

Lathers Early Childhood and Kindergarten Center



Teachers: Kim Erdelen, Jennifer Jankowski, Elizabeth Theis,
Heather Lafferty, Lisa Kordie, Sarah Keller, Chelsea Westra, Jaclyn Smith

Associate Teachers: Hanaa Alomari, Bridget Taylor,
Rosemary Mirabatur, Fatima Aoun, Melissa Arkuski,
Aferdita Qazimi, Sue Zarb, Zahra AlMaqhzumi

Early Childhood Specialist: Samantha Cronenwett

Principal: Susan Ford

♥ Welcome to
Preschool!!



Welcome to our G.S.R.P. Program

We are happy that your child has joined us this year in our program. This handbook is designed to provide parents in this program with information that will be needed throughout the school year. In addition, we are confident that your increased understanding of this program will lead to a successful preschool/readiness experience for your child.

Our Lathers Vision: *A strong foundation for a strong future.*

Our Lathers Mission: *Planting the seeds of knowledge that grow forever.*

Our Lathers Beliefs:

- *We believe every child can and will learn.*
- *We believe in celebrating success with our students.*
- *We believe differences should be celebrated.*
- *We believe that education is a combined effort---school, home, and community working together.*

Your child will begin his or her path to school success this year. We are so happy to have this opportunity to get to know your child, your family and work together to provide your child with an outstanding preschool experience. Great Start Readiness Program at Lathers is here to partner with your family to meet the needs of your preschool child.

Getting Started

Fill out paperwork from school

Please turn in the following to the teacher:

- Emergency cards (all cards)
- Completed physical/health appraisal
- Free/Reduced lunch form

Lathers School Information

Lathers office phone number: 734-762-8490

- ✓ Call the school if your child will be absent
- ✓ Call transportation to notify them you won't need the bus 762-8325
- ✓ Send a note to the teacher if you know in advance about an absence

Class Schedule

- ✓ GSRP meets four days a week, Monday – Thursday; our hours are 8:50-4:05. We offer morning, afternoon, and full day classes.
- ✓ On Fridays, the teachers will make home visits, hold parent meetings and work on program planning. Teachers are available to answer questions on Fridays, but are also available before and after school during the week by appointment.

Bus and Arrival Information



Transportation Phone Number: 734-762-8325

- ✓ Plan to walk your child to the bus & meet your child at the bus daily.
- ✓ The school bus drops children off near the Harrison/Barton door.
- ✓ Teachers or associate teachers will meet children at the bus daily.
- ✓ Teachers or associate teachers will accompany children to the bus at the end of each school day.
- ✓ Sign your child in and out each day if you drive your child to school.

Admission Requirements

- Four years of age on or before December 1
- Copy of birth certificate, immunization record, residency, income info
- Completed physical examination
- Income eligibility and/or risk factors from the GSRP survey/interview

Attendance Policy

To receive the full benefit of GSRP, it is important that your child is in attendance each and every day. Report any absence to your child's teacher. Excessive absences will be handled on an individual basis.

GSRP Curriculum, Program History and Details

GSRP is a readiness program that is funded by the State of Michigan specifically for four year-olds. We are very proud of this program that is offered to our families. It has been offered in this district for over 18 years and has provided a great foundation for so many children.

G.S.R.P. has a unique balance of learning opportunities for your child. We focus on the academic, emotional, physical and social aspects of development for the students. We offer experiences that help children to build a strong foundation in reading and literacy, math and fine motor/gross motor development. We work on building school success skills such as following directions, taking turns, listening skills and problem solving. Our goal is to address the needs of the whole child, and exposing them to wonderful preschool experiences at our school.

In addition, we extend learning through creative exploration, art, music and movement with many outstanding learning centers. We focus on developmentally appropriate activities and offer many choices each day for children to explore. Teachers provide structured direct-instruction time, story time, circle time and many free-choice options for our four year-olds. Children will visit the library and the gym each week, and will use the preschool playground outside each day, weather permitting.

CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT: Our program at Lathers uses a research-based early childhood curriculum, Creative Curriculum. This curriculum is aligned with the Preschool Standards of Quality and is nationally recognized. Creative Curriculum is implemented on a daily basis and we use the Teaching Strategies Online Gold for assessment. In addition, we do the ASQ (Ages & Stages) with each child during the school year. Informal assessments and observational records are also used.

Students are monitored for progress and this is reported to parents. Teachers make suggestions for extending the learning at home and provide resources for parents to do this. Teachers will use the two home visits and two parent/teacher conferences to share this information with families. You will be amazed at the growth and learning that takes place during the school year with your child.

Let's work together as a team to help your child have an outstanding year in G.S.R.P. Our work this year can ensure a strong foundation for future success in school. We value our home-school partnership and believe that working together, we have the greatest ability to meet the needs of our children.

Daily Schedule

All of our classrooms post a daily schedule that is visual, showing all parts of the GSRP school day. The schedule includes visuals for planning, choice time, recall, small group, large group, snacks/meals, outside time and rest time. Children understand their daily schedule and know when the transitions occur.

Child & Family Referrals

Our school is always willing to help families get connected with other services and supports. We can do this through our school social worker as well as our HELP team process. Please contact your child's teachers to let us know how we can help you and your child.

Confidentiality

All information, records and conversations are handled with confidentiality. Your privacy and your family's needs are protected at our school. We will only share information that you allow us to share if you sign a release of confidential information form.

Communication

Teachers will have regular communication with families through weekly newsletters, notes, folders emails, and/or phone calls. Teachers will also communicate in depth at home visits and parent/teacher conferences. The home visits are mandated as part of the grant from the State of Michigan.

If you are in a situation that requires translation/interpretation of school materials or materials for multiple households, please inform your child's teacher of your specific needs so that a plan can be put in place to accommodate your family. All communication between staff and families will be held in the strictest confidence. If you have any questions or concerns, at any time, regarding our program, please address them with your child's teacher.

Health & Safety

- Keep us informed if your child has any communicable diseases.
- We will notify you if any child in the class has a contagious condition.
- Keep your child home if any signs of illness are present (fever, severe cough). Refer to our "Should I Keep My Child at Home?" form.
- Children should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Garden City Schools has a nit-free policy regarding head lice.

- Teach your child good hygiene habits, such as washing after using the bathroom, covering a cough, etc. These will be reinforced at school.
- In the event of any medical emergency at school, parents will be notified immediately, along with EMS.
- In any serious situation, EMS will transport to Garden City Hospital.

Medication Policy

Medication will be administered to children only when parents have completed a Medication Permission and Instructions form. Medication must be in the original container and clearly labeled with the child's name. We can only give the recommended dose signed by a physician.

Child Abuse/Neglect

Public school employees are considered to be mandated reporters, this means if we suspect child abuse or neglect a report must be made to Child Protective Services.

Parent Volunteers

Join us for special activities and events in the classroom, such as parties or special projects. We also welcome you as a volunteer during a “regular” school day. Parents may enjoy reading to students, helping with art projects or working in one of our many learning centers with the students. Contact the teacher if you would like to be a class volunteer. You can choose to be a regular volunteer or a one-time volunteer.

Special Events and Parties

Our GSRP classes will enjoy a nice variety of special themes, topics and units of study during the school year. We will participate in many activities as we explore these different topics. While we have many special events, themes and celebrations, we will not be hosting the traditional holiday parties in the program. Your child will still have a wonderful year in preschool and will enjoy these types of party celebrations in elementary school. We ask for your support and cooperation with these guidelines.



Lathers G.S.R.P. Nutrition Plan

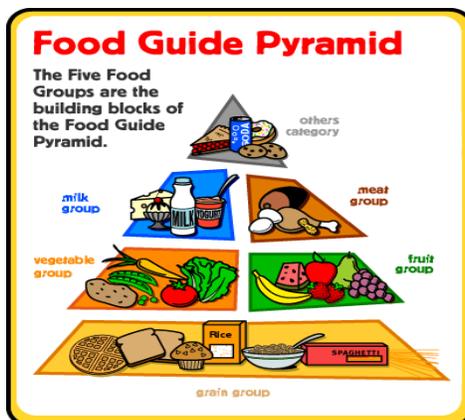
The Lathers GSRP offers a very solid nutritional plan as part of the program for our four year-olds. Our nutrition plan is based and structured around the recommendations from the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service for preschool children. All full day students have breakfast, lunch and snack at school. Half day students receive only a healthy snack, not a full meal. Our meal program is CACFP, which outlines our nutritional standards and meal plan.

We follow the guidelines from the CACFP to plan and balance our daily snacks. We use the child care meal pattern as our example. We offer 2 of the 4 components that are recommended, which is what is required for this age group. The four components include:

- Milk
- Fruit/vegetable
- Grains/bread
- Protein/protein alternate

Teachers will send home a menu that includes all meals and snacks for the whole month. This way parents will always be informed about the food that is offered, in case of allergies or other concerns. All other snacks are provided. Our meals are served “family style” with the teachers eating with the children daily.

Lathers GSRP also uses resources in the program to support healthy eating choices for children. These resources are offered through Healthy Eating for Preschoolers and choosemyplate.gov. The goal is to help children and their families begin the pathway to lifelong healthy eating choices.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

Cultural Competence Plan

Our goal at Lathers is to develop cultural competency among all of our teachers, to work more effectively in cross-cultural situations within all of our early childhood programs.

Understanding the cultural perspectives of the families and children we serve will help us to meet the needs of the whole child. We believe that becoming culturally competent is both ongoing and developmental.

We have chosen to align ourselves with the NAEYC statement: “For optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children’s home language, respect the home culture and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families including extended and nontraditional family units. Since children are rooted in their families, we see a child’s family structure and all that it entails as the CORE of their family’s culture.”

To this effort we will:

- Identify the various subgroups that we serve in Garden City
- Implement strategies that will increase educational opportunities for each group
- Create a culture of increasing our program’s level of cultural competence so that it is understood that cultural competence is an integral part of providing a high-quality program.
- Offer professional development to increase cultural awareness and competency for staff members.
- Offer opportunities for staff to engage in dialogue and reflection about cultural competency.
- Make sure all staff is aware of interpreters provided by RESA and also use TransAct for notifications when needed.

Parent Advisory Committee Information

Each year we ask for several parents to serve on our parent advisory committee. The purpose of this committee is to involve parents in decision making about their child's educational program. Please contact your child's teacher if this opportunity is of interest to you. Parent advisory meetings will be held once a quarter. We value the input of our parents and know that your contributions to our program strengthen what we do here at Lathers.

Parent Involvement

We believe in a strong partnership between school and home. With this in mind, we will have excellent communication with all GSRP families. We welcome parents into our classrooms for daily activities, special events, programs, as mystery readers, volunteers and of course, on our field trips. We value your input and are looking forward to you partnering with us for a great year with your child.-

Family Night Activities

Each year at Lathers, we conduct a number of parenting events/activities for our families. Childcare is provided so that families are better able to attend these sessions. We also host many Family Night events to participate with your child. All Lathers families are encouraged to attend.

Field Trips

Our classes will incorporate some field trips during the school year. These trips will connect to the learning in the classroom. We welcome parents to join us on these trips. Parents are welcome to ride the school bus with their child or can also choose to meet the class at the field trip location. (Siblings can not ride the bus.) These field trips are offered at no cost to our students.

EL (English Learner), Special Services & HELP Team Process

Garden City Schools uses a HELP Team approach to discuss concerns or special needs that a child may have. The HELP team referral process includes gathering information about the child, the concern that is identified and then setting up a meeting to discuss the concerns. The team consists of teachers, parents, the principal, the speech therapist and possibly a social worker. The process includes these steps: referral, meeting with team, implementation of supports/structures to help the child, and then a follow-up meeting. Children who may need special services (speech therapy, English language learners, etc.) will be screened to

determine if they are eligible for services and will receive those services here at Lathers as a student in our program.

School Clothing & Extra clothes

Students should wear clothing that is suitable for play, including using paints, art supplies and playing outside. Dress for the weather. As the weather gets colder, send mittens, hats and boots (labeled). We recommend play shoes that are suitable for running in the gym and climbing outside, open-toed shoes are prohibited.

Please bring an extra set of clothes to keep at school, labeled with your child's name. (Underwear, socks, t-shirt and pants).

Outdoor Play is Required

Our GSRP program follows many guidelines from the state. Outdoor play is required twice a day for full day students and once a day for half day students. The playtime outside is normally 20-30 minutes. Please dress your child for outdoor play on a daily basis. If the weather and wind chill is 25 degrees or above, we WILL be going outside.

School Closing/Severe Weather/Emergency Dismissals

Follow your local weather reports on radio and television channels to find out if severe weather conditions will cause schools to be closed.

Positive Behavior Support & Expectations

We believe which includes emphasizing good behavior and helping children to make appropriate choices during the school day. We focus on safety, respect and responsibility. We teach the expectations, rehearse with the students what we want them to do reinforce with positives when they comply. We redirect, re-teach and rehearse again when those behaviors are not being displayed. You will find this in each of our classrooms:

- *Children being encouraged to do things for themselves.*
- *Help them to problem solve and resolve conflicts.*
- *Help students to understand and recognize their own feelings.*
- *Help children navigate situations by helping them come up with a solution.*
- *Providing follow-up support when children make choices about conflict.*

At this age we focus on encouraging self-control, self-direction, kindness and cooperation with others. Our school social worker is available to consult with families who have concerns about their child's behavior.

Adults will never discipline a child by using any of the following methods:

- Corporal punishment: hitting, spanking, shaking or biting
- Restricting movement or confining a child in an enclosed area
- Verbal threats or emotional cruelty
- Depriving child of toilet use
- Withholding food or special activities

Disciplinary methods of restraint may only be used to prevent a child from causing harm to self or others. Parents will be notified immediately when a severe disciplinary problem occurs.

Garden City Information: Important Phone Numbers

Garden City Public Schools.....	762-8300
Lathers School.....	762-8490
Police and Fire Emergencies.....	911
Police Department (non-emergency).....	793-1700
Fire Department (non-emergency).....	793-1780
Poison Control Center.....	800-222-1222
Children’s Protective Services.....	888-712-2234
Garden City Library.....	793-1850
Maplewood Community Center.....	793-1850
Parks & Recreation.....	793-1880

Recruiting for GSRP

Each year in February, we begin taking applications for the upcoming school year in GSRP. If you have friends or neighbors in Wayne County with a child turning 4 by December 1, let them know about our GSRP program and have them call us or pick up a packet for their child. Our goal is to reach as many families as possible to provide their child with an excellent program prior to entering kindergarten.

Parent Notice of Program Measurement

Lathers Great Start Readiness Program is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM (G.S.R.P.) Information is sometimes collected about G.S.R.P. staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law. Questions? Contact: mde-gsrp@michiga.gov or 517-373-8483 or MDE. Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services

608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing MI 48909

Lathers G.R.S.P.

