

Lehigh Area School District

Pre – K Counts



Lehigh's Littlest Indians

Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027

Staff Information

Superintendent-----Mr. Jason Moser
Pre - K-2 Principal-----Mr. Aaron Sebelin
Pre - K Counts Coordinator-----Mrs. Gretchen Laviolette
Pre - K Teacher-----Mrs. Lori Hoppes
Paraprofessional-----Mrs. Bonnie Helmer

Lehighton Area School District
Administration Office
1000 Union Street
Lehighton Pa 18235
610-377-4490

Lehighton Area Elementary Center
3 Indian Lane
Lehighton Pa 18235
610-377-7880

Lehighton Area School District Mission:

Educating students for lifelong success by providing challenging and relevant instruction, fostering academic and personal growth, promoting civic responsibility, cultivating community and family partnerships and supporting the mental well-being of all in a safe environment.

Lehighton Area School District Vision:

To foster a safe and respectful environment where all individuals have the opportunity to reach their potential.

Program Philosophy

Our philosophy at Lehighton Area Pre – K Counts is that children are active learners. With this in mind, we build our program to incorporate a variety of hands-on activities that promote growth in all areas of development including intellectual, social, emotional, and physical. We also feel it is important to provide a safe and nurturing environment that encourages each child to be independent, creative and self-assured. It is our goal to make this experience a positive one for each and every child.



LEHIGHTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR



3-6 – Independence Day Holiday	<table><tr><th colspan="7">July 2026</th></tr><tr><th>Su</th><th>M</th><th>Tu</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td></tr></table>	July 2026							Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		1 – Winter Holiday 18 – Martin Luther King Holiday 22 – Professional Development Day 18-Student (95) 19-Teacher (101) 19-Para (100)	<table><tr><th colspan="7">January 2027</th></tr><tr><th>Su</th><th>M</th><th>Tu</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>24/ 31</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr></table>	January 2027							Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24/ 31	25	26	27	28	29	30							
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End of Marking Period – 10/28, 1/15, 3/24

Early Dismissal – 11/25, 12/18, 3/24, 6/8

First/Last Student Days – 8/24, Tentatively 6/8

184 Para Days – 187 Teacher Days – 180 Student Days

1502 Days (OLSDH) – 11/30, 12/21, 12/22, 12/28, 12/29

Board Approved: March 23, 2026

Prof Development – 8/17, 8/18, 8/19, 8/20, 9/21, 1/22, 5/7, 6/9

Act 80 Day – 11/6

Snow Make-up Days – 1/18, 2/12, 3/25, 5/28, 6/9

New Teacher Induction Days – 8/11, 8/12, 8/13, 8/14

Paras off – 9/21, 5/7, 6/9

Policies

Program Days and Hours:

For the most part, the Pre-K Counts Program follows the same calendar as the Lehigh Area School District. However, there are occasions when Pre-K is held when K-12 students do not have school. Therefore, parents are strongly encouraged to watch correspondence received from the Pre-K teacher for definite information regarding school days. In the event of a scheduled early dismissal day, both Pre-K Counts classrooms will attend on a condensed schedule.

Morning Session: 7:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Afternoon Session: 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

****Please do not enter the area prior to the doors opening in order to ensure the safety of all of our students.**

Arrival and Pick up:

Please be prompt in dropping off and picking up your child. This is necessary for our program's success.

Drop Off and Pick-Up for the Pre-K Counts program will be at the front Primary entrance of the Elementary Center.

The teachers will be ready for the students at 7:45 a.m. for the morning session and 11:30 a.m. for the afternoon session. Accordingly, the drop off times are 7:45 a.m. for the morning session and 11:30 a.m. for the afternoon session. If you arrive with your child after this time, you will need to go to the main entrance to check your child in at the school office.

Pick-up is 10:45 a.m. for the morning session and 2:30 p.m. for the afternoon session.

Parents will need to park in the designated area. This area is designated by the green lines on both sides of the black fence at the front of our school. Please walk your child to the main entrance of the building. This will ensure the safety of all students during the arrival and dismissal times of all Pre-K Counts students.

Only you or someone previously identified to the Pre-K Counts teacher may pick up your child. To protect your child, he/she will only be released to the person to whom prior written authorization has been given. The person picking up your child must also have proper identification (driver's license). Any changes in authorization must be in writing (see authorized pick-up form). If you know at the time of drop off that your child will be picked up by an authorized individual, please try to notify us at that time, either verbally or with a written note.

In the event of an emergency that will cause a delay in pick-up, please call the office to make staff aware that you will be late picking up your child/children from Pre-K Counts.

Leighton Area Elementary Center Phone Number: 610-377-7880

Parental Custody Issues

In cases involving child custody, it is the obligation of the custodial parent to keep all necessary court orders current. The Pre-K Counts teachers must abide by the order that is currently on file. Both natural parents have the right to access any documentation pertaining to the program unless it is specifically stated otherwise in the court order.

School Visitors

During the school day, all entry doors are locked. Parents/guardians and visitors to our school, who have been invited to participate in approved programs, must use the main K-2 Elementary Center entrance. All parents/guardians and visitors must then report to the K-2 Elementary Center office. Please bring a driver's license with you so your identification can be verified. At this time, an ID badge will be given to you to wear while you are in the building.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION NOTICE TO THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO RESIDE
IN LEIGHTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT:**

Special Education Director – Mrs. Sandra Michalik

The Leighton Area School District conducts ongoing identification activities as a part of its school program for the purpose of identifying a student who may be in need of special education and related services. Individualized services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:

1. Autism/pervasive developmental disorder
2. Blindness or visual impairment
3. Deafness or hearing impairment
4. Development delay
5. Mentally gifted
6. Intellectual disability
7. Multi-handicapped
8. Neurological impairment
9. Other health impairments
10. Physical disability
11. Serious emotional disturbance
12. Specific learning disability
13. Speech and language impairment

If a parent or guardian believes that their school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs, or young child (age 3 to school age) may be in need of early intervention, screening and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and

their eligibility are available at no cost, upon written request. A parent or guardian may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not their child is enrolled in the District's public school program. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing to, Director of Student Services.

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time, and location), a parent or guardian may contact, in writing, the person listed above or any building Principal.

Confidentiality: All information gathered about a child is subject to the confidentiality provisions contained in federal and state law. The District has policies and procedures in effect governing the collection, maintenance, destruction and disclosure to third parties of this information. For information about the policies and procedures, as well as rights of confidentiality and access to educational records, please contact Mrs. Michalik at (610) 377-4490 x7599 smichalik@lehighton.org or any building Principal.

Attendance

It is a requirement of the Pre-K Counts Program that your child attends school on a regular basis.

Students enrolled in the Pre-K Counts Program are considered full-time and must attend 5 days per week for a minimum of 180 days.

Families will be contacted when their child is absent for 3 consecutive days to learn the nature of the absence.

When your child has 5 unexcused absences, a phone call will be made to the parent(s)/guardian(s). When you attain 6 unexcused absences over the course of the school year, a letter will be mailed home. In this letter, you will be informed that building administration will be in contact with you to schedule a meeting in regards to your child's absenteeism.

Children who have 10 or more consecutive unexcused absences or more than 10% unexcused absences over the course of the school year (more than 18 days total) and have not responded to program supports, will be dismissed from the program.

Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused Absences: Excused absences are defined as: those absences when a student is prevented from attending for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons. These can be further defined as illness, family emergency, death of a family member, health or dental appointments, fire, natural disaster, or other extenuating circumstances deemed as excused by the program administrators. If the child is absent for 3 consecutive days or more, a doctor's note is required.

Unexcused absences: Unexcused absences are any absences that are not included in the above definition of excused absences.

Readmitting Absent Students:

In the event of an absence, a parent/guardian's electronic excuse or a physician's note must be submitted within three (3) school days. If the electronic excuse is not submitted by the third day of returning to school, the absence will be considered unexcused. The excuse must include the following information:

- a.) Full name of the student
- b.) Date of absence
- c.) Reason for the absence
- d.) Signature of parent/guardian

The link to the electronic excuse can be found on the District website, under the parent's tab and Excuse Blanks and Educational Trip Forms or at www.lehighton.org/excuseblankandeducationaltripform.

After three (3) or more consecutive absences, a note from a health care provider **must** be provided. The office will accept paper physicians notes.

Illnesses:

In order to ensure a safe and healthy environment, please keep your child home if they have had any of the following conditions within the last 24 hours:

- A fever of 100 degrees or higher (children may not return to school until they are 24 hours fever free);
- Diarrhea;
- Cannot eat or drink without vomiting;
- A severe head cold, with continual runny nose, sore throat, earache, or persistent cough exists;
- Any suspicious skin rash, disease of the eye, or contagious disease is present or suspect; and/or,
- Untreated lice or their eggs (nits) on hair or scalp

Health Records:

It is a requirement of the Pre -K Counts Program that Health records are kept on each child attending the Pre -K Counts Program. Parents/guardians should keep the staff informed of any medical conditions, or changes in medical conditions, in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their child/children.

Emergency Information/Parent packet will need to be completed and returned by the student's start of school. Any incomplete packet will be returned to the

parent(s)/guardian(s). If the complete packet is not returned within three (3) school days, each day after the third (3rd) day will be considered an unexcused absence until a completed packet is submitted.

Physical and Dental forms need to be returned **prior** to the student's start of school. Physical and dental forms are good for one year from completion. Please consult with your doctor/dentist. You will need to keep the physical and dental forms current while school is in session.

If a student begins the program mid-year, all forms must be submitted **prior** to the student's start date.

Immunizations:

Pennsylvania State Law requires that each child who attends the Pre –K Counts Program have the appropriate immunizations for their age.

Medications:

No medications will be given to children during the school time. Please arrange to give medication before or after school hours. An exception to this policy would be medicine required by a doctor, to be administered during school hours for a special health condition. If it is absolutely necessary that the medication be given in the school, the following requirements **MUST** be met:

- An authorization for the "Administration of Medication" must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and the physician.
- All medication must be in the original prescription container.
- Parents/guardians must bring the medication to the school nurse.
- While the child is taking medication, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep track of and replace the medication. The school nurse will not notify the parents/guardians when medications run out.

****Do not send the child to school with the medication****

Emergency closings:

Parents/guardians will be notified by the District's calling system for early dismissals, closings, late starts, emergencies, and general information. Please make sure that provisions are made for your child in the event that one of these instances occurs.

Emergency closing will also be on the TV stations WNEP 16, WFMZ 69, BRCTV 13, WBRE and WYOU. Emergency information can also be located as a pop up on the District's website at www.lehighton.org.

2 Hour Delays – Children will have class on a condensed schedule. The a.m. session will run 9:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., with a drop off time of 9:45 a.m. and a pick up time of 11:45 a.m. The p.m. session will run 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., with a drop off time of 12:30 p.m. and a pick up time of 2:30 p.m.

Early Dismissal – PM ONLY – If the District has an early dismissal due to an emergency closing, the p.m. Pre-K Counts program will not have in person class. Please note that we will need to make up the class virtually, using online learning.

**** If the District has a scheduled early dismissal, we will use a condensed schedule on that day. For example: before a holiday, on an Act 80 day, or at the end of the school year. ****

The condensed schedule is as follows:

AM Pre-K is 7:45 a.m.-9:45 a.m.

PM Pre-K is 10:45 a.m. -12:45 p.m.

Each class is two hours in length; this gives plenty of time to exit the school parking lots prior to the buses at the end of the day.

Field Trips:

Several times a year, classes will be visiting local places of interest. A permission slip will be sent home for you to sign **prior** to the trip. If a signed permission form is not provided, the student will not be allowed to attend the field trip.

Meals:

A healthy meal will be provided free for the children daily.

- A.M. (Morning) students will be served breakfast
- P.M. (Afternoon) students will be served lunch

It is a requirement of the Pre-K Counts Program that an application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals must be completed for each child in the program.

Please be sure to indicate any food allergies on **all** health forms.

****If you prefer, you may send your child to school with a healthy meal from home. In an effort to maintain nutritional health, we recommend no candy, chips, cookies, brownies, soda or other sugary drinks. Birthday treats are permissible. Please discuss this with the teacher in advance.****

A menu will be sent home each month from the cafeteria. Please be advised that menus are subject to change based on availability of products.

Clothing:

Please label all sweaters, jackets, coats, school bags, backpacks, etc. with the child's name. Often a child will have a garment identical to someone else's in the classroom.

Dress your child in comfortable, practical clothing for painting or playing outdoors. Send your child each day dressed for outside play. Sneakers are preferable. Dress-up shoes have slick soles.

Sandals, Crocs, boots, high-top sneakers, and flip-flops are dangerous and inappropriate for active play.

Children's clothing should be uncomplicated so that they can easily use the bathroom by themselves.

**** Please send in an extra pair of underwear, pants, shirt and socks to be kept at school. ****

**** Please refer to the Elementary Center Student Handbook for more information on School District dress codes****

Backpacks:

It is not required, but recommended, for each child to have a backpack.

If you do send your child with a backpack, please be advised that backpacks with wheels are not permitted because they are a safety hazard.

Please label the backpack with your child's name.

Toys or Items from home:

Children are not permitted to bring toys to school. They create a distraction and could be damaged or lost. Toys will be taken from the child and returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Classroom Expectations:

- ★ *Helping Hands*
- ★ *Listening Ears*
- ★ *Quiet Mouths*
- ★ *Looking Eyes*
- ★ *Walking Feet*

Our discipline is age appropriate. It often takes the form of a gentle reminder or redirection. Choices are offered encouraging children to make appropriate decisions and to take responsibility for their actions. Time-outs are used for limited time periods. We encourage a joint effort between the family and school if the above form of discipline is not working.

PLEASE initial behavior charts each day, so we know it has been checked.

F.I.S.H. (Family Involvement Starts Here) Books:

What is a F.I.S.H Book? It is a binder that holds everything the children and parents need to keep updated on classroom events. Another purpose of the book is to serve as a communication tool between home and school. Finally, it will help to build your child's organizational skills as well as teach them responsibility.

In the F.I.S.H Book you will find an informational calendar, menu and behavior chart.

Birthdays:

Birthdays are special to children. Every child's birthday is celebrated during our school year. If you are planning to send a treat into school to celebrate your child's birthday, **PLEASE** let us know in advance so that it does not conflict with another birthday. **Please do not send in invitations unless there is one for every child in the class.**

Religious Restrictions:

If you practice a religion which has restrictions that would prevent your child from participating in or doing a holiday or patriotic activity, please inform us so that accommodations can be made and your beliefs are not infringed upon.

Guest Reader Program:

Reading is a major part of learning! Our goal is to instill a love of learning in the children. By doing that we need your help! Each family will receive an invitation during the year to be our Guest Reader; the reader can be a family member or friend. All this person would have to do is choose a children's book that they or their child enjoys, come in, and read it to the class!

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

This law affords certain rights to Parents and Eligible Students in regards to Education Records that are maintained by schools. These rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 or attend a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;

- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

LEHIGHTON AREA School District
1000 Union Street, Lehigh, Pennsylvania 18235
Telephone: 610-377-4490 Fax: 610-577-0032

"Educating students for lifelong success by providing challenging and relevant instruction, fostering academic and personal growth, promoting civic responsibility, cultivating community and family partnerships and supporting the mental well-being of all in a safe environment."

**Notification Letter for Parents, Guardians and Employees of
Lehigh Area School District**

Dear Parent(s), Guardian(s) and Employees,

The Lehigh Area School District uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for managing insects, rodents and weeds. Our goal is to protect every student from pesticide exposure by using an IPM approach to pest management. Our IPM approach focuses on making the school buildings and grounds an unfavorable habitat for these pests by removing food and water sources and eliminating their hiding and breeding places. We accomplish this through routine cleaning and maintenance. We routinely monitor the school buildings and grounds to detect any pests that are present. The pest monitoring team consists of our building maintenance, office and teaching staff and includes our students. Pest sightings are reported to our IPM coordinator who evaluates the "pest problem" and determines the appropriate pest management techniques to address the problem. The techniques can include increased sanitation, modifying storage practices, sealing entry points, physically removing the pest, etc.

From time to time, it may be necessary to use chemicals to manage a pest problem. Chemicals will only be used when necessary, and will not be routinely applied. When chemicals are used, the school will try to use the least toxic product when possible. (Applications will be made only after normal school hours.) Notices will be posted in these areas 72 hours prior to application and for two days following the application.

Parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school may request prior notification of specific pesticide applications made at the school. To receive notification, you must be placed on the school notification registry. If you would like to be placed on the registry, please notify the District in writing. Please include your email address if you would like to be notified electronically.

If a chemical application must be made to control an emergency pest problem (ex. stinging insects), notice will be provided by telephone or email to any parent or guardian who has requested such notification in writing. Exemptions to this notification include disinfectants and anti-microbial products; self-containerized baits placed in areas not accessible to students, and gel type baits placed in cracks, and crevices or voids.

Each year the District will prepare a new notification registry.

If you have any questions, please contact Justin Smith, IPM Coordinator at (610) 377-4490 ext. 7536. All correspondence should be directed to the address, email, or telephone number listed on this letterhead.

Sincerely,

Justin Smith
Director of Operations
jlsmith@lehigh.org

SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

Here is a quick link to all Lehigh Area School District policies: www.lehighton.org/policies

The following Lehigh Area School District Board Policies require annual notification as well as dissemination to students and parents. Please take the time to review all of our policies referenced below. The policies that govern students are listed in the 200 Section, the policies that govern programs are listed in the 100 Section, the policies that govern finances are listed in the 600 Section, the policies that govern property are listed in the 700 Section, the policies that govern operations are listed in the 800 Section.

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Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

I have received, read and agree to abide by all terms listed in the Lehighton's Littlest Indian (Lehighton Pre-K Counts) Handbook for the 2026-2027 school year. I have also read and agree to abide by all terms listed in the Lehighton Elementary Center's Handbook which is located on the District website at www.lehighton.org/handbooks.

Student's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

****Please sign and return this sheet****

Attachments:

Family Engagement Plan
Plan to Reduce Suspension and expulsion
Transition Plan