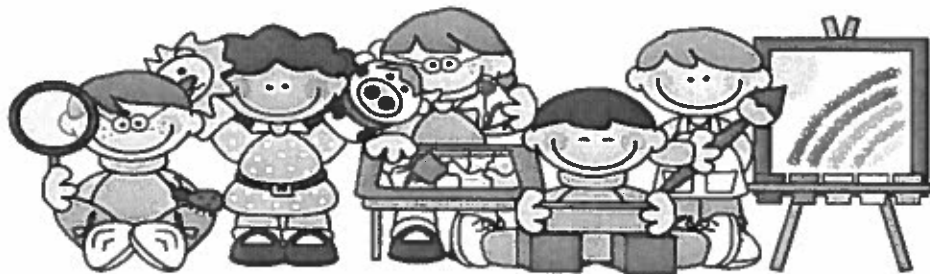


Welcome to Early Start



Mrs. Katie Jones

Teacher

Mrs. Gina Blazek

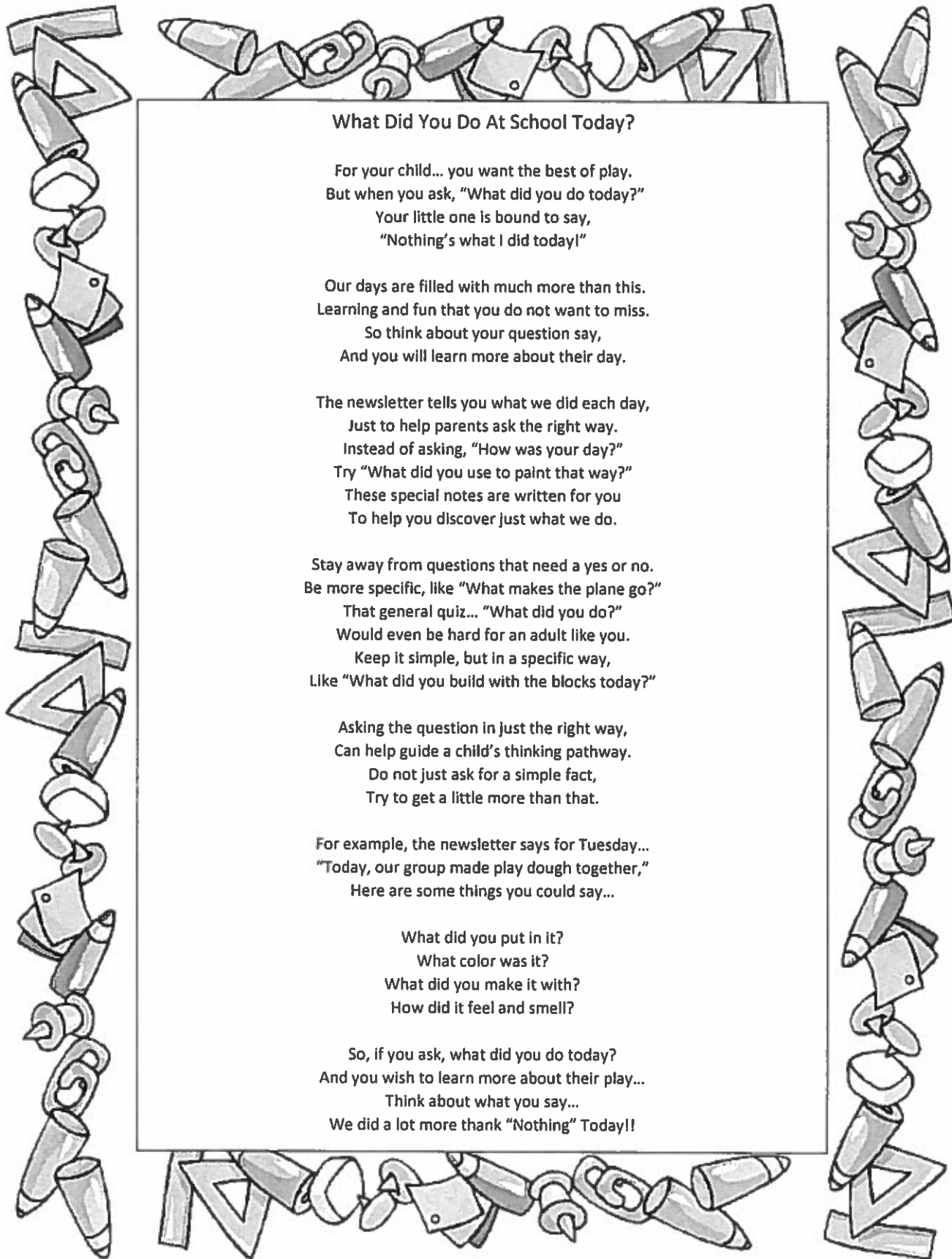
Early Start Paraprofessional

AM and PM Early Start 3 & 4 Year Olds



<http://mesearlystart.weebly.com/>

<i>Mokena Elementary School</i> District 159 11244 Willow Crest Lane Mokena, IL 60448 Phone: 708-342-4850 Fax: 708-4793120	<i>Class Times</i> <u>AM Class:</u> Monday- Friday 9:00am- 11:30am <u>PM Class:</u> Monday- Friday 12:30-3:00pm
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What Did You Do At School Today?

For your child... you want the best of play.
But when you ask, "What did you do today?"
Your little one is bound to say,
"Nothing's what I did today!"

Our days are filled with much more than this.
Learning and fun that you do not want to miss.
So think about your question say,
And you will learn more about their day.

The newsletter tells you what we did each day,
Just to help parents ask the right way.
Instead of asking, "How was your day?"
Try "What did you use to paint that way?"
These special notes are written for you
To help you discover just what we do.

Stay away from questions that need a yes or no.
Be more specific, like "What makes the plane go?"
That general quiz... "What did you do?"
Would even be hard for an adult like you.
Keep it simple, but in a specific way,
Like "What did you build with the blocks today?"

Asking the question in just the right way,
Can help guide a child's thinking pathway.
Do not just ask for a simple fact,
Try to get a little more than that.

For example, the newsletter says for Tuesday...
"Today, our group made play dough together,"
Here are some things you could say...

What did you put in it?
What color was it?
What did you make it with?
How did it feel and smell?

So, if you ask, what did you do today?
And you wish to learn more about their play...
Think about what you say...
We did a lot more than "Nothing" Today!!



Dear Family,

This week your child will complete one of the most important milestones of his or her life- the first day of school! This is a very exciting time for not only your child but you as well. I am greatly looking forward to working with you and your child this year. I am eager to help them to achieve their fullest potential. Our days and weeks will be filled with many wonderful experiences and opportunities to learn and grow. We are so excited that you will be part of our school family this year.

As wonderful as this new experience may be, it can also be quite stressful for the young child. New situations and changes can, at times, be unsettling for all of us. For many children, this may be their first time of separation from parents/caregivers at home. It is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious the first day of school.

We have provided a few suggestions for assisting your child during this transition time. Remember, the preschool staff will be available to provide support and assistance in making your child's first school days'-happy days.

- 🍎 Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect. Answer all questions directly and honestly.
- 🍎 Convey a positive attitude! Young children are aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure the child that school can be a fun and exciting place.
- 🍎 Establish a routine for school evenings and mornings. Rituals and routines will add predictability and are comforting in unfamiliar situations.
- 🍎 Clearly state to your child where you will be and when you will return. It may also be helpful to discuss what will happen when you are reunited.
- 🍎 Maintain a clear good-bye routine. This may include warning the child you are leaving, a kiss and hug, or a wave goodbye. Once you tell your child you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the good-bye with "Ok, just one more kiss and then I really have to go" tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Avoid sneaking away, this seems to encourage children to become less trusting and makes the second day of school even harder.

Please know we are here to help make the first day of school a happy transition!

Introductions

I would like to introduce the team of staff who will be working within your child's classroom this year.

Classroom Teacher

First, my name is Katie Jones, and I am delighted to be your child's teacher this year. This will be my seventh year teaching, fifth year in District 159. I graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a degree in Special Education and Early Childhood. I also attended Olivet Nazarene University, where I received my English as a Second Language (ESL) Endorsement and my Master's in Curriculum Instruction. I enjoy hanging out with my family and friends, shopping, and going to sporting events (Chicago White Sox and Chicago Blackhawks).

Favorites

Candy: Butterfingers and Skittles

Color: Yellow and Black

Drink: Sprite

Food: Tacos and Pizza

Store: Target

Sport: Hockey

Classroom Paraprofessional

My wonderful paraprofessional is Gina Blazek. Gina has worked at MES for many years now. This will be her third year in the Early Start classroom. Gina is sweet, caring, and always there to lend a helping hand. Gina enjoys going on trips to Disney, Spending time with family and friends, and going out to eat.

Favorites

Candy: Reese's

Color: Maroon

Drink: Dunkin Coffee

Food: Panera

Store: Target

Sport: Baseball

Support Staff

As part of the Early Start Program, Support Staff is available throughout the day. Our classroom works very closely with the Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Social Worker, and School Psychologist. On given days' groups are scheduled and lead by various support personnel to help further the development of each student.

Ms. Heather Sullivan Speech Pathologist

sullivanh@mokena159.org

Ms. Emmaleigh Halweg Social Worker

halwege@mokena159.org

Ms. Trish Roberts Occupational Therapist

robertst@mokena159.org

Ms. Nancy Rodighiero School Psychologist

rodighieron@mokena159.org

Absences (Per school handbook)

If your child is going to be absent from school, you will need to call the Mokena Elementary office at 708-342-4850 before the start of the day to report the absence. In the event that you do not report the child absent before school starts, one of our secretaries will call you at home or work to confirm your child's absence. This is mandatory for your child's safety.

Arrival and Departure

The following rules have been in place for the safety of ALL of our children. The students will arrive and dismiss at the side south door. Parents are not allowed within the building at this time. Please note, Kindergarten also uses this door and preschoolers should not enter until a preschool teacher has come to the door. In order to ensure the safety of all students, the doors will not open for preschool until 5 minutes prior to class starting (8:55am and 12:25pm). The teachers will assist students in gathering their belongings. Parents are to wait outside the door until the students are dismissed. If your child is taking a different mode of transportation OR someone other than the usual person is picking them up, Mrs. Katie NEEDS a note specifying what is requested on that day. We will check ID's if someone other than the usual person comes to pick up your child. On the note, please include the person's name, phone number, and relation. *When picking/dropping off your child, you are required to park in the parking lot and walk your child across the street to the side walk/door.*

Birthdays

We will celebrate each child's birthday during the school year. Your child will be given a crown to wear for the day and a special birthday award. *From the Mokena School District Handbook: As a school district, we have to be proactive with regard to the health and wellbeing of our entire student population. In order to promote healthier eating habits overall, to comply with recent legislation to protect those students with food allergies/sensitivities, and medical conditions that require our care and concern, we are implementing a "non-edible" birthday treat policy throughout the district.* If you would like to send something to the class to celebrate on your child's birthday, some suggestions include pencils, stickers, erasers, etc.

Outside

We do have a scheduled recess time, weather permitting, in which we will go outside. Please dress your child for the weather and have an appropriate pair of shoes- *No flip-flops*. We ask that your child wear shoes that have backs on them. Indoor recess will take place in the gym.

Additional Information

- 👤 Since we will be beginning our daily lessons and routines right away, it is important for your child to arrive to school on time each day. Although, if your child will be late arriving at school, please bring your child to the office and sign him/her in.
- 👤 Please be patient with messy backpacks. Your child is learning to place their papers and projects in their backpacks. Please check all papers nightly.
- 👤 Please place any notes/important envelopes to me in your child's folder. The folder will be our main way to communicate daily. We check folders daily.
- 👤 If you need to get a hold of me, please email me at Jonesk@mokena159.org. Please feel free to contact me for any reason you may have. I believe in strong communication between home and school. If you need to reach me by phone, please call the Mokena Elementary School at (708)-342-4850.



Each week a student from each class will be selected to be Star Student of the Week! Being Star Student is more than just having a fancy title for a week; Our Star Student is given special privileges and opportunities to celebrate how special he or she is. A note along with a back pack will arrive home on the Thursday prior to their week. Please be sure to read the Parent Letter inside the backpack.

Star Student Note (This will be the same note sent home the week your child is Star Student):

Dear Family,

Your child has been selected as next week's Star Student of the Week! Enclosed in the Star Student book pack you will find the following items which need to return to class except for the Star Student Goody Bag.

- "All About Me Poster" – Make sure it is completed
 - Art Supplies
 - Parent Letter
- Star Student Goody Bag- STUDENT KEEPS THIS AT HOME

While your child is the Star Student, each day of the week will consist of an exciting event or activity to honor him or her and help us get to know our special classmate.

Friday Before: Star Student Is Revealed

Your child is chosen as the Star Student of the week. He or She has received the Star Student Backpack to take home for the weekend. Please have your child complete the poster. The poster and backpack will need to return on Monday so he/she can share with the rest of the class.

Monday: Poster Share

Your student will share his or her poster with the class. This will help the rest of the class to become more acquainted with your child. After our star student shares their poster it will be displayed on our Star Student Bulletin Board for the rest of the week. At the end of the week, it will be given back to the student.

Tuesday: Sharing Sack

Your Star Student will need to bring three items from home to share with the rest of the class. Parents, we ask you please help your child collect three special items from home to bring to school this day. Students are encouraged to choose items that have some sort of meaning to them.

Wednesday: Parent Letter/ Teacher Letter

Parents, you will write a letter to the class telling us how special your child is to you. Send the letter in a sealed envelope to school with your child. I will read the letter to the class. The content of the letter is up to you but you may want to choose from one of the following ideas:

- Describe special or funny stories about your child for the class to hear
- Write a silly or serious poem about your child
- Tell us some neat things we may not know about your child.
- Send silly or special pictures with a letter describing the pictures
- Write a short story with your child as the main character.

*** If by chance there is no letter sent on this day I will write a letter to read in class about why I enjoy having your child in my classroom and how special they are to me as a student. It is more meaningful for your child if you are able to write a letter, but if you are unable to, your child will still receive a letter on this day.

Friday: Star Friends

Your Star Student will be presented with a friendship poster created by his or her classmates. The poster will include the Star's Picture surrounded by drawings by his or her classmates.

***Please let me know if you have any additional questions about the exciting upcoming week.
You may reach me at school 708-342-4850. You may also send me an email at
Jonesk@mokena159.org.***

Daily Schedule

This is a brief look at what a typical day will look like.

(The schedule may fluctuate during the year)

AM CLASS:

8:55-9:00- Arrival

9:00-9:30- Gross Motor Time

9:30-10:00- Circle

10:00-10:10- Story

10:10-10:40- Group Work

10:40-11:25- Learning Centers

Bathroom and Milk Break will take place during centers

11:25-11:30- Get ready for dismissal

11:30-Dismissal

PM CLASS:

12:30-12:35- Arrival

12:35-1:00- Circle

1:00-1:50- Learning Centers

Bathroom and Milk Break will take place during centers

1:50-2:00- Story

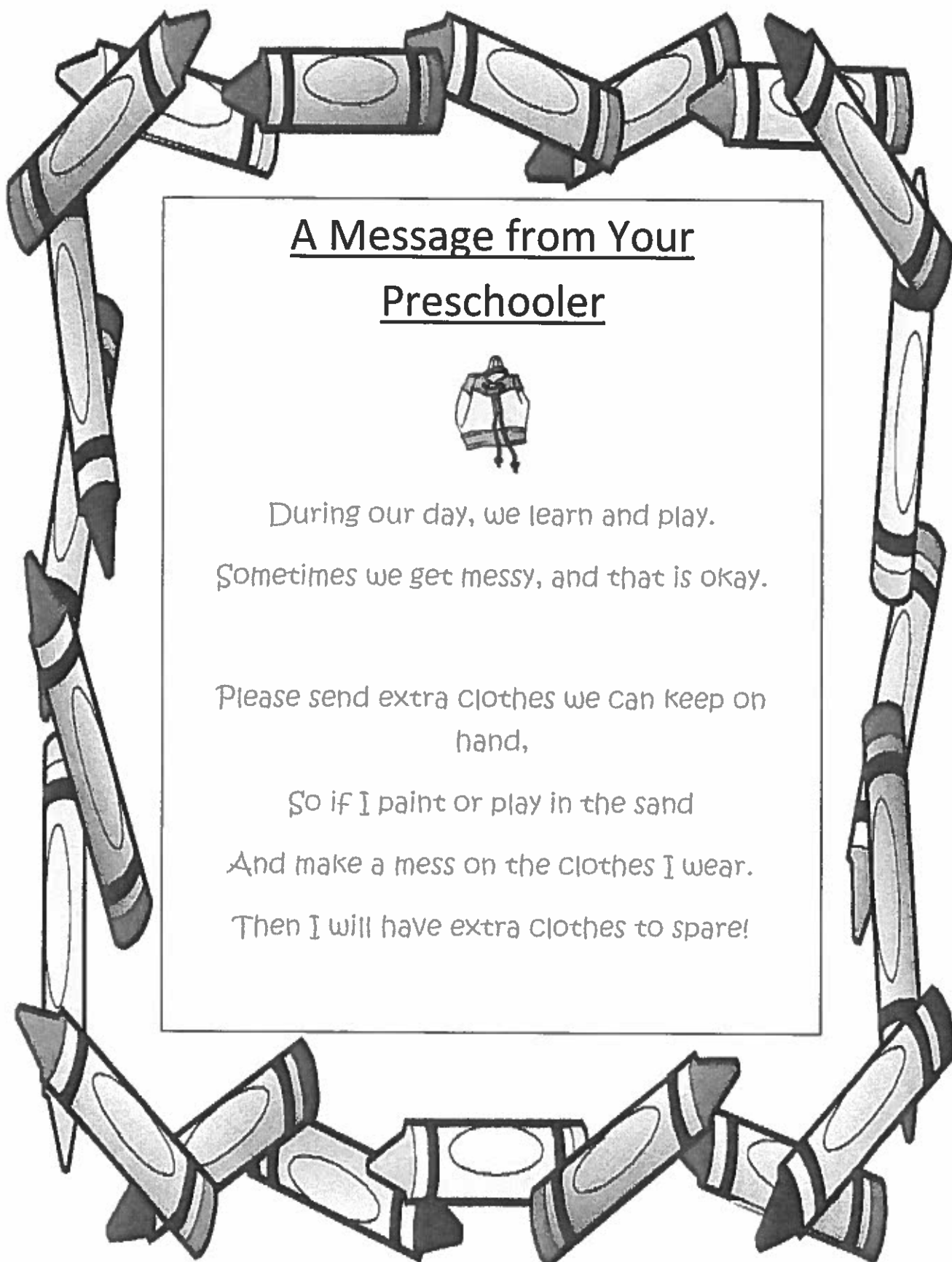
2:00-2:30- Group Work

2:30-2:55- Gross Motor/Recess

2:55-3:00- Get ready for dismissal

3:00-Dismissal

During various times and days, support staff will work within the classroom to help future support each students learning. This includes OT, PT, Speech Pathologist, and Social Worker.



A Message from Your Preschooler



During our day, we learn and play.
Sometimes we get messy, and that is okay.
Please send extra clothes we can keep on
hand,
So if I paint or play in the sand
And make a mess on the clothes I wear.
Then I will have extra clothes to spare!

Curriculum

As part of our program, we use the research based Creative Curriculum. The classroom focuses on various studies to help target specific skills, expand vocabulary, and more. The studies are research based and were developed by the Early Childhood and Early Start teams. Each year we will rotate studies to ensure your child has the maximum learning experience.

Creative Curriculum Units

<u>August</u> Back to School	<u>September</u> Trees	<u>October</u> Recycle Halloween
<u>November</u> Manners Thanksgiving	<u>December</u> Roads	<u>January</u> Pets
<u>February</u> V-Day Exercise	<u>March</u> Clothing	<u>April</u> Buildings
	<u>May/June</u> Balls	

Handwriting without Tears

We use the Handwriting without Tears program to help teach the students writing skills. The program we use is the Get Set for School-PreK. The Get Set for School curriculum teaches the easiest skills first and then builds on that knowledge. Lessons are taught in a sequence that makes sense developmentally. We use a multi-sensory approach daily within our program



Jolly Phonics

We use parts of the Jolly Phonics system to help teach students letter recognition, letter formation and letter sounds. Each letter is taught using actions for a multisensory approach. Jolly Phonics has been adapted in our classroom to follow along with the Handwriting without Tears program. Letters for the program are not taught in an alphabetic order.

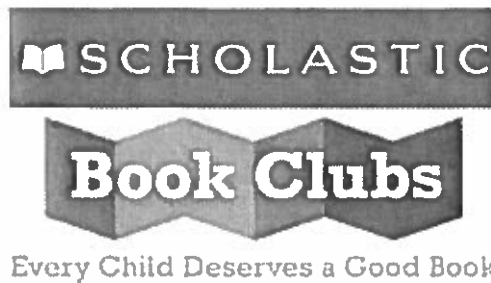
Jolly Phonics Actions



myIGDI's

myIGDI's is one of the assessments we use within Early Start. These research-based assessments are set to monitor the growth and development for pre-kindergarten skills. The assessments are well suited of general education, special education and English language learners. The assessments are broken up into two areas. Early Reading measures Picture Naming, Rhyming, Sound Identification, Which One Doesn't Belong, and Alliteration (sound to pictures). Early Numeracy measures Oral Counting, Number Naming, Quantity Comparison, and 1:1 Correspondence Counting. This Early Numeracy tests are timed. The overall assessment is completed three times per year. This gives a great overall view of the progress the student/students make over the year in each area.





Shop Online: <https://orders.scholastic.com/MBRW3>

Activation Code: MBRW3

Dear Families,

Encouraging reading is one of the most important things we can do to help you child succeed. It can be tough finding the right books to keep them interested, which is why I am so excited that our class will be participating in Scholastic Reading Club this year.

With Scholastic Reading Club:

- Every book you buy earns FREE Books for our classroom library
- You can choose from handpicked, grade- and reading level specific books for you child
- You'll find the best value on a variety of formats.

Several times a year, your child will bring home reading Club flyers. Together you can choose from books hand selected by your teachers and experts, and then order online or send you order form and payment to me.

Please make checks out to SCHOLASTIC.

I'd also love some help growing our classroom library.

Thank you for your support.

- VISIT <https://orders.scholastic.com/MBRW3>
- ENTER CLASS CODE: [MBRW3](#)
- SHOP from a carefully curated selection of books for your student
- SUBMIT your order and earn FREE books for our classroom
- All book orders will be shipped to our classroom so we can celebraate the joy of reading together!

A decorative border surrounds the text, featuring various school supplies including pencils, pens, a ruler, a clock, a protractor, a compass, a stapler, a folder, a backpack, a water bottle, a pencil sharpener, and a pair of scissors.

Recommended Supply List for Early Start 2017-2018

6 glue sticks
1 pack of crayons
2 two pocket folders (With prongs)
1 regular size backpack- NO WHEELS
1 roll of paper towels
1 box Kleenex
1 Container anti-bacterial Wipes (for cleaning)
2 boxes of 5oz plastic cups
1 box of baby wipes

AM students only

1 package gallon sized Ziploc bags

PM students only

1 package quart sized Ziploc bags

Also, please send to school a full change of clothes (including long pants) in a Ziploc bag labeled with the student's name.

**** If your child is still in diapers or pull ups, please send a pack in with your child's name on it****

Dear Parents:

Below is list of dates in which Mokena Elementary has Early Dismissal.

The Early Learning Program (EC and ES) rotate between the AM and PM session on the following dates.

AM SESSION ATTENDS ON: (PM students will stay home on these days)

- Wednesday, September 13th, 2017
- Wednesday, December 13th, 2017
- Wednesday, March 7th, 2018

PM SESSION ATTENDS ON: (AM students will stay home on these days)

- Wednesday, October 18th, 2017
- Wednesday, February, 7th, 2018
- Wednesday, May 9th, 2018

Thank you very much.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Preschool Teachers

Dear Parents,

Below is our current snack list. Please only send your child with a snack from the list below. Any items sent in with identifiers such as *"containing peanuts/tree nuts, may contain peanuts/tree nuts, or made in a facility with peanuts/tree nuts, will be returned home with your child."* Please note the snack list will be updated on a monthly basis. The update can be found on the district website.

APPROVED SNACK LIST:

- *Applesauce
- *Cheese
- *Fresh fruit
- *Fresh Vegetables
- *Rold Gold Pretzels
- *UTZ Tortilla Chips
- *Nabisco 100 Calorie packs-Chips Ahoy Thin Crisps
- *Pepperidge Farm Goldfish (pretzel, saltine, colors, pretzel & cheddar – no cinnamon)
- *Pirate's Booty Aged White Cheddar cheese baked rice/corn puffs, Sour Cream & Onion Flavor
- *Skinny Pop- White Cheddar, Pepper Jack
- *Teddy Grahams
- *Lorna Doone Shortbread Cookies
- *Barnum's Animal Crackers-Original
- *Newton's-Original Fig, Fat Free, Whole Grain, Strawberry, Raspberry
- *Kraft Handi-Snack-Premium Breadsticks'n Cheese Dip
- *Wheat Thins-Original, Parmesan Garlic, Four Cheeses

Please keep in mind this list is current as of August 8, 2017 but manufacturers can change ingredients and/or they may change the facility where they make the product to one which has peanuts. We will verify our list every two weeks and notify you of any changes made to our list. Thank you for your help in keeping all of our students safe.

Sincerely,

Anna Kirchner
Principal MES

Updated 8/8/17



Please Tell Us 2017-2018

1. Your child's full name: _____
Preferred Name you want your child to be called/write: _____
2. His/her Birth date: _____
3. Mother's Name: _____
4. Father's Name: _____
5. Home Phone Number: _____
6. Mother's Cell #: _____ Father's Cell #: _____
Mother's Work #: _____ Father's Work #: _____
Mother's Email: _____ Father's Email: _____
***Please STAR best way to contact you.**
7. Mother's Occupation: _____
8. Father's Occupation: _____
9. Student Lives with: (Please circle all that apply):
Both Parents _____ Single Parent (Circle one) Mother Father
Guardian (Specify _____) Other (Specify _____)
10. Please list all members in household and age (of children):

11. Please list 2 emergency contacts for your child. (name & #)
1. _____
2. _____
12. Do you celebrate birthdays/holidays in your home? _____
Any holiday's you don't celebrate? _____
13. Who will be dropping off and picking up your child?

14. Does your child take medications regularly? If so, what? _____

16. Does your child have any allergies? If so, what? _____
17. Does your child have any diet restrictions? _____ If yes, please explain:

18. Does your child speak or understand a language other than English? _____
If so, what? _____
19. Does your child share a room with another family member? _____
20. Which does your child sleep in? (please circle) bed toddler bed crib
21. Which does your child use regularly? (please circle)
 sippy cup straw cup regular cup
22. Please list all pets and names of pets (if applicable)

23. Please list your child's favorite...
Food _____
Toys _____
Book/Story _____
Activity _____
23. Which hand does your child prefer? _____
24. Has your child had experiences? (please circle) paints crayons scissors
25. Please describe your child's personality.

27. Please list any other concerns you have about your child



Thank you for taking the time to fill these pages and letting us
get to know your child better.

-Mrs. Katie and Staff

School Milk



Dear Parents,

As you know we will be serving milk during Early Start this year. Your child has a choice between **white** or **chocolate** milk. The milk break will be embedded within our school day.

Please complete the following and return to Mrs. Katie ASAP.

Student Name: _____

Milk Choice: **white** or **chocolate**

Parent Signature: _____

If your child has an allergy, please contact the school nurse and myself for other options. We will need a doctor's note stating the allergy, the severity, and precautions needed.



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Beginning this week I will use candy as a reward and/or reinforcer in my classroom. The following types of candy will be used: smarties, sour patch kids, soft jolly ranchers, skittles, starburst, twizzlers, dum dum suckers, tootsie rolls and soft life savers. Please sign the form below indicating whether or not your child is allowed candy at school. If your child can only have certain candies that have been listed please inform me below.

Thank you,

Mrs. Jones

Child's name: _____

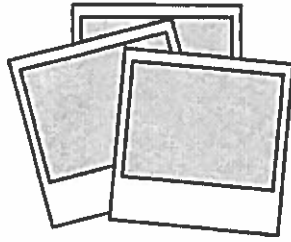
Parent's Signature: _____

____ Yes, my child is allowed to receive the candy listed above at school.

____ Yes, my child can receive the candy listed above with the exception of _____
_____ (due to allergies).

____ No, my child is not allowed to have candy at school.

Photos on website



Hi Families,

We take many pictures throughout the school year. I would love to share those pictures with the families. The easiest way to do this would be using the classroom website. I have made a photo's page on the classroom website. I will be posting all of the pictures to that page. Given I have a photo release form from most of my students; I am able to post those pictures to the website. Although you have signed the photo release form, I would still like to have your permission to post the pictures to the website before doing so. Only the students, who I have permission to post, will be shown on the photos page. If you could complete the bottom portion and return it to me ASAP. Any questions please feel free to contact me.

Student name: _____

_____ I DO give consent to post my child's photo on the Early Start classroom website.

_____ I DO NOT give consent to post my child's photo on the Early Start classroom website.

Parent Signature: _____