



Fisher Hill Integrated Preschool

Fisher Hill School offers a *free* high quality preschool inclusion program for children with and without disabilities aged 3-5. We developed our program to provide young children with disabilities with special education programming to make progress toward their goals. Typically developing children who are age 3 or 4 by September 1st are also enrolled in the preschool program as "**peer partners**" via the lottery process to ensure strong and appropriate peer modeling. Fisher Hill School values inclusion as the best way of instructing most children. Students with and without disabilities benefit from this philosophy, as the integrated classes provide a rich, language-based curriculum with a multi-sensory, developmental approach to teaching. We have a strong commitment to helping all children develop positive peer relationships, increased independence, self awareness and resilience.

Our free preschool program serves students with or without disabilities residing in the Town of Orange who will turn **3 or 4 on or by September 1 2025**. (If your child turns 5 by 9/1/2025 please contact the school for information about kindergarten registration.(978) 544-0018)

Peer Partner Program

Our free Peer Partner preschool spots are chosen for the integrated preschool program through a lottery process that occurs in April of each year. Children selected through the lottery must come in for an early childhood developmental screening, and provide appropriate enrollment documents to enter the program as a peer partner in September.

Entrance Requirements

1. Child must be an Orange resident and be able to prove residency (usually a copy of a lease or mortgage statement)
2. Child must be 3-4 years old on or before September 1st of the enrolling school year.
3. Child must not be age-eligible for Kindergarten (e.g., child cannot have turned 5 before September 1st of the enrolling year).
4. Child must be on the path to being toilet trained. (understanding that young children will still occasionally have accidents or need assistance.)
5. Transportation must be arranged by the family as it is not provided by the district.
6. Registration must be completed in a timely fashion once your child has been approved for a free peer partner spot. Failure to complete the registration and upload supporting documents can lead to forfeiture of your child's spot. Our staff are available to answer questions and support you with the registration process.
7. If your child has not had their annual physical by the time of the screening appointment, you may drop off the physical prior to the first day of school in September. If the physical is not received by the first day of school, your child will not be able to start school.

What is Early Childhood Screening?

Early Childhood screening is an essential step in becoming a peer partner. It allows the teacher to gather information about your child before enrollment. Our early childhood staff utilize a variety of age-appropriate tools to conduct the screenings. These tools consist of games and questions about basic concepts that your child is asked. Children are not expected to prepare for the screening; rather, we are hoping to get a true snapshot of their skills across domains including, speech and language, motor skills, cognitive skills, and social emotional development.

While temperaments and personalities vary, most of our peer partners are demonstrating the following skills most days:

- Age appropriate cognitive, motor, social, and speech/language skills;
- The ability to initiate and maintain positive interactions with other children (ex. Willingness and ability to play alongside or with other children)
- Participate and sustain attention in age and developmentally appropriate group activities (ex. participate in a circle or read aloud for 5-10 minutes)
- Follow adult directions (ex. responding to clean up cues and cues to transition between activities with adult modelling and encouragement)

- Toilet trained or in the process of being toilet trained.

There are times when our early childhood screening reveals some developmental questions or delays that may suggest a need for additional assessment or evaluation. This is a great time for you to discuss any concerns and ask questions of our early childhood team. If an area of delay is indicated, we will speak to you about the next steps in making a referral for a special education evaluation.

Lottery Process

Peer Partner Lottery forms are now available for the **2025/26** school year. There are limited openings in both the full day and half day preschool programs. Priority enrollment for **full day** spaces is as follows:

- Students on IEPS requiring full day programming
- Existing 4 year old Fisher Hill Peer Partners
- New 4 year old Peer Partners
- 3 year old peer partners who require full day program due to family work schedules and who meet program requirements (potty training, screened, registration completed, documents provided)

Peer Partner lottery forms will be collected from **March 17** through **April 28th**. We will hold a lottery on **April 29th** and our early childhood team will reach out to inform families that week about placement decisions and about scheduling a preschool screening appointment.

Preschool Peer Partner Lottery Link

Please click on the link below or scan the QR Code to submit a lottery form for your child

<https://forms.gle/zUmzrHtXaqZu7RDAA>



Please reach out to our early childhood coordinator, Ainsley Jackson with questions about our preschool program. ainsleyjackson@orange-elem.org or (978) 544-0018.