



Maize Early Childhood Center

2023-24

Parent Handbook

2023-2024

Maize Early Childhood Program

Maize Pre-K, Parents as Teachers, and Starlets programs

USD 266 (www.usd266.com/pre-k)

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Email: aparkhurst@usd266.com

My child's teacher: _____

Teacher's email: _____

Classroom team members: _____

Table of Contents

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Mission Statement	4
Expectations of Parents	5
Preparing for School-ABCs of MECC	6
Safety	10
Nurse's Corner	12
Parent Pick Up/Drop Off Map	13
Arrival/Dismissal Procedures	14
MECC Wellness Policy	15

Our Mission

The mission of Maize USD266 is to inspire students to discover their potential through connecting, learning, and leading.

Vision: To provide high quality early-learning experiences to all children ages birth-five years, their families, and our community.

We strive to:

- Meet each child's individual needs to develop skills for learning.
- Connect, support, and value families in being active partners in their child's education.
- Provide developmentally appropriate learning using the Kansas Early Learning Standards.
- Provide licensed educators and therapists specializing in all areas of development.
- Create a fun, safe, and positive learning environment.

Expectations for Families

Sign-In and Sign-Out

- If you are dropping your child off late or picking them up early, you must sign them in or out of the front office.
- Any non-parent picking up a child **MUST** be listed in Skyward under emergency contacts or have a written note from the parents. Parents must ensure that their pick-up person can show a picture ID to staff upon request.

Current Emergency Information

- For the safety of your child, it is the parent's responsibility to see that emergency information in Skyward is kept current at all times.
- Students enrolled in the Rising Stars program are required to have KDHE emergency contact and health forms on file with the program as well as in Skyward.

Health Request

- Parents are expected to comply with all of the program's health requirements. These requirements include: up-to-date immunizations and current physical. If assistance is needed to meet these requirements, please discuss with our school nurse.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Conferences are held three times per year: at the beginning of each year with Meet Your Teacher, in September and again in February. You will receive information from your child's teacher regarding specific dates and times.

Volunteering

- Please contact your teacher if you are interested in volunteering for your child's classroom.
- Background checks are required and must be completed annually. You can access the background screening at this site: <https://www.usd266.com/domain/1553> All visitors moving beyond a school front office and its secure vestibule will also complete a Raptor Visitor Management System screening and a temporary visitor's self-adhesive name tag printed each time they visit.
- Get involved in our school through MECC PTO! For more information on how to join or help out please contact PTO at maize.earlychildhood.pto@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page at Maize ECC PTO.

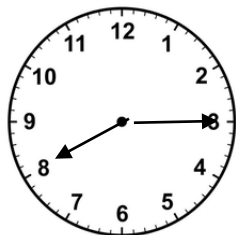
Preparing for School – The ABCs of MECC

Arrival/Dismissal

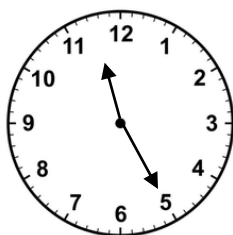
The AM session for Pre-K is 8:15-11:25 and PM is 12:25-3:35. We appreciate your efforts to be prompt at arrival and departure times. Please take your child to the classroom teacher's door behind the building.

*Gates open at 8:10 AM / 11:20 for the morning session and 12:20 / 3:30 PM for the afternoon session.

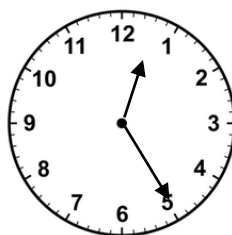
AM start time: 8:15



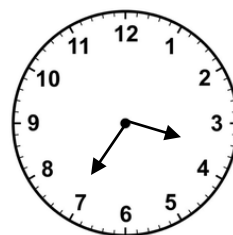
AM end time: 11:25am



PM start time: 12:25



PM end time: 3:35



**If children arrive late (after gates are closed), you must sign them in at the office.

If you are late in picking up, the following fees will be assessed:

- **A late charge of \$10 for the first 10 minutes will be charged and \$1 a minute after that.**
- Parent/guardian will be contacted using the phone numbers listed in Skyward.
- If parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called.
- If your child is not picked up within 30 minutes of the end of the session, at the discretion of the principal, child protective services may be called to take the child into emergency care.

Attendance

Your child's regular and prompt attendance at school will be important to his/her success. The preschool years are a great time for you to help your child establish good attendance habits.

Children do sometimes get sick. If your child is ill, has had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea within the last 12 hours or has colored nasal discharge, please do not bring your child to school that day. Often children may ask to come to school even though they are ill. Although your child may be disappointed, please keep the child home if sick.

- If you are going to miss school for any reason, please call and let us know at 722-3105 or send an email to the data manager listed on page 2.
- If your child rides the bus, please call transportation at 722-0582.

Backpack

Please send a backpack every day. Please do not send backpacks with wheels or small backpacks (only those large enough to hold notebook size paper). Teachers send home notes, daily work, book orders and more in the backpack. Please check daily for notes and other items.

DO NOT SEND:

- Toys
- Money
- Food
- Drinks (water bottles are allowed)

If a teacher has a special occasion to allow toys to be brought from home, they will let you know.

Birthdays

If you would like to send treats in honor of your child's birthday, please let your child's teacher know ahead of time. If your child's birthday is in the summer, you may choose a different date to bring treats if you wish. *Please ask your child's teacher for suggestions of what to bring.* We prefer healthy treats that are not too messy! We do ask that you send individual treats instead of a large cake. Please note-- *no invitations passed out at school per USD 266 policy.*

Classroom Parties

Pre-K has two classroom parties during the school year; a Fall party and Valentine's Day party. If you would like to help out with these, please sign up with your child's teacher.

Clothing

Your child will be most comfortable in washable play clothes that allow for self-dressing. We go outside daily, so please dress for the weather. Children are able to run and play best in tennis shoes or other appropriate shoes for steps, tricycles and play.

Children have accidents and get messy, so please send an extra set of clothes for your child in a plastic bag. Please send the following to school:

- Extra clothes: **shirt, pants, underwear, and socks**
- If your child is not toilet trained, please send enough supplies to last the whole day or multiple days.

Communication

Your child's teacher will send home regular communication through emailed and paper newsletters. Newsletters contain information about classroom, schedule changes, upcoming calendar events, lesson plans and other valuable information. Please make sure to read it. Maize Early Childhood Center and the district send out regular emails as well. *Please make sure your email is up-to-date in Skyward.*

Please notify the office of the following changes:

- Address changes
- Name and phone numbers of emergency contact
- Phone number for the family
- Transportation changes
- Custody changes (with supporting documentation)
- Name changes due to marriage or divorce

- Changes in health status
- Allergies

Co-Teaching and Inclusion

The teachers and staff co-teach together to offer the most possible inclusive learning environment for children.

During co-teaching times, two certified teachers are present in the classroom, and they work together through the teaching process: planning, teaching, and assessing progress. Students frequently have different learning styles and preferences. Co-teaching often allows those different needs to be more easily met. Having two teachers in the same classroom looks different depending on the activity we're doing in class and the needs of the students. Sometimes we like to split the class into groups with each teacher or para teaching one of the groups; this allows for a smaller teacher-to-student ratio to differentiate instruction. Sometimes, one teacher will pull a small group aside for additional instruction while the other teacher assists students with a different activity. Sometimes one teacher will lead while another supports. Our comprehensive staff works together to challenge and meet the needs of all students.

Curriculum

Our school uses Frog Street for our 3-year old classrooms, and Learning Without Tears for our 4-year old classrooms. All curriculum emphasizes early literacy and math skills along with developmentally appropriate social-emotional learning specially designed for the preschool environment. Teaching is adjusted to help all children learn and develop. Support services are provided as needed to help all children learn. Young children learn best through play and our daily schedules include: centers, circle time, book time, outdoor play, snack time, and small group times.

Curriculum Fee

Every student in the Maize school district receives a one-time curriculum fee. Your fee is listed on Skyward and payment is due September 30, 2023. If you qualify for free lunches, your fee is waived. If you feel you may qualify, please fill out the paperwork and turn into the office. Forms can be found in the office or asking your teacher.

Discipline

In our classrooms, the rules will be simple: be kind and be safe. Positive reinforcement and logical consequences are the main form of discipline used in each classroom. Conscious Discipline and Capturing Kids' Hearts concepts are used throughout MECC.

Family Nights

Please look on our calendar and mark the dates of the fun Family Nights. The activities are planned for children birth to age 5. We encourage you to bring the whole family and participate!

Grading/Progress Report

Progress reports are updated on Skyward every 9 weeks, which is a term.

Four-year-old progress reports use a 1-4 grading system:

- 4) The child consistently demonstrates the skill/behavior
- 3) The child frequently demonstrates the skill/behavior
- 2) The child sometimes demonstrates the skill/behavior
- 1) The child does not demonstrate the skill/behavior

Three-year-old progress reports use a 1-3 grading system:

- 3) Skilled (Performs skills consistently and independently)
- 2) Emerging (Performs skills with adult help and encouragement)
- 1) Not Yet (Student is not yet performing this skill)
- Unmarked – this skill is not assessed this quarter/term.

Library

Students attend library once per week and will have a chance to check out books to take home. Please return your book each week so you can check out a new one. Damaged or lost books will require a fee.

Music

Students attend music once per week. Our music classes use the Quaver Pre-K Music Curriculum. We play instruments, dance, sing and explore music in fun ways. A highlight every year is our Spring Program scheduled to take place in May.

Outdoor Play Policy

Our students will go outside every day except in cases of lightening/rain or temperatures below 19 degrees. Outdoor play is a very important part of our day, so we ask that you do not request that your child stay inside. Please dress your child accordingly.

PTO

Our school has an awesome Parent/Teacher Organization! We invite all parents to participate. For more information, please see their webpage at <https://www.usd266.com/domain/1686>, their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/maizeeccpto>, or by email to the PTO president at maize.earlychildhood.pto@gmail.com.

Social Media

- **Facebook:**
 - MECC Public Page: <https://www.facebook.com/MaizeECC>
 - MECC-Parents as Teachers Private Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MaizePATecc>
- **Instagram:**
 - MECC: https://www.instagram.com/Maize_ECC
 - Maize Parents as Teachers: <https://www.instagram.com/maizepat>
- **Twitter:** https://twitter.com/MaizeECC_PAT

Please let us know if you do not want your child to be in any pictures on any of these platforms.

Snacks

Students will receive a healthy snack daily. If your child has a food allergy, please make sure to alert the nurse so appropriate measures can be taken.

Transporting Your Child

Children **MUST** be in a car seat or booster seat. If you need help obtaining a car seat, please contact us.



Tuition

Tuition payments are scheduled for ACH Bank Draft payment on the first of each month. Please call 722-3105 or email the finance secretary listed on page 2 at least **FOUR** business days prior to the end of the month if you need to pay a different way than ACH Bank Draft that month.

If you need the ACH Bank Draft skipped for the month, the payment must still be paid by the first of each month using one of the following methods:

- Cash (in office)
- Check payable to MECC (in office)

- Credit Card (through your Skyward account)

As a reminder, if you want to withdraw your student, a two-week notice in writing is required or any potential refund will be forfeited as stated on your signed Family Agreement.

Website

Find us at <https://www.usd266.com/pre-k>

Safety

Parents will be notified in the case of emergencies as the situation allows. Local authorities, radio, and school district personnel at the Central Office will disseminate information as is appropriate to the public and parents.

Authorized Pick-Up

When you enrolled your child, you filled out emergency contacts which also authorizes the people who can pick up your child.

We cannot let your child go with anyone who is not listed as an emergency contact unless we have a handwritten note or verbal phone call.

- If we don't know the person, we will ask for identification, such as a driver's license.
- **If you want to add someone or take someone off, you must do so by contacting the front office.**
- ONLY the PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN can make changes.

Building

All doors to the building are locked. You must come into the office to gain entrance. Please be prepared to have your driver's license for scanning and receiving a visitor's sticker.

Custody

The law states that every parent has a right to his/her child. If you have legal documentation that says one parent is not allowed to pick up the child, **we must have a copy of that document. It must be signed by a judge and be officially stamped.**

Emergency Notification/School Closings

When school is closed for any reason, our district will notify you with a message to the phone number, email, or text number that you put into Skyward. You may also check the district website for information at usd266.com or on their twitter page @maize266.

Emergency Safety Intervention

"Emergency Safety Intervention" is the use of seclusion or physical restraint when a student presents an immediate danger to self or others. Violent action that is destructive of property may necessitate the use of an emergency safety intervention. For further information, please see the USD 266 student handbook.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Every school employee is a mandated reporter by the state and is required by Kansas law to file a report with DCF or law enforcement officials if there is a reason to suspect that a child has been harmed as a result of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse. We do not do any investigation or make any judgements or decisions in these situations. Reporting is a request for an assessment into the condition of the child.

Tornado/Fire Evacuations

Tornado: When tornado sirens are sounded, staff will follow specific procedures to move children into our tornado safe room/FEMA shelter. Classroom staff will take an emergency backpack with them.

Parents should not put themselves at risk by attempting to travel to school to pick up their children. If parents do show up, they will be asked to stay and remain until the all-clear is given.

We believe children are safer at school in a safe room than in a bus or car. If severe weather occurs during release time, children will stay at school until the all-clear is given.

If children are on a bus when a tornado siren sounds, the driver will follow the route emergency plans and locate the nearest safe place.

Fire: In case of a fire evacuation, staff will follow specific procedures to move children to a safe location until the all-clear is given.

Building Lockdown: In the event the building is placed in lockdown mode because of an outside threat, no one other than emergency personnel will be allowed in or out of the building until an all-clear signal is given by the police department.

Building Evacuation: In the event we would have to evacuate the building, staff will take the students to Maize South Intermediate School.

Safety Drills: Different safety drills, such as fire, tornado, lockdown, and evacuation, are conducted regularly.

Nurse's Corner

Required Medical Exams

- Kansas law and the preschool program require each child to have a **physical examination** completed within 90 days of enrolling. The exam is to be completed by a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- **Immunizations** are required for school entry. Immunizations must be as current as possible to attend school. There is a possibility of a student being excluded from school if not current.

Illness Policy

The preschool classrooms do not have adequate space or staff to care for ill children. Children with fevers will be sent home. Children must be fever free for 12 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine before returning to school.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted to pick up your child as soon as possible. If we cannot contact a parent, we will call one of the emergency contacts listed on your child's emergency contact list.

Medications

We encourage parents to make arrangements to give any needed medications at home, before or after school. If this is not possible, please see the nurse. Over the counter medications such as cough drops, Tylenol, ointments, etc. should not be sent to school with children and will NOT be administered by the staff at school. Please see district policy handbook for updates to this policy.

If prescribed medications must be given during school hours, staff will administer the meds after these requirements have been met:

- Kansas law requires written permission from the parent and signed order from the physician.
- Medication must be brought to school by a parent.
- The medication must be in the original container supplied by the pharmacy or physician, stating the name of the child, the medication, the dosage, the time to be given, and the way it is to be given.
- Please see district policy handbook for updates to this policy.

Health Checks

Throughout the school year, the nurse will complete vision and hearing checks.

Nutrition

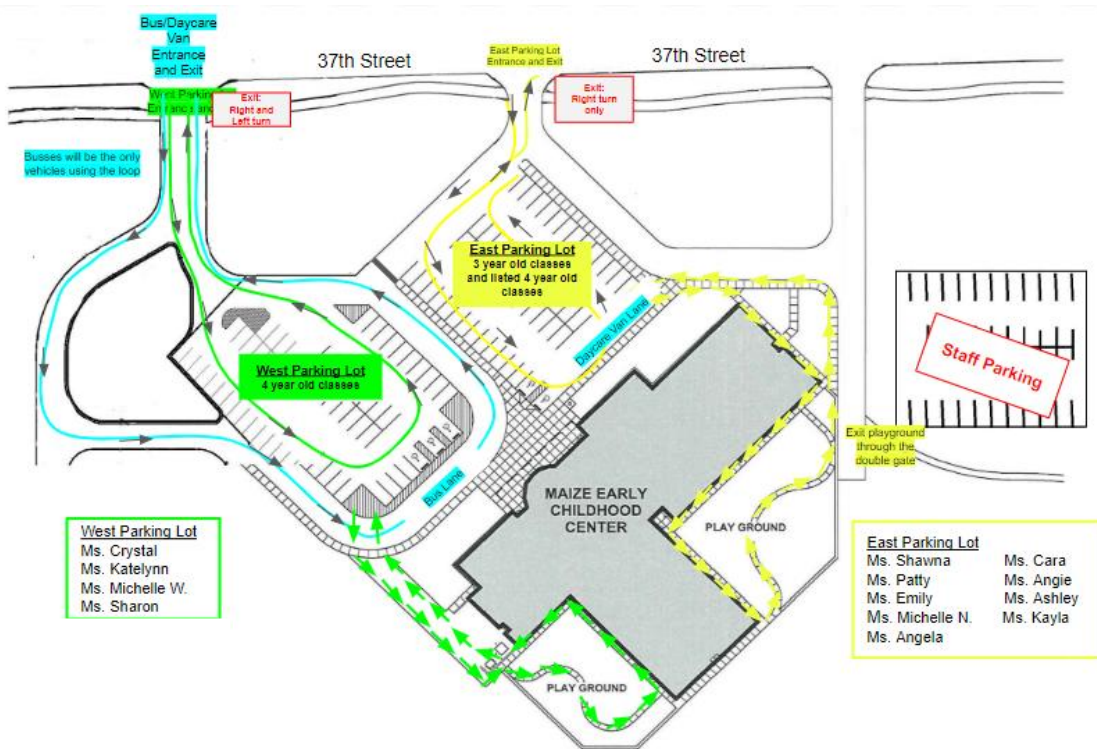
Children in the Pre-K program receive a nutritious snack daily.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

It is very important that you let us know if your child has any allergies to food. Please contact your child's teacher and the school nurse.

Maize Early Childhood Center Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Using these procedures will assist in a safe environment for our students and families.



Arrival/Dismissal Times

Please do not enter through the playground gates until the first bell rings (**AM:** 8:10 arrival, 11:20 dismissal; **PM:** 12:20 arrival, 3:30 dismissal).

East Side Classrooms

Families dropping off/picking up from these classrooms will park in the east parking lot. They will follow the sidewalk along the east side of the building to the playground and enter the playground through the single gate that is closest to the building. Families will follow the arrows (see map) and drop off/pick up their child at their classroom door then continue along the sidewalk around the playground and exit through the double gate. ***All playground equipment is closed during drop off/pick up.***

West Side Classrooms

Families dropping off/picking up from these classrooms will park in the west parking lot closest to the new Maize South Intermediate School. Families will cross the driveway at the southwest corner of the parking lot *using the marked crosswalk*. They will follow the arrows (please see map) to the playground and enter through the gate. Families will drop off/pick up their child at their classroom door and then continue along the sidewalk and exit back through the gate. ***All playground equipment is closed during drop off/pick up.***

Busses

Busses will park in front of the building along the driveway in the west parking lot. Staff will assist children off of the busses and walk them to their classrooms through the front entrance. ***For the safety of our bus riders, no cars will be allowed to use this driveway.***

Daycare Vans

Daycare vans will park in front of the building along the driveway in the East parking lot. Staff will assist children off of the vans and walk them to their classrooms through the front entrance. ***For the safety of our van riders, please park in designated parking spaces only.***

Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals

Families arriving late or picking up early – please come to the main office where office staff will then walk your child to/from the classroom. Once the gate is closed, please use the entrance at the front of the school.

Special Circumstance Drop Off/Pick Up

If you have a special circumstance/consideration regarding these procedures, please contact us and it will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and approved by administration.

- For the safety of our children – **NO CELL PHONE USE** during drop off and pick up.
- Please drive slowly and be aware of others walking to or from their vehicle.

Maize Early Childhood Center WELLNESS POLICY

REASON: To create a school environment that protects and promotes the health and well-being of our students.

Preschool children are at a developmental stage where they are forming healthy habits they will carry into adulthood. A healthy lifestyle is essential for the growth and development of children. Good nutrition and regular physical activity support children's physical health, academic achievement, and emotional well-being. Our goal is to offer a supportive, safe environment in which children feel comfortable trying new activities and building skills.

With one in five children being overweight or obese by the age of 6, child care centers and daycare home providers play an essential role in the prevention of childhood obesity. Child caregivers have an opportunity to positively impact children's healthy development by encouraging children to develop healthy habits at a young age.

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

WELLNESS EDUCATION:

- Children receive a consistent wellness message throughout their daily activities, including the promotion of nutrition and physical activity as well as emphasizing social-emotional health.
- All students, including those with disabilities or special health care needs, will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of learning experiences that support the development of habits that are based on the most recent evidence-based information. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - A curriculum-based, "Healthy Me" Unit in which students explore the importance of making healthy eating choices, incorporating physical activity, and other healthy choices like brushing teeth, washing hands, and going to the doctor.
 - All students participate in vision and hearing screenings conducted by our school nurse. MECC also partners with local dentists to provide dental screenings, as needed.
 - Proper handwashing lessons provided by the school nurse.
 - As part of the Maize Parents as Teachers program, parent educators conduct an extensive health assessment with participants (including vision, hearing, and parental mental health screenings).

WELLNESS PROMOTION:

- School staff are encouraged to model healthy food choices and water consumption. Staff are also encouraged to find opportunities for students to engage in cross-curricular, real-world learning experiences that help students to find relevance in wellness education and choices.

NUTRITION EDUCATION/PROMOTION:

- Students and school staff members have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water at all times throughout the school day. Water fountains are available in the school building and on each playground. Additionally, students are allowed to have clear/translucent individual water bottles in the classroom.
- The pretend center in classrooms includes items such as plastic food models depicting healthy foods and kitchen equipment such as pots, pans, utensils, and measuring spoons. The book area includes books about food, eating, or gardening.
- Nutrition/health posters and signage are posted in the school to promote healthy eating choices and habits.
- Nutrition awareness is integrated into snack-time through the use of teacher supported discussion on making healthy food choices. Special occasions (like birthdays and class parties) are celebrated containing a healthy component.
- **Snack:** MECC participates in The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This snack program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children.
 - Snack is served family-style, and promotes a variety of food items to encourage children to try different foods, especially fruits and vegetables.
 - Students have access to handwashing facilities before snacks. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that hand washing/sanitizing practices are implemented.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/PROMOTION:

- Children are given daily opportunities for energetic play and physical exercises that promote good health and large muscle development.
- Students have daily outdoor play, as weather permits. Indoor play options are available when weather does not allow for outdoor play. Staff supervise/facilitate outdoor and indoor play.
- Outdoor play areas are designed with play components that foster large muscle development, balance, strength, and coordination.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate multiple opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day - including additional time in the gym. Additionally, staff seeks to reduce the amount of time that students are sedentary throughout the school day. Short physical activity breaks are scheduled between or within learning or sedentary activities to invigorate children and eliminate long periods of sitting, and to incorporate physical activity into transition time.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION/PROMOTION:

- Maize Early Childhood Center utilizes several social emotional curriculums, district initiatives, and screeners to promote the development of students' social-emotional skills and health. This includes but is not limited to:
 - **Second Step Curriculum;** Second Step gives teachers an easy-to-implement, engaging way to teach social-emotional skills and concepts. Second Step programs are designed to help children thrive and be more successful in school - ultimately setting them up to be thoughtful and productive adults.
 - **Conscious Discipline:** Conscious Discipline is a universal comprehensive program that infuses social-emotional wellbeing into the entire educational system through systematically enhancing the social-emotional skills of administrators, teachers, students and families. This program focuses on Safety, Connection, and Problem solving. Conscious Discipline teaches adults to control their own

emotional responses to children so they can stay present at the moment, connect with the child, and then work through the feelings the child is having together. Conscious Discipline teaches children to name their emotions, regulate them, and then solve problems.

- **Capturing Kids Hearts:** This district initiative is a relationship building approach to discipline that creates self-managing groups. Teachers use the EXCEL model to communicate with students. Students help to create rules for the classroom (referred to as the Social Contract). Students then help to hold each other accountable to these rules. An environment is created that emphasizes positivity through “good things” and “affirmations”.
- **MTSS -SEL:** Maize Early Childhood Center utilizes a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework with a tiered infrastructure that uses data to help match social-emotional behavior assessment and instructional resources to each and every student's needs.
- **Therapy Dog:** A therapy dog is one of the many social-emotional supports available in the school. Ava is an 8-year-old Golden Retriever, trained and certified through Love on a Leash as a therapy dog. The students at MECC have the opportunity to visit, read a book with, and go on Adventures with Ava as they walk through the halls and the playground together. At times they may be Ava's Agents as they complete various “missions” at school!
- **Friendship Groups:** Teachers may also refer students for a Friendship Group for additional counseling services with the school counselor for additional social-emotional learning opportunities.
- **ASQ-SE:** 4-year-old students complete the social-emotional element of the ASQ screener. Early identification of social-emotional challenges can make all the difference to a young child. The proof is undeniable: the earlier a behavioral concern is identified, the greater the chance a child has for reaching his or her full potential in life. This is the driving force behind **Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®:SE-2)**—a parent-completed, highly reliable system focused solely on social-emotional development in young children. Accurately identifying behavior through ASQ:SE-2 paves the way for next steps—further assessment, specialized intervention or ongoing monitoring, for examples—to help children reach their fullest potential during their most formative early years.

PARENT RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- **Limiting Screen Time:** Too much screen time can impact a child's development and contribute to weight and sleep problems. Kids younger than 18 months shouldn't have screen time, except for video-chatting alongside adults. Limited, high-quality viewing (with an adult) is recommended for kids 18 to 24 months, and from 2 to 5 years, screen use should be capped at an hour a day. School-age children need consistent limits, too.
 - <https://onlinedegrees.unr.edu/online-master-of-public-health/screen-time-recommendations-by-age/>
- **Sleep:** Sleep plays a crucial role in the development of young minds. In addition to having a direct effect on happiness, research shows that sleep impacts alertness and attention, cognitive performance, mood, resiliency, vocabulary acquisition, and learning and memory. **Preschool age children need 10-13 hours of sleep per day.**
- **Nutrition:** Eating healthy food **helps children get the nutrients their bodies need to stay healthy, active, and strong.** Children develop their eating patterns early in life. These early years are an opportunity for you to teach them healthy habits that will stay with them as they get older. https://familydoctor.org/growing-healthy-importance-starting-good-nutrition-early_myplate.gov
- **Exercise:** Regular physical activity can help children and adolescents improve cardiorespiratory fitness, build strong bones and muscles, control weight, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, and reduce the risk of developing health conditions. A useful resource is: activeforlife.com (57 activities for 2-4 year old children)