

Parent Handbook



Early Learning Center Manassas Presbyterian Church

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LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

In January 1964, our congregation inaugurated its weekday program for preschool children. In taking that step we began a very special kind of ministry to families throughout our community. We have been blessed by the more than 7,000 children who have passed through our doors over the years.

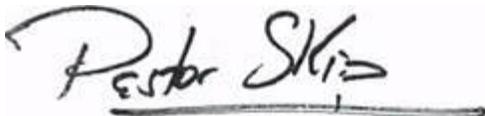
Yet each child is unique. Perhaps the strength of our program is in recognizing and celebrating the individuality of each boy and girl. We feel privileged to enjoy your confidence as we seek to contribute to the growth of the special person who is your child.

As Pastor of Manassas Presbyterian Church, I look forward to meeting you and getting to know your children. I hope to become a familiar face within your child's preschool day. I am confident that we will share many enriching experiences.

One of the real joys of our weekday mornings is to hear, see, and sometimes participate directly in the laughter, the curiosity, the eagerness, and the activities of our toddlers and preschoolers. Our building is a wonderfully lively place from September through May!

We thank you for your support. We appreciate your ideas. Most important: We welcome your child!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Skip". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

The Rev. Dr. Skip Ferguson
Pastor



WELCOME

Welcome to Manassas Presbyterian Church Early Learning Center! We are excited to have this opportunity to get to know your family, and are looking forward to watching your child grow and learn during these important early years. It is our hope to instill a joy of learning and curiosity in your child, through the process of exploration, trial and error, and the excitement of success. May you also enjoy this experience with your child!

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Learning Center (ELC) is a valued ministry of Manassas Presbyterian Church (MPC). In our programs, each child is viewed as an individual person with needs that are unique to him/her. We strive to recognize and meet the needs of each child.

We will work to provide experiences that will enrich and enhance each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Your child will come to know him/herself as a part of a group and learn the balance of independence and interdependence.

To enable the accomplishments of these objectives, we provide a "rich in experience" classroom environment that is open, loving, supportive, and nurturing. This will allow your child to develop a positive self-concept, knowing that he/she is a precious child of God.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Manassas Presbyterian Church Early Learning Center is classified as a "Religiously Exempt Child Day Center" with the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Social Services. The Early Learning Center has general liability insurance covered through the policy held by Manassas Presbyterian Church.

Staff

ELC operates under a volunteer Board of Directors ("Board") – which includes members of the congregation, and a church Session representative. The Director and/or the Assistant Director attend all board meetings. Important matters are reviewed by the Board, which is concerned with all phases of the school's program.

The Director oversees the daily workings of the preschool; aids in staff development; welcomes suggestions from parents and teachers; recommends changes in school policies and procedures; and implements decisions made by the Board. The Director is always available to answer any questions or discuss problems parents might have. In the absence of the Director, the Assistant Director assumes these roles.

All staff members are selected on the basis of a resume and interview(s) with the Board or its designee(s). Each staff member at ELC has demonstrated a love for preschool age children and has a combination of education and experience that demonstrates a background in early childhood development. In addition, during the school year, each employee is required to attend a minimum of 18 hours of professional development related to early childhood development or the education of young children.

All staff must provide proof of negative TB screening as determined by their physician, and are certified by a practicing physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. Each staff member must be subjected to criminal and child protection background checks approved by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

All substitute teachers who do not have children enrolled in the program must be subject to complete background checks and must provide proof of negative TB screening as determined by their physician. All regular substitutes (>10 days per year) will require documentation as well.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

The MPC-ELC staff is required by the Commonwealth of Virginia to report any and all instances of known or suspected child abuse, neglect, and/or endangerment. All staff are trained annually to be able to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. When a staff member has information or evidence of suspected child abuse, the Director or Church Pastor is informed of the concern. The staff member will also contact the Department of Social Services. The Department of Social Services will determine the action to be taken from the point of contact.

Location and Facilities

The Early Learning Center is accessed through the doorway at the rear of the Manassas Presbyterian Church, 8201 Ashton Avenue, Manassas, VA. Please follow the driveway on the left side past the church building. The ELC consists of 10 classrooms used on a daily basis to accommodate the enrollment of up to 112 children daily, with a maximum enrollment of up to 240 children a year. The ELC and the Property Committee of Manassas Presbyterian Church maintains two outdoor playgrounds adjacent to the preschool wing consisting of swings, slides, climbing equipment, balance beams, etc.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

To register your child for ELC, you need to submit a registration form. Current program descriptions, registration fees, and tuition rates for the year are available in the preschool office during the last week of January. Initially, registration will be accepted by mail only, based on the following criteria:



- Manassas Presbyterian Church members beginning **January 29**
- Current Early Learning Center families postmarked beginning **February 5**
- Previous Early Learning Center families postmarked beginning **February 12**
- Open enrollment postmarked beginning **February 19**

Any registration postmarked prior to the appropriate date will be returned unopened. Beginning March 1, registrations can be accepted in the office.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Children who are 18 months old (by September 30th) up to kindergarten age are eligible to enroll in ELC. ELC admits children regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or religion. Children with special needs will be accepted on the approval of the Director and Preschool Board. (This is to ensure that we can provide the resources and facilities to meet each child's needs.)

ELC strives to offer classes as needed by the community; and as space is available to accommodate the programs. The following classes are offered and filled on a first-come/first-served basis according to the registration guidelines.

- 2-year-old class - A child must have their 2nd birthday by September 30.
- 3-year-old class - A child must have their 3rd birthday by September 30. The child must be able to completely care for his/her toilet needs; No diapers or pull-ups are permitted at any time.
- 4-year-old class - A child must have their 4th birthday by September 30. The child must be able to completely care for his/her toilet needs; No diapers or pull-ups are permitted at any time.
- 5-year-old class – A child must have their 5th birthday by January 31st and must meet the Junior Kindergarten class requirements.
- In-school transfers are only permitted on recommendation of the teacher and Director or Board to meet the developmental needs of the child. All transfers must have Board approval.
- The following documentation must be presented for each child:
 - Annual Registration Form
 - Virginia School Entrance Health Form, signed by a physician/health department official, or his/her designee.
 - An original birth certificate - a copy will be kept in your child's office file.
- If classes are full, your child's name will be put on a wait list. If and when an opening occurs during the year (prior to March 1st), we will call from the wait list. You will be given 48 hours to respond.

Once the school year has begun, a parent must drop off registration forms a minimum of 48 hours prior to the child's first day of school.

CLASSES AND HOURS OF OPERATION

ELC is open from the Tuesday after Labor Day until the last Friday before Memorial Day. We closely follow the Prince William County Public School Calendar. Our center hours are 9:10 am (doors open) -12:00 pm (dismissal begins). All children must be picked up by 12:15 p.m. The preschool office is staffed daily between 8:30 am and 1:30 pm from the Tuesday after Labor Day weekend until the Friday before Memorial Day weekend. The office is open during the months of June, July and August, please call for hours. The Director is also available by appointment at other times.

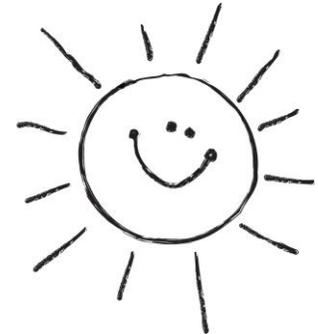
Student – Teacher Ratios

- 2-year-old classes contain a maximum of 8 children, and meet one or two mornings per week. A teacher and an assistant are dedicated to these classrooms. (Ratio 1 Adult : 4 children)
- 3-year-old classes contain a maximum of 16 children, and meet two mornings per week, Tuesday and Thursday; or three mornings per week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; or 5 mornings per week. A teacher and assistant are dedicated to these classrooms. (Ratio 1 Adult : 8 children)
- 4-year-old classes contain a maximum of 16 children, and meet either five days per week or three mornings per week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. A teacher and an assistant are dedicated to these classrooms. (Ratio 1 Adult : 8 children)
- 5-day Junior Kindergarten class contains a maximum of 16 children, and meets five mornings per week. A teacher and an assistant are dedicated to this classroom. (Ratio 1 Adult : 8 children)
- Because of the State regulations regarding class size and teacher ratio, missed days may not be made up on non-scheduled days.

WEATHER AND EMERGENCY RELATED CLOSINGS

MPC-ELC follows the Prince William County Public Schools emergency closing announcements as stated below:

- If Prince William County Public Schools close, then ELC is closed.
- If Prince William County Public Schools delay opening, then ELC is delayed.
- If Prince William County Public Schools dismiss early for any reason, we ask that you pick up your child as soon as you are able and conditions allow for a safe pick-up.

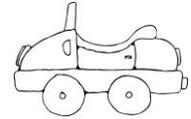
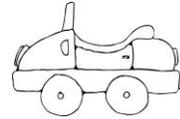
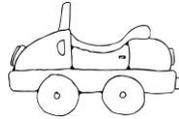
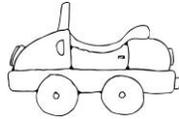


It is the policy of MPC-ELC not to make up days missed due to snow.

BUILDING SECURITY

Our building doors remain locked at all times except during arrival and dismissal. There is a security system installed in our building. During drop off and pick up, the front doors and back door are unlocked with staff supervision.

The front outer building doors are unlocked between 9:00 am to 9:25 am for drop off and 11:55 am to 12:15 pm for pick up. A staff member will be located at the front entrance during these times. Please note, however, the interior hallway doors open to the classrooms at 9:10 am. If you arrive between or after these times, please use the back preschool door for entry; there is a doorbell to the right of the door.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF 2-YEAR-OLDS

- Please park in the front parking lot and come in the main entrance by the Sanctuary. You must walk your child into the classroom.
- Interior hallway doors open to the classroom at 9:10 am.
- Remove your child's coat and hang it up.
- Sign the register with the child's name, your destination and phone number. Please indicate if anyone other than yourself will be picking up your child.
- Please return to the classroom to pick up your child by 12:15 pm.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF 3-, 4-, AND 5-YEAR-OLDS

- Walk-In - please enter and exit the building through the front entrance next to the Sanctuary. Interior hallway doors open to the classroom at 9:10 am.
- Kiss-n-Ride - please drive to the rear door. Kiss-n-Go service is available from 9:10 – 9:25 am and 12:00 – 12:15 pm (more details below)
- Other times, please park in the back of the building and ring doorbell for entry through the main preschool entrance.

KISS-N-RIDE SERVICE

Parents or caregivers can drive up to the back door of the preschool and ELC staff will oversee the arrival of your child into their classroom. Kiss-n-Ride is a convenience offered to parents and children in our 3-5 year old programs. **Kiss-n-Ride is a cell phone free service;** use of a cell phone during this time will revoke your privileges for this program.

Morning Kiss-n-Ride - Children 3 and older will be met in their vehicle at the rear entrance between 9:10 am and 9:25 am. Staff members oversee the arrival of children. After 9:25 am, you are responsible for walking your child into his/her classroom.

Afternoon Kiss-n-Ride - You must register your child in order to participate in afternoon pick up service. After we receive your registration, Kiss-n-Ride visor tags will be assigned to each family. Your visor tag must be displayed in the car window when picking up children.

Kiss-n-Ride service is available between 12:00 p.m. and 12:15 p.m. After your child is placed into your car, please drive slowly to the rear of the parking lot to fasten seat belts in order to facilitate a quicker pick-up. Please note that if your vehicle does not have an appropriate car safety seat for your child, we will not be able to release him/her to you through the Kiss-n-Ride line.

LATE PICK-UP

Please pick up your child at the scheduled time. If an unforeseen event causes your arrival to be delayed, please call the office at 703-369-5880. Please leave a message if we do not answer. We will always check for messages at 12:15 pm. To be considerate of our staff; please pick up your child as soon as possible. The Department of Social Services authorizes MPC-ELC to be open only from 9:10 am to 12:15 pm Monday through Friday. If late pick-ups become a habit or are consistent (more than 5 occurrences), we reserve the right to assess a fee of \$5 for each 15 minutes late. This fee will be charged to your financial account. If a child is left at the Center for more than 15 minutes after the Kiss-N-Ride pick-up ends, and parents have not called/cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called. After one hour, Child Protective Services (**703-792-4200**) will be called if nobody has contacted the preschool and nobody can be reached.

Please note that if our Kiss-n-Ride program runs late do to any unforeseen problems, you will not be penalized if your child is picked up after 12:15 pm. Understand also if there are emergencies in the vicinity of MPC, we will be aware of the situation and children will remain with our staff until it is safe for you to come pick up your child.



CELL PHONE USE

It is school policy that you remain off your cell phone during the arrival and dismissal times and when operating a vehicle in all areas of our parking lot. When walking in, your child will not be dismissed from their classroom until you have finished your cell phone conversation. This is an important time for you, your child, and the teacher to share important information. Your constant attention in the parking lot is necessary to keep all students safe. We ask all families to help each other be aware and reminded of our policies on cell phones.

TUITION INFORMATION

The first tuition payment for students is due August 1. This payment guarantees the child a place in the school. This payment is non-refundable

and acts as the May tuition payment. If the August payment is not received by August 15th, ELC has the right to fill the spot with a child from the wait list.

Payment for each remaining month, beginning in September thru/including the month of April, is due on the 1st of the month. Second tuition payment (for September) is due the first week of school. If tuition has not been paid by the 15th of the month, a late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed. By the end of the school year, a total of 9 monthly tuition payments will be made to the school. An annual prepayment option is available, information will be included in the first school mailing for the year.

Make tuition payments by cash or checks payable to MPC-ELC; please write your child's name in the "notes" line. If paying by cash, please bring cash to the preschool office only, and we will prepare a receipt for you; for the safety of all, you may not leave cash payments with teachers.

If your family has temporary hardship, tuition payment agreements can be made. A written agreement of a payment plan will be made and signed by the family and the director. ELC will do everything in its capability to work with a family to keep a child in the preschool program. However, if tuition account plus late fees are not paid by the end of the month, ELC has the right to remove the child from the rolls if the family has not contacted the Director. ELC holds the right to place a child from the wait list into the class at this point. The child may only reenter the program after all prior fees are paid if space is available. There is a \$25 fee for all returned checks. After 2 returned checks, all future payments must be made by cash or money order. All fees paid are applied to any outstanding charges first, then to the current tuition month.

Tuition payments can be placed in your child's Communication Folder or in the tuition boxes available at the Kiss-n-Go entrance and in the preschool office.

Discounts are available for families with multiple children and families who wish to prepay the annual tuition fee. Please contact the ELC office for more information.

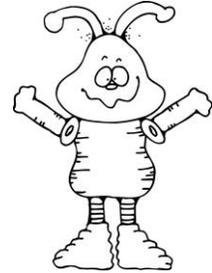
MPC-ELC offers scholarships for families in need. The Board considers applications for scholarship funds on a case-by-case basis when money is available. Families that receive MPC-ELC scholarships accept their financial commitment to the program, just as ELC accepts our financial commitment to the family. If the family's tuition fees are not paid for 2 months, the scholarship is forfeited, and the child will be removed from the rolls.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health of each child is very important to all of us. Each staff does a visual health screening of each child every day.

Please keep your child home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Has green or yellow nasal discharge accompanied by a fever
- Has pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)
- Has a rash of unknown origin (until medical evaluation determines the child can return to class)
- Has had 3 or more bouts of vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- Has a fever of 100F or higher in the previous 24 hours
- Has symptoms of illness such as behavior change, lethargy, uncontrollable cough, inexplicable irritability or crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs (until medical evaluation determines the child can return to class)
- Has "wet" blisters from poison ivy that cannot be covered by bandages



If your child has been ill, and is now on a prescribed antibiotic, your child must be kept home until they have had their medication in their system for a minimum of 24 hours.

Any child well enough to come to school will be considered well enough to play outside, unless a doctor's note is provided precluding outside play for health reasons.

Should a child become ill during the day with any of the above symptoms, the parent is notified immediately. The child will be taken out of the classroom and remain under adult supervision until the parent or an authorized person arrives to take the child home. Please arrange for your child to be picked up within 30 minutes of receiving our call.

Please contact the office if your child contracts a communicable disease (such as strep throat, influenza, hand foot and mouth disease, pinkeye, chicken pox, or parasites such as lice, ringworm, etc.) Communication and cooperation of parents are of great importance in helping to prevent the spread of diseases. Your child may return to school when he/she is no longer considered contagious, as determined by the regulations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

If your child has possibly been exposed to any contagious disease in school,

you will be notified through a letter sent home from the preschool office. All confidentiality's will be maintained. Because classrooms are used by multiple groups throughout the week, all classes meeting in the room where exposure takes place will be notified. The cleaning procedures for your child's classroom will be modified as necessary.

ABSENCES

If your child will be absent from ELC for any reason, a courtesy call to the office at 703-369-5880 is appreciated. If your child will be absent for a planned extended period for any reason, we would appreciate a written note/email. If we have not heard from you while your child is absent, you may receive a call – we miss your child!

If you will be away from ELC for an extended period, you are still responsible for your child's tuition to hold your child's place in the class. If your child has not been in school for 3 weeks, without communication with the office or the classroom teacher, your child will be considered withdrawn, and the school has the right to fill the space with a child from the wait list.

MEDICATION

The ELC has staff that are trained in Medication and PreMedication Administration as approved by the Virginia State Board of Nursing, and the Department of Social Services. Trained ELC staff will administer any and all medication for which proper paperwork and doctor's orders are completed. No medication can be administered without completed paperwork, parent signature, and where needed, a doctor's signature. ELC does not have medication on site for student use. All medications must be provided by the parent, be labeled with student's name, dosage, and method of measuring must be provided as necessary. All prescription medications must have pharmacy labels attached. No expired medications will be administered.

All medications must be brought to the office and handed to the Director or Assistant Director by a parent or guardian. At no time may medications be transported to or from school in a child's backpack, for the safety of all children. NO medication can be left in a child's backpack at any time, even if the child is traveling home with a different adult afterschool. Medications can be stored temporarily or for the day or year in the locked cabinet in the preschool office.

Doctor's written permission is required for long-term medications, such as Epi-pens, inhalers, etc. Required



forms are mailed home in June/July mailing, and are available in the office or on our website, www.manassaspreschool.org, at any time.

It is hoped that most routine prescription and over-the-counter medications can be administered before or after school. However, if you find it necessary for medication to be given during school hours, prescription medication can be administered for up to 10 days as labeled by the pharmacy, with the parent's written consent. The label must have the child's name, dosage and times indicated. Over-the-counter medication can be administered for ten days or less for specific symptoms only, we cannot administer medications "as needed".

EMERGENCIES

At least one staff member with current CPR and First Aid certifications is always on site during school hours.

A Permission for Emergency Care, located on the registration form, authorizes parents to allow ELC to provide immediate care and, if necessary, the transfer of the student and medical records to the local hospital.

In case of medical emergency during school hours, where permission has been granted as above, the staff will administer first aid. The parent or authorized adult will be notified as quickly as possible. If medical attention is required, the staff will call the local emergency team, who will transport the child to the local hospital. Every effort will be made to contact the child's own physician. A member of our staff will travel with your child.

In case of medical emergency during school hours, where permission has not been granted as above, the staff will contact the parent or authorized adult immediately. The parent will be responsible for first aid treatment.

Emergency numbers for reaching the parent(s) or guardian(s) and 2 additional authorized persons must be on file in the ELC office. Please keep these numbers, as well as any other changes to your address, updated as needed.

SNACKS

Each child brings his/her own peanut-free snack daily, in a bag labeled with his/her name. A peanut-free snack means:

- the **label** does not list peanut or peanut products as an ingredient,
- the **label** does not list peanuts as an allergen,
- the **label** does not contain wording to the effect of: "may contain trace amounts of peanuts",
- the **label** does not contain wording to the effect of: "manufactured in

- a facility that processes peanuts,” and
- the **packaging** does not contain any other wording implying possible peanut contamination.

Our school is sensitive to the increased number of peanut allergies in our community and world. ELC is proud to be a peanut sensitive school. During school hours, products with peanuts and peanut butter are not prepared, served, or eaten by staff or children. This policy includes field trips, special events and all school activities.

If your child's snack contains an item with peanuts or items that have been clearly exposed to trace amounts, our staff will remove it and replace it with an appropriate item. When this occurs, we will explain to your child that this snack can be enjoyed at home. A note explaining the reason(s) will be sent home with the item. Occasionally your child's snack will return home with no note -- that means your child's class either celebrated a birthday or cooked on that day!

Some classrooms may have a customized snack list to meet the needs of specific severe allergies other than peanuts. However, allergens will only be excluded from classroom snack time if indirect contact could cause a life threatening allergic reaction. We will do our best, however, to ensure that classroom parties provide foods that all children can enjoy.

Questions regarding snack should be directed to your child's teacher or the school office. An open line of communication is the key to a safe environment for everyone. Each teacher has an allergy list for their class posted in the classroom.

Your child's teacher will check all food items prior to opening packages. Your child may not bring snacks or drinks in glass containers. A list of suggested snacks will be published annually and updated as needed. Please remember the following:

- No candy!
- No juice boxes or sugary drinks. Water is provided daily.
- We cannot provide a refrigerator/freezer for daily snacks.
- We cannot provide a microwave for snacks.
- If you are repackaging foods at home, please cut out and enclose (or copy) the label so the teacher can reference the ingredient list. (Feel free to bring the package to the office and we can make a copy for you.)
- Please remember to pack a small snack that your child can eat in less than 15 minutes. This is not time for an early lunch.
- For homemade goods, please provide the full list of ingredients and any applicable labels associated with them. Even minor ingredients,

including decorative gels and sprinkles, etc. must be checked.

If your child forgets a snack, or the teacher cannot verify that the snack is peanut free, a simple healthy snack will be supplied and a reminder notice will be sent home. If this occurs on a regular basis a fee will be charged.

Remember, regularly sending in a snack that is not peanut-free (as defined above) is grounds for dismissal from the program.

ALLERGIES

Children with severe allergies that affect their diet must supply ALL of their own food for snacks. We also request special treats that we can keep in the classroom cabinets for birthday celebrations.

If your child has a food allergy, we have forms for you to complete to help us understand your child's needs. A physician's statement regarding your child's allergies is required where medication is necessary. While we make every possible effort to maintain a safe environment, we cannot guarantee that children suffering from a peanut allergy will not come in contact with peanut traces. While ELC does not permit peanuts and peanut butter, MPC is not a peanut-free facility, nor are many field trip destinations. We will do everything within our ability to ensure the safety of your child. MPC-ELC does not have exclusive use of the classrooms, but custodial staff and the teachers do take care to clean each classroom at the start and end of each day's use. All users of the room are asked to be sensitive to our policy.

If your child has a seasonal allergy, please communicate with the teacher any changes in medication or behavior that these may cause at the appropriate time.

The ELC is aware that at this young age, you and your child may not yet be aware of allergies that may affect your family. If your child has an allergic reaction to anything during the day at school, it will be treated as an emergency and you will be called as soon as possible. Our school will also fill out a special allergic reaction form that you can share with your doctor to help determine the cause of the reaction.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Your child's teacher would love to help you celebrate your child's birthday in class if you would like. While we will make your child feel special on this day, our celebration time is during our brief snack time. You are welcome to send in a special snack for your child and his/her classmates. The healthier the better, but we understand that your child might want sweet treats. You are welcome, but not expected, to bring in plates, napkins, drink, etc. Please do not send in goodie bags.

Your child's teacher will send home a school letter with more details close to your child's birthday. Because illness happens so randomly at this age, we ask you to send in a regular snack every day with your child even if the class is planning to celebrate a birthday; therefore, if they come home with their snack unopened, do not be surprised or alarmed.

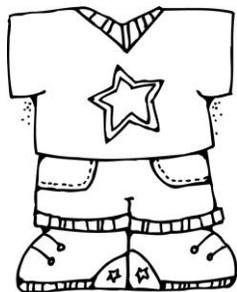
Please remember our school policy is to be peanut-free, food labels are required on all special snacks!

CLASSROOM PARTIES

On party days, please send in the specific items requested by the room parent or teacher. If you want to send an additional treat for the children, try to stick to non-food items such as pencils, erasers, stickers, small booklets, etc.

DRESS

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes including pants with elastic waistbands. For the 3, 4, and 5-year-old program, your child needs to have independent skills in the bathroom. (In an emergency, teachers are willing to assist your child if they have bathroom needs. Feel free to discuss your level of comfort with your child's teacher.) For our Parents Morning Out program, the teachers will diaper and assist your child with toileting.



Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, we will go outside every day for 30-45 minutes throughout the year, weather permitting. Your child's name should be placed on all clothing to help insure their return.

The children at MPC-ELC have a very active morning playing indoors and outdoors. For the safety of all, students should wear closed toes shoes that are secured onto the foot during the school day. Sneakers/tennis shoes are highly recommended. Open toed shoes, crocs, etc. may restrict the activities

that your child can participate in on any given day.

Please keep spare clothes; including shirts, pants, underwear, and socks in your child's bag at all times. Daily activities include active and messy play, and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. At some point during the year, your child will have a bathroom accident, or a snack/craft catastrophe, or be the recipient of another child's snack/craft catastrophe. This can be very upsetting to a child. Having a dry and quick change of clothes brings them much comfort.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Each student should bring to school each day either a backpack (2's – 5's), or tote bag (3's – 5's) to carry his/her communication folder (provided by the school), snack, and change of clothing.

Children (in 3-5 year old programs) may not bring any personal items to preschool other than on designated show-and-tell days. Weapons and action figures are not permitted at any time. For the safety of all children, live animals may not be brought in to school.

Children in the 2-year-old program may bring one small personal security item (blanket, etc.) to the school for the first few weeks. Your child's teacher will let you know when these items will no longer be allowed in the room. Pacifiers are not permitted in the classrooms (as regulated by Virginia state health code for our program).

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

The preschool retains the right to request withdrawal of any child from the program for any cause determined to be sufficient by the teacher, Director and Preschool Board. The decision to withdraw a child based on behavior or developmental needs is not made lightly, and only after a minimum of two meetings are held with the parent(s), teachers, and/or Director. No parent shall be asked to withdraw a child without the knowledge and approval of the teacher, Director, and Board. Should the preschool request withdrawal of a child, 2 weeks written notice will be given.

Such reasons to dismiss a child include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The program at MPC-ELC is not able to fulfill the specific needs of the child. If a child requires a more specialized program than is available at MPC-ELC, teacher and/or Director will inform parents of other services open to them (such as Child Find).
- The presence of a child in a class is so disruptive that it endangers the

well being of the other children or prevents the teacher from carrying out the preschool program. This includes, but is not limited to, biting and aggressive behaviors.

- Tuition fees are consistently not paid. Parents should contact the Director if there is a temporary problem with payment. If funds are available, the Board may grant a scholarship. If there is no scholarship money available, the Board may elect to accept a delay in the tuition payments.
- If a family chooses to take a leave of absence for an extended period of time (e.g. one month, two months, three months), tuition payments are required for the period of time that their child will be absent from school in order to hold the child's spot in the program. If they choose not to pay the tuition for the extended absence, the student will be withdrawn from the program.
- Repeatedly bringing a sick child to school.
- Repeatedly bringing a snack that is not peanut-free.
- Continuously picking up a child late.
- Failure to supply ELC with VA State Health Form and original Birth Certificate.

In the event a parent wishes to withdraw a child from the program, the preschool requires 1 month's notice. This enables the preschool to fill the vacancy as the child leaves. If no notice is given, tuition will be charged for that month, and the May tuition deposit will be used.

PTO

MPC-ELC is a nonprofit organization which has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO group provides volunteer services within the program and raises funds for needed major projects. The PTO meets once a month on alternating days. Please check your child's calendar for dates and plan to attend these productive meetings. Children are always welcome at the meeting. The PTO produces a monthly newsletter to keep all parents aware of its activities. The PTO is run by a PTO Board, composed of a small group of elected parent officials and the Director.

FIELD TRIPS

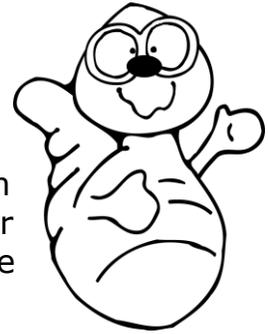
Your child might have the opportunity to participate in field trips during the year. Parent volunteers provide transportation and additional supervision during these outings. A copy of your driver's license and proof of insurance must be on file in the



school office in order for you to be a driver for our field trips. Permission slips and information about field trips are sent home prior to the event. Virginia law requires that each child be restrained in an appropriate car safety seat; therefore, on the morning of the field trip, your child will need to bring in his/her car seat.

VISION SCREENING

ELC offers a vision-screening under the auspices of the Prevention of Blindness Society for children in the 3-, 4- and 5-year-old programs. Prior to the screening dates, you will receive information and material to familiarize your child with the method used for screening. Should you desire to have your child evaluated, there will be a fee payable at the time of the screening.

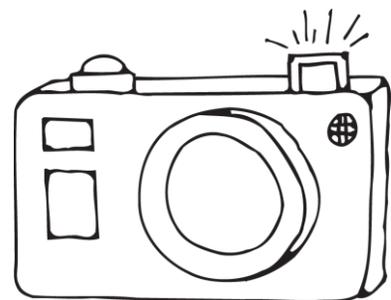


GESELL ASSESSMENT

ELC offers parents the ability to have their child assessed using the Gesell Development Observation. This is a valuable tool to determine the Developmental age of their child (from two years to nine years). This tool can be used to determine eligibility for our Junior Kindergarten program, as well/ as an independent way to determine kindergarten readiness. If at any time a parent wishes to have their child assessed with this tool, please contact the Director. The reason for use of the assessment will determine the right time of year to administer the Observation. There is an administration fee for the Gesell Developmental Observation.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Professional individual and class pictures are taken of all students in the fall. You have the option of buying photos after you view them. Details and dates will be sent home in your child's backpack.



COOKING/FOOD ACTIVITIES

Our 3-, 4- and 5-year-old programs incorporate cooking and/or food activities into the curriculum. Your child has an opportunity to become an ELC Chef! Cooking or food activities will be done once or twice a month; depending on the number of days your child attends. The children take turns counting, measuring, stirring, dipping, pouring, and tasting as they make up delicious concoctions to eat for snack. When kitchen facilities are needed, the Early Learning Center uses the church's stoves, ovens, and sinks in Room 5.

Children are brought into the kitchen in small groups under careful supervision.

PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

The closer the relationship between the parents and the school, the better your child's preschool experience will be. Questions, suggestions, comments and constructive criticism from parents can only serve to improve the program here at MPC-ELC.

MPC-ELC welcomes all parents with talents (musical, artistic, athletic, etc.), occupations, or interests that they can share with the children. These visits enrich our program tremendously. Please contact either your classroom teacher or the Director and we will find a date or dates for you to come in and share.

Parents are the only continuous teachers a child ever has. In order to get to know the family and child better, conferences are held each year. The children do not attend classes on these days. Additional meetings may be held at any point during the year, if the parents, Director or teachers so desire.

The teachers and staff will always try to keep in touch with parents regarding the children and their day. Sources of information for the parents include the following:

- Monthly classroom newsletter and calendar. Each class will send home a newsletter and calendar at the beginning of the month to let parents know of any important news or upcoming activities. These newsletters will be placed in your child's communication folder.
- Office newsletter. A newsletter from the office staff will address school-wide activities and general school news.
- Quick notes, sign-up sheets for field trips and parties, etc. can be found outside each classroom door or in your child's communication folder.
- MPC-ELC Parent Handbook. Hopefully, this Handbook has answered most of your questions about MPC-ELC. Paper copies are always available in the office by request, and it is also available on our website at www.mpc-va.org/preschool for quick reference.

We want you to feel at home at MPC-ELC; please stop in and visit anytime. This is your preschool, as well as your child's. Welcome to our MPC-ELC family!

MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Our program is committed to multicultural education, dedicated to human rights, dignity of the individual, and social justice. We strive to create a program that truly reflects the lives of our children, families, staff, and community. By recognizing the impact culture plays on families, we will make every effort to provide a culturally responsive program by affirming human differences and the right of people to make choices about their own lifestyles. We seek to recognize, appreciate, and respect the uniqueness of each child and each family. We encourage all families to share their customs, cultures, and talents.

