

**early learning center**  
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

# Family Handbook

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## Table of Contents

Absences.....	11
Accidents: Children.....	11
Administration of Medication.....	11
Allergies.....	12
Arrival & Departure.....	12
Assessment Plan.....	9
Before/After Care Transportation.....	12
Birthdays & Holidays.....	12
Bottles (for infants).....	12
Breast Feeding.....	13
Cell Phones & Texting.....	13
Child Abuse & Neglect.....	13
Clothing.....	13
Communication & Family Involvement.....	13
Community Resources.....	23
Confidentiality.....	13
Consistency of Care.....	14
Contact Information.....	4
Curriculum & Assessment.....	9
Diapers.....	14
Discipline/Positive Guidance.....	14
Emergency Contact Information.....	15
Enrollment Procedures.....	6
Family Style Dining.....	15
Feeding Infants and Toddlers.....	16
Fees.....	7
Field Trips.....	16
Fire Drills.....	16
Health Appraisal (Child Physical.....	16
Health: Children.....	16
Helmets.....	18
Holidays and Days Closed.....	8
Hours of Operation.....	8
Late Pick Up Fees.....	7
Meals and Meal Times.....	18 , 19
Mission of the Early Learning Center.....	5
No Shoe Policy (Infant Rooms.....	19
Observation Booths.....	19
Parental/Adult Code of Conduct.....	19
Parent Concerns.....	20
Parking: Newark.....	20
Participation in Programs, Research & Training Activities at the Early Learning Center.....	6
Philosophy of the Early Learning Center.....	5
Playground Access.....	20
Programs at the Early Learning Center.....	5
Purchase of Care.....	7
Ratios.....	20

Release of Children .....	21
Research at the Early Learning Center .....	5, 6
Security Measures at the ELC.....	10
Sleeping.....	21
Smoking, Alcohol, Illegal Substances & Firearms .....	21
Snow and Emergency Closing .....	8
Staff Qualifications .....	9
Staff Working for Parents .....	21
Supervision .....	22
Toys from Home .....	22
Training at the Early learning Center.....	5
Tuition and Billing.....	7
Weather Policy for Playing Outdoors.....	22
Withdrawal Policy.....	22



## Contact Information

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## **Welcome to the University of Delaware Early Learning Center**

### **Mission of the Early Learning Center**

The ELC supports children and their families by providing a high quality, nationally accredited program of early care and education; supports academic and research programs of the University as a site for observation, practicum and research students and faculty; and actively participates in state and national initiatives to advance the field of early care and education.

### **Philosophy of the Early Learning Center**

Although the program in each classroom varies to reflect the ages of the children, the children's interests, and the teacher's style, a basic philosophy remains constant throughout the ELC: The staff believes in helping each child develop to his/her fullest socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually. Parents and other family members are viewed as essential partners in that process.

### **Programs at the Early Learning Center**

Quality early care and education is the foundation service at the Early Learning Center, based on what research indicates is recommended practice for children ages birth through twelve years. Additional programs for children and families are also provided. Some of these programs may be family support programs that focus on education, literacy, and family interactions. Others may be enhancements to the child care, such as special activities within the classroom to enhance children's skills. Families will always be made aware when new programs are available.

### **Research at the Early Learning Center**

Research activities take place at the Early Learning Center so that we can better understand how children grow, learn, and interact, as well as how to better support children and families. These activities may include such things as measuring children's development over time, observations of children's interactions with toys, activities, and other children, and audio- and video-taping of children's activities. Research includes asking families to complete questionnaires to provide information for the research data base. Additionally, teachers and other staff may be asked about their views of children, the activities that take place at the ELC, and how effective they think services are for children and families. All research that takes place at the Early Learning Center is reviewed and approved by both the Center committee on research and the University of Delaware's research review board.

**Training at the Early Learning Center** Families and children are best served by professionals whose practices are based on sound theory and current research in human development and learning. As a University practicum site, the ELC serves students who are studying to enter a variety of fields including teaching, nursing, physical therapy, and psychology. Learning skills in a center that provides high quality services is one of the best ways to ensure that new professionals will be well prepared to serve children and families.

### **Special Note About Research Activity**

- Each semester there are hundreds of UD students and researchers who work in the ELC. The ELC provides research and clinical/practicum opportunities to more than fifteen departments at the University of Delaware, including Human Development and Family Studies, Education, Psychology, Physical Therapy, Nursing, Health & Exercise Sciences,

Foreign Languages, Biology, English, Music, Agriculture, Disabilities Studies, Communications, Hotel & Restaurant Management, and Nutrition.

- Researchers, complete an application process before being permitted to study or conduct research in the ELC. A preproposal justifying access to the Early Learning Center including the impact on children, families, ELC staff and the field of study must first be presented to the ELC Research Coordinator.
- The ELC Director and the ELC Research Coordinator independently determine whether or not it is an appropriate activity before passing the preproposal to the ELC Research Committee for review and a vote to approve or disapprove the activity. At any point, the preproposal may be refused, returned for revisions or to provide further clarification about the proposed activities.
- The preproposal is then voted on by the ELC Program Council, which includes University faculty members representing different disciplines, as well as a representative of Office of the Vice President of Research. The proposal must also be submitted to the University's Human Subject Review Board for approval.
- All researchers and University students who will be in the building more than seven hours in one week or a total of forty hours or more in a year are required to have a criminal background check which includes a child abuse registry check and adult abuse registry check. Additionally they must complete a health exam and TB test.

### **Participation in Programs, Research and Training Activities at the Early Learning Center**

In addition to providing quality services for children and families, the ELC supports the academic and research programs of the University as a site for student observation and practicum as well as faculty and graduate student research. All children and families enrolled at the ELC participate in these research and training activities. If you feel that you and/or your child cannot participate in these activities, it will be necessary for you to find another source of care for your child.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

The ELC actively works to ensure that our classroom enrollments reflect racial, ethnic and economic diversity and we are committed to serving children with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We manage enrollment to include:

- State Subsidized (Purchase of Care) clients, up to 30% of the total enrollment;
- Children with a diagnosed disability who are actively receiving support services, a minimum of 20% of total enrollment;
- Children living in foster care or who are recently adopted, a minimum of 10 % of total enrollment;
- Children of UD employees and the broader community

The ELC maintains a year-round, on-going wait list for new enrollments. Families may be placed on the wait list by completing a registration form and paying a non-refundable fee (this fee is waived for clients who are eligible for the state subsidized Purchase of Care program). Registration does not guarantee your child's enrollment on the date desired. Although parents are welcome to contact the ELC regarding the status of available spaces, due to the number of variables presented by the priority list, it is not possible to give you an exact number or position on the wait list. Please note that due to wait list priorities, it is possible for another family to receive a space before your child if they are in a higher priority category, even if you registered before them. When an opening occurs for your child, you will be contacted. If you decline the

first offer your name will remain in place on the wait list. If you decline a second offer your name will move to the end of the wait list.

Once you accept enrollment, you will be sent the necessary forms and paperwork to complete. Within 30 days of enrollment each family is expected to make an appointment with the Research Office Coordinator to complete questionnaires about your child and family. This information is for research purposes. Each child and family is assigned a code which ensures anonymity and confidentiality.

### **Tuition and Billing**

A non-refundable, registration fee of \$75 is collected at the time the registration form is submitted. This is not applied to tuition. Registration fees are waived for POC clients.

The ELC tuition is due monthly in advance of service. Families have four options for making payment:

1. Payment at the front desk by Cash or Check payable to the University of Delaware
2. Bi-monthly payroll deduction (for UD employees only)
3. ACH transaction to be automatically debited from a bank account on the first and fifteenth of each month
4. ACH transaction initiated by the payer at <https://primus.nss.udel.edu/casforms/ELC/>

There will be no tuition refund for days missed by children because of illness, vacation or school closing due to inclement weather.

Meals included in tuition: Breakfast, Lunch and Afternoon Snack

### **Late Pick Up Fees**

Payment will be considered late after the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month and a \$25.00 late payment fee will be assessed on past due accounts on the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month.

The ELC opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. In the event a child is picked up after 6:00 p.m. the family will be charged a late pick up fee of \$5.00 for the first minute and \$1 per minute per child for each additional minute. Late pick up fees are due the next business day.

### **Other Additional Fees**

- NSF (bounced check): \$25
- There may be additional fees for field trips and special events.

### **Purchase of Care (State Subsidized Child Care Funds)**

It is the family's responsibility to ensure that POC authorization remains current. POC reauthorization must be given to the ELC by the family before the expiration of current authorization. For example if your POC authorization expires at the end of the month, the ELC must receive the reauthorization before the first of the next month. The reauthorization form must physically be presented to the ELC by the family. If POC expires you may withdraw your child from the center or pay the full tuition rate.

Parent co-pays are assigned by the state and are due in advance of service. Families with co-pays will be charged for the six holidays allowed by the State; New Years, Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. Any day the center closes beyond the six holidays above will not be billable to POC clients.

**Hours of Operation:**

The Early Learning Center Newark is open from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Children will be admitted for attendance beginning at 7:00 a.m. All children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. when the center closes.

The Early Learning Center Wilmington is open from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Children will be admitted for attendance beginning at 7:30 a.m. All children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. when the center closes.

**Holidays & Days Closed:**

The Early Learning Center is closed on the following holidays each year:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	Thanksgiving & the day after
Memorial Day	Winter Holiday (Dec 24-Dec 31)
Independence Day	

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday before. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, we will be closed the Monday after.

In addition, the ELC closes five days per year for staff training. The Director will determine the dates annually and families are provided a calendar of holidays and closings yearly. On even numbered years, the ELC will be closed on Election Day.

**Snow & Emergency Closing:**

The Early Learning Center will follow the same snow and emergency closings as the University of Delaware. Information will be posted on the ELC answering machine and broadcast on local radio stations.

UD Early Learning Center Newark answering machine – 831-6205

UD Early Learning Center Wilmington answering machine – 778- 6515

University-wide closings/late opening information is available from:

Telephone: UD main phone number – 302-831-2000

Web sites: [www.udel.edu/UDaily](http://www.udel.edu/UDaily) or [www.udel.edu](http://www.udel.edu)

Radio stations: WJBR 99.5 FM, WILM 1450 AM and WDEL 1150 AM

## Items available for your reference at the Reception Desk:

***In order to provide you with information about the operations of the ELC and activities that take place in the Early Learning Center, the following items are available for your review at the reception desk.***

- A copy of *Delacare*, Delaware's child care regulations or you can access this at information [http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl\\_providers.shtml](http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_providers.shtml)
- A list of the ELC governing body, including names, addresses and terms of membership
- Current notices of convicted sex offenders living in the area
- Samples of the research tools currently being used in the universal data collection

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

**Curriculum** for all age groups at the ELC is designed to support the positive growth and development of the whole child. Children actively explore and learn about their environments, their peers, their communities, and themselves. Curriculum first ensures that there is emotional security for each child, and then uses children's natural curiosity and play as the foundation from which to support their cognitive, language, literacy, numeracy, social, physical and emotional skill development.

Our approach is designed to allow children to explore materials and activities so that they construct and discover knowledge, and develop skills through high quality, purposeful activities provided by the teachers. Teachers use the following curricula and frameworks, among others, to guide their individualized and group plans for children:

- Delaware Early Learning Foundations (Infant/Toddler and Preschool)
- Creative Curriculum (Infant/Toddler and Preschool)

Staff implement the curriculum in a manner that reflects responsiveness to the family home values, beliefs, experiences and language. Curriculum is adapted or modified to allow for differences in age and ability and developmental stage. Adaptations for the individual needs of children in the program are not limited to children with identified special needs.

**Assessments** are an integral part of our program. Along with other methods of ongoing family communication utilized to exchange information regarding a child's progress, at least twice a year, teachers meet with families to review and discuss their child's assessment. At this meeting, teachers will solicit input from families regarding goals for their child's individual plan. We use a variety of assessment instruments and method to support children's learning including:

- The Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers
- Ages & Stages – ASQ-SE and ASQ-3 (for infants and toddlers)
- Teaching Strategies GOLD (preschool)
- Anecdotal notes/observations
- Children's work samples

Information gleaned from multiple assessment sources along with family goals serve as the foundation/starting point for teacher's planning.

## **Staff Qualifications**

Each staff member is required to hold an appropriate certificate from the DE Office of Child Care Licensing which substantiates that s/he is fully qualified for the position held.

All administrative staff must hold a minimum of a BA/BS degree in early childhood or a related field. All teachers must have or be enrolled in an AA or BA/BS degree program. All full-time classroom staff must, at a minimum, hold a current CDA. All classroom staff who do not hold an AA or BS/BA degree in early childhood or a related field are strongly encouraged to pursue those degrees using the UD Tuition Remission benefit.

Complete job descriptions with specific qualifications for each position are provided during the employee orientation and are available any time from an associate director.

**Security Measures at the ELC:**

The health and safety of your child is of paramount importance. Some important information:

**Entering and Exiting the Building:** Families and other authorized individuals are required to enter and exit our building through the front doors only. Families are issued a swipe card and it is important that you not allow anyone else access to your card.

**Signing Children In & Out:** You must escort your child to/from the classroom and sign him/her out of the building so we know exactly who is in the building in the event of an emergency.

**Picking Up Children:** Only persons authorized by families will be able to pick up a child from the ELC and will be asked to present identification. (*See Release of Children*)

**Surveillance Features:** The ELC is equipped with security cameras both inside the building and outside. In addition, there are cameras, microphones and observation booths overlooking all spaces used by children at the ELC Newark and interior windows have been installed throughout the building to increase visibility.

**Additional Facility Safety/Security Features:**

- ELC staff, UD students and researchers are identified by a badge.
- All ELC staff are required to have training in first aid, CPR, blood borne pathogens, and the operation of a fire extinguisher. Before working with children, staff must have a criminal background check, including a child abuse registry check and adult abuse registry check. In addition, all staff is required to have a periodic health exam and TB test.
- Separate playgrounds are available for each age group and are equipped with age appropriate equipment set into a resilient material. Six foot fencing surrounds the perimeter of the ELC playground.
- Classrooms are equipped with age appropriate furniture, toys and equipment, as well as safety outlets throughout the room, and finger guards on bathroom doors. Infant rooms have diffused lighting to protect developing eyes.
- Low child to caregiver ratios.
- Internal intercom system. Telephones in each classroom.
- Smoke, sprinkler and fire alarm systems.

## Policies

*Arranged in Alphabetical Order*

### **Absences**

If your child will be absent, please contact the Newark Center at (302) 831-6205 or the Wilmington Center at (302) 778-6515 by 9:00 to inform us.

### **Accidents: Children**

When an accident or injury occurs to a child during the hours of care, the ELC will take the necessary emergency action to protect the child from further harm and will notify the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). The ELC will complete an accident/injury report and give a copy to the parent/guardian.

Most employees of the ELC are trained in first aid, CPR and blood borne pathogens. If an injury is minor, requiring only a band aid or ice, staff administers appropriate first aid and completes an accident/incident form. If it is more serious, staff consults with Administration and calls the parent to ask you to pick up the child. If it is determined that the child needs to be picked up and the parent/guardian is not available, another authorized pick up person will be contacted and asked to pick up your child.

Should a child require emergency medical treatment, we will dial 911 and contact the parent (or other authorized person) to apprise them of the situation. If emergency services arrive before the parent, and it is not in the best interest of the child to wait, a staff person will chaperone the child to the hospital, taking with them the child's emergency consent form.

### **Administration of Medication**

Only those employees who have an DE Administration of Medication certificate will administer medications to children. All paperwork required by the State will be maintained by the person administering medications.

- The Early Learning Center cannot give medication on an as needed basis. Licensing does not allow us to decide whether or not a child needs medication. Parents/Guardians must specifically identify the date and time for any medication to be given on the medication log.
- Anyone giving medication must be certified. Medication must be kept in a location that is secure and not accessible to children. When dropping off medication please make sure that you give it directly to a teacher or classroom assistant so that it can be secured.
- Parents/guardians must sign in medication (on the medication log) - indicating what is to be given (name of medication), how much is to be given (please make sure you provide an appropriate measuring device so that the exact amount can be measured and given), route the medication is to be given (ex: by mouth) and when (time).
- Medication must be in its original container and have proper labeling including the child's name and instructions for giving the medication. If it is a prescription the medication must be in the prescription bottle with the child's name on it. If the medication states, "under a certain age (for example 6), consult a physician", then the Early Learning Center must have a note from the doctor stating that it is okay to give that particular medication to the child and how much is to be given. If this dosage changes and the child is still under the identified age, the doctor must update the directions. (Most pharmacies will provide two prescription bottles upon request when filling a prescription).

- Cough medicine, Tylenol, etc. cannot be kept 'just in case'. Parents should bring in these medicines as the need arises. These medicines must be in their original container and labeled with your child's full name.
- For sunscreen and diaper ointment- parents can sign on a monthly basis. Sunscreen should be sent home at the end of the summer- (unless it is a child who needs to wear it on an ongoing basis) Sunscreen needs to be replaced each summer because it loses its SPF strength.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent must be included on forms authorizing staff to apply to your child. The bottles should be labeled with your child's name. Insect repellent should contain DEET and only be used for children who are older than two months.

### **Allergies**

Parents are required to notify the Center of any allergy to medications, food or the environment. A list will be posted in each room and in the kitchen. Parents must provide an individualized care plan from the child's health care provider if the child has special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutritional needs. This plan will be placed in the child's file and will be posted in the child's classroom.

The Early Learning Center is a "nut free environment" to protect our children with allergies to nuts. Please do not enter our facility with any foods containing nuts or nut products listed in the ingredients.

### **Arrival & Departure**

It is required that the adult picking up or dropping off your child sign your child in and out each time s/he enters or leaves the building. A sign-in sheet is available in your child's classroom.

### **Before/After Care Transportation**

No transportation is offered by the ELC.

### **Birthdays & Holidays**

Every family has special days and certain ways of celebration. Learning about other cultures is part of discovering how people are unique and yet the same. Children enjoy sharing their own special events and sharing in others' joy. At this center we hope to expose children to the diversity in the world: to help them understand the universality of celebration with foods, music, dance, songs and stories; and to help them develop a respect for differences. The teachers work with families to develop celebrations which are appropriate to the children's level of understanding, their abilities, their attention span, and the center's nutrition policy.

If you wish to provide a special snack to celebrate a birthday, cultural event or holiday please discuss your request with your child's teacher at least one week in advance. We encourage healthy choices instead of sugary items. The Office of Child Care Licensing regulations require that these foods be commercially prepared and in a sealed container upon arrival at the ELC. As stated in this handbook (under *Meals*), the ELC is a "nut free" center, therefore, none of the ingredients in the food may contain nuts or nut byproducts.

### **Bottles (for Infants)**

Glass bottles are not permitted in the ELC even if the manufacturer states it is shatter-proof.

**Breast Feeding**

The Early Learning Center encourages nursing mothers to breast feed their children. A breast feeding room is located near Infant room 5 in Newark.

**Cell Phones & Texting**

The ELC respectfully requests that families refrain from using their cell phones and texting while in the building unless there is an emergency. This will allow you to focus on talking with your child and the staff who care for your child when you are at the Center.

**Child Abuse & Neglect**

In accordance with state law, the ELC will report any suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or neglect to the Division of Family Services through the Child Abuse Reporting Number and will cooperate fully in the investigation of any incident.

Should an employee or volunteer of the ELC be suspected of child abuse or neglect, the employee will not work directly with children until the investigation is completed.

**Clothing**

Children should come dressed appropriately for active, messy play. To ensure their safety, all children should wear shoes that will protect and stay on their feet while running and engaging in play activities. Except in extreme conditions, children will go outside daily and should be dressed appropriately. Layers and warm outer clothing, including hats, gloves and boots should be provided during cold, wet or snowy weather conditions. Hats for sun protection as well as sunscreen should be provided by the parent to protect your child during sunny weather conditions. Sunscreen should be labeled with your child's name and signed in on your child's medication log. (see *Administration of Medication policy*)

Each child needs at least one change of clothing at the ELC. For children who are still in diapers or who are learning to toilet, it is recommended that two or three changes of clothing be available (including socks, underwear and if possible, shoes). Please be certain all clothing is labeled.

**Communication & Family Involvement**

The ELC staff strive to form and sustain strong reciprocal relationships with every family. We have an open door policy and encourage parents to be involved in their child's experience at the Early Learning Center. Methods of communication used at the Center may include one-to-one contact, telephone calls, notes, daily notes, memos, newsletters, information boards, email, journals, and parent conferences. Should you require a translator, please let your teacher know. Please talk with your child's teacher to identify the preferred avenue for communication for each of you.

**Confidentiality**

All information about you, your child(ren) and your family is strictly confidential. No child or family information will be shared with other agencies or individuals unless authorized by parents or legal guardians. The exception is that we are legally required to notify authorities of possible abuse or neglect.

## **Continuity of Care**

To maintain consistency of care, the Early Learning Center hires one teacher and one classroom assistant for each classroom. When substitutes are in the classrooms, all attempts are made to send the same substitutes to rooms in which they have experience. The ELC attempts to minimize transitions in order to provide continuity of care. Children transition from infant to toddlers, toddlers to young preschool and young preschool to older preschool classrooms. Transitions to Kindergarten from the older preschool program are varied depending on their next placement which can be to public, private or charter schools.

Classroom staff schedules are staggered to provide children as much time during the day with their primary caregivers – the teacher and classroom assistant. For infant staff lunches every effort is made to provide substitute coverage that is consistent for the children. During opening and closing times, children may be moved to another room within their age range with the teachers in that classroom assuming the responsibility of care until parents arrive.

## **Diapers**

Families provide diapers and wipes for their children. Please send a full box of diapers and wipes labeled with your child's name. Staff will inform you when you need to replenish your supply.

For the comfort of the child, children who are wet or soiled will be changed upon discovery. Staff will check diapers no less than every two hours, upon awakening and will refer to the diapering procedure posted at all changing stations and on the portable changing table for appropriate diapering procedures. In addition, staff will ensure that parents provide extra clothing and diapering supplies for their children.

Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed bag and returned to the parent at the end of the day. To protect the health of all children, soiled clothing will not be cleaned in the center's washing machine, including cloth diapers.

**Cloth Diapers:** Staff may only use commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use. The child's health care provider must document in writing the medical reason. When using cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit. (This means parents must provide ample outer coverings since they cannot be used twice at the center).

Cloth diapers that are soiled are placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing) that is able to be sealed – such as a Ziploc bag. This bag will then be placed in another bag and put in the child's diaper bag in the cubby. Soiled diapers are to be removed by parents daily from the center. Bags cannot be reused unless they are disinfected at home by parents using soap & water, then a bleach water solution rinse (1 part bleach: 10 parts water) and air dried.

All other diaper procedures will be followed as stipulated by the OCCL. When using a portable diapering table, staff will ensure it is placed no more than 5' from a hand washing sink.

## **Discipline/Positive Guidance**

The ELC employs positive guidance as a method of behavior management, with a strong emphasis on preventative measures. Strategies are appropriate to the child's age,

developmental stage and individual needs. One goal is to help each child develop self-control. We recognize that it is important to work together with families to encourage the child's positive behaviors.

Teaching staff never use threats or derogatory or humiliating remarks and neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. At no time will any staff member or volunteer of the ELC engage in psychological abuse or coercion and will not use any form of corporal punishment.

The most important step in the process entails teacher's use of preventative strategies. Teachers recognize the essential role that relationships play in their ability to facilitate children's social competence therefore they take intentional steps to ensure that every child feels accepted and gains a sense of belonging.

Teaching staff promote pro-social behavior by interacting in a respectful manner with all staff and children and by modeling behaviors such as; caring, turn-taking, listening, negotiating, comforting and by intentionally facilitating children's efforts in these areas. Teachers actively teach social communication and emotional regulation skills and they assist children in resolving conflicts. Staff guide children who bully, isolate, or hurt other children to learn and follow the rules of the classroom.

When challenging behaviors occur, teachers observe to identify events, activities, interactions and other contextual factors that predict challenging behavior and may contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. Information regarding the behavior is recorded on a Behavior Incident Recording form. Teachers identify skills that need to be taught and incorporate these into their activities and routines. Teachers use environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.

Teaching staff respond to a child's challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and others, is respectful and provides the child with information on acceptable behavior. If challenging behavior persists then teachers meet with their administrator to re-examine collected data and to plan how to proceed. Next steps might include one or more of the following: development of Behavior Support Plan, classroom consultation and/or technical support, and referral to outside agency. Throughout this process teachers and administrators work collaboratively with families to support the needs of the child.

Though the ELC strives to meet the individual needs of every child, enrollment may be terminated, if a child continues to put himself or others at risk of injury after reasonable interventions have been implemented.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

It is important that the center have accurate contact numbers for the parent/guardian and emergency pick-up people. If you change home/cell/business phone number, please contact the center immediately. It is also important that you notify the center of any change in address or place of employment as it occurs. Annually you will be asked to review the information on file to confirm that it is accurate.

### **Family Style Dining**

Classroom staff will guide the children during meal times using the family style dining model. Children will be encouraged to participate in: setting the table, serving appropriate foods (those

not requiring staff assistance) to themselves and cleaning up. Staff will: eat with the children and model portion control by putting the appropriate serving size on their own plate following the Child and Adult Care Food Program meal pattern requirements. They will also encourage children to develop independence and self-help skills that match their current developmental levels, set a good example by demonstrating a positive attitude toward all foods served and sit at the table with the children in order to participate in language development.

### **Feeding Infants & Toddlers**

Infants unable to sit are held for bottle-feeding. All others sit or are held to be fed. Infants do not have bottles while in a crib or eat from a propped bottle at any time.

Toddlers do not carry sippy cups or regular cups with them while crawling or walking.

### **Field Trips**

Parents will be informed of any field trip requiring transportation. Transportation for such trips, when needed, will be provided by contracted school or University of Delaware buses. Buses may not be equipped with child safety restraints. The National Highway Traffic Administration recommends that preschool age children be transported in school buses equipped for child safety restraints; however, child safety restraints are not currently required by Delaware State Law. The Office of Child Care Licensing permits us to transport preschool age children using this type of school bus as long as parents have been notified and have given permission. Parents are encouraged to volunteer on field trips. Infants and toddlers do not take field trips.

### **Fire Drills**

The ELC conducts monthly fire drills. All children, staff, families and visitor who are in the building when the drill is occurring are expected to participate.

### **Health Appraisal (Child Physical)**

In accordance with child care regulations, the Early Learning Center cannot permit any child to be admitted to the center without presenting an immunization record indicating adequate immunizations for the child's age. A full health appraisal must also be completed and submitted to the ELC prior to attendance. Health appraisals are to be updated annually or more frequently as needed.

### **Health: Children**

Upon arrival, each child will be observed for common signs of communicable disease, physical injury or other evidences of ill health.

Children shall be excluded from care if they have symptoms of illness specified below, unless written documentation from a licensed physician, or verbal with written follow-up, states the child has been diagnosed and poses no serious health risk to the child or to other children. The symptoms of illness for possible exclusion shall include, but not be limited to any of the following:

- Temperature: infants four months old and younger, equivalent to 100 degrees or greater even if there has not been a change in behavior;
- Temperature: children older than four months, equivalent to 101 degrees or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness - until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the facility.

- Digital thermometer are used. Rectal temperature shall be taken only by a licensed health care professional;
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs) - until medical evaluation allows inclusion;
- Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is, increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper - until diarrhea stops;
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools;
- Vomiting illness (two (2) or more episodes of vomiting in the previous twenty-four (24) hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the cause of the vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration;
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than two (2) hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms;
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines that condition is noninfectious;
- Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease;
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until after twenty-four (24) hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated;
- Scabies, until twenty-four (24) hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Pediculosis (head lice), until twenty-four (24) hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend care;
- Impetigo, until twenty-four (24) hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until twenty-four (24) hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever;
- Varicella-Zoster (Chicken pox), until all sores have dried and crusted (usually six (6) days);
- Shingles, only if sores cannot be covered by clothing or a dressing; if not exclude until sores have crusted and are dry;
- Pertussis, until five (5) days of antibiotic treatment;
- Mumps, until nine (9) days after onset of parotid gland swelling;
- Hepatitis A virus, until one (1) week after onset of illness, jaundice or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis (currently, immune serum globulin) has been administered to appropriate children and staff;
- Measles, until five (5) days after onset of rash;
- Rubella, until six (6) days after onset of rash;
- Herpetic gingivostomatitis (cold sores), if the child is too young to have control of oral secretions; or
- Unspecified illness if it limits the child's comfortable participation in activities or if it results in a need for greater care than can be provided without comprising the health and safety of other children.

Your child may return to the Center when the symptoms are no longer present for 24 hours or a licensed physician indicates the child poses no serious health risk to the child or to other children. The ELC reserves the right to request a doctor's note to have the child return to care.

The Center will not permit a child with a reportable communicable disease, as specified by the Delaware Division of Public Health to be admitted to or remain at the Center, unless written

documentation from the child's licensed physician states the child has been evaluated and presents no risk to the child or to others; or the Center has reported the illness to the County Health Officer of the Division of Public Health and has been advised the child presents no health risk to others. If there is conflict in the opinions of the physician and the County Health Officer regarding the exclusion of a child, the Center shall follow the instructions of the County Health Officer. Please refer to the Division of Public Health's web site for a list of communicable diseases at <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/rptdisease.html>.

When a child has been diagnosed as having a reportable vaccine-preventable communicable disease, all children who have not been immunized against the disease will be excluded from the Center in accordance with Division of Public Health procedures.

If a child who has already been admitted to the ELC manifests any of the illnesses or symptoms of a vaccine-preventable communicable disease, the Center will remove the child from the group of well children to a separate area until the child can be picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized pick up person; or a licensed physician indicates verbally or in writing that the illness/symptoms pose(s) no serious health risk to the child or to other children.

While a child is cared for in the separate room/area, the ELC will ensure that the child is supervised and the child's individual needs for rest, comfort, food, drink and appropriate activity are met.

### **Helmets**

The DE Office of Child Care Licensing Regulations state that a helmet is only necessary when riding a bicycle with wheels greater than 20 inches in diameter – which exceeds the wheel diameter of the tricycles used at the ELC therefore the Center does not provide safety helmets for children using tricycles or other ride on toys. Should a parent wish to bring in their child's helmet, they may do so. Please ensure it is labeled.

### **Meals**

Tuition includes breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack for children eating table food. Formula and baby food for children not yet eating table food is included in the price of tuition. Parents may provide alternatives. The ELC will encourage children's good health by serving nutritious meals & snacks, and teaching proper hygiene to the children, especially hand washing and tooth brushing. Staff will encourage home living skills and socialization by employing family style dining.

All requests for special foods and diets must be documented and recommended by your physician. The ELC is not required and does not provide special foods for children with food intolerances. Parents must provide appropriate food substitutes for their child. All food substitutes must meet the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program food guidelines. All foods and beverages brought from home should be labeled with the child's name, date and classroom. Food should be in unbreakable single-serve containers that can be heated in the microwave.

Foods that come from home for sharing must be whole fruits or commercially prepared in the factory-sealed containers. This applies for birthday or holiday celebrations. Reminder: we are a "nut-free" center and any food brought in may not contain nuts or nut byproducts. If unsure, please ask your child's teacher or the food service staff if an item is safe to bring to the center.

### **Meal Times ELC Newark**

Breakfast	7:15 a.m.	School Age
	8:30 a.m.	Infants, Toddlers & Preschool
Lunch	11:30 a.m.	Infants & Toddlers
	11:45 a.m.	Preschool
Snack	3:00 p.m.	Infants, Toddlers and Preschool

### **Meal Times ELC Wilmington**

Breakfast	8:30 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m.
Snack	3:00 p.m.

### **No Shoe Policy (Infant Rooms)**

Our infant rooms have a “no shoes” policy. Please remove your shoes prior to entering the rooms. Socks or booties must be worn. No bare feet allowed.

### **Observation Booths**

Observation booths are available for use by families, staff, UD students & faculty. *Children, food and drinks are not permitted in observation booths.* Families are welcome to observe without an appointment.

### **Parental/Adult Code of Conduct**

One of the goals of the ELC is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the staff at the ELC but is the responsibility of each and every adult who enters the center.

- Adults are expected to foster a positive environment by interacting with children and other adults in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy and respect.
- No adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on Center property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. This includes mobile phone conversations.
- Verbal and physical threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Adults may not use corporal punishment or harsh verbal criticism of children on ELC property. Parents are encouraged to discuss behavioral concerns with the ELC staff and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.
- Adults are prohibited from correcting or disciplining a child that is not their own. If an adult witnesses a child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their child, the adult should direct their concern to the classroom staff and/or a Center Administrator.
- For the health of all ELC employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited in the building and on the property.

**Any adult who violates the Parental/Adult Code of Conduct will not be permitted on ELC property thereafter and such violations may result in termination of enrollment.**

## Parent Concerns

Should you have a question or concern regarding your child's care, please first contact your child's classroom teacher. If your concern is not addressed or resolved to your satisfaction, please contact the appropriate Associate Director or Administrative Coordinator. Should the situation still not be resolved ask to meet with the Director.

## Parking - Newark

Parking at the Early Learning Center Newark is at a premium. Parents are to park in the large side lot between the signs and use the main entry of the building to enter/exit. At the beginning of each month a coded parking pass will be distributed to currently enrolled families of the ELC at no charge. This pass will be valid for up to one hour at drop off and up to one hour at pick up in the large parking lot to the right of the ELC for a period of one month. Cars that do not have this pass or a University gold parking permit in their front window may be ticketed and/or towed. ELC staff do not have authority to waive parking fees assessed by UD Public Safety.

Please do not park in the small visitor parking lot unless you need to use the handicapped parking space (you will need your parking pass in your windshield here as well as a handicapped designation on your vehicle). The circle in front of the building cannot be used by families to pick up/drop off children as this designated area is for school bus pick up/drop off in the morning and afternoon and is a fire lane the remainder of the time.

For the safety of all of our children and families, do not leave children unattended in your vehicle while at the ELC and do not leave your car running in the parking lot unattended.

## Playground Access

Families are not permitted to use the ELC playground outside of our normal operating hours, unless a member of the Early Learning Center staff is authorized to be present.

## Ratios

Every attempt will be made to maintain ELC ratios, however there may be occasions – such as drop-off and pick-up – when classrooms will move toward, but not exceed, State ratios.

Age Group	ELC Ratios	State of DE Ratios
<b>Infants</b> 0-16 months	1:3 Group size of six	1:4 No limit on group size
<b>Toddlers</b> 1-2 years	1:4 Group size of eight	1:7 for one year olds 1:10 for two year olds No limit on group size
<b>Preschool</b> 3-4 years	1:7 Group size of 14-16	1:12 for three year olds 1:15 for four year olds No limit on group size
<b>School Age</b> 5-12 years	1:12 for kindergarten 1:15 for school age	1:25 No limit on group size

## **Release of Children**

To protect the safety of the children in our care, it is critical that children only be released to authorized individuals. If a staff person does not recognize the person picking up, we will ask for identification, and if possible make a photo copy of the ID. If a person is not on the authorization list, we can not release the child.

*Emergency release of child:* In the event of an emergency, the parent may call to grant permission to have someone pick up who is not on the list. We will confirm that the caller is the parent. The parent must provide verbal or written permission, as well as the person's name and description. Upon arrival, this person must present identification.

If a person arrives to pick up the child and appears to be intoxicated or otherwise incapable of bringing the child home safely, ELC staff will call the parent or emergency contact person listed on the Child Information Card to request their assistance.

*NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS:* Unless the Center has a copy of a valid court order barring a noncustodial parent from contact with his/her child, the ELC cannot refuse a parent access to the child.

If a family wishes to add or delete people authorized to pick up their child, they must provide the ELC this information in person and in writing to staff at the front desk. The change will be noted in our files and the staff will be notified. It is essential that all contact information be kept current for authorized pick up persons.

If a child is left at the center past pick-up time, the parents and other persons listed as authorized to pick up will be called. If there is no response at any of the provided numbers, messages will be left. If there is no response to pick up the child within a half hour, the Delaware Division of Child Protective Services will be called to assume responsibility for the child.

## **Sleeping**

All cots/cribs will be a minimum of 18" apart and labeled with child's names. When possible, children are to sleep head to toe to prevent the spread of air-borne illnesses. To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) the following guidelines are followed:

- Infants, unless otherwise ordered by a physician and documented in writing, are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment that meets the standards of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft items are not allowed in cribs for infants younger than eight months.
- If a blanket is used, the infant is placed at the foot of the crib with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the infant's chest.
- After being placed down to sleep on their backs, infants are allowed to assume any sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.

## **Smoking, Alcohol, Illegal Substances & Firearms**

No smoking, alcohol, or illegal substances are permitted on ELC grounds, including all interior and exterior spaces. Firearms are prohibited on ELC property.

## **Staff Working for Parents**

We do not encourage, authorize or take responsibility for any services that employees may provide outside of our programs.

**Supervision**

At no time may any child be left unsupervised in the Early Learning Center or on the ELC grounds. Once an adult signs a child out of the ELC, they are responsible for the close supervision of that child while on ELC property.

**Toys from Home**

Unless specifically requested/approved by your child's teacher, toys, games, electronic equipment, trading cards or similar items, should not be brought to school. Young children who have a transition object such as a blanket or stuffed animal may bring that item to the Center, but the ELC is not responsible if it is lost, damaged or broken in any way.

**Weather Policy for Playing Outdoors**

The *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Care* – written in collaboration with the *American Academy of Pediatrics* recommend children play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. We follow their policy which states: "Weather that poses a significant health risk will include wind chill at or below 15°F and heat index at or above 90°F, as identified by the National Weather Service." Children should be dressed appropriately to accommodate these temperatures when outdoors. If children are not well enough to go outdoors they should not be brought to school.

**Withdrawal Policy**

If you wish to withdraw your child from the Early Learning Center, please provide one month's written notice. We respectfully request that you include the reason for withdrawing.

## Community Resources

Act Now Crisis Line and Children's Services.....	800-969-4357
Brandywine Counseling.....	302-656-2348
Catholic Charities.....	302-655-9624
Center for Disease Control.....	800-232-4636
Children and Families First.....	302-658-5177
Child Development Watch.....	302-995-8617
Child Mental Health Services.....	302-633-2579
Child, Inc.....	302-762-8989
Dart First State Reduced Fare Program.....	302-577-3278
Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.....	302-633-2505
Delaware Division of Family Services.....	302-633-2650
Delaware Guidance for Children and Youth.....	302-652-3948
Delaware Health and social Services.....	302-577-4643
Delaware Helpline.....	302-577-3000
Delaware State Housing Authority.....	302-577-5001
Developmental Disabilities Council.....	302-739-2232
Easter Seal Society.....	302-324-4444
Henrietta Johnson Medical Center (Wilmington).....	302-655-6190
Hudson State Service Center (Newark).....	302-283-7500
Jewish Family Services of Delaware.....	302-478-9411
Libraries – Delaware Division of.....	800-282-8696
New Castle county Head Start Program (3-5 year olds).....	302-452-1500
New Directions Early Head Start (pregnant women and birth – 3 year olds).....	302-831-0584
Occupational Therapists and Associates.....	302-736-0990
Office of Child Care Licensing.....	302-892-5800
Parents as Teachers.....	302-454-5955
Parent Education Partnership.....	302-633-2505
Parent Information Center.....	302-366-0152
Poison Control Center.....	800-722-7112
Read-Aloud Delaware.....	302-656-5256
Wilmington Head Start (3-5 year olds).....	302-421-3620
YMCA of Delaware.....	302-571-6975