



# 2025-2026

# Cordova STEAM

# Preschool Handbook

Welcome to the Cordova STEAM Preschool! The Cordova Recreation & Park District (CRPD) strives to serve and meet the needs of its community by providing an affordable part-time preschool program and we are excited that you are interested in our program. To make sure that our program is a good fit for your family and to ensure the best possible experience for your child, we ask that you carefully review this handbook as it contains important information to help you prepare for preschool.

The STEAM Preschool offers 2 different age appropriate classes:

### **Micros**

Tuesday & Thursday 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

\* children must be 3 on or before 9/1/2025 and fully potty trained.

### **Megas**

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

\* children must be 4 on or before 9/1/2025 and fully potty trained.

## General Information

**Location:** Hagan Community Center Building 3  
2197 Chase Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Contact Info:</b> STEAM Classroom<br>916-369-9844<br><a href="mailto:tschleeter@cordovarpd.gov">tschleeter@cordovarpd.gov</a> | Hagan Community Center<br>916-369-9844   |
| Courtney Onstot<br>Recreation Coordinator<br>916-382-8567<br><a href="mailto:constot@cordovarpd.gov">constot@cordovarpd.gov</a>  | Matthew Zimmerling<br>Recreation Supervisor II<br>916-307-6865<br><a href="mailto:mzimmerling@cordovarpd.gov">mzimmerling@cordovarpd.gov</a> |

**Hours:** 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Program Dates:** September 2 – May 8

|                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Closure Dates:</b> | School Holiday             |
| October 13            | Veteran’s Day              |
| November 11           | Thanksgiving Break         |
| November 24 – 28      | Winter Break               |
| December 22 – Jan 2   | Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| January 19            | President’s Week Break     |
| February 16 – 20      | Spring Break               |
| April 3 – 10          |                            |

**Fees:** A \$55 Non-Refundable administration fee is due at the time of registration

| Payment Due       | Month       | Micros<br>(Ages 3-4) T/TH | Megs<br>(Ages 4-5) M/W/F |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Upon Registration | September   | \$236                     | \$330                    |
| 9/20              | October     | \$236                     | \$330                    |
| 10/20             | November    | \$236                     | \$330                    |
| 11/20             | December    | \$236                     | \$330                    |
| 12/20             | January     | \$236                     | \$330                    |
| 1/20              | February    | \$236                     | \$330                    |
| 2/20              | March       | \$236                     | \$330                    |
| 3/20              | April & May | \$236                     | \$330                    |

# Welcome

The Cordova STEAM preschool is a play-based program that integrates STEAM activities into our daily curriculum; STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. Our philosophies and curriculum are based on NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards and competencies for early childhood education. Our program aims to support all areas of development, including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic and aesthetic domains (critical elements of brain development: learning motivation, social interactions and play) while developing a love for STEAM activities. Our philosophy is to encourage playful learning that combines a child's interest with learning opportunities in the context of playful, intentional and enjoyable experiences.

Our staff provide joyful and meaningful curriculum for our program participants while instilling the principles of fairness and justice that reflect our goals of anti-bias education. Our teachers build on each child's unique set of individual and family strengths, cultural background, language, abilities and experience to equitably support each child's development and learning. Our playful learning approach includes child selected and directed play and exploration along with teacher guidance; teachers set up the environment and use open-ended questions and suggestions to encourage children toward a learning goal while still providing children with choices.

CRPD staff will follow local and state guidance and mandates to keep children and staff safe while participating at Cordova STEAM Preschool. Staff will continue to provide enhanced cleaning measures and handwashing during the preschool program. Additional information and modifications will be provided as necessary.

We hope your family enjoys their time in the Cordova STEAM Preschool. We are looking forward to the fun and joy, as we get to experience this year together!

Warm Regards,

Courtney Onstot  
Recreation Coordinator

## **Registration:**

Your initial registration into the program must be done with CRPD staff and is not available online. The \$55 nonrefundable administrative fee and first month's payment is required when registering. The Student Information Form, signed Agreement, Waiver & Release Form and verification of the child's Birth Certificate and Immunization Record also need to be provided with registration. Information collected includes, but is not limited to emergency contacts, individuals authorized to pick up, medical information and other relevant behavioral and health information.

We are unable to hold spaces without payment, completed forms or verification of Birth Certificate and Immunization Records.

## **Payments:**

Payments are for one-month sessions. Payments are due on the 20th of the prior month, for example, October fees are due September 20<sup>th</sup>. Payments can be made in the office or by logging into your CRPD account, contact our Hagan Community Center Office if you need help logging into your account. Payments will be considered late if not paid by 25<sup>th</sup> of the month and a \$10 late fee will be added to your account. If payment is not received by the first of the month, your child will not be allowed to attend class until payment is received. If payment is not made before the 10th of the month your child will be administratively dropped from the program and your child's spot will be opened to for families on the waitlist. If you would like to rejoin the program and space is available a new \$55 administrative fee will be required and updated paperwork must be submitted to restart the program.

## **Arrival & Dismissal:**

Children must be accompanied by a grown-up at the start and dismissal of class. The Classroom doors will open at 9:00 a.m. for drop-off. Dismissal will begin at 11:55 a.m. Grown-Ups must be on the authorized pickup list and have a photo ID available for staff to verify identity. This time can also be used to talk with the teacher regarding any important questions or updates. There is a \$1 per minute late fee for children who are not picked up by 12:05 pm. Late fees will be added to your family account and children will not be able to attend the next session until all fees are paid.

## **Communications:**

Families will be able to communicate via the Class Dojo app. Class Dojo is a great tool to have direct contact with the program; you'll be able to message staff, receive daily updates, share photos, and access the activity calendar. Families can sign up through an invite that will be emailed by Ms. Trish.

## **Health & Safety:**

In the event of illness, please keep sick children at home as they will benefit more by returning to class well-rested and healthy. In the event your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, such as Pink Eye, Strep Throat, Head Lice, Chicken Pox, Measels or Mumps, please notify our

Recreation Coordinator, Courtney at [constot@cordovarpd.gov](mailto:constot@cordovarpd.gov) immediately. Children who arrive sick or become sick while at the program will be sent home immediately. Grown-ups must be prepared to pick up as soon as possible should they receive notification that their child is showing signs of illness.

### **Medications:**

The teachers are not permitted to administer medications to the child under any circumstances. If an emergency arises teachers will assess the situation, seek medical attention, and contact the grown-up immediately. Children should be aware of their allergies, as well as their medications, and have a basic knowledge of administration. Teachers can store allergy medications/epi-pens in the classroom if the item is clearly labeled with a prescription in the child's name.

### **Allergies:**

If your child has any allergies, please make sure it is **listed on their Student Information Sheet and talk with your child's teacher if you have any concerns.** Please make sure your teacher is aware of all food allergies.

**The Cordova STEAM Preschool Program is a peanut free zone.**

We will make every reasonable effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If your child requires accommodations, please complete the CRPD Reasonable Accommodations Questionnaire which can be found online at [crpd.com/recreation/inclusion](http://crpd.com/recreation/inclusion).

## **Special Events:**

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are important days to children and our staff enjoy sharing this special celebration. We sing, "Happy Birthday," to children during snack time and have a birthday sticker for them to wear. Children may bring a treat to share with their classmates to celebrate. We understand not all families celebrate birthdays, please speak with your teacher if you prefer not to have a classroom celebration. All treats need to be packaged with an ingredient list available.

**Please do not bring treats with peanuts or peanut butter products.**

### **Field Trips**

Grown-up participation field trips are scheduled throughout the year and will be listed on the monthly calendar. Families are responsible for their own transportation to and from the destination and are required to stay the entire time. Fee's are included in tuition for one grown-up and the child. Field trips are special days for the child to spend with their class and whenever possible we hope these trips can be just for the children in the class. In the event additional children or Grown-ups attend they will be responsible to pay for any participation or entrance fees.

### **"Special Days"**

The school has many "special days", our Winter Celebration, end-of-the-year pool party, Graduation (for the Megs) and other special days to enhance and bring to reality our weekly curriculum. Additional information is provided prior to each event and some events may be combined with both classes and held on a day your child does not usually attend. Information and dates will be provided to the family as far in advance as possible when this does occur.

## **Program Expectations:**

### **Preschool Rules:**

We have a few rules to keep children, staff, and our facilities safe. Rules will be discussed weekly with reminders throughout the week. Please review with your child prior to the start of program:

- Follow directions; listen to, respect, and cooperate with others
- Respect the park, facilities, and animals
- Wear shoes at all times while in program
- Do not bring toys or valuables from home
- No sharing of food with children or staff

### **Child Behaviors:**

We realize children will sometimes have a difficult day; they may become aggressive with others, have a difficult time listening, or make unsafe choices. Our first approach is always through positive communication to aid in problem solving skills, appropriate emotional behaviors, and healthier self-direction. When this proves ineffective, we have a three-step process that all staff follow.

- 1) Redirection: focuses on the intent of the behavior and allows the child to change course of their actions in a safe manner
- 2) Limited choice: if the behavior persists, the child is then given two appropriate choices from the staff. Each choice is a safe resolution to the problem at hand
- 3) Removal from the activity: if the child is still not able to make a safe choice, then the teacher will remove the child from the activity and refocus their energy until the child is ready to make safe and kind choices

In the event of a major disruption, the child's grown-up will be contacted and if necessary, a conference will be held to discuss a solution.

### **Restroom:**

Your child is required to be completely potty trained before the first day of school. **Pull-ups and diapers may not be used at preschool.** A child that is completely potty trained will be able to:

- Identify the specific signs from their body that it is time to use the restroom
- Make the decision to stop their current activity and go to the restroom
- Undress and dress themselves
- Thoroughly wipe and clean themselves after using the restroom

Teachers are available to assist with buttons and zippers. If a child needs help, the teacher can talk the child through the process, but they cannot enter the restroom stall with them.

We understand that accidents can happen. In the event of a bathroom accident, if the child has a spare set of clothes we will talk them through removing their soiled clothing and then place the soiled clothes into a plastic bag. If the child does not have a spare set of clothes or needs help cleaning and changing a Grown-up will be called to help change or pick up the child. If accidents continue to occur the child may be removed from the program until they are completely potty trained.

## **Program Information:**

We have two class options at the Cordova Steam Preschool:

**Megas** is scheduled for Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and is a great option for older/returning students who are comfortable attending school three days a week and will be enrolling in Kindergarten next school year. Students registering for Megas must be 4 years old on or before September 1 to enroll. The teacher will conduct **student evaluations** in the fall and spring for the students in the Megas class. The purpose of the evaluation is to help us individualize curriculum and set goals for each child.

**Micros** is scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday mornings and is a great option for younger students who have not attended any type of structured program. Students registering for Micros must be 3 years old on or before September 1 to enroll.

### **Things to Bring**

- **Play Clothes** – Children should wear clothes that can get dirty. Please feel free to pack a change of clothes for your child if needed.
- **Shoes** - Children must arrive with closed-toed shoes to be able to run in; please NO Crocs, we often play at the playground with bark.
- **Backpack** - Please ensure that your child's bag is light enough to carry. Your child's backpack should have a weather appropriate change of clothes and their snack. Two shoulder strapped bags are suggested.
- **Snack** - Children will eat morning snack near 10 a.m. Please provide a health snack that your child will enjoy.
- **Water** - Refillable water bottles are recommended. Water breaks are encouraged throughout the day to keep hydrated. Staff will assist with refilling of water bottles

### **What NOT to Bring**

We are not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen belongings. Toys, valuables and electronics are not recommended.

### **Lost and Found**

We ask that you label all of your child's belongings so that we can do our best to return lost items to the right person.

### **Daily Schedule:**

|            |                           |
|------------|---------------------------|
| 9:00 a.m.  | Sign-in                   |
| 9:15 a.m.  | Learning Lab Team Meeting |
| 9:45 a.m.  | Indoor Discovery          |
| 10:30 a.m. | Nutrition Break           |
| 11:00 a.m. | Outdoor Exploration       |
| 11:45 a.m. | Collaboration             |
| 12:00 p.m. | Dismissal                 |

### **Sign In**

Children will practice writing their names when they arrive in the classroom. Each child will have a weekly journal to help the child practice using a pencil and to give them an opportunity to exercise their fine motor muscles. Though there are many exercises we may use to assist in the development of these skills, each child will learn to write at their own pace.

## **Learning Lab Team Meeting**

This time includes music, dancing and storytelling. Children develop rhythm, social skills, gross and fine motor skills when learning a new song. Story time helps literacy development a love for literature and fosters active participation. Stories teach the alphabet, colors, counting concepts, self-identity, culture, family dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Children also learn self-control as they wait to share their input during the team meeting. This time also includes discussion of the calendar and a brief instructional time about the current focus of study. Table experiments, investigations or activities will be introduced, and a chance for children to ask questions.

## **Indoor Discovery**

This is the time of day when children will have the freedom to choose their path of exploration. Each day the teacher will offer three distinct opportunities at the preschool tables to discover something new in addition to the play options that are present in our everyday classroom.

- 1) **Chemistry and Physics:** The chemistry discovery table will offer varied tactile/sensory experiences including but not limited to sand, water, orbeez, rice or playdough with various implements similar to measuring cups, marble tracks, funnels and toys. This gives children many new understandings of physics, density, spatial relationships, measuring, cause and effect, in addition, it will lead to fine and gross motor development by exercising the hands and practicing skills such as pouring and grasping.
- 2) **Math and Engineering:** Math discoveries will include quantity, classification, number recognition, math operations and patterning. This will be done using a variety of materials, both with teacher support, and children working independently. Children will also learn about sequencing which builds the foundation for coding, as well as early reading and writing skills.
- 3) **Science:** This discovery table will include the opportunity to investigate a variety of natural items such as plant dissections, rock and mineral study, animal discards such as shed snakeskin and empty beehives. The classroom will conduct weekly experiments pertaining to the monthly theme; for example, if the class is exploring weather, the class will recreate rain clouds or make a tornado in a bottle. The children will learn the scientific method; learning how to originate and share their hypothesis, carry out the experiment, record their results and form their own conclusions. The class will also follow the engineering design process; this gives the children the ability to perform inquiries through observations and investigations as well as documenting and communicating their inquiries.
- 4) **Art and Technology:** This table will offer an opportunity to create something often related to the monthly theme, a book that we have read or a subject of interest to children. We will touch on subjects such as shapes, colors and spatial awareness which tie into early math concepts. This table will have a lot of variation throughout the year because it is used to dive deeper into child-led discoveries.

In addition to the discovery tables daily curriculum, children will have the opportunity to explore dramatic play in the Imagination Station and create in the Art Lab. The Art Lab offers loose recycled items and a wide variety of crafting materials for open-ended creations. We offer a variety of building materials at the Engineering Workshop and many toys on rotation. There is a cozy Research Library and a Recording Station to practice observing, writing skills and to sketch new ideas. The classroom Science and Math Lab offers many science and math materials that are readily available.



## **Nutrition Break**

Grown-ups are required to provide a healthy snack and beverage for their child. Fruit, vegetables, cheese, crackers, juice and flavored water are all options that are recommended. Sugary or salty treats should be brought for birthdays and special occasions only.

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## **Outdoor Exploration**

When playing outside children develop gross motor skills, a sense of body limitation and self-direction. Outside play will be spent at the on-site playground and in the courtyard in front of the classroom. If the weather does not allow us to go outside, we will extend free play in the classroom or inside the larger building (Building 1). Often, teachers will guide gross motor activities inside the classroom to give children the same learning opportunities as outside play.

## **Collaboration**

In small groups, the teacher guides the class to focus on a specific skill set or goal. At this time each child is involved in a lesson with others of a similar skill level. The teacher or aide will sit with each small group to ensure best practice.

## **Calendar and Monthly Themes**

The teacher will create a monthly theme for the class that will relate to an area of STEAM and it will also include a program learning goal for that month. Activities throughout the week will tie into the current theme. The calendar and newsletter will also include any special subject matter the teachers want to convey to the grown-ups. This is a great tool to help you keep track of timelines, essential dates or special events for the program.

## **Program Goals**

To be ready for kindergarten, we assist children in becoming socially competent, emotionally self-regulated, physically capable and cognitive critical thinkers with a love for learning and we accomplish these goals in the following ways:

- 1) Socially Competent – we can help children reach social competence by guiding them to:
  - Practice problem-solving skills
  - Compassionately interact with peers
  - Communicate and respond effectively
  - Respect personal space and personal decisions
- 2) Emotionally Self-Regulated – we can help children to manage emotions on their own and recognize the emotions of others by providing opportunities to:
  - Build self-confidence
  - Express their emotions
  - Teach and demonstrate empathy
  - Encourage a growth mindset
- 3) Physically Capable - we can help children be physically capable of success in kindergarten by encouraging the practice of:
  - Fine motor skills (writing/cutting)
  - Gross motor skills (running/jumping/balance)
  - Independence by taking care of their own needs

- 4) Cognitive Critical Thinkers – We can help children’s cognitive development and critical thinking skills by:
  - Providing a routine of academics (ABCs & 123s)
  - Asking open-ended questions (WHY?)
  - Supporting language development
  
- 5) Love for Learning – by creating a positive, memorable first experience in school by:
  - Creating environments for discovery and reflection
  - Using positive reinforcement
  - Having fun; both teacher and child

## **Staff**

We are very proud of the quality of staff we have assembled for this program. Our staff are hired and trained specifically for these leadership positions. Candidates are screened through an interview process, a reference check and a DOJ Live Scan fingerprinting check. Our staff have been selected for their enthusiasm, love of children, and the unique skills and strengths they bring to the program.

### **Preschool Teacher and Aide**

The teacher and aide are responsible for facilitating, initiating and leading children’s experiments, lessons and explorations. They work directly with children and are accountable for their safety and supervision throughout the day’s activities. The teacher and aide are expected to create and maintain a safe, enjoyable and fun atmosphere for children, as well as be a leader and a role model for appropriate social and physical behaviors.

### **Recreation Coordinator**

Under the direction of the Recreation Supervisor, the Recreation Coordinator is responsible for the daily operations of the program, safety and supervision of all staff and participants, proper opening/closing of facilities, maintaining and inventorying supplies, forms and records, as needed. They will assist in creating or improving themes, curriculum, policies, procedures and scheduling staff. The Recreation Coordinator will also address any customer service or staff-related issues.

### **Recreation Supervisor**

The Recreation Supervisor is responsible for creating and/or implementing the program, the policies and the procedures necessary to ensure safety of staff and participants in addition to providing quality community enrichment. The Recreation Supervisor deals with the administration and registration of the program along with customer service and satisfaction. The supervisor also organizes and conducts the hiring and training process for staff.

Thank you for choosing Cordova STEAM Preschool for your early childhood educational needs. We look forward to a wonderful year with your child!