve the educational needs of the child.

### **Snack/Classroom Food**

ECFE families *may be* asked to donate snack items. Families who bring snack to share in their classroom must follow the state law that all food should be wrapped and commercially prepared;

no home-prepared food can be shared at school. ECFE policy requires healthy snacks to provide the nutrition and energy for optimal health and learning. Snack ideas included from the Smart Snack list include: unsweetened applesauce, yogurt, cheese, whole grain crackers, mini bagels, cottage cheese, muffins, low sugar cereal. Please notify your child's teacher if your child has a food allergy.

### **School Closing**

ECFE programs will follow late start or school closing due to severe weather. These closing are announced on: ECFE and Community Education facebook pages, KRWC 1360 AM, WCCO 830 AM radio, school website at [www.bhmschools.org](http://www.bhmschools.org) , TV channels 4, 5, 9, and 11.

### **Late Start**

If school is late there are no morning classes or Family Learning. Classes that are begin at 12pm or after will be held as scheduled. If school is cancelled in mid-morning or noon there will be no afternoon or evening classes. **ECFE will not make up snow/inclement weather days. No refunds will be given due to inclement weather.**

### **Visitors To ECFE Classes**

Only registered children are allowed to attend ECFE parent child or preschool classes. Any significant adult in the life of the child are welcome to attend class in place of the parents.

### **Volunteering With Younger Children**

Please find other care for siblings when volunteering in ECFE classes to prevent distractions in the classroom.

If that's not possible, talk to the teacher about volunteer projects that can be done at home.

### **Evaluations**

Parent/child classes offer parents an opportunity to complete a class evaluation. ECFE staff members and administrators rely upon parent input to create a menu of class options, that best fit the needs of families.

### **Cell Phones**

Please turn off cell phones during class.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is very important. While attending class or volunteering, you may observe, read or hear things about individual students and their school or home experience. Do not discuss your observations or opinions about a student with anyone other than the student's teacher or ECFE Coordinator. All information about student abilities, behavior, relationships, or background is confidential. We depend on our parents and volunteers to maintain confidentiality of our students, staff and volunteers.



**Tobacco Free/Chemical Free**

Smoking and use of tobacco products, alcohol, and chemicals are prohibited on school district property.

**MN School Dangerous Weapon Law**

Bringing a dangerous weapon on school property is a violation of Minnesota law. This is any device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of producing great bodily harm or death. School property includes on a school bus, in a school building, in a private vehicle on school property, or on a school-sponsored trip. Parents please remember this when attending classes and/or entering school property. Children are discouraged from bringing toy weapons to school; these toys will not be allowed in the classroom.



## Preschool and Preschool Screening

### Spring Into Preschool

Spring Into Preschool is for children ages 2.5-3.5 years old and their parents. Children attend a weekly session, while parents participate in parent discussion groups throughout the program year. The focus of Spring Into Preschool is to support learning and skill building in the social/emotional domain. A community of learners is built through intentional teaching and exploration, free play, circle time/group activities, hand washing/ self-help and snack time routines. Your child will be encouraged to try a variety of developmentally appropriate activities throughout their day.



### Ready Set Grow Preschool

Ready Set Grow Preschool is for children ages 3 to 5 years old to learn and strengthen skills across developmental domains. Children enrolled in 3 and 4 year old classes meet for 2 hours per session, 2 days per week. Children enrolled in the 4 and 5 year old classes meet for 3 hours per session, two, three, four or five days per week.

- ✓ Enrolled children must have completed Early Childhood Screening or do so within 90 days
- ✓ Orientation and open house offered before beginning of class start date
- ✓ Conferences are offered twice a year for 4/5 year old classes
- ✓ Field Trips for children 4 and 5 years
- ✓ Creative Curriculum, Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment, MN Preschool Indicators of Progress, and Conscious Discipline provide the foundation for curriculum and assessment.
- ✓ State of the art classroom equipment
- ✓ State of MN Licensed Teachers

✓ 4 Star Quality Rating by MN Parent Aware

A community of learners is built through intentional teaching and exploration, free play, circle time/group activities, hand washing/ self-help and snack time routines. Your child will be encouraged to try a variety of developmentally appropriate activities throughout their day. Children with special needs participate in preschool through integrated preschool programming. We will encourage all children/families to respect the abilities and differences of all people. ECFE and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) staff will work together to meet the needs of all students.

## **Ready Set Grow Preschool Parent Involvement**

The opportunities and options for parent involvement are shared with parents at the Fall Open House, through the ECFE Newsletter and Community Education catalog. Parent participation is required for all preschool parents.

## **General Preschool Information:**

### **Spring Into Preschool and Ready Set Grow Preschool**

Children are asked to bring a large zippered backpack/book bag each day to take home school projects and school notes. Please send along a complete change of clothing (including socks and underwear) labeled with your child's name.

### **Communication**

Teachers will be available before and after class, and by appointment either on the phone or in person to discuss any concerns you may have. Ask your child to share his/her school bag notices & projects. Teachers may ask for parent email addresses, if available, for notices and updates.

### **Custody/Communication Information**

ECFE/preschool teachers recognize that preschool children may live with one parent or guardian, possibly at more than one address. The following policy is an attempt to assist ECFE/preschool and parents in communication with each other under these circumstances.

Until a parent or guardian presents the teacher with an *official* document of custody, communications will be sent home with the child or to the address of the child's residence. Unless the teacher receives and verifies official notification that a court order exists to prohibit such actions, the non-custodial parent or guardian may:

- receive, upon request, copies of any and all communications from the school about the student;
- receive, upon request, information about the student's health, attendance or school progress;
- attend, upon request, a school-scheduled conference to review the child's program.

A copy of the court order will be kept on file.

If information is requested for child custody issues, generally, ECFE teachers are allowed to only report attendance.

### **Evaluations**

Parents will have the opportunity to evaluate their child's preschool experience at least once a year.

### **Field Trips for Ready Set Grow Preschool**

Parents will need to sign a field trip permission form for walking field trips within the downtown area. For bus field trips (for 4 and 5 year old children only), a *separate* permission form will be required at the time of the trip. **NOTE:** Parents who are bus drivers are not allowed to drive bus while attending for their children's class trips.

### **Sharing Time**

Sometime during the quarter your child may have the opportunity to bring something special to share with the class. Each teacher will send home specific information regarding their sharing routine and guidelines.

### **Snacks**

A snack schedule will be sent home with your child each semester. State law requires use of only commercially prepared foods. ECFE policy requires nutritious snacks from the Smart Snack list: such as, fresh or dried fruits, unsweetened applesauce, cheese, yogurt, crackers, pretzels, mini bagels, popcorn, bread sticks, muffins or low sugar cereal. Please do NOT send candy, cupcakes, cake, gummy treats, fruit roll ups, juice, or juice drinks. Please alert staff of any food allergies so requests for snacks without that ingredient can be made.

### **Transportation and Pick-up Authorization**

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school. Please send a note when someone other than the parent is going to pick up your child or call ECFE at 763.682.8780 if an emergency arises during class time. Please remember to have them bring along a photo I.D. to share with staff. If there is someone who is NOT authorized to pick up your child we need to know this in writing. We need a copy of the restraining order/divorce decree if the non-authorized person is a biological parent. Due to tight schedules, please plan to arrive no more than 5 minutes prior to class time, stay with your child until the class opens and pick up your child promptly when class ends. When parents use car pools or local transportation, ex., Trailblazer, they are responsible for informing both Trailblazer and class teachers of changes, especially if a child will not be riding. Please do not drop off children unless there is a staff person available to receive your child.

**Toileting**

All children who attend preschool classes are expected to handle their own toileting needs. Exceptions are made for children with Special Education services.

**Volunteers**

Parents are welcomed to assist the teacher, share their interests or professions, or just come to observe. Please arrange your visit with the teacher ahead of time. All school volunteers are required to have a criminal history background check completed before volunteering. Volunteers pay the fee for this check. See Volunteer Handbook for details.

**Sign In/Out**

You are required to sign in before you volunteer or visit. Stop in the school office immediately upon arrival each time you volunteer. Visitors/volunteers must wear a visitor/volunteer badge while in the building. Badges identify you to students, staff and other volunteers as a registered visitor/volunteer. For the safety of everyone, we need to know who is in the building and where to locate you in case of an emergency. Don't forget to sign out when you leave the building.

**Winter Clothing**

In winter children need boots, snow pants, mittens, and hats to allow for spontaneous outdoor activities. Please label your child's clothing.

## Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening is mandated by Minnesota State Law within 90 days of beginning preschool and prior to your child entering Kindergarten. The intent of this law is to see that all children are healthy and ready for learning by preschool age. The screening also helps you learn more about how your child is doing developmentally. Your child will be screened for speech, vision, hearing, height and weight as well as general development. In addition, your child's health history will be reviewed. Families whose names are on the school census will be contacted when their child reaches 3 years of age. Screening in the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools is held at three sites. Records from screening in another district should be transferred to the elementary school nurse. If you are new to this district, call 763.682.8737 to be listed on the census.

## Annual Notifications from Buildings & Grounds

**Asbestos: Annual Notification of Availability of the Management Plan and Related Activities**

ISD 877 has on file a complete and updated Management Plan dealing with Asbestos Containing Building Materials (ACBM) within the School District's buildings. The Management Plan is available for viewing by interested parties, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the

Principal's Office at each school site. Copies of the management plan are available from the District for a nominal cost.

As required by Federal law, the condition of asbestos in our school is surveyed every six months as part of an ongoing operations and maintenance program. The most recent survey was completed in June 2011. A comprehensive inspection is conducted every three years. The latest three-year inspection was completed in December 2008. Concerns identified from these inspections are remedied by professional asbestos abatement contractors in a timely manner. Asbestos-containing floor tile and mastic were removed from Discovery, Parkside, Tatanka, and Hanover elementary schools during the summer of 2011. There are no current plans to remove the remaining asbestos unless its condition deteriorates or it becomes necessary due to renovation. If you have any questions or concerns, please address them to the District "Designated Person" for asbestos management, Director of Buildings and Grounds, at 763.682.8773.

### **Janet B. Johnson, Parents Right-To-Know Act, August 2003**

A Minnesota state law went into effect in the year 2000 that requires schools to inform school employees and parents if they apply pesticides on school property.

Specifically, this law requires schools that apply these pesticides to maintain an estimated schedule of pesticide applications and to make the schedule available to employees and parents for review or copying at each school's office. If you would like to be notified prior to pesticide applications made on days other than those specified in the estimated schedule (excluding emergency applications), please contact John Heltunen at 763.682.8773.

The long-term health effects on children from the application of such pesticides or the class of chemicals to which they belong may not be fully understood.

ISD 877 is continuing to work closely with its health and safety resources to comply with integrated pest management guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns, please address them to John Heltunen, Director of Buildings and Grounds.

### **Indoor Air Quality Management Plan**

As an additional requirement by the Department of Education, ISD 877 has developed and implemented an Indoor Air Quality Management Plan that addresses indoor air quality issues throughout the District. Walkthroughs and inspections of the buildings are performed annually to detect current problems and prevent future problems from occurring. Information is also available from the Minnesota Department of Health at

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/schools/index.html>.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding indoor air quality, please contact the District's IAQ Coordinator.