RIVERVIEW GARDENS SCHOOL DISTRICT

MICHELLE OBAMA

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMIC CENTER

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Home of the



Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center
1111 St. Cyr Rd.
St. Louis MO 63137-1413

7.31.26

CONTACT INFORMATION

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT OFFICE OR ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL WITH ANY CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS

- **MOECAC PHONE NUMBER 314-869-3211**
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WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center. Choosing early education for your child is one of the most important tasks that you face as a parent, and we are happy that you have chosen our Center. We look forward to building a meaningful relationship with your family and are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment in which your child can learn and grow.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with valuable information about our Center. We hope that it will be a helpful resource during your child's stay with us. Some of the more important policies to review include:

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

TRIAL PERIOD

GUIDANCE POLICY

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

LEAVING THE CENTER

UNIFORMS AND CLOTHING

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Children learn best when their families and teachers work together. Our Center encourages your presence and participation and we welcome you to join us during our events. Please feel free to contact the office staff, your child's teachers or myself if you have any questions.

On behalf of all of the staff at Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center - welcome to our school family! This year we are "Soaring to New Heights"... up, up and away!

- **Dr. E'mita T. Meeks Williams**

HISTORY

The Early Childhood Education Center (opened its doors at 420 Chambers in February 1998, followed by the second Center at 355 Shepley in September 1999. The Center began with three children at the Chambers location and has grown to 12 classrooms. In July 2001 all early childhood programming was moved to the Shepley location. In July 2005 all early childhood classrooms were moved to Danforth Elementary which became a Pre-K through 2nd grade building. Grades 3 through 6 were relocated to the newly acquired Danforth Academy. In 2011 the building became Danforth Early Childhood Education Center and serves children infant through kindergarten. The Center is licensed by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. A copy of the Licensing Rules for Child Day Care Centers in Missouri is available at the Early Childhood Education Center for review. Copies of the staff's Child Care Registry forms are also available upon request.

The Early Childhood Education Center became accredited by Missouri Accreditation of Childhood Care and Education Programs in May of 2003. Missouri Accreditation is a voluntary program that took three years to complete. Only centers that meet the highest standards qualify for accreditation. Children enrolled in centers like the Early Childhood Education Center accredited by Missouri Accreditation can be assured the best possible environment in which they can flourish intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Riverview Gardens Early Childhood Education Center is operated under the auspices of the Riverview Gardens School District and Special Administrative Board. The center was tuition-based and open to all Riverview Gardens children until the 2016-2017 school year. Preschool classes are for children ages 3 (by July 31), 4, and 5-years-old not currently

eligible for kindergarten. Children must be toilet trained. All children are accepted on a one month trial period.

Riverview Gardens Early Childhood Education Center also offers preschool classes for children with special needs. These classes are available to qualified students and are staffed by teachers from the Special School District of St. Louis County. The children in these classes do not need to be toilet trained. Children with special needs may also be served itinerantly in the full day classrooms.

In January 2005 the Teen Infant Parent (TIP) room was opened to provide services for children of teen parents enrolled in the Riverview Gardens High School or Alternative Education Program. Teen parents were required to participate in parenting classes and attend school on a daily basis. In February 2009 the TIP room was expanded to include children of all parents in the district and is now called the Infant/Toddler Room. In addition, a 2/3-year-old room was opened to meet the growing demand for care. Parents who receive Day Care Assistance are required to pay a copay. This was a wonderful program but I am sad to say that it ended the 2018-2019 school year.
The Riverview Gardens School District is committed to early childhood education and continues to support the Center every way it can. We currently have 11 General Education classrooms and 6 Special Education classrooms.

Past Directors:
Mrs. Ann Beckring
Mrs. Christine Kula-Branz
Mrs. Mary Kreckler
Dr. Crystal Hunter
Dr. Lanor Payne

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the **Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center** is to Foster Connections, Curiosity, and Life-long Learners.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center is to do whatever it T.A.K.E.S.:

Teach

All

Kids

Essential

Skills



PHILOSOPHY

We believe in . . .

- supporting parents as their children's first and most influential teachers.

- encouraging all children to understand their surroundings by watching, exploring, problem-solving and making choices.

- helping children acquire and use language to communicate information, thoughts and feelings.

- engaging children in active learning experiences through purposeful and productive play.

- meeting children's social, emotional, and intellectual needs so they become enthusiastic, lifelong learners.

- offering children a multi-age setting that encourages cooperation and builds on prior experiences and knowledge.

- understanding and appreciating the traditions of various cultures as essential components in developing partnerships with families.

STATE APPROVED CURRICULA

All of our preschool classes are mixed-aged classrooms serving 3, 4, and 5-year-old children. The Center maintains an excellent adult-child ratio. Class size is limited to10 children to one adult (10:1) or 20 children to two adults (20:2) in our 3, 4, and 5-year-old classrooms. Occasionally volunteers, college, or high school students assist the staff at the Center. These volunteers and students are always supervised when working with the children and provide opportunities for special activities and more individualized attention. Our curriculum is based on the belief that young children learn best through play and experimenting with the environment. Copies of lesson plans are posted in every classroom.

Our classrooms use the Missouri Early Learning Goals curriculum which we adapt to meet the needs of our children. In this State approved program children construct their own knowledge and values by interacting with their physical world and the people around them. Our classrooms are full of activity, conversation, and social interaction. Children sing, role play, draw, explore science, count, exercise, and have language experiences that naturally lead into reading and writing.

This hands-on learning allows children to try out new ideas and concepts. In time children develop the concept that one object can stand for another such as a block can become a car or a telephone. This is the beginning of symbolic thinking. This is also demonstrated in "reading pictures". Children learn that pictures represent people, places, and things. When they are ready children recognize that letters and numerals represent sounds and the numbers of objects. This symbolic concept is very necessary for academic success, and is achieved not through worksheets or flash cards but through play and experimenting with the environment.

Children who are simply taught to memorize letters and numerals often suffer later on because they lack the foundation for these concepts. These children can often read but have little understanding of what they are reading, or they can memorize 2 + 2 = 4 but cannot do a problem involving logical thinking such as, "If James has 2 cars and Sonja has 2 cars, how many cars do they have together?" Children need to experience the concrete before moving on to the symbols that are necessary for elementary school. Children who have this opportunity see themselves as problem solvers, thinkers, explorers, and discoverers. They become independent, active learners for the rest of their lives.

CURRICULUM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The curriculum goals for the **Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center** program come from the Missouri Early Learning Goals developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Their implementation is in concert with developmentally appropriate practices from the National Association for the Education of Young Children that acknowledges the importance of play.

I. Approaches to Learning
- Shows curiosity
- Takes initiative
- Exhibits creativity and inventiveness
- Shows confidence
- Displays persistence

- Uses problem-solving skills

II. Social and Emotional Development
- Exhibits self-awareness and self-confidence
- Manages feelings and behavior
- Builds relationships

III. Physical Development, Health and Safety
- Uses Gross Motor Skills with Purpose and Collaboration
- Uses Fine Motor Skills with Purpose and Control
- Responds to Sensory Input to Function in the Environment
- Practices healthy behaviors
- Practices safe behaviors

IV. Language and Literacy
- Represents feelings and ideas in a variety of ways
- Listens for different purposes
- Uses language to communicate
- Develops and expands vocabulary
- Applies early reading skills
- Uses concepts of print
- Attends to sounds in language (phonological awareness)
- Uses writing as a means of expression/communication

V. Mathematics
- Uses number to show quantity
- Uses language to represent number of objects
- Solves problems using number
- Uses numerical representations
- Makes comparisons
- Uses measurements
- Collects, organizes and displays information (Charting and Graphing)

V. Mathematics cont.
- Investigates positions and location
- Explores shapes in the environment

VI. Science

- Explores physical properties of objects and materials
- Investigates properties of objects and materials
- Solves problems involving physical properties of objects and materials
- Represents observations of the physical world in a variety of ways
- Explores characteristics of living things
- Investigates characteristics of living
- Solves problems related to living things
- Represents observations about living things in a variety of ways
- Explores properties of earth and sky
- Investigates properties of earth and sky
- Solves problems involving earth and sky
- Represents observations about earth and sky in a variety of way

VII. Understanding the World

- Explores family
- Shows interest in people and the community
- Explores people and the community
- Investigates mechanical devices
- Investigates electronic devices

VIII. Expressive Arts

- Shows interest in music and movement
- Explores music and movement
- Shows interest in visual arts
- Explores visual arts
- Shows interest in dramatic arts
- Explores dramatic arts

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

The **Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center** is open to all resident children ages 3 to 5 years old. Children are accepted on a one month trial basis. Children must be potty trained and 3 years of age by

July 31 of the current year to attend the Pre-K program. If they turn 3 years of age after July 31st.

The admission to the Pre-K program begins with a developmental and health screening provided free of charge through the Parents as Teachers program. To complete the admission procedure, in addition to the enrollment papers, parents must provide proof of residency, an official state birth certificate, the child's Social Security card, and proof of up to date immunizations.

All paperwork for admission must be complete before it will be accepted by the Center. *Within 30 days of admission a medical examination (not more than 12 months old) signed by a licensed physician or registered nurse who is under the supervision of a licensed physician, must be submitted to the Center. 2025 the Focus Parent portal is a step that has been added to the enrollment process. visit: https://rgsd.mo.focusschoolsoftware.com to create an account and register your child(ren). In person enrollment, FOCUS and child screening need to be completed for your child to be completely.*

All classrooms throughout our Center provide services to children identified with special needs. Children are placed in the least restrictive environment. Children identified with special needs will be accepted to the full day classes only when recommended by the special school district coordinator and the early childhood director.

Admission to the classes for children with special needs operated by the Special School District is determined by Special School District personnel. A referral packet for services is required. The Special School District has separate requirements, as determined by law, to attend their classes at the Early Childhood Education Center. To meet licensing requirements, *all* enrollment forms must be submitted to the office before the child can attend the Center.

Parents are expected to notify the Center of changes regarding address, home phone number, work phone number, cell phone number, place of employment, etc. It is vital for your child's well-being that we have accurate information so that we can contact you in case of an emergency. In addition, major changes in the family structure such as births, deaths, divorce, or new people living in the household often affect your child's

behavior at school. Keeping us informed will help us better support your child while at the Center. Notes to your child's teacher can be completed and left with staff. Likewise, your child's teacher or staff members will inform you of changes in behavior that are observed. Good communication by all is the best way to provide quality care for your child.

IMMUNIZATIONS

A complete immunization record is required at enrollment. If your child has not received all immunizations appropriate for his/her age, proof must be shown that the immunization process has begun. This process must continue to be completed on the Department of Health's recommended schedule. The parents must notify the Center of additional immunizations as they are given. Failure to complete the recommended immunization schedule will result in the child's enrollment being discontinued.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has provided a 2011 recommendation immunization schedule which is included on the next 2 pages.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Within 30 days of enrollment a physical exam form signed by a physician, or licensed nurse under the supervision of a physician, must be submitted to the Center. Children who do not meet this requirement will not be allowed back into the Center until the physical is complete**.** The Center should be informed of significant changes in your child's health. Children that suffer from asthma must have the asthma plan form completed and signed by the doctor before the child's date of attendance.

TRIAL PERIOD

All children are accepted for admission on a one month trial basis. The health and safety of your child, as well as all the children in the Center, is

of the utmost importance. If it is determined that the Center cannot adequately meet the needs of your child or if the health and safety of other children is being jeopardized, other arrangements will need to be made for your child's care.

SIBLINGS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

When two children from the same family attend the Center it is the Center's policy to put each child in a different class. This allows each child to develop independently of each other. Staff that are parents or family members of children that attend the center will not be placed in the same classroom.

STAFFING

Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center employs a variety of highly qualified staff members. All teachers have bachelor's or master's degrees in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, or Early Childhood Special Education and are certified by the State of Missouri. All full-time assistants have a minimum of 60 college credits and some have an Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education. All staff members are very interested in your child. We encourage you to communicate with us openly and often.

VOLUNTEERS

Individuals wishing to volunteer at the Early Childhood Education are required to have a background check before starting work. For further information contact the office personnel. The background check and volunteer information is on the Riverview Gardens School District

Website. There is a fee for the Background screening. Once approved you will be notified and set up volunteer opportunities with the Director. This includes participating in class activities, field trips, parental partnerships and events. Volunteers may never be alone with children that are not their family members.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Center is open Monday through Friday Full day classes are from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Full day classes operate during the regular school year with a one month additional summer session. Half day classes operate Monday through Thursday during the regular school year only.

Children should be in their classrooms by 8:15 a.m. on each day. Children coming after this time miss out on plans for the day, welcoming activities, and center time.

Early Childhood Special Education classes offered through Special School District classes operate from Monday through Thursday during the regular school year only. All classes are half day only. Special School District personnel will inform parents if their children qualify for summer sessions.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULES FOR PRESCHOOL

Full-Day Time	Activity
8:15 - 8:45	Arrival Time/Hand washing/Breakfast
8:45 - 9:45	Centers/Small Group
9:45 - 10:00	Good Morning Large Group Meeting
10:00 - 10:40	Outdoor Learning Centers/Gross Motor
10:45 - 11:15	Circle Time/Large Group
11:15 - 11:30	Restroom Break/Transition to Lunch
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 12:15	Restroom Break

12:15 - 12:30	Story Time
12:30 - 2:30	Rest Time
2:40 - 3:00	Outside Learning Centers/Snack
3:00 - 3:15	Music & Movement/Goodbye Large Group Meeting/Dismissal

*****This is a sample schedule. Individual classroom schedules may vary.

Enrollment & Attendance Information

We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and high-quality learning environment for every child. To help us maintain appropriate staffing, classroom support, and learning opportunities, please review the following enrollment and attendance guidelines for the 2026–2027 school year.

Enrollment Capacity
Our program will serve a maximum of **140 students**. Once we reach capacity, families interested in enrolling will be placed on a **waiting list**. Families will be contacted as openings become available.

Regular Attendance Matters
Consistent attendance is important because it helps children build relationships, establish routines, and make steady progress in their learning. Students are expected to maintain an **85% attendance rate**.

We understand that families may experience circumstances that affect attendance. We encourage families to communicate with the school when

their child will be absent so that we can provide support and maintain accurate attendance records.

To ensure that enrollment opportunities are available to families who are able to participate consistently, **students who do not maintain the required 85% attendance rate may be withdrawn from the program.** Families will be provided communication regarding attendance concerns before a withdrawal decision is made, when appropriate.

Classroom Structure
To support student learning and provide appropriate classroom support, our program will include:

- **8 classrooms** with up to 10 students each
- **3 classrooms** with up to 20 students each, with an Instructional Assistant assigned to each classroom
- **4 additional Instructional Assistants** who will provide support and coverage during teacher lunch periods, planning periods, and other times when additional classroom support is needed

We appreciate our families' partnership in ensuring that children attend regularly and arrive ready to learn. Together, we can help every child **Soar to New Heights!**

regulations, accreditation materials, and their children's developmental records etc. by contacting the Center's Director.

FAMILY EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to become active participants in their children's education. A strong home-school relationship is vital to a child's development and success.

A class newsletter is published regularly and distributed regarding the Center's happenings as well as features on child development and ideas that parents and children can do together.

Conferences are held in the fall and spring each school year. Parents and teachers have the opportunity to share information regarding the child

and his/her progress. Portfolios and developmental information will be shared at conferences. Informal communication is also maintained throughout the year through telephone calls and notes. Written communication will be on a daily or weekly basis. Parents who wish may see their child's developmental records. Parents are asked to contact their child's teacher if they have questions or difficulties. If after speaking with the teacher you still have concerns, please contact the Director.

Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center works closely with the Riverview Gardens Parents as Teachers program. We encourage all families enrolled at the Center to also enroll in Parents as Teachers. PAT offers personal visits, where parents will learn to be better observers of their children, learn developmental information and participate in learning activities with their children. In addition, special Parents as Teachers group meetings and activities are also planned throughout the year.

GUIDANCE POLICY

In accordance with the philosophy of the Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center as well as the laws of the state of Missouri, no physical or verbal abuse is allowed. Disciplinary techniques are positive and supportive. Praise and encouragement are more effective in promoting desirable behavior than negative or punitive techniques. Teachers are encouraged to make expectations clear and age-appropriate, to model desirable behaviors, to anticipate potential conflicts, and to use discussion and or redirection as needed.

Sometimes a child's behavior results in a logical consequence which helps the child learn the cause-effect relationship of his/her action. For example, the rule might be that children pick up toys before going outside to play. If the child does not pick up any toys, the logical consequence is that going outside is delayed until he/she has assisted in putting some of the toys away.

Occasionally a child who is being disruptive or losing control may be removed to the sidelines of the group, assisted in gaining control, and then invited to rejoin the group and reminded of appropriate behavior.

Regardless of the method of behavior management, the goal of the Center's staff is to assist each child toward the development of self-control and positive interactions with other children and adults.

Additionally the Center has begun to implement Conscious Discipline. It is a program that integrates classroom management with social-emotional learning, utilizes everyday events as the curriculum, and addresses the adult's emotional intelligence as well as the child's. Conscious Discipline empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children. It uses a multi-faceted approach to address behavior. It goes beyond programs that teach specific behaviors and offers a specialized model of the brain based on scientific research. This Conscious Discipline brain state model becomes a framework for staff to understand the internal brain states that are most likely to produce positive behavior in children and in staff. With this awareness, staff can learn to consciously manage their own thoughts and emotions so that they can help children learn to do the same.

For more information on Conscious Discipline go to: www.consciousdiscipline.com.

If a child's behavior becomes problematic, parents will be consulted and asked to cooperate with the teachers in finding successful strategies to change the child's behavior. Sometimes a recommendation for further evaluation or help may be recommended. On rare occasions it may be determined that our program is not appropriate for a particular child.

SCHOOL WIDE BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

KHFOOTY- Keep Hands Feet other objects to yourself

(Please review daily with your child, more information is coming)

We Are…..	Safe *(KHFOOTY)*	Respectful *(KHFOOTY)*	Responsible *(KHFOOTY)*	Ready to Learn

UNIFORMS AND CLOTHING

Uniforms are **optional** at Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center . If you would like for your child to wear a uniform to school, the uniform guidelines are as follows:

- **Pants, Shorts or Jumpers -** Children will wear navy blue (no blue jeans) or khaki pants, shorts or jumpers. Pants or shorts should have inside pockets if they have pockets. Both zipper and elastic waists are acceptable.
- **Shirts or Blouses** - Children will wear **red or navy blue** golf or polo shirts or blouses. All shirts or blouses must have collars. Long or short sleeves are acceptable.
- **Sweaters or Sweatshirts** - Navy blue or red sweaters or sweatshirts may be worn when necessary.
- **Shoes and Socks** - Shoes must tie, buckle, or Velcro. Sandals must be closed toed and have a strap on the heel. **No flip flops, flops or open toe sandals are allowed or crocs**. Tennis shoes are an appropriate shoe and must be worn with socks. **All clothing should**

be marked with your child's name. Since many items will look the same this labeling is especially important. Warm outer clothing is required for outdoor play during cold weather. This includes a warm coat, hat, mittens, snow-pants, and boots. Remember to label these with your child's name.

Your child needs a complete change of clothing (shirt, pants or shorts, underwear, and socks and shoes) at the Center at all times in case of an emergency. Please label all items and put in a zip lock bag marked with your child's name. The teachers will send home wet items when they are used. Please send replacement items back to school the next day. Neither the staff nor the Center is responsible for lost items.

The Center is a very active place and the children will be more comfortable if they do not have to worry about keeping their clothing clean. The teachers have the children wear smocks during messy play, but accidents happen. Stains and dirt are a part of age-appropriate play.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

The doors to the Center are locked at all times to ensure the children's safety. For entry to the school please ring the bell and you will be buzzed in. Everyone that enters the building will be brought through the security entrance. There will be metal detectors and all bags will be searched.

If someone not on the pick-up list will be bringing or picking up your child please call the office ahead of time. They will be buzzed in by office personnel and picture identification will be checked before your child will be released to them. A copy of his/her identification may be photocopied for your child's protection. We have the Raptor system for all visitors that enter the building. Be sure to have your ID ready for entrance to the building.

***All guardians must sign their child in and out each* day on the computers by the office before taking the child to class.** All children are to be signed in and out by an adult, 18 years and older, at the computers at both *arrival* and *departure* times. The sign-in process serves two purposes. First, it is our method of safeguarding your child and second, it is our

documentation of your child's attendance at the Center. If someone new will be bringing or picking up your child, please make sure that he/she knows to sign in and out using the computer system and stopping by the office with photo identification.

Hand Washing Policy

All children are to wash their hands upon arriving at the center. This is one way to help ensure the health of everyone. Children must be with an adult at all times. The adult must go to the bathroom with the child and walk the child to his/her classroom. Do not send children up the steps and around the corner without the adult greeting a teacher.

Communication

We work hard to keep you informed and connected!

● **Classroom Updates**: Your child's teacher will send a Monthly newsletter (usually on the First Monday) with classroom highlights, learning goals, and reminders

. ● **School-Wide Updates**: Each Sunday at 2:00 p.m., Principal, Dr. E'mita Williams sends a weekly e-note or voicenote through FOCUS with important updates and calendar information.

● **Google Classroom or ClassDOJO**: Teachers also use these to share photos, classwork, and updates throughout the week.

● **Questions or Concerns?** You can email your child's teacher directly. Their daily office hours are listed in their email signature. For school-wide questions, see the Contact Information page in this handbook.

Attendance IS a BIG Deal

Your child didn't want to go to school today. Your child said they didn't feel well.

So you let your child stay home.

NO BIG DEAL

It's very cold outside and you don't have a car available to drive your child to school.
So you let your child stay home.
NO BIG DEAL
You usually drive your child to school but your car won't start today.
So you let your child stay home.
NO BIG DEAL
Your child frequently arrives a few minutes late to school because of the many things that have to be done as part of the busy morning routine.
NO BIG DEAL
OR IS IT A BIG DEAL???
NO BIG DEAL… **YES, IT IS!**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

What is your child learning from you about the importance of attending school?
What would your child learn from you about following through on commitments in the situations just described? You want your child to be successful---in school---in life. Regular attendance is vital to your child's success in school in the same way that it will be vital to his or her success in a job. Patterns are now being formed---in school---in life. What kind of pattern is your child forming?

You have the responsibility of ensuring the regular attendance of your child at school. Why is regular attendance so important? If your child frequently is absent, he/she misses valuable contact with classmates and class instruction.

Of course, there are some valid reasons for keeping your child home from school:

- Significant illness
- Family emergency

- Observance of religious holiday
- Death in the immediate family
- Circumstances which cause you concern for the safety or health of your child

But, what do you do when your child tells you he/she is sick and doesn't want to go to school and you have serious doubts that he/she is really sick? Try explaining to your child that there are times when we all don't feel great, but we go to work anyway. Maybe you point out sometimes you have to go out there into the world even if you don't feel 100%. Help your child make the distinction between being uncomfortable and being really sick.

Ensuring your child's regular school attendance is a sure way for you to help your child learn how to fulfill his/her responsibility.

Helping your child to succeed is a very big deal. Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center is willing to help. If you are having a problem getting your child to attend regularly, call Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center, personnel are available to work with and help your family. **The child who misses school today without a valid reason could become the dropout of the future. Missing school is a BIG DEAL! Don't let it happen! Help is only a phone call away. Staff can be reached by calling (314)869-3211.**

When your child is absent due to illness, vacation, or any other reason please keep the Center informed by means of a note or phone call. If your child is absent for 21 consecutive days without notifying the Center, his/her enrollment will be discontinued. Children identified with special needs will be enrolled until the Special School District determines that they no longer qualify for services.

HOLIDAYS AND VACATION DAYS

The Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center follows the Riverview Gardens school calendar with minor exceptions. The Center is closed on major holidays such as Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth and Independence Day. In addition the Center is closed for Winter Recess, Spring Recess, the week after the regular school term ends in May, and the week before school opens for the Fall term. A special early childhood school calendar is distributed each fall to all Early Childhood Education Center families.

SNOW DAYS

In case of inclement weather the Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center will follow the Riverview Gardens School District school closing policy. **If the district schools are closed, the Center will also be closed**. Official announcements will be broadcast on television channels KMOV, KTVI, KSDK, and NEWS 30. Radio stations KTRS, KEZK, WIL, WRTH, KXOK, KATZ, MAJIC, and KIX will also announce the closings. The district's automated calling system will also call the parents' main contact telephone number. If the Riverview Gardens Schools close during the day, the Center staff will contact the parents. Children are to be picked up within one hour of notification. Parents should make prior arrangements to have their children picked up for early dismissal.

CELEBRATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

Birthdays, holidays, and special events are important to children. Arrangements for birthdays and other celebrations must be made with your child's teacher in advance. Please keep things simple. Your child's teacher will help you decide what is appropriate if you need assistance. All treats must be store bought in the original wrappers. No homemade treats may be brought to school. Some healthy food ideas include thin crust pizza with low fat toppings (no pork), fruit or grain muffins, bagel slices with jam, hot pretzels, Go-Gurt, ice cream cups (100 calorie cup, low fat, or low sugar), cheese cubes or string cheese, fruit pizza, plain or fruit topped angel food cake, 100% fruit juice products, fruit snacks or Roll-ups

(ingredient statement will specify grapes, orange juice, apples or pears from concentrate). **Foods NOT allowed: Peanuts, chocolate candy, cookies, cakes, candies and cupcakes,pies with icing. You will be asked to take your cupcakes home if you bring them to the school.**
Once a year at trunk or treat we allow candy to be brought in and sent home for consumption.

FIELD EXPERIENCES/IN HOUSE EXPERIENCES

Field Trips are designed to bring experiences to the Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center that our students would otherwise not have access to. The Field Trip Committee has picked out experiences that we feel are important learning experiences to our students. They have tried to find hands-on engaging topics to help the children learn. They are trying to plan one experience a quarter to help with the student's curiosity.

REST TIME

State licensing requires a 90 minute rest period for all full day children. Every child needs a small blanket and small travel pillow. Please put the child's name on items. Blankets will be sent home on Fridays to be laundered and *must be* returned the following Monday.

We understand that not all children nap. If a child is not sleeping, they are offered quiet, calming activities to engage in during this time. This helps them relax and recharge while being respectful of those who are resting. To help children feel comfortable, we encourage families to send a crib sheet, a small blanket, and a soft comfort item from home. Staff members are present and actively supervising throughout rest time, moving around the room to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for all children

MEAL TIME

Breakfast, lunch and snacks are served daily to all full day students. The 3 to
5-year-old children eat lunch in the school cafeteria. Meals are served family style which provides opportunities for the children to practice good manners. Lunch is provided by the Riverview Gardens food service and follows the same menu as the Riverview Gardens elementary schools. Menus are sent home monthly and also posted in your child's classroom. One snack and either breakfast or lunch will be served daily to children who attend the Center for a half-day. We ask that children finish any food or drink brought with them from home before they enter the building. **Any food, candy, cough drops, drinks, etc. brought to the Center will be thrown away. This is for licensing and safety purposes. Snacks such as chips or crackers must be low fat and or baked, not fried.**

TOYS OR MONEY

The Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center is equipped with many quality toys for your child to use. We ask, therefore, that children keep their personal items at home. Toys and money brought to the Center will be put away or sent home with the family members upon arrival. The Center is not responsible for items brought from home.

OUTSIDE PLAY

Children attending the Center play outdoors each morning and afternoon. Only in extreme conditions of hard rain, sub-zero temperatures and wind chills, or extremely high heat index will the children remain indoors. The staff follows the Children's Hospital guidelines below. Knowing this, please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Fresh air is an integral part of our daily schedule. **Your child will be expected to go outdoors unless there is a note from your physician.** In the summer, sunscreen is required.

Children who have special medical needs will have a special outdoor schedule which is compatible with their medical condition.

Children attending the Center will be provided bike helmets to wear when riding our bicycles. This is according to the St. Louis County Ordinance stating that it is unlawful for a parent or guardian to permit a child under the age of 17 to operate or be a passenger on a bicycle unless the child is wearing protective headgear (helmet), which properly fits and is fastened securely upon the head of the operator and/or passenger.

Outside Play Guidelines

Temperatures include wind chill factor and heat index

100° or above	Children should not go outside.
90° to 99°	Children can stay out with sunscreen and plenty of water. Outdoor play may need to be limited to 5-15 minutes.
32° to 89°	Children can stay outside without time restriction.
10° to 31°	Children can stay outside for 5-15 minutes.

Below 9°	Children should not go outside.

HOME AND SCHOOL CONNECTION

Learning activities will occasionally be sent home by your child's teacher. These will consist of a variety of tasks.

Our faculty strives to make each home and school activity meaningful and purposeful. These activities give students the opportunity to practice skills, prepare for a new topic or elaborate on material already introduced. An activity calendar will be sent home monthly with suggested activities to enhance your child's learning at home. Reading to your child on a daily basis is one of the best ways to prepare your child to read.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Each teacher will furnish a list of necessary supplies to be provided by the parents. All students should carry a clear backpack to transport items to and from school.This is a District policy.

Toilet Training

All students must be toilet trained prior to enrollment. Pull-ups are not allowed. If a child has two accidents in one day, the family will be notified to come and pick up the child for the remainder of that day. If the child continues to have frequent accidents on a daily basis, the Director will meet with the staff and the family to create a plan. The child will recieve 4 warnings, the 5th accident may result in removing the child from preschool enrollment until complete toilet training is achieved. A Written warning will be given to the parents before this action takes place.

STUDENT RECORDS

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the district to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about students and families. These records must be kept confidential in accordance with law, but must also be readily available to district personnel who need the records to effectively serve district students.

The superintendent or designee will provide for the proper administration of student records in accordance with law, will develop appropriate procedures for maintaining student records and will standardize procedures for the collection and transmission of necessary information about individual students throughout the district. The building principal shall assist the superintendent in developing the student records system, maintaining and protecting the records in his or her building and developing protocols for releasing student education records. The superintendent or designee will make arrangements so that all district employees are trained annually on the confidentiality of student education records, as applicable for each employee classification.

Parent Access

All parents will have the right to inspect their child's education records as allowed by law. As used in this policy, a "parent" includes a biological or adoptive parent, a guardian or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a natural parent or guardian. The district will extend the same rights to either parent, regardless of divorce, custody or visitation rights, unless the district is provided with evidence that the parent's rights to inspect records have been legally revoked.

If a parent believes the education records related to the student contain information that is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's privacy, he or she may ask the district to amend the record by following the appeals procedures created by the superintendent or designee.

The district will annually notify parents of their rights in accordance with law.

Health Information

Student health information is a type of student record that is particularly sensitive and protected by numerous state and federal laws. Student health information shall be protected from unauthorized, illegal or inappropriate disclosure by adherence to the principles of confidentiality and privacy. The information shall be protected regardless of whether the information is received orally, in writing or electronically and regardless of the type of record or method of storage.

ILLNESS POLICY

We at the Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center realize that many parents work outside the home. However, children do become ill and appropriate guidelines must be met and enforced according to The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services as well as, The St. Louis County Department of Health. Therefore, children will be observed for contagious illnesses and diseases. Any child exhibiting the following symptoms will be assessed, isolated and may be excluded from class, including, but not limited to the following medical diseases and conditions:

- Vomiting/Diarrheal episodes of 2 or more
- Unusual spots or unknown rash on the skin
- Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)
- Chicken Pox
- Strep (sore) Throat
- Lice
- Fever of 100 degrees or more orally or 99 degrees or more under the arm
- Severe/excessive coughing; including common cold and/or asthma symptoms (monitored by a healthcare professional)

Children who are not feeling well are often overwhelmed in a group setting. For your child's comfort and the protection of the other children, ***we ask that you pick up your sick child within one hour of being notified.***

According to licensing regulations parents will also be contacted if their child is unable to participate in the daily activities of the Center. Reasons for calling may include:

- excessive crying or crying more than usual
- cranky/less activity than usual
- feels general discomfort/seems ill
- loss of appetite (if child normally eats well)
- teacher feels the child does not feel well enough to participate
- fever of 100° or more orally or 99° or more under the arm

Children must be free of all illness for 24 hours before returning to school. Children must also have a normal temperature (without any medication) for 24 hours before they can return to school.

The school nurse's office exists for emergency situations and as a waiting area for ill students who are going home.

MEDICATION

The Michelle Obama Early Childhood Academic Center will administer prescription medication with a parent or guardian's written permission (completed medication form in enrollment packet). The medication must be brought to the school nurse along with specific instructions signed by the prescribing physician. Prescription drugs must be labeled with the name of the patient, the name of the physician, prescription number and date, name of medication, dosage and frequency. Many parents ask for a separate prescription bottle which can be sent to school. Most children will only receive one dose of medicine at the Center each day. Children must be on the medication for 24 hours before the Center will administer it. This is a safety precaution to see if the child has an allergic reaction to

the medication. Children with asthma who have inhalers should have one at school at all times.

Parents should make sure that all medications are given to the teacher or school nurse. The medications are required to be locked in a box and out of the reach of children. Leaving medication in book bags is a safety hazard.

INJURY AND ACCIDENTS

The staff at the Center takes every precaution to see that your child is safe. Our preschool, however, is a busy and active one and accidents may happen as your child explores his/her environment and learns how to socialize with other children.

In the event of a minor injury immediate first-aid will be administered along with TLC (tender loving care). The staff will complete an **accident form** with a description of the accident and the care given to your child. The parents are to sign the accident report and take a copy. The original will be placed in the child's file. **Illness forms** will also be used to report a child's illness.

In case of a serious injury emergency first aid will be given and the parent will be notified. A Riverview Gardens nurse will be called if one is on duty at the time of the accident. If the parents/guardians are not available, the emergency contact person listed on the enrollment form will be notified. If neither parent nor an emergency contact can be notified, the child's physician will be called if the situation warrants. In case of a life threatening event 911 will be called.

It is extremely important that you inform the Center of changes in your address, home, cell, or work telephone numbers. **We must have this information to respond effectively in an emergency**.

REPORTING/INVESTIGATING CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

The Board of Education requires its staff members to comply with the state child abuse and neglect laws and the mandatory reporting of suspected neglect and/or abuse. Any school official or employee acting in his or her official capacity who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or who observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, will immediately make a report to the school principal or designee, including any report of excessive absences that may indicate educational neglect. The school principal or designee will then become responsible for making a report via the Child Abuse Hotline to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services, as required by law. This policy does not preclude any employee from directly reporting abuse or neglect to the CD. However, the school official or employee must notify the school principal or designee immediately after making a report.

The school principal will make the superintendent aware that a report has been made and will keep him or her aware of the status of the case. If the school principal or designee has reason to believe that a victim of such abuse or neglect is a resident of another state or was injured as a result of an act that occurred in another state, then, in addition to notifying the Missouri CD pursuant to this policy, he or she may also make a report to the child protection agency with the authority to receive such reports, pursuant to law, in the other state.

The district, as a mandated reporter, will be entitled, upon request, to information on the general disposition of the report. The district may also receive findings and information concerning the case, if requested. The information should be shared with the staff member who originated the report, but should not be released to anyone else without written authorization from the CD. Parents/Guardians should be referred to the CD for information regarding the investigation. Parents or guardians have access to the CD records after the investigation is completed, except that the identity of the reporter is not released.

Any person who in good faith participates in the making of such reports, or in any judicial proceeding resulting therefrom, will be immune from civil or criminal liability. It shall not be the responsibility of the school official or employee who initiated the report to prove that the child has been neglected or abused.

STATE LICENSING REPORTS AND REGULATIONS

The State Licensing Compliance Reports along with the Licensing Regulation Handbook are located in the Early Childhood Education Center office. Parents wishing access to these reports and regulations may ask office personnel to view them. State licensing reports and regulations can also be accessed on the web at:

www.health.mo.gov/safety/childcare

If there are any questions regarding this matter, please check with office personnel.

LEAVING THE CENTER

Notice of two weeks is expected when your child leaves the Center. This is to be **in writing and turned in to the office**. Please see the office for the appropriate form. Staff members often have items that need to be sent home with your child on the last day and also wish to properly say "good-bye" to your child.


Dreamer
Mum says that I daydream
I should go play, instead
I need fresh air and sunshine,
that's what my mum said.
Dad says I'm a dreamer
that there's treasure in my head
ideas are going to blossom,
that's what my dad said.