



# Parent Handbook

## 2021-22

**Director: Elizabeth Collins**

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**Monica Lynne Neidorff Early Childhood Center  
AT A GLANCE**

<p>Contact Information</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Director Supervisors</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Address</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ECC Office Phone Main Office Phone Email</p>	<p>Liz Collins Claire Welker (Infant/Toddler) Christine Walsh (Preschool)</p> <p>7701 Maryland Clayton MO, 63105</p> <p>314-727-2565 314-727-1747 <a href="mailto:collinse@kolrinahstl.org">collinse@kolrinahstl.org</a> <a href="mailto:eccoffice@kolrinahstl.org">eccoffice@kolrinahstl.org</a></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Hours</p>	<p>Monday-Friday 7:30am-5:25pm</p>
<p>What should I do for a planned absence? (vacation, etc)</p>	<p>Let the Directors know. If using vacation credits, fill out a green vacation form and submit to the office one week prior.</p>
<p>Can I add on a day to my child's schedule?</p>	<p>Yes, check with the office. If space allows, fill out a green add/on form with the requested day(s).</p>
<p>When is my child too sick to attend?</p>	<p>Any fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, 1 episode of vomit, 2 episodes of diarrhea within 24 hours, or if your child is too sick to participate in regular school activities (see illness policy on pages 5 and 6 for more information.)</p>
<p>What will my child eat at school?</p>	<p>Lunch is sent from home- All lunches must be dairy/vegetarian/pareve to comply with our Kashrut (kosher) policy (p10 and 11) and peanut/tree nut free.</p> <p>MLNECC provides 2 healthy, nut-free snacks a day (AM &amp; PM), except in the baby rooms where parents send all food from home.</p>

## **MLNECC OVERVIEW**

### **Philosophy**

Our goal is to provide a nurturing environment in order to encourage physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth for each child. The staff at The Monica Lynne Neidorff Early Childhood Center is aware of the developmental stages of children and we strive to meet the individual needs of all children enrolled in our school. When a child's developmental and self-esteem needs are met in a loving, caring and relaxed atmosphere, learning can take place and a child can reach his or her full potential.

To achieve each child's potential growth, our program is built around the concept of learning through play. Children acquire knowledge about the physical and social world in which they live through discovery, experience and interactions with people and objects.

### **Program Overview**

Children learn best through experiences that involve all of the senses. They need routine to function securely. During each school day, there will be periods devoted to routine tasks, including free choice centers and directed play, as well as interactive time and quiet time. Our curriculum is flexible, based on these ideas and takes into consideration the interests and abilities of the children within each class.

Children's mental and social development evolves through interaction with their environment and with their peers. They discover, understand and interpret the world by being exposed to a variety of experiences. During the school day, we provide activities that incorporate music, art, science, cooking, creative movement, language, literacy and math in an experience-oriented and age appropriate way.

As a Jewish Center, our program infuses Jewish culture, language and holidays into the curriculum on a regular basis. We promote Jewish culture by participating in life experiences such as weekly celebrations of Shabbat, daily brachot/blessings, celebrating Jewish holidays and talking about Jewish values. We are also committed to respecting and validating the religious and cultural background of each child and family.

Our goal is not to just prepare our children for kindergarten, but for life. We look forward to you being a part of our community and working together to offer the best to your children.

## **MLNECC POLICIES**

### **Admission**

We accept children from all religious and ethnic backgrounds. Priority enrollment will be given to members of Kol Rinah Synagogue, members of the Jewish Community and siblings of currently enrolled students. We fill full-time classroom spots first, then accommodate part-time requests. Once a classroom is at capacity, families are placed on our waitlist.

When a family is offered a spot, we require a \$200 tuition deposit and a \$100 registration fee (\$115 for 2 or more children). These fees are non-refundable. Enrollment forms, including required health, authorization and developmental forms. All children must be up-to-date on required immunizations. Forms must be returned to the ECC Office by your child's first day of school in order to be accepted into care.

### **Drop Off and Pick Up**

MLNECC is open from 7:30am-5:25pm. Children must arrive within their assigned drop-off times. Each family will have an assigned ten-minute window to drop off their child and pick them up. Families MUST arrive within their allotted time in order to help us maintain safe distances.

If you arrive prior to 7:30am, you must stay in your car with your child until we open at 7:30am. Our staff is scheduled until 5:25pm each day, so you must pick your child up prior to this time.

You must contact the office if your child needs to be dropped off or picked up at a time other than their assigned times on any given day. If your child must be picked up in the middle of the day for any reason, it must be cleared with the office. We also ask that you do not pick up between the hours of 12:45pm and 3:00pm. This is the time that children are napping and teachers are taking their breaks, so it can be disruptive to have children come in or leave during this time.

### **Financial Policies and Fees**

Tuition invoices are sent via email on the 1st school day of the month. Tuition payment must be received by the 5th of the month. All accounts that do not reach a balance of zero by the end of the month will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 per month. A family who falls behind more than eight weeks may have their child discharged from the facility unless special arrangements are made with the Director. Families who are repeatedly tardy in their late payment may be asked to leave MLNECC.

There are four payment options available to you:

- Auto pay via deduction from a checking/savings account
- Auto pay via a debit or credit card\*
- Pay on site via debit or credit card\*
- Pay by check

*\*Debit/Credit card payments will be assessed a 2.5% processing fee each month.*

Tuition is based on the number of days that school is in session during the school year and divided into 10 equal payments (August through May), regardless of how many days school is in session each month. Summer rates (June and July) are the same for families who maintain their regular school year schedule. Changing to a different schedule for Summer Camp is allowed, at the listed rate, provided there is space in your child's classroom. Families who remove their child for the entire Summer, but plan to return in the Fall, will be responsible for paying 25% of their regular tuition rate in order to hold that child's spot in the classroom.

There will be no refund issued for days missed due to vacation (unless using vacation credits, explained in next segment), illness or when school is canceled due to bad weather or other unplanned situation in which we would have to close.

Need for special financial arrangements due to extenuating circumstances will need to be presented to the Director for consideration.

### **Vacation Credits**

Families that attend full-time or four days during the school year will receive vacation days equal to the number of days they attend per week (ex: if your child attends four days a week, you will receive four vacation credits for the year). The daily credit is equal to your daily rate.

All credits must be used by July 31st of the current school year. Unused credits do not roll over to the next year. Families who join the school after the start of the school year will receive vacation credits at the beginning of the next school year.

To request a vacation credit, you must submit a vacation to the ECC office at least one week prior. Forms are available in the ECC office. You may not request a vacation day after the event has occurred. Credits will appear on the following month's tuition invoice.

### **Add-On Days and Schedule Changes**

To add on a day to your child's regular schedule, you must submit a completed add-on form to the ECC at least one week prior. Requests will be approved on a first come, first serve basis and based on availability in the classroom.

**Once a day is requested in writing and approved by the Director, you are financially responsible for that day.** Fees will be reflected on the following month's invoice and must be paid by the end of that month or a late fee will be assessed.

Families who attend fewer than 5 days a week may not swap days if a child misses a day due to illness or other reasons.

If you need to make a regular change to your child's schedule, submit a request in writing to the main office. All families will be allowed one schedule change per year (not including Summer).

Families who leave the center for any reason before the end of the school year must give 30 days notice to the Director, in writing. Families are financially responsible for this 30-day period.

## Health and Wellness

The State of Missouri requires a completed and updated Health Form, signed annually by your child's physician, to be on file in the ECC office. An updated immunization record must also be on file. Any child with a medical exemption must have the appropriate exemption card on file, signed by their physician. Families have the right to ask if MLNECC has any unvaccinated children enrolled. MLNECC does not allow exemptions for reasons other than medical.

## Illness and Injury

If your child is not well, seems over-tired or is otherwise not their usual self, keep them home for the day, if possible. If your child is on any medication, parents must inform the Director and have a completed medication authorization form on file in the office. All medications will be kept in the ECC office in their original container, labeled with the child's name.

You must notify the Director if your child contracts ANY communicable disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, influenza, conjunctivitis, RSV, or has lice. We send out notices to other families when a child has a communicable disease. The child's name will never be shared. **We require a physician's note prior to returning to school following a communicable disease.**

MLNECC's illness policy is based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association. Most children with a mild illness can safely attend child care. However, there are times when you must keep your child home from school.

To reduce the spread of communicable disease, your child may not attend if he/she displays any of the following symptoms:

Symptom	Exclusion Criteria
General illness / Signs of possible severe illness	Unable to participate in routine activities or needs more care than can be provided by the staff.  Until a healthcare provider has done an evaluation to rule out severe illness when the child is unusually tired, has uncontrolled coughing, unexplained irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs for the child.
Fever	Recorded temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, along with any symptoms listed above and/or unable to participate in routine activities.  Children must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
Diarrhea	Until the child has been free of diarrhea for at least 24 hours or until a medical exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease.  Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a child's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form and/or watery, bloody or containing mucus.
Vomiting	One episode within the previous 24 hours, unless determined by a physician to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

Mouth sores with drooling	Until a medical exam indicates the child may return or until the sores have healed.
Rash with fever or behavior change	Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not those of a communicable disease that requires exclusion.
Eye drainage	When pus drainage and/or fever or eye pain is present or a medical exam indicates that a child may return.
Unusual color of skin, eyes, stool or urine	Until a medical exam indicates the child does not have hepatitis A.

\*A note on immunizations – Children may return to school the same day after receiving vaccinations. However, we ask that you tell the ECC office which vaccines they received, so we may monitor for adverse reactions.

Some children may also develop a fever 24-48 hours after routine vaccinations or other mild side effects. If this happens, we require children to be kept home or be picked up from school if the fever is 100.4 degrees or greater. Likewise, if a child is fussy or inconsolable to the point where they need consistent one-on-one care from a teacher, we will call to have your child picked up, as this can leave other teachers responsible for too many other children.

Your child may not attend if he/she has any of the following diagnoses from a health provider until treated and/or no longer contagious:

- Infectious conjunctivitis/pink eye (with eye discharge) until a minimum of 24 hours after treatment started
- Hand, Foot and Mouth disease, until fever free for 24 hours and any mouth sores have healed over
- Scabies, head lice or other infestation, until a minimum of 24 hours after treatment and free of nits
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment started
- Strep throat, scarlet fever or other strep infection, until a minimum of 24 hours after treatment started
- Pertussis, until 5 days after treatment started
- Tuberculosis (TB), until a health care provider determines that the disease is not contagious
- Chicken pox, until 6 days after the start of rash or all sores have crusted over
- Mumps, until 9 days after the start of symptoms
- Rubella (German measles), until 6 days after the start of rash
- Oral herpes (if child is drooling or lesions cannot be covered), until lesions heal
- Shingles (if lesions cannot be covered), until lesions are dry
- Shigella (vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps and high fever), treated with antibiotics and may return with physician's written permission.

Should your child become ill at school, we will call you to pick him/her up within one hour of being contacted. If we are unable to reach either parent via phone or email, we will call your child's emergency contacts. No exceptions will be made. Families who do not pick up their child within one hour will be assessed a late fee and repeat offenders may be asked to leave MLNECC.

Should your child be injured while at school, appropriate first aid will be followed and a report will be written to document the incident. We will not contact parents for minor accidents/injuries such as scrapes, small cuts, or bites that do not break the skin. For any serious injuries or anytime the staff is unable to provide medical care, we will contact parents during the day.

Should a situation arise where the child needs immediate medical attention, staff will contact 911. Our staff are all CPR and First Aid certified. Universal precautions are used in dealing with bodily functions.

### **Biting**

Young children engage in physical behaviors and don't always have the verbal skills to communicate their wants and needs. Biting is one of the most frequent and frustrating behaviors in this age group. Reasons for biting range from exploration to frustration, teething, health problems and a lack of language skills. Biting is not necessarily an indication of aggression toward another. When biting occurs, the teacher shows immediate support for the injured child. Both children are treated with respect and support. The child who did the biting is reminded that teeth are for biting food only. Teachers encourage the child to offer "to make it feel better" by offering an ice pack or other soothing action. A forced, insincere statement of "I'm sorry" is not encouraged. After the biting incident, the child exhibiting the biting behavior is observed, supervised and redirected.

MLNECC will inform both families about any biting incident. If a bite breaks the skin, the Director will call the family of the bitten child immediately in case it warrants additional medical attention. MLNECC will not inform families about the identity of the children involved in a biting incident.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

MLNECC practices regular fire drills so that the children are familiar with the sound of the alarm and with the procedures for emergency exiting. In the event of a tornado or tornado warning, each classroom has a designated spot within the building away from glass, doors and exterior walls.

MLNECC has lock out and evacuation procedures in place and staff receive training in what to do in case of an intruder or other need to implement these procedures. In the case of such an emergency, the Directors and staff will first work to make sure all children are safe and follow direction from emergency responders before communicating information to parents.

## **Toilet Training Policy**

Children in the Penguin class (turning 4 that school year) and Starfish class (turning 5 that school year) must be fully toilet trained and able to use the restroom independently. Therefore, we focus on toilet training in the Koala class (turning 3 that school year) and ask that parents work together with staff to make this a positive experience for their child. **Children in the Panda class and younger do not toilet train in their classroom as there is no accessible toilet located in the rooms.**

Teachers and parents will work together when a child starts showing signs of readiness. If a parent feels that their child is ready to begin training, they must first fill out a Toilet Readiness Checklist with the teacher of that classroom. From that point, the teacher and parent will decide how they would like to move forward with training. This could mean working on some points from the checklist that aren't marked off yet, or that their child is ready to go ahead with training at school. This decision is made with much thought and consideration of the individual child, as all children show toilet training readiness at various times and it is important that we know the proper signs to ensure success. School is a fun, busy place and younger children aren't always ready to stop what they are doing to take care of toileting without having accidents, even if they are successful at home. We ask that you keep this in mind when considering readiness for your child.

When working on toilet training at home, you must keep your child's teacher updated on the progress. For sanitation reasons, children must be in diapers or pull ups. If they are in underwear, they must be able to get to the toilet in time. If a child has one bowel movement accident or two urine accidents in one day while wearing underwear, we will put a diaper or pull-up on for the remainder of the day. We understand that accidents will happen, but we must abide by this rule each individual day to ensure the sanitation of our school environment.

All children in the process of toilet training or who are fully toilet-trained must have a full set of extra clothes in their cubby, including **two pairs** of underwear.

### **What to wear during training:**

Children should wear easy on and off pants during training. We prefer sweat pant like bottoms that are fairly loose that they will be able to pull up and down without assistance. Please don't send them in anything that requires us to remove the top to get to the bottom.

#### **Some things we do to get kids ready to train:**

- 1) We start reading toilet books and talking about going pee or poo in the toilet during changing.
- 2) We have them sit on the toilet during natural transition times. (diaper changes, after meals, etc)
- 3) We practice with them getting their pants up and down on their own and hand washing.
- 4) We will supervise them and watch for signs that they have to go or are going.
- 5) We keep close communication with the parents about any indicators suggesting the child is ready.

#### **Some things we don't do:**

- 1) Clean out poopy underwear. We will bag pee soaked underwear and return it to the parent at the end of the day but we will not do this with soiled underwear. We must dispose of that immediately into the garbage.
- 2) We don't limit food or drinks to only be given at certain times. We maintain the same food and snack schedule during training.

## **Overview of Toilet Training Policy**

When you feel your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. **PLEASE NOTE: We will only assist your child in toilet training if you have successfully begun training at home or one week prior.**

We will follow through and encourage your child while in care. Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. We require that the child be at least two years of age and must also show signs of readiness (please read our Toilet Training Readiness Checklist). Positive reinforcements and consistency must be continued at home.

\*\*After you have reviewed our Policy and Training Checklist, we ask that you fill out and sign below and turn in to the office.

### **Toilet Training Policy Agreement**

I have read the Toilet Training Policy in its entirety and I agree to abide by the policy set forth.

<b>Child's Name</b>	
<b>Parent/Guardian Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

### **Nap / Rest Time**

Time to nap and rest is an essential part of the day, as a time to reset after an active morning and recharge for the afternoon.

Infants in the Monkey room will take naps based on a schedule created by the teachers and parents. Older babies in the Owl room take a morning and afternoon nap, with the ability to transition to one afternoon nap when ready. Babies will nap in a crib or pack and play. Babies 12 months and older may transition to a cot when ready. Sheets are provided by the school and washed at school. Swaddles / sleep sacks may be sent from home. Babies under one year of age may not use a blanket.

All other rooms have a nap / quiet rest time from approximately 1:00-3:00pm. A cot will be provided for your child; you may send a sheet (crib size), blanket or other comfort item from home. These will be sent home weekly for washing. Children who wake up prior to the end of the rest period, will be asked to remain on their cot for the duration of quiet time. Children must remain on their cot for at least 30 minutes but cannot be forced to stay on their cot for more than one hour. If a child becomes disruptive to other napping children, will be given a quiet activity on their cot or at a table.

### **Discipline**

Discipline in the classroom exists to promote behaviors that are beneficial to the child's development and welfare while changing or eliminating behaviors that are injurious to his/her well-being. When used positively, it contributes to the growth and development of a child and establishes positive patterns of behavior. Guidance plays an important role in positive discipline and children should be familiar with what is expected of them. Rules should be simple, consistent and developmentally appropriate. When there is disruptive behavior, the child will be reminded of the rules and redirected to another activity. Classrooms have quiet corners or areas where a child may

sit quietly for a few minutes before returning to an activity. There will never be any physical, verbal or mental punishment at any time at MLNECC.

### **Security**

Kol Rinah has a synagogue-wide security system. All families will be issued two key fobs, each with a unique 4-digit code. All lost or stolen key fobs must be reported to the ECC office immediately. Replacement key fobs may be purchased for \$10 each. When a family leaves MLNECC or their youngest child graduates, key fobs must be returned to the ECC office within one week or you will be assessed a \$25 charge. If you forget your key fob or another person is dropping off / picking up your child, you must utilize the door buzzer to be let in. Office staff may ask for identification and have the right to refuse entry to any person they are uncomfortable letting into the building.

It is important to be aware of who follows you into the building. If you feel someone followed you in who does not belong in the building, notify the Director immediately.

Children will only be released to parents or individuals authorized by parents to pick up their child. If someone different will be picking your child up, you must notify the Director in writing. A phone call is acceptable in the case of emergencies. Picture identification must be presented before the child is released. A child cannot be released to anyone under 18 years of age.

### **Snack and Lunch**

Our school observes the Jewish dietary rules of Kashrut (kosher). A kosher, healthy and nut free snack will be provided in the morning to all children in the Sea Turtle through Starfish rooms and a second snack in the afternoon following nap/rest time. Lunch brought from home must be meatless. Dairy, vegetarian and pareve (neither meat or dairy) lunches are acceptable. Lunch should be sent in a reusable lunch bag labeled on the outside with your child's name. Lunches are refrigerated until lunch time and meals can be reheated in the class microwave if desired. Do not send your child to school with candy or gum.

Infants and older babies in the Monkey and Owl rooms will bring all their food (including breastmilk, formula and milk) from home.

### **Mealtime Policy**

Mealtime is a time for learning. Through eating meals together as a class, children are improving their social and language skills. They learn more about routine through having set meal times and going through the process of waiting for their food and cleaning up after. As they learn to use utensils and explore the textures of different foods with their hands and mouths, children are improving their sensory and motor development. To aid in comfort level and exploration of new foods, we must allow them to touch the food and get messy.

Mealtime at school should be a positive and teachable experience. Staff members will offer all food provided (for lunch and snacks) and allow each child to make their own choices about what they eat and how much they eat. Staff members are not responsible for convincing a child to eat any specific amount or type of food. Staff members are to offer what is given and allow the child to decide how much they eat and what they eat.

#### *General Guidelines regarding Meals:*

- We do not withhold food from children.
- We do not use food as a reward or punishment.
- We offer all food in a child's lunch unless otherwise requested from the parent.
- All snack food is offered, but not forced.

**NUT FREE, PEANUT FREE POLICY:**

For the safety of our students, products that contain tree nuts or peanuts may not be present at Kol Rinah Early Childhood Center. This includes snacks and other food provided by our school and lunches that students bring to school from home. Please use the following guidelines to determine if something is okay to include in your child's lunch:

Not acceptable for school:

- “Contains peanuts and/or tree nuts”
- “May contain peanuts and/or tree nuts”

Acceptable for school:

- “Made in a facility with peanuts and/or tree nuts”
- “Made on shared equipment with peanuts and/or tree nuts”

\*\*Please be sure to remind all of your children’s caretakers of our nut free status to ensure that they pack appropriate foods in your child’s lunch. If items are included in a child’s lunch that is not within school guidelines, a friendly call to the child’s family will be made to clarify these requirements\*\*

A note on glass containers – we understand that many parents prefer to send food in glass containers and breastmilk/formula in glass bottles.

- When food is sent in a glass container, we will warm it up (if needed) in the container and then transfer the food to a plate or piece of wax paper.
- Glass bottles are permitted in the Monkey room, but must be in the silicone sleeve.
- Glass bottles will not be permitted in the Owl room, as babies at this age are encouraged to feed themselves and will also be transitioning to sippy/straw cups at this time.

See page 15 for additional information on Kosher symbols and a list of suggested lunch ideas.

**Field Trips**

Our preschool classes go on field trips during the year. Advance notice and permission will always be provided for these trips and we depend on parent volunteers to help drive and chaperone. Drivers will be asked to show proof of a current driver’s license and insurance. All children must travel in an appropriate car seat in the back seat of the car, provided by the child’s family. Drivers are responsible for the children in their car throughout the field trip. Siblings are not allowed on field trips.

Occasionally, all children will take impromptu walking or stroller trips around the neighborhood. Parents give consent for these trips in their enrollment forms, permission for individual outings will not be requested.

**Inclement Weather**

We make every effort to remain open and the decision to close or have a delay in opening will be made no later than 6:30am. If we decide to have a delay in opening, school will open at 8:30am. When there is bad weather in the morning, please be sure to stay with your child until we have sufficient staff, as many of our staff live further away from school and may need more time to get to school.

When it becomes necessary to close school or have a delayed opening due to inclement weather or other acts of God (e.g., power outage), we will notify parents via text message, email and on KSDK. Be sure to notify the office if your cell phone or email address changes at any point, so our contact lists can be updated.

## Dismissal

After attempts have been made to meet a child's individual needs, any child who demonstrates an inability to benefit from the care offered by the Monica Lynne Neidorff Early Childhood Center or whose presence is detrimental to other children may be discharged from the facility.

Care of a child may also be discontinued if MLNECC staff and the parent(s) cannot establish a mutually satisfactory working relationship.

## Your Child's Day at MLNECC

MLNECC offers full day programming for children 6 weeks to 5 years of age. MLNECC offers summer camp programming in June and July for all our regular year families. When space allows, we accept additional families for summer camp.

**We ask that all children are settled in their classroom by 9:00am.** This enables all babies to be in the room at the start of morning nap without interruptions and all older children to be present for circle time and other beginning of the day routines. Full day children who arrive prior to 9:00am will be in their classroom for free play and centers.

At MLNECC, your children will get messy! Art projects, easel painting, playground time, nature walks and exploring our outdoor classroom are all an integral part of your child's day. Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that you don't mind getting dirty, closed toe shoes and seasonally appropriate outerwear (sun hat/sunglasses in the summer; coat, hat/mittens and warm shoes/boots in the winter). **Closed toe shoes are the only appropriate footwear for your child while at school.** If a teacher feels a child's footwear is not conducive to active play, they will be asked to sit out during gym / playground time.

Your child's cubby should always have a spare outfit, including extra socks and underwear (if potty trained). Please check this outfit throughout the year to make sure it is seasonally appropriate and the correct size. We do water play during summer camp, so a swimsuit and closed-toe water shoes are essential on those days.

## Enrichment

MLNECC offers diverse and developmentally appropriate enrichment programming with experienced specialists. Enrichment programming includes music (secular and Jewish), creative movement, yoga, art, science/outdoor learning, and social-emotional skills development.

## Shabbat, Holidays and Birthday Celebrations

Every Friday morning at 11:30am, the entire school comes together to welcome Shabbat with the Kol Rinah rabbis through music, stories and saying the blessings over the candles, grape juice and challah. Parents are always welcome to join us during this time. ***{COVID RESTRICTIONS dictate changes in this policy. As of the 2021-22 school year, we will not be meeting in person for Shabbat.}***

We recognize all the Jewish holidays throughout the year plus Thanksgiving and recognize most with special family programs, specific dates and times can be found in your school calendar. **Valentine's Day and Halloween are not Jewish holidays and are not observed at MLNECC.** Please respect this by refraining from sending in holiday-specific cards, treats or sending your child in costume. Children are always welcome to discuss their own holiday traditions in their class.

Parents are invited to visit their child's classroom for an afternoon snack on their child's birthday. ***{COVID RESTRICTIONS dictate changes in this policy. As of the 2021-22 school year, we will not be allowing parents into the building.}*** The Bakery at Ladue Crossing (and a few other locations), Dierbergs bakery in Brentwood and Breadsmith Bakery in Kirkwood are fine. An acceptable kosher symbol (hechsher) must be visible on the packaging and checked by the Director. Let your child's teacher know ahead of time that you'll be sending in a special snack.

## **Additional Important Information**

### **School Communications**

We communicate with parents primarily through email. All families receive a monthly newsletter from the Director with classroom news, upcoming events, photos and other important information. Individual classrooms send home weekly or biweekly newsletters, either by email or hard copy. Check your child's cubby and lunchbox daily for any notes from your child's teacher. The Monkey (infant) and Owl (mobile baby) rooms use a daily record sheet to keep track of your child's feedings, diaper changes and naps for parents to take home at the end of each day.

### **Conferences**

Teachers will schedule parent conferences twice each year, in the fall and in the spring, to discuss your child's progress, discuss any developmental concerns and answer any questions you may have. Conferences are generally held between 7:30 and 9:00am and 4:00 and 5:30pm. Should you have any questions or concerns at other times of the year, you are welcome to schedule a time to meet with your child's teachers and/or the Director at a mutually agreeable time.

### **Assessment**

At MLNECC, we firmly believe that children should be treated as the individuals that they are and acknowledge that children achieve developmental milestones when they are ready. To ensure that we are doing our jobs the best we can in fostering each child's development, MLNECC conducts two developmental screenings during a child's time at our school.

Shortly after children turn 2 but before they turn 3, we do an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). After children turn 3 but before they turn 4, we conduct a Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning (DIAL-4). These results allow teachers insight into how the children in their class acquire and obtain new information and help us identify any areas of concern. Parents are informed of the results as well. Should the findings suggest that any child might benefit from additional support, the Director will meet with the parents to discuss next steps.

More information and consent forms are sent home to families prior to starting any assessment.

### **Classroom Transitions**

MLNECC has 7 classrooms for ages 6 weeks through 5 years of age and are grouped into classes by age. Infants and toddlers may transition to a new classroom mid-year, when they are both old enough and developmentally ready, should a spot become available in the next room. Otherwise, children transition to the next classroom in June (at the start of our summer session) or August (the start of the school year).

### **Preschool Parents Organization (PPO)**

The MLNECC PPO is composed of families who want to provide additional experiences for enrolled children and support for classroom teachers. The PPO plans special events for families, provides social activities for parents, participates in our annual book fair and plans fundraisers for teacher supplies and the purchase of teacher appreciation gifts in December and May. Annual dues are \$40/family and all families are encouraged to join. If you are interested in volunteering with the PPO, you may contact the PPO co-presidents. Additional information and contact info can be found in your enrollment packet.

