

Ready ... Get Set

Our Lady of Mercy School/ Early Childhood Center



As early childhood educators we believe the child learns best through an interdisciplinary approach: highlighting art, music, and creative thinking. It is our goal to cherish and nurture the individual gifts of your child. We support and encourage your child to achieve his/her potential and become an ambassador of the Good News.



Purpose of Ready ... Get Set

The purpose of READY ... GET SET is to provide specialized information to help you and your child have a successful year at our Early Childhood Center. Newly formatted in alphabetical order this booklet should be kept handy to answer any questions that may come up during the school year.

Through the eyes of a child before the first day of school his/her stomach churns and he/she may feel nervous.

Children, parents, and teachers all share these thoughts, as the school year is about to begin. It is enveloped in anticipation, excitement, and optimism about the upcoming year. The success of that first hour of school is in your hands. That is why it is important that you take the time to read *Ready ... Get Set* so your child will come to school ready for his/her first day!

OUR TOWN-OUR COMMUNITY-OUR SCHOOL

CREATING LANDSCAPES OF LITERACY

Our theme for the opening of school is **OUR TOWN-OUR COMMUNITY-OUR SCHOOL!** As we get ready to **CROSS THE THRESHOLD** into the new school year your child will explore new ideas and exciting concepts.

We will begin the year exploring our town, our community, and our school through hands-on experiences designed to create links between experience and understanding while highlighting the importance and interconnectedness of religion, language arts, math, science, and the arts that will make the lessons memorable.

This venture will take your early learner on an exciting journey where he she will use his/her imagination and encourage your

child to research and make connections between our school, our community, and our town. When we meet on August 23, 2010 at the Early Childhood Center we will provide you with more information on this project.

Our team is looking forward to creating a partnership with you. The partnership begins **NOW** as you read **READY ... GET SET** and familiarize yourself with what your child needs for the first day of school. *Through the eyes of your child*, since your child will be in new surroundings it is **important** that you give your child the advantage and read this handbook acquainting yourself with the policies and routines of our Early Childhood Center. We have written important issues in red for your convenience.

*God bless you,
Sheffield, Fitzgerald, & Turner*

Arrival and Dismissal

PreK 3 Kinder Cub
Tuesday and Thursday
8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

PreK 4 Kinder Cub
Meets Daily
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Kindergarten
Kinder Bear
10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
All Day K Students
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

SNOW DAYS

On days when there is a delayed opening because of snow, Our Lady of Mercy follows the same procedure for the Town of Madison.

If there is a ninety minute or two-hour delay there will be no PreK 3 or PreK 4 Program.

ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS ARRIVE AT 10:30 IF THERE IS A NINETY-MINUTE OR TWO-HOUR DELAY.

If there is an early dismissal at 12:00 all Kindergarten students will be dismissed at 12:00.

Parents will be given a diagrammed traffic pattern at our BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT in August for the procedures and policies for dropping off your child at the Early Childhood Center. Enter behind the warehouse on the left at the end of Academy Street. Take the first left after the warehouse. The entrance door for the Center is before the fenced in area. All parents in the Early Childhood Program are asked to park along the curb. **IF STUDENTS ARE RECEIVING**

ASSISTANCE EXITING A CAR, WE ASK DRIVERS NOT TO GO AROUND THE CAR BUT TO PLEASE WAIT PATIENTLY. It is important that you encourage your child to enter the building on his/her own. A staff member will be there to greet you and your child.

Everyone drives straight ahead and exits the parking lot exiting to Academy Street. Follow the same procedure for dismissal.

LATE ARRIVALS ARE ASKED TO ENTER VIA THE FRONT DOOR OF THE CENTER. RING THE DOORBELL FOR OUR CLASSROOM. THANK

Through the Eyes of a Child

Children become concerned with details. Details are their security blanket. How they get home is very important to them, so be sure to tell your child if transportation arrangements are changing. Sometimes details and changes in routine become confusing so it is important:

IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO SWITCH HIS/HER BUS YOU MUST RECEIVE PERMISSION FROM THE BUS COMPANY. A NOTE MUST BE SENT TO THE DIRECTOR FOR THE BUS DRIVER TO

VERIFY THAT YOU CALLED THE BUS COMPANY.

This rule holds true if another parent will pick up your child or if there is any change in your daily routine picking up your child. **NO CHILD IN PREK 3 OR PREK 4 MAY RIDE THE BUS.**

THE SCHOOL POLICY FOR OLM IS: WITHOUT A NOTE SIGNED BY A PARENT THE DIRECTOR IS NOT ABLE TO LET YOUR CHILD GO ON THE BUS OR BE RELEASED TO ANOTHER ADULT.

Friday's/First Friday's/Special Events/

All PreK 4 and Kindergarten students will attend scheduled Masses at the Main Campus. This includes Friday Morning Prayer, First Friday Liturgies, Holy Day Liturgies, and other special events. At our **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT MEETING** you will receive a form giving your child permission to ride

the Shuttle to return to the Early Childhood Center after the activities at the Main Campus. **All students will meet at the main campus by 8:10. PreK 4 students will be picked up at the main campus at 11:00 and kindergarten students will be shuttled by bus to the Early Childhood Center.**

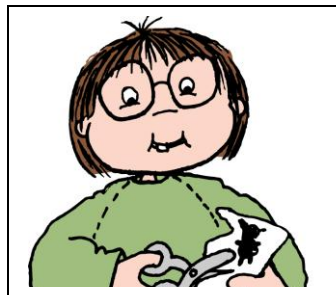
Backpacks

Since children started school, there has always been some form of book carrying. Today the industry is enormous, and children can carry everything from a doll to a dinosaur and Mickey to Pooh. The problem is that many people who design the bags do not field test with children. A teacher standing alone with twenty-five children who can't zip, snap, or buckle, or mount the backpacks on their backs can be overwhelmed. **IF SCHOOL IS THE PLACE TO LEARN INDEPENDENCE THEN CHILDREN NEED TO HAVE APPROPRIATE MATERIALS TO GET THEM OFF TO A NON-FRUSTRATING START.**

Please buy a backpack that is not too small or too difficult to

maneuver. Before school starts play with your child and show him/her how to fill and zip the bag. **If Mom can do it but the child cannot then it is not the appropriate backpack for your child.**

Encourage your child to carry the backpack all by himself/herself. The caregiver should not be carrying the backpack!



THE TIME
TO BE HAPPY IS NOW
THE PLACE
TO BE HAPPY IS HERE
THE WAY
TO BE HAPPY
IS TO MAKE OTHERS SO.
Robert G. Ingersall

Crayons/ Glue Sticks / Scissors

Your child will need both fat and skinny crayons. Please purchase a box of **CRAYOLA EIGHT BASIC COLORS**. If you purchase a box of 16, 24, or 64 place **ONLY** the eight basic colors in your child's pencil box. Most children at this age do not read, so purchasing boxes that contain 16, 24, or 64 crayons presents a **BIG PROBLEM!** When asked to color a picture green your child might chose the green-yellow crayon that has the same green wrapper as the green crayon. This selection will make the answer wrong on the assessment sheet if your child was asked to circle the picture with green. **Children use the skinny crayons for detailed work and fat crayons for covering a broader area.**

Today's choices for the classroom adhesives are extensive. My personal choice is the **GLUE STICK**. This newest of the adhesives for children can be best utilized when children are

working **INDEPENDENTLY**. Glue sticks hold light objects and paper. They are carefree for the teacher whose children are working alone. **PURCHASE FOUR GLUE STICKS TO BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR. GIVE YOUR CHILD TWO NEW GLUE STICKS EVERY MONTH.**

All children need a pair of **FISKARS OR SUPER SAFETY SCISSORS FOR CHILDREN**. Super Safety scissors are stainless steel blades inlaid in plastic, which extend just past one edge of the tips. They are non-toxic, non-breakable, rustproof, ambidextrous, safe, and always sharp.

DO NOT BUY THE RUBBER SAFETY SCISSORS. Children have a great deal of difficulty with them and they are not as sharp. When the child's hand begins to sweat they do not cut paper. Through the years I have seen children become very frustrated with these scissors, often bringing the child to tears.

Discipline – Creating a Peaceable Kingdom

If we learn at an early age that conflicts can be resolved, then we will be more prepared to cope with our problems as adults.



If we learn at an early age that conflicts can be resolved, then we will be more prepared to cope with our problems as adults. Our classroom has a special place where the early learner can sit down and creatively draw a solution to a conflict. The **HeART** problem-solving table invites the child to realize that when we make choices certain consequences may follow. The problem solving table empowers the child to be honest, to try to cooperate, and to resolve

difficulties with others. Young children are naturally forgiving and are empowered by solving problems themselves. They must learn that a certain amount of conflict in life is natural. Our job as teachers and parents is to give every child experiences and help in developing skills to handle conflict in appropriate ways. Children will then be able to see that conflict is a challenging part of life but does not need to become a way of life.

The HeART Problem-Solving Table

CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH THE **HeART** PROBLEM-SOLVING TABLE

Step One: The Problem-Solving Table provides a place for the child/children to sit down and peacefully find solutions to problems by drawing solutions. The teacher, as mediator, encourages the child/children to draw the conflict and asks each child to dictate what the conflict was, and writes it at the top of each page. The mediator reminds the child/children of the classroom rules and invites the child/children to turn the paper over and draw the best solution for the conflict. Again, the teacher, as mediator, asks each child to dictate the solution and writes it at the top of each paper.

following three steps, to resolve the conflict:

1. Look at the other child and state the child's name. (e.g. Gloria) This technique assures listening.
2. Give "I" message. (E.g. I feel sad when you don't share.) This allows the child to inform others of the accusation or problem.
3. Tell the other child what you want. "Let's share." This offers a solution to the problem.

STEP THREE: Because parents are the most powerful force in a child's life, it is important to encourage your participation in celebrating your child's solution to a conflict. When the **HeART** Problem-Solving table is utilized to resolve a conflict, your child will bring home the drawing for you to sign and return to school the following day.

STEP TWO: The children use the

Change the world
one child at a time



Lunch or Snack

Children in the PreK 3 and Pre 4 class **WILL NOT** have snack in school. They **WILL NOT** need a lunch box.

Kindergarten students will have lunch in school each day. Lunch will be served at 11:45 daily. Children may order milk from school.

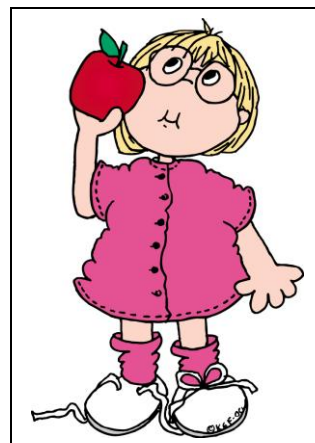
SAFETY MEASURES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF SWINE FLU:

- **PACK A FACE CLOTH IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH BOX. THE FACE CLOTH WILL BE YOUR CHILD'S PLACEMAT. IT WILL CATCH THOSE UNWANTED SPILLS AND PREVENT GERMS. THE**

FACE CLOTH WILL GO HOME DAILY TO BE WASHED.

- **ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS AND PREK 3 AND PREK 4 STUDENTS NEED HANDI-WIPES. CHILDREN WILL USE THE HANDI-WIPES TO WASH HANDS BEFORE AND AFTER ART PROJECTS AND BEFORE AND AFTER LUNCH.**

Kindergarten students are asked to pack extra water or juice for an afternoon snack. If the weather is warm children may need an extra drink. Also pack an extra snack like cookies or fruit. Thank you.



*Risk more than others
think is safe.
Care more than others
think is wise.
Dream more than
others think is
practical.
Expect more than
others think is possible.
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

An Important Note about Foods

Children are easily persuaded by friends to exchange food; however, they may not be aware that their friend may have a food allergy. It is important that you discuss with your child how important it is **NOT** to share his/her food with anyone.

THE SCHOOL HEALTH OFFICE ALLERTED US THAT WE HAVE SEVERAL STUDENTS WITH SEVERE PEANUT/NUT ALLERGIES: BECAUSE OF THIS WE ASK THAT LUNCH AND SNACKS BE PEANUT FREE.



Portfolios

PreK 3, PreK 4, and Kindergarten students have a special portfolio. Each child has a personalized binder (provided by parents) that holds a treasury of activities, photos, and booklets documenting your child's work.

The Portfolio offers:

- A snapshot of our daily routine.
- A springboard for conversation

about favorite games or friends.

- Projects for enrichment in content subjects.
- Assessments in core subjects: Religion, Reading, and Math.

Avery View Binder and Portfolio Bags

Every Kinder Bear and Kinder Cub will need a 2 inch three ring Avery Economy View Binder. This will be your child's **PORTFOLIO** to treasure school memories.

- ★ Put your child's name on the **INSIDE** of the binder.
- ★ Place **INSIDE** the binder, 100 economy weight sheet protectors. (Please take the protectors out of the box and put them on the rings in the binder. Thank you.)

Your child will need a canvas tote bag to carry his/her Portfolio. Buy a tote bag big enough to fit the 2 inch three ring Avery Economy View Binder and comfortable enough for your child to carry to and from school. If you purchase a plain tote bag, your child can decorate it with you. Be sure your child's name is on the outside of the bag in big letters. The binder and tote bag should be in school by **September 15, 2010**.



*There are two important gifts we can give our children:
One of these is roots,
the other is wings.
Anonymous*

Progress Reports



Before Veterans Day, parents of Pre-Kindergarten (3 and 4) and Kindergarten students will have a formal conference with the classroom teachers. At this special half-hour conference, offered **ONLY** during your child's early childhood years, we will discuss your child's talents and learning style.

Children attending the PreK 3 and PreK 4 program will receive a written report in January and

June. Kindergarten students receive a formal progress report in January, April, and June.

Parents are encouraged to call the Early Childhood Director **at any time to request a conference.**

Organizing Personal Materials

Each child will have a coat hook. We will begin the first day to teach your child to hang up his/her coat. Please show your child the chain or hook on the collar that helps the coat or sweater stay on the hook.

LABEL your child's clothing so that they will not become lost. A laundry marker is all you need to write your child's name in all items. Your child's name on the item means the item will always be

found.

Just like the three little kittens, your child can easily misplace hats, mittens, and gloves. Some children like to put these in their backpack but they tend to get lost inside! One way to keep things together is to **SHOVE THE ITEMS DOWN THE COAT SLEEVES**. This is good because the child cannot get his/her coat on without being confronted with the other items that are worn home. Teach your child this simple technique.

SUPERNOODLE OF THE DAY

Time goes by quickly in the morning and afternoon and so often your child wants to share something special but we find there is **NO** more time. Very often more than one child has something special to share. To be an equal opportunity classroom we have a tradition of celebrating **SUPERNOODLE OF THE DAY**. The special day for your child has been selected on, near, or on a month anniversary of your child's birthday. On this special day your child may **design a special birthday hat**. The type of hat you choose and what you display on the hat is up to you. Your child's hat

can display your child's hobbies, hopes, and dreams, a favorite family holiday, a favorite color, favorite foods, or even favorite books. **YOUR CHILD WEARS THE HAT ON HIS/HER SPECIAL DAY**. We will document the event through photos. This is our rendition of Show and Tell. Along with the special designer hat your child celebrates the day with a **SPECIAL BIRTHDAY BOOK**.



We all deserve to be
shining stars!
Your child will TWINKLE
as OLM celebrates
YOUR SHINING STAR
AS
SUPERNOODLE OF THE
DAY

SUPERNOODLE OF THE DAY – Birthday Book

The **SUPERNOODLE OF THE DAY** selects with your help a special birthday book. After purchasing the book, write your child's name and birth date on the inside cover and wrap the book as a gift. **THE SUPERNOODLE OF THE DAY presents the book to the class** to be read by the Director of the Early Childhood Center.

In June we will have a **HAPPY UNBIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**. **ALL** books brought in by the children will be put in a grab bag and each child will select a book, which will serve as a lasting memory of the year.

Parents have asked how much should they spend. That is **UP TO YOU**. No value can be placed on a good book. What your child might treasure as a favorite book has a priceless value.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN USED BOOKS.

Discuss with your child that this book is a **GIFT**. Your child should not return home with the book you donated. It is important that your child learn the value of giving. This is an opportunity of true giving.

Sharing the birthday hat and book should not take more than 20 minutes.

As **SUPERNOODLE** your shining star will be line leader, classroom helper, and assist with lunch duties. This is a special event.



On the day you were born your
were special in
God's eyes.
AT THE MEETING IN AUGUST
YOU WILL RECEIVE A
CALENDAR FOR
SUPERNOODLE OF THE DAY.

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UNIFORM INFORMATION

PREK 3/PREK 4/ KINDERGARTEN

- OLMS insignia white polo shirt
- OLMS navy shorts for boys
- OLMS navy skort or shorts for girls
- White socks
- Mostly white sneakers
- Black rubber soled shoes

WINTER UNIFORM IS WORN FROM OCTOBER 15th – APRIL 30th

- OLMS insignia white polo shirt
- Navy sweat pants
- Mostly white sneakers
- Black rubber soled shoes
- Girls may wear skort
- Navy knee socks or navy tights

SUMMER GYM UNIFORMS

PLEASE NOTE CHILDREN IN PREK 4/
KINDERGARTEN MAY WEAR THEIR GYM
UNIFORM TO SCHOOL ON GYM DAYS –
GYM SCHEDULE TBA

SUMMER GYM UNIFORM

- OLMS Athletic T-Shirt
- OLMS Navy Gym Shorts
- White socks
- Mostly white sneakers

WINTER GYM UNIFORM

- OLMS Athletic T-Shirt
- Navy Sweat Pants
- Mostly white Sneakers

**NOTE: NO GYM UNIFORM
FOR PREK 3**

Through the Eyes of a Child

Routines are an integral part of the child's day because routines relate feelings of security that help each child participate and give him/her a sense of belonging.

Clogs, jellies, flip-flops, or sandals are **not** to be worn; they are not safe for the gym or the playground.

ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN SO ALL CHILDREN MUST HAVE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES IN HIS/HER

BACKPACK. Place the following in your child's backpack:

- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Socks
- ✓ Clean shirt
- ✓ Clean pants or shorts

CHILDREN ARE NOT EXPECTED TO HAVE A CLEAN UNIFORM FOR EMERGENCIES. REMEMBER TO SWITCH EMERGENCY CLOTHES TO FIT THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR.

CHECKLIST – WHAT YOU NEED FOR THE FIRST DAY ...

- ✓ A container (a pencil box) to hold crayons, pencils, glue sticks, six-inch ruler, and scissors. Remember to write your child's name on the box. (All crayons, pencils, and glue sticks should be removed from packaging and placed in box.)
- ✓ Four glue sticks placed in the pencil box. Remember to send in new glue sticks every month.
- ✓ One pair of children's **FISKARS** or **SAFETY SCISSORS** placed in pencil box.
- ✓ Two or three sharpened pencils placed in pencil box.
- ✓ Emergency clothes placed in your child's backpack.
- ✓ Kindergarten: a lunch box with your child's name on it.
- ✓ Kindergarten: a face cloth for a placemat.
- ✓ **All students:** all articles of clothing labeled with your child's name.
- ✓ **All students:** handi-wipes to clean hands before and after art activities and before and after snack or lunch.