



September 2026 All-School Newsletter

Welcome, everyone! We are so happy to be working with your family this year. We are looking forward to a wonderful school year! To stay informed about what is happening in our school, we ask that you refer to our monthly all-school newsletter.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO: If your address, phone number, or emergency contacts change during the school year, please keep us updated. If you use your cell phone as an emergency number, please keep it turned on while your child is in school.

A WORD ABOUT FEET: Our students are very active during their days at MEEC. They climb and run on the playground, use balance beams, and move around a lot in the gym. To be safe and able to participate in all activities, we are requesting that children wear tennis shoes. Please save the sandals and Crocs for times when your child is not at MEEC. Please dress them in washable play clothes, because sometimes we get messy!



SCHOOL SUPPLIES: We are asking every student to send in the following school supplies:

Great Beginnings: Large package of baby wipes & a bottle of hand sanitizer

Wee Three's PM: Large box of Kleenex & a bottle of hand sanitizer

Stepping Stones: Large Roll of Paper Towels & cotton balls

Wee Three's AM (Big Room): Large box of gallon-size Ziploc bags & Lysol Multipurpose Spray

Pre-K: Large box of sandwich-size Ziploc bags and uncoated cheap 6-inch plates



WEBSITE: Please use our website, www.meec.us, for vital information. There you will find classroom newsletters, forms, the school calendar, curriculum, and lots of other good stuff.

♥ Welcome to
Preschool!

Volunteer Needed: We are looking for a parent, grandparent, or friend who would be able to re-carpet our four balance beams in the gym. Please reach out to the office, and thanks in advance for your help!



HALLWAYS: Please do not arrive too early for your child's class. Sometimes, arriving too early can make your child more anxious. Other times, children get bored and begin to run in the halls or use equipment in the hallways that is needed for students. We want children to respect the school rules with a quiet voice and walking feet. When a child is overstimulated in the hallway, it doesn't allow them to enter the classroom ready to learn. We appreciate your help!

TUITION: Your monthly payment is due by the 5th of each month. Please submit your payments to the office. We kindly request that you refrain from placing payments in your child's backpack or leaving them in the hallway bins. If you are paying by cash, please place it in an envelope marked with your child's name.



MEEC Spirit Sale: We are excited about our spirit wear sale! The spirit store will accept orders online until September 13th. Throughout the school year, we will have spirit days, so grab your MEEC gear today. **This will be the only sale of the year,** so **[CLICK HERE TO ORDER!](#)**

SICK POLICY: We ask that you please keep in mind that our sick policy is that a child must be free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. **We ask that you do not give your child fever-reducing medicine to mask the symptoms.** Please understand that a fever is a precursor to contagious colds, COVID, and Monkeypox. We appreciate your diligence in avoiding the spread of illness.



CLASS DOJO: We ask that all families have at least one family member join Class Dojo. Teachers will use this to share reminders about special days, send pictures, or for school cancellations. Parents, you will be able to chat directly with the teachers. This is an easy and quick way to communicate with our staff! Please download the app and click the link to join. Please remember to enter your child's first and last name. Also, there is no reason to make any purchase. Simply click "No, Thank You". Please feel free to share this with other family members.

[Great Beginnings](#)

[Wee Three's AM Big Room](#)



[Stepping Stones](#)

[Wee Three's PM Little Room](#)

[Pre-K](#)

NEWSLETTERS: Each month, your teachers will provide you with details about activities in your child's classroom. These newsletters will be emailed to your family, posted on the class bulletin board, and on our school website. **If you are not receiving an email with our monthly newsletters, please let Ms. Cindy know, and she will resolve the issue.**

DROP OFF & PICK UP: Since we have limited time with our students, we ask that you be on time for your child to start their school day. Please wait in the hallway with your child until the teacher opens the door to greet them. At the end of the day, the teacher will want to share with you about your child's day, so **please arrive 10 minutes before dismissal.** We ask that you please keep all children by your side in the hall. Please avoid them playing on the stairs, in the fellowship hall, or in the gym. **If, for any reason, you need us to bring your child out to the car (perhaps younger siblings are sleeping), please just call the office, and we will be happy to accommodate.**

SNACKS: Each class will have a snack sign-up. We are trying to encourage a variety of healthy snacks for our students. Many parents of young children struggle with trying new foods. The school setting and positive pressure from peers are the perfect combination to make this happen. We strongly encourage parents to send in cut-up fruit, veggies, bananas, yogurt, etc. Just a reminder that we are a nut-free school. **Make sure to read the directions on the Sign-Up Genius link provided in your child's class newsletter.** Thank you for your support!

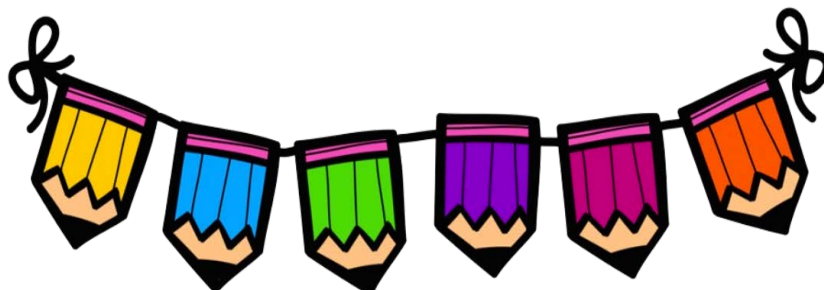


Fall Picture Day: We are excited to have Lifetouch Photography come to take our school pictures this year. Picture Day will be on **Wednesday, September 30th and Thursday, October 1st**. Your child's picture will be taken during class time on the day that they attend school. You will receive a proof with the option to order photos. **Online orders will be due October 7th.** The pictures are great, and our school gets a small profit from the photo sales!



PARENT ROOM: Please take advantage of our parent room located upstairs and next to the gym. We have provided this space for families and little ones to wait while their preschooler is in class. We have also added a Parent Lending Library to this room. Feel free to read and borrow a book of interest. Lastly, please be respectful of the area. Make sure the garbage is disposed of in the trash can, the library is only used for adults, and toys are returned to the proper place. We hope you enjoy this space!

PTO (Parent Teacher Organization): We are so thrilled to have [Chelsey Repasy](#) as the head of our PTO group at our school. They have a bulletin board in the hallway to the right when you walk into the school for information about upcoming events. The purpose of this organization is to bring parents and teachers together for the success of the children. Their first meeting will be **September 21st at 6:30 pm**. Meetings will be bi-monthly at the school and through ZOOM. We hope to see you there!





LIKE US ON FACEBOOK! Watch for pictures, artwork, and fun activities from your child's day! If you would like to enjoy pictures from your child's day, we encourage you to follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)!



@MEEC.US

HOW CAN YOU HELP RAISE MONEY FOR OUR SCHOOL?

THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS allows its members to designate a recipient for Choice Dollars. Choose MEEC, and we will receive a quarterly donation from Thrivent.

UNITED WAY: MEEC is a United Way Agency. You can designate your donation for United Way to be used for MEEC by using our code (50239).

Red Wagon Farm Field Trip: Friday, October 2nd, families will meet at Red Wagon Farm for a fun-filled fall event. Please see the attached flyer for details. Morning classes will meet at 10:00 am and afternoon classes at 11:30 am. Forms and money are due no later than September 18th. Adults are \$2 and children \$10. Hope to see you!

PICTURE DAY: We were thrilled to have LifeTouch back to take beautiful school pictures again. Pictures will be taken during our class time on **Wednesday, September 30th, and Thursday, October 1st**. You will receive a flyer showing you the fall background and the opportunity to choose your preferred solid background. We are happy to allow siblings not attending MEEC to get their photos as well! Please note that our classes are at full capacity, so the photographer has about five minutes per family. You will receive your photo proof that day and will have **until October 7th** to order photos online. All photos will be sent to the school. Please see the attached flier.

Are you looking to rent a space for a party gathering? Bethel Lutheran Church has the Fellowship Hall (\$200 per day) and Gathering Place (\$175 per day) available to rent. Reservation forms will need to be filled out before the church council's monthly meetings, every 2nd Tuesday of the month. This opportunity is a great stress reliever where you don't have to worry about cleaning your house or making sure you have enough room for everyone. [Click here to make your reservation!](#) If you have questions, please see Gail Gold in the church office or email: Bethelstaff@sbcglobal.net or call Office Phone: (440) 843-6663.

TRUNK OR TREATING: We are very excited for our annual Trunk or Treating in collaboration with Bethel Lutheran Church! Bring your little ghosts and goblins with their treat or treat bags and dressed up in their Halloween costumes to trick or treat at the decorated cars on Friday, October 16th, from 6:00 - 6:30 pm. **If you would like to reserve a parking spot to show off your decorated trunk and pass out candy, we would love to have you!** Please let the office know by October 13th to hold your spot. We ask for all decorated cars to be parked by 5:45. Please be prepared to show your Halloween spirit and have goodies just like trick-or-treat night.



Paperwork: Just a reminder that all enrollment forms and medical forms should be handed in by the first day of school. Additional paperwork is due by Friday, September 11th.

Dismissal: Teachers give a general overview of the activities your child participated in ten minutes before the end of the day. This information is key to having a conversation about their day. When you ask a child about their day, they most often will reply, "I played"; however, there is so much more about their day. So please make sure you are there ahead of dismissal time, so your teacher has a chance to fill you in about their day. We pride ourselves on communication with our families, so please be there to take in this information.

UPCOMING EVENTS:	First Day of School	August 31st
	Labor Day - No School	September 7th
	Picture Day	September 30 & Oct. 1st
	Field Trip to Red Wagon Farm	October 2nd
	Teacher In-Service (No School)	October 12th
	Trunk or Treating	October 16th @ 6pm
	Conference Days	Nov. 3rd & 6th



"Miss Ashley" Belica, Assistant Teacher, is happy to be at MEEC for her first year. She has been coming to MEEC for years with her nephew and my son! She has three children and enjoys watching her daughter at dance and her son play baseball! Watching my kids do what they love brings me the most joy!

"Miss Tonya" Farran-Zaripheh, Director/Teacher, has earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from Notre Dame College and is completing her Master's degree at Baldwin Wallace University. She has 18 years of experience as an MEEC preschool teacher, as well as coursework and experience in special education. She is the proud parent of her five children, who are all MEEC alumni!

"Miss Karlie" Frimel, Assistant, is new to MEEC this year and cannot wait to meet all these new little friends! She has experience working with children at Disney World, the zoo, and teaching adults special skills at Medina Creative Living. She has an incredible husband and two daughters-one is a MEEC graduate and the other is starting her first year in the Great Beginnings classroom. Karlie is so excited for this incredible opportunity to help your children learn and grow!

"Miss Kim" Garvey, Assistant Teacher, has been with us since 2018. She has been involved in the special needs community for several years and has been volunteering with Connecting for Kids. She has done countless hours of research and has experience with her children. Kim's kind and calm personality makes her a great match for MEEC. Ms. Kim will be assisting our little friends in the big classroom.

"Miss Brittany" Hamper, Assistant Teacher, joined our school in 2025. She has worked with children for many years by taking care of children in her home daycare, coaching soccer with special needs children, working alongside her children's school in Columbia, and running activities with children at her campground. She truly has a heart for working alongside children and helping them learn and grow. Miss Brittany brings her creative and caring energy to the MEEC classrooms again this year!

"Miss Deena" Hernandez, Teacher, has earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Kent State University. She has previous experience working in preschool classrooms with children of all abilities. She also has experience working closely with families to provide support and community resources. Miss Deena's daughter is a recent graduate of MEEC. She is excited to meet our families and help the children learn and grow. Ms. Deena will be teaching our youngest students in the small room.

"Miss DeAnna" Lindsey, Teacher, has earned a Master's Degree in Social Work and has previous experience with ABA programming. Two of her three daughters are MEEC graduates. We are pleased to have DeAnna starting her 11th year as a teacher in the big room,

"Miss Talia" LoPiccolo, Assistant Teacher, brings over 10 years of experience in providing personal and companion care, where she developed a natural gift for supporting children and adults of all abilities with patience and warmth. Her passion for helping others grow has inspired her to transition into early childhood education. She is eager to bring her energy and care into the classroom. Outside of work, Talia enjoys spending time with family, the outdoors, and cooking something yummy! She's thrilled to join the team and looks forward to getting to know all of the children and families in both classrooms.

"Miss Bri" Vargo-Monschein, Teacher, joined our school in 2024. Ms. Bri earned a Bachelor's degree from Kent State University and her Master's degree in Communication from Southern New Hampshire University. She has previous work experience in the county board setting, working with individuals with developmental disabilities throughout the lifespan. This work includes: case management services, assisting families with connecting to community resources, and advocacy. She has two children; one is currently attending MEEC. She is most looking forward to meeting all the families and being able to help the children learn, grow, and thrive.

"Miss Jennifer" Morgan, M.A. CCC/SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, has been at MEEC for over 25 years. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Ithaca College and her Master's Degree at Kent State University in Speech-Language Pathology. She has completed over 50 hours of continuing education on a variety of subjects, including Feeding and Swallowing, Stuttering, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Neuroscience and Self-Regulation, and Play-Based Treatment Programs. Miss Jennifer loves movement-based therapy! "If the kids are having fun, it makes learning easy!"

"Miss Sharon" Prexta, M.A., CCC/SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, has been at MEEC since 2000. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Baldwin Wallace College and her Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology from Cleveland State University. She specializes in Sensory Integration, Apraxia, Augmentative Communication, and Autism. "At MEEC, we treat the whole child using evidence-based therapy techniques. We build movement and motor planning activities into every speech session."

"Miss Chelsea" Repasy, Assistant, has earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from Slippery Rock University. She has prior training in ABA therapy from the Cleveland Clinic, along with in-home care. She also has a background in dance and loves to add it to the classroom as it brings joy and creativity to the students. Outside of school, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two children. Chelsea has been with MEEC since 2021 and enjoys helping in the big room!

"Miss Sidney" Rihvalsky, Teacher/Assistant, studied at Ohio University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in psychology. Here, she began working in early childhood education and fell in love with it. Once graduated in 2020, Sidney worked as a behavior therapist at a school for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Since then, she has been a caregiver for multiple families with young children and has worked as a teacher in an early preschool classroom. Sidney began her experience at MEEC in 2023. She is grateful and honored to be a part of such a beloved school!

"Miss Nikki" Sphar, Assistant, has worked in early childhood education for 20 years and holds a Child Development Associate credential. She enjoys working with preschoolers to see how they develop throughout the year and the great conversations she has with them! She is a huge Cleveland Guardians fan, enjoys being out in nature, listening to music, and spending time with family and friends.

"Miss Cindy" Todorov, Office Administrator, has a background in software support and enjoys keeping the office organized and running smoothly. Cindy's big smile and welcoming personality make everyone feel at home at our school.

"Miss Amy" Upchurch, Assistant Teacher, brings many years of experience working with children and families in educational, creative, and special-needs settings. She has a BFA in Studio Arts along with advanced training in trauma-informed practice, nervous system regulation, and supporting children with diverse developmental needs. Amy is especially happy to return to the MEEC community, where both of her children began their own educational journeys, and looks forward to getting to know and partnering with MEEC's children and families.

