

Dear Parents:

The staff of Early Learning Center would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to ELC. We would also like to thank you for allowing us to share with you in the growth and development of your child and for your willingness to have your child participate in our program.

Please take a few moments to read through this handbook. You will find a section containing our philosophy and some general information about ELC. **At the end of this handbook you will find a statement of agreement that must be signed by you prior to your child's enrollment.**

Parents are always welcome to observe any aspect of our program at anytime during normal operating hours. Observation appointments are not required for parents. All other visitors to the center are required to make prior arrangements and sign-in at the front office.

We are excited about the coming year and are confident that both you and your child will find the experience both enjoyable and beneficial. Please call if you have any questions or concerns about the policies addressed in this handbook or if there is any other way we can be of assistance. If at any time a family needs assistance translating and/or understanding any of the centers policies and procedures there are many options available through the University including but not limited to, translation through the International Affairs office and Disability Services. Please let the manager or your child's teacher know if you require these or any other additional services.

You may contact us at:

Early Learning Center  
Ferris State University  
1349 Cramer Circle  
101 Bishop Hall  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
(231) 591-2390  
[www.ferris.edu/earlylearningcenter](http://www.ferris.edu/earlylearningcenter)

Sincerely,  
THE STAFF OF EARLY LEARNING-CENTER

**This handbook is an integral part of the Early Learning Center contract as if fully set forth in that contract, and as such, you agree to abide by the policies set out in this handbook. It is the policy of Ferris State University to prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion or creed, national origin, sex, age, marital status, veteran or military status, height, weight, protected disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic prohibited by applicable State or federal laws or regulations.**

## Mission, Vision, and Core Values

As part of the greater University community the Early Learning Center strives to uphold and promote the mission, vision, and core values of Ferris State University.

### Mission:

Ferris State University prepares students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. Through its many partnerships and its career-oriented, broad-based education, Ferris serves our rapidly changing global economy and society.

### Vision:

Building on the vision of our founders, Ferris State University will be an agile and transformational university. By integrating theory and practice, we will foster opportunity, discovery, and professional preparation for a dynamic global society.

Core Values: Collaboration, Diversity, Ethical Community, Excellence, Learning, Opportunity.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of Early Learning Center is based on the belief that each child is a unique individual. While at ELC, all children are given many opportunities to learn in their own way, pursuing their own interests and having their many individual needs met. The center's goal is to accept each child as they are and help foster their growth and development into a responsible, independent, and caring person. We strive to make all children more aware of the world around them through activities and experiences aimed at social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. ELC understands the importance of providing the opportunity for children to participate in group and individual activities, active and quiet times, large and fine motor activities, and time for social interactions to promote problem solving and listening skills.

Early Learning Center believes if given the chance, every child has the potential to develop a healthy sense of self-esteem; a feeling that he or she is special, and a foundation that will encourage enjoyable learning experiences now and in the future.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

The goal of Early Learning Center is to provide a safe and stimulating environment which will help each child grow and develop at his/her own pace and to provide the community with a quality model child care program.

## **Program Goals for Children**

1. To help children develop a positive self-image.
2. To provide opportunities to establish early friendships for social interactions among children and adults; a foundation on which to build future learning.
3. To provide activities encouraging development of large and fine motor skills.
4. To help children develop effective communication, interpersonal relations, listening and conflict resolution skills.
5. To encourage children to express themselves in appropriate and acceptable ways.
6. To develop in each child an interest in learning about his/her environment.
7. To offer experiences that enable children to develop self-esteem and confidence to make decisions for themselves.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

ELC provides quality care and educational opportunities for children of Ferris State University students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding communities. ELC operates as an educational laboratory to various academic programs at Ferris State University. As outlined in the contract under “contract terms”:

*At any time throughout the day children may be observed and/or recorded and/or photographed for/ by the University’s students and/or faculty/staff for educational purposes and/or for marketing and promotional purposes.*

ELC has observation rooms complete with audio and video equipment which are available to parents enrolled in the center at any time without appointment.

ELC offers the following programs:

Infant Room	1 month - 18 months
Toddler Room	18-30 months
Preschool Room	2.5 years - 4 years
Pre-K Room	4-5 years
Summer Camp	5-12 years

*In all cases children are placed in groups which fit their developmental readiness as well as chronological age. ELC staff will work with families to determine which program will fit the needs of each individual child.*

### Transitioning to a new classroom

When children are transitioning into a new classroom within the center the current teaching team and the new teaching team will meet with the parents to inform and discuss the upcoming transition, introducing the family to the classroom and providing a Family Questionnaire for the new classroom, a daily schedule, and COR goals & objectives. After meeting with the child’s parent, the teaching staff set up a transition routine which best meets the needs of the child. During the transition process frequent communication between teaching staff and families will occur to assure a smooth transition for the child.

The teaching staff will follow up with a meeting with each child’s family shortly after enrollment begins to discuss specific goals, concerns, or questions the family may have.

For children who are entering kindergarten the ELC will keep open communication with all the area schools on their enrollment dates and processes. ELC will share these with families, and with parent/guardian

approval, provide the new school with pertinent information regarding the child's progress while at ELC.

The Early Learning Center is open between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Children may be dropped off beginning at 7:30 a.m. Children must be picked up **no later** than 5:30 p.m.

The ELC will be closed on the following periods annually:

Two weeks between summer and fall semester  
Labor Day  
The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving and the following day  
Four weeks between the end of fall exam week and the beginning of spring semester  
FSU Spring Break week  
Spring Recess (Thursday before Easter and Good Friday)  
Memorial Day  
The week of July 4<sup>th</sup>

The exact dates of these weeks will be available at the beginning of the contract period in which they occur. The closure periods align with the FSU Academic calendar to allow for professional development, cleaning/sanitation, building maintenance, staff vacation, classroom preparation, and time for teaching staff to coordinate assessments of child progress

### **Inclement Weather – Emergency closing**

In the event the University cancels classes due to weather or other emergencies, ELC will also be closed. Parents are responsible to listen for cancellation announcements on local radio and television stations. Information will also be available at the Ferris info line – 591-5602, by calling the center @ 591-2390 for a recorded message on closings, or on the Ferris home page – [www.ferris.edu](http://www.ferris.edu).

ELC will also attempt to inform parents of any unexpected closings. In order for this system to be effective, parents are encouraged to keep contact information such as phone numbers, email address, and cell phone email addresses up-to-date at all times. If you have any questions, please see the office staff for assistance.

Parent accounts will be credited for emergency dates of closure.

## PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The professional staff at ELC are dedicated to providing quality care and educational opportunities to all children. Full - time staff receive competitive wages and University administrative benefits packages to promote a consistent tenure of qualified teachers.

- Teachers have a minimum of a minimum of a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA), and related field experience, and/or equivalent combination of education and experience.
- All staff participate in ongoing professional training opportunities
- Teachers have current CPR and First Aid Certification (infant, child, and adult, including managing blocked airways) as well as annual Blood borne Pathogens Training
- All staff are dedicated to providing on-going partnerships with families.
- Infant and Toddler staff participate in Safe Sleep and SIDS training annually

In addition, all staff and non-parent volunteers are required to complete the following screening process before contact with children occurs:

- Criminal History Check
- Verification from Department of Health and Human Services they have not been placed on the Central Registry for Child Abuse/Neglect
- Signed Staff/Volunteer Screening Statement indicating they are informed of the "Child Protection Law" and their responsibility to comply with the law.
- Verification of Negative TB test and a Physical Form signed by a licensed physician

## CONTRACT TERMS

A contract will be prepared covering dates, hours, and tuition charges for each semester a child is enrolled at ELC. The contract must be signed by the parent and returned to our office by the deadline set each semester. A signed contract is an agreement that families will abide by all rules, regulations, and policies set

out in this handbook and agree to pay for **all** dates specified in the contract even when the child is absent; in turn, ELC agrees to provide child care services on all days and hours contracted. The exception to this policy is for inclement weather or emergency closing dates of the University. Before signing the contract parents should pay particular attention to the contract terms listed on the bottom.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

ELC enrolls children three times annually; fall, spring, and summer. We believe this process will assist parents in planning for the financial impact of tuition charges. Once a contract is received by the center the contract is considered legal and binding for the contract term. Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances occur impacting a family's ability to remain enrolled at ELC. When this occurs, a formal written request must be submitted to the manager indicating the reason for the request. If, upon an approval of the request, a child is withdrawn from the center during the contract period, the parent is required to pay tuition for 30 calendar days from the date of the withdrawal request or the remainder of the contract, whichever is sooner. The parties agree to this amount as liquidated damages in recognition of the lost revenue, given that the center is unable to fill the slot taken by the withdrawn child after the semester begins.

## **Tuition and Registration**

A one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$40.00 is required for each family at the time of initial enrollment. This registration fee does not apply toward tuition cost. Tuition charges are based on full day (7:30 am – 5:30 pm) scheduling options which include:

- **Monday through Friday**
- **Monday, Wednesday, Friday**
- **Tuesday and Thursday**

You may contact our office for current tuition rates.

## **Enrollment Eligibility**

The following information must be **completed** at least 24 hours prior to the admittance of each child:

1. Waiting list application.
2. Signed Contract for current semester
3. Registration fee of \$40.00
4. \*Up – to – date Immunization Record
5. \*Child Information Record – updated annually and/or as changes occur
6. Michigan Child and Adult Food Care Program Form
7. Legal copy of the child's Birth Certificate
8. Health Examination Form – must be signed by a licensed physician and returned no later than 30 days after initial enrollment
9. Signed statement of Understanding from back of parent handbook.

- 10. Completed Family Questionnaire
- 11. Security Entrance Agreement

**\*It is the responsibility of the parent to maintain up – to – date information regarding their child. Failure to provide these items may result in your child’s enrollment being delayed or cancelled. Tuition charges will be assessed to your account until the required information is provided.**

**Each time a child receives an immunization while enrolled it is the parent’s responsibility to provide an updated copy of the child’s immunization record within 5 days of the administration of the immunization.**

### **Drop In Policy**

Drop in enrollment will be approved by the front office on a space available basis provided a family has completed the required paperwork 24 hours prior to requesting care. Paperwork required includes a completed Child Information Record, current immunization record, completed food program form, and signed statement from parent indicating the child has no health restrictions. Forms are available in the office and may be filled out each semester. Please contact the office for current drop in rates. Families who have current contracts receive priority for drop in care. **Drop in fees must be paid in advance of service being provided.**

## **SIGN IN/OUT PROCEDURES**

ELC is required to maintain attendance records for each child enrolled. These records are used for reporting to state regulatory agencies, emergency evacuation procedures, and DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services) for billing purposes (if applicable). The following guidelines need to be followed when signing your child in or out. The sign in/out attendance sheets are located outside each classroom door.

1. Sign the child in by entering the exact time of drop off and initial in the appropriate box next to the child’s name.
2. If someone other than a parent is picking up a child, the parent should enter the person’s name in the box labeled “Adult other than parent or guardian picking up child”. **THIS PERSON MUST BE LISTED ON THE CHILD INFORMATION RECORD UNDER PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP CHILD.**
3. Sign the child out by entering the exact time the child is picked up from the center and sign in the box labeled “Adult Signature”.



4. Any person other than a parent or legal guardian (and parents unknown to staff) are required to provide a valid picture I.D.
5. Failure to follow the above procedures will result in the following:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> time - written warning
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> & all subsequent occurrences     \$2.00 charge and written notice

Occasionally circumstances arise prohibiting a parent from picking up their child as planned. Per State of Michigan licensing regulations, **ELC cannot accept phone calls from parents or guardians requesting someone else pick up a child. In place of a phone call parents may email the center or send in a written note signed by the parent or legal guardian indicating the person authorized to release the child to. In all circumstances, individuals must have valid picture I.D.**

## **DISMISSAL FROM CARE**

Early Learning Center reserves the right to request dismissal from the program if the child's needs are not being met, or the needs of the other children are being compromised.

Enrollment eligibility will be terminated for non-payment of tuition or for non-compliance of Health Department or Department of Health and Human Services regulations.

Early Learning-Center may request dismissal from our program for the following reasons:

1. Non – Cooperation of parent or child which jeopardizes the health and/or safety of another child.
2. Delinquency of payment of fees.
3. Inability of child or parent to adjust to the center's program.
4. Abuse of the 7:30 a.m. opening or 5:30 p.m. closing times
5. Verbal and/or physical abuse by a parent or child of other children, parents, and/or staff members
6. Failure to pick up a sick child within the 30- minute allotted time frame.

In the event a child and/or parent is dismissed for the above reasons, the parent or legal guardian will be responsible for the financial charges on the remainder of the contract.

## **PAYMENT METHODS**

Upon enrollment each family is asked complete a Payment Option Agreement to determine the payment method which best suits each families needs. ELC accepts payment in the form of cash, check, money order, or for Ferris State

University students, student accounts may be billed **if** excess funds exist on the account. Student account billing may only be done at the beginning of the contract for accounts in good standing. Payments may be made at the front desk or you may drop your payment in the drop box located outside Bishop Hall room 102. For families that hold a Monday-Friday contract and do not receive DHHS reimbursements, a 10% discount off of the entire semester's tuition is available if paid within 5 business days from the start of the contract. In all cases payments are expected to be made on a regular basis and cover the entire tuition amount for that period. Please be sure checks are made payable to: **Ferris State University**.

ELC gladly accepts payments from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It is the parent's responsibility to contact the DHHS office to determine eligibility and authorization amounts. New clients, who have applied for assistance and have not received verification from DHHS before enrollment begins, may make payments equal to 1/3 of the weekly tuition, for up to 4 weeks after initial enrollment. After notification from the DHHS office, the parent will be held responsible for whatever portion of tuition has not been covered. Once the center has received authorization from DHHS an estimate will be made of the parent's portion of tuition. Parents will be responsible for any amount not covered by DHHS. Children's attendance directly impacts the amount of reimbursement that DHHS contributes. Please keep in mind the percentage DHHS authorizes will not cover the entire amount of your tuition charges. Generally, up to 75% of tuition charges may be covered. Each case is different and eligibility is determined by DHHS. **Per DHHS policies, if a parent fails to report any required information payment will not be authorized, which may impact DHHS reimbursement. If this occurs parents will be responsible to cover the tuition amounts not reimbursed by DHHS.**

## **LATE PICK UP/EARLY DROP OFF**

Late pick-ups and early drop-offs negatively affect the operation of the center and cause staffing overtime expenses to occur. Late pick up is defined as the child not being under the supervision of the parent or designated guardian ready to leave the center by 5:30 pm. Teaching staff are only available to communicate and assist with departure until 5:30pm. Early drop-off is defined as the parent or designated guardian leaving a child in the care of the teaching staff prior to 7:30 am.

### **First late pick-up/early drop-off**

The first time a late pick-up or early drop-off occurs during a specific contract period a verbal warning will be issued without a fee being charged to the parent's account provided the timeframe is less than 15 minutes. If a child is not picked up within 15 minutes the policy for second late pick-up will automatically be applied.

## **Second late pick-up/early drop-off**

The second time during the same contracted period, a written warning will be issued as well as a fee of \$5.00 per 5-minute period as detailed in the table below:

Minutes	Fee per child
1:00-5:00	\$5.00
5:01-10:00	\$10.00
10:01-15:00	\$15.00
15:01-20:00	\$20.00
20:01-25:00	\$25.00
25:01-30:00	\$30.00
Over 30:00	Call DPS for child pick-up

## **Third late pick-up/early drop-off**

Regretfully, the third occurrence in the same contract period may result in immediate dismissal from ELC. As per the contract terms, the parent is still responsible to fulfill the remaining financial obligation of the contract.

When children are dropped off at the center before the scheduled contracted time, the same fees as stated above will be charged to your account. On the third occurrence in the same contract period, the same policy stated above for late pick – up will be used.

**If a child has not been picked – up from the center and the parent has not contacted the center after 15 minutes, the emergency contact person listed on the emergency information card will be notified. If the emergency contact person cannot be reached after 30 minutes, and the parent has still not notified the center, the staff at ELC will notify the Department of Public Safety on campus. If the Department of Public Safety is unable to contact the parent or emergency contact person, Child Protective Services will be contacted.**

## **ARRIVAL AND PICK UP PROCEDURES (10B.19)**

### **Safety & Security**

For safety reasons please be sure children are with an adult at all times during arrival & pick-up. These times can be hectic and confusing for parents, staff, and children. ELC asks parents to make sure the double doors in the hallway remain closed at all times. The hallway needs to remain free from items such as car seats, strollers, bikes, etc. as these items impose barriers to proper egress in emergency situations. In addition, parents are also asked to cooperate with

center rules regarding walking in the hallways. Parents should help demonstrate safe walking procedures by encouraging children not to hurry to and from classrooms.

The security door is located in the hallway prior to the classrooms. A swipe card is required to gain entrance to the classroom areas. Access is open to current families only. Upon enrollment families complete a Security Entrance Agreement. Parents who are FSU students, faculty, or staff can use their FSU ID cards. Parents who are not affiliated with the University will be issued up to two swipe cards free of charge. Additional cards may be purchased for \$10 each. Cards are turned in to the office at the end of enrollment.

### **Arrival (Drop-Off Procedure) (10D.7)**

Early Learning Center is licensed to begin operations at 7:30 am. Parents are asked to not arrive at the center prior to the 7:30 am opening to avoid additional charges to your account (see Late Pick/Early Drop off charge policy). Parents are responsible for assisting their child with the removal of any outside clothing, if needed. Parents are asked to accompany their child into the child's room and sign the child in. Please be sure your child is under the supervision of his/her teacher before leaving the premises. ELC does not promote parents leaving without informing their child. We realize it is sometimes stressful for parents to hear their child when they are upset. Research supports the negative impact that this practice can have on children's ability to successfully develop separation strategies. Teaching staff will work with families to develop separation routines which will support children and families in saying goodbye. The observation rooms are a great resource for parents to see how their child adjusts in their absence. Parents are welcome to utilize the observation rooms at any time.

In order for children to have the full benefit of our educational programming, each classroom has specific times that are appropriate for drop-off. This policy allows teaching staff adequate opportunities to complete the requirements of our assessment process, such as anecdotal notes and other authentic assessment materials, for each child. This data helps guides the teaching in their daily planning efforts to provide an active learning environment.

The specific time frames for each classroom are posted on the security entrance and at each classroom. The ELC realizes that there may be times when a child may arrive late to the program. Parents are asked to pre-arrange these occurrences with the teaching staff to coordinate drop-off to minimize disruptions. In these instances, families will be expected to remain with their child until the child is settled into the classroom routine.

## **Departure (Pick Up Procedure) (10D.9)**

Early Learning Center is licensed to provide services until 5:30pm. Parents are asked to arrive at the center in a timely manner to allow for end of the day communication. At the end of the day families are expected to pick up their children and leave the facility **by 5:30pm** to avoid additional charges (see Late Pickup/Early Drop of charge policy). We are always happy to communicate with parents and share feedback from their child's day, but we ask parent's cooperation in arranging pick up time to accommodate the 5:30pm closing time. With advance notice, staff can arrange special meetings with families after 5:30pm if necessary.

If you know you are going to be detained, please notify the center immediately so we can reassure your child he/she has not been forgotten. If we are not notified within 15 minutes past your child's contracted time, the emergency contact person listed on your child's information record will be contacted to pick up your child.

## **Authorization to pick up a child**

Children will be released only to persons whose names are listed on the child information record. No child will be released to a person not authorized by a parent to pick up the child. Per State of Michigan licensing regulations **ELC must have written authorization for changes in this respect.** Forms are available in the front office to make authorization changes or update contact information.

Photo identification will be required for persons picking up children.

As stipulated by state law and licensing regulations, **ELC cannot legally prevent a biological parent from picking up their child unless a court order stating otherwise is on file in our office.**

## **Releasing a Child to an Adult Under the Influence of Alcohol or Other Drug Use**

If a situation arises when a staff person suspects an adult may be impaired due to alcohol or other drug use the following procedures will be followed to protect children from being placed in a dangerous situation.

1. Offer to keep child in care for an extended period until the adult can secure another option to safely pick up the child.

2. Call another of the child's emergency contacts identified on the Child Information Record

If the parent or adult refuses the above options:

Staff are required to inform the parent that it is not safe for the children to ride with him/her at this time and notify law enforcement as soon as they leave the site (staff will obtain a description of the vehicle and plate number).

Once an adult drives away with the child the staff will contact law enforcement immediately (call 911) and then call DHHS – Child Protective Services (855-444-3911)

In the event that an adult is not driving in a vehicle with the child, but staff still observe signs that an adult is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, the staff are still required to report the suspicion to law enforcement and Child Protective Services.

### **PARENT PARKING**

Parents are responsible to register their vehicle(s) each semester with ELC. To receive a parking permit, parents will need to submit the vehicle's plate #. Parking space is reserved in front of Bishop Hall for drop – off and pick – up. These spaces may be used for up to 15 minutes. After 5:00p.m you may park in the parking lot located to the west of Bishop Hall if all of the designated parking spaces for ELC are filled. Public Safety may ticket vehicles which are parked in ELC reserved parking more than 15 minutes. If more time is needed for volunteer or classroom related activities, please inform the front office and accommodations will be made.

For the safety of everyone, please be sure children are not left unattended in a vehicle or leave a vehicle engine running when an adult is not present in the vehicle (with or without children present. Except if vehicles need to idle in cases of extreme heat or cold to maintain safe interior or engine temperatures. **(5A.25)**).

If you have special guests/visitors who will be visiting the center, such as grandparents, etc., please have them stop at the front office to receive a guest parking permit. The University appreciates your cooperation in this matter as the safety of all University participants is of the utmost importance.

## FAMILY ROOM

Room 104 is available for use by parents. This room can be used for breastfeeding, studying, relaxing, parent meetings, etc. There is a computer and printer for parent use available in the lounge complete with internet service. There are also signs on the board to post on the door for privacy if needed. We hope this area will be a relaxing area for parents to enjoy.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS (10B.19, R.400. 8155(5))**

A standard medical (health appraisal) form provided by ELC must be completed by your child's physician no later than 30 days after initial enrollment at the center. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain current health appraisal and immunization records for their child. Health appraisals are current for up to 1 year from the original date for infants and toddlers and up to 2 years for preschool children. Information regarding specific immunization requirements can be obtained from your child's physician or the local health department.

If you choose to sign an Immunization Waiver Form for your child, and a communicable disease which is vaccine preventable occurs within the center, your child will be excluded from attending based on the Health Departments exclusion policies. Please be aware that regular tuition charges will be assessed to your account in this situation.

It is important every parent cooperate fully with our health program. Our policies are designed to protect the well being of all children and to guard, as much as possible, against avoidable absences for health reasons. When there are symptoms of illness or other indications indicating a child is not well enough to participate in group activities, arrangements must be made for his/her care outside the center. ELC does not have provisions for the care of children who are ill.

Proper care at the beginning of an illness can often shorten its duration. If your child becomes ill at the center, he/she will be isolated, and you or the emergency person listed on your child's information record will be called, so you can make arrangements to have him/her picked up **within 30 minutes**.

In the event your child becomes ill at home or while at the center, it is necessary to keep your child out of the center for a complete 24 hours after **all** symptoms or signs of illness have passed. This policy includes, but is not limited to; fever, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, nasal congestion, and eye discharge. If your child is prescribed an antibiotic from his/her physician, they should be kept at home for a full 24 hours from the first dose.

ELC staff will use the following guidelines to determine when a child should be sent home from the center. If you notice your child has one or more of the

following symptoms, please keep your child at home to monitor your child's health for a full 24 hours.

- **Fever – AND/OR** sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion. Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher taken under the arm, 101 degrees F if taken orally, or 102 degrees F if taken rectally. For children 4 months or younger, the lower rectal temperature of 101 degrees F is considered fever threshold. **ELC will take children's temperature under the arm only.**
- **Diarrhea** – runny, watery, or bloody stools.
- **Vomiting** – 2 or more times in a 24- hour period.
- **Body rash with fever**
- **Sore throat** with fever and/or swollen glands
- **Severe coughing** – child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing.
- **Eye discharge** – thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye.
- **Yellowish skin or eyes**
- **Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.**
- **The child has a specific condition that is likely to expose others to a communicable disease.**

Please report to the center any illness your child may have. Any special needs, such as allergies or restriction of physical activities, must be specifically noted by your child's physician. Parents should be aware in circumstances where a physician has limited a child's physical activities and/or ability to go outside, ELC cannot provide care requiring the children to be separate from the group, children should be kept at home until they can fully participate in normal daily activities. ELC does have an approved Health Care Services Plan established. A copy can be found at each of the classroom entrances and you may also request a copy for your records at any time.

### **MEDICATION (10B.19)**

The staff at ELC will administer medications to children under the following guidelines:

In all cases medication may only be administered by a staff person who has successfully completed medication administration training through MI Registry. **(5A.20)**. Refrigerated medication will be kept in room 118 inside the locked box located in the refrigerator. Medication which does not require refrigeration is kept in a locked box inside the classroom. A Medication Administration log is maintained for all medications (prescription and over-the-counter). The Medication Administration log is kept with the medication in the locked box at all



times. Staff members administering medication are responsible to keep records at each dose.

**The tool used for administering medication is the responsibility of the child's parent to supply. A medication administration tool can be used for only one child. Teaching staff will label the tool with the child's name and take care of cleaning and sanitizing after each use.**

**ELC staff are not authorized to administer aspirin, Tylenol, Motrin, or similar products to children under 2 years old without a prescription from the child's doctor.**

### **Prescription Medication –**

The staff at ELC will administer medications to children under the following guidelines:

- Medication bottle contains the child's full name.
- The medication has been prescribed by a licensed physician.
- The medication is in the original container (you may want to ask the pharmacist to dispense medication in two containers).
- Contains the date prescription was filled.
- Contains the expiration date of the medication
- Is in a child - proof container (if applicable).
- A Prescription Medication Consent Form must be completed and signed by the parent/legal guardian.
- Consent form and administration log are to be kept with the medication at all times

### **Over – the – Counter Medication – (including teething gel)**

- Medication is in original container.
- **Medication must contain specific directions for child's age and/or weight.**
- Container must be labeled with child's full name.
- Expiration date of medication must be on the original medication container.
- Medication must be in a child - proof container (if applicable)
- An Over-the-counter Medication Consent Form must be completed and signed by the parent/legal guardian.
- Consent form and administration log are to be kept with the medication at all times

**PLEASE DO NOT ADMINISTER FEVER REDUCING PRODUCTS TO YOUR CHILD BEFORE THEY ARE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL. IF YOUR CHILD IS ILL ENOUGH TO REQUIRE THESE PRODUCTS THEY SHOULD BE KEPT AT HOME. FEVERS ARE OFTEN INDICATIONS OF OTHER ILLNESSES. FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.**

## **(5A.16)**

Products such as diaper ointments, hand cream, sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher), and other such topical ointments require an annual permission form to be completed by the child's parent/legal guardian. Parents should seek the advice of their child's doctor before requesting administration of such products. It is the responsibility of the child's parent to provide all items for the annual permission form. Typical ointment products are not required to be placed in the medication lock box, but must be placed well out of children's reach in a secure location.

\*Special note: staff must adhere to the directions and age requirements listed on the topical ointment container. A physician's note is required for infants under 6 months old or for age groups not specified on the original container.

The application of insect repellents will only occur if a public health authority has issued a recommendation for the use of such products due to a high risk of insect-borne disease. It will be the responsibility of the parent to provide insect repellents which contain DEET and to provide written permission in an over-the-counter medication form for application to occur. Insect repellents will be applied no more than once per day and cannot be applied to children under 2 months old.

## **Communicable Diseases**

If your child has a communicable disease such as whooping cough, strep throat, measles, chicken pox, pink eye, etc., please notify ELC immediately. This will allow us to inform the other parents and the Health Department. A notice of a communicable disease will be posted at the security entrance. This notice does not give the child's name. We are required to report the child's name and information to the Mecosta County Health Department for some specific communicable diseases. Please see the front office if you have questions.

If a child becomes ill at ELC, the parent/legal guardian will be contacted immediately. Whenever a communicable disease is present we will use the guidelines set by the State of Michigan and the local health departments to determine when a child can return to our program.

## **Head Lice Policy**

In cooperation with the District Health Department #10 and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the following Head Lice Policy is:

- Periodic "head checks" will be conducted at school to screen students for lice.
- Whenever a student is found to be infested with head lice or to have nits, staff will notify parents.

- A student identified with head lice or nits will not be permitted to attend school or participate in school functions until school personnel have checked and found he/she to be "nit-free".
- Educational materials shall be provided to parents, guardians and staff at the beginning of the school year, periodically throughout the school year, and whenever a case of head lice is encountered in a school setting. In addition, if the same child contracts head lice for a second time within a six- week period, the Department of Public Health for both the county in which the child resides and Mecosta County will be notified. If the same child contracts head lice for a third time during the school year, the Department of Public Health and DHHS will be notified in order that one of these agencies may assist the parent(s)/guardian(s) with effective treatment of the infestation.

### **FOOD SERVICE (10.D.01e)**

Nutritious meals are prepared daily at the center. ELC participates in the Michigan Child & Adult Care Food Program. Meals are prepared with the guidelines set forth by this program. Menus and photos of each meal are posted on the menu board in the hallway directly before the security entrance. If you would like a copy for your records, please let us know at the front desk. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) ([http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html)) online, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The following meals are provided daily:

BREAKFAST	8:15 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.
LUNCH	11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. shifts beginning with the infant room.
SNACK	2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. shifts depending on nap schedules

As stated in the guidelines for the Michigan Child & Adult Food Care Program, meals and snacks cannot be served outside the child's assigned room times. Food from outside the center cannot be served except for treats pre-approved through your child's teacher that may be brought in for special occasions, such as birthdays. Foods brought from home for special occasions must be only whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers (with ingredients listed).

If your child is allergic to a specific food item, ELC will need to have a physician's note for our files stating the child's allergy and any substitutions to be provided by ELC.

If you have religious convictions against any particular food items, we request a written note to include in your child's file specifying the items.

## **REST AND RELAXATION**

Rest time is a very important part of the child's daily schedule. Rest time is scheduled from approximately 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. daily. Children are not required to sleep, but are asked to quietly remain on their cots to allow the opportunity for other children to rest. Parents are encouraged to provide a small blanket & pillow to help their children relax. Please be sure all items are labeled with your child's name. These items will be sent home weekly for cleaning. The staff will be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing your child's cot and sheet.

During rest time staff will dim lights, play soft music to soothe children and provide a relaxing atmosphere.

**The center policy states we give every child the opportunity to relax and rest every day. We do not prevent a child from sleeping or resting so they will sleep better at home. We will attempt to work with specific parent requests which support opportunities for appropriate rest for children.**

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

Early Learning Center (ELC) offers a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate curriculum where active learning is facilitated by flexible classroom arrangements that utilize interest centers and individualized activities based on each child's individual background and learning style.

The ELC utilizes the High Scope Curriculum for all age groups combined with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Developmentally Appropriate Practice standards and the State of Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality.

Utilizing High Scope's online Child Observation Record, (COR Advantage) goals and objectives are developed for each age group based on the developmental stages of the children enrolled. The curriculum is based on the belief that learning is an on-going, life-long process as well as emergent, child-centered, and play-based with activities and experiences designed to help children gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. ELC believes parents are valuable partners in their children's education and provides families with a copy of their children's daily schedule, curriculum goals & objectives, and a Family Information Form during the enrollment orientation process. To foster a positive school-home partnership parents also receive on-going communication from teaching staff and opportunities to be involved in their child's classroom.

The ELC holds the following fundamental beliefs that allow the children and families enrolled in our program the following benefits:

- A climate of acceptance and inclusion by enrolling children of varying cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and racial backgrounds who have a range of abilities and special needs.
- Qualified and nurturing staff members who use developmentally appropriate practices and who develop warm, responsive relationships with each child and family.
- Enhancement to each child's social, emotional and physical health and well-being through the assignment to a consistent teaching team.
- Warm, stimulating, and multi-sensory environment filled with culturally, linguistically and developmentally appropriate materials and activities.
- On-going staff development reflective of the most current information about young children's development and early learning.
- Continuous assessment and evaluation system that regularly monitors individual children's development and the important aspects of the program's quality to support children's continued development and learning.
- Collaboration with the community to ensure appropriate referrals as needed.

### **Special Needs Policy(10D.10)**

ELC strives to provide appropriate developmental learning opportunities for all children in accordance with the Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood Standards of Quality.

The curriculum is designed to provide a developmentally and linguistically appropriate environment and adult guidance to enable the participation of children with special needs. We do our best to ensure our program:

- Supports all children in achieving a sense of belonging, contribution, and membership in their classroom.
- Adapts activities, make accommodations, and uses other social strategies that integrate children socially and enables them to participate in activities, regardless of abilities.
- Adapts materials and equipment so that all children can share in activities, contribute to the group, engage, develop, and keep friendships.
- Provides and arranges space to make play equipment and materials accessible to all children, both inside and outdoors.
- Assists children, if necessary, in playing with and using materials, communicating their discoveries, solving problems, or engaging for longer periods of time.
- Increases the complexity and challenge of activities, materials, play or learning opportunities, as children develop and find greater self-confidence.
- Observes children carefully to identify their preferred ways of interacting with the environment, taking into account their skills in handling objects and materials, frequency of conversations, interest in listening to stories and songs, and choices to work alone or engage with others.
- Provides multiple avenues for children to learn and to express themselves with others, alone, or through technology (e.g., children with disabilities have access to creative and physical experiences that enable participation in alternative ways).
- Requires each adult to be responsible for each child in the program so that every adult can support every child to meet their learning expectations.
- Discusses with parents and with relevant staff parental expectations for their children.
- Provides adults trained in medical, dental, and emotional support to be on-site when required by a physician to deliver special services to children with documented special needs.

### **Infant / Toddler -Primary Caregivers**

Upon enrollment each child enrolled in the Infant and Toddler program will be assigned a primary caregiver. Primary caregivers are essential to forming positive relationships between the children and teachers. A primary caregiver is the primary contact with the child's family and is responsible to plan activities for each of the children in the care group based on each child's individual needs. The primary caregiver assignments are posted in each classroom and given to each family. The curriculum goals & objectives, together with input from parents provide guidance for planning for each individual child.

## **Preschool and Pre-K**

A daily schedule has been developed to begin to prepare children for kindergarten. The daily schedule of the preschool classroom is designed to offer children a variety of learning experiences including group and self - initiated activities.

## **Daily Schedule**

The preschool classroom follows the HighScope curriculum. Some aspects of the curriculum are outlined below.

### **Large Group Time**

At Large Group Time, the whole group of children and adults gather for playing games, making up and singing songs, doing finger plays, learning dances, or playing musical instruments. Large Group Time provides an opportunity of shared control between teachers and students. He or she can sometimes be a leader and sometimes a follower. This provides an opportunity for children to learn the social skills of imitation, turn taking, listening to others, and group effort.

### **Small Group Time**

During Small Group Time, each adult meets with 5 to 8 children to work on the activities planned by the teaching team, to provide some key experiences of cognitive growth. Adults plan Small Group activities around the interest and abilities of the children, allowing for individual ideas and differences. They use this time to observe children, expose them to new materials, and give them a chance to find new ways of using materials.

### **Planning Time**

At Planning Time, adults and children meet together to talk about what each child wants to do and how the child might go about doing it. Children decide how they will use their choice time and the adult will encourage the child to say or demonstrate what he or she would like to do. The adult helps them learn how to identify choices for themselves. Children who plan for themselves see that they can make things happen. They begin to view themselves as people who can decide and who can act on their own decisions.

### **Work Time**

Work Time is the heart of the preschool day. The children may use the entire classroom to explore, learn new skills, try out ideas, and put together what they know in ways that make sense to them. Adults move among the children, observing and helping as needed. During Work Time,

a child and adult may work together on various skills such as fine/gross motor activities or identifying numbers, colors, and shapes.

## **Clean-Up Time**

Adults in the program can assist children with Clean-Up by encouraging them to clean up throughout Work Time as they finish one plan and begin another. During Clean-Up, children put away the toys and materials they have been using. They may also wipe tables, wash paint brushes, jars, or cooking utensils, and sweep or vacuum floors. As they sort, pile, stack, empty, and fit together materials, they learn where things go and that similar things go together. This helps them also develop problem solving skills. Recognizing that the symbols on the shelves stand for real objects is a skill necessary for reading. Sorting things, putting materials back, and cleaning up also helps children see that clean-up is a part of any activity.

## **Recall Time**

Recall Time gives children the opportunity to remember and represent what they did during Work Time. Recalling completes the “plan-do-review” process. By looking back at what they have done, children can start to see the relationship between their plans and their activities and can develop more awareness of their own actions and ideas. In the process of recalling, children attach language to their actions. Talking about recalling in a small group, helps them get ideas from each other about things they might like to try. Adults may ask them to recall specifics, for example: “Did you play in the blocks? What did you build? Where did you play outside? Who did you play with?”

## **Rest Time**

Rest time is a very important part of the child’s daily schedule. Rest time is scheduled from 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. daily. Children are not required to sleep, but are asked to quietly remain on their cots during rest time. We encourage you to provide a small blanket & pillow to help your child relax. If you would like your child to have a small blanket/pillow to be kept in the classroom, but would not like to send one from home, please contact us and we will provide one. (231) 591-2390. Please be sure all items are labeled with your child’s name. These items will be sent home weekly for cleaning. The staff will be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing your child’s cot and sheets.

During rest time we will dim lights, play soft music, help soothe children and provide a relaxing atmosphere.

## **Outside Time**



Outside time is when children can run, jump, skip, climb, slide, push, throw, race, shout, hide, and dig. Our schedule includes outdoor activities each day, weather permitting. Children will go outside if the temperature is 20 degrees or above, and not higher than 85 degrees. In all cases the staff will use “sound judgment” when determining if children should be taken outside. Fresh air is important for all children; it aids in controlling the spread of illness. If your child is too sick to go outdoors, they should be kept at home until he or she can participate in outdoor activities. We do not have excess staff to supervise children indoors and outdoors at the same time. Keep in mind weather can change without advance notice. We suggest that you keep clothing at the center to accommodate a variety of temperatures. We cannot be responsible if parents do not provide appropriate clothing for their child. We will not take children outside if it is raining. Please be sure all outerwear is labeled with your child’s name. This includes jackets, snow pants, boots, gloves, hats, etc.

### **Assessment Plan (2A.8, 4A.1)**

At ELC, assessment is an on-going process designed to meet the individual developmental needs of children as well as to improve program quality. The assessment procedures are designed to gather information on each child and each group of children from several forms of evidence. As data is gathered it is organized to guide planning which supports children’s growth and development and inform planning for overall program improvements. **(4A.2)**.

The majority of the assessment process is completed as part of typical daily routines with the children in their classroom setting. The ELC assessment plan is sensitive to and informed by family culture, experiences, children’s abilities, and home language.

ELC utilizes High Scope’s online Child Observation Record (COR Advantage) which provides a systematic ongoing assessment to allow teaching staff to monitor each child’s progress in each content area, which will allow staff to plan and scaffold children’s future learning experiences.

Teaching staff share written reports created through the assessment process with families at least 2 times per year generally through parent conferences. Upon request the reports can be shared more frequently. **(4E.2)**. At enrollment families are provided with information on the center’s assessment process. Teaching staff set up a meeting to discuss the parent’s goals for their child, screening results, and observations of the child’s progress in the classroom. Shared goals are monitored and adjusted on an on-going basis between teaching staff and parents. **(4E.3)**

## Assessment Methods

ELC uses a variety of methods such as developmental and health screenings, input from families, teacher observations/anecdotal notes, checklists, rating scales, etc. to collect information. The information is used to assess each child's progress across all areas of development including cognitive skills, language, social/ emotional development, and physical development. Formal assessment using the collection of data explained above is typically completed 4 times per year for each child. The results of the assessment are used to establish goals for each child to further support future learning opportunities.

ELC routinely evaluates the standardization samples, procedures, scoring, reliability and validity of all formal and informal assessment methods to ensure that the tools and methods are meeting the needs of our children and program.

Teaching staff that have assessment responsibilities have completed training specific to the established Assessment Procedures including but not limited to, High Scope COR Advantage Assessment training, early childhood development, training on recording anecdotal records, completing checklist, administering developmental screenings and working with families(4E.4).

## **COR ADVANTAGE - Uses of Assessment Results**

**ELC will use the information gathered and collected to support children's development and learning by:**

- Identifying children who may benefit from special services and arrange for referrals as appropriate
- Identifying individual interests and developing goals for children
- Adapting teaching practices and the environment to support children
- Communicating with families regarding their child
- Improving program quality

Program uses for Assessment Results through COR Advantage:

- Outcomes Report
- Strengths and Opportunities Report
- Other reports as needed to support on-going children's development and needs

## Confidentiality (10D.6)

All information pertaining to children's records and assessment materials will be treated with respect and will be handled in a professional manner. Individuals who will have access to the child's records include the manager, assistant manager, the classroom teacher and classroom assistant teacher(s), the child's legal guardians, and Regulatory authorities.

Child records and portfolios kept on the computer are available only to the individuals mentioned above. Hard copies of the Brigance screening results, Health Appraisals and Assessment Portfolios are kept in secured offices (managers or teacher's) in locked filing cabinets. Children's records are kept for seven years and disposed of through Ferris State University Archive department unless otherwise requested by a child's parent or legal guardian. More information regarding the Brigance Screening tool and High Scope COR Advantage please visit [www.brigance.com](http://www.brigance.com) or [www.CORAdvantage.org](http://www.CORAdvantage.org). Teachers and management staff can also provide further information on the Early Learning Center's Assessment procedures.

## COMMUNICATION AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Maintaining an on-going reciprocal partnership with families is key to providing a quality learning environment for young children.

ELC will use the following methods to communicate with families:

- **Daily verbal communication** – teaching staff greet children and parents by name, share accomplishments, or something the child enjoyed during the day, and solicit feedback from parents
- **Daily written communication**- Daily records will be kept for each child in the infant and toddler programs. These records will include food intake, sleeping patterns, toileting, and developmental milestones such as crawling, sitting, focusing on objects, or smiling. All forms are carboned so that parents can take a copy home each day. The other copy is kept on file as a permanent record. In the preschool and Pre-K rooms, similar records are kept. The main goal of the tyke and preschool daily records is for parents to have an overview of their child's day. The records for the preschool and Pre-K rooms will include daily activities, eating, and rest patterns.
- **Copies of individual lesson plans** – Upon request each parent is provided with a copy of their child's individual lesson plans and/or portfolio contents
- **Parent conferences** – are scheduled at least 2 times per year (more often as requested by parents and/or teaching staff). Conferences are scheduled in advance at times of convenience for families
- **Parent meetings/family events** – are scheduled throughout the year based on the interest of the parents. Surveys are used to determine the frequency and format for such meetings
- **Parent Advisory committee** – parents are invited to participate in the Parent Advisory committee meetings. Surveys and feedback from

advisory committee members is used to determine the frequency and format of meetings

- **Volunteer Opportunities** – ELC staff value parent participation in the program. Children benefit from having family members involved in their daily activities. This is a wonderful way to demonstrate to children the value of a home – school partnership. Parents are welcome at anytime to assist with class projects, field trips, special events, or just spending time in the classroom
- **Other forms of communication** – center-wide newsletters and notes from teachers are other ways center staff communicate with families
- **Additional Family Involvement-** Parents are welcome to work with staff and participate in community and advocacy projects such as Great Start Family Fun Days, Month of the Young Child Activities, etc.

## **Resolving differences with families (10B.20)**

Early Learning Center strives to build reciprocal partnerships with all families to make them feel welcomed and valued as part of their child’s educational team. Inevitably, challenging situations come up from time to time; such situations can be viewed as learning opportunities for everyone involved. When situations arise which involve differences between the center staff and family members, the following steps are taken as part of the problem solving approach:

- Teaching staff arrange to meet with family members in a private setting away from children
- Teaching staff gather information from families
- Teaching staff clarify the problem and develop goals cooperatively allowing family members to explain their perspectives. Together as a team generate specific goals
- Brainstorm to generate possible solutions – together as a team openly discuss ways each team member can support the child to achieve the agreed upon goals
- Create a written plan of action – include the goals established and a timeline for following up with all parties involved
- Follow up and continue discussions – once an agreement has been made, make plans to check back on progress. Update plans as needed based on the success of the specific plans established. It may require several meetings and discussions to find successful solutions

In the event a conflict and/or differences are not able to be solved by the steps listed above, it may be necessary to involve the manager for assistance. The manager will also follow the steps listed above to resolve the issue. Based on the needs of the child, family, and other children enrolled a decision will be made on the next steps to be taken which may include referral to the Associate Vice President of Auxiliary Enterprises, and/or removal from Early Learning Center.

## **Cultural Competency Policy**

ELC strives to provide culturally sensitive environments in which all families and children feel welcomed and accepted, in accordance with the Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood Standards of Quality. In addition to seeking information from families, ELC staff will work closely with the Ferris State University International Education Office and the Diversity and Inclusion Office to connect staff and families with resources and/or networking support.

The curriculum is designed to include experiences related to multicultural awareness. Our goal is to:

- Provide opportunities for children to interact with adult members of their own and of other cultural groups.
- Provide classroom activities which include books, pictures, props, music, foods, materials, field trips, and clothing representing a wide range of cultural groups as they are represented in present day and historic settings.
- Assures that children receive positive, accurate information about a variety of cultural groups, including those specific to their families and/or community.
- Integrate multicultural activities into the daily routines of the program rather than reserving them only for holidays or special occasions.
- Support learning cultural competence among staff that is carried into all aspects of the program.
- Reflect the culture of the children in each classroom.
- Recognize models and supports respect for language diversity.
- Provide a learning environment where no child is mocked, belittled, bullied, or ignored.
- Provide a minimum of 3 hours annual Professional Development in areas that support the backgrounds, cultural belief and/or special needs of the children enrolled.

### **Guidance Policy (1B.8, 1B.10, 10B.18)**

The staff at Early Learning Center will use only positive methods of discipline/guidance, which encourage each child to develop self-control, self-esteem, and self-direction. When children are actively involved in developmentally appropriate learning activities, misbehavior is less likely to occur. The goal is to assist children in conflict resolution strategies to help strengthen their problem solving abilities.

The following methods of punishment, psychological abuse, and/or coercion shall never be utilized by staff in accordance with State of Michigan Licensing Regulations and NAEYC Accreditation Standards:

- Physical punishment such as: shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, pulling of arms,

- hair, ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time, restricting a child's movement by binding or tying up
- Psychological abuse such as: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening children, ostracism, withholding affection.
  - Coercion such as rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part; forcing a child to sit down, lie, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up)
  - Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use
  - Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle
  - Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities
  - Excluding a child from daily learning experiences

### Conflict Resolution Strategies

ELC utilizes the High Scope Approach to resolving conflicts with children. The adults working with children can support them by facilitating the six steps of conflict resolution, as developmentally appropriate for each age group.

1. Approach: Place yourself between children, at their level, use a calm voice
2. Acknowledge: Use phrases like "You look really upset"
3. Ask: "What's the problem"
4. Restate: "So the problem is...."
5. Ask: "What can we do to solve this problem". Encourage children to think of a solution. It is important children agree on a solution together.
6. Follow-up: "You solved this problem". Stay close to offer follow up if needed

The more these strategies are used, the more successful children will become at being critical thinkers and problems solvers.

### Infants and Toddlers

It is developmentally appropriate for infants and toddlers to be curious about their surroundings. During active exploration of their environment, children may engage in actions which could cause harm to themselves, others, or the environment around them. A child's natural curiosity can override their ability to comply with rules; ELC staff will strive to provide a "child – proof" environment so children are able to enjoy free exploration of the world around them. This is a delicate stage in a child's development; during this stage they are forming a self-concept of themselves. Teaching staff attempt to eliminate negatives such as "NO" and "DON'T", instead using phrases which let the child know what appropriate choices they can make, staff also redirect inappropriate activities. Infants and toddlers do not typically possess the verbal skills needed to express their anger or frustration; instead they may use unacceptable behaviors (aggression, biting, and temper tantrums) to communicate. It is important to understand these are typical behaviors children this age exhibit. The goal is to help them learn replacement behaviors.

The first step is to try to determine the cause of the behavior and focus on what the child needs, rather than on what they are doing or saying. Record observations and speak with other teaching staff and/or the child's parents to gain understanding of why the child may be using the behaviors.

## Preschool

During the preschool years' children begin to understand classroom expectations. The teaching staff set guidelines through classroom limits, schedules, and teaching strategies geared toward assisting children to become self – confident, critical thinkers and problem solvers. The teaching staff realizes conflicts will occur with young children. The teaching staff will use these situations to help children learn conflict resolution strategies and problem solving skills. Staff model positive techniques by teaching children the importance of listening to other points of view, identifying the problem at hand, seeking solutions, and agreeing on solutions. It is important for adults to be facilitators in the problem solving effort rather than dictate what the solutions should be.

## Physical Aggression

When physical aggression occurs the behavior will be stopped immediately by positioning yourself between the aggressive child and the victim. The victim is given immediate attention to be sure they are all right. Staff position themselves at the aggressive child's level and clearly state the rule about hurting others. The aggressive child is involved in comforting and taking care of the victim (if the victim allows it). Staff remain calm when dealing with both children. Both children are given positive attention throughout the incident.

## Temper Tantrums

When temper tantrums occur teachers make sure the child is safe from harming themselves or others around them and reassure the child that teachers are there to help. The best defense for temper tantrums is planning ahead to minimize them. Some strategies include:

- Give children opportunities to be helpers
- Give children many opportunities to make choices for themselves
- Label shelves and materials with pictures so children can easily use them independently
- Give children a wide variety of toys and materials to play with including items they are familiar with
- Offer children comfort often (hugs, cuddles, verbal acknowledgement, etc.)
- Know children's physical needs and schedules –such as when they are hungry tired, etc.
- Give children opportunities to play outdoors and/or active play indoors throughout the day

## Biting

A typical behavior especially for infants and toddlers is biting. Biting can cause a very stressful atmosphere for the children, staff, and for parents. It is important to remain calm and focus on what may be causing the child to bite. When biting occurs, ELC staff follow these strategies:

- Respond calmly and promptly
- Comfort and care for the victim – wash the wound and apply an ice pack to reduce swelling
- Deal with the biter by stating firmly biting is not all right (do not use tone of voice to punish the child, or become overly dramatic)
- Encourage the biter to care for the victim (if the victim will allow)
- Give the biter suggestions for a replacement behavior such as using words or growling, etc.
- Document the biting injury and give copy to manager
- Complete an Incident Report
- Keep a positive prospective on the biting child
- Speak with both parents (biter and victim) to seek information and try to help parents understand the situation, **retain confidentiality of all involved**
- Continue to observe to identify possible patterns/causes
- Speak with manager if biting persists beyond normal/typical occurrences

## **Challenging Behaviors (1E.1, 3B.2)**

Occasionally, children's behaviors go beyond what is typically considered developmentally appropriate.

Challenging behaviors are "any behavior that (1) interferes with children's learning, development and success at play (2) is harmful to the child, other children, or adults [or] (3) puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure". (*Kaiser & Rasminksy, Challenging Behavior in Young Children (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*, Pearson Education Inc. p.8). Examples of Challenging behavior include, but are not limited to: physical aggression such as hitting, biting, shoving, whacking with toys, destruction of property, relational aggression ["you can't play with us"], verbal bullying, tantrums, whining, testing limits, refusal to follow directions and/or observe classroom rules, and/or imposing safety risks to self and/or others around them. If repeated redirection attempts are unsuccessful, ELC staff reserves the right to have a child displaying extreme behaviors picked up from the center for the remainder of the day. This will allow the child with extreme behaviors a chance to calm down away from the physical environment.

*In the event potentially harmful situations persist, the following measures will be taken:*

- *Teaching staff will work together to assess the function of the challenging behavior.*



- *Teachers will observe the challenging behavior through observations (including but not limited to: a Scatterplot form completed by classroom staff for no less than 2 weeks), input from other staff who interact with the child*
- *A conference with the parent(s), the teacher, and the manager will be scheduled to coordinate a behavior modification plan and share and connect families with other resources and support services available.*
- Together with families identify positive behavior support strategies (such as removing materials or modifying the classroom environment that could be triggering the challenging behavior, or create a predictable daily schedule so children know what to do and when to do it), set reasonable goals, and monitor progress.

In accordance with federal, state, and civil rights laws the ELC's goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures as much as possible.

If after the above attempts to eliminate extreme behaviors are not successful, the center staff may request the child be removed from the center to ensure the health and safety of all children enrolled. Should removal from the program be necessary the center will assist the family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

## **CENTER ACTIVITIES**

### **Outdoor Play**

The daily schedule includes outdoor activities each day, weather permitting. ELC policy is if the temperature is 20 degrees or above, and not higher than 85 degrees, all children will be provided with outdoor activities each day. Fresh air is important for all children; it aids in controlling the spread of illness. If a child is too sick to go outdoors, they should be kept at home until he or she can participate in outdoor activities. ELC does not have excess staff to supervise children indoors and outdoors at the same time. Keep in mind weather can change without advance notice. We suggest you keep clothing at the center to accommodate a variety of temperatures. We cannot be responsible if parents do not provide appropriate clothing for their child. Children are not taken outside if it is raining. Regarding small infants, the teaching staff will use sound judgment on taking them outside, as it pertains to temperatures. Infants are exposed to the outdoors as much as possible.

Please be sure all outerwear is labeled with your child's name. This includes jackets, snow pants, boots, gloves, hats, etc.

Providing children with outdoor experiences is required by State and National Standards. As part of a quality program, children are allowed to explore all areas of the classroom and outdoor space. Staff are not able to prohibit children from utilizing any of the materials or spaces in the classroom or outdoor environment.

## **Field Trips (10.D.06.d)**

Children must have a signed permission slip from their parents to participate in any field trip. If public transportation is used to transport preschool/Pre-K children and adults to and from field trip destinations, parents are asked to pay their child's cost. Children who are not scheduled for the time of the field trip may participate in the field trip activity if the parent accompanies them or you may contact the office to check for space availability to drop in. In regards to infants and toddlers, field trips will be limited to campus activities. Public transportation will not be utilized with infants and toddlers.

The teaching staff will take safety precautions to maintain safety standards while on field trips. Each classroom is equipped with an emergency bag containing, child information records, a cell phone for emergencies, and a first-aid kit.

Field trips are an important part of the education process at ELC. Field trips are planned to expose children to the community and the world around them. Teaching staff will inform all families in advance of field trips. If your child is not in attendance at the time the class leaves for a scheduled field trip it will be the parent's responsibility to either transport their child to the field trip location or supervise their child until the group returns. Due to licensing restrictions on enrollment numbers children may not be left at the center without their parent to supervise them.

Special accommodations for children and/or adults with special needs and/or disabilities can be arranged with prior notice to the Manager.

## **Birthdays**

We generally celebrate birthdays during the lunch or snack period. If you would like to arrange a special snack for your child's birthday, please check with his or her teacher to make arrangements. ELC is not permitted to use candles. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the celebration whenever possible.

Keep in mind the policy for bringing outside food into the center as required by national accreditation standards:

*Foods brought from home for special occasions must be only whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers (with ingredients listed).*

## **Holidays**

Concerning holidays, we strive to eliminate the stress and commercialism of holiday time for the children. ELC does not celebrate individual holidays at the center. To respect the many different cultural beliefs of our families we encourage families to celebrate their personal traditions and beliefs together outside of the center. During holidays we may incorporate educational activities that enhance overall learning. For example, at Halloween children can explore the inside of pumpkins or do cooking projects, on Valentine's Day children may practice writing letters or drawing pictures to friends, etc.

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS**

### **Dress**

You will quickly discover children play and work hard while at our center. They are regularly involved with a wide variety of tasks and materials. While we do our best to help them remain clean, children should come to school in clothing which can "stand up" to a child's environment. Part of our program is allowing children the opportunity to manipulate their environment. Sometimes in the "learning" process accidents and messes happen. ELC is not responsible for clothing which becomes stained or ruined during children's activities. We ask parents to keep extra sets of clothing in their child's tubbies at all times. This includes underwear and socks as well as tops and bottoms.

### **Shoe Policy**

All children will need to have at the center at all times a pair of shoes with a closed toe and closed back suitable for active play, including jumping, running, climbing, etc. These shoes may be left at the center in the child's tubby or worn to the school each day. If children do not have a pair of closed toe and closed back shoes they will not be able to participate in active play. If this happens, ELC staff reserves the right to ask parents to pick up their child from the center, since we cannot guarantee staffing to care for children not able to participate in planned activities.

No "Heely" shoes or flip-flops allowed at anytime. Sandals with back straps (including Crocs), to securely hold children's feet are allowed provided a pair of closed toe and closed back shoes is available for the child to change into.

### **Additional Infant/Toddler Room Policy:**

Children will need to have a pair of inside only shoes to wear during play in the classrooms. Likewise, adults will need to remove shoes before entering the classrooms. Stocking feet are allowed for adults during drop-off.

## **Jewelry**

We request children refrain from wearing jewelry to the center. It is natural for children to be curious and pull at jewelry while children are wearing it. If your child has jewelry on while attending ELC, the classroom staff will remove it and place it in your child's tubby. ELC cannot be held responsible for lost, stolen, or broken jewelry.

## **Toys**

We recommend children not bring their own toys or games from home, as they invariably present problems. They may be lost, damaged, or cause conflicts with other children. However, we understand many children are attached to special items. We will work cooperatively with families when this occurs, to help the child gently separate from their special belonging. If an item from home is brought to the center, ELC cannot be held responsible if it is lost, damaged, or stolen. If you have a special book or activity which can be shared with your child's entire group, please speak with your child's teacher.

## **Objects Not Permitted (10.D.01.i)**

For safety reasons the following items are not allowed at ELC

Guns or weapons (real or pretend)	Balloons
Money	Rubber Bands
Sharp objects	Candy, Gum, Cookies, or other food
Any items that may be conducive to violent and/or aggressive play	

## **Items to Be Provided By the Parent**

- Diapers, wet wipes, diaper ointments, and teething gels
- Baby food in labeled jars for children over 3 months
- Prepared formula – if parent denies brand provided by ELC
- At least one complete change of clothing to be left at the center
- Toothbrush
- Blanket, small pillow

- Sunscreen (if necessary)

## **DIAPER POLICY**

ELC is not responsible for providing diapers for children. However, we realize sometimes parents forget to keep diapers on hand. ELC staff will inform you on your child's Daily Activity Record when your child's diaper supply is getting low. If your child does run out of diapers, we will have extras available. To recover the cost of the diapers, your account will be billed 50 cents per diaper used.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES (10B.19, R.400. 8155(1))**

**Fire:** Children and staff will participate in fire drill procedures monthly. Maps showing evacuation routes are posted on each classroom door and in each office. When we evacuate the building, children are moved to Cramer Hall.

**Tornado:** Children and staff will participate in routine tornado safety procedures. Conditions will be monitored daily during the tornado season. Whenever a tornado warning is issued all children will take shelter until an "all clear" has been given. In case of a tornado alert, the center staff will keep the children in a sheltered area near their classroom. These evacuation and shelter areas are posted on each classroom door and in each office.

**Accidents:** All accidents that occur at the center will be reported to the parent. Minor injuries, scratches, insect bites, and bruises will be treated by our staff with tender, loving care. ELC is not permitted to apply ointments, creams, peroxide, or other such items to children.

An Incident report will be prepared by the teaching staff for each accident/illness that occurs at the center. We ask you to check your child's mailbox daily for these reports, sign the report, and return it to the teacher in charge.

### **Serious Accidents or Injury:**

This policy refers to any accident or injury that cannot be treated by simple first aid. This may include but is not limited to: bone fractures, eye injuries, concussions, or an unconscious child.

Parents will be contacted immediately for conditions we feel require medical attention. If we are unable to notify the parents, we will contact the emergency person listed on your child's information record.

The Department of Public Safety on campus will be contacted in the case of an extreme emergency. ELC staff are not permitted under any circumstances to transport children when dealing with a serious accident or injury.

**Bomb Threats/Lockdown:** Children and staff will participate in crisis management drills at least one time per semester. Not all crisis situations require evacuation from the center. Various scenarios for lockdown and bomb threats will be practiced so that all occupants are aware of what is expected. Children and staff will only evacuate the facility when Public Safety Officials have advised that this is the safest solution. Evacuation routes are posted on each classroom door along with Fire and Tornado procedures.

## **SPECIAL CONCERNS**

### **Confidentiality**

Students, volunteers, and staff are required to sign a Volunteer Confidentiality Statement agreeing to keep child and family information confidential as outlined in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct. Family and child information including health records, assessments and other forms of documentation are only available to ELC administrators, teaching staff working directly with the child, the parents or legal guardian of the child, and regulatory authorities upon request. Children and family files are kept in secure locations and/or on computers which require password access.

### **Suspected Abuse or Neglect (6A.10, 10D.5, R.400. 8125 (11))**

As prescribed by Child Protection Law Act No. 238 of the Public Acts of 1975 as amended by the State of Michigan, when child care staff members have reasonable cause to suspect Child abuse or neglect they are legally bound to immediately make an oral report to Child Protective Services. A written report is required within 72 hours of making the oral report. Please be advised under the mandated reporting laws, staff are required to report any suspicious behaviors or markings. Child Protective Services are responsible to determine if the report made by center staff should be investigated. This law has been enacted in order to provide the best possible future for children and Tot's Place supports it wholeheartedly.

Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect in the workplace are immune from discharge, retaliation or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

If a staff member is accused and/or suspected of child abuse or neglect the ELC, that staff member will be immediately suspended (with pay) and an oral report will be made to Child Protective Services (with a written report provided within 72 hours). The incident(s) of concern alleged against the staff member will be investigated by Ferris State University's Human Resources department, according to existing University employment policies and procedures. The investigation will be reviewed by the University's General Counsel and will result in a written report of the investigation and details of any corrective action taken. Child Protective Services will be provided a copy of the report of this investigation.

### **Change in Family Information**

If there is a change in your address, home or work telephone number, or family status, please notify us so that we can change our records. It is especially helpful to know of new family situations such as separation, divorce, re-marriage, a new baby, family illness, etc.; as such changes may affect your child's mood or behavior. We can help your child deal more effectively with new family conditions if we are informed in advance. If your child has special health problems, such as unusual stress, or obsessive fears, please let us know. We also need to be aware of changes concerning emergency contact persons. This information is vital to ensure the health and safety of your child. Please be sure to keep your Child Information Record up-to-date with emergency contact person information and parent work and/or school information.

### **Pesticide Notification(9D.4)**

In the event that it becomes necessary to apply pesticides at the center a notice will be placed at the main entrance to the center and a note will be sent home with each child at least 48 hours in advance. The notice will contain a statement that pesticide application is required, the target pest, approximate location of the application, date of application, ELC contact information, and the toll-free number for a national pesticide information center. Parents have the right to be informed of pesticide application by first-class mail 3 days in advance of the application. If you wish to be notified by mail a written request to the office is required. In the event an emergency situation exists, such as possible harm to the children enrolled by the presence of a pest, a pesticide may be applied without providing advance notice to parents. Promptly following the application, a notice will be posted at the entrance door to the center and a note will be sent home with each child. Every year an annual notification of the center's integrated pesticide management program will be sent home to parents.

Whenever possible non-toxic pest management techniques will be used inside and outside the center to eliminate and/or reduce harmful chemical exposures.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Our classrooms are “cell phone free” environments. This policy allows us to maximize opportunities for parent-child and staff-parent communication during drop-off and pick-up times. Your cooperation in this policy is greatly appreciated.

### **Consumer Product Safety Recall Notices (9A.5)**

Consumer Product Safety Recall (CPSC) will be posted on the Regulatory Board located next to the menu board. As the center is informed, notices are posted for staff and families. Anyone who would like additional information on safety recalls can sign up to receive notices at: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Newsroom/Subscribe/> ; then select “Recalls involving infant/child products”.

### **Eco-Friendly practices (2L.11)**

Early Learning Center strives to use Eco-Friendly practices with furnishings, toys, air and food.

- Solid wooden toys with non-toxic finish are preferred over plastic.
- However, if plastic must be purchased, look for plastics numbered 1, 2, 4 or 5 as they are safer.
- Look for toys that don't require batteries
- Try to purchase items made in USA, Canada, Europe or Japan as those countries have higher regulations to follow.
- All fruits and vegetables are washed prior to consumption. All lids of canned goods are washed prior to opening.
- Purchase fragrance-free, 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified least toxic cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting products.
- No aerosol sprays will be allowed.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

#### Teaching Staff:

We ask parent's cooperation and support in upholding our conflict of interest policy regarding ELC teaching staff caring for children outside of contracted center time. We expect our teachers to abide by the Code of Ethical conduct as set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This principle reads “We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with young children”.

We understand the level of comfort you may feel with our teaching staff and how hard it is to secure quality after hours' care; but we also know parents expect excellence and high quality from our center and we expect it of ourselves. By supporting this policy, you will assist us in achieving this goal.

#### Student Staff:



Due to the center operating schedule aligning with the University's academic schedule, we understand that some families may need assistance during periods the ELC is closed for training, prep, and vacations. The ELC does have a list of student staff who may be interested in caring for children outside the center contracted dates. This is allowed for paid student staff **only** during periods that the center does not provide contracted care for children. Daytimes, evening, and weekends during contract periods do not fall under this policy.

Furthermore, parents are responsible to contact and screen each student without input from the ELC. The ELC is not able to recommend students to families. There is a separate agreement for families and students to sign allowing release of contact information and releasing the ELC from responsibility for any service provided outside the contracted periods.

**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

***EFFECTIVE: August 26, 2019***

**Upon signing this statement, the parent, legal guardian or responsible adult and Early Learning Center agrees to abide by all of the provisions contained in this handbook.**

**Child(ren) name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please check all boxes and initial in the space provided:**

- ELC maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans. \_\_\_\_\_(initial)
- The notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours. \_\_\_\_\_(initial)
- Licensing inspections and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at: [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare) \_\_\_\_\_(initial)

**Parent/Legal Guardian signature indicates receipt of the Early Learning Center/GSRP Parent Handbook which includes the information provided above as required by the Department of Consumer Industry Child Day Care Licensing Division. In witness whereof, the parties hereto have executed this agreement as of the specified date:**

Parent/Legal Guardian

Early Learning Center

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date