Dear Parents,

Welcome and welcome back to another great year at Wayside Elementary School. My name is Lita Yates and I am the school counselor. I am new to Wayside E.S., but this is my 23rd year as an MCPS employee! I began my tenure as a classroom teacher. Now I am a National Board Certified Counselor and look forward to my tenth year as an elementary school counselor. On a personal note, I am the mother of three very active children, Kira 16 years old, Colleen 15 years old, and Jimmy 12 years old, and my husband is also an MCPS employee.

I have enjoyed getting to know the staff here at Wayside this summer, and I am excited to meet and work with everyone in the Wayside community. I typically send monthly newsletters with helpful tips and resources that address concerns and questions based on your feedback. You can sign-up to receive these newsletters electronically. This newsletter includes tips for starting a new year, an introduction to the role of the counselor and the counseling program, and some helpful resources. The last page of this newsletter will ask for your feedback. See you soon!

Happy Reading!

-Mrs. Yates

Contact info: Mrs. Yates
Lita_M_Yates@mcpsmd.org
301-279-8484

MCPS Helpful Tools

MCPS for Parents: Check out the Montgomery County Public schools website for parents at: http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/parents/

QuickNotes, Your information connection to MCPS in six languages: English 中文 (Chinese) français (French) 한국어 (Korean) español (Spanish) Việt Nam (Vietnamese)
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/quicknotes/welcome/english/

Special Programs: Montgomery County Public Schools offers special programs for students. More information, and the forms needed to apply for these programs can be found on the website mentioned above, and at http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/ Here is an overview:
Starting a New School Year!

Knowing how difficult it can be to get kids up and moving while getting back into a routine and starting school, I’m offering a few tips for a smooth first week of school:

• **Be positive!** Nothing sets the tone for a year like the attitude of one’s closest role models—your parents! If you are excited and positive, your children will know that and be in a positive mindset as they begin their new year, meet new teachers, and make new friends!

• **Be interested!** Ask your child about his/her day. Doing this regularly will increase the amount of feedback you get—they know you will ask, so they will start to be prepared to report. You might want to start with “Tell me one good thing that happened to you today.”

• **Be a role model!** Tell about your day, a quick catalog of events, and tell how you handle things that don’t go the way you wanted/expected.

• **Be prompt!** Getting to school on time is crucial to your child’s success in school! From greeting and checking in with friends, to signing up for lunch, and starting the day ahead of the game, there’s nothing like being late to set your child up for a rough day. (Having said that, I have three kids, I know it will happen on rare occasions, just don’t make it a habit!)

• **Be prepared!** Make sure your child has all the needed school supplies, lunch money in his/her account, knows his/her SNAP number, knows how to get home at the end of the day...it will make the beginning of the year easier. (There are donated school supplies for students who may need them—please let me know)

Here are some article to help you smooth the stress that comes with getting back into routine of school, sports, and other activities.

**The Importance of Home & School Teamwork**

Neither parents nor teachers working alone can do everything to help students learn. But when parents and teachers are on the same team, children win every time. Here’s how you can contribute to the partnership:

• **Establish and enforce** firm, fair & consistent rules. Respect for rules at home will translate to respect for learning.

• **Support your school’s policies** for attendance, discipline, homework, etc.

• **Come to every school event you can**, including teacher conferences.

• **Don’t talk disrespectfully** about the school or the teacher. Make sure your child knows that the teacher is in charge in the classroom and requires respect.

• **Show you believe that education is important.** Set a good example. Spend time reading to show your child that reading is enjoyable and useful. Stay positive about school. Your attitude will rub off and lead to better academic success.

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Role of the Counselor

An important consideration in the counseling relationship is confidentiality with students, parents, and teachers. I know that as a parent it can be hard to know when to ask for help and to ask for help when you know you need it. I hope that you will feel comfortable contacting me, via phone, email, or note, any time. I will help you find resources, look into situations, and support you and your children in any way I can.

What is typical? Sometimes kids are faced with problems that aren’t even problems, but confusing situations and/or difficult choices. Sometimes kids want to visit about good or exciting happenings; the kind of things just have to share! Sometimes kids are asked to deal with problems that are really big, or appear that way to the child or parent. Problems and difficult situations may arise from relationships with others, feelings about themselves, or from things beyond their control. Common problems we work on with a student include academic motivation, sadness, fears, loss, getting along with others, and other developmental concerns. I can also provide information and resources available for outside counseling.

The Counseling Program

The counselor’s primary responsibility is providing direct services to children.

Responsive Counseling:
Small group counseling provides students an opportunity to develop skills, share ideas, and support one another. I may also have friendship and social skills groups as needed to help students develop skills in those areas. Other topics for small groups might include: loss, skill development, divorce, anger management, and self-esteem building. I will also be providing individual counseling within the county guidelines for school counselors. I will always contact parents before including children in any group or beginning any kind of counseling.

Classroom Activities–:
The MCPS counseling program includes research based standards including:
   1. Mindset standards
   2. Behavior standards including: Learning Strategies, Self-Management Skills, and Social Skills
Based on these standards, I facilitate lessons for each class every 3 weeks. With each lesson I will send home a note to parents describing the focus of the lesson and asking you to support the learning.

School Program Support:
I actively participate in the articulation process & orientation for new students, EMT and 504 meetings, school committees and teams, assistance with testing, individual planning—planning for students with special needs (emotional, behavioral), counseling students with academic difficulties, parent conferences and more!

If you would like to know more about the counseling program, please ask!
DYK Did you know?

Montgomery County Public schools has a "language line" that allows interpreters to translate phone calls into another language? This service has translators of many different languages available to allow parents and school staff to communicate more easily.

I am not recommending these Other Resources, just letting you know they are available.

Welcome to Alert Montgomery https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov/index.php?CCheck=1
This alert system is administered by the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Montgomery County can use the Roam Secure Alert Network to contact you during a major crisis, emergency, or severe weather event. Residents who register on this system will receive only the most urgent alerts (e.g. Water main break, Tornado Warning) if they do not register for other optional groups. Alert Montgomery can deliver important emergency alerts, notifications and updates to you on all of your devices at once:

Parent Encouragement Program
For more information, visit PEP's website: http://www.parentencouragement.org/
Have a teenager, too? Check out our course guide by age group.
Please complete and return this brief survey to Mrs. Yates ASAP:

I would like to offer you the option to receive my Counselor Corner Newsletter via email. Please return this portion of the newsletter.

Dear Mrs. Yates,

Section 1:

☐ Please begin sending me an electronic copy of the Counselor Corner Newsletter via email at: __________________________

Section 2:

I think the information in this newsletter was:

☐ very helpful       ☐ somewhat helpful       ☐ not helpful

Section 3:

I would like to see you include the following in one of your newsletters:

Signed __________________________ parent of __________________________ in grade ___