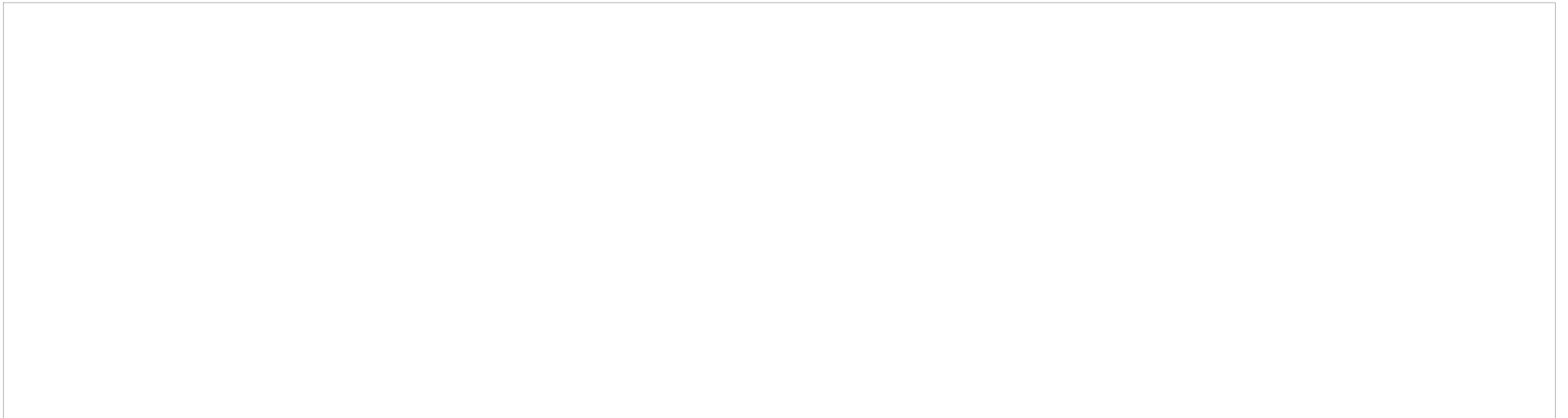
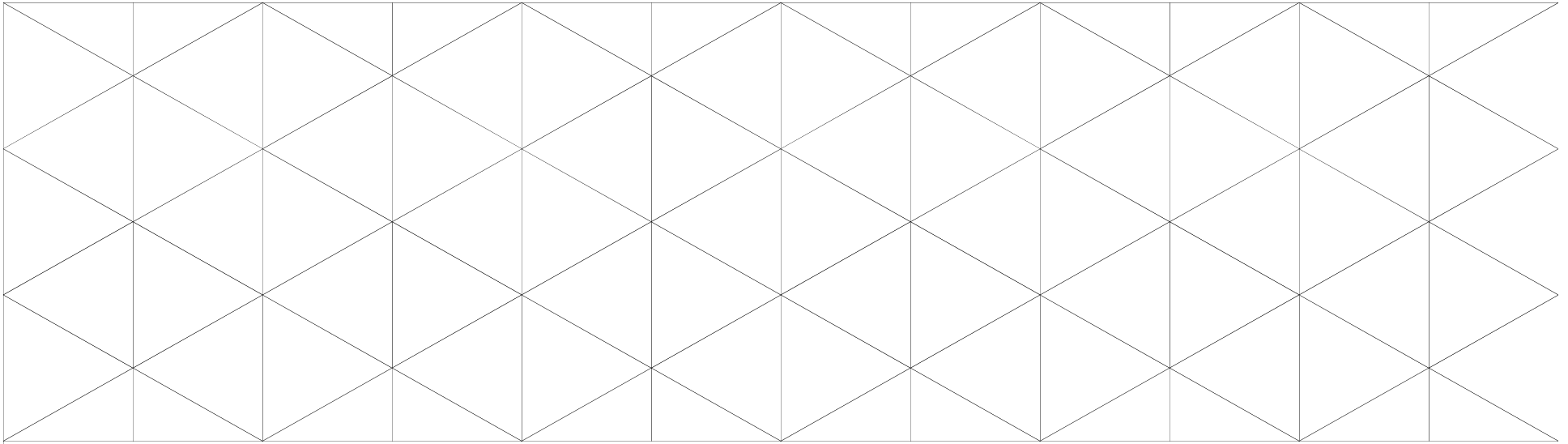


# **School-Sponsored Child Care & Collaborative Programming**

Elcho Early Learning Center, School District of Elcho





**Becca Multhauf - Early Learning Center Director**  
**Betsy Gruszynski - PK-5 Principal & Director of Instruction**

[www.elchoschool.org](http://www.elchoschool.org)

## Elcho - *Where is that?*

Elcho is an unincorporated community in north central Wisconsin approximately halfway between Wausau and Upper Michigan. The District covers over 320 square miles. One building serves roughly 300 students and additional children in the Early Learning Center.

Approximately 54% of students are considered economically disadvantaged, 14% are identified as students with disabilities and 92% identify themselves as white.



## **It began in 2000**

The district started with before- and after-school child care programming for students in grades K-6. In the summer of 2001 the only regulated group child care center in the district closed. The district responded to the need by adding services for children ages six weeks to twelve years.

Our district is located 22 miles from Antigo and 26 miles from Rhinelander. Many families were taking their small children to child care programming in the community they worked in. We were concerned that families would choose open enrollment to those districts once their child became old enough for school.

# Head Start...then Child Care...then 4K



Our progression of program implementation is quite different than most districts.

Prior to 2000 the District rented space to Family and Child Learning Centers to operate **Head Start** and Early Head Start programming.

Full-day, full-year **child care** programming began in 2001.

Four-year-old kindergarten (**4K**) didn't start until the 2005-2006 school year. This was also the year that we no longer maintained a separate **early childhood special education** classroom.

# 4K

**2005-2006:** Full day programming Tuesdays and Thursdays

**2006-Present:** Half-day programming Tuesday through Friday

8:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

12:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

*Our cohort sizes typically range between 20-30 students. Our class sizes are limited to 18 students with a teacher and a paraprofessional.*

*Background picture of our 4K class taking a Brain Break with their fourth grade Reading Buddies.*

# Early Childhood Special Education

We no longer operate a self-contained special education classroom because our collaborative allows for the children to be served in their daily environment. Almost all of our special education services are provided itinerantly, with the exception of some speech or occupational therapy needs that require leaving the classroom. This structure removes much of the stigma that parents express they have had over their child being identified for special education.

We've developed a strong relationship with Birth to 3 in order to meet the needs of younger children. Often removing the need for school services once the child is three years old.

# Child Care Programming

Open 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday

All Year Long

We typically serve 90-100 children each year, ages six weeks to twelve years.

We offer flexible scheduling to support families and their ability to stay home with their children when their work/school schedule allows for it.



# Head Start

Family and Child Learning Centers of Northeast Wisconsin contracts services from our district for half-day programming that runs most weeks of the school year. Head Start sets the number of days/hours but allows us to set them to compliment other programming and our district calendar.

Contract provides a reimbursement rate of \$23.50 per child, per day of attendance. A day consists of a minimum of 4 hours. The program must run 4 days/week, 32 weeks/year.

*Photo: Four year olds at Little Olympics*



# Licensing - School Rules



School operated child care programs are legally exempt from obtaining a child care license from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

However, beginning in fall 2016, all child care programs operated or contracted by a public school that

- wish to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy payments on behalf of an eligible family

**OR**

- that will participate in Wisconsin's quality improvement system (YoungStar)

must be monitored annually for compliance with a subset of the Administrative Code DCF 251. Licensing Rules/Group Child Care Centers.

# Young Star

YoungStar is a program that recognizes quality in early care and education programs and provides supports and resources, such as technical assistance and micro-grants.

In order to receive reimbursements through Wisconsin's child care subsidy program, Wisconsin Shares, a program must complete and submit a YoungStar Contract. Early care and education programs work with technical consultants to engage in efforts to promote their quality and proceed with a process that determines their star rating on a scale from one to five. A program's annual rating is based upon indicators that are related to four primary areas of quality: Education and Training Qualifications; Learning Environment and Curriculum; Professional and Business Practices; Health and Wellness.

# Wisconsin Shares

Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy supports low-income working families by subsidizing a portion of the cost of quality child care while the parents or caregivers are working or participating in another approved activity. Wisconsin Shares is implemented locally by coordinators in counties and tribes.



# TEACH & REWARD

**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN** provides higher education scholarships to professionals who work in regulated early childhood and school age care settings.

**REWARD Wisconsin Stipend Program** provides child care professionals salary supplements based on their educational attainments and longevity in the field.

Both of these programs are administered through the **Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.**



# Child Care Resource & Referral



Supporting Families Together provides a multitude of related resources throughout the state of Wisconsin. Child Care Resource & Referral agencies collect data from regulated providers that school districts could find valuable in starting and maintaining services.

- Regulated slots in your county
- Hourly rates charged by age level
- Wages and benefits (assistants, teachers, admin.)

# Transportation

Wrap-around services have assisted our district in reducing midday transportation needs for children in partial day programming (4K & ECSped). While we are still obligated to provide transportation for families who choose to only participate in half-day programming, most school years we haven't had to provide any midday transportation. Most families have expressed appreciation for the option to utilize multiple programs to create full-day opportunities for their children. This is a savings to our district of approximately \$80,000 per year.



# Open Enrollment



At present 22% of the children we are serving do not reside in our district. We have found that, by building a strong relationship with the family when their child is an infant, we increase their connectedness to the district (and other families in the district) and the likelihood that they will choose to open enroll their child in our school.

Currently, 50% of the students who are open enrolled into the School District of Elcho have utilized child care programming.

# Budget



Child care is a community service that our district levies \$75,000 (of the \$250,000 budget) through fund 80. The remaining revenue comes from parent fees (including subsidy payments) and contracted services fees from Head Start.

97.25% of the budget covers salary and fringe for 9 employees.

# Support Staff Contractual Language

Early Learning Center (ELC) personnel receive weekly schedules based on the schedules of the children. Unlike other areas of the district, these employees have varying daily and weekly schedules. Staffing is based on a staff-to-child ratio set by child care licensing. Therefore, if daily census drops the ELC staff may be sent home prior to the end of their scheduled work day. The ELC director creates the weekly schedule while closely monitoring each employee's annual range of hours to ensure that we are staying within an appropriate range for prorated benefits (part-time). Based on the fluctuation in children during the year, we have multiple categories of ELC staff:

*Part-time/School Year    Full-time/School Year    Part-time/ Full Year    Full-time/Full Year  
Summer*

# ***One-Stop Shopping***

Over the years families have sighted multiple reasons that they are happy that their child care program is in the school:

- Facility: playground, large motor space, computer labs, library
- On-site specialists in reading, occupational/physical therapy, speech therapists
- Access to other resources such as family events and guest presentations
- A sense of security that the program has oversight for content and quality
- All of their children are in the same location and share busing services

# FAQs

- Head Start requires Non Federal Share (in-kind) as part of their agreement. The district annual responsibility is \$2,250.
- We do not have attendance requirements in order for families to retain their slot(s) during times they don't need care (Ex: swing shift workers, summer for teachers).
- At the age of one, children are eligible for the school nutrition program including free/reduced food service.
- Snow Days - We cancel all programming.
- In addition to the service to the families, our program created nine jobs in our community.
- When we have IEPs we take into consideration the fact that we can offer free programming in order to best meet the needs of our children with special needs.



# Handbooks

We would be happy to share our Family Handbook and ELC Staff Handbooks.

We also welcome phone calls, e-mails and site visits.

Please contact us.

*Photo: Preschool room exercising when large motor space not available.*



# Contact Us

## School District of Elcho

*Providing Quality Care & Education for Our Littlest Learners*

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