



# Maplewood Richmond Heights **EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER**

## *School as Studio*

**T**eaching and learning in the MRH Early Childhood Center incorporate the metaphor of “School as Studio.” This means that...

The student is seen as an artist and takes joy in representing, interpreting and expressing his or her thinking by using various media. Student-generated work may result in

- Performances (drama, dialogue, etc.)
- Products (pictures, journal entries, etc.)
- Students sharing work with others
- Student self-reflection

The curriculum incorporates the arts as a vehicle. Works of art and the artistic process provide models for learning and knowing. The curriculum is characterized by

- Integration (arts into academics; academics into arts)
- The exploration of big ideas and small moments

Instruction is inquiry-based; the posing of questions and the rigorous investigation of those questions is encouraged. Instruction is characterized by

- Cooperative and collaborative learning
- Active and experimental learning
- Project-work based on student questions and interests
- Rigorous student exploration of questions

The environment, both in the classroom and in the school, encourages artistic exploration and is seen as the “third teacher.” The environment is characterized by a visually appealing class-



The languages of drawing, dance, sculpture, collage, architecture, and drama are all a part of the thinking and learning at MRH ECC.

room environment, and hallway and classroom display spaces for student work.

The teacher carefully studies children’s academic, creative and social progress to better plan the next learning experience.



## MRH Early Childhood Center

**PreK-1**

Grades served

**276**

Student enrollment

**11:1**

Student to teacher ratio

**15:1**

Student to classroom teacher ratio

**54**

Percentage of teaching staff with a master's degree or higher

**11.2**

Average years of teaching experience for teaching staff

**100**

Percentage of teaching staff with full certification

**93%**

Student attendance rate

Source: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

# The Reggio Emilia Approach Creates Meaningful Learning Experiences

The process of observing, questioning, experiencing and reflecting are all integral pieces of meaningful learning at MRH Early Childhood Center.

The content areas of early literacy, math, science, the arts, sociomoral development and motor development support this learning. The curriculum develops as children, families and educators bring their interests for exploration, study and research to this community.

The renowned early childhood programs of Reggio Emilia, Italy, named as one of the best educational systems in the world, inspires the work in early childhood education at the Early Childhood Center. Missouri's Early Childhood Standards also provide a strong framework for appropriate living and learning experiences in our preschool.



Teachers introduce materials, questions, and opportunities that provoke children to explore topics.

## Professional Development at MRH Early Childhood Center

The teaching staff at MRH Early Childhood Center takes part in a variety of professional development activities throughout the course of the year to improve and enhance their classroom teaching. The goals for MRH ECC professional development are:

- to continue to implement and refine curriculum in literacy, mathematics, inquiry, and technology by deepening our understanding of best practices in classroom instruction
- to embed a common language and common understandings and practices in the area of discipline
- to implement best practices in differentiation of instruction.

Teachers work with experts in the field on strategies for merging the models of "Schools of Studio" and the Reggio Emilia philosophy on their level.

ECC teachers have also studied the Vision Management System of discipline, which focuses on establishing routines that reduce discipline issues and improve instruction. Staff members are supportive and serve as resources to their colleagues, as evidenced by the newly created mathematics-coaching program for first grade staff, which is based on the highly successful literacy-coaching model already in place at the school.