

Welcome to the Dulce Elementary School Pre-K program. We are excited to have you and your child join us this school year for a community bridge building year.

This year will be a year of wondrous and amazing growth experiences in the Dulce Elementary under the teachings of a New Mexico certified Pre-K instructor.



There will be many opportunities in the beginning of your child's education, and we encourage you to walk with us this first year of school for them. Attend virtual classes, participate in the parent advisory team, and attend virtual Pre-K family nights.

This handbook is prepared to answer questions you may have about Pre-K provided by Dulce Elementary. Feel free to contact one of the following if you have any questions. Or visit prek.ped.state.nm.us/ the NM Pre-K website.

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WHAT IS NM PRE-K?

New Mexico Pre-K provides classroom-based learning for young children so that they are ready for Kindergarten at age five. Pre-K provides educational activities based on what children need to learn in seven areas:

1. Listening, language, reading and writing
2. Science
3. Counting, shapes, sorting and measuring
4. Coordination, hygiene, health, and well-being
5. Art, music, and movement
6. Independence, problem-solving, thinking, and perseverance
7. Appropriate behavior, social skills, and being a part of a group

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ELIGIBILITY

All children in Pre-K must have their 4th birthday before September 1 of the current school year.

There are no family income requirements (high or low).

DES Pre-K is an integrated school-based program that provides services for all children regardless of race, ethnicity, disability or non-disability.

RECRUITMENT

Information is provided throughout the Dulce community. Notifications are given in a variety of methods that include:

- Using marquees at each DISD school site, as available.
- PSAs on the local radio station, KCIE 90.5
- Articles in the local newspaper, The Chieftain
- On the DISD website, www.dulceschools.com
- Word of mouth & social media

Posted information will stay posted until all 10 student slots are filled. Interested parents may contact the DES office, 8 am to 5:30 pm, phone number (575) 759-2951.

DES Pre-K program will also partner with the Jicarilla Child & Family Education Center, to support any students not eligible for early childhood education or childcare services who may be placed on a waiting list for their program to ensure their child receives educational services.

Selection/Prioritization

DES Pre-K will consider the following situations as priority needs when making participant selections:

- Children without opportunity to attend a quality early childcare & education program.
- Children determined with the most need, as indicated by screening results from the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE).
- Children who will attend Kindergarten in Dulce Elementary School in the following school year.

ENROLLMENT

Due to the current pandemic, applications will be filed solely online at Powerschool enrollment on the DISD website at www.dulceschools.com. Parents may call for information on required documentation for enrollment at (575) 759-2951.

DES will hold a virtual Pre-Registration and screening meeting, August 8-19, 2022 by appointment between 8 am — 3 pm, for the Pre-K program. Enrollment is limited to 10 students for Pre-K.

1. Registration will remain open and accepted until all allotted slots are filled. A waiting list is then started for additional inquiries and registrants.
2. If registrants are placed on the waiting list, the family will fill out the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) to determine need. Placement is determined by those most in need, as indicated by the screening results.
3. Vacated slots will be filled with students from the waiting list.

Student Privacy Rights

DES Pre-K follows the Family Educational rights and Privacy Act (FERPA 0 20 U.S.C.1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) about confidentiality of student information. All student records are kept in locked, fire-proof cabinets.

FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. It applies to all schools that receive funds under an application program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents/guardians certain rights related to their child(ren)'s educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches 18 years of age or attends a school beyond high school. These students and the parents/guardians have the right to inspect and review their child(ren)'s records maintained at the school. Schools are not required to provide copies unless there are extenuating circumstances. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents/guardians also have the right to request corrections and updates to their child(ren)'s records. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian has the right to a formal hearing. If the school still decides not to amend the record after the hearing, a statement with the record setting forth the parent/guardian's view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the custodial parent/guardian in order to release any information from a student's educational record. FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organization
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State or Tribal law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents/guardians about directory information and allow parents/guardians a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them, if they do not want the information disclosed. Schools must notify parents/guardians annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PAC bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school. For more information call 1 800-USA-LEARN (1 -800-872-5327).

If events occur where your child is withdrawn from Pre-K during the school year, the parent guardian is expected to come to the DES office to disenroll the student from class. A reason for leaving is needed. If moving, parents/guardians will be required to provide DES the name of the school, the city, state and expected day of arrival to the new location. DES will provide a record of enrollment and attendance to the new school as needed. Call the DES office for further disenrollment information (575) 759-2951.

ATTENDANCE

Children are required to attend DES Pre-K at least 90% of the time (virtually and person). However, if a child is ill or the family is having extreme extenuating circumstances, the child will be sent home. Please call the DES office to notify us if your child will be absent for these reasons. All school building, NMPED, and CDC policies will be followed as per COVID-19 containment.

If your child becomes sick at school, we will make every effort to make them comfortable & contained, until we are able to contact you or stated emergency contacts to take them home. Keep contact numbers up to date for your child's safety during situations like this.

DES will follow all Dulce Independent School District attendance policies, as detailed in the Student/Parent Handbook as follows:

- Students are expected to be in their scheduled classes Monday —Friday as per teacher schedules
- If a student is absent, the parent/guardian must notify the school by phone by 8 am with a written note the day the child returns to school.
- DES Pre-K will follow the DISD calendar and hours. For 2022-2023 SY, Pre-K classes will be from 8 am to 3:00 pm Monday to Thursday, and 8 am to 1 pm on Fridays.

Excused absences are sickness, medical appointments, dental appointments, serious illness, a death in the immediate family, religious commitments, cultural ceremonies, and required court appearances. For students absent for more than three (3) consecutive days for medical reasons, a doctor's note is required in order to be excused. School sponsored activities (field trips, etc.) are also excused.

Unexcused absences include any absence with no appropriate excuse. Examples include family vacations, shopping, haircuts, sleeping in late, etc. A student who is late to class is considered tardy. If late 15 minutes or more may become an unexcused absence.

Missing 10 consecutive days without contacting the teacher or DES office will be grounds for a student to be dropped from the program. DES staff will notify the student's family at 5, 8 and 10 days of absence, with a withdrawal/disenrollment notification on the 10th day and will disenroll the student from the program. DES staff will then contact parents/guardians of the next child on the waiting list to invite that child to fill the vacated spot. **The child who was removed from the program, will be moved down to the bottom of the waiting list if the family is still interested in having their child in the Pre-K program.**

Before a student is removed and before the 10th day of unexcused absence, DES Pre-K staff will reach out to the family, an Attendance Plan will be developed, and resources provided to assist the family in getting the child to return to school consistently.

MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

Health services are available to students through a nurse aide shared between schools in DISD.

A student's parent/guardian must sign a "Consent for School Health Services" and the "Emergency Medical Authorization" forms at the beginning of each school year. This allows a student to receive medical services. The consent form allows the nurse's aide to administer mild analgesics, antacids, antibiotic ointments and to treat colds.

Prescription and other medications including inhalers, cannot be given by school personnel at school. Medications may be brought to the school and administered by the parent to the child while observed by school personnel.

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

New Mexico Legislation requires that students in Pre-K are screened for vision and hearing, development, and social emotional skills. Screenings are done at the start of each school year and for any new enrollees, within the first three months of school and at any time. For 2022-2023 SY, students will be screened one by one by appointment.

1. Screenings are not diagnostic, but solely to identify children who need further evaluation.
2. Referral Notice: Preschool staff will inform families of screening and observational results no later than the next scheduled parent/teacher conference.
3. If a student wears prescription glasses, make sure they wear them to school every day.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Dulce Elementary welcomes you as partner to help make your child's educational journey a successful one. If families grow and learn, children grow and learn ready to develop into productive and successful citizens. Parents are one of the most important factors in their child(ren)'s success. Working together, we will give you 90 hours or more for family engagement — as outlined below.

Pre-K Open House — Open House will be held before the first month of school is over on a day chosen by the Pre-K teacher. The purpose for the open house is to introduce the Pre-K students to the classroom environment and provide families the opportunity to meet the teacher.

Home Visits — Pre-K teachers will schedule in-person or virtual meetings prior to the first day of school. Parents/guardians and students meet their teacher while being able to develop instruction, so students are set up for a successful school year. Students entering the program mid-year will also receive a home visit either virtually or in person, as the pandemic situation calls for.

Parent Visits to the Classroom — **Until further notice, no visitors are allowed in the classroom hallways elementary building except ONE Pre-K parent for Pre-K student drop off and pick up before and after school.** All visitors must sign in at the front office, presenting a photo I.D. and wear the sticker or card pass visibly to take your child to class to sign them in and out of class. Parents/guardians are asked to maintain a positive, supportive attitude with students, teachers and staff and abide by school regulations. If a child must be checked out before the end of the school day, do not tie up teacher attention to other students by talking for long periods of time. Instead, please schedule a conference with the teacher separately if you need to talk for long periods about anything.

Parent/Teacher Conferences - Conferences will be scheduled in-person or virtually with the DISD school board approved calendar. (Sept. 7, Nov. 16 and Feb. 1). Parent conferences include review of student progress using the Early Childhood Observation Tool (ECOT) that are completed on all NM Pre-K children.

Parent Advisory Committee Meetings — Meetings will be scheduled once every 9-weeks throughout the school year. Parents/guardians can coordinate with the Pre-K teacher for possible dates.

Positive Solutions for Parents Sessions — parents guardians are invited to participate in a monthly parent learning opportunity called Positive Solutions for Parents Sessions, through the Pyramid Model

Consortium: Supporting Early Childhood PBIS. The training materials provide information for families to promote children's social and emotional skills, understand behavior, and use positive approaches to help children learn appropriate behavior in and out of school. The trainings are designed to give parents general information on key strategies that may be used with all children. Each family is provided a family Workbook to keep track of their ideas and strategies to try weekly home activities. See modules in the table below:

	Module	Primary Focus
1	Making Connection!	Building relationships, quality time, positive comments and encouragement
2	Making it Happen!	Play as a powerful parenting practice, development of friendship skills, encouraging positive behavior
3	Why Do Children Do What They Do!	Determining the meaning of behavior, making expectations clear, developing and teaching household rules
4	Teach Me What To Do!	Emotional vocabulary, managing anger, and handling disappointment, problem solving
5	Facing the Challenge (Part 1)	Examine specific strategies that can be used to promote positive adult and child behavior in & away from home
6	Facing the Challenge (Part 2)	Problem solving, challenging behavior, and evening/day routines

Family Nights - Monthly family nights for students and their families are planned to extend the themes and learning of the classroom instruction for that month. Family Night activities include stations for literacy, math and art/science activities.

- September 2022 — "All About Me" Family Presentations & Pre-K Open House
- October 2022 - Fall Harvest
- November 2022 — Jicarilla Families and Culture
- December 2022 — Generosity
- January 2023 — Coats and Clothing
- February 2023 — Family Connections
- March 2023 — Reduce, Recycle, Reuse
- April 2023 — Spring Fling
- May 2023 — Awards and Promotion

Project- Based Learning Field Trips — will be in April 2023 — Gathering Edible Plants

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCEDURES PLAN

Supports are in place to help identify any students' potential special needs early in the process of their school year. DISD knows all students have unique strengths, talents, learning styles and needs. Therefore, we work to provide specific learning opportunities for all students throughout the day. Children with suspected developmental delays will be eligible for Child Find screening and evaluation services in partnership with families.

Screening and Referral

All Dulce Pre-K students will receive developmental and health screenings prior to beginning the program or within the first three months of school. Parents will be included in the screening process and informed of the results. Appropriate referrals and services are made available to address all identified concerns.

Student data from parent intake, home and center visits, screening results, and classroom-based observations are considered by Pre-K teachers when planning lessons, play, and learning opportunities for all children in the program. Parents are encouraged to provide school personnel with any information that will assist in planning an effective educational program for their child, including but not limited to the student's health needs, culture, home language, behavior, or development. If you have questions or concerns about your child's health, behavior, or development, please let us know as soon as possible.

Pre-K students experiencing difficulties in the classroom can be referred to the DISD Special Education Department by the teacher, parent/guardian, primary care provider, or local child protection agency when applicable. Clear, complete description of concerns will assist the Special Education Department in determining whether the child should be referred for specific additional screening or further assessment.

Identification of potentially eligible children may occur through:

- The Dulce Schools Pre-K Screening Process,
- The annual Dulce-area Child Find Screening Fair, held annually the first Wed. of October, or
- Through a parent/guardian, teacher, or physician referral.

Evaluation for Potential Eligibility for Special Education

If formal assessment is justified, DISD Special Education staff will set a meeting with the child's parent/guardian to discuss the proposed evaluation(s) and determine next steps. If the child's Eligibility Determination Team determines there is a need for special education services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed. Pending parent/guardian consent, the student will receive special education services onsite in the least restrictive environment.

NOTE: Informed, written parent/guardian consent is required for special education evaluations, as well as for the development of an Individual Education Program (IEP) and/or provision of special education and related services.

TRANSITION PLAN

Every effort will be made to smoothly transition students to Kindergarten next year. February to April — Pre-K/Head Start transition days are scheduled, one visit per month, for one hour to visit and participate in a Kindergarten classroom and meet teachers.

- May — Pre-K/Head Start students will visit the DES cafeteria during lunch. The Pre-K Promotion and Awards Ceremony will also have a Kindergarten teacher talk about Kindergarten expectations.
- July to September — Registration is open. Available Pre-K positions are open. Pre-K Open House will allow parents to see their classroom and meet their teacher.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

License and Education Levels — The Pre-K teacher is required to have a degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and be licensed by the New Mexico Public Education Department. For the 2022-2023 school year. If a teacher does not have their degree, they would sign an agreement to take classes and work to acquiring their ECE degree.

Continued Professional Training Opportunities —NM Pre-K requires teacher and EA's to attend trainings on current topics to ensure best practices are being used to teach Pre-K. For the 2022-2023 school year, NMPED will provide six modules of training to the Pre-K and head start teachers throughout the year.

Individual Professional Development Plans — Administrators, teachers and EAs are required to design an Individualized Professional Development plan each school year with an overall goal and short-term objectives with steps to meet those goals as educators.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Dulce Elementary has opted out of transporting students by bus for Pre-K. This means parents guardians will be responsible for transporting their child(ren) to and from PreK.

Drop Off and Pick Up- Parents/guardians who are over 18 years of age and who are on the student pick up list, must sign their child in after a curbside temperature and health check. For Pick-Up, teachers will be outside as weather permits or in the classroom with the students until the parents come to the classroom to pick up the child and sign them out. Please pick up and drop off students on time, every day.

Identification of Contact for Students — Regardless of the reason a child is being picked up, all contacts for the child can be asked to show a picture I.D. to school personnel. Any adults are asked to undergo a temperature check and sign in and out for pick up for contact tracing in the building. It is important each person has proper I.D. available for the safety of all children.

Program and Classroom Quality Improvement Plan — Continuous improvements to procedures and practices for classroom instruction and student safety are made throughout the whole schoolyear. Some changes with short notice to ensure child and staff safety and optimal educational experiences.

Input into planning for such goals will be heard from the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The responsibility of the PAC is to work with staff to start action steps, review and study progress data, and make suggestions to support continuous growth and improvement of Pre-K.

The **Jicarilla Apache Nation** requires all people 2 years of age and older wear a **mask** indoors at school and in public settings. COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected. Help slow the spread.