The MECK Pre-K program is administered in partnership with Smart Start of Mecklenburg County. In compliance with federal law, MECK Pre-K administers all education programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability.

© 2019 Mecklenburg County. All rights reserved.

---

**Table of Contents**

- Mission, Guiding Principals, Goals .......................................................... 4
- MECK Pre-K Daily Schedule ................................................................. 5
- Attendance, Tardies and Early Dismissal .............................................. 6
- Weather Procedures ........................................................................... 7
- Transfer, Withdrawal and Behavior Policy ........................................ 8-9
- Breakfast and Lunch, Food Allergies, Celebrations ......................... 10
- Emergency Procedures and First Aid, Serious Incident Procedures, Medication ........................................ 11
- Illness or Sickness, Transportation .................................................... 12
- Parent Engagement ........................................................................... 13
- Before and After School Care, Family Service Program, Clothing ...... 14
- Required School Supplies, Required Information ............................. 15
- MECK Pre-K Learning Compact ....................................................... 16-17
- Child Assessment ............................................................................. 18
- Home/School/Parent Agreement ...................................................... 19
- Parent Handbook Signature .............................................................. 20
- MECK Pre-K/Family/Student Pledge Form ...................................... 21
- Notes ................................................................................................. 22-23
- School Calendar ................................................................................ Back Cover
**Mission**

The MECK Pre-K Program will provide educational experiences that will allow children to enjoy learning and develop critical skills needed to be prepared and successful in kindergarten while educating and empowering our families to be advocates in their child’s education.

**Guiding Principles for MECK Pre-K Program**

- All children deserve an opportunity to learn, grow and strive.
- All developmental areas (approach to learning, social and emotional, cognitive, language and health and physical) are interconnected and must be addressed.
- What children learn should be rooted and supported by research.
- Learning should take place in quality facilities with qualified professional staff.
- Families learn alongside their children.

**Guiding Principles for MECK Pre-K Instruction**

The MECK Pre-K Program provides a curriculum based on five fundamental principles. These principals guide practice and help you understand the reason for intentionally setting up and operating the classroom in particular ways.

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social-Emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

**Goals**

- Maximize to capacity our MECK Pre-K sites.
- Collaborate with various resources to meet the needs of the children in the community and in the program.
- Support and meet the needs of the directors, teachers and families.
- Involve, inform and empower parents.

---

**MECK Pre-K Daily Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrival / Free Choice Activities</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Group (Morning Meeting)</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Choice Time/ Cleanup</td>
<td>65 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud #1/ Small Group</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Play</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand washing and Lunch</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest and Quiet Activities</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Play</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud / Small Groups</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Choice/ Cleanup</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Group Roundup / Departure</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The time and implementation of the various components of the day will vary based on site. Please contact the classroom teacher for the daily schedule for your child’s assigned classroom.
Parents are responsible for their child's regular school attendance. The MECK Pre-K Learning Compact page 16 requires regular attendance.

Regular attendance is necessary for your child to gain the greatest benefit from this learning opportunity. Attendance is very important for success in our program. Children absent from school miss out on key opportunities to learn, build lasting friendships, and develop the skills and attitudes needed to become good citizens and valued employees. There is a clear connection between student attendance and student performance in school.

In order for your child to meet the goals of our program and to be ready for kindergarten, she/he needs to attend a full day of school each day. Parents who bring their child to school should arrive in their child’s classroom at least 10 minutes before the instructional day is to begin. This will give your child an opportunity to unpack and get ready for the day.

**Excused Absences:**
Illness, religious holidays, death in immediate family, quarantine, family emergencies, education opportunities (with prior approval), and administrative proceedings.

**Unexcused Absences:**
Missing the bus, oversleeping, bad weather, car trouble and no-shows.

**Consecutive Absences:**
Excessive excused absences and back-to-back unexcused absences are examples of consecutive absences. MECK Pre-K realizes that there may be occasions when excused absences may occur beyond one day. When this occurs parents are required to inform the director and classroom teacher.

*10 consecutive absences could result in the removal of your child from the program*

**Tardies and Early Dismissal**
Please make arriving on time a priority. Tardiness interrupts the instructional day and disrupts your child’s daily routine. Please know that you may be asked to sign your child in or out in the office and get a visitor’s pass to walk your child to the classroom. Tardiness beyond 30 - 45 minutes needs to be approved by the site director.

Picking up children before dismissal time results in missed learning opportunities for your child. Please notify the teacher or director of early pick up to limit interruptions during the instructional day.

---

**Weather Procedures**

In the event of an emergency, it is important that your contact information on record remain accurate. Please notify your child care center and the classroom teachers of any address, telephone or emergency contact changes as soon as possible.

The safety of your child is our priority. In case of bad weather, here are some important things to remember:

- MECK Pre-K sites follow the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools inclement weather decisions regarding closings and delays.
- The decision to close schools or to delay opening will be made no later than 5:00 AM. If possible, the decision will be made the evening before.
- Tune in to area radio and television stations for the CMS announcement or contact a neighbor who can listen for you.

Generally, all MECK Pre-K sites will be affected by the decision, not just schools in areas of the county where weather conditions are most severe. If no announcement is made, you may assume schools will operate on a normal schedule.
**Transfer**

If you would like to request a transfer during the school year to another MECK Pre-K site, please contact the MECK Pre-K office at 601 E. 5th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202 or call 704-943-9585. Transfers are based on availability.

**Withdrawal**

If you choose to withdraw your child, please inform your site director and contact the MECK Pre-K office at 601 E. 5th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202 or call 704-943-9585 soon as possible.

**MECK Pre-K Program Behavior Policy**

The MECK Pre-K Program is based on the belief that prosocial guidance help children develop prosocial behaviors such as: self-esteem, empathy, self-control, friendliness, generosity, cooperation, helpfulness and respect. MECK Pre-K believes that learning prosocial skills helps children to work and play peacefully in their preschool classrooms, get along with others and overcome conflict. These skills give children a basic start in developing positive attitudes and behavior that will last a lifetime.

Research has shown that suspension and expulsion occur at high rates in preschool settings and too often the data show a disproportional number of boys and children of color who are subject to suspension and expulsion. MECK Pre-K has adopted the joint policy statement of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Dept. of Education which recommends that better support be provided to young children, their parents, and staff within the early childhood programs to prevent suspension and expulsion of young children.

**How the behavior responsibilities are shared:**

**Parents will be responsible for promoting appropriate school behavior by:**

1. Teaching and discussing the purpose of school and school rules. Children respond well to clear and consistent expectations from adults.
2. Attending conferences concerning the child and picking him/her up when requested.
3. Being an active member of the child’s support team by providing structure at home and reviewing daily school correspondence which will be sent home in the child’s book bag. This includes working to sustain home routines such as bedtime and reading books that are sent home daily.
4. Responding appropriately to school reports by praising and encouraging positive behavior and discussing areas that need improvement.
5. Providing the school with the names and phone numbers of persons who may care for the child if it is necessary that he/she leave during the school day due to illness or behavior the staff cannot safely manage.

**The MECK Pre-K site administrators and staff will promote appropriate school behavior by:**

1. Implementing and teaching rules and procedures that provide consistency and order to the child’s learning environment and teaches them appropriate school behavior.
2. Providing enough supervision to children who struggle with change.
3. Forming positive relationships with children and parents and supporting children’s communication as they learn to express their wants and needs.
4. Using non-verbal cues (pictures, signals) or prompts (gentle touch, pictures/signals) to encourage children to correct their behavior.
5. Using verbal cues to redirect children to make desirable choices.
6. Recognizing natural consequences (fall and get hurt) and enforcing logical consequences (spill something then cleans it up) respectfully.

**MECK Pre-K program staff will support appropriate school behavior by:**

1. Working with parents, administrators, support staff and teachers to develop and implement appropriate behavior interventions.
2. Coordinating referrals as needed to other specialized community program personnel to support children and families through the referral process.
3. Making every attempt to defer the suspension or exclusion of any children from the classroom or from the program.
Breakfast and Lunch

• The kitchen staff prepares breakfast, lunch and snack. Posted menus align with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) nutrition guidelines for children.

• If parents choose to pack their child’s lunch, please contact the site director.

Food Allergies

• If your child has a food allergy, you must provide this written information from a licensed health care provider to the site director. Please make sure it describes your child’s specific allergic condition.

• Once documentation is received, the site will work closely with you to develop a healthcare plan that will minimize risk to the child, as well as an emergency healthcare plan in the event of an allergic reaction.

• All foods brought to school to be served to the children must be pre-packaged and the food ingredient label must be attached.

Celebrations

• The center directors in collaboration with the classroom teacher will determine when celebrations surrounding special occasions can take place.

• For all celebrations that include food please refer to the specifications listed in the Food Allergy section above.

• All celebrations should take place at the end of the day or at the director’s discretion to decrease interruptions during the school day.

Birthdays are a very important time for most young children. Teachers will recognize children in many ways on their “special day.” If you would like to add to this celebration, arrange with your child’s teacher to send a cookie or a cupcake (must be purchased from a commercial kitchen, e.g., Food Lion, Harris Teeter, etc.) for each class member on your child’s birthday. We would like these to be eaten after lunch as a dessert. No birthday parties will be held during the instructional day.

Emergency Procedures and First Aid

In case of a suspected contagious disease or emergency, these procedures are followed:

• The parent is contacted.

• The parent is asked to take the child home or to a doctor.

Serious Incident Procedures

• The school calls 911.

• The parent is notified.

If necessary, the student is sent with an accompanying adult to the hospital of the parent’s choice as indicated on the emergency contact card/form.

Medication

ALL MEDICATION SHOULD BE GIVEN AT HOME.

However, some students need medication during school hours in order to receive maximum effect of treatment. In these cases, a Medical Authorization Form must be submitted containing the following information:

• The name of the drug, dosage and the time interval that the medication is taken. Additional forms may be picked up at the school office.

• All prescription medication must be in the original container with the prescription label and child’s name.

• Non-prescription medication such as aspirin can only be given with the written permission of the parent and physician. And must be in the original container with the label attached. No medications will be accepted without the Medical Authorization Form.

• Children are not to handle any medication. Medication should be handed from parent to teacher.
**Illness or Sickness**

In the case of a fever or upset stomach, the child should remain at home. When a child appears to have a contagious or communicable disease, parents are contacted. Parents may be asked to take their child to a doctor. The site director will determine if a child is too ill to remain at school. Any child experiencing the following symptoms will be sent home:

- A fever of 100 degrees or higher (child may return to school after the fever is completely gone for 24 hours).
- Contagious skin or eye infection.
- Diarrhea three times in a two-hour span.
- Vomiting.

State law requires that we notify parents of children who are exposed to certain contagious diseases. This will be done through a written notice sent to parents.

If your child becomes infected with a contagious disease, please notify the school immediately so the director can notify families of other children who may have been exposed to the disease. Some contagious diseases include flu, chicken pox, measles, pink eye, impetigo, ringworm, pinworms and head lice.

**Transportation**

Parents or guardians who bring children to school in the mornings must walk them to the classroom, sign them in and let the teacher or assistant know that the child is present. Never leave a child in the classroom alone. When picking up a child, make sure the teacher or teacher assistant is made aware that the child is leaving. Parents providing children with transportation are asked to be on time for drop-off and pick-up. Late pick-ups may result in wrap-around fees.

Your child will be released only to the parent(s) or other persons authorized by the parent. The designated person must show identification that matches information on file at the site.

**Parent Engagement**

Parent Engagement is key to your child’s success in school. Parents are important to the success of our program as well.

**At Home Participation**

Each family is expected to: read at least 100 books with their child during the course of the year, attend Parent Orientation, participate in parent conferences, and participate in two school related events (total of 4 contacts). Below are some ways that you can fulfill your parent reading requirements.

- Books will be sent home except during school breaks.
- Books from school, home or the public library may also be read.
- Books may be read by parent or other adult family members.

In addition to reading, here are other ways you can engage in your child’s learning experience.

**School Visits**

Although parents are expected to have four school visits during the course of the year, you are also encouraged to volunteer, visit or attend school functions as often as your schedule allows. Opportunities include:

- Volunteering in the classroom.
- Accompanying the class on field trips.

**Parent Education**

- Attending school wide functions such as Parent Workshops, School Programs, Book Fair, etc.
- Utilizing Community Resources such as the Library, the YMCA, ImaginOn, Discovery Place.
- Receiving and learning about family support with Community Partnerships such as Smart Start, Child Care Resources Inc., Thompsons Child & Family Services, Mecklenburg County Health Department, Care Ring, Communities in Schools.
Before and After School Care

The MECK Pre-K Program may provide before and after school care support for Pre-K children. Any supervision needed before or after normal school operational hours should be arranged with the center your child is attending and is subject to any applicable fees. If your child is receiving childcare subsidy, it can be applied to wrap around care services. For more information about childcare subsidy, please contact Child Care Resources, Inc. at 704-376-6697.

Family Service Program

The Success Coach and Family Support Staff serve as consultants and may be invited to observe and offer suggestions to teachers and parents. In addition, they can provide information on community services offered to families, children and staff.

Clothing

As you know, young children are extremely active. Please dress your child for play and according to weather conditions. Tennis shoes or other rubber soled shoes are the safest footwear choices. Sandals, flip flops, shoes with wheels, open-toe shoes, or elevated heels are not safe for young children and are not recommended.

Classrooms are not equipped with changing tables or wipes, so it is imperative that your child is potty-trained and have the capacity to express their desire to go to the bathroom and independently manage their clothing.

Parents are asked to send a complete change of clothes to school (i.e. bottom, top, socks, and underclothes). The clothes are kept in the child’s individual cubby to be used in case of accidental soiling or wetness. If your child comes home with clothes provided by the school, please remember to wash and return them to school. Clothing kept at school should be appropriate for the current season.

* Please note: if your child's school has a school uniform policy, Pre-K students must follow the dress code.

Required School Supplies

- Book Bag
- Change of Clothing

Required Information

Must be kept updated

- Current address
- Current phone number/contact information
- Current physical
- Current immunization record
- Current dental screenings
- Current Medical Action Plans (Asthma, Allegy, etc.)
MECK Pre-K Learning Compact

In the MECK Pre-K Program we believe in the importance of families and schools working together. We believe that students do their best through the teamwork of students, families and educators. This friendly agreement lists the ways we all can contribute to the success of every student.

Parent and Family Responsibilities

✓ Make sure my child attends school every day and arrives on time.
✓ Make sure my child is well rested.
✓ Check my child’s book bag every day for home/school communication.
✓ Make childcare arrangements for my child before school and after school.
✓ Allow school staff to make home visits during the school year.
✓ Attend a parent orientation session, parent-teacher conference, parent events and workshops, whenever possible (at least 4 times during the school year).
✓ Agree to read 100 books (4 books per week) with my child and sign the reading log.
✓ Agree to replace any books that are damaged or lost.
✓ Contact teachers or staff when I have a question about my child.
✓ Pick up my child if he or she is sick or cannot be safely managed.

Student Responsibilities

✓ Be a positive contributor to the classroom community.
✓ Get a good night sleep.
✓ Bring my book bag every day.

Teacher Responsibilities

✓ Make a home visit at the beginning of the year and have at least one parent-teacher conference annually.
✓ Provide a safe, welcoming environment for students and parents/guardians.
✓ Help parents/guardians identify ways to help their child learn the skills that will enable them to play cooperatively, be successful and ready for kindergarten.
✓ Communicate regularly with parents/guardians about children's social and emotional development and academic progress in school.
✓ Provide a book every day (Take-Home Reader) that the parent/guardian and child can read together.
✓ Provide high quality instruction to all students.
✓ Assess students’ progress using TS Gold.
✓ Teach and practice the social and emotional behaviors that will lead to cooperation.

Director Responsibilities

✓ Welcome all parents/guardians and encourage them to take an active part in the school community and their child’s education.
✓ Educate students, teachers, families and school staff about the importance of daily conversation and reading as well as the partnership approach of the Compact.
✓ Provide a variety of opportunities for parents/guardians to participate in school activities (i.e. parent workshops and volunteering).
✓ Ensure that translators or equipment are available so that all parents/guardians can participate.
✓ Encourages involvement of MECK Pre-K families at all school events.
Child Assessment

Your child’s classroom will have the opportunity to be a part of the “Teaching Strategies Gold” assessment. Teaching Strategies Gold is an online tool that blends ongoing observations assessment in all areas of development and learning.

Starting in October, your child’s teacher will observe him/her throughout the school day, recording what was seen and heard by taking notes, collecting samples of your child’s drawings and writings, taking photos, and recording audio or video clips.

You will receive information to inform you of your child’s progress at the end of each trimester. For each area of development and learning, your child’s current knowledge, skills, and behaviors will be listed. In addition, there is a section that shares what skills and or behaviors that your child will be focusing on. Teachers will share ways that you can support your child’s development and learning at home. When reading reports, it is important to remember that all children develop at different rates and that other factors can play a role in this development. MECK Pre-K is committed to helping your child grow to their fullest potential.

If you have any questions on how to read this report please contact your child’s teacher.

In addition to Teaching Strategies, the teacher will implement Teachstone CLASS Strategies. CLASS is a tool used to promote great teaching. It involves teacher-student interactions. Teachers meet the needs of the children by developing relationships with them, creating nurturing environments and challenging children to learn as they make connections through play. The teacher will be observing, assessing, reflecting and making adjustment to ensure daily maximum learning opportunities.

Home/School/Parent Agreement

We agree to work together to help _______________________________ be successful in the MECK Pre-K program. We promise to communicate in person, by telephone or in writing whenever necessary and sincerely invest in our child's education. We understand the vision of the county, the philosophy and goals of the MECK Pre-K Program and the commitment of the site that we chose and in doing so agree and accept full responsibility for cooperating in every way possible in the process, progress and success of our child's education.

We understand that accurate records will be kept of our child’s attendance, our parent/family participation and our child’s progress. As the parent/guardian, we understand that if we do not comply with the parent and family responsibilities as described in the MECK Pre-K Parent Handbook, despite supportive services, our child may be removed from the MECK Pre-K program.

By initialing the areas below I agree that the handbook has been reviewed and I have read and understand its content.

____ Attendance                 ____ Transfers & Withdrawals       ____ Behavior Policies
____ Field Trips                 ____ Meals & Food Allergies        ____ Transportation
____ Parent Engagement     ____ Emergency & First Aid         ____ Afterschool Care
____ Home/School Connections           ____ Assessment & Teaching Practice

I, ________________________________, authorize the MECK Pre-K program to use images and audio recordings of my child, such as photographs, video and audio tape, as well as student work product, for purposes of publicity, program activities, and to fulfill contractual obligations of the MECK Pre-K program. Such image and voice reproductions may appear in photographs, on video or DVD, on the Internet, or in other formats as Smart Start of Mecklenburg County deems appropriate.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature __________________________  Date _______________

Teacher’s Signature ____________________________  Date _______________

18
MECK Pre-K/Family/Student Pledge Form

It is important that families and teachers work together to help students achieve high academic standards. The following are agreed-upon roles and responsibilities that we as partners will carry out to support student success.

Staff Pledge
I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:
• Teach classes through interesting and challenging lessons that follow the Foundations for Early Learning
• Have high expectations and help every child develop a love of learning
• Communicate regularly with families about student progress
• Provide a welcoming, warm, safe and caring learning environment
• Participate in professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning
• Support partnerships with families and community
• Respect the school, staff and the cultural differences of my students and their families

Signature                                                                                          Date

Family/Parent Pledge
I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:
• Make sure my child arrives at school on time and remains until dismissal time
• Make sure my child is well rested for school
• Support the staff in their efforts to promote appropriate behavior
• Attend conferences and communicate regularly with my child’s teacher
• Ask my child about his/her day and monitor for communications from school every day
• Return requested information in a timely manner
• Support my child with home-school activities

Signature                                                                                          Date

Student Pledge
I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:
• Come to school ready to learn
• Learn and follow classroom rules
• Talk to my family about my school day activities
• Respect the school, my classmates and their families and my teachers

Parent Signature indicates they have discussed with child                                          Date
School Calendar

Teacher Workdays .................. August 16, 19-23, 2019
Home Visit ........................ August 26-28, 2019
Staggered Entry ................... August 29-30, 2019 & September 3, 2019
Labor Day Holiday ................ September 2, 2019
First day of school ................. September 4, 2019
Teacher Workday .................. October 9, 2019
Early Release Day .................. October 16, 2019
Teacher Workday .................. October 28, 2019
Teacher Workday .................. November 5, 2019
Veterans Day Holiday ............ November 11, 2019
Annual Leave Day .................. November 27, 2019
Thanksgiving Holiday ............. November 28-29, 2019
Winter Break ........................ December 23, 2019 - January 3, 2020
Annual Leave Day .................. December 23, 2019
Holidays ........................... December 24-26, 2019
Annual Leave Days ............... December 27-31, 2019
Holiday ............................. January 1, 2020
Teacher Workday .................. January 2-3, 2020
Early Release Day .................. January 8, 2020
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday .. January 20, 2020
Teacher Workday .................. January 24, 2020
Teacher Workday .................. February 17, 2020
Early Release Day .................. March 4, 2020
Teacher Workday .................. March 27, 2020
Teacher Workday .................. April 9, 2020
Holiday ............................. April 10, 2019
Spring Break/Annual Leave Days .. April 13 - April 17, 2020
Early Release Day .................. April 29, 2020
Memorial Day Holiday ............ May 25, 2020
Last day of school ............... June 9, 2020
Teacher Workdays ............... June 10-11, 2020

Make-up Days:
1. October 28
2. November 5
3. January 24
4. February 17
5. March 27
6. April 9
7. June 10
8. June 11

Follow MECK Pre-K
Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to keep up with all the latest MECK Pre-K news and to show your support for Universal Pre-K in Mecklenburg County!

Call or visit MECK Pre-K
601 E. 5th Street, Suite 200, Charlotte, NC 28202
704-943-9585 | MECKPreK.org