

# EARLY LEARNING CENTER



# Parent Handbook

Last revised: August 1, 2015

Early Learning Center, Inc. welcomes you and your child to our early care and education program. Here at Early Learning Center we aim to provide each child with fun and creative experiences that foster growth and learning.

As parent, you are the prime caregiver and educator of your child. We need your on-going involvement so that your child can successfully develop socially, emotionally and physically. Additionally, the program has certain health requirements that you will play a vital role in meeting.

- (HRS) 3040 Yellow form – Health Form (the child physician will provide)
- (HRS) 680 Blue Form – Immunization Form (the child physician will provide)
- Health Forms must be updated yearly
- Immunization forms must be updated yearly on expiration date as determined by the child’s doctor.

Remember your child cannot start school until forms listed below and all requirements are met.

- Enrollment Form
- Emergency Form

We look forward to sharing the joy of early childhood education with you and your child.

### **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

At Early Learning Center our educational philosophy encourages a learning environment that stimulates and nurtures your child’s growth and development.

### **GOAL FOR CHILDREN**

It is the goal of our center to provide:

- A program that is individualized to meet the needs of every child.
- An environment that is safe and orderly and contains varies and stimulating toys and materials.
- The opportunity to select activities and materials that interest them, as children learn by being actively involved.
- A language-rich environment.
- Staff members who have specialized training in early childhood development and education.
- Parents with the environment of respect, where they are encouraged to participate in their children’s educational experience.

Our Curriculum is age appropriate and is based on developmentally appropriate guidelines of National Association of Young Children (NAEYC). Early Learning Center uses the High Scope Approach curriculum. The children learn by doing. The curriculum is both educational and fun for the children and includes 58 key experiences, daily routine of active and passive play. The carefully combination of all of the above help each child start their education in a positive, supportive, nurturing and truly fun environment which are based on the philosophy that children

learn best by doing (Piaget) and hands-on approach including a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities each day.

### **Individual Group Curriculum**

#### **Toddler Program (13 months to 36 months)**

Under a warm watchful eye, your toddler will develop feeling of confidence and competence. We understand that at the stage toddler's practice independence, but need trusted adult as a secure base of support. The environment is designed to offer toddlers chances to be in control and to participate in group play, imaginary play, and independent activity and sharing is fostered.

#### **Preschool Program (3 to 5 years old)**

The children at the preschool level are developing and learning in all areas of human functioning: physical, social, emotional and cognitive (including language, perception, reasoning, memory, and other aspect of intellectual development). The curriculum is both educational and fun for the children and includes 58 key experiences, daily routine of active and passive play. Your child will be kept busy and will develop a love for learning the fun way.

### **USE OF TELEVISION**

The use of television and videos are not used at the Early Learning Center as we do not have a television.

### **RATIOS**

- Infants 6 weeks to 12 months: 1 staff for 4 Infants
- Toddlers 12 months – 24 months: 1 staff for 6 toddlers
- Two year old: 1 staff for 8 children
- Three year old: 1 staff for 10 children
- Four year old: 1 staff for 10 children

We understand the importance of ratios to qualify day care. It is our commitment to offer lowest ratios when possible.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

A. Parents may secure child care applications from the center during regular office hours.

Regular office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

B. The application must be returned to the center a week in before the first day of attendance.

C. Parents are required to submit a medical examination report and a current immunization report on their child no later than the first day of enrollment.

D. Parents are encouraged to visit the center before their child is enrolled and should bring their child with them. This will give the child an opportunity to meet the teachers and other children before the first full day of attendance. A 3 to 4 hour stay by the student on the first day is encouraged.

E. Parents are required to have a pre-enrollment conference with the Director prior to the child's first day of enrollment. During the pre-enrollment conference, parents are encouraged to share information about their child, voice their expectations of the program and ask questions.

F. It is the responsibility of the parent to report to the Center any change of address, telephone numbers (home or work), employment, emergency contact person and medical information.

**TUITION FEES** – We will be collected every Monday. Checks are to be made to Early Learning Center. A charge of \$15.00 will be added to every check returned by the bank. There are no fee reductions for absence except in the case of an extended illness (over two weeks) of the child. In such case written doctor’s notification is required. No refund or discounts are given for absences or holidays. We do not charge for the food that we serve.

Weekly Fee Schedule:

		Full Time	Part Time
Infant	0-12 months	\$150.00	\$100.00
Toddler	13-23 months	\$140.00	\$90.00
	24-35 months	\$130.00	\$90.00
Preschool	36-47 months	\$120.00	\$85.00
	48-59 months	\$110.00	\$85.00
School-Age	60 mo. -13 yrs.	\$105.00	\$75.00
VPK extended care		\$50.00	

**VACATIONS** – You are entitled to two weeks per calendar of vacation that you may take at any time. The first year will be prorated to when you register. Parents must notify the director two (2) weeks in advance.

**HOURS AND DAYS OF OPEARATION**

The Early Learning Center is open: 52 weeks/ year Monday – Friday 6:30 A.M. -6:00 P.M

LATE CHARGES – For every 15 minutes or fraction there will be a \$5.00 late fee.

**OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS THE CENTER WILL CLOSE**

- NEW YEAR’S DAY
- DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BIRTHDAY
- PRESIDENT’S DAY
- GOOD FRIDAY
- MEMORIAL DAY
- INDEPENDENCE DAY
- LABOR DAY
- COLUMBUS DAY
- VETERANS’ DAY
- THANKSGIVING DAY& DAY FOLLOWING
- CHRISTMAS

**SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Should the weather become inclement warranting the closing of our local public schools our school will also be closed. Parents or the Emergency Contact adult will be notified to pick students up from school. We also follow the Miami-Dade County Public School closings.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICY**

**SIGN-IN SYSTEM-** It is necessary that all parents /guardians follow the requirements of signing in and out. This system will allow the school to have a more accurate count of the families using the center and will provide the parents with the maximum security for our children.

All parents must sign children in upon arrival and out upon departure. ELC staff will not receive students before 6:30 a.m. Pick up time is 6:00 p.m. unless stated otherwise. We encourages you to bring you child to school no later than 8:30 a.m. so that he or she will be able to eat breakfast with the other children and be ready to participate in all scheduled activities for the day.

**IF AN INDIVIDUAL OTHER THAN THE PARENT/GUARDIAN IS PICKING UP THE CHILD, THE PARENT MUST NOTIFY ADMINISTRATION AND THE CHILD'S TEACHER. THE INDIVIDUAL MUST SHOW IDENTIFICATION, SUCH AS DRIVER'S LICENSE, PRIOR TO DEPARTING WITH THE CHILD IF THE STAFF ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE INDIVIDUAL.**

To prevent unnecessary accidents, parents are asked to take your child/children directly to their class upon entering the building or to the designated class for students arriving before 8:30 a.m. Students leaving the building must be accompanied by parents or adults from the class to the vehicle. **DO NOT ALLOW** your child the freedom to run or roam the building, classrooms or hallway. ELC will not be held liable for accidents, incidents, or injuries that may occur to children who are not under the care of ELC staff. When children are released from the class to parents/guardians, they are no longer under the care of ELC staff.

**EVENING PICK-UP:** Children must be picked up by a parent or preauthorized person. Early Learning Center requires any preauthorized pick-up person to have a picture ID and be 18 years of age or older. Please do not allow siblings or other family members under the age of 18 to pick up your child. Always pick up your youngest child first. Older siblings are not allowed in the Infant or Toddlers classroom. Please remember to sign out your child.

**Authorization for someone other than the persons listed on your enrollment form to pick-up your child must be in writing and in advance to the center office.** Identification (driver's license or work ID with photo) will be required for anyone picking-up children other than parents, if not recognized by the staff. A long day at child care can be hard on some children. If you are going to be later than normal please call and let us know so we can reassure your child that you are fine, just running late. Prepare for a pleasant evening at home by insuring that your child is picked up on time. Anytime your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m. there is a \$5.00 late pick-up fee. This fee needs to be in cash. Have exact change ready when you arrive. The fee goes up \$5.00 every fifteen minutes you are late. Parents, please be considerate of your teacher's time when you come in right at 6:00 p.m. Some of our staff have evening classes to get to, family commitments, some even have second jobs. If you want to meet with a teacher schedule an appointment for a mutually convenient time.

## **Safety Tips during Arrival and Departure**

1. Please turn your car off and take the keys out of the ignition before entering the center in the morning and afternoon.
2. Please turn off or turn down loud music.
3. Please drive very slowly when approaching the building.
4. Please do not leave small children unattended. We know it's convenient not to have to bring in your small ones or infants while you take their older siblings to class or pick them up at the end of the day, but the following can happen:
  - The child or another child can jump into the driver's seat and change gears.
  - A lot of times little ones can lock themselves or the parent may lock them in by unintentionally.
  - The child or baby can choke
  - Someone can abduct your child.
  - Children can climb out of the car and get hit by a moving car or wonder off.
  - Children can go into your purse and open medicine bottles.
  - Heat exhaustion or hypothermia may occur since your car should not be left running.
  - Heads, necks, and arms can get caught in power windows.
  - Children can sometimes lock parents out of the car or parents may accidentally lock themselves out of the car.

## **POLICIES**

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT** – The purpose of discipline is to help children learn ways of behaving that are acceptable to themselves and other young children. This usually means setting limits for their safety, the safety of others and the safety of property. Teachers will help children understand the logical consequences of their own actions. Most of the time behavior problems arise as a result of social interactions. These are the techniques utilized by the adults on our staff to effectively help children in their effort to resolve conflicts. We will:

1. Keep children's developmental characteristic in mind.
2. Maintain limits and expectations for behavior that are developmentally appropriate.
3. Help children resolve conflicts when they arise.

## **DIS-ENROLLING/TERMINATION OF A CHILD**

A parent's right to withdraw a child from Early Learning Center is respected. The Early Learning Center has specific advance written notice requirements. Information regarding termination is included as part of each center's financial policy.

There may be situations in which termination of service to an individual child or family is initiated by the Early Learning Center management. Although each circumstance is unique, efforts will be made by the parties concerned to improve the situation prior to a termination decision. Should termination become necessary, a two-week written notice is generally provided. Parents at odds with the decision can address their concerns with the Early Learning Center owner or director.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

As mandated reporters all observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective service agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred.

Staff member will call the Florida Abuse Hotline 1-800-962-2873 or 1-800-96-ABUSE to report abuse or neglect. Other way to report child abuse or neglect can be done as follows:

- Telephone at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873), or
- Fax at 1-800-914-0004, or
- Online at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>

The staff member will follow the directions of the child protective services agency regarding completion of written reports.

If a caregiver is suspected or accused of child abuse or neglect may be suspended or given leave of absence pending investigation of the accusations. Such caregivers may also be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. Parents or legal guardians of the suspected abused or neglected child will be notified. Parents and guardians of the other children in the program will be notified by the Director or Owner if a caregiver is suspected or accused of abuse or neglect so they may share any concerns that have had. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse or neglect will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

**BIRTHDAY PARTIES** – Birthday parties are wonderful experience for young children. Our children are welcome to share their birthdays with their classmates. Celebration time should be in the P.M. snack.

No food is to be brought into the center by either students or parents. The only food to be brought into the center is food from the caterer. Food for special occasions must receive prior approval.

1. All children on special diet must have documentation form from physician, a copy given to teacher.
2. Information regarding food restrictions for religious reasons must be provided in writing by the parent or guardian.
3. Any nutritional problem should be immediately referred to the office. This included all eating problems.

**CHANGE OF CLOTHING** – Our experience with young children tells us that many accidents happen. Please keep a change of clothing in a zip lock, plastic marked with the child's name, in your child's cubby or backpack for those emergency monuments.

**PLEASE LABEL EVERY ITEM VERY CLEARLY WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME**

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES** – No matter how careful and safety –conscious we are there will be times when emergency occur. Parents or guardian shall be notified immediately of any illness or injury to their child and specific instructions regarding action to be taken shall be obtained. It is crucial that the information on your enrollment form is accurate. If the parents or person designated to be called in case of emergency cannot be reached, the director or staff will contact other relative.

**PILLOWS, BLANKET, AND SHEETS-** must go home every Friday to be laundered

**ILLNESS and MEDICATION-** If your child shows symptoms of being ILL please keep him/her at HOME and obtain necessary medical care. Please notify the center of your child's illness. Also, let us know if you need assistance in arranging medical care for you child's illness. In order for the staff to administer medication it must be prescribed by a doctor unless it is an over-the counter medication, which can be given only as recommended by the label. Please help us by:

- A. Signing and dating a medical consent form, which can be picked up from the class.
- B. Making sure all medication be in the original container and the date, child's name, Doctor's name, and the dosage plainly stated is present on prescribed medications.

### **INTOXICATED OR IMPAIRED INDIVIDUAL**

The Early Learning Center prohibits the release of a child to an adult we suspect may be intoxicated, impaired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In the event that a parent/guardian are intoxicated or impaired, a person on the child's emergency contact list will be notified to pick up the child. On the other hand, if an emergency contact person is impaired or intoxicated, the parent will be notified to pick up the child or make alternate arrangements.

### **WHAT IS REQUIRED OF PARENTS? (Volunteering and involvement)**

Communicate with at least one of your child's teachers every day. Ask questions and give input about the experiences your child is having. Make sure you have contact with each teacher in the classroom every week. Get to know them and allow them to get to know you. Read materials that are sent home and pay attention to notices that are posted around the center. Each classroom has a parent bulletin board, and boards showing the children's art work and projects. There are information boards in the hall and at the front desk. Successful students always have a parent that is involved in the programs offered by the school and eagerly participates. Show your child by your actions that his/her education is important to you. Start participating now while your child is in preschool; show him/her how much you care.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer and be involved at the center throughout the year. By doing so the children can see the parents have an interest in the center as well as being a role model for their child. Some ways that parents can volunteer or become involved at the center is by...

- Help the teacher by putting up theme boards in the classroom
- Chaperone on field trips
- Read stories or storyboard with pictures
- Invite parents to monthly performance to assist the teacher
- Assist during social events that include the entire family (picnics, family video night, center fair, holiday/special events).

Parents and teachers can communicate at arrival and departure by speaking to their child's teacher prior to the beginning of the teacher's lesson. If the teacher is involved with the children, parents are asked to speak to the Director and leave a message for the teacher who will call the parent to follow up on the concern. During arrival parents in the Infant and Toddler room are



given a daily report about their child. The teachers in all the classrooms will inform the parents about their child’s day. We encourage parents to talk to the teachers daily to share their goals, expectations of the child.

**Nutrition Policy: Meals and Snacks**

The center will provide nourishments three times each day. Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack will be distributed. All meals and snacks are prepared based on the Recommended Dietary Allowances contained in the Food Pyramid. Menus are posted in the center. This center participates in the Child Care Food Program of Florida Dept. of Health & Human Services, which meet all federal recommended daily nutritional standards. All parents/guardians are requested to fill out annually a Child Food Program Eligibility Application in order for the Center to maintain state compliance.

Parents must provide formula, and baby food for their infants. Parents who provide their own formula, must prepared it at home and bring it in ready to serve. Parents are required to fill out an infant feeding schedule before the first day of care.

Parents must provide food for children who are on special diets that are prescribed by the child’s physician. Parents must have a Physician or Dietitian to substantiate the need for a special diet in writing. Notes from Physicians are needed to substantiate food allergies.

Extra snacks, other foods and /or beverages are not permitted in the Center. The Center provides a balanced snack, which meets nutritional guidelines. Soft drinks are discouraged.

**Open Door Policy:**

We have an “open door” policy at Early Learning Center parents may visit their children in our facilities any time they wish. We do ask parents who plan to visit their children frequently to follow the classroom routine. We also ask that you make an appointment if you wish to meet with the Director or a staff member.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN RECEIPT**

I have received a copy of Early Learning Center Parent Handbook. I understand I must adhere to the policies stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE