

Madison Early Childhood Education Center Parent Handbook



For further information, call 630-617-2385

Revised 2021

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Overview of Early Learning Beliefs:

- **Early learning and development are multidimensional. Developmental domains are highly interrelated.**
Development in one domain influences development in other domains. For example, a child's language skills affect his or her ability to engage in social interactions. Therefore, developmental domains cannot be considered in isolation from each other. The dynamic interaction of all areas of development must be considered. Standards and benchmarks listed for each domain could also be cited in different domains.
- **Young children are capable and competent.**
All children are capable of positive developmental outcomes. There should be high expectations for all young children, regardless of their backgrounds and experience.
- **Children are individuals who develop at different rates.**
Each child is unique. Each grows and develops skills and competencies at their own pace. Some children may have a developmental delay or disability that may require program staff members to adapt expectations or experiences so that individual children can successfully achieve a particular benchmark.
- **Children will exhibit a range of skills and competencies in any domain of development.**
All children within an age group should not be expected to arrive at each benchmark at the same time or to show mastery to the same degree of proficiency.
- **Knowledge of how children grow and develop, together with expectations that are consistent with growth patterns, are essential to develop, implement and maximize the benefits of educational experiences for children.**
Early care and education program staff members must agree on what they expect children to know and be able to do within the context of child growth and development. With this knowledge, early childhood staff members can make sound decisions about appropriate curriculum for the group and for individual children.
- **Young children learn through active exploration of their environment in child-initiated and teacher-selected activities.**
Early childhood educators recognize that children's play is a highly supportive context for development and learning. The early childhood environment should provide opportunities for children to explore materials, engage in activities and interact with peers and adults to construct their own understanding of the world around them. There should, therefore, be a balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities to maximize learning.
- **Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children.**
Families should be aware of programmatic goals, experiences that should be provided for children and expectations for their performance by the end of the preschool years. Program staff members and families should work collaboratively to ensure that children are provided optimal learning experiences.

Generalization of skills across educational environments:

- Generalization of skills occurs through:
 - Optimal performances – abilities in highly structured, routine activities
 - Functional performance – carryover of skills to other environments
- Parents need to be informed of educational activities to assist with generalization of skills and to reinforce skills at home.
- Parents will share with staff techniques and strategies that work at home and can be generalized to the school's environment.
- Staff will assist parents with carryover of skills to home. Home visits will be arranged on request during school days and within school hours.

Parent Observation:

Parents are welcome to visit and observe school programs during the school year. We are requesting that you follow the procedures below so that the learning of all of our students can occur without disruption.

1. A request must be made by direct communication with the classroom teacher. Please be aware that we have numerous visitors to our classrooms. To minimize the disruption in our classrooms, we will limit the number of observations that can occur in any given week and therefore, we may not be able to accommodate your first choice for an observation date.
2. The teacher will contact the administrator with the time of the scheduled visit. Visitors may need to be accompanied by school personnel. School personnel accompanying parents is typically the Principal.
3. Observers must sign in at the office and obtain a nametag.
4. Parents should not bring siblings or other children to the observation.
5. Generally, we would like observations to be limited to no more than one hour. Please remember that observers are expected to just watch the therapists and staff working and not interrupt their interactions with the children. If you have a comment or suggestion about a situation that you observed, please follow up the observation with an email or phone call.
6. Please remember that the staff's primary responsibility is to teach the students. Please understand that staff will not be able to answer questions when you are observing but you are welcome to follow up with an email or phone call at a later time.
7. At the end of the observation, you need to sign out before you leave. Please remember that these procedures are to maintain the staff-student contact time and to ensure the safety and security of all of our students.

Parent Volunteers In the Classroom:

Parent volunteers contribute greatly to teachers and classroom activities. There are a variety of ways parents can contribute to their child's classroom either from home or by their presence in the classroom. Volunteers are reminded to maintain confidentiality of student issues they observe, while at school, out of respect for individual children and their educational plans. Please remember that due to student needs and the number of adults supporting the classroom that volunteering opportunities may be limited or not available in all classrooms. Please remember that when you volunteer in the classroom that you will be working with all of the students in the classroom and not just your child. Please also remember that once you have been given your volunteer assignment that the staff's primary responsibility will again be with the children and that while they are available to answer questions about the project you are working on, they will not be available for conversations or to answer questions about the children in the classroom. Please talk to your classroom teacher about volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in volunteering you must stop by the office to read and sign our Madison Code of Ethics for Volunteers prior to your first time in the classroom.

The Creative Curriculum:

The educational focus for the program is provided through our curriculum. We implement the *Creative Curriculum 5th Edition* which is a research based curriculum aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards. Our staff has analyzed the IELDS to determine power standards that we think all students need before leaving our program to better prepare them for elementary education.

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP):

We assess students using the *Desired Results Developmental Profile* (DRDP). Children are observed while they are playing, working, lining up, and during other parts of the typical school day.

- Teachers collect "evidence" of children's learning: write a note, mark a checklist, take a photo, or collect some samples of their work. Children likely won't even notice teachers observing.
- Teachers use these observations to place each child's abilities on a learning pathway. The information is entered into a secure district system at the end of each trimester.

- Teachers will generate progress reports at the end of each trimester indicating where children are on learning pathway levels. They also summarize this information into the children's strengths and areas for growth, which are located in the comments section of the report card.

DRDP is fully aligned to measure the IELDS power standards We are excited to have a comprehensive assessment tool aligned to our curriculum and standards.. This information assists teachers in continuing to plan and provide learning experiences for our students along with a way to monitor their progress.

Communication with Parents:

Communication with parents is a vital component of our program and facilitates a relationship with the classroom teacher, educational team and school staff. This may be accomplished through a variety of ways such as:

- Seesaw posts from teachers about student learning on a regular basis.
- Once a week teachers send home or upload to Seesaw *My Week At School* to inform you of classroom learning and upcoming events.
- Parent /Teacher conferences or team meetings. Your child's teacher can also be contacted through her email or voicemail. Teachers will not be able to return your phone calls during school hours as they are teaching.
- Madison Newsletter from the Principal distributed weekly electronically.
- Home visits can also be arranged upon request to your child's teacher.

Behavioral Interventions:

We have developed consistent, school wide behavioral outcomes as part of the implementation of Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS). Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is a proactive systems approach to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture needed for all students in a school to achieve social, emotional, and academic success. Our outcomes for students are to be ready, respectful, responsible and safe while attending Madison. We have worked to determine a system of support and practices for students to reach these outcomes. We will take data on how the students are doing in learning these outcomes through the two standards that address social emotional development and will further develop additional interventions and supports for students who may be struggling. Parents are important as part of this process and we need your support in reinforcing our outcomes and expectations with your children at home. The District also has a specific policy and developed procedures on the use of behavioral interventions for students with disabilities. We provide a copy of this policy and procedures to parents and guardians of all students with individualized educational plans and it may also be obtained through the Student Services Department. If a child is demonstrating behaviors that are dangerous or could injure someone else, crisis prevention intervention procedures will be used to keep the child and/or others safe. Staff receive training on the proper procedures to use to deescalate the situation safely. If crisis prevention intervention strategies are used, we are required to send home written documentation of the event and procedures used.

Expulsion and Suspension:

Madison ECE Center believes in the importance of developing and supporting children's social-emotional development. The program utilizes materials such as Creative Curriculum, Second Step, Calm Classroom, Calm Corners, and Zones of Regulation to support students. These programs in combination with our highly trained staff offer a wide range of support to develop students' skills for learning, emotional management, friendship skills and problem-solving. In accordance with the State of Illinois Public Act 100-015, the Elmhurst CUSD#205 prohibits the practice of expulsion and suspension for early childhood age students (3-5 years of age). As a district, we are committed to working collaboratively with families to ensure success for all students and development abilities.

Parents' Rights and Responsibilities:

Parents are given a copy of the Rules and Regulations governing Special Education at least once a school year and upon request. Parents are encouraged to participate in the planning of special education programs for their children. The staff respect the parent's viewpoint and seek their input regarding strategies that work at home.

Special Education Staff and their roles:

Children enrolled in District Early Learning programs may receive services from a variety of special educators:

- Early Childhood Teachers are responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing large and small group classroom instruction and educational programs for each student. They consult with team members and facilitate carry over activities recommended by related service providers across educational environments. The Teacher also manages classroom behavior and is the prime communicator with parents.
- Educational Assistants implement classroom activities under the supervision of the teacher and educational team.
- Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) implement speech and language therapy services and collaborate with the educational team to carry out activities across educational environments. The Speech Pathologist also provides consultation and generalization of skills across educational environments and suggestions for activities at home.
- Occupational Therapists (OT) implement fine motor activities (such as coloring, cutting, and pre-writing) that increase skill development and independent self help skills. Occupational therapists also provide consultation and generalization of skills across educational environments and suggestions for activities at home.
- Physical Therapists (PT) implement activities that increase gross motor skills, such as jumping, walking and running, and independent functioning. The Physical Therapist also provides consultation and generalization of skills across educational environments and suggestions for home.
- School Social Worker (SW) implement activities that promote social skills and provide support to parents for behavior management techniques at home. The Social Worker consults and assists with the generalization of skills across educational environments.
- School Psychologist (PSYCH) utilize a variety of assessment procedures in conducting individual evaluations of students. These evaluations may be done individually or as part of a team. Evaluations may include, but not be limited to, standardized tests, observations, and/or interviews. The school psychologist also works to improve instruction for all students by helping staff to analyze student data and assist in developing interventions and a progress monitoring system to effectively gauge student learning.
- School Association Special Education in DuPage (SASED): District 205 is a member of the SASED special education cooperative. A wide variety of other special education personnel and programs are available as needed, pursuant to policy and procedures of both district 205 and SASED. Some examples of these personnel include Itinerant Teachers of the Hearing Impaired and Itinerant Teachers of Visually Impaired etc.

Individualized Educational Program (IEP)

If a child is found eligible for special education service, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written. The IEP includes annual goals and short-term objectives to address educational needs. The IEP team also determines special education services, placement, and the need for extended year programming beyond the regular school calendar. Placement decisions are based on the individual needs of your child as agreed upon by the team. The services your child receives are individualized to meet his/her needs. No decisions are made in advance of the meeting and parents are active participants in this process. The IEP is implemented by school staff and services are delivered at Madison Early Childhood Education Center. Instruction is aligned with Illinois Early Learning Standards. Students do not need to be toilet trained to receive special education placement and services.

Annual Reviews:

Once a year, your child's teacher will contact you regarding the date for the annual review IEP meeting. At this meeting the school staff will review progress and update IEP goals and objectives. Staff will do their best to select a time when all necessary staff is available to meet. We hope this scheduled time is convenient and that you will have flexibility to arrange your schedule accordingly. Parents will receive

notification of this meeting at least 10 days in advance of the scheduled meeting. If you cannot attend, please call your child's special education teacher immediately. The Annual Review meeting will also focus on placement decisions for the next school year. The Extended School Year (ESY) program will also be addressed (see Extended School Year for more details). The annual review meeting is scheduled for a 60-90 minute period, depending on what needs to be discussed. If your child is 3 years old and has recently entered the program, the annual review will be scheduled one year from their entry date to the program, unless other needs to revise the IEP arise. If your child is 5 years old or older, Kindergarten placement must be considered. To facilitate the meeting, PROPOSED goals will be sent to you by your child's educational team in advance of the meeting for your review and consideration, as a courtesy. All IEP decisions are made at the meeting with parents and the school team present.

Extended School Year (ESY):

This is a summer program that is appropriate for some students in special education. The need for ESY will be determined at the staffing based on a pattern of significant regression and extended recoupment time required to maintain skills. Some loss of skills is normal for all children so we are looking to see if your child's recovery of these skills will be greater and take longer. The focus of the ESY summer program is to maintain current skill levels. Goals and objectives are identified from the most current IEP, unless the annual review takes place after April 15th. In this case, goals and objectives from the previous IEP will be identified as the educational focus for ESY. Related services for ESY are determined on an individual basis for each student and are not automatically provided during the summer. Typically, a student's related services for the ESY program are less than what they receive during the school year, though the team has flexibility in determining related service minutes. Frequently the classroom teacher is able to provide many opportunities to maintain skills within the classroom setting. Participation in the program is voluntary.

General School Information

School Hours:

The school program is five days a week, per MECEC calendar. The morning programs are in session from 8:50 –11:20 AM. The afternoon programs are in session from 12:30 – 3:00PM.

Program Location:

All Early Childhood classrooms are located at the Madison Early Childhood Education Center. We are located at 130 W. Madison St. in Elmhurst, IL.

Important Telephone Numbers for MECEC:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● Madison Early Childhood Center Office: | 630-617-2385/630-617-8212 (fax) |
| ● Attendance Line | 630-617-8264 |
| ● Susan Kondrat/Principal | 630-617-2489 |
| ● Cottage Hill Bus Company: | 630-279-9570 |
| ● First Student Bus Company | 630-530-9366 |
| ● Transportation Cottage Hill (Karen Spaeth) | 630-617-2357 |

**Teachers are not able to take phone calls during instructional time. Please leave a message on their voice mail or the office staff can take a message. Teachers will return phone calls before or after school hours or when their schedule allows.

District 205 Website:

The purpose of the District 205 Website (www.elmhurst205.org) is to provide a "window" into the district for students, staff, parents, and community members. Information presented on the site is intended to inform our constituents about district activities, programs, and services, as well as to serve as an educational and instructional resource for our students and staff. Parents are asked to sign a release giving consent to use

their child's name, voice, image or original work on the District 205 Website as part of the registration process. You can go to the Madison website directly by going to <https://mecc.elmhurst205.org>.

Adverse Weather:

In adverse weather, you can update emergency closing information by call the district's recorded message at 630-834-4530. You will receive a message from School Messenger if we have an emergency closing. You may also get information on the district's web site: www.elmhurst205.org or from WGN Closing center web site is <https://www.emergencyclosingcenter.com/>

Please dress your child appropriately for the weather as classrooms will go outside to play. Extra clothing kept at school will need to be changed as the seasons change.

School Security:

All visitors to the District, including parents, are required to register using their driver's license or state ID in the office and wear identification badges. The school building and access to classrooms are always locked so that all visitors need to report to the office to determine if they can access any part of the school with students.

District 205 has a means to alert teachers to the potential and/or real danger of suspicious individuals. We will notify parents of the reported presence of suspicious persons in the school neighborhood. Students participate in drills at school to practice their responses should there be a fire, tornado, or a security breach. Students also participate in bus evacuation drills. All schools are equipped with emergency radios for communication with outside agencies.

Video Surveillance:

Video cameras will be used in common areas of the school for the primary purpose of reducing disciplinary problems, vandalism, and to provide a safe environment for students and staff. Disciplinary action may be taken with students based on video documentation.

Student Fees:

School fees are established by the Board of Education. Specific information concerning fees will be available during registration. The district will waive all fees for students whose parents are unable to afford them including but not limited to children eligible for free milk or free lunches. Other special, extraordinary, family circumstances may qualify for waiver of fees. In such instances, the principal is responsible for processing the request.

Transportation:

Transportation is provided for At-Risk and Early Childhood Special Education students as part of the program. Transportation can be provided for tuition based students for a monthly fee of \$1000.00 per year.

All students aged 3-5 and enrolled in a district program must have a bus tag attached to their backpack at all times. Bus tags are made by school personnel and will be attached to your child's backpack. These tags contain basic identifying information for your child's safety. Please have your child ready for bus pickup at the designated time and at the correct pick up area ten minutes before their pick up time. If the bus picks up in front of your house, it will only wait 3 minutes for your child to board, and then must continue the route to ensure all students arrive at school on time. After waiting the appropriate 2- 3 minutes, the bus will continue on their route. It is the bus driver's responsibility to see that your child is safely secured with a safety device.

If you require any change to your child's pickup or drop off locations, please contact the Madison office for another Bus Transportation Information form. Students riding on First Student can fax the updated forms to

630-617-8212. Students riding Cottage Hill may fax the letter to 630-993-6673 or send a letter of attention to the transportation coordinator in the Special Services Department.

A parent or designated adult must always be present when a child is picked up or dropped off. For safety and security reasons, a parent or designated adult must be present while your child is entering or exiting the bus to assist the child as needed. If the designated adult is not present, the child may not exit the bus. **If your child has a pickup in front of your home and will not be riding the bus on any given day, you must call your child's bus company in the morning before 7:00 AM. First Student can be contacted at 630-530-9366 and Cottage Hill can be contacted at 630-279-9570.**

Should any bus accidents occur, paramedics would be called to the scene. Emergency medical service personnel will determine the nature of injuries and take appropriate action. Parents will be notified.

Please be aware that there is no food or drink allowed on the bus for safety reasons.

Parent Pick Up and Drop Off policy:

MECEC provides a Parent Pick-up and Drop-Off service to parents. To access the Pick-Up service on a regular basis you must register for a number in the main office. AM Drop Off is from 8:45-8:55. AM Pick up is from 11:15-11:30. PM Drop Off is from 12:25-12:35. PM Pick Up is from 2:55-3:10. Parents who arrive after the scheduled drop off or pick up times, must park and come into the school office and sign their child in or out. If your child typically rides a bus or you need to pick up your child from school outside of your regularly scheduled pick up days, you must send a note to your child's teacher informing them of the change. **If we have not received a note and you do not contact the main office your child will go home as they would normally.** If your child is dropped off or picked up by someone other than a parent, (e.g. friend or relative) you will need to send a note in advance to the teacher and the person will have to show identification when they pick up your child. In addition, please inform the person that they must follow the same building procedures listed above. **Please understand that the staff is unable to arrange alternative pick up and drop off arrangements based on verbal requests alone.**

Medical Information:

Illinois law requires that all students enrolled in school for the first time must have physical examinations administered by physicians before they can enter school. Physicians licensed to practice medicine in all of the branches shall be responsible for the performance of the health examination. All students must have on file a record of immunizations and dates administered by their doctor for polio, DPT, measles, rubella and mumps. Specific information as to the sequence of the immunization can be obtained from the school health office. District 205 has adopted an *October 15th exclusion policy* (see registration on page 11 for more specific information).

A transfer student is permitted 30 days from the date of entry to obtain a medical report from the previous school or from an examining physician. Any parent who objects to the physical examination on religious grounds may submit a signed statement to the Board of Education.

Health Services:

Nurses are employed in the District schools. The teacher refers children to the nurse whenever symptoms indicate the possibility of other health related problems. Nurses make no diagnosis, but recommend that children be taken to their family doctor whenever it seems advisable.

District 205 has adopted an October 15th exclusion date for all students who are non-compliant with state mandated physical examination/immunization requirements.

Immunization/Medical Exam Guidelines:

A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall present proof of student's health examination and required immunizations as follows:

- a. Dated within one year before entering Madison ECE Center, Kindergarten, sixth and ninth grades.
- b. Dated within one year when a student transfers from another Illinois school district, entering Madison ECE Center, Kindergarten, sixth or ninth grade.
- c. Whenever an out-of-state student first enrolls in a District school, regardless of the student's grade.

Failure to comply with the above requirements by October 15th will result in the student's exclusion from school until the required completed health forms are presented to the District. If a medical reason prevents a student from receiving a required immunization by the first day of school, the student must present an immunization schedule and a statement of the medical reasons causing the delay. All students who are first-time registrants shall have 30 days following registration to comply with the health examination and immunization regulations.

Health-related problems should be discussed with the school nurse or health aide so that proper arrangements may be made to take care of any special health situation.

Each child is required to have up to date Emergency Health and Accident information with emergency addresses and phone numbers of two responsible persons living nearby in case the parent cannot be reached.

Children who become ill must go home. The school nurse will contact a parent or designated responsible person from the emergency contact information you provided if illness occurs at school.. Children suffering from **an acute cold, sore throat, earache, swollen glands, inflamed eyes, fever of 100.0 or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, skin eruptions or rashes, listlessness, weakness, drowsiness, flushed skin or headache should not be in school.**

Temperature readings should be normal for 24 hours WITHOUT MEDICATION before the student returns to school.

Medication:

No medications will be given at school except those which have been prescribed by a physician and which are needed to maintain the child in school. Parents should make every effort to adjust medication schedules so that medication may be administered under parent supervision. Before medication is given at school, parents should consult with their child's physician to see if midday medication schedules can be adjusted so that medication is given at a time when the child is not in school.

Any medication that is taken to school shall be brought to the nurse's office in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacist or physician. A medication permission form, to be signed by the parent, must be obtained from the school nurse's office. A physician's order is to be attached to the form. This form must be on file at school. No over the counter medications will be given unless prescribed by a physician. This includes aspirin or non-aspirin pain relievers.

Students may not carry any type of medicines, pills, inhalers etc. unless the physician has a prescription on file with the health office stating that he/she needs to keep the medicine on their person. If a student is to take medication at school, the parents should bring the medication to school and not send it with their child. The parent is also responsible for picking up their child's medication if it has been discontinued and on the last day of school.

Please notify your school nurse if your child is taking any medicine on a regular basis at home.

District 205 has initiated the following procedure for administering medication to students. To ensure the utmost safety for our students requiring medication during the school day, all medications are now being administered by a registered nurse. This procedure is in alignment with procedures found effective in most schools in DuPage County. Please know that in an emergency or unavailability of the nurse, all school administrators are able to dispense medication to students.

Allergy Awareness:

Food allergies present an increasing challenge for schools. Identification of students at risk of a life-threatening reaction cannot be predicted. Because of the life-threatening nature of these allergies and their increasing prevalence, schools must be prepared to provide treatment to food-allergic students, reduce the risk of a food-allergic reaction, and to accommodate students with food allergies.

School is a potentially high-risk setting for accidental exposure to a food allergen. School district procedures must be in place to address allergy issues during a variety of activities such as classroom projects, crafts, field trips, and before-/after-school activities. Such activities can take place in classrooms, food service/cafeteria locations, outdoor activity areas, buses, and other instructional areas.

Elmhurst School District #205 has developed a [Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management Procedures \(FAAMP\)](#) as a guideline for schools to follow. The purpose of the [Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management Procedure \(FAAMP\)](#) is to address the needs of children with food allergies within the school setting.

In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students, please refer to the [Administrative Food Guidelines](#). Parents can use this information to help all students with avoiding exposure to food allergies. A food allergy is a very serious concern for all. Exposure to an allergen can cause reactions varying from itching or swelling of the mouth, tongue and lips, to life-threatening shortness of breath and a drop in blood pressure.

Elmhurst 205 Guidelines for Snacks, Rewards, Parties, Curriculum Related Events:

DAILY CLASSROOM SNACKS

The District places an emphasis on healthy snacks with a focus on fruits and vegetables. A list of acceptable snacks will be provided for those students in an allergy-aware classroom.

REWARDS

Teachers will not use foods or beverages as rewards for individual or small group academic performance or good behavior.

BIRTHDAYS

Non-edible birthday treats such as pencils, stickers, etc. are allowed to be distributed for birthdays. No food items shall be allowed for birthday celebrations.

CLASSROOM AND GRADE LEVEL PARTIES

Food items are not to be distributed or used for classroom and grade level parties. Activities planned for classroom and grade level parties are to use only non-food items.

CURRICULUM RELATED FOOD EVENTS

A permission slip with food items and ingredients listed must be sent to parents at least 3 school days prior to the instructional activity. Instructional programs must be developed with sensitivity to specific classroom allergies.

PTA EVENTS

PTA Events need to use allergen-safe foods whenever possible at their events. Ingredient lists need to be provided with the lists of foods prior to the event and upon request during the event. Specific allergy restrictions need to be complied with for any rooms/spaces utilized.

Group Snack :

Group snack is part of our educational program as it facilitates communication, interaction and social skills with peers and adults. Oral motor and sensory issues may also be addressed. In accordance with the district's wellness policy snacks should be of nutritional value. The classroom teacher will inform you of classroom snack needs. **All foods brought to the classroom must be commercially prepared.** Milk is available for snack time.

District 205 supports medical conditions of all students in all educational settings. Students on specialized diets will only be allowed to eat or drink what is sent from home per parent direction.

A list of acceptable snacks will be provided for those students in an allergy-aware classroom.

Birthdays:

Teachers would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school. These events help facilitate social, emotional and language development. Non-edible birthday treats such as pencils, stickers, etc. are allowed to be distributed for birthdays. No food items shall be allowed for birthday celebrations.

Birthday Books-The MECEC Library is always accepting donations to expand our collection! In addition to treats, you are welcome to give a gift to the library and celebrate reading by donating your child's favorite book or by purchasing a book from our library wish list. On your child's birthday, we will read the book donation to their classroom. We will recognize your gift with a special birthday plaque with your child's picture inside of the front cover and it will be placed in our library collection.

Teachers may distribute party invitations only if one is sent for each child in the class.

Photo Release:

Students may be photographed as part of their participation in the programs at MECEC. Teachers photograph students as part of classroom projects and books, classroom communication, and student portfolio samples, etc. The purpose of these exchanges is to facilitate social communication skills across educational environments. This may also assist with communication at home. If you did not allow photographs/videotaping as part of your district permission when registering your child, we will be sending home a classroom photo release for the purposes stated above.

Student Progress Reports:

Student Progress Reports are issued three times a year and are sent home at the same time as elementary students. All students with and IEP' will receive a copy of goals with updated progress in addition to the progress report.

Parent Teacher Conferences:

Parents are invited to confer with teachers in the fall of each year (see district calendar for conference dates). Conference times are scheduled through the classroom teacher. Please be aware that individual team meetings can be scheduled through the classroom teacher when additional meetings are needed.

Toilet Training:

Staff will provide you with a handout to support toilet training activities at home on request. School staff will support toilet training methods used at home. Wearing comfortable and easily manageable clothing will assist your child with developing independence with toileting activities (please see below). Parents of

students who are not yet independent in toileting must provide the school with Pull Up diapers (required so that your child can participate in the toileting process) and wipes. While toilet training, parents should consider having their child wear cloth underwear under the Pull Up or buying Pull Ups in order to allow the child to feel wetness.

Clothing Guidelines to Promote Independence:

Students who demonstrate delayed developmental skills are often also delayed in their self help and independent skills. Many students at Madison Early Childhood Center are not toilet trained or are at many different developmental levels in becoming independent with their self help skills. To strengthen your child's skills and enhance independence, there are a few things that you can do to help us at school. You may want to consider these tips before shopping for the next season.

- 1) Avoid one piece outfits.
- 2) Consider pants and shorts that pull up easily.
- 3) Avoid zippers and belts for school when your child is trying to master independent toileting skills.

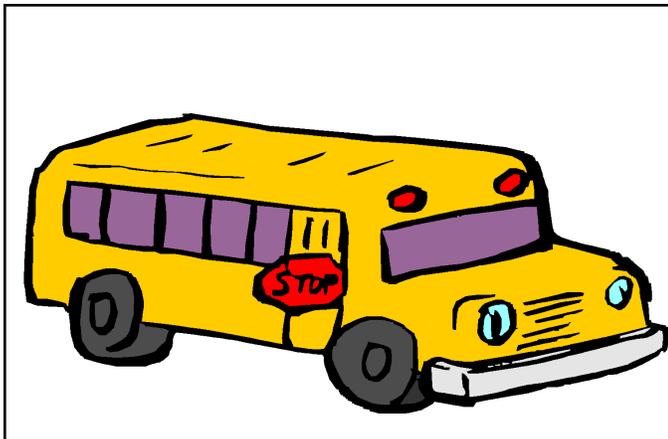
We thank you in advance for your assistance.

Managing Mornings

Tips for a Smooth Start in the Mornings:

Mornings can be more hectic during the week when you have to follow a schedule. Families need to work together to maintain a predictable routine. Remember that children are more demanding if they feel they are being ignored, rushed or manipulated. Be sure to give your family enough time to say "Good Morning" in a friendly and caring manner paired with a warm hug.

<p>Warm up in the morning. Slow down – rushing adds tension. Sing or hum or put on relaxing music. Look for humor.</p>	
	<p>Rely on simple strategies. Let children make choices about what they wear. Let your children dress to a timer—can they get dressed before the timer goes off? Get dressed first, then have breakfast. Encourage independent skills. Use a nurturing touch--kindness and humor is contagious!!!</p>
<p>Make breakfast fun and simple! Serve banana slices dipped in yogurt. Sprinkle a mixture of sugar and cinnamon on buttered toast. If you eat with your child, breakfast is bound to go smoother!! Put a smiley face of raisins on oatmeal or cereal. Make pancakes in the shape of Mickey Mouse.</p>	



Organize, organize, organize!!
Pack backpacks and lunches the night before. Put backpacks by the front door so they are ready to go. Help children choose and lay out their clothes for the morning. Plan for the unexpected (misplaced keys, tantrum, misplaced shoes) by giving yourself more time. Set realistic goals, you can't expect children to get ready in ten minutes.

How to Help Your Child Prepare for School

Taken from: From Early Intervention to Preschool Programs...and School – Age Services: A Parent's Guide to Transitioning Young Children with Special Needs; Padmaja Sarathy; LRP Publications; 2006.

Many parents have asked what they can do to help their child be better prepared for school. In supporting your child's transition, the staff offer these suggestions:

1. Assist your child to follow an established routine at home to be ready for the new program.
2. Get your child used to short periods of separation from you while you leave him/her in the care of a responsible adult.
3. Help your child to become more independent and to perform his self-care needs. Examples include following simple directions, asking for help, caring for own belongings, putting toys away, hanging up their own coat, etc.
4. Encourage your child to play by himself or with a peer for short periods of time without needing constant adult attention (not unattended).
5. Encourage your child to communicate his/her wants and needs – using words, gestures, sign language or pictures.
6. Arrange for opportunities to be around other young children: to play and communicate with others, to participate in a group setting.
7. Expose her/him to play with a variety of toys and materials. Teach your child how to use toys and materials appropriately.
8. Read stories to your child. Encourage him/her to look at books. Enjoy singing songs and playing games together.
9. Talk to your child about going to a new setting. Get your child excited about the new program discussing the fun activities that he/she will get to do.
10. Take your child to the playground at the new school so her/she can become familiar with the school setting. Talk about how this is your new school.

Nurturing Separation

Separation is a time when both you and your child will experience many different emotions. Your child will often be caught between his or her need to be close to you and growing independence. Here are some strategies to help make the process go more smoothly.

1. Lay the groundwork for separation the night before.

Before the child goes to bed, briefly talk about what will happen the next day. Together, you and your child can pick out what he or she would like to wear the next day. Put his or her backpack by the door. You may want to include a small picture book or a favorite object/toy. (Once the child is in the classroom, items from home will be put in the backpack so that they are not lost, forgotten and do not distract from the classroom routines.) Teachers are sensitive as to how and when to assist the child with putting their items away.

2. Daily routines at home in the morning and after school are helpful in assisting children with transitions, expectations and ultimately separation.

Daily routines in the morning and before bedtime are very helpful in assisting the child with what will happen next. Over time this prepares them emotionally for the next activity. Within daily routines are natural expectations. For example, we get up in the morning and we get dressed before we leave the house. Each family establishes their own routine to meet the needs of that family. Bedtime routines are very helpful in calming children down at the end of their day so that they can prepare for sleep. A warm bath followed by parents reading books/or looking at pictures in books (on the child's bed), is a typical calming activity for children before lights are turned out and the expectation is for the child to go to sleep.

3. Brief statements by parents in the morning of what is going to happen that day.

Parents can assist their child in preparing for the day by briefly telling them the big events of what will happen that day. For example, "You get to go to school and play with your friends. I am going to work. I will see you at _____". Remember that school is your child's work. Everyone has a job and stated simply, this is what we do.

Once you know some of the other child's names in your child's class, you can take time to talk about what your child anticipates he will do at school with his friends during the day. You might ask, "What do you think you will do first at school today – play with blocks or read a book?"

4. Let your child see that you and his or her teacher are building a relationship and that you like school.

When you are at school, greet school personnel warmly. When you read notes sent home about what the child did at school, make positive comments about what fun that must have been. Keep conversations regarding concerns you may have private with your child's teacher and these should not take place in front of your child. Teachers will return your phone calls as soon as they are able.

5. Always take time to say goodbye.

It may seem tempting to leave your child while he or she is involved in an activity and might not notice, but this doesn't promote trust in the long run. Clear good-byes build trust. Over time, they can strengthen your child's belief that you will come back. Establish a routine with your child for saying goodbye. Give some thought to the ritual you want to establish with your child in that 'goodbye moment'. Do you want to give me two hugs? Do we want to rub noses? Does the wink I give you really a secret way to communicate "I love you"? **Be sure to leave your child with an image of what you will do together at the end of the day.**

6. *Words of wisdom:* Once you've made the decision to go and have said goodbye, leave.

We've found it's very confusing when parents or caregivers come back for one last hug, peek or re-appear for the child if they believe you have left. It can make children anxious, or make a child think, "Maybe Mom or Dad is not really gone. Maybe if I cry enough, they will come back."

7. Trust your school's education staff.

We know our roles in helping to make this transition period go as smoothly as possible for you and your child. If we are not comfortable with each other's suggestions, it's important that we work out solutions that will be best for your child. We want you to share your concerns with us, so that we can build the same kind of relationship that we want with your children. A relationship built on trust and respect. We recognize each child and his or her family is unique and special.