

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 2023-2024

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 also utilize a *Positive Behavior Supports System* 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.

ESSD40 ECC Philosophy

The ECC is a community partner and strongly believes in a school-family relationship. We are committed to working as a team to help support the whole child. We create a safe and loving environment that allows for genuine connections that support children in their educational experiences to be their authentic selves. Children learn through purposeful play by exploring with a variety of experiences that inspire questions and wonderings that are relevant to the world around them. Teachers facilitate meaningful opportunities that reflect children’s needs and desires, while fostering children’s self-confidence and independence. We at the ECC are committed to seeing the best in each other, our students and their families. We’re glad you’re here!

ECC Calendar

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

August 23-24	Home Visits for new students and full-day students
August 25	First day of school
September 4	No School/Labor Day
September 22	No School/Teacher Professional Development
October 25	<u>Half Day AM Session Only- Full Day Dismissal at 11:15am for Parent/Teacher Conferences</u>
October 26	No School Parent/Teacher Conferences
October 27	No School
October 30	No School/Teacher Professional Development
November 20-21	No School/Teacher Professional Development
November 22-24	No School/Thanksgiving
December 20	<u>Half Day AM SESSION ONLY-Full Day dismissal at 11:15am</u>
Dec. 21-Jan. 4	No School/Winter Break
January 3	No School/Teacher Professional Development
January 4	Students return to school
January 15	No School/Martin Luther King Day
February 14	<u>Half Day AM Session Only- Full Day Dismissal at 11:15am for Parent/Teacher Conferences</u>
February 15	No School Parent/Teacher Conferences
February 16	No School/Teacher Professional Development
February 19	No School
March 25-29	No School/Spring Break
March 22	No School/ECC Mass Screening for 2022-2023 Students
April 12	No School
April 15	No School/Teacher Professional Development
May 2-3	No School Parent Teacher Conference
May 14	PM Session Last Day of School
May 15	Planned Last Day/ <u>Half Day AM SESSION ONLY-Full Day dismissal at 11:15am</u>

- Highlighted days are days that the ECC is not in session, but the rest of the district is in session.

Staff Directory

Superintendent	Dr. Jarret Tomlinson
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services	Dr. Christen Everett
Early Childhood Principal	Dr. Katie Andreasen
Secretary	Kim Simonitis
Process Coordinator	Leslie Leonard
Classroom Teachers	Shelby Copeland Lori Hurla Kennedy Lynn Olivia McHenry Taylor Rusche Jodi Stewart Ali Stock Taylor Williams
Classroom Assistants	Nikki Allen Katie Battagler Stacy Breeden Lori Coale Julie Davis Blakely Gabbert Krista Hahn Alycia Clevenger Pam Nichols
Speech/Language Pathologists	Laura Wood Avery Pack
Family Advocate	Chelsea Lane
Parents As Teachers	Kathy Emery
Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy/Play Therapy	Cathy Norman/Madeline Hamilton
School Nurse	Kristin Van Cleave Smith
Technology Support	Albert Gonzalez
Custodial	Lenny Smith/James Wallace

School Hours

Half Day Classes

Morning Classes **8:00 am – 10:45 am**

Afternoon Classes **12:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

Full Day Classes

8:00 am – 2:00 pm

Half Day Dismissal

District Half Day Dismissal Times

Morning Classes **8:00 am – 11:00 am**

Afternoon Classes **NO SCHOOL**

Full Day Classes

8:00 am – 11:00 am

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 8:00 am for AM session and 12:00 pm for PM session. Full day parents may drop off their child at the building using the Outdoor Drop Off Procedure at 8:00 am. Half day classes will begin promptly at 8:15 am or 12:15 pm and your child will be counted tardy/late if they arrive after this time. Full day classes will begin at 8:15 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 at the front desk. 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, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the absence by the school. If the student was absent due to a medical appointment or another unavoidable and documentable appointment, then a note must be turned in to the office so the absence can be documented as “Verified”. You will also receive a Learning Genie Daily Health Card each morning through the Learning Genie App. If your child is sick, you can use this to communicate their absence instead of calling.

Visitors

Visitors are always welcome at the ECC. 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. **It is highly encouraged that your child wear tennis shoes, as this is the safest footwear for the activities we have at the ECC.**

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, Pop, and Snacks

Students are not permitted to come to school with candy, gum, or pop 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 snack fee (not applicable to Full Day or tuition paying students). We ask that each child bring \$100 a year for snacks.** 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 snacks instead of providing money. This snack **MUST** be pre-packaged/commercially prepared for health and safety reasons. This year all payments will be made through [RevTrak](#).

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 **24 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 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. Medication should not be brought in by a child at any time. Only students who carry an epipen or inhaler are allowed to carry medication with them if it has been approved by the building nurse. 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 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, paraeducator, 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. They last about 15 minutes.

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 support 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.



Survival State

BRAIN STEM

The Survival State represents the primal brain and asks the question, "Am I safe?" The only way to soothe the Survival State is through the creation of *Safety*.



Emotional State

LIMBIC SYSTEM

This Brain State represents mid-level functionality and asks the question, "Am I loved?" The only way to soothe an upset emotional state is through *Connection*.



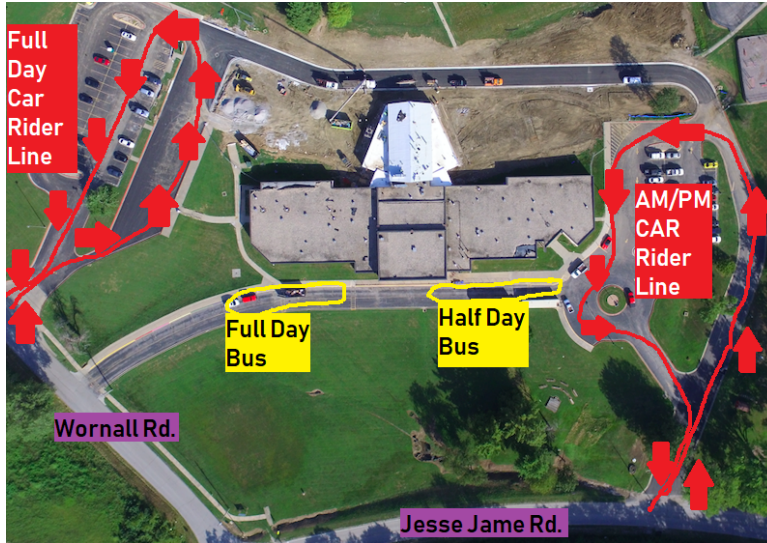
Executive State

PREFRONTAL LOBES

The Executive State represents the optimal state for problem-solving and learning. This Brain State asks the question, "What can I learn from this?"

Drop Off & Pick Up Procedures

Staff will come out to get students out of cars and off of buses at 8:00 am and 12:00 pm for drop off. Full day staff will come out to get students out of cars and off of buses at 8:00 am. Please stay in your car with your child and allow the staff member to get your child out of the car. Half day programs will begin promptly at 8:15 am or 12:15 pm. Full day programs will begin at 8:15 am. If your child is late to school, please sign in at the front office.



Note to AM Car Rider Families: With the addition of Lewis Elementary to our campus, please be patient with pick up and drop off. The ECC will arrive and dismiss ahead of the elementary students.

AM\PM Parent Drop Off/Pick Up



Full Day Parent Drop Off/Pick Up



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 bring them into the front office. Please identify yourself when you buzz at the front door by stating your name and what child you are dropping off/picking up. An ECC member will come to escort 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. Lewis Elementary will start their arrival at 8:20am. If you are bringing your child during their arrival, please park your car and walk in with your child to check them in.

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. For events, there is also parking in the south parking lot by the water tower. When leaving the ECC from the front lot, please utilize the circle drive at the front of the building, and keep the bus lane clear. The bus lane is found on the east side of the building. Cars are not permitted to drive down the bus lane.

Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for **all** students. **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 and the ECC.** 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 3 times per year.