

MPCS Early Childhood Playground Rules

***revised 12.10.24 (please note, this is a living document)**

The fenced south play yard is only for children 3 to 7 years of age. This play yard is only open during school hours, for children and staff in school during school hours, including before and after care.

PLAYGROUND STATIONS:

If a station is not occupied, that area is closed for play. Adults are asked to spread out in stations and move with the energy of the children.

1. Climbing Structure
2. Top of the Hill
3. Playhouse
4. Swings / Spinner (3 and 4 can merge when needed, otherwise, close playhouse)
5. Sandbox / Block (when waterplay is closed)
6. Waterplay / Blocks (when waterplay is open)

As the Adult in the play yard:

The work is to be present, engaged and aware of the children around you. Guiding healthy and meaningful play takes patience, levity and awareness. Think of the wingspan of a golden hawk, more so than the propellers of a helicopter. We hold space, while giving space. We have awareness, whilst also trusting in the unfolding of each moment.

When a child is struggling with a rule / behavior:

- First step is often redirection or a teachable moment
- Second Step could be purposeful / joyful work WITH a Teacher (this is not punitive, this is a means to shift the energy) In this case, please inform the Lead Teacher
- Third Step may be time with a teacher, walking around together, or sitting together

Guidelines for Playyard (grown-up language):

- ★ Safety and Security ALWAYS come first
- ★ **We maintain Colorado State Licensure ratios** with ECT Qualified employees
- ★ **Cell phones and texting for essential needs and emergencies**
- ★ **No photos** unless specifically for yearbook or classroom use
- ★ **Adults** do not direct children's play (An exception to this rule is when Lead Teachers bring games, or guides children with a jump rope, etc.)
- ★ Adults need to consciously move with the energy of the children, **keeping all areas of play watched at all times**
- ★ **Limit chit chat and adult gatherings** to focus on children without intruding
- ★ When children are on the **climbing structure and or monkey bars**, a teacher needs to be present in the woodchips at all times
- ★ Each class cleans up after themselves
- ★ **Swings** are for bellies and bottoms only. If two children want to work together to ride the swing, they can. Children waiting a turn may sit on the concrete edge of the woodchips. No line can form around the swings. Children get themselves up

on the swings and pump their legs to swing. Children may help one another, but adults do not push children. Swings go back and forth only. No timers can be used for timing turns.

- ★ **Small slide** can be used in both directions / head and or feet first
- ★ **Large slide** sliding down only / feet first
- ★ **Flower Beds and Tree Zones** are areas for growth, not the children
- ★ **Garden Bed** gravel is not for digging
- ★ **Metal shovels** live in the sandbox
- ★ **Grassy hill** is not for digging
- ★ **Tonka Trucks** stay on the sandbox side of the river. Children can ride in them. Tonka trucks drive safely, No crashing
- ★ **Playhouse** is for house play. No climbing on the interior or exterior of the house. No climbing through the windows of the playhouse.
- ★ **Sand** stays in the sandbox
- ★ **Flagstone cubes/benches** for sitting on, not for making fairy dust
- ★ **Seasonal Reminders:** No rakes or brooms when the play yard is covered in snow. Snow shovels and sleds only when there is snow! Snow shovels are for the concrete and flagstone only. If grass is exposed – no sleds. No snowballs! Waterplay is only on when the water is turned on for our sprinklers (typically April-October)
- ★ **Stumps** stay where they are, they are not for digging out
- ★ **Wagons** may go on the entire playyard. Children must sit on their bottom inside
- ★ **Friendly rough-n-tumble play** is allowed with clear adult guidance in the open grassy area. Everyone participating needs to be smiling. We play for fun, not to hurt.
- ★ **Puddle play** is acceptable with correct clothing / footwear in appropriate temperatures (there is no laying in puddles, or painting bodies with mud).
- ★ **Classroom doors** and **play yard gates** are to be opened by adults only
- ★ **Caregivers** wait outside the gates for pick up and drop off
- ★ **Children** may not hang or swing on gates
- ★ **Water Play** / Hands, tools and toys make get wet / Shoes and clothes stay dry
- ★ No toys from home
- ★ When taking children to the restroom, or to a classroom, the children will walk next to you, or behind you (on a train). We walk from A to B. No running.
- ★ **Jump rope** is for Kindergarten-aged children. Preschool children can use it, with teacher guidance Teachers - for interested preschool children, beginning with snakes (or rivers) where the jump rope stays on the ground is a great idea! Stay next to the children using the jump rope.
- ★ **Sidewalk chalk** is for the concrete sidewalk only (not our bodies, fences or stumps)
- ★ **Monkey bars** are for children to use without adult assistance. They may sit on top of bars, until others wish to pass by, then they must move along
- ★ **Spinner** is for one child at a time, 4 years+

Language we use with children for playyard rules:

1. Children may not hurt or threaten one's self or others.
 - "Children are to use their hands for purposeful work and kind touches"
2. Appropriate language must always be used.
 - Our words are kind, true, sweet and clear.
 - "Those words are too big for you" "We can call each other by our true names"
3. Kissing or inappropriate demonstrations of affection are not permissible.
 - "Let's save our kisses for our family"
4. Sticks may be picked up, but not used as weapons, thrown, or while running.
 - "Walking feet with our building sticks."
5. Rocks may be piled but never thrown.
 - "Only bees, butterflies (etc.) fly in our play yard, and rocks live on the ground."
"Only Brother Wind blows the sand."
6. Children must always be respectful of other's games. Others are welcome to join.
 - " I am here, ready to play. What can I be?"
7. Objects may not be passed, thrown over or stuck through any part of the fence.
 - "What lives on this side of the fence, stays on this side of the fence"
8. A child yelling for help is one thing, but screaming is not allowed.
 - "Your screams are too loud for our school play yard." "Screams are for emergencies."
9. We are all kind to all living creatures.
 - " We take care of all of Mother Earth's babies."
10. We leave growing things alone and may play with what is already on the ground.
 - "Ouch" say the trees. "Ouch" say the leaves and petals. You may leave them be."
11. Teachers help a line form for spinner or swings, if needed
 - "Ding Dong". When you hear "ding dong" you may let another friend have a turn
12. The sand stays in the sandbox
 - "The sand lives in the sandbox"
13. Tools (brooms, shovels, rakes, etc) are only used for what they are intended
 - (the best way to explain this, is by modeling)
 - brooms are for sweeping and flying (in the season)
 - rakes are for raking
 - shovels are for digging (large shovels go no higher than our waist)
14. Sand stays low to the ground
 - "You may dig like a person, not like a puppy"
15. If a child asks to be assisted on monkey bars or spinner, we say
 - "If you can, you may"
 - "Your time will come"
 - "Maybe when you get a little bit taller"
16. Rough-n-Tumble Play
 - We hear our friend's words, if they are finished we STOP. STOP means, "get off" or "take your hands away"
 - Clothes and hats are not part of the game. A teacher must always be present

