

Excelsior Springs Early Childhood Center



Mission Statement

The mission of the Excelsior Springs School District, in **partnership** with students, parents and community, is to assure a **focused and challenging curriculum** that will monitor progress and provide a **comprehensive system of support** to prepare all students for their **next level of learning**.

Family Handbook

Our Program

The Excelsior Springs Early Childhood Center provides services for district preschool children, ages 3-5 years. Children must qualify through our screening process. Call *Parents as Teachers* at 630-9293 to set up a preschool screening.

Our daily schedule allows for students to access the general curriculum through circle time, centers, free choice/play, recess, and more. Speech/language, occupational, and physical therapies are available for those students who qualify.

The ECC has adopted *Project Construct*, an approach to teaching that is based on what we know about how children learn. This approach is derived from the theoretical view that learners construct knowledge through interaction with their physical and social environments. Through “hands-on, minds-on” learning experiences, students in constructivist classrooms attain deep understanding in the core content areas, while they also learn to work collaboratively with adults and peers and to be lifelong problem solvers.

We have also adopted *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)* as our behavior framework. This framework maximizes the selection and use of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along with a multi-tiered continuum that supports the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of all students. One key classroom management program we utilize for social-emotional learning is *Conscious Discipline*, which is a trauma-informed approach that has a focus on self-regulation.

We believe that all children can learn and have unique ways in which they do so. We provide a variety of distinctive opportunities and differentiated instruction in order to meet these unique learning styles. **We believe in your child.**

School Calendar

The ECC follows the Excelsior Springs School District's schedule.

September 8&9	Virtual Home Visits for new students and full-day students
September 10	First day of school
October 22 & 23	No School Teacher Professional Development
October 28	No School Teacher Professional Development
November 16-20	Virtual Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 25-27	No School/Thanksgiving
December 18	Half Day AM STUDENTS ONLY
Dec. 21-Jan. 4	No School – Winter Break
January 4	No School/Teacher Professional Development
January 18	No School/Martin Luther King Day
February 11 & 12	No School Winter Parent Teacher Conferences
February 15	No School
March 19	No School
March 22	No School/ECC Mass Screening for 2021-2022 Students
April 2	No School
April 5	No School/Teacher Professional Development
May 10&11	No School Parent Teacher Conference
May 20	Planned Last Day/Half Day AM STUDENTS ONLY

Staff Directory

Superintendent

Dr. Dan Hoehn

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Dr. Heather Gross

Early Childhood Principal

Dr. Katie Andreasen

Secretary

Patty Kistner

Process Coordinator

Leslie Leonard

Classroom Teachers

Emily Gremminger

Lori Hurla

Lizzie Mace

Mary Sellers

Jodi Stewart

Ali Stock

Meredith Wood

Classroom Assistants

Nikki Allen

Katie Battagler

Stacy Breeden

Kelley Crowley

Baylee Eider

Paula Johnson

Loren Ray

Anita Renne

Gina Smith

Speech/Language Pathologists

Beth Barkley

Avery Pack

Family Advocate

Chelsea Lane

Parents As Teachers

Kathy Emery

Occupational Therapy

Beverly Hufft/Cathy Norman

Physical Therapist

Tiffany Burkeybile

School Hours

Half Day Classes

Morning Classes **8:30 am – 11:15 am**

Afternoon Classes **12:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

Full Day Classes

8:30 am – 2:30 pm

Half Day Dismissal

Half Day Classes

Morning Classes **8:30 am – 11:15 am**

Afternoon Classes **NO SCHOOL**

Full Day Classes

8:30 am – 11:00 pm

For security our students and all visitors, including parents, must enter through the front entrance via the building secretary. If you are going past the drop off doors, you will need to stop by the secretary's desk.

Half Day parents may drop off their child at the building using the Outdoor Drop Off Procedure at 8:30 am and pick up at 12:30 pm. Full day parents may drop off their child at the building using the Outdoor Drop Off Procedure at 8:30 am. The child will have their temperature taken before they exit the vehicle. Half day classes will begin promptly at 8:40 am or 12:40 pm and your child will be counted tardy/late if they arrive after this time. Full day classes will begin at 8:40 am and your child will be counted tardy/late if they arrive after this time. If your child is late to school, you will be required to sign in using the Kiosk system in the front vestibule. You will need to have your driver's license in hand to check out your child.

If students do not ride the bus they must be picked up promptly at the dismissal time listed above. If you are unable to pick up your child in a timely manner please call the office and let us know you will be delayed and find a replacement if necessary. If a parent is late to pick up their child on a consistent basis they will have a conference with the principal and the child may no longer be able to attend school and be placed on the waiting list.

All families are to use the Parent Drop Off/ Pick Up Procedure if their child does not ride the bus.

Attendance

If your child will be **absent**, please call the ECC at 816-630-9297 as early as possible and speak to the secretary or leave her a message. **Unexplained absences of 10 days may result in your child being replaced with someone on our waiting list.** If the school office does not receive notification, an automated phone call will be generated by the school to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the absence. If the student was absent due to a medical appointment or another unavoidable and documentable appointment, then a note must be turned into the office so the absence can be documented as "Verified".

Visitors

At this time, visitors are not allowed in the ECC building. We apologize for this inconvenience and do so only to keep students and staff safe. When we are able to open up the building, visitors are always welcome in the classrooms. However, all visitors must plan their visit ahead of time with the teacher. Anyone volunteering in the classroom must have a Background Check completed.

Weather/School Closings

Excelsior Springs School District **cancellations** are made by 6 a.m. and all area media are notified by 6:15 a.m. Closings are announced on KCMO, KEXS, and KAOL radio stations and all Kansas City television

stations. **Cancellation information is also available at 630-ESMO. If Excelsior Springs has issued a late start, the ECC will not have the half-day morning session but will have the half-day afternoon session. Full-day students will be picked up approximately two hours later than normal.**

Changing weather conditions may result in an early dismissal. If district elementary schools dismiss early, the ECC will be closed for the afternoon.

School Attire

Please dress your child in clothing that is easily washed so that he/she can enjoy the activities provided. Many activities include paint, sand, water, clay, crayons, markers, etc. In addition, it is very important that your child be dressed appropriately according to the weather. We do play outside each day (unless there are extreme weather conditions) and want your child to be comfortable. Tennis shoes are important, as well as hats and gloves when appropriate. At this time the Clay County Health Department has issued a mask order requiring children ages 3-5 to wear masks.

Outdoor Recess

Outside recess/activities may occur as long as the natural temperature and wind chill is above 20 degrees F. Students will be expected to participate in all school activities, including outdoor and physical activities, unless a doctor's note is submitted to the school. The district safety director uses the following source ([https://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/pdf/weatherwatch .pdf](https://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/pdf/weatherwatch.pdf)) to make recommendations regarding outdoor activities based on weather information:

*30 degrees wind-chill is chilly and generally uncomfortable. Children may play outdoors and be comfortable when appropriately dressed for cold weather. Watch for signs of children being uncomfortable while playing.

*20 degrees to 30 degrees wind-chill is cold. Use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or too cold while at play. Hats, gloves, and coats must be worn.

When the temperature and/or heat index reaches 100 degrees F, students will spend limited time playing outdoors. Additional hydration is necessary and close supervision by school staff is necessary to prevent overheating.

Toys

Personal items such as toys, balls, games, trading cards, dolls, etc. need to remain at home. The school provides adequate play equipment for educational needs.

Pets

If your child is interested in bringing a pet to school for "show-and-tell," you will need to set up a scheduled time with your teacher. This request may not be honored due to allergies and other students concerns.

Candy, Gum, and Snacks

Students are not permitted to come to school with candy or gum, unless requested by the teacher for an activity or party. All breakfast and lunch food should be eaten before coming to school (not applicable to full day classrooms as they eat breakfast, lunch, and a snack at school).

Snacks

Snacks brought to share with the class are welcome after your teacher is notified. Classroom snacks **MUST** be pre-packaged/commercially prepared for health and safety reasons. We ask half day students for a monthly snack fee from families (not applicable to **Full Day or tuition paying students**). We ask that each child bring \$100 a year for snack. This can be paid in one large sum or split into smaller payments. Please speak with the ECC Secretary to discuss payment. Families are also welcome to donate snack instead of providing money. This snack **MUST** be pre-packaged/commercially prepared for health and safety reasons.

Emergency Contacts

Be sure that we always have correct and current phone numbers where you can be reached in case of illness or accident in **Powerschool**. If you have not completed or updated your **E-registration** please speak with the building secretary as we use this tool in emergencies. In addition, we must have at least 3 other emergency contacts in **Powerschool** in the event we cannot reach you. It is your responsibility to inform us of any changes in this information.

Release of Children

Your child will ONLY be released to those listed on their pick-up list. If at any time you arrange for someone other than those people listed, you must inform the teacher or building secretary of these arrangements before they occur. A form of **picture ID will be required** for us to release the child. We want to ensure the safety of your child.

Sick Children

Our program follows district regulations for student illnesses. Children are required to stay home if they have any of the following afflictions: diarrhea, pink eye, vomiting, colds, flu, COVID 19, fever (100°F or higher) and any other contagious illness. They must remain home for **72 hours AFTER returning to normal health**. If any of these conditions occur during school hours, children are isolated while parents are contacted to pick up their child. The building provides a designated, safe isolation area for sick children. If there are signs of head lice the school must be notified and your child treated with a pediculicide medication. Families **MUST** pick up their child within an hour of being notified.

Immunizations

Students cannot enroll and/or attend school unless immunized as required by Missouri State Law. (See board policy JHCB inoculation of students.) Students who fail to comply with District and/or State regulations concerning immunizations and health records may not attend school until the problem is corrected. Proper immunizations must be completed or in progress at the time of enrollment.

Medications

All student medications are to be kept in the school health room at all times. Teachers may administer medication after being trained by the building nurse to do so. If a teacher is to administer a medication the building nurse needs to be notified, so charting of the medication can take place. If a child presents you with medication, please take the medication and call the nurse or the office to come get it. Medication should not be carried by a child at any time unless authorized by the district nurse. This typically refers to students who carry an epipen or inhaler. The school nurse will call home to inform the parents/guardians of medication policies and procedures.

Injuries

Major: Child will be seen/treated by the **ECC nurse** or the closest building nurse while parents and/or emergency care are contacted immediately.

Minor: Child will be seen/treated by the **teacher** and parents will be notified at the end of the school day.

Every precaution will be taken to prevent accidents. Teachers should always keep the safety of the students as a major objective in their planning. Should an accident occur, for a student or a staff member, please report it immediately to the office and fill out an accident report form which may be secured from the health room. The district nurse should then be notified by office personnel. The health room personnel and or teacher will take care of the student and contact parents. Then, if a medical emergency arises, the district nurse and the principal will work together in handling the situation. In order to ensure the safety of students, there should be no burning candles, candle warmers, or microwaves in the classroom.

Conferences

The ECC calendar provides three scheduled parent-teacher conference opportunities each year. A parent may request a phone, or virtual conference at any time during the year. In addition, teachers may request a conference with you when needed.

Home Visits

All full day students and new students will be eligible for a Virtual Home Visit at the beginning of the year. Teachers will contact families to set up these visits. The visit is meant to be a time for the child, teacher, Para educator, and parent to get to know each other better. It is not a time to judge or report negativity. Teachers will ask parents about their child and their strengths and interests.

Phone Calls

Feel free to call anytime with questions/concerns. Most often, the teacher will be working with the children and be unavailable to speak right away. Always leave a message with the secretary or on the teacher's extension so your call can be returned as soon as possible. If it is an emergency or you are attempting to change your pick up plan for the day please contact the building secretary at 816-630-9297.

Media

Newspaper, television and organizations or facilities that provide services or education for our students may come to our school to report on our program. If you do not want your child involved in any interviews and/or photos, please share this with your child's classroom teacher. This is also part of the **E-registration** process. These recordings will be used for educational purposes and to document the learning in the program.

Mandatory Reporters

All Missouri school personnel are mandatory reporters of suspicious child abuse or neglect.

Personal Records

Your child's personal files are available to be viewed upon your request. This information is kept confidential, unless written notification is received indicating a release of records.

Classroom Management

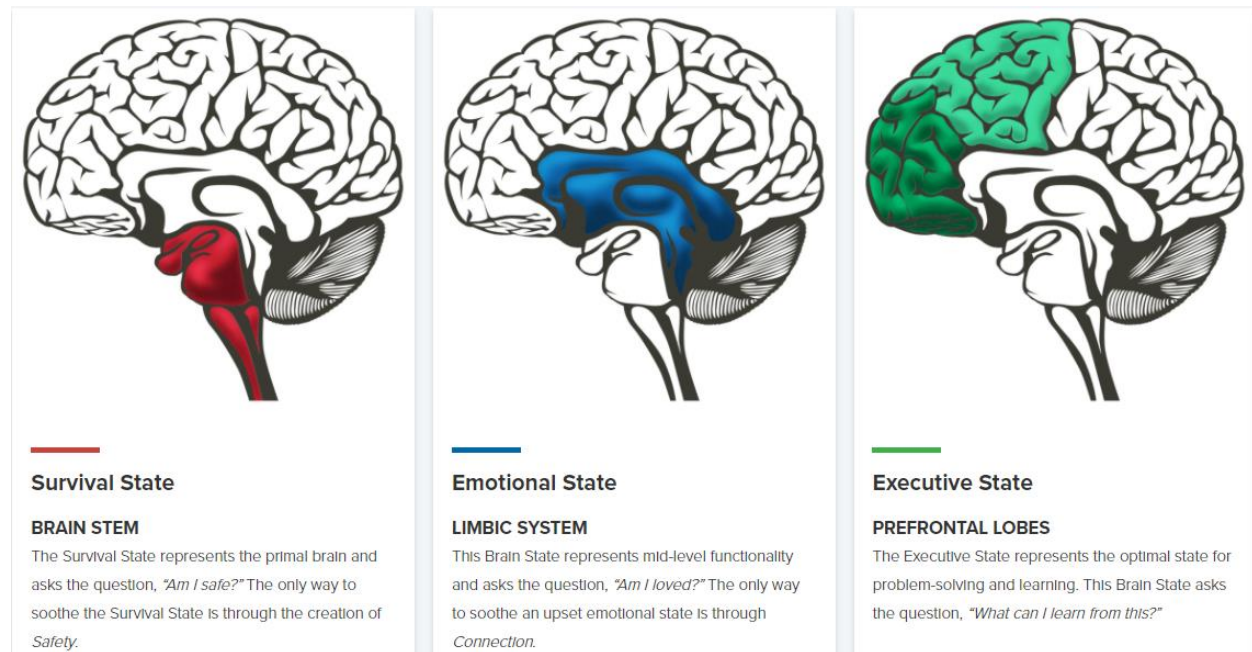
Our classroom management is based on the principles of the **PBIS®** framework. PBIS is a system used by schools to help prevent problem behaviors by teaching students specific expectations for all settings within the school. PBIS provides for a common language that can be used by all staff members and students. Clear classroom expectations and supports are put into place to help all students be successful with both their learning and their behavior. The program is very structured and the students know the expectations for all settings. We support a majority of the effective practices tied to the PBIS framework with Conscious Discipline.

Conscious Discipline is a trauma informed, self-regulation program that will support our PBIS framework. Conscious Discipline uses brain based research to transform the way we view and respond to behavior as adults and how we teach children to manage their own. It will support in teaching social-emotional and life skills to children. More information on both PBIS and Conscious Discipline will be presented as parent

events. Please visit <https://consciousdiscipline.com/> to learn more.

Conscious Discipline empowers us to be conscious of brain-body states in ourselves and children. It then provides us with the practical skills we need to manage our thoughts, feelings and actions.

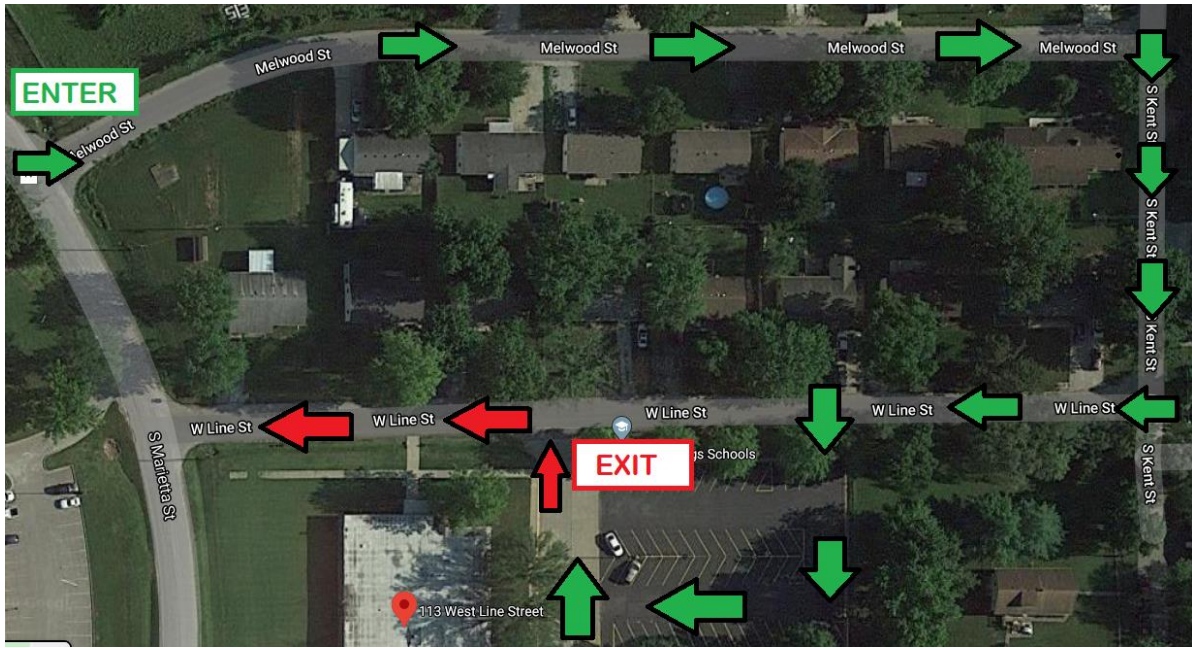
With this ability to self-regulate, we are then able to teach children to do the same. By doing this, we help children who are physically aggressive (survival state) or verbally aggressive (emotional state) become more integrated so they can learn and use problem-solving skills (executive state). When we understand the brain state model, we can clearly see the importance of building our homes, schools and businesses on the core principles of safety, connection and problem-solving.



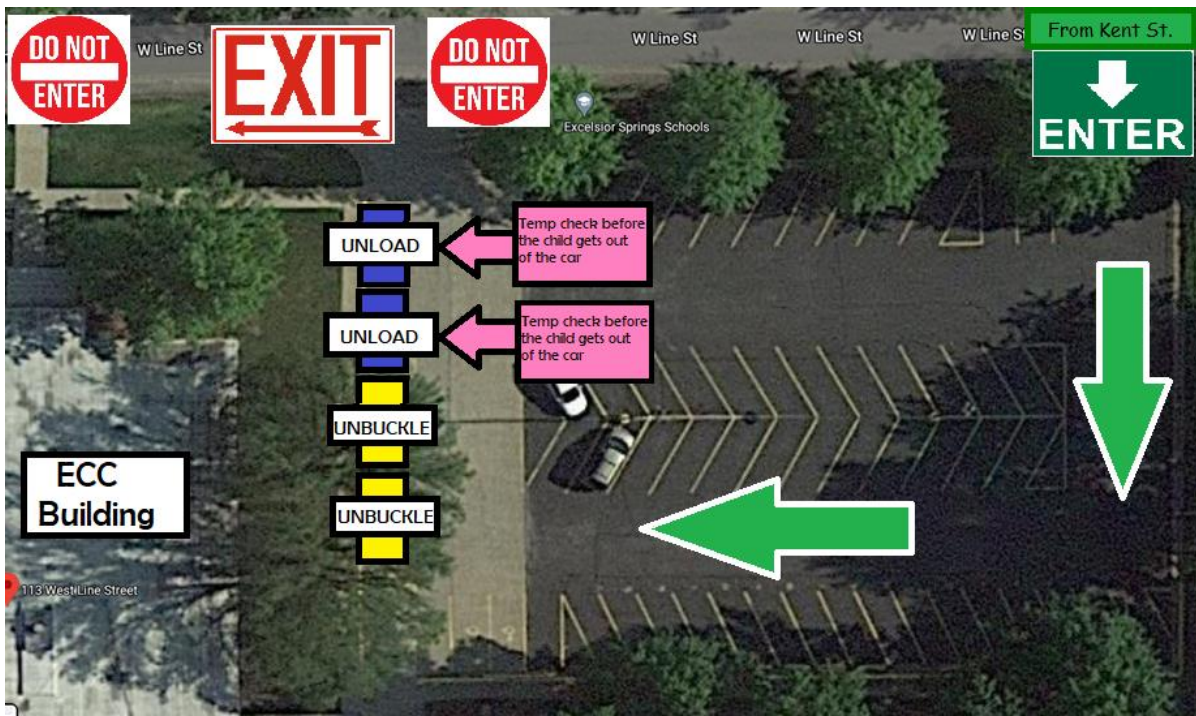
Family Drop Off/Pick Up

(8:30am, 11:15am, 12:30pm, 2:30pm, 3:30pm)

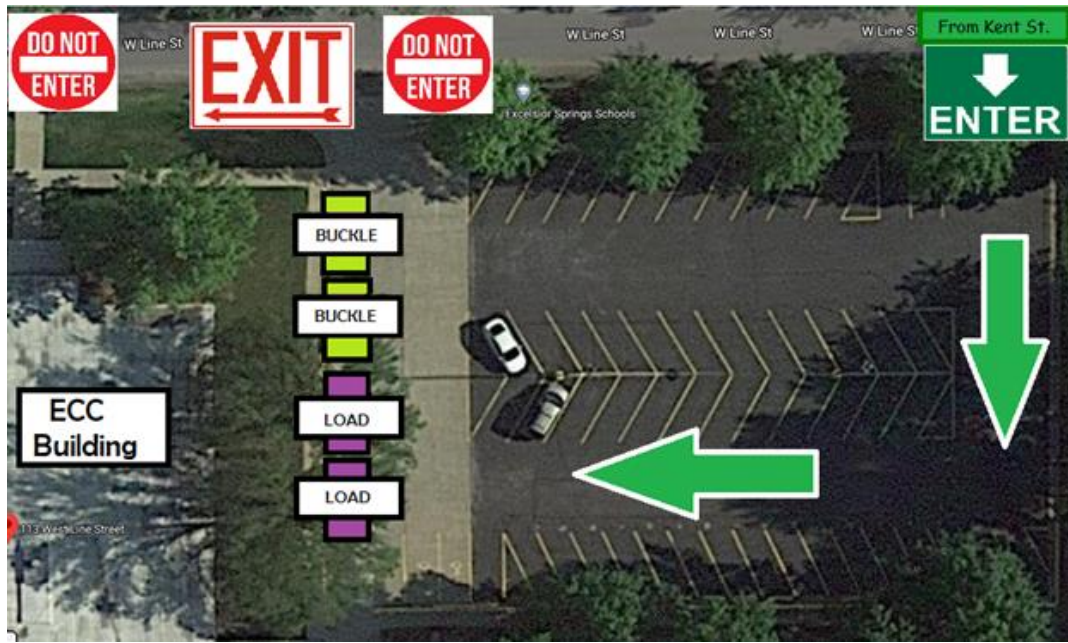
When families come to drop off or pick up their child, they will turn on Melwood Street north of West Line Street where the ECC is located. They will follow Melwood until they run into South Kent Street. They will then take a right onto South Kent Street until they reach West Line Street. At this time they will take a right and then a left into the east entrance of the ECC. They will then follow the signs to the drop off point. Once they have either dropped their child off or picked them up and secured them in the car/booster seat, they will exit out the west drive and take a left onto West Line Street to exit the parking lot.



FAMILY DROP OFF
(8:30am and 12:30pm)



FAMILY PICK UP
(11:15am, 2:30pm and 3:30pm)



Late Drop Off and Early Pick Up

If your child is late to school or you are picking up early, you will be required to sign in using the Kiosk system in the front vestibule. You will need to have your driver's license in hand to check out your child. Please identify yourself when you buzz at the front door by stating your name and what child you are dropping off/picking up. You will then move to the Raptor kiosk and follow the procedures listed there to check in or check out your child. The ECC secretary will communicate with you via an Alexa Show so you are able to have a conversation, relay pertinent information, and ask any questions. An ECC member will come to take your child to class straight from the main vestibule or deliver your child to the main vestibule. When necessary, the ECC secretary will have you come to the front office during your visit.

Parking

In order to ensure the safety of our students, we are asking that **no one parks directly in front of the building or next to the sidewalks** and that you hold your child's hand while in the parking lot. Please feel free to park further down the street or in our parking lot when you visit our site.



Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for **some** students. **Unfortunately, not all students are eligible for bus transportation.** If your child is a bus rider and will be absent, please notify the Apple Bus Company at 816-630-9929 as early as possible. This way, the drivers can make route changes as necessary. The Apple Bus Company's phone is generally answered in person from 6:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. Make sure to leave a message if you call outside of business hours. Your child should be ready for the bus 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. The bus drivers will not wait for your child. If your child misses the bus, it is your responsibility to transport them to school. Be sure you are home 10 minutes prior to the scheduled drop-off time. Your child will not be left at home alone or with a stranger. If no one is there to collect your child, they will be brought back to the ECC. It will then be your responsibility to pick up your child. When children are late for the bus, it makes all the students late for school. The bus will not wait more than 2 minutes for you at your stop. Failure to get your child off the bus will result in a conference with the building principal to solve this problem.

Project Construct

What Is Project Construct?

Project Construct is an approach to teaching that is based on what we know about learning. Project Construct incorporates curricular goals and assessment tools that are linked to state and national standards that reflect current knowledge about how children learn and develop.

Project Construct is derived from constructivism-the view that learners construct knowledge through interactions with their physical and social environments. The Project Construct approach to teaching is a rigorous, contextualized, problem-based, and learner-centered pedagogy that encourages students to hypothesize and predict, pose questions, defend and revise ideas, and research answers, as well as to imagine, investigate, and invent. Through “hands-on, minds-on” learning experiences, students in Project Construct classrooms attain deep understandings in the core content areas. They also learn to work collaboratively with adults and peers and learn to be lifelong problem solvers.

In addition, the Project Construct approach is consistent with developmentally appropriate practices. A substantial body of research indicates that implementing developmentally appropriate practices results in positive student outcomes.

The Project Construct goals for students and curriculum frameworks are also linked with the Missouri Early Learning Standards. Educators implementing Project Construct can be sure they are preparing children for the high expectations they will encounter as they progress through school.

Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

The Project Construct Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment is built around a set of goals for students that reflect current theory and research. These goals, which are listed below, represent critical learning outcomes for students in early childhood programs, and are consistent with Missouri's Early Learning Standards.

The goals are organized by four interrelated domains rather than by traditional subject areas because young children do not categorize experiences in the same way older children and adults. In this way, the foundations for academic learning are embedded in the social and physical environments and integrated into contexts that are meaningful to young children and appropriate to their stages of development.

Sociomoral Domain: Social and Personal Development

Social Development

- Build relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults
- Build relationships of mutual trust and respect with peers
- Consider the perspectives of others
- Cooperate and collaborate as a member of the learning community

Personal Development

- Be inquisitive
- Take initiative
- Be Confident
- Be inventive
- Be reflective

Cognitive Domain: Mathematics and Scientific Thinking

Mathematical Thinking

- Develop logical thinking
- Develop numerical thinking reasoning
- Develop geometric, spatial and temporal reasoning
- Analyze data
- Exchange mathematical ideas

Scientific Thinking

- Increase Knowledge of the physical world
- Develop and apply scientific reasoning
- Exchange scientific ideas

Represent Domain: Language Development

Language Development

- Develop effective listening skills and speaking abilities

- Develop as a reader
- Develop as a writer
- Use language to communicate in a variety of ways for different purposes and audiences
- Gather and comprehend information from a variety of sources

Symbolic Expression

- Represent ideas and feelings through pretend play
- Represent ideas and feelings through movement
- Represent ideas and feelings through music
- Represent ideas and feelings through art and construction
- Recognize that symbolic expression has social, cultural, and historical contexts

Physical Development Domain: Motor Development

Motor Skills

- Develop motor skills for personally meaningful purposes

Health and safety

- Develop healthy living practice

What does a Project Construct classroom look like?

In a Project Construct classroom, each child is valued and respected, both as a learner and as a person. Educators using Project Construct support children's development as individuals, as learners, and as members of a classroom community. Along with a thorough understanding of curriculum (what children need to know and be able to do each developmental level), teachers in Project Construct classrooms

- use students' interests to motivate and engage them in learning
- encourage children to collaborate and work together
- allow children to take initiative, express opinions and make choices
- view children's errors as learning opportunities
- assess children's thinking, as well as their work, in order to teach more effectively

Project Construct teachers also believe that the classroom environment is an important tool for helping children learn. Room arrangements and daily schedules, while carefully designed, are flexible. Student work is on display everywhere, signaling to students that the room belongs to them. There are tables for children to work together in groups and individual spaces for independent work.

While Project Construct teachers each have their own ways of involving students in the subject matter, you can be sure of one thing; they all believe that high expectations and rich learning environments challenge students to reach their maximum potential.

The Project Construct learning environment reflects the curriculum. Therefore, it should provide opportunities for children to make choices, to solve problems, to collaborate, and to be responsible members of the classroom community. The arrangement of the room, the materials, and the equipment should also be safe, orderly, and developmentally appropriate.

The learning environment includes:

- adequate space for developmentally appropriate learning activities
- a carpeted area for the whole class to meet together
- places for two children or a small group to meet or work together
- places where children can be alone
- noisy areas separated from quiet areas
- enough space for active play
- places to display children's creations
- storage space for children's personal items, such as backpacks and clothing
- space for teacher storage of classroom supplies and personal items
- space and equipment for outdoor play

The classroom is arranged in learning centers with well-defined spaces for center activities. The number and type of centers differ for each class and are often changed during the year according to the teacher's curricular decisions and in response to children's needs, as well as their self-initiated, spontaneous interests and ideas.

Typical learning centers may be block construction, pretend play, art, sensory activities, fine motor games, math games, literacy, science, listening, and music.

The learning centers should provide the children with opportunities to:

- explore and experiment
- problem solve
- make decisions and choices
- investigate personal interests
- role play
- create
- interact with one another
- interact with the teacher

Schedules

To meet the needs and interests of young children the daily schedule offers a balance between child-initiated and teacher-initiated learning experiences, relatively free movement activities and more restricted, quieter activities, individualized, small-group, and large-group activities. In addition, the schedule is built upon careful consideration of the young child's needs for nutrition, bathroom breaks, rest, and vigorous exercise.

Most of the day is devoted to active "hands-on, minds-on" learning experiences such as journal writing, shared-reading time, story time, science experiments, art activities, pretend play, outdoor free play, dance or movement experiences, physical knowledge activities, construction, board/card games, or puzzles. A minimal part of the day should be devoted to large-group, teacher-initiated activities or direct instruction.

Assessment of the Curriculum

The ECC utilizes the *Desired Results Developmental Profile 2015 (DRDP)* as the assessment tool in conjunction with *Project Construct* to inform instruction and program development. This tool looks at the following eight domains:

- Approaches to Learning-Self-Regulation
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy Development
- English-Language Development
- Cognition, Including Math and Science
- Physical Development-Health
- History- Social Science
- Visual and Performing Arts

Teachers formatively assess if students are responding, exploring, building, or integrating developmental level and plan future instruction based on this information. Parents will receive feedback using this measure 2-3 times per year.

Acknowledgement Agreement

I _____, have read the ECC Preschool Parent Handbook and agreed to the following conditions and regulations.

Please place a checkmark beside each statement upon agreement

_____ My child may participate in any photograph, videotape, or recording for educational purposes.

_____ My child's photo may be posted on their teacher's parent communication platform as well as the ECC Facebook page.

_____ To ensure student safety, I will not park directly in the front of the building or in the drop off/pick up lanes (located next to the sidewalks).

_____ To ensure that my child is prepared for the next year, I will make sure my child is attending school each day they are healthy.

_____ To ensure that the school district is prepared in an emergency, I will complete E-registry.

_____ I will have my child picked up at the scheduled dismissal times for the AM and PM classes (doesn't apply to bus riders).

_____ I agree to allow my child to have vision, hearing, height, and weight developmental screenings done at the Early Childhood Center.

Please return this signed sheet to the classroom teacher.

Student's name: _____

Parent's name: _____

Date: _____