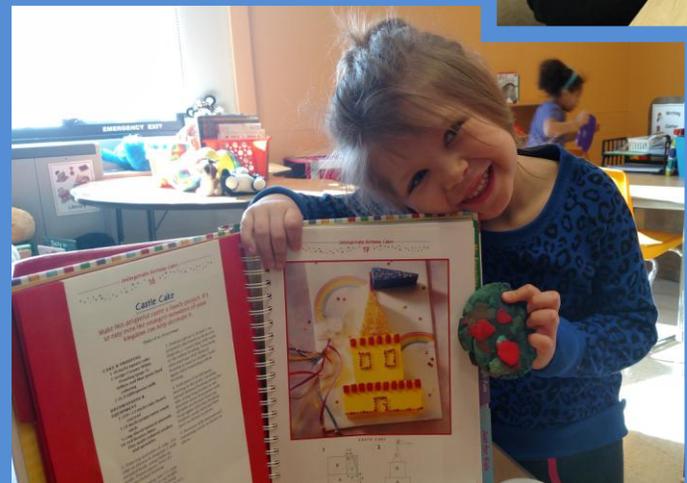


**Delta-Schoolcraft
Great Start Readiness Program
Handbook**



2016-17 GSRP Partners
MDS CAA Early Childhood Program
Small Wonders Preschool
Big Bay de Noc Readiness Program
Emerald Elementary Readiness Preschool
Mid Peninsula Readiness Preschool
Bark River Harris Readiness Program



Content by Topic

Accident or Emergency	11
Admissions.....	6
Affirmative Action Policy.....	13
Attendance.....	7
Birthdays.....	14-15
Child Custody.....	14
Communications with Parents/Guardians.....	14-15
Confidentiality Policy.....	7
Contact Information.....	15
Curriculum & Child Assessment.....	3
Days & Hours of Operations.....	7
Developmental Screening.....	3
Discipline Policy.....	11-12
Dress & Supplies.....	10
Exclusion Policy.....	8-9
Extra Clothing.....	9
Field Trips.....	14
Food for Thought.....	17
Food Service and Nutrition.....	14
Grievance.....	13-14
Health Policy.....	10-11
Illness.....	8-9
Inclement Weather Reminders.....	9
Mandated Reporters.....	12-13
Medication Policy.....	10
Mission Statement.....	3
Multi-tiered Systems of Support-MTSS.....	12-13
Objects not Permitted	11
Outdoor Play.....	9
Parent Involvement.....	4-5
Preschool Poem.....	18
Program Measurement.....	4
Program Philosophy.....	3
Referral Policy.....	6-7
Rest Time Policy.....	10
School Calendar.....	7
Standards.....	4
Student Selection & Placement.....	5
Transition Procedures.....	15
Transportation.....	8
Withdrawal.....	8

Mission Statement

The Great Start Readiness Program's purpose is to provide an atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and creative growth and development of the child. The program follows the guidelines within that of the GSRP, and the State of Michigan's daycare licensing, to ensure the best overall learning experience for the child as a whole.

Program Philosophy

The Great Start Readiness Program believes that each child is unique, each contributing their own special set of interests, needs, and abilities. We strive to meet each child's emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development. We feel children learn best in a caring and creative learning environment. Patience, sharing, responsibility, and teamwork are practiced through participating in the daily routine of GSRP.

Curriculum & Child Assessment

Great Start Readiness Programs use the Creative Curriculum model and the Teaching Strategies GOLD child assessment tool. These are approved by the Michigan Department of Education for GSRP, meeting the Standards of Quality and Curriculum guidelines the State of Michigan has set forth. Creative Curriculum for Preschool is based on five fundamental principles that guide practice and help us understand the reasons for intentionally setting up and operating preschool programs in particular ways.

These are the five principles:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social-Emotional competence is a significant factor for school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

Developmental Screening

In addition to the ongoing assessment, GSRP uses an approved developmental screening tool with every child enrolled. GSRP staff will discuss results with parents including any additional evaluations that may be needed such as, but not limited to, occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, and/or school social workers or behavior specialist.

Standards

GSRP is licensed by the Bureau of Regulatory Services in the State of Michigan and complies with all of the standards put forth by that department. Its operation is governed by the State of Michigan's At Risk Preschool Program and meets or exceeds their guidelines. GSRP is also *licensed* through the State of Michigan and has to follow the same rules as a daycare facility would.

Program Measurement

GSRP is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state wide Great Start Readiness Program. Information is sometimes collected about the GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child or family
- Observe children in the classroom
- Measure what children know about letters, words, or numbers
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child would be identified. **IT IS PROTECTED BY LAW.**

Questions? Contact mde-gsrp@michigan.gov or 517-373-8483 or MDE, Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services, 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008 Lansing, MI 48909

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement with emphasis on increased awareness of child development is a component of GSRP. Parents are invited to complete a response sheet to determine their level of comfortable involvement on program or area-wide advisory committees, or other group sharing roles. A minimum of **two home visits** and **two parent-teacher conferences** will be held for each family. Either the parent/guardian or the teacher may request additional conferences at any time. Because of state regulations concerning class size and teacher ratio, it is not possible for children to bring friends or siblings to visit. Parents/guardians, however, are encouraged to visit GSRP although advance notice is requested due to DHS clearance regulations. During the visit the teacher may not be free to talk with adults. Please understand that the children come first during class time. The teacher will be available to talk with you after the children are dismissed for the day.

GSRP believes that the parent involvement and support is crucial for a child's success. Parents and family members are viewed as partners and colleagues of the early childhood teachers, with both having their own areas of responsibility and expertise. Being involved in

the day to day activities of the classroom will provide good role models not only for your child but for the entire classroom.

Ways to be involved in the classroom:

Participate (chaperone) for field trips, visit the classroom on your child’s birthday or other special day, be a member on the Parent Advisory Board or Policy Council, read to the students, play with the students, or share a talent, job, or culture with the classroom.

Student Selection & Placement

The selection process begins with a joint registration through the Delta-Schoolcraft ISD and MDS Community Action Agency. Parents are notified of registration via radio, newspaper, school announcements, brochures, and word of mouth. Parents fill out an application and have an interview with GSRP/Early Childhood Program staff. The first week of August of the current school year, all completed applications with documentation are reviewed and given priority based on income and other factors of potential risk to school success. Families are notified of acceptance by phone or mail. Any remaining candidates are placed on a waiting list. All waitlist families will receive information from Delta-Schoolcraft ISD on how to find alternate high quality child care or preschool, how to help get their child ready for school and additional opportunities to become involved such as the Great Start Home Visiting Program or Great Start Parent Coalitions.

All applications are processed at the Community Action Agency. Placement with a program will benefit each family’s individual situation and allow for the maximum amount of children placed in a program.

Family income is the most determinant factor for eligibility for GSRP. At least 90% of children enrolled in Delta and Schoolcraft Counties must have parent(s) who are identified as having below 300%; low family income.

2016 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Household Size	Annual Income	Annual Income	Annual Income				
1	\$0-\$11,880	\$11,881-\$17,780	\$17,781-\$23,540	\$23,541-\$29,425	\$29,426 - \$35,310	\$35,311 - \$40,215	\$40,216 and Up
2	\$8,011-\$16,020	\$16,021-\$24,030	\$24,031-\$32,040	\$32,041-\$40,050	\$40,051 - \$48,060	\$48,061 - \$56,070	\$56,071 and Up
3	\$10,081-\$20,160	\$20,161-\$30,240	\$30,241-\$40,320	\$40,321-\$50,400	\$50,401 - \$60,480	\$60,481 - \$70,560	\$70,561 and Up
4	\$12,151-\$24,300	\$24,301-\$36,450	\$36,451-\$48,600	\$48,601-\$60,750	\$60,751 - \$72,900	\$72,901 - \$85,050	\$85,051 and Up
5	\$14,221-\$28,440	\$28,441-\$42,660	\$42,661-\$56,880	\$56,881-\$71,100	\$71,101 - \$85,320	\$85,321 - \$99,540	\$99,541 and Up
6	\$16,291-\$32,580	\$32,581-\$48,870	\$48,871-\$65,160	\$65,161-\$81,450	\$81,451 - \$97,740	\$97,741 - \$114,030	\$114,031 and Up
Ea. additional	\$4,160	\$6,240	\$8,320	\$10,400	\$12,480	\$14,560	\$16,640

- Families under 250% poverty must NOT be charged tuition (Includes all GSRP/Head Start blend families)
- Families in which the GSRP child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) documenting services needed for success in the classroom must NOT be charged tuition.
- Families over 250% will be charged tuition according to the table below as determined and approved by the Delta-Schoolcraft School Readiness Advisory Committee.

Percent Poverty Level	Annual Tuition Fee
Below 250%; Head Start eligible	No tuition
251%-300%	\$181 (Part day)/ \$363 (Full day)
301%-350%	\$363 (Part day)/ \$725 (Full day)
351% and above	\$544 (Part day)/ \$1,088 (Full day)

Admissions

Children who are four years old on or before *December 1st* of the current school year are eligible to apply for GSRP.

1. No child will be denied admission on the basis of race, creed, or religion.
2. Applications will be determined eligible by the Great Start Readiness Program guidelines.
3. Classes will be filled on an income basis followed by a risk priority ranking. Upon applying, all children will be placed on a waiting list and classes filled according to family need. Only children who qualify with completed forms (health appraisal, immunization record, birth certificate, child information card, and proof of income) will be considered for programming.
4. Parents of eligible children will receive notification of acceptance into either Head Start or GSRP, typically by phone. Families needs and preferences will be discussed with them during the enrollment process. As vacancies occur during the school year, they will be filled from the waiting list, or from new registrations, according to the above procedures.

Referral policy

Family support services are available to families in GSRP in both Delta and Schoolcraft Counties. Services can be obtained from the Intermediate School District, Great Start/Parents as Teachers, Department of Health and Human Services, Mental Health Department, and the Woman's Shelter.

If in need of assistance, please contact your child's teacher or family service worker (FSW). GSRP staff is committed to connecting you with whatever resources and supports your family might need.

Confidentiality Policy

All information provided to GSRP about your child and/or family is confidential. Written information is kept in your child's individual file. This information will not be shared with anyone other than school personnel without your written permission, except where required by law. Family and staff have the right to examine their own child's records.

School Calendar

GSRP typically follows the ISD school calendar. Classrooms typically begin programming within two weeks of the start of public school in September and end sometime in May. A tentative GSRP calendar will be handed out to families at the beginning of the school year. The program mandates a certain number of days in session. Due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, days may need to be added at the end of the programming year.

Days & Hours of Operation

GSRP classes meet four days a week (M-Th). Your child may have a morning, afternoon, or full-day session depending on the program your child is attending. GSRP staff will provide a school calendar and hours of operation at your first home visit, orientation or open house.

Attendance

1. Regular attendance in GSRP better prepares your child for elementary school and overall school success.
2. In cases of chronic absenteeism (10 or more days per semester) or excessive tardiness, GSRP staff will contact the parent and work together to determine appropriate supports or interventions that might be helpful for ensuring the child is consistently attending school on time and is ready to learn.
3. On the day(s) your child is absent from school, you must notify the program. Individual programs may have specific instructions for absences. Please provide the reason for the absence and estimated day of return.
4. Tardiness:
 - a. Students are expected to be in the classroom when school begins.
 - b. It is the parents' responsibility to drop off and pick up children on time; or get their child to and from the bus on time.

Withdrawal

Children may be withdrawn from the program for any of the following reasons:

1. Parent request
2. Family moves out of the area and is unable to transport their child to school from their new location.
3. Child behavior(s): If a child endangers him/herself, or the well-being of other children in the program, supports and interventions may be discussed with parents in an effort to help him/her succeed in the classroom. It may become necessary to temporarily remove a child from a classroom should supports be deemed insufficient to meet the child's needs; however, every attempt will be made to support a child through successful completion of the program.

Transportation

Some programs may be able to provide transportation. Providing child transportation to and from GSRP contributes significantly to family access, but this service is not required. DHS child care licensing rules include requirements for the transportation of preschoolers.

Licensing rules assure the safety and welfare of children, that children are properly supervised while being transported, and are not confined in a vehicle for long periods of time. Licensing rules apply to both routine and field trip transportation.

- ❖ Parents give permission for their children to be transported
- ❖ Children are escorted by adults to and from vehicles
- ❖ Children are offered adult assistance when entering and exiting vehicles
- ❖ Children are not to be in a vehicle for more than one continuous hour.

Child transportation for children under four years of age varies by program and district. Please call your GSRP administrator to inquire.

Exclusion policy

Children will be excluded from the program if there are injuries or contagious illnesses that endanger the health and/or safety of others. Children will not be excluded because of the need for additional support, assistance with toileting, or disabilities.

Illness

If your child is too sick to participate in daily activities, then s/he is also too sick to be at school. If your child has any of the following symptoms, he will not be allowed at school:

- **Vomiting or Diarrhea:** If your child vomits or has diarrhea within 12 hours before s/he comes to school, your child is not allowed in school.
- **Fever:** If your child has a fever of 100° or more without the use of fever reducing medications (e.g. Tylenol, Advil), either the night before and/or the morning of school, your child is not allowed in school.
- **Strep Throat:** If your child has had a culture or your doctor suspects strep throat, your child is not allowed in school until the culture results have been returned. If the culture is positive, your child is not allowed in school until he has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- **Pink Eye:** If your child has pink eye, he is not allowed in school until he has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- **Contagious Illness:** If your child has any contagious illness, he must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

YOU MUST NOTIFY GSRP STAFF OF ANY AND ALL ILLNESSES.

Outdoor Play

GSRP will have outdoor play every day, except in the event of extreme weather. It will be 30 minutes for half-day programs and 60 minutes for full-day programs. Examples of extreme weather include but not limited to; high winds, extreme cold weather, thunderstorms, heavy rain, icy conditions, or a combination of conditions. Extreme weather will be evaluated on a daily basis by GSRP staff and administration.

Inclement Weather Reminders

Local radio stations will carry notices of school closings or watch TV 6 out of Marquette, MI or the TV6 App on a smart phone, if possible. Should severe weather conditions develop during class time, you may be asked to make arrangements to pick up your child or plan for an early bus drop.

Extra Clothing

Please send a change of clothes including underwear and socks in a gallon size Ziploc type plastic bag with your child's name on it. (Head Start Blend Programs provide these for families) It will be stored in your child's locker, cubby, or backpack. Even if your child RARELY has a bathroom accident, other types of spills, messes, and unexpected events may require a change of clothing.

Dress and Supplies

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and tennis shoes (flip flops and high heels are NOT recommended). Daily activities include active and **messy** play and the children should

feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. The child's name should be placed on all outdoor clothing and other belongings to help ensure the return of all the personal possessions. The only supply that is required is a backpack, without wheels and LARGE enough to transport the communication folder and projects home. Please send it EVERYDAY. If you do not have the means to provide a backpack, please inform your teacher.

Rest Time Policy

Naptime or quiet time will be provided when preschool children are in attendance five or more continuous hours per day.

Children will be provided with a mat or cot to lie on. Children wishing to use a pillow or blanket will need to bring one from home. Blankets and pillows will be kept separate from each other in the child's locker or cubby. Please wash their blanket weekly. Children will not be required to rest for more than one hour and alternate quiet activities will be provided for those children who do not sleep. Children who are sleeping and do not wake up independently will be gently awakened using soft touches, opening of the blinds, and conversation. Children are expected to assist with putting away their sleeping materials.

Medication Policy

By law we are not allowed to dispense medications unless we have the following documentation:

1. Signed statement from doctor that identifies the child, the medication, the proper dose with schedule and instructions for administration;
2. The medication must have the child's name attached;
3. A signed consent form. Staff will provide necessary forms upon request.

Only medication in its original prescription bottle, labeled with the date of prescription, student's name, and exact dosage, will be administered and only in the presence of another adult.

Health policies

1. Each child is required by the State of Michigan to have on file a health appraisal form, which includes a health statement, record of up-to-date immunizations and medical examination results with the signature of the child's source of medical care. A child's health appraisal form should be complete prior to entry in GSRP.

2. A completed Child Information Record Card is required for each student before attending GSRP. On this form there must be on file for each child a signed guardian and/or another authorized person.
3. If a change of address, doctor, etc. occurs during the school year, the teacher is to be notified and the card updated *immediately*.

Accidents and Emergencies

According to Child Care Licensing Rules, (R 400.8158) accidents or illnesses occurring while a child is in care which result in emergency treatment or hospitalization shall be reported verbally within 24 hours of the incident or parent report of treatment, and in writing by GSRP to the Department of Health and Human Services within 72 hours of the verbal report. In cases of medical emergency during GSRP session, the staff member designated by the teacher will stay with the injured or sick child and administer first aid. GSRP staff, or other adult designated by the teacher will notify the parent/guardian as quickly as possible. If further medical attention is required, or upon request of the parent/guardian, and adult designated by the teacher will call the local ambulance service (dialing 9-1-1), which will transport the child and staff member to the hospital that has been designated on the child's emergency form. Every effort will be made to contact the child's own physical listed on the emergency form.

Objects not permitted

Guns, money, gum, candy, electronics, sharp objects, and inappropriate items are not permitted at school. We prefer that children leave their own toys and games at home unless asked by staff to bring something.

Discipline Policy

The GSRP philosophy is rooted in the fact that children learn best through experiences. GSRP staff guide and direct the children to help them learn to cooperate with their peers and to have positive, educational experiences to encourage and enhance their growth and development. The staff shall not be abusive or neglectful nor use corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child will be deprived of snack, rest, or toilet use as a means of discipline. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others. Removal of a child from the group for disciplinary or health reasons shall be to a location where supervision by staff shall be maintained.

This can best be accomplished by:

- ❖ Having a variety of activities for the children
- ❖ The use of group management techniques, discussing with the children how to handle overcrowding at each area, and allow for sufficient materials.
- ❖ Using the state recommended ratio of no more than eight children to one adult.
- ❖ Using positive language with the children to give feedback for appropriate behavior.
- ❖ A touch to put a child back on task, such as attending at a group time
- ❖ Speaking with a child if behavior is inappropriate for the area or material that they are using. (Children may be asked to choose a different activity for awhile until materials can be used with more care. Children may also be separated to reduce aggression.)
- ❖ If group behavior is a problem, the area that has become a problem for the group to handle, may be closed.

If after exhausting all of these methods, a child still has a problem with inappropriate behaviors, the child may be taken to a quiet area of the room to calm down. When calm, staff will discuss the behavior with him/her in a problem-solving manner. If behavior continues after these measures and either has a high degree of intensity or causes injury to self or others it is cause for concern and further intervention as follows:

- ❖ A parent-teacher conference to discuss the behavior will be the next step.
- ❖ Children with consistent difficulties will be taken through the above procedures, and the parents will be consulted regularly.
- ❖ If necessary, outside assistance will be sought via a DSISD Social Worker or Behavior Specialist.
- ❖ Ultimately, the child could be dismissed from the program; a consideration only when the health, safety, or welfare of this child and/or others in the group is at risk and all attempts to intervene via child and classroom supports have proven ineffective.
- ❖ Non-severe and developmentally appropriate discipline or restraint may be used when reasonable and necessary to prevent a child from harming him/herself. It may also be used to prevent a child from harming other persons or property. Parents will be notified if a restraint was necessary.

Staff will be as consistent as possible with classroom rules so that the children will know what is expected of them. This will help lead the children to successful social interactions.

Multi-tiered Systems of Supports – MTSS

Supports for students with academic challenges

Many children experience challenges with learning. New federal laws have helped schools focus on early intervention when students first show signs of difficulty. These laws include the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004).

MTSS refers to a problem solving process used to improve student learning and success in school. This process involves:

1. Screening all students to identify concerns early. Areas screened include: Communication, fine motor, gross motor, problem solving and personal social skills.
2. Using research-based or proven strategies to improve student learning.
3. Collaboration of staff (Lead and Associate Teacher) and DSISD ancillary staff (Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Early Childhood Specialist, Behavioral Support Staff etc.).
4. Continuous monitoring of student progress throughout.
5. Team meetings to make a coordinated plan for interventions. Everyone on the team is unique and brings a wealth of talents and perspectives. Parents are essential members of the team.

Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and the Early Childhood Specialist may be working in your child's classroom to support student learning. Your child's teacher will have a record book in their classroom where information will be kept on screenings and interventions that have been implemented. Emphasis is on using a collaborative, team approach to increase student achievement.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher or the Early Childhood Specialist for your child's GSRP Classroom.

We believe that home and school together form a positive support system for the growing child. Parents are always kept informed of their child's progress.

Mandated Reporters Policy

GSRP staff are Mandated Reporters. State Statute 722.623, Sec. 3(1) requires any person employed in a professional capacity, which has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, to report the abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Affirmative Action Statement

The GSRP advertises in the public media in order to make openings known to all. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or religion.

Grievance Policy

If a parent wishes to air a complaint or state a concern about anything happening in the classroom or at school the following procedure is to be followed;

1. Contact the teacher directly either in person, by phone, or by written note bringing the item of concern to his/her attention.
2. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the program supervisor or administrator may be contacted.

3. If a solution cannot be reached, the GSRP Early Childhood Contact (ECC) at the Intermediate School District should be contacted to discuss the matter.
4. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached after discussing the issue with the ECC, an appointment may be made with the ISD Superintendent to discuss the concern.

Child Custody

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may NOT limit the other from picking up the child from GSRP. It is not within our rights to withhold a child from a parent unless there has been a **court action**, which limits one parent's right to the child.

Program administration/staff must have documentation on file before action can be taken.

Field Trips

Parents will be informed of field trips in advance through newsletters, notes, etc. Transportation will be provided by GSRP if it is not within comfortable walking distance. Parents may be asked to transport their child in rare circumstances to the site of the field trip if transportation is not available. (This would not apply for GSRP/Head Start blend programs) Family members are encouraged to participate in these field trips with the child; however, younger siblings may not be able to ride the bus due to state regulations regarding children three and under.

Food Service and Nutrition

We can help form good eating habits by introducing nutritious foods early in a child's life. If a child requires a special diet, that parent/guardian will be asked to provide that snack. Snack is offered daily. Breakfast and lunch programs are available in most GSRP-GSRP/Head Start blend programs. Your child's teacher will provide you with this information.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special to young children. We will celebrate your child's birthday by recognizing him/her with a variety of special activities. If you do **not** want us to celebrate your child's birthday, let us know. Some GSRP programs allow birthday treats; (GSRP/Head Start blend programs do not) however, the intention of GSRP is to provide nutritious snacks, so if you wish to send in a treat, think healthy. Please do not feel obligated to do so.

Communications with Parents/ Guardians

Notes and newsletters will be sent home on a regular basis. Please check your child's communication folder daily. Some GSRP programs use email, texting and/or Facebook as

well. Please feel free to share family news with the GSRP staff at any time. This handbook is supplied in an effort to answer any questions regarding GSRP. Please feel free to contact anyone on staff if you have any other questions.

Transition Procedures

The transition to Kindergarten takes place gradually. Parent-teacher conferences and home visits offer parents a formal meeting time with GSRP staff to discuss their child's growth and development, their level of readiness and the upcoming transition to Kindergarten. In addition, all registration materials for Kindergarten are provided for the parents with jointly required material being passed along to the receiving teacher. Finally, an open house in Kindergarten is scheduled in the fall of the next school year. Parents should call their resident district for further information.

Delta Schoolcraft GSRP

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For all other GSRP inquiries, contact:
Tammra Barteld, Early Childhood Contact for Delta-Schoolcraft ISD
tbarteld@dsisd.k12.mi.us or (906) 399-6134

These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education.

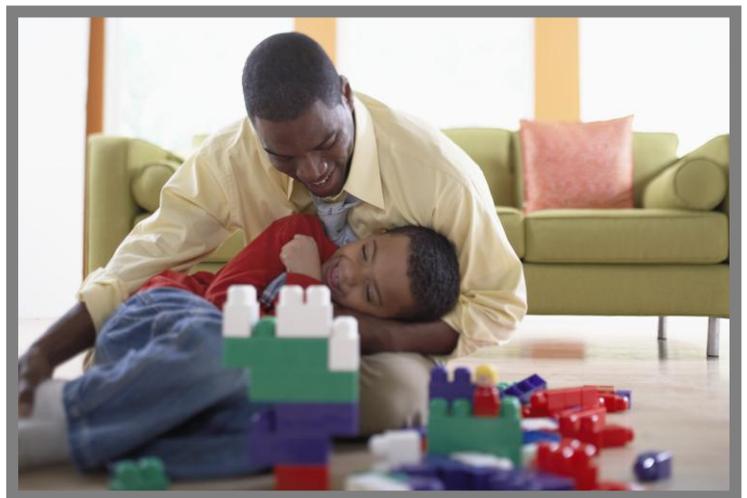
FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Many people still think that all we do in preschool is play! If you were looking into the classroom and did not know anything about GSRP, you might be one of those people. The Great Start Readiness Program is just that, it's a great start! It's a start into learning how to interact with others and solving problems. It's a start to being creative and abstract in their work. It's a start to learning math

problems and reading. Most importantly, it's a start to the things that we can't even predict!

It may look like play to you, but we are working and learning. We are providing you with a poem about the way children learn and grow through play. We hope you find this as touching as we do. And remember as parents, encourage your children to "play" and to play WITH them



because this is only the start of what they are going to do and who they are!

Play...is my work

Please don't say I'm "Just playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play,
About balance, I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up,
Setting the table, caring for the babies,
Don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing."
I may be a mother or a father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint,
Or standing at an easel, or molding and shaping clay,
Please don't let me hear you say, "He is Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I just might be a teacher someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some "playing" at my school,
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "play."
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.
I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods,
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "Just Play."
I'm learning to follow directions and see the differences.
I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run, and move my body,
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning how my body works.
I may be a doctor, nurse, or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today,
And I say, "I just played."
Please don't misunderstand me.
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.



I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work.

I'm preparing for tomorrow.

Today, I am a child and my work is play.