

# Stellar Start PLAYSchool

## Parent Handbook 2025-2026



**Enrollment Questions?**

Email Ms. Dallas at  
[dorvick@chicorec.gov](mailto:dorvick@chicorec.gov)



**CARD**  
Chico Area Recreation & Park District

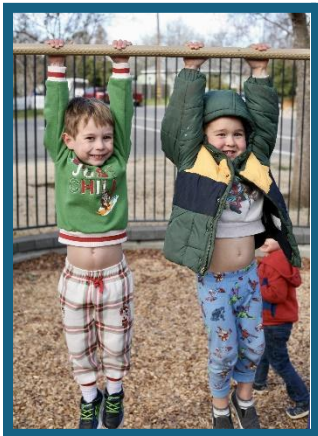
# Welcome to Stellar Start PLAYSchool

## Meet our Program Manager, Ms. Dallas!



Hi there! My name is Ms. Dallas, and I am thrilled to be leading our Stellar Start Playschool program. I graduated from Chico State in 2022 with a degree in Mathematics Education. I have spent time as a substitute and instructional aid in various traditional and non-traditional classroom settings. I have become especially passionate about growth and learning in recreational environments at CARD. I have been with CARD for nearly six years, working in programs ranging from Parent-Tot classes to High School basketball leagues.

Some of my favorite programs to run are for our 3-5-year-olds: our former preschool, Little Wonders, and ShortE Sports. Preschool children are at a magical age, constantly full of wonder and learning. It's incredibly rewarding to be a part of the mission.



We can't wait to meet you at Stellar Start PLAYSchool! This is a sweet age when children discover themselves, their friends, and the world around them. At Stellar Start, we champion learning through PLAY! Instructors lead engaging, hands-on activities with age-appropriate academics and fundamental movement skills woven throughout.

We look forward to helping big dreams blast off at Stellar Start.

## Program Philosophy

At Stellar Start, we believe preschool children learn best through play and exploration. We create a unique environment where children develop academic, social, and classroom-readiness skills, all while engaging in play with their peers. The focus is on making this first classroom experience one that fosters a love of learning.



## What Makes Us Stellar

Each week includes activities that encourage growth in the following areas:

- **Age-appropriate Academics:** Students practice letter sounds and letter recognition, counting, shapes, colors, tracing and holding a pencil, opposites, rhyming, and patterns.
- **Social-Emotional Skills:** Students practice sharing, respecting others' space, expressing emotions, including others, resolving conflicts, working as a team, and taking turns.
- **Classroom Readiness Skills:** Students practice raising their hands, taking turns, sharing, lining up, transitioning between activities, writing their names, and using scissors and glue.
- **Fundamental Movement Skills:** Students practice jumping, balancing, skipping, throwing, kicking, catching, and dancing.
- **STEAM Concepts:** Students participate weekly in STEAM explorations, which include science experiments, building challenges, art projects, number games, and many more!

## Program Units

Some of the exciting monthly themes we may explore include:



Outer Space, Under the Sea, Winter Wonderland, Flowers and Worms, Rainbows, Transportation, Dinosaurs, My Body, Robots, Our Five Senses, Leaves, Seasons, Our Calendar, Animals and Babies, Music, and more!

# Program Details

**Ages:** 3-5 years old

**Days:** Tuesday & Thursday

**Hours:** 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**Dates:** See below.

Visit our website at [www.chicorec.gov/stellar-start](http://www.chicorec.gov/stellar-start) for parent resources.



## Contacts

**Stellar Start Playschool Program Manager:** Dallas Orvick

**Email:** dorvick@chicorec.gov

**Cell Phone:** 530-514-8874

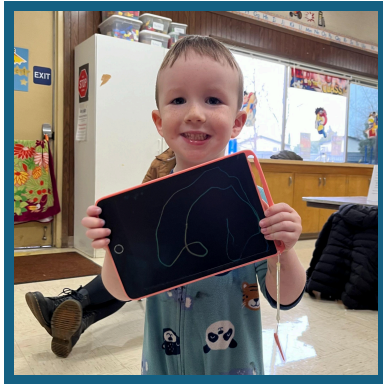
*You can reach us on the cell phone during program hours. After hours, you can text or leave a voicemail.*

**Location:** Dorothy F. Johnson Center, 775 E. 16<sup>th</sup> St Chico, CA 95926

Toddler Classroom entrance through the black playground gates



# Program Dates and Fees



The Parent or Legal Guardian who registered the child is responsible for paying all fees. Fees for the 2025/26 school year are listed below. Billing is on a month-to-month basis, and monthly fees vary based on the number of program days. CARD does not pro-rate for days unattended. See the program calendar in this handbook.

## Late Pick-Up Fees

Your child must be picked up no later than the program end time. A late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute is charged for the first 3 instances. The late fee increases to \$5.00 per minute starting on the 4th instance. If your child is picked up late 6 times, they will be removed from the program.

**CARD's TAX ID # 94-1156263**

Month (Tu/Th)	Dates	Fee (\$31/per day)
September 2025	Sept 2-25	\$248 (8 sessions)
October 2025	Sept 30-Oct 30	\$310 (10 sessions)
	Nov 4-20	
November 2025	*program running on 11/11	\$186 (6 sessions)
December 2025	Dec 2-18	\$186 (6 sessions)
January 2026	Jan 6-29	\$248 (8 sessions)
February 2026	Feb 3-26	\$248 (8 sessions)
	Mar 3-26	
March 2026	*no program 3/17, 3/19	\$186 (6 sessions)
April 2026	Mar 31-Apr 30	\$310 (10 sessions)
May 2026	May 5-21	\$186 (6 sessions)

# Behavior and Bathroom Expectations

## Questions to consider before registration:

Our goal is for your child to be successful in the program. If your answer is "NO" to one or more questions, your child may not be ready for this program.

- Can they meet the Behavior and Bathroom Expectations? (see below)
- Can they stay with the group and not run away when upset or overwhelmed? Our programs maintain set ratios and are not designed for one-on-one care.
- Is your child overwhelmed with loud noises? At times, the program can be loud.
- Is your child comfortable when you are not present?
- Does your child warm up to new situations where they do not know anyone?



## Behavior Expectations

Below are the behavior expectations for all children. If behavior expectations are not being met, staff will use their best judgment when deciding what level of consequence is most appropriate for the circumstances.

- **Be Safe** (includes staying with the group, keeping hands and feet to themselves, following rules)
- **Be Respectful** (includes listening and following directions, using appropriate language, being kind to others, using equipment properly)
- **Be Responsible** (includes using the restroom independently/no bathroom accidents, telling the truth)

CARD programs are committed to being safe and enjoyable places for all. Our programs maintain set ratios and are not designed for one-on-one care. Our program ratio is 1:8 with two staff for a max of 16 children per session. Staff may suspend or expel a child from the program for recurring behavioral concerns or extreme situations.

CARD will not tolerate participants compromising the safety of themselves or others, causing or threatening physical injury to another person, bringing weapons or illegal contraband to the program, or vandalizing the program equipment or space. Any of these or other actions deemed dangerous, illegal, or harmful will result in immediate expulsion from the program.

## **Bathroom Expectations**

**All children must be fully potty trained and able to use the restroom independently (no pull-ups).** Staff may verbally assist children with bathroom usage; however, your child must be able to do the following independently:

- communicate their need to use the bathroom.
- use the toilet without making a mess.
- wipe and pull up their pants.
- flush the toilet.
- get soap from the wall dispenser.
- turn on and off the water.
- pull a paper towel down.
- change their underwear.



In a bathroom accident, staff will contact parents/guardians to request immediate pick-up or assistance with cleaning and clothing change. Recurring bathroom accidents may result in removal from the program. Please always send your child a change of clothes stored in a zip-lock plastic bag so that dirty clothes may be sent home bagged if necessary.

## **Behavior Management**

We adhere to developmentally appropriate practices and guidelines, recognizing that each child has unique growth patterns, personalities, learning styles, and family backgrounds. While certain behaviors are common at specific ages or stages, we acknowledge that children acquire social skills at their own pace. With this in mind, we carefully observe each child and create individualized behavior plans when necessary.

Our approach emphasizes "positive discipline," which focuses on reinforcing positive behaviors rather than addressing negative ones. We may redirect children and discuss appropriate behavior with them. When needed, we speak in a firm yet caring tone. Removing a child from the rest of the group may be necessary. If a behavior continues, a **Behavior Notification Form** may be reviewed with parents at pick-up. If behavior persists, we will meet with the child's parents or guardians to develop a Behavior Contract.

## **Disenrollment Policy**

CARD reserves the right to disenroll any child at any time if we determine that disenrollment is in the child's best interest and/or the program. Our primary goal is to provide high-quality care and early education for all enrolled children, but in rare cases, disenrollment may be necessary.

# General Expectations

To access your CARD online account, visit [www.chicorec.gov](http://www.chicorec.gov) and click "Account Login." **You will use the email address you provided during enrollment as your log-in, and your default password is *welcome1*.**



## Attendance

CARD does not have attendance requirements; your child may attend days/hours as needed. It would be helpful for you to notify our staff if your child is absent.

**Unexplained absences will not be confirmed by CARD staff.** All children must be signed in each day. Only authorized pick-up people will be allowed to sign a child out.

## Authorized Pick-up People

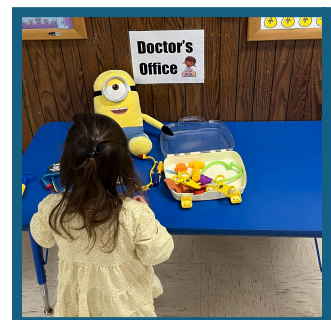
The Parent or Legal Guardian who enrolled the child is the only individual who can access the child's account information and may designate individuals who can add or remove people from the child's pick-up list. Anyone listed as an authorized pick-up person may sign out the child. **Photo ID will be checked!** These rules are strictly enforced for your child's safety; no exceptions will be made.

To add individuals to the authorized pick-up list for your child, you can

- Turn in an [Authorized Pick-Up Add](#) form
- Provide a written note with your signature to the program. If you cannot give this note to staff in person, you may write a note and text a picture to the site's cell phone. CARD does not allow phone-ins as an authorized release of a child.

## Snacks/Lunch

CARD does not provide food. Please send your child a large, hearty lunch for lunchtime, plenty of small healthy snacks for snack time, and a full water bottle daily. Food and water should be in containers the child can open independently.





## **Personal Belongings**

Children should not bring valuables to the program. Please label your child's belongings, such as water bottles, jackets, and backpacks. CARD is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **Program Attire**

Be prepared for the weather each day! Layers are always strongly recommended. In the spring, please send children wearing hats, pre-applied sunscreen, and bug spray. Water clothes and shoes should be packed daily for playing in the Chapman Park Splash Pad, and a change of clothes. In the winter, please send children with warm coats and rain jackets.

## **Health Policies**

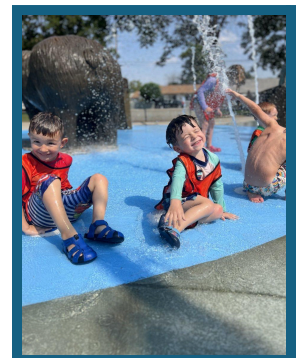
CARD does not store or dispense medication. While children may bring sunscreen and bug spray to the program, CARD staff are prohibited from applying them to children. Please drop off your children with sunscreen and bug spray already applied.

If your child becomes ill at the program, you will be notified and must arrange to have your child picked up immediately. Once your child has been fever-free for 24 hours, they can return to the program. **Please notify staff if your child has been exposed to any contagious disease or condition, such as COVID-19, chicken pox, lice, pink eye, mumps, measles, etc., so we can notify other parents immediately.**

- Do not send your child to the program if they are not feeling well, have excessive coughing, have an excessive runny nose, or have a temperature over 100.4°. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning.
- If a child indicates they do not feel well, you will be called for immediate pick-up.
- If a child has COVID-19 symptoms, they may not attend the program. Please follow guidelines set by local health officials.

## **Accommodation and Inclusion**

We are happy to work with those with special needs to ensure equal access to our recreation programs. Please refer to the Accommodations Policy and Request Form found [HERE](#).



Please note that participants needing reasonable accommodation must register for an activity or program and submit a completed Accommodation Request Form no later than four weeks before the start date of the activity or program.

## **Code of Conduct**

To ensure the safety of all children and staff in our programs, individuals are responsible for adhering to the program rules and policies whenever they are in the program. This includes appropriate language, a civil tone of voice, a calm demeanor,



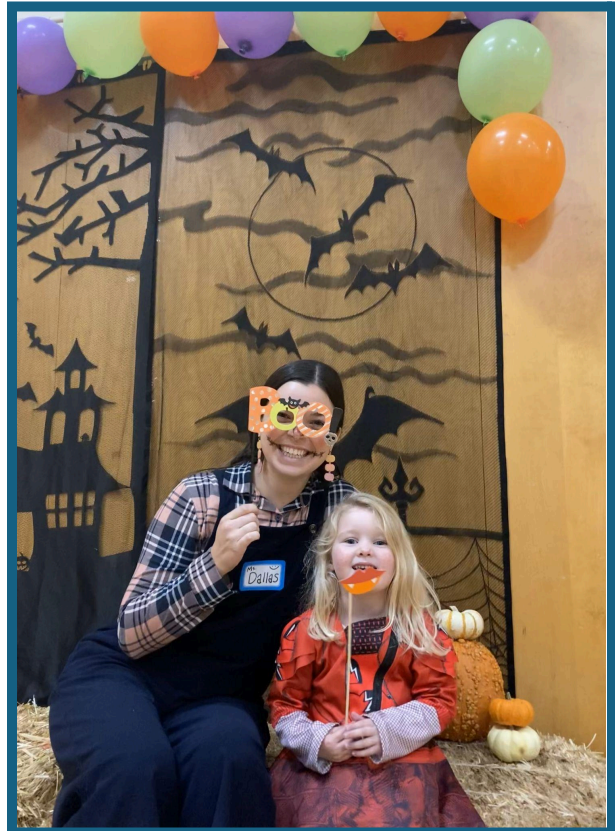
respecting personal space, and maintaining professional boundaries. Any person who does not meet conduct expectations will be asked to leave the premises immediately, and the participant may be removed from the program.

## **Photo/Video Release**

CARD reserves the right to photograph and video record activities and program participants for potential promotional purposes.

# Special Events

- Birthdays: You can bring a store-bought treat for the class on your child's birthday (this is optional and by no means required). Please let staff know in advance. Treats will be distributed at lunchtime.
- Halloween: Children are welcome to wear a costume to school for Halloween if it does not include blood, weapons, or easily lost props.
- Valentine's Day: Students may bring Valentine's Day treats to hand out to classmates on Valentine's Day. Please include ALL classmates.
- We have two events each year where families are invited to stay and PLAY: The final class in December, where we sing songs and celebrate all things Winter Wonderland, and the final class in May, where students "graduate" and we celebrate all we have learned.



# Frequently Asked Questions

- Late drop-off and/or early pick-up is allowed. Please let us know if you can and call the site phone when you arrive. We recommend allowing an extra ten minutes for appointments in case we are out and about in the park when you arrive.
- Occasional potty accidents are expected at this age and will not result in immediate dismissal from the program. If continuous accidents occur, your child may be removed from the program.
- Due to the setting and style of our program, we take safety very seriously. This kind of setting requires trust to listen and stay with the group, and your child must know to stay near an adult who will keep them safe. If a child requires continuous handholding to stay with the group or a staff member must run after a child, they may be removed from the program.
- Families trickle in between 8:30 and 9:00 AM during free play. If your child finds drop-offs difficult, you can drop off at 9:00 AM, when the structured portion of our day begins. We have noticed this helps some children focus on something other than feeling sad or nervous and has a smoother transition.
- We recommend quick, confident drop-offs if your child finds them challenging. If a child remains upset and cannot transition to the program, we will call parents for an early pick-up. We want Stellar Start PLAYSchool to be a fun experience, not a forced one.
- A spot is not guaranteed if you step away from the program and return later. You will need to add your name to the waitlist, and participants will be called in the order received when spots open.
- Email is our primary form of communication. Ms. Dallas sends monthly email updates to recap their learning and introduce the next unit.



# Program Flow

## A Day-in-the-life at Stellar Start PLAYSchool:

8:30-9:00 AM	<b>Parents Drop Off</b> and Students free play in our specially curated Toddler Classroom
Clean Up Song	
9:00 AM	<b>Circle Time</b> - Greet our classmates, Sing songs, and Review our Rules and Visual Daily Agenda
Bathroom Break	
9:15 AM	<b>Get Our Wiggles Out PLAY</b> - High energy activity (Freeze tag, Balloon play, Scavenger hunts, etc)
9:30 AM	<b>Stations</b> - Students rotate through three engaging stations featuring academic topics, fine motor skills, arts and crafts, etc.
Wash Hands and Bathroom Break	
10:15 AM	<b>Snack and Recess</b> - Free PLAY on the playground with bikes, chalk, and bubbles galore
10:45 AM	<b>Storytime Adventures</b>
11:00 AM	<b>Outdoor PLAY</b> - Teamwork games, park walks, or garden time in the sunshine
Wash Hands and Bathroom Break	
11:30 AM	<b>Lunch</b>
11:45 AM-12:00 PM	<b>Free PLAY</b> on the playground while Parents Pick Up

# Stellar Start PLAYschool

## 2025-2026

# Program Calendar



### September 25

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	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				

### October 25

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			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	

### November 25

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						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						

### December 25

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	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			

### January 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				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

### February 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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

### March 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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				

### April 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			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		

### May 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					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						

- Start of New Session
- Program Session
- No Program
- First Day of Program
- Last Day of Program

Tuesdays & Thursdays  
8:30 AM-12:00 PM

#### Sessions:

- \$248.00 9/2-9/25
- \$310.00 9/30-10/30
- \$186.00 11/4-11/20
- \$186.00 12/2-12/18
- \$248.00 1/6-1/29
- \$248.00 2/3-2/26
- \$186.00 3/3-3/26 (no sessions 3/17, 3/19)
- \$310.00 3/31-4/30
- \$186.00 5/5-5/21