



EARLY CHILDHOOD
FAMILY EDUCATION

Crookston Community Education



EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION



Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is a program of Crookston Community Education offering classes and activities for parents and their children birth through five at Washington School. All of society benefits from STRONG FAMILIES and HEALTHY, CAPABLE, CHILDREN. Strong families are the foundation of a strong society NOW and far into the FUTURE. Parents have a great influence on their children as the first and most significant teachers in their lives. Because the role of parenting is so important, ECFE is designed to include children and their parents in activities that strengthen parenting skills, encourage children in caring ways, and will bring parents and children together for a variety of shared experiences.

September—May, 2025-2026

WELCOME TO ECFE!



Parents are the first and most important influence on a child's physical health, mental health, moral values, and learning. Early parental influences form the foundation for school success and a meaningful and productive adult life. Research shows that early childhood programs that include parents build protective factors through child development and guidance, social networks that provide reassurance and support, and connections to community resources. All parents benefit from information and support during the early years.

CONTACT US

ECFE Main Office 218-281-2762 Washington School 724 University Avenue Crookston, MN, 56716	Gina Gunderson Early Childhood Coordinator Licensed Parent Educator ginagunderson@isd593.org	Brenda Crane Early Childhood Administrative Assistant brendacrane@isd593.org	Brandon Neibauer-Adams Community Education Director brandonadams@isd593.org
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Crookston Public Schools has received a top rating for high quality Early Childhood Programs. For more information about Parent Aware, go to: parentawareratings.org

ARE YOU ON THE CENSUS?

Preschool parents, your child is never too young or too old to be on our census. If your family has a new addition through birth or adoption, or you are new to the Crookston community, contact the Washington School Office at 281-2762 with your child's information. By doing so, your family will receive information on community collaboration, upcoming early childhood events, early childhood screening, School Readiness, Kindergarten Roundup and other important information. Please notify our office of changes in address and telephone numbers. Providing updated information will help keep you informed of the Early Childhood opportunities that you don't want your child to miss.



WHAT IS ECFE?

ECFE Mission

The mission of ECFE is to strengthen families through the education and support of all parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children.

WHAT YOU AND YOUR CHILD WILL GAIN FROM ECFE

- Information, new tools, and new strategies to support healthy growth and development for parents and children
 - Enhanced family communication skills and co-parenting skills
 - Strategies for balancing family life
- Opportunities to connect with other families and build relationships

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

In Person Classes

Separating Classes

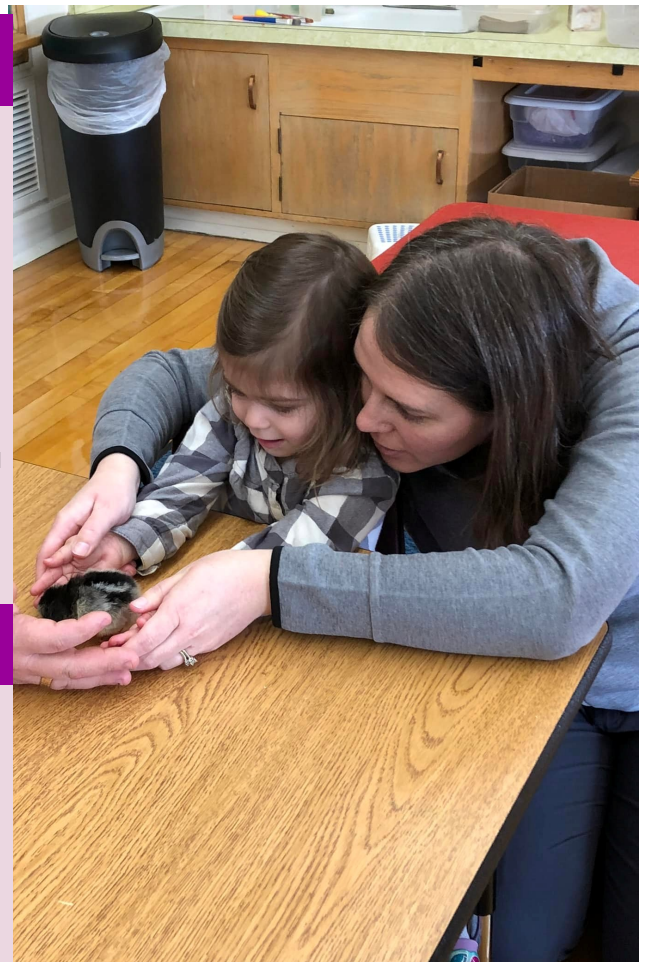
Classes include time with children and their caregivers interacting in early childhood spaces. Caregivers leave the children's space for parent education while children stay and learn from other children and professional staff.

Non-Separating Classes

Play, learn, and sing with your child and other families. Parent education and children's activities happen in one space. If you or your child are not ready to separate or to prefer to use ECFE as a time to play and learn together, look for this type of class.

Home Visits

Make a free appointment with a licensed parent educator to discuss your parenting challenges, receive resources and/or develop a plan that will fit you and your family. A follow-up consultation will be offered if necessary and can be scheduled after your first visit. Call Gina Gunderson at 281-2762.



BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE CLASSES



In Birth to Kindergarten Entrance classes, families and their young children come together to explore, play, and learn. The parent educator facilitates conversations on child development and ways to support children's growth and learning while building the parent/child relationship. Early childhood educators engage children in developmentally appropriate activities to support specific needs and growth of all children.

All families with children ages Birth to Kindergarten Entrance are welcome to attend our classes.

Books Alive

Mondays, 10—11 a.m.

ECFE with a twist! During this class you and your child will participate in activities that emphasize STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) in the early childhood classroom. Each week we will focus on one or more of these areas with developmentally appropriate activities.

Instructor: Gina Gunderson

Registration Is Required

Cost: \$30.00



Mixed Age Magic

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.—12:15 p.m.

Families meet in the classroom/gym for circle time with stories and songs. Parents will meet informally to share ideas and discuss topics such as positive discipline strategies, challenging behaviors, food, health and safety tips, and more. Parents learn from each other as they discuss topics that most interest them. During parent education time, the children remain in the classroom/gym to play and explore with each other and the early childhood teacher and classroom aide.

Instructors: Gina Gunderson, Kiely Tate

Registration Is Required

Cost: \$30.00

Oh the Places We'll Go

Fridays, 9:30—11:00 a.m.

Mix it up on Fridays and enroll in the ECFE class that is going places. During this class, we will explore our community, whether it's at a local business or outside at one of the many fabulous parks! Both parent's and child's needs are met with creative activities and personal growth opportunities. Research reveals the necessity of contact with nature for healthy child and adult development. A growing body of research links our mental, physical and spiritual health directly to our association with nature.

Instructor: Gina Gunderson

Registration is Required

Cost: \$30.00

FREE ECFE OPTIONS

Pop in and Play

10:30—11:30 AM

Second Saturday

October—April

Ages birth to Kindergarten
Entrance

Registration not required

Pop in and play in the gym on a Saturday morning! You and your child can come and play in the gym using equipment designed for young children. Come expecting to have lots of fun making wonderful memories with your child.

Instructors: Gina Gunderson and Kiely Tate

Cost: Free



Unplug and Play

5:00—6:00 PM

First Tuesday

Oct. 7,

Dec. 2, Jan. 6,

Feb. 3, Feb. 17, Mar. 3,

April 7, May 5

Ages birth to Kindergarten
entrance

Registration not required.
Come as you are able.

It's time to "Unplug and Play"! Get out of the house and have some family fun in the gym at Washington School when it is dark outside. Get up and get going to this fun and exciting FREE ECFE class.

Instructor: Gina Gunderson

Mixed Age Magic PM

4:30—6 p.m.


First Thursday

October—May

Registration Required


Ages birth to Kindergarten entrance
Families meet in the classroom/gym for circle time with stories and songs. Parents will meet informally to share ideas and discuss topics such as positive discipline strategies, challenging behaviors, food, health and safety tips, and more. Parents learn from each other as they discuss topics that most interest them. During parent education time, the children remain in the classroom/gym to play and explore with each other and the early childhood teacher.

Instructors: Gina Gunderson and Kiely Tate



Baby Bounce

First and Third Tuesday of the Month
from 10:30-11:00 AM
📍 Crookston Public Library



ECFE, in collaboration with the Lake Agassiz Regional Library, invites infants and caregivers to the Crookston Public Library to sing, clap, bounce, and listen to rhymes and stories. Stay to chat and play after!

Instructor: Gina Gunderson

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EVENTS

Celebrate the Young Child at Wildwood Park

Tuesday, September 16
5—6:30 PM

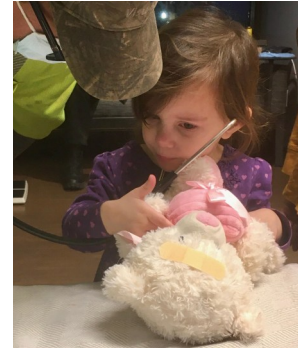
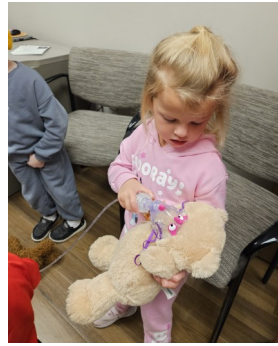
The Celebrate the Young Child Collaborative invites you to come and PLAY outside with your children and enjoy the beautiful Castle Park. There will be activities, a light supper, and much more!



Teddy Bear Clinic RiverView Health

Monday, October 20
6:00—7:00 PM

Bring your teddy bear along and meet us at the main entrance of Riverview Health for a tour of the hospital! The Riverview staff will show you the nursery where they care for newborns. They will give your teddy bear an identification bracelet, check teddy's ears, and take an x-ray. This special event is a learning experience for children and teddy bears, alike.



Grandparents Night

Washington School

Monday, November 17
6:00—7:00 PM

Grandparents or special adult friends are invited to join children ages birth to kindergarten entrance for an evening of special time together.



Daddy & Me Class

Washington School

Monday, December 15
5—6 p.m.

Ages birth to Kindergarten entrance

A night for dads and their little buddies filled with activities, games and fun filled gym time.

Instructor: Gina Gunderson

Registration Is Required



EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EVENTS

Build a Wood Project

Monday, January 12

6:00—7:00 PM

Washington School

Wanted, young carpenters! You will need to bring a parent or special friend, a Phillips screwdriver, and a hammer to build a project that will be useful for years to come. Supplies are limited so please register and pay for your project by January 8th. The cost is \$8.00 per project for materials. No one will be turned away due to inability to pay.

March Musical Madness

Monday, March 30

6:00—7:00 PM

Highland School

Come and enjoy music! Musicians will entertain you and your children. Your child will have the opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of many musical instruments. Children can join in a sing-a-long or move to the music. Enjoy the wonderful sound of live music!

ECFE is Going to the Pool

Monday, February 9

6:00—7:00 PM

Crookston Pool

Bring your child and explore to the water with them. Exposing children to water at a young age is beneficial to them and builds confidence to be comfortable around it.

Celebrate the Young Child Family Festival

Tuesday, April 21

5:30—7:00 PM

The Celebrate the Young Child Collaborative invites you to come PLAY together at our CYC Family Festival at Washington School. Many hands-on stations will be available, along with informational booths and a light meal.

Celebrate the Young Child at the Crookston Public Library

TBD

The Celebrate the Young Child Collaborative, and the CALL Committee, invite you to come for an adventure at the Crookston Public Library.

End of the Year Picnic

Monday, May 11

5:00—6:30 PM

Washington School

School Readiness and ECCE families along with Washington staff and families will celebrate together at a fun End of the Year Picnic. This event offers great food and family fun. In the event of rain, activities will be held inside.



OTHER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Crookston Public School Early Childhood Parent Advisory Council (PAC) provides input and support to the ECFE and the School Readiness programs.

Our stated purpose is to assist the Early Childhood Coordinator in planning, implementing, and evaluating the ECFE and School Readiness programs. We strive to represent the concerns of participants, raise money, organize and publicize our programs and events, review center policies and programming, and interface with staff.

PAC meetings are held quarterly to review committee work and participant feedback, hear reports from our various liaisons and event coordinators, and discuss larger issues such as legislation, registration, and program goals. Additional meetings are held as needed for fundraising events.

Attending PAC meetings is a great way to learn more about school district programs and make personal connections with other families. Meetings will be held four times during the school year. Child care will be provided with advance notice. Parents of children in ECFE and School Readiness are invited to attend a meeting, as it fits their schedule. All input is welcome!

If you have questions about the Early Childhood Parent Advisory Council, contact Gina Gunderson, Early Childhood Coordinator, at 218-281-2762.

Future meetings will be from 5—6 p.m. at Washington School on the following dates:

Tuesday, November 11th

Tuesday, January 10th

Tuesday, March 10th

Tuesday, May 12th



Early Childhood Screening

The early childhood years from birth to the start of kindergarten are an important time of rapid learning and growth. The State of Minnesota requires that all children are screened prior to entering preschool and kindergarten. Early Childhood Screening is a quick and simple check of how children are doing between the ages of three and four years. It identifies, at an early stage, possible learning or health concerns so that children can get the help they need before starting school. Early Childhood Screening is *not* a kindergarten entrance test. Crookston Public School's Early Childhood Screening will be held March 17 & 18 and in August 2026. **Children born by March 15th, 2023, who have not yet been screened, will be eligible.** In February, parents of eligible screening age children will receive information about setting up an appointment for screening. If your child will be eligible and you do not receive a letter in February, please contact us at 281-2762.

School Readiness Programming

The registration process for preschool begins in May when information for the upcoming school year is mailed to families with children who will be three or four years old by September 1. Children who are 5 years old on or before September 1 are eligible for Kindergarten. Classes for the 2025-2026 school year have already been filled. Please inquire if you wish to be placed on a waiting list.

School Readiness offers children five preschool sessions a week, guided by a professional early childhood educator. Children have the opportunity to become comfortable with going to school, making the transition to kindergarten easier! The goals of the School Readiness Program are to encourage children's physical, social, cognitive, and language development based on Minnesota's early Childhood Indicators of Progress. These standards lay the foundation for later academic success.

Stay informed of opportunities for your child by providing our office with any changes to your address or telephone number. Contact us with updates at 281-2762.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Crookston Early Childhood Initiative (ECI)

The Crookston Early Childhood Initiative supports parents of children age birth to 5 in the crucial role they have in preparing children for success in school, the workplace, and life. A Directory of Crookston Early Childhood Opportunities has been designed to help parents and can be obtained at any of the Crookston Public Schools, City Hall, and the Crookston Library. It is a listing of available resources including home-based childcare, pre-school education, parenting education, and community services throughout Crookston. For more information, like us on the Crookston Early Child Initiative Facebook page. The Crookston ECI is here to help children and all those who parent, care for, and educate young children. If you see a need in our community, or would like to support the work of the ECI, please contact Gina Gunderson, Local Coordinator, at 281-2762.

Check out our Little House of Books around the community: Evergreen Park, Castle Park, Landslide Park, Crookston Sports Center, and the Ray Ecklund Complex! The ECI is hopeful this initiative will result in more books to enter more homes in our community, resulting in MORE children reaping the benefits of reading or being read to! Happy Reading Everyone!

CROOKSTON EARLY CHILDHOOD



The Crookston Early Childhood Initiative is sponsored by the Northwest Minnesota Foundation and is part of the statewide Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative.

INITIATIVE

Love ♥ Learn ♥ Thrive

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Parents of children are invited to register their child for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The program provides one book every month to your child from the time you enroll until they turn five for FREE. The program is managed by Crookston Public School and funded by the United Way of Crookston. You can register at:
www.ImaginationLibrary.com.



Help Me Grow provides resources for families to understand developmental milestones and learn if there are concerns. This helps families take the lead in seeking additional support or referring their child for a comprehensive, confidential screening or evaluation at no cost. If you have concerns about a child's development and think a child might need extra help to learn and grow, don't hesitate to refer a child. The family will be contacted by the local school district to arrange for a screening or evaluation to determine if their child is eligible for Infant and Toddler Intervention or Preschool Special Education services. Check online at www.helpmegrowmn.org for more information or to refer a child 0-5 years old.

help me



HOW TO REGISTER

ONLINE	OR	BY MAIL	OR	IN-PERSON	OR	BY PHONE
Click the link below: <u>Early Childhood Family Education Class Registration, 2025-2026</u>		Complete and mail your registration form to: ECFE 724 University Avenue Crookston, MN 56716		Bring your registration form to: Washington School 724 University Avenue Crookston, MN 56716		Call the Washington School office at: 218-281-2762

Program Details and Policies

- Registration is ongoing. Classes are filled on a first come first serve basis.
- There is a fee for each weekly class. A supply fee may apply.
- Events are free. A supply fee may apply.
- The maximum enrollment may vary with each class.
- Contact the Washington School office for reduced fee information or payment forms.
- No family will be turned away due to inability to pay.
- Refunds are not available.

What are the goals for ECFE participants

1. Parent-child relationships support the child's development in physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, communication skills, cognition, and general knowledge.
2. Parents understand the importance of their role and how it changes over time.
3. Parents have the knowledge and realistic expectations to anticipate and meet the developmental needs of their children.
4. Parents demonstrate sensitive and responsive care and interactions with their children.
5. Parents and children experience a smooth transition from early childhood programs and services into kindergarten and the K-12 system.
6. Parents are engaged in their children's learning and education in the school age years.
7. Families participate in formal and informal social networks in their communities that support effective parenting.
8. Families are knowledgeable about and use community resources.

REGISTRATION FORM



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STUDENT INFORMATION

Complete one form for each child.

Child's Name: _____

State Student ID (School use only): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Gender: _____ Immunizations Up to Date: _____ YES _____ NO

Documentation of your child's full legal name and birth date is needed to correctly establish your child's record in our data base. Please provide a copy of the state-issued birth certificate.

_____ A copy the birth certificate is attached. _____ Previously submitted a copy of the birth certificate.

Classes are filled on a first come, first serve basis. There is a fee for weekly classes. No one will be turned away for inability to pay. Refunds are not available.

Family Class Fee: \$30

Make checks payable to: Community Education

Payment plans are available. Call 281-2762 for more information.

Class Title: _____ Class Fee: _____

Class Title: _____ Class Fee: _____

Class Title: _____ Class Fee: _____

TOTAL FEE: _____

Name of Parents Attending: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____