



Welcome to

St. Matthew's EEC

Dear EEC Family,

September is only a few weeks away and we could not be more excited to welcome you to the 2019-2020 school year! To be well-prepared for the first day of school, please read through this newsletter carefully.

EEC Staff

We pride ourselves on the quality of care and the professionalism of our staff. You will be receiving communication directly from your classroom teacher, but should you have any other questions or concerns, please direct them to the following people.

- EEC Director: Christin Vare
- Assistant Director: Maria Calabrese
- Business Manager: Carmie Naleski
- Closing Supervisor: Sarah Truitt
- Office Number: 301-464-1813
- Like us on Facebook to get the latest updates and inclement weather notices: St. Matthew's Early Education Center

School Routines

School classrooms will open their doors at 8:45 (or 9:00 for kindergarten and All-Day Pre-K). The teacher will greet each child at the door and make *brief* contact with you. A quick and happy departure helps our school day run smoothly!

If your child is only here for our half-day program, there is no need to bring a backpack or lunch. We will provide a snack and water or milk. We will also give each child a folder in which we will send home notices and student work. Please return the folder each school day.

School pick-up is promptly at 11:45 for ½-day classes. If you are going to be late, please call the office to let us know so we can reassure your child that everything is okay and you are on your way. All-Day Pre-K ends at 2:30. Kindergarten dismissal is 3:15.

Child Care Routines

- **Child Care Hours:** 7 am to 6 pm
- **Opening & Closing Rooms:** 106 (across from school office) and Room 24 for kindergarten and All-day Pre-K
- If you drop-off in room 106, please take your child's bags/lunch/clothes to their coat hook outside of their classroom. That way you know your child will

have what he or she needs for the day. This is also a good time to read notices posted outside of class and to see your child's artwork in the hall.

- Parents/guardians must sign their child in and out every day on the classroom clipboard.
- Please bring a photo ID at pick-up until teachers get to know you.
- Your child will only be released at the end of the day to a person on your Emergency Form. If you need someone else to pick-up, please call the office. We will also need a photo ID to verify.
- **Door codes** will be available at the Open Houses and on the first day of school.
- **We close at 6 pm. LATE FEES will be assessed PER CHILD at the rate of \$10 per 15 minutes, beginning at 6:05 pm.**

Health & Safety

Please return all state-mandated forms by August 1st

- Health Inventory & Immunizations
- Emergency Forms (need new forms for all students)
- Birth Certificate or Passport

What to bring

St. Matthew's believes in sand, wood chips, glitter and glue! You can fully expect your child to be covered in one or all of the above on a daily basis. Please dress them accordingly. Here is a general list of items to pack for the first day. You will be receiving a more specialized list from your child's teachers.

- Extra clothes labeled with your child's name and placed in a zip lock, labeled bag. Pack: shorts, shirt, underwear, socks.
- Don't forget napping accoutrements if your child is in a napping room. Cot sheets may be purchased in the office for \$10. Please limit to a cot sheet, blanket and a lovey.
- Lunch. We provide morning and afternoon snacks, but you will need to pack your child's lunch. We provide milk or water at snack and lunch. Please make your teachers aware of any ALLERGIES!

Classroom Communication

On the first day of school, you will receive a welcome letter from your child's teachers. The letter will reiterate much of what is here, but it will be more specific to the workings of that classroom. The letter will also provide information on

the best lines of communication between parent and teacher, and special school days like show-and-tell. Then each month, you will receive a calendar detailing upcoming events and scheduled activities. **Please make sure that your teachers and the office have your best email addresses.** Teachers will also post information on the board outside their classroom and you may leave notes for them near the clipboard.

EMAIL is the Key!

PLEASE share your email address with the office and your child’s teacher. If you don’t have one, please get one. We use email for all kinds of information: tuition reminders, payment receipts, inclement weather notices, event updates and reminders, emergency plans, School News articles, pictures.... the list is endless.

Parking

The parking lot can be a challenge. Please keep the following tips in mind.

1. Parking spaces are clearly marked.
2. Do not park in the handicap spots if you are not handicapped.
3. Do not leave children or babies in cars unattended. It is dangerous and you can be reported to the police.
4. Yellow curbs mean NO PARKING.
5. If you arrive in the parking lot and there are no parking spots, please wait a few minutes until one opens up.
6. Please remain alert – children dart away from parents when they are excited!

Building Security = Team Effort

The most important thing we do each day is keep our students and staff safe. We are committed to the safety of our building and have invested heavily in security equipment: we have over 16 cameras inside and outside, and we keep the doors locked at all times. But of course, all systems have their limitations.

In the last few years, we have discovered that we are most vulnerable to intruders at busy drop-off and pick-up times: out of courtesy, parents hold the door open for the next person. Or, a visitor waits until someone is exiting the building and comes in while the door is open. **PLEASE** pay attention to these behaviors. You have our permission to be “rude” and close the door behind you. If the following person is a parent here, they will understand. Do not let anyone in who is not with a child. Feel free to tell the person they need to use their code or buzz the office to get into the building. **AND** please let us know when you see someone you do not recognize in the building. We will go find them! When we work together, safety reigns!

Upcoming Events

- August 29: Open House for T/Th students; Ice Cream Social for Kindergarten
- August 30: Open House for students in ADPK, M-F and MWF classes
- September 3: First Day of school for T/Th, M-F, All-Day Pre-K and Kindergarten
- September 4: First day for MWF classes
- September 9: Claire’s Gourmet packets go home
- September 27: Family Fun Night!
- September 30: Alternative Pick-Up Plan at 11:45 dismissal (more info to come)
- October 4: Claire’s Gourmet DUE
- October 7/8: School Pictures
- October 9 - School & CC closed for Professional Development
- October 10-11: Parent Teacher Conferences
- October 30-31: Halloween Parade and Carnival
- November 11: Veteran’s Day – CLOSED
- November 27-29: Thanksgiving Break
- December 20: Closing early at 3:30 pm
- January 2: School resumes

Back to School Tips

Whether your child is returning to St. Matthew’s this fall or embarking on her very first school experience, parent preparation for the first day of school is the key to your child’s success. The following list gives you a few suggestions on how to help your child transition from summer to school.

SUMMERTIME FUN

1. Explore the idea of school through play. Set up a make-believe school room with stuffed animals as the students. Take turns being the teacher. Your child can teach his dolls how to sing a song or drink from a cup. You can teach your child a song with finger movements. Keep it fun!
2. Set-up playdates with neighbors. Help your child share toys, take turns on the slide, and speak up for herself. Encourage her to ask the other parent for help.
3. Give your child the gift of allowing other people to care for him. Attend church and leave your child in the nursery or Sunday school. Get a babysitter for a few hours a week. Use the child care at the gym. Exchange babysitting with a neighbor.
4. Take your child to reading times at the library so she can learn how to sit and listen to other people.

5. Make a game out of practicing self-care tasks such as drinking from a cup, pulling up pants, putting on shoes, washing hands, and most importantly, asking for help with the bathroom.
6. Encourage your child to clean up one activity before moving onto the next.

BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

1. Bring your child to the playground at St. Matthew's after dinner for a little early evening play. This will make playground time a friendly and familiar time of the day. (Please close the gates behind you when you leave and return the tricycles to their place along the brick wall.)
2. Establish an "early to bed, early to rise" routine that mimics your school day routine. Setting your child's internal "clock" will make your mornings smoother.
3. For most families with multiple children, the morning routine involves choreography akin to the opening ceremony of the Olympics. Begin putting the pieces together and practicing each person's role. Also, pat yourself on the back each time you get your children to school safely.....it can be a herculean task ☺
4. Describe school in super-positive terms. Tell your child how much you loved your teachers. Get him excited about making new friends.
5. Read stories about preschool and saying good-bye.
 - a. *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
 - b. *David Goes to School* by David Shannon
 - c. *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen
 - d. *First Day of School* by Anne Rockwell
 - e. *When I Miss You* by Cornelia Maude Spelman
 - f. *Take a Kiss to School* by Angela McAllister
 - g. *It's Time for Preschool* by Esme Raj Codell
 - h. *A Pocketful of Kisses* by Audrey Penn

OPEN HOUSE #1 ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 29 for T/Th students only. 9 am to 11 am

OPEN HOUSE #2 ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 30 is for students in class M-F, MWF, All-Day Pre-K 9 am to 11 am

1. Visit your child's classroom and meet your new teachers. This is the most important factor in taking the mystery out of the first day of school.
2. Take a tour of the classroom. Notice where the books, the dolls or your child's favorite toys are located. This gives him something to look forward to.
3. Explain that you will normally kiss her good-bye at the door but today you get to come in and play.
4. Introduce yourself to other parents. You will be running into them for years to come at the pool, Giant & soccer games. St. Matthew's families are *everywhere!*

5. Just stay for about 30 minutes.
6. This is a good day to take care of business. Bring in all missing forms and pay tuition. That way your focus can be on your child on the first day of school!

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

1. Don't rush through the routine and add stress to the morning. Children react strongly to that emotion.
2. Tell your child how excited you are that he is going to school because it is so much fun!
3. Give a quick kiss at the door to your child's classroom. Don't forget to smile, give the thumbs-up, and tell her that you will be back soon.
4. Don't skip step three by dropping and running. In five minutes, your child is going to look up and wonder where you are.
5. Radiate confidence in your child's ability to love school!

SEPARATION IS A PROCESS

Your child will either adjust very quickly or will need lots of time to develop trust and comfort with her new surroundings. Our teachers are amazingly patient and skilled at this process, so allow them to work their magic. This can take 6 weeks.

CHILD CARE PARENTS

1. If you cannot make the Open House on your assigned day, please let us know. We will try to find another time for you and your child to visit their classroom and meet their new teacher
2. If your child has half-day pre-k, he will have one room for school and another room for child care. Please visit and show him where both classrooms are located. Introduce yourself and your child to both sets of teachers. You will need extra clothes for both classrooms, but lunch and backpack will stay in child care.

Last but Not Least

Your child will be receiving a postcard from his or her teacher in the next two weeks!

