STERLING EARLY CHILDHOOD **PROGRAM**











LITTLE JETS PARENT HANDBOOK

2020-2021

Sterling Jets Pre-Kindergarten

Sterling Public Schools

District No. 33, Johnson County 250 Main Street Sterling, NE 68443 Phone: (402) 866-4761

Pre-Kindergarten Staff

- · Mr. Adrian Allen Superintendent
- Mr. Jacob Davenport Pre-K-12 Principal
- Mrs. Katie Marshall Pre-Kindergarten Teacher (4 year olds)
- Miss Annaleise Nelson Pre-Kindergarten Paraeducator
- Mrs. Jenna Sedivy Pre-Kindergarten Teacher (3 year olds)
- Miss Emily Retchless Pre-Kindergarten Paraeducator
- The Sterling Pre-Kindergarten is under the umbrella of the District No. 33 Public School. All policies set forth by the District No. 33 Board of Education in the District's Handbook are also in effect for the Pre-Kindergarten.
- The additional guidelines set forth in the Pre-Kindergarten Parent Handbook are solely for the Sterling Pre-Kindergarten and address issues that only pertain to Pre-Kindergarten students.
- Sterling Pre-Kindergarten pre-registration is open to all 3 and 4 year olds. Children who are eligible for kindergarten may not enroll in the program.
- · Classes are held 5 days per week. We have one session: 8:00 3:37. Families may request half-day for their child from 8 12pm. Preschool will not be in session on early dismissal days or late starts. We may not be able to honor all or any parent requests.

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<u>ABSENCES</u> - If your child is absent or ill, it is necessary for you to <u>call (402) 886-4761 ext. 100 or email</u> <u>rkinney@sterlingpublicschools.com</u> and inform us of your child's absence and the reason for it. The secretary at this number will let the Early Childhood teacher know your child will be gone. If a child must leave early for a doctor's appointment, you need to go to the office to sign him/her out and the secretary will call him/her to the office.

If your child is not in preschool and the teacher has not been informed of the absence, school personnel will make a reasonable effort to contact the parents or emergency contacts to ensure that your child is safe and where they are supposed to be.

If a child needs to leave early or come late, they need to be signed in or out at the office. Children will then need to be dropped off or picked up in the office. All half-day children will be picked up in the office at their noon dismissal time.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Classes are held 5 days a week. Full Day: 8:00 a.m. - 3:37 p.m. Half-Day: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

You will be required to fill out a paper listing the person(s) to whom you authorize the school to release your child. Your child will never be released to someone not on that list unless we receive a signed note from you giving your permission. If the staff does not know the person picking up your child that person will be asked to show identification, and if there is any question you will be called. PLEASE let the staff know in writing, ahead of time when your child's daily routine changes. We take the safety of your child very seriously and good communication between home and school makes this much easier for the staff.

ATTENDANCE - A key factor in making each child's school experience a success is regular school attendance. Parents/guardians should notify the school before or as early as possible on the morning of the child's absence or late arrival. Even though preschool attendance isn't mandatory, in order to keep a spot in the program regular attendance is expected.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND LEARNING CLIMATE - Children learn best in the context of their relationships with other people in their lives. Because their relationships with peers and teachers influence how children feel about school and how they learn, the social climate in a classroom is critically important. With this knowledge in mind setting, the tone for how children will treat one another, how the teacher will treat the children, and how inevitable problems that arise will be resolved are cornerstones for a successful pre-kindergarten experience. We believe that a successful pre-kindergarten experience is key to a successful overall school experience.

Our classroom is a "community" of which your child becomes a member when he/she is enrolled. Our classroom does not become a "community" automatically or quickly however, the process takes time, teaching and modeling expected behaviors. This community must be a place where your child feels safe, learns to collaborate and assist others, and sees him/herself as an important part of the group. This "community" also nurtures social competence by helping your child understand how to treat other people and how he/she wants to be treated, how to acquire skills to cooperate, negotiate, make and keep friends, and to resolve problems and conflicts in an appropriate way.

Teaching young children requires patience, as they often need to be reminded about safety rules and other guidelines. Each behavioral expectation/ground rule will be stated clearly and precisely, and then your child will be instructed to follow the rule by showing other acceptable, safe activities and choices. Our guidance will most often take the form of redirection by helping the child put his/her own feelings and frustration into words instead of actions. This modeling and redirecting are effective ways to help your child increase social skills.

Examples of unacceptable behavior include: hitting, kicking, throwing objects, defiance of authority, abuse of equipment, supplies or facilities. If your child is non-responsive to the teacher's intervention in such a situation and/or poses a safety issue to other students, then he/she will be removed from the group.

When your child is removed he/she will be sent to our "safe place" where multiple techniques and tools to calm down will be used before talking the situation over with a staff member. The space has a stuffed animal, several books about emotions, sensory bottles, and fidget toys. The purpose of this space is not to punish, but rather to provide a chance for students to discuss behaviors that might have been inappropriate and learn how they can better react next time.

This space is also available for students to choose to visit if they are feeling overwhelmed or anxious and would like to take a break from the classroom activities that take place throughout the day. They may stay there as long as they feel comfortable and return to the group when they are ready.

<u>BIRTH CERTIFICATES</u> - A copy of your child's certified birth certificate must be provided to the school within the first week of class. A copy will be made and the certified certificate will be returned to you. Failure to provide this document will lead to your child not being allowed to continue their enrollment in the program.

<u>BIRTHDAYS</u> - Birthdays are special occasions for young children. We will do special, in class, celebrations for each child on his/her birthday. Party invitations will not be allowed to be handed out in school unless they are for the entire class. You are welcome to send birthday treats but please check with your child's teacher about allergies first.

<u>CALENDAR</u> - A calendar has been developed that has all of the important dates for the Early Childhood Program. Please pay close attention to this calendar throughout the year as it may differ from the K-12 calendar. Any changes to the calendar will be communicated with parents throughout the year.

<u>CLOTHING</u> - Your child will spend a great deal of each day on the floor inside, playing outside, painting, and just being very active. Please dress your child for these activities each day. Flip-flops aren't allowed during preschool for safety reasons. If you wish, a pair of tennis shoes can be kept at school for your child to change into for the day.

We will play outside each day unless there is precipitation falling or the temperature or wind chill is less than 20° . Your child will need snow boots that he/she can easily pull on and off, shoes to change back into, warm clothing, hats, and mittens when winter arrives. We would ask that you send some type of jacket each day in the fall and spring so your child is prepared for outdoor time.

We know accidents happen to all children. With this in mind, we would ask that you send an extra change of clothes to be kept in his/her cubby at school. The wet clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag in your child's backpack. Please replace the change of clothes the following school day.

<u>COMMUNICATION APP</u> - The teachers use an app to help keep you updated on classroom activities, learning, schedule changes, etc. Information on the app and downloading will be given out at the beginning of the year.

<u>DISTRICT 33 ALERTS</u> - To provide you the best in school communication for school activities and important school messages, District 33 utilizes PowerSchool and an Automated Messaging Service.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS - When school is closed, starts late, or closes early because of inclement weather, information will be shared through the following sources:

Automated Messaging Service - phone call, email, and/or text message from school School Webpage and School Facebook page
KLKN TV - Channel 8 in Lincoln
KOLN TV - Channel 10/11 in Lincoln
KETV - Channel 7 in Omaha

<u>EMERGENCY INFORMATION</u> - Please update emergency contacts promptly. If your home or work phone number changes, or your contact numbers change, PLEASE inform the office as soon as possible so you can be located quickly if an emergency occurs.

ENTRANCE CRITERIA- Registration is open to all 3 and 4 year olds. Children who are eligible for kindergarten may not enroll in the program. Precedence will be given to the following based on availability:

- Students in our district who turn 3 years old by the first day of preschool
- Students who have an IFSP
- Out of district children whose older siblings option into Sterling Public Schools

If your child's enrollment was not approved and you would like it to be reconsidered, you can attend a meeting of the school board and make a request. Enrollment will then be left up to the discretion of the school board.

FAMILY - Families play a central role in their child's development. Engaging families in their child's preschool experience is essential to maximize learning. We will strive to partner actively with parents and guardians. There will be many opportunities for families to work with their preschooler throughout the year. Some ways that we like to build the family-school relationship include but are not limited to the following:

- Communication we will communicate with you via notes, emails, phone calls and conversations.
- Family Activities flyers will be sent home throughout the year to inform you of family activities that will happen at school.
- Early Childhood Advisory Committee a group of parents collaborate with preschool staff and community providers that meet together and discuss current preschool happenings and events that are relevant to EEC. Two meetings are held each year.

<u>FIELD TRIPS</u> - The Pre-Kindergarten children will have field trips to various points of interest throughout the year. A permission slip with trip information is included on the registration form. Please sign and return this slip promptly.

Parents are invited to help with supervision on these trips as needed. Field trips are special times for the children. Having a parent or family member go along makes it even more special. We ask that younger siblings not attend the trip with the preschool child and parent.

FOOD ALLERGY - If a child has identified food or drink allergies, or medical conditions that require a modification in diet, the school may provide food and drink that takes this into account. For the school to provide dietary substitutions in snacks, a doctor's note is required stating the allergy or dietary requirements.

HOME VISITS - There will be two home visits per year between the parent(s) and the teacher to discuss the child's development and learning. If you prefer, the visit can take place in a different location. Teachers will give you a window of time to schedule the visit.

ILLNESS - The following Nebraska State Health Guidelines will be used:

- Children with a temperature of 100 degrees or more should not be in school. A child may not return until they have been without fever without medication for 24 hours.
- Children with serious communicable/infectious diseases must have a doctor's permission slip to return to school in accordance with State Health Guidelines.

Diseases included are:

- Hepatitis A
- Tuberculosis
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Children with chickenpox will be excluded from school for no less than 6 days (day of onset of specific symptoms is counted as day "0", the day after is day "1") after the appearance of the first crop of vesicles, and the child is without fever and the vesicles are dry.
- Children with some communicable/infectious diseases cannot remain in school.

Examples of these diseases are:

- Streptococcal Infections (strep throat, scar Latina)
- Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)
- Scabies

A minimum of 24 hours exclusion and proof of treatment will be required before a child having this type of disease can attend school.

 Children with some diseases must have a doctor's permission slip or evidence of treatment (proof of medication) to re-enter school.

Examples of these diseases include:

- Impetigo
- Ringworm
- Head Lice, Nits, and Bed Bugs Children identified as having head lice, nits, and/or bed bugs will be
 excluded from school and not permitted to return to school until they receive appropriate and successful
 treatment. When he/she returns to school, a check will be done to ensure there are no live lice, nits,
 and/or bed bugs are detected.
- Children with an unidentified rash who are without fever (under 100 degrees) and feeling well, may stay
 in school. When a rash is observed, parents must be notified of the rash. Rashes persisting longer than 3
 days require proof of medical evaluation. Some rashes may require immediate exclusion and proof of
 medical evaluation.
- Children will be sent home if they are vomiting or have diarrhea regardless of whether or not they have a temperature elevation. A child may not return to school until 24 hours symptom free.
- In the event it becomes known that a child is infected with a chronic infectious disease not commonly associated with casual transmittal (i.e. hepatitis, rheumatic fever, mononucleosis and HIV) and any changes in the educational program of a child is needed, this will be handled on a case-by-case basis, relying on the best scientific and medical advice available.

<u>IMMUNIZATIONS</u> - Children in Nebraska may only enroll in and attend school if they are protected against communicable diseases and conditions such as measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus, by immunization prior to enrollment (Revised Statute, Chapter 79-217). The following are the vaccines children need prior to attending preschool for the 2019-2020 school year:

- 4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine,
- 3 doses of Polio vaccine,
- 3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age (Hib not required after child reaches 5 yrs. of age),
- 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine,
- 1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age,
- 1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age, written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian or health care provider will be accepted.
- 4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age (Pneumococcal not required after child reaches 5 years of age).

LIBRARY TIME - Children will have library one time per week to hear story time.

<u>MANDATORY REPORTERS</u> - The law requires that every member on staff at Sterling Public Schools report any sign of child abuse or neglect. This includes proper safety restraints or leaving younger children in vehicles while picking up your preschooler. If staff sees abuse or neglect they are required under state law to report.

<u>MEDICATIONS</u> - Medication products will be used at the discretion of trained personnel. - Over the counter medication products may be used in the school office for personal hygiene, skin care, first aid, or for therapeutic purposes. These products may be used without specific consent and are provided by the school.

The administration of medication at school is strongly discouraged except when necessary for the child's health or education. The dosage intervals of many medications can be adjusted so the times for taking medication come outside school hours. When possible, interval adjustment should be considered before administering medication at school. All medications administered by school district personnel shall be administered in accordance with Medication Aide Act. (Board Policy 6815)

- 1. <u>Authorization for Prescription Medications</u> Prescription medications which must be administered during school hours may be administered when the following are on file at school:
 - a. A caretaker's signed and dated authorization/permission to administer the medication during school, which included the reason the child is receiving the medication. (Note: all references to "caretaker" in this policy shall also include a parent, foster parent, family member or legal guardian; it shall not include a friend or child provider).
 - b. The medication is in its original packaging and is labeled as dispensed by the prescriber or pharmacist. The label must name the child and identify the medication, administering physician, strength, dosage, time interval and route to be administered. Two labeled containers may be requested: one for home and one for school. If needed, the physician may be contacted for clarification on medication administration.
- 2. <u>Authorization for Non-Prescription Medications</u> If a regular education child must take non-prescription medication during school, procedure 1 above is to be followed before administration, and the medication must be provided in its original container.
- 3. <u>Authorizations</u> Medication authorizations must be renewed annually and updated immediately as changes occur.

STERLING PRE-KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY - Sterling Public Schools acknowledges and respects the uniqueness of each child. It also supports the belief that a child's strong sense of self-esteem comes from experiencing success within an age appropriate environment enhanced by a rich, stimulating curriculum. The

curriculum engages children's learning in all developmental areas, while at the same time allowing for individual differences in learning styles and encouraging creativity through a variety of play based experiences.

Our overall goals for the children enrolled in Sterling Pre-Kindergarten are:

- 1. A strong sense of self-confidence and self-esteem
- 2. Development of the whole child
- 3. Development of the social/emotional skills

Specifically these goals include:

Development of Self Confidence and Self Esteem

- · Positive identity and self-respect
- · Trust of others and in his/herself
- · Empowerment to make choices and show initiative
- · Express creativity
- · Willingness to try new experiences
- · Expressing needs, feelings and ideas in an appropriate manner

Development of the Whole Child

- Communication skills
- · Language development
- Physical skills
- · Intellectual abilities/Cognitive skills
- Creativity

Development of Social/Emotional Skills

- · Problem solving and conflict resolution
- Cooperating in play and work
- Developing trust in peers and work
- · Developing trust in peers and adults
- · Belonging to and participating in groups
- · Learning to take turns and to share
- · Becoming both a leader and a follower
- · Expressing feelings to peers and adults appropriately
- · Developing good listening skills
- · Making friends, being friends, and sharing friends
- · Having fun!

The Values and Goals We Use to Implement Our Philosophy

- · Maintain a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment.
- Respect children's uniqueness and recognize and celebrate their individual differences.
- · Create a trusting and predictable environment.
- Development of an environment that says "yes" to exploring, experimenting, discovering, having fun with friends, and being a child!
- Emphasis on the "process" (which is the immersion in the "doing") rather than the "product"

- · Use of positive language.
- · Modeling of empathy and compassion.
- · Encourage children to the risks so they can experience new successes.
- · Help children learn to make choices and develop responsibility for those choices.
- · Keep a sense of humor and create laughter.
- Provide a "child-centered program" which comes from a blend of the interests of the children together with a successfully planned and organized facility and use of our adopted Creative Curriculum Gold.
- · Continually cultivate curriculum, which is updated and revised to ensure a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences for children.

Curriculum and Assessment

We have adopted <u>The Creative Curriculum Gold for Pre-Kindergarten</u>, one that is recommended by The State of Nebraska Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood. This comprehensive assessment tool is designed for the early childhood programs serving children ages 3-5. It rests on a firm foundation of research and best practices recognized nationally by Early Childhood professionals and the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

The two distinct features of <u>The Creative Curriculum Gold</u> are 1.) The organizational structure and 2.) The focus on interest areas in the classroom environment.

The Organizational Structure has five components, which are:

- · How Children Develop and Learn
- · The Learning Environment
- · What Children Learn
- · The Teacher's Role
- · The Family's Role

Inside the five components you find a list of eleven key INTEREST AREAS. These eleven areas provide the detailed content and structure that ensures our pre-kindergarten is meeting the developmental needs of our students.

Within the framework of <u>The Creative Curriculum Gold</u> your child will be exposed to a variety of experiences. Some of these may include but are not limited to:

- · Field trips, both walking within the community and driving to other locations.
- · A sufficient amount of outdoor time.
- · Immersion in literature, in a variety of formats.
- · Group time, both large and small group settings.
- · Math, Pre-reading, Pre-writing, reading, writing.
- Other experiences too numerous to list here!

QUESTIONS - We want to make sure that you have a positive year at the Sterling Program. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact:

Katie Marshall, Preschool Teacher (kmarshall@sterlingpublicschools.com)

Jenna Sedivy, Preschool Teacher (<u>isedivy@sterlingpublicschools.com</u>)

Adrian Allen, Superintendent (aallen@sterlingpublicschools.com)

REST TIME - Rest is extremely important for young children's development. The classroom schedule will include an afternoon rest time from 12:30-2pm each day. During this time the students will quietly rest on their mats as the lights are turned off and relaxing music is played. We understand that some students may not fall asleep. If you prefer that your child not take a nap/rest then you may pick your child up at 12pm for half-day preschool. We also ask that you not drop your child off during rest time as it disrupts the other students who are sleeping. Each child attending full day prek will need to bring a blanket to use at nap time. Blankets will be washed weekly here at school.

RESTROOMS - We know accidents happen to all children. Your child will not be punished or made to feel bad if he/she has an accident, a staff member will handle it in a very matter of fact fashion. With this in mind, we would ask that you send an extra change of clothes to be kept in his/her cubby at school. The wet clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag in your child's backpack. Please replace the change of clothes the following school day.

SNACK - Students have the chance for a school-provided snack when the class wakes up from their afternoon nap.

Each child needs to bring a water bottle to keep at school. It will stay in their cubby and be refilled for them so they can get a drink whenever they need to, including at snack time.

<u>SIGNED RELEASE FOR PICTURES AND VIDEO OF YOUR CHILD</u> - Pictures (digital) and video of our children, activities, and classroom will be taken and used for various projects from time to time. Pre-Kindergarten children delight in seeing pictures of themselves and these pictures can become a great teaching tool.

These same pictures are positive additions to articles posted on the district website or submitted to the local paper. You will be given a permission form allowing your child's picture to be taken and to be used as part of an article either online or in the paper, or within the classroom for the class books and other projects. Please indicate on the form your choice in this matter and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. Thank you.

<u>SUPPLIES</u> - A suggested supply list will be provided to all families. Special requests may also be made by the classroom teacher for special projects (milk jugs, paper towel tubes, etc.). If you cannot help with these projects, that does not reflect or affect your child at preschool. A pair of shoes for children to wear in the gym is also required to keep our gym floors in good shape.

<u>TOYS AND PETS</u> - Children need to leave personal toys/items at home. They can be lost or misused by others and can be a distraction. We do not allow pets to be brought to preschool for safety reasons. Children of this age may not understand how to properly handle or interact with animals. We will, however, have a Friday show and tell. Your child will be asked to bring a specific item i.e. "something that begins with the letter A". The show and tell list will be included in the monthly newsletter.

EXTRA POLICIES

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activites and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Name: Adrian Allen
Title: Superintendent

Address: 250 Main St, Sterling, NE 68443

Telephone: 402-866-4761 x102

E-mail: <u>aallen@sterlingpublicschools.com</u>

For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, visit

http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area or call 1-800-421-3481.

For additional prohibited discrimination and related information, please review School District Policy 3053 - Nondiscrimination.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Children (or parents on behalf of a child) or employees who suspect that they have become the victim of a discriminatory act, intentional or unintentional, because of a school employee or policy should:

- 1. Discuss the grievance with the teacher or the building Principal within ten (10) school days of the alleged situation.
- 2. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant should contact the Superintendent of the schools and submit the nature of the grievance in writing to the Superintendent of schools within ten (10) school days of receiving an oral response from the Principal or teacher. The Superintendent of schools will, within ten (10) school days of receiving the written grievance, interview the complainant, investigate the nature of the grievance, and submit in writing to the complainant a proposed resolution.
- 3. Submit a written request for a board hearing on the grievance to the Board President within 10 school days of receiving the Superintendent's response.
- 4. The board will convene a hearing on the grievance within twenty (20) school days of receiving a written request for a hearing and reserve the right to solicit evidence and testimony from all pertinent sources.
- 5. The board will submit a written resolution of the grievance to the complainant within twenty (20) school days of conducting the hearing. The decision of the board will conclude the grievance procedure.

RECEIPT OF PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK FORM - Please fill page out entirely and return to school. I hereby acknowledge with my signature that _____ received the Student Name procedures and regulations outlined in this Sterling Early Childhood Handbook, and that _____ have read and understand them. Parent/Guardian Name Parent/Guardian Signature Date STERLING PUBLIC SCHOOL FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT (1974) According to the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act, Sterling School is required to inform parents/legal guardians that standard information in regard to your child can be published unless you wish to restrict information. Examples of publications include district music/sports programs, honor roll, bulletin boards, newspapers, newsletters, student directories, websites, award listings, and birthday/Valentine lists. In addition, the press often covers special school events for the newspaper, television or website. If you choose to restrict your child's name or likeness, they will not be included in press coverage or publications, per Board Policy #5017. If you do not wish to have your child's information released, you may check and sign the exclusion form below and return it to the school your child attends. This form will be placed in the student's file and be in effect for the duration of your child's attendance at Sterling Public School. It will be up to the parent to contact the school building to redirect any of the items from the preference you have marked below. Thanks for your partnership in your child's education. It is important to note that Sterling School makes every effort to safeguard the privacy of our students. We do not release student information for unofficial business. If this form is not returned, your student will be placed in the NO RESTRICTIONS category. PLEASE PUT AN X IN FRONT OF THE CHOICE(S) THAT APPLY: A. No Restrictions: I do not wish to restrict the release of any directory information about my child and hereby give consent for publication of the below mentioned items. B. Restrictions: I hereby direct the school district NOT TO RELEASE the following directory information concerning my child: Student Name/Home Address/Telephone Number/Birth date Restriction will exclude your child from class lists, music or sports programs, newsletters, newspapers, Valentine and birthday lists, bulletin boards, honor roll, award listings, student directories, scholarship listings, graduation listings, etc. Student Photo or Video Release Restrictions will exclude your child from television, newsletter, newspaper, or website coverage of school events, field trips and classroom activities. (Does not include yearbook or photo ID) Student Work Display Restriction will exclude your child's schoolwork or art from being posted on the web, published in the paper or on television, and District 33 school displays at public buildings. Military & Institutions of Higher Learning Restriction will exclude Sterling Schools from sharing student name/home address/telephone number in lists given to recruiters.

Student Name

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date: _____

Date: ____