

PEI Parent Handbook 2023-2024

(updated – April 20, 2023)

WELCOME! We are pleased you have chosen our school and look forward to working with you in providing a nurturing, stimulating environment for your child to grow and learn. Every child has unique gifts and abilities that are to be celebrated and nurtured. They learn best within the context of relationships and through playful interactions within their environment. You and your child deserve equitable access to appropriate services and supports that acknowledge their uniqueness and enable them to reach their full potential. This handbook is designed to provide information regarding the operation of Presbyterian Ear Institute School for Oral Deaf Education.

Our Mission at PEI

It is the mission of Presbyterian Ear Institute (PEI) School for Oral Deaf Education to provide an educational program for children who are deaf/hard-of-hearing in which they listen, learn, and speak. PEI recently started accepting children who have typical hearing but have speech and language delays. We strive to provide a stimulating learning environment in which the children can grow socially, emotionally, linguistically, and academically.

Goals of Our Program

- To teach children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing or who have typical hearing with speech and language delays to talk, understand and respond when others talk to them
- To individualize instruction in speech, language, auditory skills and academics so that each child can reach his/her maximum potential
- To help each student reach his/her potential in the entire basic academic subject areas as required by the *New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines and the Essential Indicators and Program Standards as specified by the New Mexico PreK and the New Mexico FOCUS programs.*
- To help each child develop a positive self-image, gain self-confidence and achieve success in a carefully structured, nurturing environment
- To provide support and ongoing educational training to the families
- To advance advocacy efforts for inclusive practices that build upon unique child, family and community strengths and are accountable to all children and their families.

Philosophy

We at PEI are committed to valuing and embracing all children and their families, and will involve families and communities as partners and decision-makers. We commit to building trust and establishing collaborative partnerships that benefit children, their families, and the professionals who work with them. We strongly believe in providing choice, flexibility and continuity of services and supports for families within communities. Our philosophy at PEI is that with skilled instruction in listening, language and speech, children will be able to successfully integrate into a mainstream environment in their neighborhood school with language and academics levels at or above their hearing peers. Children must develop skills to communicate effectively in order to keep up academically, be accepted socially, and to cope with the mainstream emotionally.

The factors most critical to successful mainstreaming are receptive and expressive spoken language that support developing good reading skills. Having the ability to understand and to express themselves using mature, complex language (that is at or above his/her appropriate age level) is important not only for communicating but also to be successful academically.

PEI will promote every New Mexico citizen understands of the importance of high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs and practices. We support interactions and relationships that foster self-reflection. We will utilize information about growth, development and experiences of individual children and families for program and curriculum development and improvement. PEI will strive to continuously improve services and supports by evaluating current practices and incorporating effective methods, models and research in our work. We will promote the alignment of services and supports that build on both the unique assets of each child and acknowledge the strengths of children's and families' heritage, language and culture. PEI will strive to ensure that services are provided by people who reflect the diversity of the community, are well educated and are well compensated. Lastly, PEI is an integrated, multidisciplinary system of professional development, training and technical assistance that supports the design, implementation and evaluation of practices that are respectful of and responsive to each child and family. Presbyterian Ear Institute School for Oral Deaf Education is a non-profit organization that operates as a licensed pre-school program through the state of New Mexico. PEI is currently licensed with the New Mexico Child Youth and Families Child Care Services Bureau with a Two+ Star License #4002257. The school is currently licensed to serve children 18 months to 5 years of age.

You can review the licensing regulations at www.CYFD.org or there is a copy posted at PEI. If you would like a copy, please ask the principal.

School Curriculum

Presbyterian Ear Institute is a program that utilizes protocols and methodology developed by Jean Sacher Moog, MSSH at The Moog Center in St. Louis, Missouri. In PEI's program, the goal is for children to become proficient enough in spoken language to use it as their primary means of communication and as their academic language. Children talk all day long in all activities and are stimulated and encouraged by their teachers to do so.

Some features of a program using Moog methodology:

- private, not-for-profit schools that are committed to implementing the Moog protocols for teaching deaf children to talk; all instruction is focused on improving the child's ability to talk
- a unique organizational schedule that promotes individualization designed for focus on spoken language (imitation, prompting, expansion, spontaneous) in groups of 2-3 students/1 teacher
- maximum access to sound through hearing aids and cochlear implants for deaf/hard-of-hearing children
- provide objective-driven instruction utilizing Moog protocols for vocabulary, speech, auditory training, and spoken language
- focus on reading, writing, phonemic awareness, and other academics

At PEI all of the staff and board members are committed to implementing Moog methods, evaluation and instruction to maximize student success.

Assessment Policy

Our policy is to evaluate our children with norm-referenced standardized tests every year. Norm-referenced tests are those which compare your child's skills to those of other children with normal hearing across the nation. Norm-referenced tests provide us with numerical scores that help us chart your child's overall progress in speech, listening, and language skills. Tests that compare children with a hearing loss to typically hearing children give us important information about readiness for the mainstream.

Once a year, graduates of PEI are re-evaluated to track progress.

We will continue to monitor your child's growth regularly with our language-driven Moog protocols and individualized planning process. We will also assess your child's progress every year on an on-going basis using criterion-referenced tests. These tests do not provide a numerical score. Instead, they provide checklists of speech, language, and listening skills that are appropriate for your child's age. These tests will provide a fine-tuned way for us to view your child's development and the skills they should be acquiring.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are developed from the criterion-referenced protocols to provide objectives to meet the specific needs of each child in language, listening and speech.

Pre-academic and academic goals are taken from the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines, the Essential Indicators and New Mexico Pre-k Program Standards, and from curriculum materials that relate to the standards.

If there are other areas of concern for a child (i.e. motor development, sensory interaction, cognitive development), appropriate referrals will be made for evaluation.

In addition, lessons are to incorporate the following six standards:

- develop effective personal and social skills
- participate as active and effective learners
- communicate optimally and effectively in a variety of settings
- use bodies to explore, negotiate, and manipulate the environment
- demonstrate independence in areas of daily life
- engage in meaningful literacy experiences

Schedule

Students attend on a staggered schedule.

- Breakfast – parents may bring their child to school to eat breakfast as early as 8:30 a.m. .
Monday – Friday. Parents provide breakfast food.
- Equipment check begins at 8:45 a.m. Monday - Friday
- Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. for both toddlers and preschoolers Monday – Friday
- Toddlers are dismissed at 3:00 p.m.
- Preschoolers are dismissed at 3:30 pm.
- Before Care and After Care programs are offered to families who would like to utilize this service. (see page 4 for details)

Our school year is an 11-month program, August through June.

The daily schedule is a signature element of Moog methodology. It is organized to provide individualization of instruction to the greatest degree possible without it being individual instruction. Children are organized in small groups for very focused spoken language instruction (listening, speech, syntax and vocabulary) and reading (story time for younger children). Children are grouped according to their ability in each of these subject areas.

The schedule provides a balance for children, moving from periods of intense instruction in small groups of two or three to larger group activities with opportunities to physically move around and participate in a variety of activities.

The small group, therapy-like, sessions provide frequent opportunities for talking. The small groups also ensure that the teacher can know precisely each child's skills and can gear the instruction to just the right level for maximum challenge and maximum success. This is individualization at it very best.

Due to this highly individualized programming, the staff at PEI is constantly evaluating to see how programming is working. Young children develop and learn at different rates, so it is important that we adjust the schedule and expectations to meet their needs. We will try to keep their day and their teachers as consistent as possible and we will let you know if there is going to be a change in your child's schedule.

Before school, our teachers are busy planning and preparing for the day. It will help us focus on getting ready for children if you bring your child on time. If you arrive early, we would appreciate it if you could wait in the lobby until 8:45 so that we can make sure we are all set up for a busy day. Arriving late disrupts classes that have already begun to work.

Extended Day Program – Before Care/ After Care

- **The cost for this service is \$5.00 per hour, pro-rated to the half-hour. (Ex: drop off at 7:30 A.M. would cost \$2:50 for a ½ hour of care or \$5.00 for 1 hour of care).**

If your family schedule requires care before and after school, we have an extended day program. Children may be dropped off and supervised as early as 7:30 and picked up by 5:00 M – Th. Aftercare goes only until 4:00 on Fridays. The charge for this program is \$5.00/hour. So that we can ensure that there is staff to supervise this program, please make prior arrangements with the principal if you are going to use our extended day program.

Admission Policy

PEI serves a targeted population of children, with special needs. Our students may have varied types and degrees of hearing loss and the associated delays in language and communication, speech and articulation, auditory skill development, cognition, pragmatic, adaptive, social-emotional, and play skills. Secondly, we serve a number of hearing children with speech and language delays that impact many of the same skill sets as our deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Thirdly, we also serve children

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who have hearing and have no other speech, language, or developmental delays. Our aim is to provide language-related lessons as well as typical preschool program lessons that address the skills and needs described above.

PEI serves children of various age groups in the following capacity:

- Toddler Program: Children served in our toddler program range in age from 18 months to 3 years old. These children are accepted through the New Mexico Family Infant-Toddler Program (F.I.T.) and must have a documented hearing loss to qualify.
- Mixed-age New Mexico Pre-K: All children served must have reached their third (3rd) birthday before September 1 of the current year and/or their fourth (4th) birthday before September 1 of the current year and are not age-eligible for kindergarten. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the children must live within the attendance zone of a Title 1 school. Children in the mixed age pre-k may have a documented hearing loss, or they may have typical hearing and may or may not have a speech and/or language delay.
- Pre-kindergarten: Children 5-6 years old may continue to attend PEI if they have either a documented hearing loss and/or having typical hearing but have a speech and/or language delay. This is contingent on whether we have a peer group for children staying an “extra” year, and whether PEI has enough teachers to staff a classroom.

The process for admission to PEI is a team approach based on evaluation and information provided by the team. A full evaluation may include speech perception testing, language testing, diagnostic evaluation, audiological evaluation, and parent interview. The child's age at onset of hearing loss, current age, and former educational placement is considered, as well as the child's present mode of communication such as oral language, sign language, or a combination of the two modes. Present level auditory capabilities as well as cognitive function are deciding factors in how the child will relate in the classroom environment. Family support is a major factor in the success of teaching deaf and hard-of-hearing and speech/language delayed children to talk and is therefore heavily considered as part of the selection process. Family support and commitment are observed through the initial parent interview and consequent trial period. No child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, or ethnic origin.

The following circumstances may be cause for concern:

- The child has had a cochlear implant for an extended length of time and does not discriminate words through listening alone.
- The child has been in a structured deaf education program or has received extensive speech-language therapy and has not made progress.
- The child is over age three and has no effective means of communication.
- The child exhibits poor attention in teaching/assessment tasks.
- The child exhibits oral-motor difficulties and/or the child has other conditions that interfere with learning to talk and may require additional expertise.
- The child exhibits processing problems, demonstrated by repeating or parroting without comprehension.

Children accepted on a diagnostic basis need to be carefully monitored. A child who has additional learning problems may continue in the program only if, in the opinion of the team, the child is continuing to benefit and learn. Diagnostic placement allows time for evaluation to determine whether

the child has met the established objectives. If the evaluation results indicate that PEI cannot appropriately meet the needs of your child, the principal explains why and works with parents to find alternative placement.

Well-child and Hearing/Vision/Dental Screening

Well-Child Visit: Within *two months* of enrollment, all enrolled students will be required to provide documentation of a well-child check with their pediatrician according to the American Academy of Pediatrics schedule.

Screenings: Within *six months* of enrollment and annually thereafter, all children will have a hearing, vision and dental screening as follows:

Hearing Screening: Children referred to our program for hearing-related issues will be fully assessed by a licensed audiologist. Children with typical hearing will be screened to see if they need further testing. Insurance will be billed for screening; no charge to families.

Vision Screening: PEI will request an annual vision screening through the Albuquerque Lions Club which they provide free of charge. Children who enroll mid-year may need to obtain a vision screening during their well-child visit or from another vision specialist.

Dental Screening: PEI will request an annual dental screening from the Department of Health or a local dental specialist. Children who enroll mid-year may need to obtain a dental screening during their well-child visit or from their family dentist.

Transition Plan and IEP Support

For parents interested in placing their child in PEI's Toddler and NM Pre-K program, the following process takes place:

- Parents meet with the principal to discuss the child's needs and the scope and expectation of our program.
- Parents are taken on a tour of the school.
- Since all our children have special needs, evaluation results from outside providers will be requested.
- If no evaluation results are available, children will be fully evaluated in the areas of speech, language and audition including some assessment in fine and gross motor skills, pragmatic skills, and cognitive function.
- If the child needs to be assessed, introductions are made to the lead SLP to initiate the assessment process. Insurance information is acquired from the family.
- If the child has documentation of a hearing loss or speech/language delay, such documentation is gathered or requested.
- A registration packet is given to the family to fill out.
- Appointments for a speech/language assessment or hearing evaluation are made and evaluations are conducted.

- The evaluation team makes a decision about the child's acceptance into the program and the family is contacted.
- The principal meets with the family again and reviews all paperwork. At that time the family meets with the child's teachers/providers.
- If it is before the beginning of the school year, parents are informed about the start of school functions including home visits, registration/meet-the-teacher night and the first day of school. If it is the middle of the year, this process is accomplished on an individual basis. Home visits are conducted within 2 weeks of enrollment for children in the New Mexico Pre-K program.
- Since each child's speech and language is assessed, children are placed in groups according to their age and their language needs. Children may be transitioned to a different group if it is found the child can progress more effectively with different peers and language models.
- For children transitioning to kindergarten or an outside public or private school, families will need to contact Child Find, their district's special education department, or the public mainstream school in which they wish to enroll their child. Families must make the first contact. PEI will assist families with this transition, collaborating with outside programs, providing evaluation and classroom data, conferring with receiving schools and educators, and will attend IEP meetings with families. PEI will provide families with contact information for these programs when transition is being considered.

For children attending PEI, teaching staff develops our own internal Individualized Education Plans that include goals and objectives for language and speech development and auditory training. For incoming children who have public school IEPs in place, goals and objectives will be honored and incorporated into lesson planning and a PEI IEP will be developed for the child. Children who are three years old or older will be directed to contact the local Child Find to connect with the public school system and develop a formal, public-school IEP. Children aging out of preschool and who will be transitioning out of PEI into a public or special education setting will be given contact information for their school district in order to initiate the transition process. Portfolios and identification numbers will be shared with the parent or passed on to the receiving kindergarten teacher.

Children with needs beyond the scope of our practice will be referred to providers who may be able to better meet their needs. PEI staff will assist the families with this IEP process by providing our assessment data for the school district and receiving school, parent education about the IEP process, and attending the IEP with the parents.

TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

For children who are ageing out of program and transitioning to a public school setting, parents may be interested in identifying what elementary schools in their area are Title 1 schools. Since our families come from a variety of cities, counties and school districts in New Mexico, contact the principal at PEI to obtain a list of applicable schools in your area.

Amplification

To develop good listening skills for spoken language development, a deaf/hard-of-hearing child must wear his/her amplification all waking hours. Please help us by making sure that your child's equipment is on and functioning properly when they come to school.

If there is a problem with the device, please let your child's teacher know so that we can troubleshoot the problem or provide a loaner.

If your family is struggling with keeping equipment on the child, please let your child's teacher know so we can help with options and create a plan to support consistent, daily wear of equipment. "EYES OPEN? EARS ON!"

Every family should maintain insurance coverage for their child's hearing aid and/or cochlear implant for loss and repair.

Children who come to school without functioning equipment and the problems cannot be addressed will be sent home.

Recruitment

PEI uses a variety of methods to recruit families for our programs:

- PEI collaborates with area physicians, ENTs, audiology clinics, speech pathology providers, early intervention programs affiliated with the Family Infant Toddler Program to seek out referrals of families who have children with hearing loss or speech and language delays.
- PEI sends out flyers through the New Mexico Childcare and Education Association and other local daycares such as UNM Children's Campus.
- PEI posts openings on our business website and our business related social media sources such as Facebook.
- Recruitment through these sources is ongoing as we have openings.
- Collaboration with these programs and parents is vital to deduce family needs and parent preferences in service providers so that duplication of services is avoided.

Tuition

Tuition:

- Funding received through the FIT programs for toddlers is accepted as payment-in-full for the child's tuition until they are three years old.
- Funding received through the New Mexico Mixed-age Pre-K program is accepted as payment-in-full for the child's tuition until they finish in the four-year-old program.
- A child must be 3 by September 1, or 4 by September 1st, in order to receive NM PreK funding. If the child turns 3 after September 1st, they are not eligible for NM PreK funding and will need to participate in a self-pay program.
- Families of deaf and hard-of-hearing children 5 years old and older will pay tuition on a monthly basis configured on a sliding fee scale based on income.
- Families of typically hearing children 5 years old and older will pay tuition on a monthly basis with a \$500.00 discount from regular tuition in the amount of \$1000.00 per month.

Tuition payments should be made to Presbyterian Ear Institute. Tuition for full-day students is configured starting at \$15,000 annually before discounts and sliding fee scales are applied. Fee credit is not applicable to days your child does not attend. Upon signing a contract at the enrollment meeting, the family is expected to follow through with monthly payments due on a mutually agreed upon date.

Tuition, FIT and New Mexico Pre-K funding does not cover audiological or speech therapy services. Payment for these services will be billed through your child's insurance. Any applicable copayments will be discussed with individual families. Please notify the front desk with any change to your child's insurance as soon as possible. These services are provided through Presbyterian Ear Institute's audiology and speech programs.

Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the principal. Applications and additional information for tuition support may be obtained from the principal. Parents of children with hearing loss are encouraged to seek tuition support from other grant opportunities, such as Alexander Graham Bell Association funding (www.AGBell.org - parent-infant/preschool services), Educate New Mexico (5 yrs and above) at www.educatenm.org and Childcare Assistance at www.newmexicokids.org. Please ask the principal for more information on these programs. If you plan to disenroll your child, please schedule a meeting with the principal so that we can address the transition process. PEI reserves the right to disenroll a child if a parent's needs or a child's needs cannot be met.

Selection/Prioritization

- PEI is pleased to collaborate with community programs such as FIT and New Mexico Pre-K to be able to provide high quality services delivered by trained and degreed experts in the fields of hearing loss, speech/language pathology, and early childhood education. PEI provides a full-day program using evidence-based practice in all domains of child development. Without the support of these community programs, such extensive programming and scope of practice might not be available within a family's community, in typical daycare centers, or might not be within the reach of families due to financial constraints.
- PEI provides continuity of care by having regular communication with families regarding progress, trans-disciplinary parent/teacher conferences three times a year or as needed (including the child's language teacher, SLP, preschool teacher, and audiologist.)
- PEI engages in bi-weekly meetings of all service providers to discuss ongoing concerns of children and to orchestrate any changes needed to support continued progress.
- Because PEI serves children with special needs, families will be supported in their child's transition to kindergarten programs. PEI will assist families in communicating with state and local special needs programs, public school Child Find programs; public and private mainstream programs to support any requisites for further evaluations and IEP development.

What to Bring

Please bring a labeled change of clothes including socks and underwear that will stay in your child's cubby in case of spills or accidents. Please remember that children and the weather change, so clothing may need to be exchanged throughout the year.

For diaper user, please bring wipes and diapers labeled with your child's name. Check regularly to make sure your child has enough diapers at school.

Please provide a backpack to carry important papers and incredible artwork to and from school.

Children who stay all day will need to bring a lunch and a snack. We do ask that lunches either have a cold pack in them or are able to stay all day without refrigeration. Please send nutritional food that does not need to be heated before eating. Our lunch time is limited and we want to ensure that all children have sufficient time to eat their lunch without being rushed or having to wait for their food to cool. If you would like your child to have a warm lunch, please send food pre-warmed and in a thermos that can keep it warm until lunchtime.

Attendance Policy

The success of your child in developing speech and language depends on your child's attendance at school. PEI's school calendar includes 178 instructional days. If your child will be absent, please let us know at 224-7020 before 9:00am. To maintain compliance with state guidelines, your child is required to attend 90% of the time. PEI currently uses Brightwheel as a method to monitor attendance. Absences are either marked as excused or unexcused as defined below.

Excused Absences include the following reasons with proper notification:

- illness (including documented chronic illness)
- limited family emergencies
- family deaths
- medical, health or legal appointments
- religious commitments
- deployment of a military parent/guardian
- limited extenuating circumstances as approved in advance by the school principal
- tribal obligations

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- non-school sponsored activities or trips
- family vacations outside of the normally scheduled school breaks

Children are allowed up to 5 unexcused absences. If your child will be absent 3 consecutive days without notification, then someone from PEI will follow-up with a phone call. After 10 consecutive unexcused absences, then a meeting with the family will be held to review options for continued enrollment and an action plan will be created.

General Information

Arrival and Departure

The Brightwheel app will be used to sign your child in and out. Please download the Brightwheel app for attendance and communication purposes. Inform the school when the app has been downloaded so we can update the database with your child's data and family contact information. Please make sure that your child is signed in for the day and that he/she is signed out at the end of the day. Only persons who have previous authorization may pick up a child at PEI.

Attendance

PEI keeps attendance for each classroom on a daily basis. The staff keeps the attendance throughout the day so that we can make sure each child is accounted for during fire drills, etc.

Babysitting Policy

PEI does not allow staff to provide services outside of PEI (e.g., babysitting or tutoring) to families seen at PEI for any reason (including speech-language therapy, audiology, or services through the School for Oral Deaf Education).

Birthday Parties and Holiday Celebrations

A birthday is an occasion of special importance to a child. A small celebration is held at school for each birthday, with songs and treats at lunch or snack time. If desired, parents may send cupcakes or cookies for all of the school children. Parents are cordially invited to join the celebration on that day. If they can't attend parents may request that the staff takes photos. Please let the teachers know in advance so that other refreshments will not be planned for that day. Students whose birthdays fall on a day when school is not in session often enjoy having a school celebration on a special day during the school year.

Special holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day and the Fourth of July are examples of holidays that children enjoy celebrating. If there is a holiday that is special to your family, please let us know so that we may share it at school.

Child Abuse Reporting

Teachers and other staff are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse, neglect or exploitation to the State of New Mexico. To report any suspected incidents of possible child abuse or neglect, please call 841-6100.

Clothing

Children's clothing for school should be practical and washable. Please be advised that clothing will get soiled from daily activities such as paint and outdoor play.

Please dress your child in clothes that can be managed easily, especially for toilet training. Children do go outside everyday unless the temperature is very hot or very cold. It is much easier to negotiate the playground in shoes with a closed toe, so please avoid use of sandals or flip-flops.

As the weather cools, parents are used to their child entering the building directly from their vehicle and frequently do not bring a jacket, at times forgetting that the children do have outside recess during the day. **Please be sure your child comes with an appropriately warm jacket during cooler/colder seasons.**

Confidentiality

All personal information pertaining to children and their families will be kept strictly confidential. Information will not be released to other agencies without written permission. PEI follows HIPAA guidelines for confidentiality.

Field Trip Guidelines

Permission for school field trips is given at the time of enrollment. Families will be notified when a field trip is scheduled and what the destination will be. Field trips are planned only for those children who attend the full day program. Health records/medicine will be present during field trips for children who require special procedures or precautions due to health conditions.

Each parent is responsible for providing the appropriate child safety seat meeting federal standards for the student. Presbyterian Ear Institute School for Oral Deaf Education will not transport children on field trips without a car seat as required by New Mexico State Law. If an appropriate car seat is not sent with children who require them on announced field trip days, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. Parents are asked to be available to chaperone and/or to help with transportation for these outings. Parents volunteering to drive on field trips must have a valid driver's license and must have vehicle registration and insurance. Verification of these documents will be required for each field trip.

Fire Drills Fire drills are held on a monthly basis for the safety of the children.

First Aid/CPR

Staff members are trained in First Aid/CPR according to licensing guidelines.

Food Exclusions

Due to allergies, we ask that NO peanuts or peanut butter be brought to school when there is a child with a known allergy. The staff will inform parents if we have any children with a peanut allergy.

If your child has any food allergies, please inform PEI staff as soon as possible so that we can ensure proper snack guidelines and food handling.

Grievance/Conflict Resolutions/Complaints

Input from our families is held in the highest regard by PEI. If at any time a parent experiences dissatisfaction with any aspect of our program, the parent may speak with the teacher. If the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent or teacher, then further consultation with the principal should be pursued in an effort to resolve the issue. Should the problem persist, the parent may contact the director who will work with the principal to resolve the issue.

Lunch and Snacks

All students must bring their own lunch and drinks. Parents are also responsible for providing snacks. We ask parents to send simple, healthy foods that your child can eat independently. Please let us know if your child is allergic to any foods, or cannot have them for other reasons. Please refer to the flyer on snack requirements included in your enrollment packet. We may have students who have peanut allergies, in which case snacks may not contain peanuts or peanut butter or be processed in factories that process peanuts.

Napping

Children five years of age and younger who stay at school longer than six hours will be provided with a rest period after lunch according to state law. The length of time will vary according to the age of the child. These children are asked to bring a small blanket with their name on it to keep at school. The family may send a crib sheet as a mat cover, and a small pillow. These items are taken home every Friday to be laundered and returned on Monday. Children who do not nap can do quiet activities at this time.

Non-Discrimination

PEI treats all children and parents equally and fairly and does not discriminate based on ethnic background, gender, age, income level or ability.

Non-Smoking

PEI is a non-smoking facility.

Parking

When parking at PEI, please park in the designated parking spots in the front of the building. Please do not park at the curb or in the circular driveway as patients may need to use those areas. Please make sure that you closely supervise your child in the parking lot and in the school until they are dropped off in the classroom.

Personal Belongings

Each child at PEI will be supplied with a cubby to store personal possessions. We do request that children leave toys at home due to limited space.

Release of Children

PEI will release children from the school only to those people who are listed on the child's registration form. If you wish for your child to be released to anyone else, please inform the school either in person, via phone, or send a signed permission slip to the school, including the name of the person who will pick up your child. Please let that person know that they will have to show a photo identification to pick up your child.

Snow Days

PEI follows the Albuquerque Public School (APS) schedule in the event of snow or other severe weather conditions. If you are concerned about the weather, listen to your radio or TV for any announcements regarding closing of APS schools. You can also log on to kobtv.com or koat.com for information.

In the event of a two-hour delay, classes will begin at 11:00.

Video Viewing

PEI does permit the viewing of "G" rated videos on special days. Video viewing is viewed as a "treat" and not part of our daily or weekly curriculum.

Health of Children

Immunizations

Immunizations and relevant health history are required by the New Mexico Department of Health and must be completed prior to enrollment. A copy of the current immunization requirements will be required upon enrollment. Annually, each student's immunization records are updated to verify that all requirements have been met. Students will not be allowed to attend school without proof that they have been properly immunized or exempted.

Accidents and Injuries

PEI certified teachers and staff are expected to give First Aid and CPR to your child. Minor cuts, bruises and scrapes will be washed with water and bandaged. **Please keep your work, home and**

cell phone numbers current so that we can notify you at the time of an accident or injury in case you would like to take your child home.

In the event of a serious injury or emergency, PEI staff will call 911. We will then notify you immediately to let you know if your child is being treated at a local hospital or emergency center.

If an injury results in medical treatment or hospitalization, we are required to notify the Department of Social and Health Services and to submit an Accident Report Form to them via fax as well as a copy to you.

Cleaning

Before and after class, the teachers and cleaning staff take care to clean the surfaces that children use, such as tables, doorknobs and water faucets with bleach and rinse.

Hand washing

To control infection at our school, we ask that all children wash their hands with soap and water upon arriving at school, after toileting, before lunch or snack, after being on the playground, and before leaving school. Teachers follow the same guidelines.

Medical Emergencies

In an emergency, a conscientious effort will be made to contact parents before any action is taken. If the parent is not available, we will call emergency numbers documented on the signed authorization form.

Medication

Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet or in a lockbox in the staff refrigerator. Parents will sign the medication log each day the medication will be given. All medications, prescription and over the counter, must come in the original container with current label. All medications, prescription and over the counter, require daily written permission from parent or guardian. The medication log must be filled out daily and signed at the end of the day by the parent/guardian for all prescription and over the counter medications. A permission to dispense medication slip must accompany all prescription and over the counter medications. This document can be obtained from PEI staff from our medication log.

Prescription Medications

Prescription label must show the following

- prescription number
- name of medication
- date filled
- physician's name
- child's name
- instructions for dosage, which includes time to be give and duration

Prescriptions will only be given for the duration specified by the physician.

Over the Counter Medications

Over the counter medications will only be given as exactly stated on the container label, which includes age, dosage and maximum days to administer, unless accompanied by a doctor's note stating otherwise.

Tylenol cannot be given to reduce a fever for the purpose of a child staying at school for the day. Tylenol can be given for other reasons and parent must specify dosage, reason the Tylenol is needed and amount of days to administer.

Medications that don't specify dosage for your child's age on the bottle cannot be given without a doctor's note. Medications must be picked up by the parent or thrown out at the end of the week.

Sick Children

- Each child is observed daily for signs of illness.
- Children with contagious illnesses must stay at home.
- All parents of children at the school, as well as the Health Department, will be notified of communicable diseases so appropriate action can be taken to protect children.

When your child needs to be picked up from school due to illness:

- a temperature of 101° or higher
- vomiting more than once
- diarrhea more than 3 times in one school day
- red or pink eyes, especially with discharge and/or other cases have been confirmed (doctor may clear child if pink eye is not suspected and child may return to school)
- if your child has a low-grade temperature (between 100°-101°) and has one of the following
 - a rash that is not associated with heat, allergies or thick nasal discharge or colored nasal discharge
 - painful earache, cough or sore throat
 - vomiting-first case

Your child may return to school when:

- symptom free for 24 hours
- if medication was prescribed, the child has been on medication for 24 hours

If a child becomes ill at school, a parent will be notified and must pick up the child. Staff will care for the student until he/she is picked up and will keep them as comfortable as possible. If a parent cannot be reached, the person designated as an emergency contact on the enrollment form will be contacted.

Sun Exposure/Sunscreen

Sunscreen is very important for children. We ask that you apply sunscreen before the school day. In the event of a field trip or day with an extended period of time outdoors, sunscreen is treated the same as medication. "Permission to dispense" must be signed on the registration form. Due to allergies or sensitivities, PEI cannot provide sunscreen for children. Parents will need to provide sunscreen for their child.

Toileting

Communication between parents and teachers is the key to successful toilet training. PEI wants to provide the same routine that our child is using at home. Please let us know when you feel your child is ready to learn to use the toilet. We want this to be a positive experience for both you and your child. The teachers at PEI are aware of the signs that they should look for when a child is ready to be trained. Each child's individual readiness for toilet training must be the key that begins this process. A child must be potty trained before starting the full-day 3 year old program.

Behavior Policies

An effective school environment has high expectations for the children with reasonable limits. When simple clear limits are present, children become responsible for their own actions. Children need to understand why their behavior is inappropriate and learn how to modify it. Guidance means setting limits, guiding behavior and helping children to learn appropriate behavior. Here are some of our guidelines:

- Simple guidelines for expected behavior are explained to the children.
- Children hear the guidelines of respect for one another, safety and maintaining the environment with positive statements such as:
 - "We walk at our school."
 - Alternative choices are given when needed.
 - "Would you like to walk by yourself or hold my hand?"
- Teachers help two or more students resolve their own problems and differences and use appropriate language to do so.
- Simple techniques such as redirection and engaging activities are used.
- Cool down ("**reset**") or time out is used infrequently and only for very short durations (a minute for every year of age) within the classroom to give the child time to regroup.

Our teachers will keep families informed of any behavior modification programs implemented so that families can assist in the carry-over of these programs, furthering our commitment to work as team with families.

PEI does not allow any form of corporal punishment or withholding of food to modify a child's behavior. If recurrent problems arise in the child's behavior, the director of the school will arrange for a written record of the child's actions to be made for a period of two weeks, followed by a discussion with the child's parents. Referrals to outside specialists may be made. Behavior that is not allowed at PEI is:

- excessive hitting, biting or other aggressive or intimidating behavior
- behavior that is contrary to healthy thinking and safe childhood activities such as name-calling, bullying, use of inappropriate words
- excessive disrespect to other children or to teachers
- refusal to respect the school's guidelines

Emergencies/Disaster Preparedness Procedures

When a disaster/emergency occurs, children can be hurt or afraid. They depend upon their caregivers to protect them from harm. Good planning is therefore important. Staff is trained regularly in

emergency procedures: monthly fire drills; quarterly disaster preparedness drills including lockdown procedures and shelter-in-place.

Fire

Fire escape routes are posted in every room in the building. Staff and children are trained through drills to respond quickly and calmly to the announcement of a fire or to the fire alarm. This involves routine hearing of the announcement and immediately exiting using the appropriate exit. Drills are conducted monthly at various times of the day.

General Evacuation

In the event of an evacuation, children will be taken to the front parking lot. In case of a life threatening situation, we will walk the children to Presbyterian Hospital located north of the school. A list of the children and phone numbers will be with the staff and principal during this time and parents will be contacted.

Tornado/Severe Weather

The staff will instruct the children on where to proceed depending on location: under the tables, in the hallway, away from windows, etc. Staff and children do not leave this area until the all-clear signal has been given by the principal or emergency official.

Missing Child

No children shall be outside or inside without the prescribed ration to staff supervision. In the event the program is unable to locate a child, all children will be brought into classrooms and counted. Staff will then immediately and completely search the grounds and the building while the other children are being supervised. If the child is not found within 10 minutes, 911 will be called and then parents will be contacted. No staff or children shall leave the program until the authorities arrive.

Dangerous Adult

All visitors must sign in upon their arrival to the building. Visitors not associated with the school are not allowed into the designated school areas.

In the event of the presence of an adult who is deemed by the staff to present a danger to the children or to a specific child, 911 will be called immediately. Staff will calmly request that the person leave the premises and advise them that officials are on the way. (Unless they feel that this will increase the level of danger in the situation). A dangerous adult would include an adult exhibiting inappropriate behavior, bearing weapons or showing signs of intoxication by either alcohol or drugs. This also includes any person who is prohibited by court order (on file with the program) to see or transport the child. In the event the adult leaves the premises before authorities arrive, the staff will attempt to get the license plate number and a full description of the individual.

Lock Down

Notification will be made and children will move to assigned classroom, secure all doors, close the blinds, turn off the lights and move away from doors and window. The school will remain in lockdown until the all clear from safety personnel is given.

Toxic or Hazardous Materials

In the event of a toxic spill, staff and children will cooperate fully with official safety personnel. All staff and children will be brought into the building if not already there and will stay inside until the all clear signal is given by the officials. If officials determine that evacuation of the building must occur, the staff will follow the guidelines of evacuation by official personnel.

Earthquake

In the event of an earthquake, staff will direct the children that are indoors to take cover. Staff that is outdoors will direct the children to move away from structures and trees and to sit with the staff member. Structural damage will be assessed by official personnel or the principal before children are allowed to remain or re-enter the structure. PEI has a Disaster and Emergency Plan on file.

Family Engagement and Activities

“The language environment at home is the basis of an infant’s brain growth and best predicts the child’s language, reading and IQ outcomes (Suskind, 2015). Language learning and knowledge acquisition begins in infancy. Because language and information are learned best in a social interaction with the people who love the baby, the parents generally become their child’s first teacher and teach the child the language and knowledge of the home (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015; Rhoades and Duncan, 2017).

Thus, all families are advised to speak the language they know best right from the beginning, whether that language is English, Spanish, Russian, sign language, etc. Science tells us that parents should speak the language where they have the most knowledge, experience, words, and information to pass to their child to grow their child’s brain with knowledge (Chen, Kennedy, & Zhou, 2012; Rhoades & Duncan, 2017). Therefore, based on the science of general early language acquisition, families of children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can best provide early brain and literacy development experiences by immersing their children in the family’s home language.” – Children With Hearing Loss: Developing Listening and Talking; Cole, B Elizabeth and Carol Flexer, 2020

PEI couldn’t agree more. This premise also applies to children who have hearing but have a speech or spoken language delay. Working together, parents and school staff provide opportunities to grow in knowledge about your child, share skills and strategies for supporting your child at home and “building your child’s brain” all throughout their day. Parent involvement also helps PEI thrive as a school by supporting fundraisers, investing in quality educational options, and advocating in the community for choices for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Home visits

For New Mexico Pre-k families, home visits are conducted at the beginning of every school year by your child’s teacher and educational assistant.

Meet the Teacher/Registration Night

At the beginning of each school year, a Meet the Teacher/Registration Night is planned. Parents bring their enrollment paperwork and their child. Parents gather first to be introduced to the staff as a whole and to have some light refreshments. The principal and lead teacher review all paperwork.

Afterwards, the parents are directed to the teachers/rooms their child will be placed with, allow the children to see where they will be attending and meet their teachers, and engage with other parents and students.

Classroom Observation

PEI has an open-door policy. This means that you may visit the school and the child's classroom as you wish. If there is a specific activity you would like to see, please check with the principal to see what time would be best to observe. Please remember that some children are distracted from their learning by their parent's presence in the classroom.

Daily Communication

Daily communication with your child's school is crucial for a quality education. Communication may not always be verbal. Please check the parent bulletin board and the white board in the hallway next to the kitchen for information. In addition, information may be sent in writing in your child's backpack, or via Brightwheel. Please check every day for updates from the school.

Events at home can greatly affect children's behavior at school. Please let us know if there is something that has happened that we should be aware of so we can interact with your child accordingly.

Language Experience Books

We are asking all families to utilize Language Experience Books with their child. Language Experience Books are books adults create with their child about the experiences they or their child want to talk about and capture. They are about real life and are not "busy work". They are appropriate for all children regardless of hearing status. Frequently, a parent and a child use the book to talk about and write about an experience together. Grandparents and other family members can also "write" with the child.

Materials needed include: a simple spiral-bound notebook or composition book; pencil, pen, water-based markers that don't bleed; colored pencils, crayons; can also use tape, photos, tickets, stickers, any memorabilia or souvenirs

The purpose of using Language Experience books is:

- To foster conversation and the turn-taking "serve and return" of dialog
- To introduce new words/vocabulary
- To introduce new language forms, question forms and structures
- To associate spoken language with the images on the page
- To expose the child to adult models of writing
- To associate a child's spoken word with their written form
- To give the child turns to draw, speak, and write
- To use the books to look back on previous experiences or forward to upcoming experiences and use language that depicts time in the past and future
- To have fun!

Write frequently in your child's language experience book, with your child. Otherwise, the child won't grasp their importance or have the practice that results in learning to rely on reading and writing for AUTHENTIC PURPOSES.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

(Revised April 20, 2023)

Presbyterian Ear Institute is a partnership between parents, teachers, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, support staff, and administration to provide the best possible educational outcomes for our children. To achieve our ambitious goals, we must all commit to working together collaboratively and effectively. PEI has a strong financial aid program and collaboration with early childhood funding programs to help families in their pursuit of a quality spoken-language program for their child. PEI has developed a Parent-School Agreement delineating the school's commitment to the children and families, and the prerequisite for each family to commit to 20 hours of volunteer involvement in the school. There are many ways that you can contribute:

- help teachers prepare materials and bulletin boards
- share your special talents with the children
- drive and chaperon on field trips
- plan and support fundraising events – such as stuffing bags, set up/tear down, bake sales, selling raffle tickets, preparing raffle baskets, etc.
- prepare a “Hot Lunch Day” for students
- school/classroom/furniture/toy cleaning and beginning and end of school year cleaning
- regular ongoing toy cleaning for classrooms, large activity room, and audiology rooms, etc.
- Scholastic Books management
- decorate school for seasonal parties
- provide treats for seasonal parties
- be the “Class Parent”
- be active in Parent Community Group meetings
- Being a Parent Community Group leader
- develop a GoFundMe site for fundraising
- assist with the Travel Raffle Parent Group fundraiser

Let us know how you would like to share your talents!

Mystery Reader

Every month, a “mystery reader” will be invited to read to the children via a virtual venue. Any parent, grandparent, family member or friend can be the “mystery reader”. The reader will provide the children with 3 clues to help the children guess who the reader might be. Please contact your child's teacher to sign up for this fun opportunity!

Parent Community Group Meetings

The PEI Parent Group has meetings once a month. These meetings include childcare. The meetings include guest speakers, information on what is happening in the community, in education, activities and resources the parent might find helpful, IEP education, how to work with and elicit language from their child, how to read effectively to their child, and planning important fundraisers for the school. At the beginning of the year, the Parent Community Group will decide together what day of the month and time of day the meetings will be held.

Multicultural Activities

The children and families at PEI exemplify a diverse mix of ethnic and cultural groups. We celebrate our diversity! We welcome families to come and share your stories and traditions with us. Such sharing can involve music, dance, reading, cooking, or any other skill or gift you'd like to share.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Three parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled during the year. Conferences are designed to develop goals and objectives, report progress and contribute to a better understanding of the student by all concerned. Families meet with their child's preschool teacher, language pull-out teacher, and their speech and language pathologist. At the first conference in September, goals and objectives will be discussed with the parents and staff of PEI. At the second conference in January, goals and objectives are reviewed and the progress will be reported. The final conference will be held at the end of the school year in May. All goals and objectives are reviewed and the full school year is reflected upon. At any time throughout the school year, parents are encouraged to discuss concerns or questions about their child's educational program with the principal. Spanish interpretation will be set up for families who need it.

Wish List

There are always things we need and want at PEI. There is a wish list located on the parent bulletin board of things we would like if you would like to buy something for the school. Some of the things we always need are:

- boxes of tissues
- disposable/flushable wipes
- glue sticks
- small (2 oz.) bottles of glue
- ziploc bags, all sizes
- index cards
- computer paper
- post It Notes
- dish soap
- paper towels
- napkins
- paper plates
- paper cups
- construction paper
- children's books
- SANITIZING WIPES
- LYSOL SPRAY
- HAND SANITIZER

Resources for Families

The NM PreK website has plenty of great materials and resources for families to access. Some are resources for parent education. Others are for use with your child. Check out <https://www.newmexicoprek.org/material-library/#198-policy-materials-materiales-sobre-politicas> and scroll down to "One Page Resources" and "Family Materials".

Another great resource is the Hearing First website. It has all the latest information you could possibly ask for regarding Listening and Spoken Language, Hearing and Evaluation Technology, webinars to learn more about how to support your child's

progress, and connecting with other parents and professionals. Check it out at <https://www.hearingfirst.org/>.