

# 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 2021-2022 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 Supervisors: Tiffany Smith & Kiarra Simon
- Office Number: 301-464-1813

### School Routines

- Drop-off and health screenings will take place in Fellowship Hall unless your classroom is designated curbside drop-off. After check-in, your child will be brought to their classroom by a staff member.
- Please wear a mask at all times when entering the building.
- At pick-up time, check in with the Afternoon Supervisor and then wait for your child in the narthex, unless you are designated curbside pick-up.

### Child Care Routines

- **Child Care Hours:** 7 am to 6 pm
- Drop-off and afternoon check-in will be in/near Fellowship Hall.
- Please bring a photo ID at pick-up until teachers get to know you.
- Pick-up will be at the classroom door, but parents must remain in the hallway.
- 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 house appointments August 30<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup>**.

- Health Inventory
- Blood Lead Test (pg. 4 of Health Inventory)
- Immunizations
- Emergency Form (need a new form for all students)
- Birth Certificate or Passport
- COVID-19 Parent Addendum

## 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, and an extra **cloth mask**.
- 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 and small blanket.
- 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 Thursday, you will receive a welcome letter from your child's teachers via email. 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 requests for the classroom. 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.** Any copies of teacher letters and school information will be sent home on Fridays.

## EMAIL is the Key!

We use email and **Mail Chimp** for all kinds of school-wide information: tuition reminders, 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. Please be mindful when entering the parking lot that some classes will be using curbside drop-off.
6. 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!

## 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.

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. Help your child share toys, take turns on the slide, and speak up for herself.
3. 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.

4. Encourage your child to clean up one activity before moving onto the next.

## BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

1. 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.
2. 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 ☺
3. Describe school in super-positive terms. Tell your child how much you loved your teachers. Get him excited about making new friends.
4. 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

## 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 and hug. 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 up to 6 weeks.

