

**Rochester Public Schools**  
**Early Childhood Family Services**

201 8th St NW  
Rochester, MN 55901  
507-328-4020

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www.rochesterce.org/PAIR



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**Early Childhood Screening**

507-328-4004

**Rochester Family Literacy**

507-328-4020

**Preschool Enrichment**

507-328-4030



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**early childhood**  
**family services**

**2016 - 2017**

**Parent Handbook**

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pair@rochester.k12.mn.us  
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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### PAIR/School Readiness Advisory Council

The PAIR and School Readiness Advisory Council is made up of program participants and community professionals. The Advisory Council:

- Advises staff on programming and policies
- Promotes the program through outreach and events
- Advocates for quality Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness programs

The PAIR and School Readiness Advisory Council meets one Wednesday evening per month, September-May.

### School Readiness

Families First of Minnesota: Ensuring positive beginnings for all young children and their families.

PAIR partners with Families First of Minnesota to operate the School Readiness program to provide scholarships for families. The School Readiness program is a continuum of services that allow children 3 years old to kindergarten enrollment to participate in early childhood programs and services that enable them to enter school with the skills and behavior needed for them to progress and flourish.

School Readiness placement considerations include child and family needs, available community openings and parent choice. Children and families with the greatest need have the highest priority for enrollment.

### Have Questions or Comments?

We want your experience at PAIR to be a positive one. If you have any other questions, please talk to your teachers or call the office at 507-328-4020. We will be happy to assist you.

More information and parent resources can be found on our website at [www.rochester.k12.mn.us/PAIR](http://www.rochester.k12.mn.us/PAIR).

## **Safety**

All our class buildings practice fire, tornado and lock down drills for safety as required by the school district. Drills are typically unscheduled. A drill may occur during class. Teachers will update you, the first week of class, as to the proper procedures in case of emergency.

## **Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)**

PAIR fosters and promotes a safe, effective learning environment that enhances student learning through teaching and reinforcing positive behavior.

PBIS focuses on preventing behavior problems by:

- > having safe and effective learning environments
- > teaching behavior expectations
- > providing research- based supports for positive student behavior

An important feature of PBIS is engaging families as partners in the schools. The Rochester Public Schools as adopted PBIS in all of their schools. There are 3 behavioral expectations that will be taught and reinforced in each EC classroom.

**Be Safe**

**Be Kind**

**Be Responsible**

## **Separation**

Parents\* are welcome to stay and calm their child if extra length of time is needed at separation time. Teachers will call the parent educator in the event the child continues to cry for ten minutes with staff. Parent will then remain in the classroom for the remainder of the class.

## **Communication**

Communication is encouraged when discussing your child(ren). Feel free to contact your teacher for a sit down when you feel it necessary. If you have any concerns you are welcome to contact the PAIR office at any time.

*\*The word "parent" includes all individuals who function in a primary parenting role- mothers, fathers, partners, grandparents, foster parents and other relatives.*

# **ABOUT PAIR**

## **PAIR/ECFS Philosophy**

Early Childhood Family Education is a program which recognizes parents\* as a child's first and most important teachers. ECFE supports this critical time (birth to kindergarten) of growth and learning by providing a two-generation program with both parents and their young children participating. All parents can benefit from information and support during these early years.

## **PAIR's Mission**

*"Strengthening families with young children through education and support"*

## **What is PAIR/ECFE?**

PAIR—Parents Are Important In Rochester is Rochester Public Schools' Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program. ECFE offers high-quality parent and early education programming. PAIR provides:

- Parenting information and resources to help strengthen your parenting skills.
- Purposeful, age appropriate, researched-based instruction covering all areas of your child's development.
- Fun learning activities for both you and your child.

## **Who can take a PAIR class?**

PAIR is intended for ALL parents\*, relatives or individuals who function in a primary parenting role and their children, age birth to kindergarten enrollment, who live in the Rochester School District. While nannies and child care providers are not considered primary caregivers for parenting classes, certain classes are available and noted in the catalog.

## **Who teaches PAIR classes?**

PAIR classes are taught by parent educators and early childhood teachers who are licensed by the State of MN in their field of Study.

*\*The word "parent" includes all individuals who function in a primary parenting role- mothers, fathers, partners, grandparents, foster parents and other relatives.*

## Parent Involvement

A parent\* may attend a PAIR class without their child, however every child must be accompanied by their parent/guardian. A family member who provides regular care for the child may attend if a parent/guardian is unavailable. The relative must be registered and participate fully in all parts of the class. This includes full participation in the parent class component. Exceptions are on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the PAIR office in advance.

## The PAIR/ECFE Experience



### **1. PACT (Parent and Child Time)**

Class begins with parent and child interaction time, circle time with books and song as well as activities, all designed to enhance your child's learning. You will also get great ideas to take home with you to enjoy with the whole family.



### **2. Parent Time**

Parents participate in a discussion led by a licensed parent educator. The parent discussion covers information on developmental, age-related concerns and allows time to connect with other parents.



### **3. Children's Time**

While the parents are in the discussion, children are learning through songs, reading, play and activities designed to enhance their creativity and imagination. A licensed early childhood teacher leads the children in these activities.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

### General Attendance Guidelines

Any Guardian/Foster Parent/Relative who is involved in a caregiving role may enroll with the child and attend in lieu of parent, if the parent is unavailable to attend. For purposes of definition "relative" or "relatives" means non-custodial grandparents or other person related to a child by blood, marriage, adoption or placement. This relative must fully participate in all components of the program. If a relative is attending class instead of a parent/guardian, we encourage this adult to remain consistent for each class.

Visiting family members are allowed to attend class with the parent and child(ren) as a guest. Class instructors must be notified prior to the class.

## Sibling Care

Sibling care is child care provided for children ages nine months to kindergarten enrollment while their parent/guardian is in class with another child(ren). Lap babies\* can be registered for sibling care at any time during the session when the child is age eligible if space is available. The sibling care fee is for the entire session. Encore families need to register and pay for sibling care for the year to guarantee a spot at any time during the year. If a spot is not reserved, we cannot guarantee care when your lap baby is eligible. If no care is available, you will be responsible to find alternative care.

Sibling care is designed to provide an environment that is safe, nurturing and fun and often is a mixed age group of children. Every effort is made to provide activities that are developmentally appropriate, however, the safety of all the children is always our first priority in mixed-age classrooms.

Child must be registered in order to attend. If separation is a problem, the parent must stay with the child in sibling care for the remainder of the class, and try again the following class.

### School Age Sibling Care Policy

Sibling care is not available for school age children. Kindergartners may attend child care or sibling care only **if** they have a preschool age sibling attending and **if** space is available. Class instructors must be notified prior to the class.

## **IN THE CLASSROOM**

### Dress/Clothing

Learning can be messy, classes often visit the gym or go outside. Please dress your child accordingly. Washable, season-appropriate clothing and shoes suitable for running/playing (no flip-flops) should be worn for class.

### Snacks

Most PAIR classes include a children's snack time. **Report any food allergies on your School Health Information Form prior to the start of class.** Families may be asked to volunteer to provide healthy snacks/beverages for the children's class. This is optional for all families. All snacks must be store bought. Teachers will provide you with suggestions for appropriate foods. If you are absent on your snack day, do not worry, snacks will be provided that day.

## Forms Needed at Registration

**PAIR classes** forms include:

- registration (online or paper copy)
- immunization records

This information needs to be communicated with the office prior to the first day of class.

- health form, **only if your child has any health concerns**

## Immunizations

All children attending PAIR classes and sibling care need to have a current immunization record on file each school year. Immunizations can be turned in one of the following ways:

1) at Northrop • 201  
8th St NW • 3rd floor •  
room 301

2) have your health  
care provider fax them  
• (507) 328-4015

3) bring a copy to the  
first class meeting!

## PAIR's Refund Policy

If PAIR cancels a class or sibling care due to low enrollment, you will be notified immediately and your fee will be refunded. (PAIR reserves the right to cancel any classes/sibling care that do not meet minimum enrollment.)

**If you drop a class with a session length of *FOUR WEEKS OR LESS***, you must do so 24 hours before the first class meeting to receive a refund, minus a \$5 processing fee. \*Refunds will not be processed for classes that meet only one session.

**If you drop a class with a session length of *FIVE OR MORE WEEKS***, you must do so within 48 hours after the first class meeting to receive a refund, minus a \$5 processing fee.

\*Lap babies are defined as children under nine months of age.

\*The word "parent" includes all individuals who function in a primary parenting role- mothers, fathers, partners, grandparents, foster parents and other relatives.

## Parent Attendance:

Parents\* must participate in the parent education portion of the class if their child(ren) is attending the children's program. They may not wait in the hall or leave the building.

## Sick Child

If your child has had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours, keep them home to rest/recover: a fever (of over 100); vomiting or diarrhea; a severe cold with fever, sneezing and nose drainage; an unidentified rash; conjunctivitis/pink eye; or other signs of illness.

If your child has seen a doctor and is on medication, they should not return to class until they have taken their medication for at least 24 hours and are feeling up to participating. Please call the PAIR office to let us know if other children in the class may have been exposed to a contagious condition.

## Sick Parent/Emergencies

If a child is enrolled but the parent\* is unable to attend because of an emergency situation (illness, cancer treatment, funeral, hospitalization) the adult caring for the child may bring the child on a **one-time-basis**. This must receive prior approval by the office. The adult attending must participate in the parent/ child interaction and parent education portion of the class. The adult in this case may include a currently enrolled parent in the class. Jury duty, doctor appointments, meetings, or open houses are not considered an emergency.

## Absences/Attendance

Notify the PAIR office when you or your child will miss a PAIR class or sibling care at 507-328-4020. After hours voicemail is available, or email the PAIR office at [paiir@rochester.k12.mn.us](mailto:paiir@rochester.k12.mn.us).

\*The word "parent" includes all individuals who function in a primary parenting role- mothers, fathers, partners, grandparents, foster parents and other relatives.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What if I do not live in the Rochester School District?

Rochester School District families are registered first. If you do not live in the district, you are welcome to register one week after First Draw. All out of district registrants will pay a \$5 out of district fee per class per child. Out of district fees are not eligible to be waived.

### Can PAIR accommodate my child's allergies/special needs?

PAIR welcomes all families. To better serve your child(ren) it is important to contact the PAIR office after registration about any allergies, special needs or developmental concerns. A School Health Information Form is required before class begins for all children in preschool, and for any child in a PAIR class who has a health need, allergy, epi-pen or asthma plan. A nurse will follow up with those parents whose child(ren) have any health concerns.

### Do you provide transportation?

Transportation is available for one PAIR class per week for families in need, at no cost to the family. Call the PAIR office at 328-4020 for assistance. When using transportation you are responsible for providing car or booster seats for your children.

### Does PAIR cancel classes due to bad weather?

Yes. If the Rochester Public Schools are cancelled for the day, all PAIR classes are cancelled.

- **If school begins late**, morning PAIR classes are canceled, but afternoon and evening PAIR classes will be held.
- **If school dismisses early**, all PAIR classes are canceled for the rest of the day and evening.

### **For closings, cancellations or any weather related information:**

Please call the Community Education Weather cancellation recording at 507-328-4010 or sign up for the Rochester Public School Skylert message system at [www.rochester.k12.mn.us](http://www.rochester.k12.mn.us) to be notified when school is closed. PAIR is unable to schedule make up or refund fees for class times canceled due to inclement weather.

*\*The word "parent" includes all individuals who function in a primary parenting role- mothers, fathers, partners, grandparents, foster parents and other relatives.*

### Do you offer payment assistance?

Yes. PAIR offers a sliding fee scale based on household income. The sliding fee is applied to your class registrations. Consider this sliding fee scale a guide to determine what your family can afford to pay. Please note, fees can be waived or reduced at any income level if family circumstances would make payment a hardship. Call PAIR at 507-328-4020 if you have any questions about the fee scale or fee waivers.

**No Rochester resident will be denied participation due to inability to pay.**

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### First Draw

A lottery is used to determine placement into classes that are over-enrolled. First Draw is the date in which the lottery draw occurs. An email confirmation will be sent out to confirm placement. If space is available after First Draw, registration is first come, first served. Payment is due upon registration.

### Age Requirements

PAIR classes are designed for specific age groups, so your child must be the appropriate age on or before the first class meeting. We will accept children outside the age range for a class **only** if there is room in the class **and** if the child's birthday falls

within one month of the start date of the class. The registrant will be put on a waiting list and must wait until one week before class begins for a confirmation of enrollment.

### Photos/ Video Taping

PAIR staff may take photos in our classrooms to use in our newsletters, brochures and on our website. Upon registration you can choose whether to allow permission to photograph or not. If you do not want your family's photo taken, it is your responsibility to submit a *Media Exemption Form* to the PAIR office. This form is available online, in the PAIR office and in classrooms. Any personal photos you take in our classrooms cannot include children or adults other than your own family, per district policy. Video taping is prohibited in all PAIR classrooms.