



Parent Handbook

2026-2027



Health & Safety Information

MECK Pre-K values the health and safety of our students, families, teachers and staff. We work with officials from Mecklenburg County, the NC Division of Public Health and the NC Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that our classrooms are operated in accordance with health and safety best practices.

Visit MECKPreK.org to review more information on health and safety practices.



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, sexual orientation, age or disability.



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Mission

MECK Pre-K provides a year's worth of educational experiences that nurture children's love of learning and help them develop critical skills needed to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. We educate and empower families to be participants and advocates in their child's education.

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.

Guiding Principles for MECK Pre-K Program

- All children deserve an opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.
- All developmental areas (approaches to play and learning, emotional and social, language, cognitive, 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 principles 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.
- Emotional-Social 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.

MECK Pre-K Daily Schedule



SEL / Second Step	20 minutes
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Breakfast	20 minutes
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Large Group (Morning Meeting)	20 minutes
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Free Choice Time / Center Time	75 minutes
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Read Aloud	15 minutes
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Small Group	25 minutes
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Outdoor Play	30 minutes
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Lunch	30 minutes
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Rest and Quiet Activities	25 minutes
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Outdoor Play	30 minutes
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PAC / Heggerty	20 minutes
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Free Choice / Center Time	70 minutes
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Large Group Roundup / Departure	10 minutes
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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. Children receive a minimum of 6.5 hours of direct instruction for 10 months.

Creative Curriculum Edition 6 is the curriculum implemented.

Attendance

Regular attendance is vital for your student to maximize the valuable learning experiences in MECK Pre-K. To achieve our program's goals and to prepare your students for kindergarten, students are expected to attend school daily and be on time.

Reporting An Absence: In the event your student is going to be absent from school, parents or guardians must notify the school using the TS Family App, by telephone, or by email.

Tardies: Students will be marked tardy if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the school day. Late arrivals and early pick-ups are considered disruptions to the classroom environment. Arriving late and picking students up early deprives the students of valuable learning time and disrupts the education of other students.

Late Pick-Up: We are sensitive to the fact that unforeseen situations may occur. Due to the operational and staffing costs being incurred when a parent/guardian is late picking up their student, your student's program may charge a late fee.

Chronic Absenteeism: The MECK Pre-K Enrollment & Placement Department monitors attendance daily. Students who attend less than 85% of scheduled program days in a calendar month are considered chronically absent. When attendance concerns arise, MECK Pre-K will partner with families to identify challenges and develop strategies that support regular attendance.

Continued chronic absenteeism may result in additional action, including possible withdrawal from the program. **Additionally, five (5) consecutive unexcused absences may result in withdrawal from MECK Pre-K.**

Families are encouraged to communicate with their student's school regarding attendance concerns or circumstances that may affect their student's ability to attend school regularly.

MECK Pre-K Extended Absence: An extended absence is offered to families when a student must be absent from school for three (3) or more consecutive days due to extended emergencies or travel requirements with an expected return date.

To request an extended absence, please contact your student program or the MECK Pre-K main office at info@meckprek.org in advance of the absence.

The student's absence may NOT exceed 30 calendar days. Consecutive absences without an approved Extended Absence will result in withdrawal from the program. Families may submit requests for an Extended Absence beginning October 1; the deadline for submission is March 1.

For more information about MECK Pre-K Extended Absence and to determine if your child qualifies for the Extended Absence, contact our office at (704) 943-9585.

Your commitment to your students' attendance makes a significant difference in their educational journey! The MECK Pre-K Learning Compact, found on pages 13-14, states full expectations for regular attendance.

Child Custody and Legal Guardianship

Legal parents are people officially recognized as parents on the child's birth certificate. Both legal parents have equal rights to the child if there is no legal custody or legal guardianship order. Please submit legal custody or legal guardianship orders to your child's teacher and site administrator.

Religious Activities

MECK Pre-K funds are not used to pay for religious worship, instruction/proselytization activities or equipment/supplies for religious worship.

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.

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, Suite 200, Charlotte, NC 28202 or call 704-943-9585. One transfer is allowed during the school year and is based on availability.

Transfer requests submitted after April 1 of the program year will not be considered.

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, Suite 200, Charlotte, NC 28202 or call 704-943-9585 as soon as possible.

MECK Pre-K Program Behavior Policy

The MECK Pre-K Program is based on the belief that prosocial guidance helps 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 disproportionate 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 CARE meetings concerning the child and picking him/her up within 1 hour of being called.
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. Teaching and consistently reinforcing emotional and social skills throughout the day.
2. Working with parents, administrators, support staff and teachers to develop and implement appropriate behavior interventions.
3. Coordinating referrals as needed to other specialized community program personnel to support children and families through the referral process.
4. Making every attempt to defer the suspension or exclusion of any children from the classroom or from the program.

MECK Pre-K Child Development Consultant will support appropriate school behavior by:

1. Contacting the family regarding their behavior concerns.
2. Conducting onsite observations.
3. Providing family with referrals/resources.
4. The Child and Family Support Team will assess students based on family identifiers and referrals to determine the best placement by research-based assessments, observations, and determinations.

Breakfast, Lunch and Snack

- 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.
- Families will not be charged fees for meals (breakfast, lunch and snacks).
- If your child has a special diet and/or a diagnosis requiring changes to food preferences or requirements, it is the family's responsibility to provide dietary options and/or to work with the site administrators/staff to ensure your child's nutritional needs can be met during the school day.

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.

Incident Procedures

Minor Incidents:

- The school will contact the family.
- The family will receive an incident report.

Serious Incidents:

- 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. Be sure to keep your emergency contact card/form updated when there is a change.

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. This includes an EpiPen for allergies or inhalers for asthma.
- There are no medically trained nurses or physicians on site. Should your child require staff to administer medication, please communicate and plan directly with the site administrator for your assigned MECK Pre-K location.

Health Assessment

A completed Health Assessment must be on file within **30 days** of your child's first day of attendance at the site. Health assessments must have the following four areas:

Physical, immunization, vision screening, and hearing screening.

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 without the help of medication for at least 24 hours)
- Contagious skin or eye infection
- Diarrhea three times in a two-hour span (child may return to school once he/she is clear of all symptoms for at least 24 hours)
- Vomiting (child may return to school once he/she is clear of all symptoms for at least 24 hours)

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.

Sites may provide transportation to MECK Pre-K families. Transportation should be arranged with the center your child is attending and may be subject to fees.

Parent Engagement

Parent Engagement is key to your child's success in school. Parents are important to the success of our program as well. MECK Pre-K requires parents/guardians to complete a total of 7 contacts:

Home/School Participation

Each family is expected to:

1. Attend and/or view the MECK Pre-K Parent Orientation
2. Allow teachers to complete a Meet-n-Greet
3. Participate in two required parent conferences. Parents may request a third conference at the end of the year if they have any questions and concerns.
4. Read at least 100 books with their child during the course of the year
5. Participate in at least one parent event at the school
6. Attend at least one parent education workshop offered by the school

Parents are required to verify compliance of meeting the expectations by signing the parent signature form in the classroom/home visit.

Below are some ways that you can fulfill your parent reading requirements:

- Books will be sent home except during school breaks.
- Books/magazines from school or the public library may also be read.
- Books may be read by parent or other adult family members.
- Families fill out the reading log and return to the teacher.

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 seven 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 (i.e., meals, celebrations)
- Accompanying the class on field trips

Parent Education

- Attending at least one schoolwide function such as Parent Workshops.
- Utilizing Community Resources such as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg 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, and Communities in Schools.

Before and After School Care

The center where your MECK Pre-K classroom is located may provide before and after school care services. 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. MECK Pre-K does provide \$100/child/week for before and after (wrap) care. If the center's fee exceeds the \$100 parents/guardians are responsible for the balance. 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.

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 allowed.

Parents are asked to send a complete change of clothes to school (e.g. 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.

Note: Additional guidance will be provided by the site administrator.

Potty Trained

Classrooms are not equipped with changing tables or diapering items and teacher/child ratios do not allow staff to leave the group to attend to individual diapering issues.

Before your child begins MECK Pre-K it is imperative that they be fully potty-trained and have the capacity to express their need to use the bathroom in a timely manner. They must be able to independently manage the tasks of toileting including manipulating their clothing, wiping, flushing, and hand washing.

Students that are not potty trained may be subject to an extended leave until potty training is complete.



Required School Supplies

- Book Bag to be carried back and forth to school daily
- Change of clothing (seasonably appropriate) to be kept in your child's cubby

Required Information (Must be kept updated)

- Current address
- Current email
- Current phone number/contact information
- Current physical
- Current hearing screening (included in the physical)
- Current vision screening (included in the physical)
- Current immunization record
- Current Medical Action Plans (Asthma, Allergy, etc.)
- IEP's, Speech, OT and other educational developmental plans



MECK Pre-K Learning Compact

Parent and Family Responsibilities

- ✓ Make sure my child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- ✓ Make sure my child has a completed health assessment on file.
- ✓ 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 conduct a "Meet-n-Greet" at the beginning of the school year.
- ✓ Attend a parent orientation session, two (2) parent-teacher conferences, one (1) classroom event, and one (1) parent education workshop during the school year
- Agree to read one-hundred (100) books (four (4) per week) with my child and sign the reading log.
- ✓ Use the Teaching Strategies Family App each week to view updates, support learning home, and communicate with my child's teacher
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Agree to replace any books that are damaged or lost.

Student Responsibilities

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

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.



Teacher Responsibilities

- ✓ Host a “Meet and Greet” for each family prior to child’s start day.
- ✓ Conduct at least two parent-teacher conferences annually.
- ✓ Create a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for students and families.
- ✓ Partner with parents/guardians to support their child’s learning and development, focusing on cooperative play, school success, and kindergarten readiness.
- ✓ Maintain regular communication with parents/guardians regarding their child’s academic progress and social-emotional development.
- ✓ Provide a daily take-home book that the parent/guardian and child can read together.
- ✓ Deliver high quality instruction to all students using Creative Curriculum.
- ✓ Monitor and assess students’ progress.
- ✓ Teach and reinforce social-emotional skills that promote cooperation and positive behavior.
- ✓ Support and extend learning at home through MarcoPolo and TSG Family app.

Site Administrator 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 (e.g. parent workshops, volunteering and special events).
- ✓ Ensure that translators or equipment are available so that all parents/guardians can participate.
- ✓ Encourage involvement of MECK Pre-K families at all school events.

Child Assessment

Your child's progress will be assessed throughout the school year using a combination of Brigance, PAST (Phonological Awareness Screening Test), and Mastery Connect for progress monitoring. These assessments help track growth across key developmental areas, including Health and Physical Development, Language and Literacy, Cognitive Development, and Social-Emotional Skills, aligned with NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development.

Teachers will gather data through structured assessments and progress monitoring. You will receive reports at the end of each trimester detailing your child's current knowledge, skills, and behaviors. These reports will also outline the next steps in their learning and ways you can support their development at home.

It's important to remember that children develop at their own pace, and various factors can influence their growth. MECK Pre-K is committed to helping each child reach their fullest potential. If you have any questions about your child's assessment results, please contact their teacher for further guidance.

Bullying Policy

Here at MECK Pre-K, each and every member of the staff at your child development center and all our program personnel are required to work diligently to uphold the responsibility of keeping your children safe, educated and supported throughout their time with us. As your children grow and their time in our program progresses, it is essential that we continue to address and uphold the standards you not only have a right to expect, but that your children deserve. We take your children's well-being seriously and will continue to ensure that we are honoring them by fulfilling our mission and maintaining standards to do so.

One of the pillars and very foundations of MECK Pre-K is and will always be that students remain physically, emotionally, and mentally safe while in our program. Specifically, bullying of any kind is, under no circumstance, tolerated in our classrooms, on our playgrounds, in our parking lots or in center common areas. Bullying is defined as "seeking to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone who is perceived as vulnerable" and includes intentional acts as well as acts perceived by others as hurtful or threatening. Whether this behavior occurs in the relationship:

- between students,
- between parent and child,
- between parents of the same child,
- between parents of different children,
- between parents and teachers,
- or through the encouragement by parents/families of their children to be violent in any way towards another student or any adult at school
- Bullying is NOT tolerated on any level.

MECK Pre-K Curriculum



How does MECK Pre-K ensure that the pre-K education we offer is high-quality?

We do that by partnering with licensed child development centers, employing talented, licensed MECK Pre-K teachers, and using a comprehensive, research-based curriculum called The Creative Curriculum®.

The Creative Curriculum® is a hands-on, project-based approach to education that incorporates real life experiences into the learning process. MECK Pre-K students spend each day learning, practicing real life skills and expanding their knowledge. Teachers are trained to follow a child's interests, build on previous knowledge, and provide real world experience based on that knowledge.

We use Heggerty during our PAC time. The Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Pre-K lessons are designed to supplement our existing literacy curriculum. Lessons are taught daily with explicit teacher modeling and scaffolded support, leading to improvement in students' reading, spelling and writing as the students learn to hear the sounds in words. The curriculum teaches eight phonemic awareness skills: rhyme, onset fluency, phoneme isolation, blending, segmenting, adding, deleting, and substituting. Additionally, letter names, sound recognition, and language awareness are taught.

During SEL, we use Second Step. To support social-emotional learning, MECK Pre-K implements the Second Step curriculum. This research-based program helps children develop essential skills such as self-regulation, problem-solving, and positive interactions with peers and adults. Through engaging lessons and activities, children learn to manage their emotions, build friendships, and practice important social behaviors.

Child and Family Support Team

The Child and Family Support Team with the MECK Pre-K program is charged with ensuring the overall development, wellness and need for support is honored throughout your child's time in MECK Pre-K. While the team embraces the approach of your child as a whole-person, this team works with teachers, site administrators, and appropriate community partners to create support plans and/or best placement. Families are asked to be full partners in this team's endeavor to approach their education in a way to support children's success in our academic settings.

Guiding Parents to Services (GPS)

Guiding Parents to Services (GPS) is a funded program of Smart Start of Mecklenburg County, and may also serve MECK Pre-K families working with the Child and Family Support Team. GPS supports families with children 3-5 years old as they explore educational options when medical, developmental, or behavioral concerns may impact their needs. GPS will provide ongoing informational presentations on IEPs and the evaluation process throughout the year for families that request IEPs. This program requires a referral and is provided to families at no cost.

Home/School/Parent Agreement

We agree to work together to help _____ (child's name) be successful in the MECK Pre-K program. We promise to communicate in person with the teacher and the school, by telephone or in writing whenever necessary and sincerely invest in our child's education. We understand the vision of Mecklenburg 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 failure to adhere to all MECK Pre-K policies outlined in this parent handbook, including the seven (7) parent engagement activities may jeopardize my child's enrollment in 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, _____ (parent's name) authorize the MECK Pre-K program and/or their Marketing & Communications Partner to use images and audio 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, on the Internet, or in other formats as Smart Start of Mecklenburg County deems appropriate.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher's Signature _____ Date _____

MECK Pre-K Parent Handbook Signature 2026-2027



Child's Name _____

Parent/Guardian's Name _____

Date _____

STUDENT COMPACT

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. We understand that attendance matters for child development and school readiness and will work to ensure that _____ arrives to MECK Pre-K on time and attends at least 90% of scheduled school days (and more to the extent possible).

As a family committed to your child's success, you will fulfill the responsibilities listed in the student compact. Accurate records will be kept of your child's attendance, parent/family participation and your child's progress. You, as a parent/guardian, understand that if you do not fulfill the parent and family responsibilities listed in the student compact, despite supportive services, your child may be removed from the MECK Pre-K program.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Teacher's Signature

Date

I have carefully read the Parent Handbook for the MECK Pre-K program and accept full responsibility for cooperating in every way possible including regular and on-time attendance.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

I give permission for my child to travel outside the center grounds. Children will be carefully supervised by the teaching staff. I also understand that parent and community volunteers may occasionally provide teacher support in MECK Pre-K classrooms.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

I, _____ authorize the MECK Pre-K program (and MPK's marketing team to use images and audio recordings of my child, such as photographs, video and audio, 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, on the Internet, in advertising/media campaigns or in other formats as MECK Pre-K/Mecklenburg County/Smart Start deems appropriate.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in MECK Pre-K

MECK Pre-K is committed to providing high-quality, developmentally appropriate learning experiences while responsibly utilizing emerging technologies to support teaching and learning.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems that can assist with tasks such as generating ideas, creating instructional materials, organizing information, and supporting communication. MECK Pre-K may allow educators and staff to use approved AI tools to enhance lesson planning, create educational resources, support family communications, and improve program efficiency.

The use of AI within MECK Pre-K is guided by the following principles

- › AI is used as a tool to support educators and is not a replacement for professional judgment, teaching, or interactions with children.
- › Children will not independently use AI tools as part of the MECK Pre-K program.
- › AI will not replace hands-on, play-based learning experiences that are essential to early childhood development.
- › Student privacy and confidentiality will be protected at all times. Staff members are prohibited from entering personally identifiable student information, including student names, photographs, videos, assessment data, or other confidential information into public AI tools.
- › Any AI tools utilized by MECK Pre-K must align with applicable privacy laws, program policies, and county technology guidelines.

MECK Pre-K believes that responsible use of technology can support educators while maintaining our commitment to safe, engaging, and developmentally appropriate learning environments for all children.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) Awareness and Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the MECK Pre-K Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement included in the Parent Handbook.

I understand that:

- MECK Pre-K may use approved AI tools to support planning, communication, and program operations.
- Children will not independently use AI tools as part of the MECK Pre-K program.
- MECK Pre-K is committed to protecting student privacy and confidentiality.
- Personally identifiable student information will not be entered into public AI systems.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of MECK Pre-K's approach to the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____



Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment and Understanding of the Child and Family Support Team

MECK Pre-K would like to make families aware that MECK Pre-K and its Child and Family Support Team are not part of the Local Education Agency (LEA), which is Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS).

The Child Development and Family Team may provide classroom strategies, developmental guidance and support to families as they navigate referrals and processes related to educational support plans, including an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Section 504 Accommodation Plan, to assist with students' transition into kindergarten.

However, MECK Pre-K is not responsible for determining eligibility for, developing or implementing formal IEPs or Section 504 Plans. Any formal evaluation, eligibility determination or legally binding educational plan must be completed through the appropriate Local Education Agency or authorized entity.

MECK Pre-K reserves the right to implement internally developed classroom strategies and supports to assist students participating in the MECK Pre-K program. MECK Pre-K reserves the right to reassess the appropriateness of the current classroom schedule, placement or support structure based on the resources and supports available within the program.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information above regarding the role of MECK Pre-K and the Child and Family Support Team.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

2026-2027 School Calendar

Teacher Workday (no school for children)	August 17-24, 2026
“Meet and Greets” (held at schools-Family Visit)	August 25-27, 2026
Staggered Entry Days (small groups of children)	August 28-31 and September 1, 2026
First Day of School for Full Class	September 2, 2026
Holiday-Labor Day (no school for all)	September 7, 2026
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	September 21, 2026
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	October 2, 2026
Early Release Day (1/2 day of school for children)	October 14, 2026
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	November 2, 2026
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	November 3, 2026
Holiday-Veteran’s Day (no school for all)	November 11, 2026
Early Release Day (1/2 day of school for children)	November 19, 2026
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	November 25, 2026
Holiday-Thanksgiving (no school for all)	November 26-27, 2026
Early Release Day (1/2 day of school for children)	December 9, 2026
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	December 21, 2026
Winter Break (no school for all)	December 22-31, 2026
Holiday-New Year’s Day (no school for all)	January 1, 2027
Holiday-MLK Jr. Day (no school for all)	January 18, 2027
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	January 22, 2027
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	February 15, 2027
Early Release Day (1/2 day of school for children)	February 24, 2027
Teacher Workday (no school for children)	March 25, 2027
Holiday-Good Friday (no school for all)	March 26, 2027
Spring Break (no school for all)	March 29- April 2, 2027
Early Release Day (1/2 day of school for children)	April 28, 2027
Holiday-Memorial Day (no school for all)	May 31, 2027
Last Day of School for Children	June 9, 2027
Teacher Workdays (no school for children)	June 10-11, 2027

Make-up Days:

These are scheduled days off that are used as school days if too many days of instruction are lost to inclement weather or other school closings.

1. January 18, 2027
2. February 15, 2027
3. March 25, 2027
4. June 10, 2027
5. June 11, 2027

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