



The Parent Handbook

THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER

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PARENT HANDBOOK

The Early Learning Center

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This handbook contains the policies and procedures of the Early Learning Center. It is meant to serve only as a reference guide. Complete Policies and Procedures are available in the office.

WELCOME TO ELC

It is our pleasure to welcome you to The Early Learning Center. We look forward to making this a very special year for both your child and you. If this book is not written in a language you understand please let us know so we can assist you in translation.

During the first few weeks of school our staff will get to know the children and informally assess their developmental skills and interests. We will make every effort to help each child feel comfortable about coming to preschool while enjoying the activities which we provide.

Preschool is frequently a child's first step into the "big" world, and it can be a time of major adjustment. Frequently children experience signs of stress such as toilet accidents, excessive crying, changes in sleep patterns and general irritability. Don't despair! These symptoms are usually temporary and the result of the adjustments your child is making to his new activities. Within a few short weeks we know that he is going to be excited about coming to school and will have adapted to the changes in his routine. By working together as parents and educators, we hope to make this transition time the easiest possible for your child.

Many parents of children entering preschool expect their children to have instant friends. Developmentally, this is not always the case. We have found, particularly in our younger students, that they are still fairly egocentric, playing alone or near others without a lot of interaction. Therefore, one of the important goals we have as teachers is to assist children in their social development, encouraging appropriate social interaction in the activities we offer. Additionally we will provide an enrollment list to assist you in continuing friendships outside the classroom.

By the beginning of each week that school is in session, information about the unit being taught that week will be posted on the school's website. This information not only will keep you informed about some of the specific daily happenings in each room, but also will provide you with a basis for conversation with your child following her day at school.

We know, especially if this is your first school experience, that you will have many questions. In this handbook, we hope to have anticipated some of your concerns and answered some of your more general questions. Please read your handbook and keep it in a convenient spot for future reference. Also look for weekly and monthly newsletters which will be posted on the school's website (www.elcpreschool.com). They are full of specific information concerning school, upcoming events, and important reminders.

It is our goal at ELC to make your child's preschool experience a positive one; one that offers opportunities for growth, learning and fun.

TEAM TEACHERS

The Early Learning Center uses a team teaching system. In such an arrangement, each teacher has equal responsibility for all classroom functions including planning, teaching and parent conferences. All staff are fully qualified and come to your children with a variety of teaching experiences.

We are confident in our team teaching system and know this approach will provide an enjoyable learning environment for your child. The teachers are excited about sharing another year with the children at ELC, and look forward to making this the best year possible for all families involved in the preschool.

In order for us to do the best possible job for your child, continuous, open communication between home and school is essential. Our entire staff is here to work with you to provide an enriching preschool experience.

Please feel free to discuss any of your questions, concerns, comments or suggestions with either of your child's teachers or the director throughout the year. Conferences can be scheduled anytime simply by contacting the school.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

ELC teachers hold telephone conferences in the fall and in-person conferences are scheduled in the spring. These conferences are opportunities to share insights, concerns and goals for your child. At the spring conference and again at the end of the school year teachers provide parents with an overview of his child's development as indicated on assessment forms.

Additional conferences may be scheduled by either teacher or parent request.

CURRICULUM NIGHT and more

In September the staff will meet with families to explain why we do what we do, and answer any questions you may have. Other get-togethers will also be planned (e.g. Special Person breakfast/lunch; Tools Together, Fishing with Family, Mother's Day teas, Holiday performances). You will be notified of them in the weekly newsletter.

WHAT IS THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER?

The Early Learning Center was incorporated in January, 1975, to provide a unique preschool program for children in the Ann Arbor area. The non-profit corporation is operated by a Board of Trustees consisting of parents of present or former students. ELC is licensed by the State of Michigan and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Board meetings are held monthly and are open to all ELC families. Meeting dates will be announced in the monthly newsletter.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Early Learning Center provides a unique preschool program based on the belief that learning takes place primarily through exploratory play activities. ELC's well-structured play environment offers a variety of directed and non-directed activities. Children are encouraged to play, to explore, to think, and to develop a strong sense of self-esteem, independence and curiosity.

The program also focuses on the emotional needs of children. Emphasizing kindness and cooperation, ELC strives to foster good relationships among the children and between children and adults. Natural curiosity and creativity are nurtured. We understand that young children have powerful feelings—feelings which they are encouraged to express both verbally and through dramatic play.

The Early Learning Center attempts to provide a well-balanced program. Activities are planned with regard to the social, emotional, intellectual, physical and creative needs of each child. Our goal is to offer a comfortable, nurturing, and stimulating environment which promotes the growth of the whole child.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Learning Center provides a safe and nurturing learning environment for preschool age children of all cultural backgrounds and abilities. We believe that learning takes place primarily through exploratory play. We offer a variety of both directed and non-directed activities to encourage children to develop a strong sense of curiosity, self-esteem, and independence.

ABUSE & NEGLECT POLICY

This child care facility prohibits abuse and neglect of any form, whether verbal, physical or otherwise. Only positive forms of discipline such as redirection will be used at this facility. As a licensed child care provider, we must report abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities whenever we have a reasonable suspicion of it occurring.

HOLIDAY POLICY

The Early Learning Center wishes to recognize cultural and religious holidays throughout the year. Emphasis will be placed on, but not limited to, holidays celebrated by cultures represented by current ELC families.

No holiday will be dealt with for longer than one week, and some may be touched upon for only one day. Weekly themes will not be named by the holiday which is to be discussed, but by a more general term, so as not to imply that all classroom activities that week will revolve around the holiday. (E.g. the theme for the last week in October could be "Let's Pretend" rather than "Halloween").

We want to impress upon our students that each one of them is special and that the holidays and customs they practice are part of what makes them important.

WHO MAY ATTEND THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER?

There are three basic requirements for enrollment at ELC:

The child must:

1. have attained the age of two years and six months by Sept 1st
2. be toilet trained
3. have the "clearance" of a licensed physician

Handicapped children are eligible for enrollment. See the director for details.

No child will be refused admission on the basis of race, creed, sex, religion, or national origin.



GOALS

1. To provide a balanced program with a variety of developmentally appropriate activities to stimulate interest and curiosity in all curriculum areas including math, science, language arts/literacy, social studies, health and safety, and technology.
2. To provide opportunities for children to gain competence in a variety of skills and techniques which increase their interest and control over their environment.
3. To provide a nurturing, relaxed, and non-sexist environment with caring adults where self concepts are enhanced, independence encouraged, decision-making offered, social skills acquired, and individuality respected.
4. To help children learn to appreciate music, to foster creative imagination, and to further develop a sense of rhythm.
5. To stimulate creative self-expression through the arts which allows children maximum opportunity for active involvement.
6. To provide opportunities to develop large motor skills and coordination through physically active play, as well as opportunities and materials that support fine-motor development.
7. To provide for each child's physical well-being while in our care.
8. To provide guidance and education to families regarding child development issues.
9. To support and nurture families in their child rearing efforts.
10. To guide families with positive parenting strategies through newsletters, conferences, interaction with staff, and workshops.
11. To support families in their efforts to encourage age-appropriate independence.
12. To teach families about appropriate pre-school social development, which will carry over to situations outside of the pre-school.

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE AND EXPECTATIONS

The classroom environment at ELC is created to foster positive interactions among classmates and teachers. Rules are reasonable and revolve around two main concerns—safety and kindness. The teacher's role is to help students learn appropriate behavior through positive approaches to discipline, thereby encouraging self-direction, self-control, and self-esteem in the students.

We understand that preschool children are just beginning to learn how to get along in a group. To help with these new socialization skills, teachers encourage problem-solving. They praise positive behavior and redirect any behavior that might be unacceptable.

We welcome parental input and encourage parent-teacher communication to promote positive classroom behavior.

CHILD CODE OF CONDUCT

We know that children learn many things through play. We recognize that occasional roughness in play is normal. Aggressive behavior, usually caused by physical or emotional stress, is also not unusual. Bullying is very different from these occasional misbehaviors. Bullying is repeated roughness or repeated planned victimization. The intention of bullying is to gain more power and control or cause deliberate hurt. It occurs consistently between the same children, with each consistently playing the same role—victim or aggressor. The victim is usually younger, smaller/weaker, and lacks the skills to cope with the aggression. Bullying in the preschool setting usually involves social exclusion or isolation (“You can’t come to my party” or “You’re not my friend”), name calling, or repeated physical abuse: hitting, kicking, shoving, or spitting.

Bullying can have a terrible impact on the children who are bullied, other children who observe the bullying, and the overall climate of the school. If you suspect your child is being bullied, or you think your child is bullying, please talk with the teachers and director immediately. Bullying usually occurs when an adult is not in the immediate vicinity—in a corner, on the playground, etc. Once aware, the ELC staff will work with the children and their families to ensure the safety and comfort of all the students. We do not suspend or expel children at ELC. To us that means we’ve given up on the child and/or family—something we would never do!

TOY GUNS AND WEAPONS

In keeping with our philosophy of play, we discourage the use of weapons of any sort, and monitor this type of play very closely. We prefer that play war toys and guns not be sent to school. We encourage non-violent, imaginative play with emphasis on positive interaction and cooperation.

HOW MUCH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IS REQUIRED?

Because The Early Learning Center is not a cooperative preschool, all parental involvement is optional. However, parents are welcome to participate in parties and special events. You are also encouraged to share your special talents or interests with the children at other times during the school year. Keep an eye on the themes for each week. Something we do will probably be right up your alley.

Remember you are always welcome to visit and spend some time with your child at school.

Each spring we ask all families to complete an evaluation survey involving all areas of our program. We use the results of this survey as a basis for continuing our successful activities and for changing those that need improvement. These surveys help us set program goals for continuous improvement.

Staff and Volunteer Screening

Licensing rules for Michigan Child Care Centers require that we develop and implement a written screening policy for all staff and volunteers, including parents, who have contact with children. All ELC staff members have submitted to a Michigan Department of State Police Criminal History check. All volunteers at ELC work under the direct supervision of an ELC staff member. No volunteers shall be responsible for children in the classrooms, bathrooms, or playground without a staff member present. A volunteer self-certification statement regarding felony convictions must be on file at ELC before anyone may volunteer at ELC. Forms are available from the director.

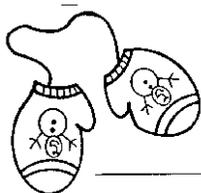
Disaster Preparedness Plan

One of the things we ask parents is to always let us know where we can contact you when your child is at ELC. It's important for you to list your cell phone numbers on the Child Information card...and keep your phone on when your child is at school! In the event of a major problem at our building or in the immediate neighborhood we are prepared for evacuating the children to a safe sight. Our first evacuation site would be to 3060 Packard, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. This is the black glass building in the strip mall off Packard, just one block from ELC. Our second evacuation site is at Mitchell Elementary School, 3550 Pittsview Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, (734) 971-5904. From ELC you would turn right on Creek, left on Lorraine, and right on Pittsview. Mitchell School is next to Scarlett Middle School. In the event of an evacuation we would do our very best to call and notify parents, but if that is not possible we rely on parents to contact the evacuation locations for information. For security purposes the building is locked during school hours. If you arrive after normal drop-off or before normal pick-up times, please ring the door bell at the red door and a staff member will open the door for you.

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed in clothing which is comfortable for running, climbing, sitting, and painting. We try to protect clothing with painting smocks, but we cannot possibly protect clothing at all times.

We believe that the variety of aesthetic and tactile experiences we provide for children is important in developing a well-rounded child. Please support us by allowing your child the freedom to participate without worrying about spills.



Please LABEL all of your child's outer clothing such as hats, jackets, sweaters, boots, snow pants, mittens, etc. We frequently find that younger children and children with brand new clothing do not always recognize their own things. We need names on each item in order to match it with the correct child.

ELC TOTE BAGS

Each child is given an ELC tote bag when they start school. We ask that they decorate this bag and use it instead of a back pack when they come to school. These bags are much easier for children and staff to pack with all those precious art projects!

FUNDRAISERS

During the school year, ELC sponsors several fundraisers. Each of these events is designed to supplement our current budget so additional activities and equipment can be made available to the children. The income from one fundraiser each year is designated for a scholarship fund.

All of the fundraising activities at ELC have been chosen for their appropriateness in a preschool setting as well as their "money-earning" potential. Participation is voluntary, but families are encouraged to participate when they can. If you prefer not to participate in the fundraisers, perhaps you would consider making a donation to the school. Because of our 501(c)(3) status, any donation you make to ELC is tax-deductible. Upcoming fundraising events are listed in the monthly newsletters.

DONATIONS

Any preschool teacher is always collecting one person's junk and turning it into our children's treasures. We are continually seeking items that might be transformed into interesting goodies or have more than one use at school. We sometimes need everyday things such as toilet paper and paper towel rolls, meat trays, and egg cartons.

We would also love to have things like old ribbons, fancy fabric scraps, old jewelry, beads, craft leftovers, feathers, or any other interesting materials that you think could be recycled. Please check with your child's teachers before bringing materials in, to be sure we have enough storage space available.

BOOK ORDERS

For families who wish to order children's books through the Scholastic Book Clubs, we will be sending home order forms on a monthly basis. These are for your convenience. Please place your orders online at <http://pcool.scholastic.com/parentordering/login.jsp>. You will set up your own user name and password. Friends and relatives are welcome to place orders also. They should use your child's name when ordering.

TRANSPORTATION

We do not provide transportation to and from school at ELC. We do, however, provide a list of the names and addresses of other children attending our preschool so that carpools can be arranged.

Please remember that Michigan law requires that children under the age of 7 and under 4'9" in height must be properly secured in an approved Child Restraint System.

When you drop your child at ELC, please do not park your car in front of the mailbox on Redwood. Also, please do not allow children to open car doors or to run in the parking lot unattended since there can be a lot of traffic coming and going. If you or your child is disabled in any way and you require assistance with drop-off and/or pick-up, please talk with the director.

For safety reasons, we cannot allow children to be in the parking lot unescorted. Therefore, we ask that you bring your child directly to his classroom before school and pick him up at the playground or the classroom door after school.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Early Learning Center offers the following schedule of classes:



Monday through Friday morning

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	Early Bird Extension
8:45 - 11:45 a.m.	Preschool Sessions
11:45 - 12:15 p.m.	Lunch Extension

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday afternoon

11:45 - 12:15 p.m.	Lunch Extension
12:30 - 3:15 p.m.	Preschool Sessions

Enrollment is by the year. Children may be enrolled from two to five half-days a week. There are afternoon extensions offered Tues, Wed and Thurs. Parents may choose which days of the week they would like their children to attend. We ask that this choice remain constant for the year.

TUITION

The packet you received when you enrolled your child in The Early Learning Center included tuition and payment schedules. Please be reminded of the payment options available and be prompt with your tuition payment.

Payment Options

1. Nine equal payments may be made. The payment is due the *first class session* of each month. Monthly payments include a \$5.00 service charge.
2. Two payments may be made, one each semester. Half of the tuition is due the *first class session* of September and the second half is due the *first class session* of February.
3. Families with children enrolled 5 days per week, or those with more than one child enrolled, may pay tuition in two equal payments per semester. There is a 10% discount of tuition for the second child enrolled. Payments are due the *first class sessions* of September, November, February, and April.

* Early Bird and Lunch Extension fees will be computed on an individual basis and included on monthly statements.

* A \$10 late fee will be charged if payment is not received by the date indicated on your billing statement.

LATE FEE & RETURNED CHECK POLICY

The Board of Trustees has issued a late charge and returned check policy. For those families who are consistently late in picking up their child after school, a fee of *one dollar per minute* will be charged. An occasional flat tire or other unavoidable lateness will not be penalized. We do ask, however, that you make every effort to pick up your child on time. Any check that is redeposited a second time and returned to ELC will result in a \$25.00 returned check charge. If the check is for tuition and/or extension late payment fees may also apply.

ABSENCE AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If a child is absent because of illness or for other reasons, tuition is not refundable. In addition, a child cannot attend other class sessions to compensate for absences.

In situations where it is necessary for a child to withdraw from ELC for either of the following reasons, the family is entitled to a pro-rated tuition refund. That is, the family will be required to pay only for the sessions attended.

1. Withdrawal due to adjustment difficulties of the child -- after a parent conference and with the concurrence of the staff.
2. Withdrawal necessitated by the inability of the child to meet the enrollment criteria, particularly as they relate to toilet training.

In all other withdrawal situations, two weeks' notice of withdrawal will be required. In lieu of such notice, two weeks' tuition will be required. After April 1st no withdrawals will be accepted for the remainder of the school year. Families will be required to complete all payments for the remainder of the school year. This is due to the difficulty of filling a space so late in the academic year.

LUNCH EXTENSION

Children who participate in the lunch extension have the opportunity to eat lunch at school under the supervision of our staff. Students must bring their own lunches and place them on the stairway ledge at the ramp entrance. Please be sure the lunch includes a cold pack, since they are not refrigerated. We have several children in school who have life-threatening allergies. Please remember that ELC is a no nut/peanut environment. Please see page 24 for “no nut/peanut” lunch ideas. Supervised play follows lunch.

In order for us to assure a relaxed, comfortable, and safe lunch hour, we must limit the number of children attending each lunch. Sign up for students who will be regulars at lunch extension (i.e. the child will always be attending on a specific day) can be arranged through the director. In order to make it possible for all children to participate in the lunch extension on an occasional basis, *we ask that regular lunch extensions be requested only when absolutely necessary*. Regular lunch extensions are not guaranteed, and are limited to one day a week.

Daily sign up sheets for occasional lunch extensions are posted on the bulletin board in the coat room two weeks in advance. Lunch extensions are billed only after use at the end of each month. Lunch extensions are not available on field trip days.

BIRTHDAYS

If your child has a birthday during the school year, please remind the teachers of it a couple of weeks in advance so we can celebrate as a class. Your child may wish to bring some kind of treat to share with the class. In keeping with NAEYC guidelines all treats from home must be commercially-prepared individually-packaged foods in factory-sealed containers (with labels). Specifically, parents are asked to select from the following options: popsicles, individual ice cream, Kraft/Hunt vanilla or chocolate pudding, applesauce cups, or single serve, factory sealed rice krispie treats, goldfish crackers, or teddy grahams. **These treats may not contain any of the following... peanuts/tree nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut/nut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or any of the statements "May contain traces of peanut/tree nuts" or "Manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts and or tree nuts."** Please refer to the allergy section for more information on prohibited ingredients and helpful tips for reading labels. Regardless of the treat, we will put a candle in a cup and sing *Happy Birthday!*

Children with summer birthdays will have a chance to celebrate their birthdays at the end of the school year or they may wish to celebrate their "half" birthdays.

BULLETIN BOARD

The bulletin board in the coat room is used to post general notices and information. The lunch extension sheet is posted at the ramp entrance to the school. The teachers post schedules of daily activities near their classroom doors.

SCHOOL CLOSING

ELC follows the Ann Arbor Public Schools in closing for weather emergencies. Local television and radio stations will broadcast school closings every ten to fifteen minutes or as necessary. Be sure to listen for their announcements in the event of uncertainty about school closing. You can also call the Ann Arbor school hotline at 994-8684 or check their website for school cancellations at <http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/aaps.home>. Whenever possible ELC will also broadcast closings on our telephone answering machine and website.

The Board of Trustees has adopted a policy that there will be no tuition refund or make-up of days for any days when ELC is closed due to circumstances beyond the Center's control (i.e. weather, utilities failure, etc.).

HEALTH POLICY

This policy was written with the health of everyone in The Early Learning Center community in mind including children, parents, and staff. To reduce the spread of disease we ask that parents assist children in washing their hands upon arrival at the school. Specific illness information was provided by the Washtenaw County Health Department.

Handwashing

Children and adults wash their hands:

- On arrival for the day;
- After diapering or using the toilet
- After handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood, or vomit);
- Before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or after handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g. meat, eggs, poultry)
- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals;

Adults also wash their hands

- Before and after feeding a child;
- Before and after administering medication
- After assisting a child with toileting; and
- After handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- Using liquid soap and running water;
- Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g. by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any required hand-washing situation listed above.

- Staff wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur
- Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or for removing smeared fecal material.
- In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

Note: The use of alcohol-based hand rubs in lieu of handwashing is not recommended for early education and child care settings. If these products are used as a temporary measure, a sufficient amount must be used to keep the hands wet for 15 seconds. Since the alcohol-based hand rubs are toxic and flammable, they must be stored and used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

State of Michigan Health Requirements

Certification of immunization must be on file at ELC from the first day of attendance.

Physical/Health Appraisal must be on file at ELC within 30 days of the first day of attendance.

Emergency Medical Information must be on file at ELC from the first day of attendance.

Symptoms of Illness

A child should be kept at home if he or she displays any of the following symptoms the night before or the day of school:

chills	red or swollen joints
unusual cough	listlessness
diarrhea	nausea or vomiting
earache	skin rashes or sores
sore throat	inflamed or swollen eyes
severe headache	complaints of pain
fever: over 100 ^o orally or 101 ^o rectally	difficulty breathing stiff neck

Common Cold

Because the immune system of a preschool child is not fully developed, he/she may contract a common cold quite frequently. Consequently, a child who has a simple cold may attend school if she feels well enough to participate in the daily activities, including outdoor play. However, if there is excessive nasal discharge or a severe cough, it is recommended that the child stay at home.

MEDICATION

Non-Prescription Medication

The Early Learning Center CANNOT administer non-prescription drugs to children at the Center. Either you or a designated person will need to come to the Center and give the non-prescription medication if you desire your child to receive it.

Prescription Medication

The staff of the Early Learning Center will administer prescription medications only if:

The medication is in its original container, stored according to instructions and clearly labeled for the specific child.

An Early Learning Center Medication Form and/or Allergy Action Plan, specifying the details of the medication and given to the child's teacher, has been completed by the parent and physician. (Forms available from Director.) The medication will be placed in a labeled container and stored in a locked cabinet.

A staff teacher or director will record on the Medication Form the time and amount of medication given or applied.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The following is a list of specific communicable diseases that exclude a child from attending school.

1. *Chicken pox*: May return to school after all skin lesions have dried. (at least six days after lesions start)
2. *Mumps*: May return to school after swelling is completely gone. (approximately 9 days)
3. *Strep throat*: May return to school after the first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
4. *Measles or German measles*: May return to school not earlier than 4 days after the onset of rash.
5. *Pink eye or conjunctivitis*: May return to school when eyes are clear.
6. *Impetigo*: May return to school after the first 24 hours of treatment.
7. *Hepatitis A*: May return to school with physician's clearance.
8. *Ringworm or pin worm*: May return to school after the first 24 hours of physician-prescribed treatment.
9. *Lice*: May return to school when free of infestation as the result of treatment with a medicated shampoo that kills lice.

10. *Scabies*: May return to school after the first 24 hours of physician-prescribed treatment.
11. *Unidentified rash*: May return to school after rash disappears or with physician's clearance.
12. *Meningitis/H. Flu*: May return to school with physician's clearance.

If your child contracts a communicable disease, please notify ELC as soon as possible. Parents of the other children will be alerted to the presence of the disease via a posting on the ramp door and/or email. Reports on communicable diseases are also sent weekly to the County Health. Further information about the disease will be available on request in the office. Your confidentiality is assured.

If your child has a special medical condition or health need, we request that you inform The Early Learning Center so that the staff may act appropriately in the case of a medical emergency.

ABSENCES

The staff at ELC encourages regular attendance at school. A predictable school routine will help your child make steady progress in school and develop a comfortable niche in the classroom. If a child will be extremely late or absent from school, please notify ELC at 734-973-7722 or email at info@elcpreschool.com.

Resources

Washtenaw County Public Health Department

555 Towner

P.O. Box 915

Ypsilanti MI 48197

734-544-6700

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health

Washtenaw County Red Cross

4624 Packard Road

Ann Arbor MI 48108

734-971-5300

<http://www.redcross.org/mi/ann-arbor>

Project Outreach: Provides case management and mental health treatment to homeless individuals

110 N. 4th Ave

Ann Arbor MI

734-222-3750

Ann Arbor Community Center: Counseling services to individuals, families, and groups.

625 N, Main St

Ann Arbor MI

Catholic Social Services: Variety of services

4925 Packard Rd

Ann Arbor MI 48108

734-971-9781

<http://csswashtenaw.org/>

FORMS

Prior to the first day of school, you were asked to complete several forms. Please make sure each of these forms has been returned to ELC. If any changes occur in the information you have given, please update the forms immediately so that all forms remain current. All information supplied to ELC is confidential. It is available only to a child's parents/legal guardian; ELC staff, and regulatory authorities, on request.

Health Form: Each child must have a green health form on file. This form must be signed by a physician and include up-to-date immunizations including 4 DPT, 3 polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 1 MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), 1 varicella (chicken pox), (or proof of chicken pox) , H.influenzae type b (HIB), and a Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccination (PCV7, Prevnar). A negative TB verification is recommended.

Information Card: Each child must have a Michigan Department of Human Services Child Information Record on file. This card includes the names of persons to whom your child may be released. Your child will not be released to a person not named on this card unless you have sent a signed and dated note to your child's teachers.

Field Trip Permission Slip: A walking field trip permission slip requires a parent signature so that your child may participate in neighborhood walking trips.

Press Release / In-House Videotaping / Website & ELC Brochure: A news media photographic release form requires a parent signature in case students' photos are used in local news media. A videotaping release is necessary for staff training videotaping or special program (e.g. at the holidays) taping. These are only available to ELC staff or families. The Website/Brochure release allows us to use your child's photograph on our website or brochure. Names will never accompany these photographs.

Sunscreen/Deet Application: This would allow our staff to apply sunscreen or deet bug spray to your child on an as needed basis.

Health Information Access: This gives permission to all currently employed staff to access the health information kept in your child's file.

FIELD TRIPS

Several field trips are scheduled during the school year. The classrooms schedule *walking field trips* as part of their curriculum. This may be a nature walk to look at trees and wildlife, it may be part of an ecology and recycling unit, or it may be a parade.

We also have *parent vehicle driven field trips* once or twice during the school year. Common destinations for these trips are the University of Michigan Exhibit Museum, Leslie Science Center, or a local farm. We ask that parents accompany their children on these trips, and will assist you in making car pool arrangements as needed.

Staff are required to have fully charged cell phones and first aid supplies with them for every field trip. When parents drive any non-related child on a field trip we require they have a cell phone and first aid kit with them. We recommend that all vehicles have a first aid kit! (ELC has first aid kits available for loan for field trips; please notify the director when you return it if it has been used.) We will also supply field trip drivers with staff cell phone numbers. We request that you use these numbers for field trip emergencies only.

PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In the event a pesticide application is required on ELC property (inside or outside), parents will be notified. A sign will be posted on the ramp bulletin board and notice will be sent home via the children's backpacks or email. IPM (Integrated Pest Management) techniques are used, so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation. Whenever practical, nonpesticide means to manage or limit pests will be used.

SNACKS

During the course of every session, the children are provided a snack. Frequently the children help in the preparation of the snack. Occasionally parents may send a birthday treat to celebrate a special day (please see page 14). The remainder of the time, the snack is planned and provided by the Center. Children frequently assist in cooking their snacks. Below are suggestions of possible snacks that may be served when the children eat together at snack time:

fresh fruit	pasta
fresh vegetables	muffins of all types
goldfish	hummus and pita chips
bagels	spaghetti
cheese	toast & jelly
cereal	tortilla chips and salsa
vegetables	crackers of all sorts

ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS

If your child has any allergies, make sure to include a record of them on the Health Appraisal form and the child information card. If your child has any food restrictions, due to allergies or other reasons, please inform the teachers and director so that they are aware of your child's dietary needs for snack, cooking projects, etc. Parents of food-allergic children are required to complete the Food Allergy Action Plan and an Allergy Posting Permission, provide necessary medication for their child (at least two epinephrine auto injectors), replace expired medication, and inform the director and teachers of any changes in the child's allergy status. For staff monitoring purposes a listing of allergic children or children with a specific medical condition and their allergy/condition will be posted in the classrooms.

Due to the increasing number of peanut/tree nut allergic students, and to the serious consequences of these allergies, ELC has a “**NO PEANUTS/NO TREE NUTS**” policy. That means that anyone entering the Early Learning Center must not bring ANYTHING into the building that contains peanuts or tree nuts (almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts/filberts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts/pignolias, pistachios, walnuts, etc). This restriction includes any foods manufactured in the same facility where peanuts and/or tree nuts are processed. We appreciate your help in upholding our “No Peanut/No Tree Nut” policy.

Here are some helpful hints for reading ingredient labels:

Food that contains tree nuts or peanuts in the ingredient list.	Food that is "Made in a facility that processes nuts or peanuts" or "May contain traces..."	Food that is "Made on equipment that processes tree nuts or peanuts"
<p style="text-align: center;">Please keep these foods at home</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For example:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>INGREDIENTS: CHICORY ROOT EXTRACT, SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE CHIPS (SUGAR, CHOCOLATE LIQUOR, COCOA BUTTER, DEXTROSE, MILKFAT, SOY LECITHIN), ROLLED OATS, CRISP RICE (RICE FLOUR, SUGAR, MALT EXTRACT, SALT, COLOR ADDED), HIGH MALTOSSE CORN SYRUP, BARLEY FLAKES, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, SUGAR, VEGETABLE OIL (CANOLA AND PALM KERNEL), MALTODEXTRIN, HONEY, GLYCERIN, TRICALCIUM PHOSPHATE, SOY LECITHIN, SALT, NONFAT MILK, COCOA PROCESSED WITH ALKALI, NATURAL FLAVOR, BAKING SODA, COLOR ADDED, ALMOND FLOUR, PEANUT FLOUR, SUNFLOWER MEAL, WHEAT FLOUR. MIXED TOCOPHEROLS ADDED TO RETAIN FRESHNESS. CONTAINS MILK, SOY, ALMOND, PEANUT, SUNFLOWER AND WHEAT INGREDIENTS.</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">Please keep these foods at home</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For example:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>INGREDIENTS: Chocolate, sugar, cocoa butter vanilla - a natural flavor. May contain traces of peanuts soybean, nuts and milk.</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">Please keep these foods at home</p> <div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Ingredient Declaration: Dark Chocolate (Chocolate Liquor, Sugar, Cocoa Butter, Soy Lecithin (An Emulsifier), Vanilla), Sweetened Dried Cranberries (Cranberries, Sugar, Sunflower Oil), Confectioner's Polish (Modified Corn Starch, Sugar, Citric Acid, Sorbic Acid, Water), Confectioner's Glaze.</p> <p>Allergy Information: CONTAINS MILK. MANUFACTURED ON EQUIPMENT THAT PROCESSES PRODUCTS CONTAINING PEANUTS, TREE NUTS, DAIRY PRODUCTS AND WHEAT.</p> </div>

The Early Learning Center is unable to guarantee that your student with life-threatening allergies will not be accidentally exposed to his/her allergens in the school environment. However, ELC will work to keep his/her risks as minimal as possible.

Occasionally parents volunteers are asked to bring in a supplemental snack or treat for special occasions (such as the Let's Pretend Parties or the Holiday Parties). Below are some suggestions for "no peanut/tree nut" snacks and candies. Please remember that all treats/snacks from home must be commercially-prepared individually-packaged foods in factory sealed containers (with labels).

***IMPORTANT REMINDER**

Due to continual changes in manufacturer packaging and processing, please read the ingredient label of your snack chosen from this list to ensure that it does not contain any of the following... peanuts/tree nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut/nut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or any of the statements "May contain traces of peanut/tree nuts" or "Manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts (and/or other nuts)".

Fruits

All fresh fruit (whole)
Dole Fruit Bowls
Del Monte Fruit To-Go Cups
Sun-Maid Raisins (**not chocolate covered**)
Craisins

Vegetables

All Fresh Vegetables Including:
Carrots with Dip
Celery Sticks with Cream Cheese or Dip

Gummy Snacks

(**Not Brachs.**) Only Betty Crocker or Nabisco Fruit Snacks including:
Fruit Roll-Ups
Shark Bites
Fun Fruits

Cookies

Oreos & Mini Oreos (**not mint-creme**)
Chips-A-Hoy (**not minis**)
Teddy Grahams
Pepperidge Farm - Milano, Chessmen, Shortbread and Sugar Cookies
Keebler - Butter Cookies, Grasshopper Cookies
Nabisco - Barnum Animal Crackers, Fig Newtons
Hostess Ho-Ho's & Twinkies
Rice Krispie Treats (**plain only**)
Nutrigrain Cereal bars (Mixed Berry, Raspberry, Apple Cinnamon, Blueberry, Cherry, Strawberry)

Salty Snacks

*No pretzels for children under 4
Rold Gold Pretzels
Snyders of Hanover Pretzels
Ruffles Potato Chips
Lays Potato Chips
Pringles (**original only**)
Quaker Quakes (mini rice cakes)

Miscellaneous

Cheese (string cheese, cheese cubes or block cheese – not processed cheese spreads)
Cream Cheese
Yogurt (**not soy brands**) - Gogurt, Danimals, etc.
T. Mazettis Caramel Apple Dip (with apples)
Pizza - Papa Johns, Dominoes, Pizza Hut

Cereals

Kelloggs Corn Flake cereal

Kashi (Go Lean, Good Friends Cinnamon Raisin Crunch & Heart to Heart) cereal
General Mills Kix (Original, Berry Berry)
General Mills Chex (Rice, Corn, Wheat and the blend of three)
General Mills Cheerios (Regular, Triple Berry, Strawberry, Apple Cinnamon) Note: Multigrain Cheerios and Honey Nut are NOT safe

Frozen Treats

Minute Maid - Juice Bars, Fruit & Cream Swirls
Good Humor - Fudgesicles, Popsicles
Rainbow Sherbet Treats
Juicy Juice Frozen Juice Pops
Deans Neopolitan Ice Cream sandwiches
Dove Ice Cream bars
ICEE Frozen Treats
Tropicana Fruit Juice Bars
Welch's Fruit Juice Popsicles & Whole Fruit bars

Crackers

Honey Maid - Cinnamon or Honey
Grahams & Sticks
Ritz Crackers (**plain only, not sandwiches**)
Keebler Club Crackers (**original only, not sandwiches**)
Nabisco Saltines
Sunshine Cheez-Its
Triscuit
Wheat Thins
Pepperidge Farm Cheddar Goldfish
Keebler Town House Crackers

Jellos and Puddings

Hershey Chocolate Pudding Tubes
Kraft Handi-Snacks - Vanilla & Chocolate Pudding
Hunts - Juicy Gels, Vanilla & Chocolate Pudding
Jello - Gelatin Cups, Vanilla, Chocolate & Oreo Pudding
Dole Fruit-n-Gel Bowls

Hot dogs and cheese are cut into "French fry" strips before serving. Grapes are cut into halves.

Lunch Ideas that Do Not Contain Peanuts or Tree Nuts

These foods are not guaranteed to be "no nut" foods, and ingredients vary depending on the manufacturer. Please read the ingredient label of the foods chosen from this list to ensure that they do not contain any of the following... peanuts/tree-nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut/tree-nut oil, peanut/tree-nut flour, peanut/tree-nut meal, or any of the statements "May contain traces of peanut/tree-nuts" or "Manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts (and/or other nuts)". The word "nut" should not be present anywhere on the label. Thank you for your cooperation in this important matter.

In addition to reading the ingredient list of commercially-prepared foods, please be aware of the potential for nuts/nut products in home baked goods and other foods prepared at home. Items containing peanuts, tree nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, cashews, pistachios, etc.), or nut products should not be sent in lunches. A list of specific ingredients is included here: almonds, artificial nuts, beechnut, beer nuts, Brazil nuts, butternut, cashews, chestnuts, chinquapin, coconut, cold pressed, expeller pressed, or extruded peanut oil, filberts/hazelnuts, gianduja (*a chocolate-nut mixture*), ginkgo nut, goobers, ground nuts, hickory nuts, litchi/lichee/lychee nut, macadamia nuts, marzipan/almond paste, mixed nuts, monkey nuts, Nangai nuts, natural nut extract (e.g., *almond, walnut*), nut butters (e.g., *cashew butter*), nut meal, nut paste (e.g., *almond paste*), nut pieces, nutmeat, peanuts, peanut butter, peanut flour, peanut protein hydrolysate, nutmeat, pecans, pesto, pili nut, pine nuts (*also referred to as Indian, pignoli, piñolia, pignon, piñon, and pinyon nuts*), pistachios, praline, shea nut, walnuts.

Bread Ideas

- Pita
- Muffins
- Mini bagel
- Matzo
- Whole wheat bun
- Bread sticks and butter

Fillings

- Cream Cheese – plain, strawberry, raspberry, blueberry, pineapple
- Plain cream cheese with the following: jelly, apple butter, shredded veggies, or mild cheese
- Deli meats
- Tuna

Veggie Ideas

- Baby carrots
- Cucumber or pickle slices
- Olives
- Celery sticks
- Salad with side dressing
- Sugar snap peas
- Grape Tomatoes

Fruit Ideas

- Cut up apples
- Melon balls or cubes
- Dried fruit chips and raisins
- Banana
- Clementines
- Oranges
- Pineapple chunks
- Apple sauce or Jell-O with fruit
- Yogurt with added fruit
- Grapes, cut in half

Other Ideas

- Dry cereal
- Cheese and crackers
- Salad (add chicken or turkey cubes)
- Bean burritos
- Cheese tortellini (or plain pasta) with parmesan sprinkles (cold, or warm in thermos)
- Leftover pasta with marinara or meat sauce & parmesan (cold, or warm in thermos)
- Rolled up deli meat and cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Spaghetti
- Macaroni and cheese
- Rice with veggies
- Soup – (your child's favorite) in a thermos
- Home-made lunchables – crackers, squares of deli meat, circles of cheese
- Drinkable yogurt

Tips

- ✓ Have your child help pick out what they would like at the grocery store, and then have them help make their own lunch.
- ✓ Food warmed and put in a thermos provides a hot lunch. Remember to add a spoon or fork.
- ✓ Children love cheese/meat cut into interesting shapes with a cookie cutter!
- ✓ Freezer packs will keep necessary items chilled.

