



## LITTLE DUTCH ACADEMY AT THE VIERSEN EARLY LEARNING CENTER

### Building a strong foundation for a quality education at Pella Community Schools.

#### THE FIRST 2,000 DAYS...

There are approximately 2,000 days from when a child is born until he or she enters kindergarten. Nearly 90% of brain growth occurs during these 2,000 days, making this time period one of the most critical for learning. The Little Dutch Academy is dedicated to providing an environment that challenges, supports, and nurtures each child to give them the best possible start to their school experience.



#### LITTLE DUTCH ACADEMY'S MISSION



The mission of Little Dutch Academy is to nurture all children and grow their love for learning. Building strong relationships between staff and students is the foundation of this mission. We want all students to feel loved and valued. Additionally, we desire a partnership with families so that all students thrive both inside and outside of school. Supporting the whole child is essential; thus we will help students develop social skills in addition to academic ones. At this stage of development, learning occurs primarily through play. Therefore, there is an emphasis on exploration through play, supported by scaffolding and guidance from staff. Additionally, with all preschool teachers certified through the Department of Education, we are able to support all diverse academic needs to help all students develop their potential.

#### ENROLLMENT

To be eligible for 4 year old preschool, your child must be four years old on or before September 15. For 3 year old preschool, your child must be three years old on or before September 15. Families can enroll in preschool and wrap-around care starting March 3. Please visit [pellaschools.org/parents/registration](http://pellaschools.org/parents/registration)

## **LITTLE DUTCH ACADEMY PROGRAMS**

### **3 Year Old Preschool**

- Little Dutch Academy Three Year Old Preschool provides a high-quality foundation for education to learn and explore the world around them. The teacher is licensed through the Department of Education.



### **4 Year Old Preschool**

- Little Dutch Academy Four Year Old Preschool provides a high quality education that is individualized to help each student learn and be kindergarten ready. All teachers are licensed through the Department of Education.

### **3 and 4 Year Old Wrap Around Care**

- Little Dutch Academy provides wrap-around care for three and four year olds to continue to provide a nurturing environment that builds upon and supports their preschool experience.

### **Special Education**

- A licensed special education teacher will work with the preschool teacher to support students with an Individualized Education Plan to help them reach their full potential.

Please visit <https://www.pellaschools.org/schools/little-dutch-academy/> for details on each program.

## **A QUALITY EDUCATION AT PELLA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

Attending preschool at Little Dutch Academy is just the start to a quality education at Pella Community Schools. Being part of the school district, Little Dutch Academy meets every student where they are at and helps them develop their potential.

- Pella Schools understands that every child may not be ready for kindergarten when they are five. To allow some families and students to have a bonus year to grow emotionally, socially, academically, or physically before starting kindergarten, they offer two sections of Pre-K that families can opt into.
- Preschool through 12th grade not only focuses on academics, but uses social emotional programs to help develop a well-rounded student. Preschool uses AI's Pals curriculum to help students learn self regulation skills as well as how to interact with friends and solve problems. Kindergarten - 12th grade uses Leader in Me curriculum to help all students understand that 'Everyone has Genius' and 'Everyone Can Be a Leader'! Students are taught the '7 Habits of Highly Effective People' and learn how to apply it to be as successful as they can be!
- Pella Schools is dedicated to meeting all student needs and helping them grow. This starts in the preschool classroom where teachers identify and encourage students' growth academically and social-emotionally. Throughout elementary school, students participate in WIN (What I Need) Time where they engage in a differentiated classes aligned to exactly what they need to succeed. The Middle School and High School offer a wide variety of classes that allow students to follow the path they are interested in and need to equip them for success after high school.

## **LITTLE DUTCH ACADEMY PROGRAMS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Is my child ready for preschool?**

Yes! It doesn't matter where your child is developmentally, we will be excited to have them attend Little Dutch Academy! Our certified teachers are always excited to meet each and every child where they are at academically, socially, and emotionally, and help them grow and thrive!

### **What does preschool look like at Little Dutch Academy?**

Preschool is fun! Our preschool teachers are experts at making learning engaging! Students learn literacy, math, science, social studies, and arts, and much of it is done through songs, dance, and play. Play is an important component present in an early childhood setting; through play, children develop healthy brains, bodies, and relationships. Open-ended play allows children to be creative and learn how to interact with others, both peers and adults. Additionally, research has shown that play helps develop self-control, language, reasoning, and social skills, which are important for kindergarten readiness. The curriculum we use in preschool, Creative Curriculum, allows for this important play with guidance and scaffolding from educators.



### **Does my child need to be potty-trained to attend 3 or 4 Year Old Preschool?**

We strongly encourage families to have their preschoolers potty trained before attending! This allows for students and associates to spend more time in the classroom! Being potty trained is not a requirement, though. If preschoolers are not potty trained, we will partner with families to make a plan that will be carried out at Little Dutch Academy and home to help the preschooler learn this life skill. We also understand that some students will have disabilities that delay potty-training. Our bathrooms will be equipped to serve these students as well.

### **What is the discipline policy at Little Dutch Academy?**

Staff at Little Dutch Academy use preventative strategies to build a positive, welcoming, and warm learning environment. This includes, but is not limited to, building strong positive relationships with each student, teaching clear expectations and routines, having high expectations, and providing an engaging learning environment. If students display behaviors that are outside our expectations, we will re-teach and provide safe boundaries if needed. We will communicate with families if there are concerning behaviors and, if needed, make a plan to help shape behaviors for the child's success.

### **What is the student-teacher ratio in the classrooms?**

The ratio for preschool is 1:10. There will be a certified teacher in every 3 and 4 Year Old Preschool Classroom and at least one associate. Having at least two adults in the room allows for more differentiation and guidance to help all students grow and achieve. The 3 Year Old Preschool Classroom will start with 16 students per section with room to accept students who qualify for special education to join during the year. In the wrap-around care classrooms, the ratio is 1:12 for four year olds and 1:10 for three year olds.

To learn more about our preschool program, please visit our handbook at <https://www.pellaschools.org/schools/little-dutch-academy/>