

EARLY LEARNING

CENTER OF

CENTRAL Illinois

PARENT

HANDBOOK

Early Learning Center is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services by the Fire Department and the County Health Department. Unannounced inspections are regularly conducted by these organizations to ensure adherence to standards.

Center Contact Information

Address: 7411 N University Ave Peoria IL 61614

Phone Numbers: 309-689-1126

309-689-1057

Fax Number: 309-689-5763

Email: customerservice@elcci.org

website: www.elcci.org

Philosophy

The philosophy of our center is that children learn best through hands-on playing and natural learning experiences. We strive to give our children natural experiences that allow them to learn through their own curiosity and imagination.

OUR PROGRAM

Our daily program begins at 6:30 a.m. with center play and ends at 1:00 a.m.

Each class' schedule varies according to the ages of children and the teaching styles of each teacher. Each schedule is designed to allow circle time, center time, outdoor play time, music and movement, small group, meal times, and literacy time twice a day. Naptime is every afternoon, 12noon-2pm, not exceeding two hours, less for those who do not sleep and rest period for evenings is at 8:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. depending on the age group. As children begin to go home with their parents, classes may combine to finish out the day.

Hours of Operation

Daily Hours

The Early Learning Center, (ELC) is open from 6:30 A.M. to 1:00 A.M. Sunday through Saturday, ELC will be closed for predetermined holidays. Tuition is not reduced for holidays.

Holidays

The Holiday schedule is listed below:

- New Year's Day (Open at 5:00pm)
- Easter Sunday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day (Open at 5:00 pm)

Inclement Weather or Emergency Closing Policy

Any announcement concerning the closing of the ELC due to inclement weather or emergencies (such as heating/cooling issues) will be made by the center's Director. Announcements will be made on the local news channels. The decision to close the program will be made as early as possible.

In the event the weather worsens during the day or an emergency arises during the day, the Director or designee will contact all parents by telephone to notify them of the closing time. Parents are expected to pick up their children within the time frame given by ELC. Tuition is not reduced for closings due to inclement weather or emergencies, unless the center is closed for one whole continuous week.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Procedures

The Early Learning Center provides service for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age.

Required Information:

1. Registration fee of \$25 paid in full. Note: This fee is non-refundable.

2. Completed enrollment Application
 3. A complete Immunization Record provided by the child's physician.
 4. A complete physical done by the child's physician. This physical must be no more than 2 years old and must be updated with us every two years.
 5. Tuberculin Skin Test. Unless the examining physician has made a determination that it is unnecessary, a tuberculin skin test by the Mantoux method and the results of that test must be included in the initial examination for all children who have attained one year of age, or at the age of one year for children who are enrolled before their first birthday. If your child's physician finds that this is unnecessary they must write a note stating that they are waving the test.
 6. Lead Assessment. Every child must have a lead assessment by their examining physician to determine if a lead test is necessary. If your child's physician finds that this is unnecessary they must write a note stating that they are waving the test
- A copy of the certified birth certificate. Not the one that is hospital issued. This birth certificate must be turned in no later than 2 weeks after your child is enrolled. If Early Learning Center doesn't have a copy of the birth certificate, per DCFS licensing standards we are required to report the child to Peoria Police as a missing child.
7. A schedule and complete list of contact information on where parents can be reached in case of an emergency. A list of emergency contacts, including names and phone numbers (must be 18 years of age). This list must be updated whenever changes in emergency contact information occur.
 8. Medical information including known allergies (food, medicine, etc.),
 9. Food Program Application and Infant Food Waiver (if applicable)
 10. Child Care Connection Forms (if applicable)

Non Discrimination Policy

ELC does not discriminate against any child or family based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion or disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made to provide services to all children enrolled in our program.

Attendance Policy

If a child is absent for more than 3 days, without notice, we cannot guarantee their enrolled position. You must inform us on Monday or sooner if your child will be out sick for a week or if they will be gone on vacation. Each family receives one Ill Child Credit and one Vacation Credit every six months.

Withdrawal

Parents and legal guardians are required to provide a two week notice upon leaving the center. All unpaid balances must also be brought up to date. If two weeks notice is not given, ELC reserves the right to charge the two weeks tuition to the account. If payment is not made 30 days after you withdraw your account will be turned over to Midwest Collection Agency. The family is then responsible for all charges owed to us, as well as any collection fees, court cost, etc that may incur.

Discontinuance of Service Policy

Early Learning Center may discontinue a child for reasons which include, but are not limited to: parent failure to pay tuition; failure to turn in necessary Child Care Connection paperwork or being unapproved with Child Care Connection for 30 days; disturbance of the

Center's program by a parent; continued disagreement or dissatisfaction of a parent to the point of disruption for the teachers and/or children, or behavior from the child that would be considered dangerous to themselves, other children or staff members. Under DCFS regulations, enrollment may be terminated if the child or family can not uphold agreements made with the center, the child's needs are not met by the center, or the child's presence is detrimental to the group.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Arrivals

Parents or assigned adult are to drop off their child according to the pre-approved schedule. The parent or the assigned adult must accompany the child into the Classroom (or other assigned areas of play) and entrust the child to the care of a staff member. The adult must also sign-in each child he/she brings to the Early Learning Center. Please understand that our children nap between 12:00pm and 2:00pm we greatly appreciate no drop offs during this time as to not interrupt the children.

Parents are responsible for checking the child's "cubby" each day to ensure that all necessary items are in place. Parents will receive a daily report (picked up by parents upon departure) which includes information to help parents keep track of their child's needs for the following days.

Please notify the center by 9:00 a.m. if your child is to be absent.

Departure-Child Release

We have policies and procedures in place for releasing children to

anyone other than custodial parents and legal guardians. For the safety of all children in our care we ask that anyone unfamiliar to the staff show proper photo identification to verify their identity. Please inform friends and relatives of this policy so they are prepared when picking up your child. Early Learning Center cannot release any child to an unauthorized person; therefore, we must emphasize the importance of keeping contact information current.

Children are released only:

- To an authorized parent/legal guardian
- To a person authorized by written permission from the parents
- To an authorized person with a picture I.D.
- To an authorized sibling 18 years of age or older

The parent or authorized representative of the parent needs to sign out each child.. Signing the children in and out keeps the center in compliance with state regulations and it adds an extra measure of protection for all the children. No one under the age of 18 can pick up a child from Early Learning Center no matter the circumstances, per DCFS licensing standards.

If a situation arises where your child must go home and all of your personal numbers have been tried, we will contact your emergency phone list for someone to pick up your child and we will leave messages for you so you know who has your child. In the event of a late pick up and we are unable to reach any contact person by 1:00AM, we will notify the Department of Children and Family Services and if necessary the Peoria Police Department.

Late Policy

The center's hours of operation end promptly at 1:00AM. Tardy departures of children impose an unfair burden on the staff at the end of their work. The Center charges \$1.00 per minute after 1:00 am. From 1:05- 1:15 am the charge is \$2.00 per minute, at \$5.00 per every minute after 1:15 am. The charge is per family, not per child. The charge must be paid the following day or the child can't attend. We must pay a teacher to stay after hours and care for your child, as well as the director.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is a weekly charge, but may be paid in advance. (Rates are subject to change at anytime.)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Full Time</u>
Under age 2	\$250 or \$55/day
Age 2	\$210 or \$47/day
Age 3 and Older	\$170 or \$39/day

We also bill a \$25.00 activity fee each quarter for all children who are 3 and older (February, May, August, and November). This is to help cover the cost of class parties, field trips, guest speakers, etc.

Fee Schedule

Tuition is due and payable in advance on Monday of each week. Paying the tuition in advance allows us to prepare for the month through meal and activity planning and paying our staff on time. If you choose to

pay bi-weekly, you are responsible for paying for 2 weeks of tuition (in advance). If you choose to pay monthly, your fee is due on the first day of the month. For those families who are applying for Child Care Connection Subsidy, a standard weekly tuition will be charged to your account until your child care is approved.

The weekly fee that Early Learning Center charges is \$33, until Child Care Connection approval is obtained. After we receive approval from Child Care Connection, your account will be credited accordingly. Take note that Child Care Connection doesn't pay for any late fees that your account may occur, if your account does occur late fees you are responsible for paying them. If your case is not approved or you go more than 30 days unapproved, you will be responsible for paying the Private Pay tuition for any days your child attended Early Learning Center, or subjected to discontinuance of service.

If your child is sick or stays home for any reason, credit can only be given if they are out for an entire consecutive week. You must inform the center if your child will be gone for longer than a day. He/she will not be allowed to 'make-up' the days missed. We must plan to have all staff here even if your child does not attend.

Rate Increase for Private Pay Families

Parents are informed of current rates when children are enrolled. If there is an increase in rates, parents will be given a minimum of 2 weeks notice regarding the new rates. Private pay families must inform the center of how many days a week their children will be attending so that they may be charged accordingly. This charge will remain the same regardless if the child attends fewer days than

stated. If the child comes more days than stated additional charges will occur.

Refunds

No refunds in tuition are made for absences.

Late Fee

Payment is due on the Monday of each week. If tuition is not paid by that Monday at pick-up and reasonable arrangements have not been made with the director, you will be charged an additional \$5 each additional day tuition is not paid.

Returned Check Charge

A \$25.00 fee will be charged for any returned check. This fee and the amount of the returned check will be **due in cash** before your child may return.

Meals and Snacks

Early Learning Center provides breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner and an evening snack daily. The food served meets the guidelines of the Child and Adult Care Food Program under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Menus are posted on the Bulletin Board located outside the office and in the classrooms for parental review.

The times are as follows:

- 8:00 – 8:30 Breakfast
- 11:00 - 11:45 Lunch
- 2:00-2:30 PM Snack
- 5:00-5:45 Dinner

- o 7:00-7:30 Evening Snack

Parents are encouraged to examine the menu and notify staff if there is something their child cannot have for medical or religious reasons. If your child has an allergy to a food, please include this on the admission form and documentation from a physician. If your child has an allergy to the menu a substitute meal must be brought in for them.

Infants are fed according to their individual schedules. Parents who choose not to participate in our Infant Food Program must supply all formula and food items (along with a written feeding schedule). Only sanitized bottles and nipples are to be brought. Please mark the bottles with your child's name and date prior to bringing the bottles and formula to the Center. Formula must be milk-based unless a physician provides written consent.

When the option of ELC providing your infant formula is chosen, the formula that is used is Enfamil Infant. No specialty formula will be purchased by ELC.

No food, other than formula, milk, breast milk or water will be placed in bottles for infant feedings unless otherwise indicated by the child's physician. You must bring in a signed note stating why your child must have something else in their bottle.

Food Allergies

Due to the numerous types of food allergies that are present in today's children ELC has established the following policy.

Absolutely no outside food is allowed in the building unless approved by the center director. If a child enters the building with outside food the food must be discarded or given back to the parent, it will not be saved or served at the center. If party or birthday treats are brought in for the classrooms they must be store bought. Nothing homemade will be served to the children. Every ELC staff member is given notice of each child's allergies regardless if they are in their assigned classroom or not.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

Clothing should be comfortable enough to allow children to fully participate in a wide variety of activities (i.e. painting, water play, sandbox, etc.) without undue concern that these clothes will be damaged. Learning, we believe, should be a positive experience. Sometimes it's noisy and messy. Often it's joyous! For safety, as well as health reasons, children should wear comfortable footwear that has closed toes. If closed toed shoes are not worn, a pair must be provided for children to change into during the day when play necessitates it. Children are expected to dress appropriately and be ready to go outdoors in every season.

Please dress children in cool clothing for summer; warm coats, hats and gloves in the winter; and sweaters in the fall and spring. In the summer months, we would like each child to have a swim suit and towel to splash in the water with their friends on a warm day.

*** All clothing, blankets, and security items should be labeled with your child's name. If not labeled they may be lost or go**

home with the wrong child*

If there are medical reasons why a child cannot participate in outdoor activities, but is well enough to be at the center, we will be happy to comply with your **physician's written request** and instructions. Our children do not play outdoors in inclement weather or in extreme hot/cold conditions. DCFS licensing standards require us to take the children outside everyday. The children do not go out if it is colder than 32 degrees and they do not go out if it is hotter than 90 degrees. Please sign the permission slip and provide sunscreen for your child so that we may keep them safe during sunny days.

Each child is expected to keep a complete change of extra clothing. Please also include a comb or brush. Extra clothing should be placed in a plastic Ziploc bag clearly labeled with the child's name and placed in the child's "cubby". During toilet training please bring at least two extra changes of clothing. Parents of infants and toddlers also need to provide disposable diapers and any needed diaper powder, wipes, or ointment.

Parents should provide a blanket for naptime. The classroom teachers are responsible for sanitizing their cots every day after nap time and bedtime. Children should not bring other toys from home. Early Learning Center is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken personal items, this includes but not limited to toys, clothes, shoes, electronics, ECT. **Early Learning Center will not replace personal items that are lost, stolen or broken.**

Biting

Biting is not uncommon when infants and toddlers respond to the discomfort of teething and when they are beginning to express their strong likes and dislikes. Biting can also occur when children are seeking adult's attention or when they are adjusting to sharing their space and their materials. Biting occurs most frequently when children's language is just emerging – it is sometimes their most effective strategy for expressing their emotions. We wish that biting never happened – but it does. You can be assured that the staff supervises all children all the time. When we are working with a child who is using his/her teeth to solve his/her problems, our teachers target their efforts to prevent injuries and to change this behavior as quickly as possible.

Behavior Problems

It's always a relief to know that the less-than-perfect behaviors are a very normal part of growing up. However, disruptive or hurtful actions cannot be allowed at our center.

Our policy is now as follows:

First time sent up to the office: 15 minutes to calm down, think about behavior, and return to classroom.

Second time sent up to the office the same day: Parent is called and speaks with the child to try and get the behavior under control. If child fixes behavior they may return to the classroom.

If child is not cooperating or fixing behavior parent will be called and asked to pick that child up. If they are not able to pick them up within the hour, we will begin calling people from your emergency list.

If child is still not picked up within the hour, the child will not be allowed to return to the center the next day.

Emergency Procedures/Drills

Early Learning Center places a high priority on being prepared for a variety of emergencies that may arise. If your child should have an emergency while in our care and the child needs immediate assistance, it is our policy to contact you and your preferred hospital immediately. If we are unable to reach you, another adult on the child's emergency list will be notified. If the child does not need immediate care, we will make a record of the incident, what we did to treat it, and provide a written note to ensure you are notified of the incident when you pick up our child.

Fire and tornado emergencies are posted by every exit and in every classroom, accessible to every adult in the building. In the event there should be a fire or tornado, we will follow our building procedures to ensure all children are safe. In the event of a true tornado or fire emergency, we will try to notify parents as soon as possible of their child's safety.

We have set up an emergency plan as follows:

Stay informed. The Early Learning Center staff monitors alert statuses of any kind. When an alert is in a heightened state (for weather or otherwise), the radio and Internet are checked regularly for breaking information.

COMMUNICATION

Parent Communication

We recognize that communication between teachers and parents is essential. Every effort will be made to communicate the kind of day each child has had. We also appreciate parents sharing any insight that could influence a child's daily progress at the Center.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

If staff suspects a child has been abused or neglected, we are required to report it to the Department of Children and Family Services and/or local law enforcement immediately. Every employee of Early Learning Center is required to sign a mandated reporter form stating that if they suspect child abuse or neglect they are legally obligated to report it.

Photographs and Video Tapes

All children (with the exception of our children who are under DCFS care) may be photographed or recorded to develop videos, published material or press releases, with the understanding that a family's privacy will be respected and honored. Identifiable photographs will not be used without prior specific approval from the parents. Children's pictures will only be added to the center's website with a signed permission form from the parent/legal guardian.

HEALTH ISSUES

No-Smoking Policy

This is a non-smoking facility. No smoking is permitted inside the building at any time. Smoking is also prohibited within 50 feet outside of the center.

Sick Child Policy

Children will be screened daily upon their arrival for any obvious signs of illness. For the safety and health of all our children and teachers, sick children need to be at home. If symptoms of illness are present, the child care staff will determine whether they are able to care for your child safely, based on the apparent degree of illness. Children with diarrhea and those with a rash combined with fever (oral temperature of 101° F or higher or under the arm temperature of 100° F or higher) shall not be admitted while those symptoms persist, and shall be removed as soon as possible should these symptoms develop while the child is in care. Please note, if a child's temperature exceeds 103° while in care, 911 will be called.

When you have been contacted because of illness, please pick up your child within the hour. It is very important you have alternative care for your child when your child is sick. We know it can be a very frustrating time when a child is sent home because of illness. No tuition adjustment will be made for absences due to illness.

If one of the following conditions or illness occurs, your child is required to be excluded from attendance at the Center:

- * Fever with behavior change or symptoms of illness;
- * Diarrhea *All Diarrhea is a health concern in the classroom.
- * Vomiting - two or more times in the previous 24 hours
- * Mouth sores associated with the child's inability to control his or her saliva
- * Rash with fever or behavior change - unless a physician has determined the illness to be non-communicable;

- * Purulent conjunctivitis (pink eye) - until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- * Impetigo - until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- * Ringworm - until anti-fungal cream has been applied and provided to the center in order to reduce the spread of infection;
- * Strep throat - until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and until the child has been without fever for 24 hours;
- * Head lice - until the morning after the first treatment;
- * Scabies - until the morning after the first treatment;
- * Chicken pox - until at least six days after onset of rash;
- * Whooping cough - until five days of antibiotic treatment have been completed;
- * Mumps - until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling;
- * Measles - until four days after disappearance of the rash;
- * Symptoms of possible severe illness, such as unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other unusual signs;
- * Illness which calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children;
- * Symptoms which may be indicative of one of the serious, communicable diseases identified in the Illinois Department of Public Health Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690).

The 24 hour "Symptom Free" Rule

The Centers' policy requires that your child be free of symptoms of illness: fever, diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours. Fever-free means without medication for fever reduction. Please keep in mind that if we send your child home

because of illness, the child will not be admitted to the center the next day because the 24-hour period will not have elapsed. Do not rush a child's return to childcare following an illness. The Center reserves the right to require a doctor's statement before your child can be readmitted to the center.

Prevention

Because young children are vulnerable to infectious diseases, we encourage you as the parent/guardian to be aware of our health policies and procedures as stated. Prevention of illnesses or contagious diseases is critical. We encourage you to:

- * Do a brief assessment of your child's health each morning. Please do not bring a sick child to the center.
- * Provide disposable as opposed to cloth diapers.
- * Provide disposable wipes.
- * Be aware that low-grade fevers may be associated with an infection or illness, and not "just teething".
- * Keep your emergency contact name and numbers up-to-date.
- * Dress your child appropriately – according to weather, etc.
- * Be aware that on short notice you may have to pick up your child due to illness.

Sanitation Procedures

Parents must supply disposable diapers and wipes. However, it is imperative children have a minimum of 1 diaper for every two hours they will be in care each day. (i.e. Child care from 7 am - 5 pm = 10 hours-minimum of 5 diapers) Changing areas have running water and are disinfected after each use. Teachers wear a fresh pair of gloves

each time they change a child's diaper. Every precaution is made to keep the diaper changing areas as germ free as possible. Licensing regulations are adhered to in all areas of sanitation procedures.

MEDICATIONS

The administration and storage of medications is overseen by the Early Learning Center office. Medications are stored in a locked box unless it is being accessed by an authorized staff member removing a medication. Medications requiring refrigeration are kept locked in the program refrigerator.

Prescribed medications must be labeled with the following information:

- * Name of the person for which the medication is prescribed (child being served)
- * Name of the medication
- * Dosage and route
- * Prescription number clearly labeled on the item

Prescription medications will be administered according to the physician's order as indicated on the prescription bottle/box. The Parent/Legal guardian is required to sign a Medication Authorization Form agreeing to the administration of the prescription medication to their child.

Every prescribed medication must be signed in on the Medication Authorization Form. Any prescribed medication/dosage change requires a new authorization before it can be given. Should staff observe signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction (such as a rash, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) they will contact the parent/guardian

immediately and request the parent/guardian to pick their child up and seek medical attention. The program staff is responsible for continued monitoring of the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

If a medication is missed or not administered according to the physician's order (excluding the one hour window), staff will observe and document any reaction due to the medication being missed. Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately.

If your child has a severe allergy or asthma as indicated on the Food Allergy/Asthma Action Plan, you are responsible for providing necessary medication for your child daily.

Pest Control Policy

The Early Learning Center uses Markley's Pest Control to control any pests we encounter in the building. Markley's Pest Control uses the policies of the Integrate Pest Management for Schools & Daycare Facilities. Once a month the company inspects the Center. Insect monitors are the only device used in the center. If a problem is seen and it is decided a chemical is needed it will be applied in a minimal amount. No children will be present and we will notify all parents 30 days before the chemical is applied.