



College of Education &
Human Development

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Family Handbook

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Welcome to the University of Delaware Early Learning Center

Mission

To provide a model of quality early care and education services for children and their families which supports the academic and research programs of the University.

Vision

To lay the foundation for exceptional practice for future leaders in the field of early childhood education in partnership with families, the university community and professionals locally and globally, and most importantly for our children.

Program Design

The UD Early Learning Center provides high quality early care and education programs for approximately 250 children and their families annually while providing a model, data-rich site for observation, clinical placement and research by UD students, faculty, and early care and education professionals from throughout the region. As a University practicum site, the ELC serves students who are studying to enter a variety of fields including teaching, nursing, physical therapy, psychology and more. Hands on learning 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.

The ELC was established as a university-wide research and clinical center in 2004 and operates 11 hours per day year-round. The Center serves up to 250 children ages 6 weeks through 3rd grade and their families. The population includes families who are UD employees as well as families from the broader community; approximately 30% of the families fall within the federal definition of a family living in poverty and 20% of the enrollment is intended for children with disabilities. The racial and economic diversity of the families enrolled at the ELC reflects the diversity of the state. The Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a distinction held by fewer than 10% of the Centers in the nation.

Philosophy of the Early Learning Center

Each classroom varies to reflect the developmental level of the child and supports the cognitive development so rapidly happening during this period of life. This is accomplished through the nurturing and supportive environments and responsive teaching of each staff member. 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.

The Early Learning Center has established strong partnerships with agencies such as Child Development Watch, Easter Seals and the Christina School District to meet the needs of children with identified disabilities. These agencies provide on-site physical therapy, occupational therapy, early childhood education therapy, and speech therapy for children with identified needs. Classroom teachers work closely with therapists to ensure that IFSP and IEP goals and objectives are integrated into day-to-day classroom activities and assist therapists in tracking progress. All families have frequent opportunities to participate in classroom and family events at the Center including parent education sessions.

Research at the Early Learning Center

The Early Learning Center is a focal point for interdisciplinary research conducted by faculty and undergraduate/graduate students from academic departments across the University. The emphasis is on translational research, with findings that can be put into practice to directly benefit children and families. All research that takes place at the ELC is reviewed and approved by the UD Institutional Review Board. Research activities involve children, families and staff.

Enrollment Procedures

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. Registration does not guarantee your child's enrollment. 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. A \$100 non-refundable deposit is required and will be deducted from your first month's tuition.

Tuition, Billing and Additional Fees

The ELC tuition is due monthly in advance of service. A daily breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack are included in the cost of tuition. 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/>

Payment will be considered late after the 5th of each month and a \$25.00 late payment fee will be assessed on past due accounts on the 6th of each month. A check returned for insufficient funds will result in a \$25 fee.

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

There will be no tuition refund for days missed by children because of illness, vacation or school closing due to inclement weather. There may be additional fees for field trips and special events.

Purchase of Care (POC) (State Subsidized Child Care Funds)

It is the family's responsibility to ensure 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. The ELC is obligated to collect co-pays. Families with co-pays will be charged for the six holidays allowed by the State; New Years, Memorial Day, 4th 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 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.

Holidays & Days Closed

We are closed New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving & the day after, Winter Holiday (usually Dec 24-31). 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. On even numbered years, the ELC will be closed on Election Day. In addition, the ELC is closed on various days per year for professional development and for family/teacher conferences (*see yearly calendar for dates*). The Director will determine the dates annually and families will be provided a yearly calendar in order to make alternate child care arrangements. Please note, in order to provide the best of care for all children, early learning professionals must stay current in their field and be supported through professional development offerings.

Reference Items Available at the Front Desk

The following items are available for your review at the reception desk:

- A copy of *Delacare*, Delaware's child care regulations;
- Current notices of convicted sex offenders living or working in the area;
- ELC Emergency Plan
- Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards

Curriculum and Screening and Assessment of Children

Curriculum

The curriculum at the Early Learning Center for all age groups is designed to support the growth and development of the whole child. Activities are planned for children that stimulate and promote their growth in all developmental areas – cognitive, language and literacy, physical, creative, social and emotional development. The Creative Curriculum® and the Anti-Bias Curriculum support the goals of the Delaware Department of Education's Early Learning Foundations for Infants/Toddlers and Preschool. The Preschool classes are supported by The Creative Curriculum, Anti-Bias Curriculum, as well as Unlocking Doors to Language and Literacy. Outdoor Learning is also supported through planned and enacted curriculum experiences. The K – 12 Common Core Standards are used to guide programming and activities for the school age program.

Staff assess children's current levels of development and plan activities designed to foster and support their growth. 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 and supported by the teachers. The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible and responsive to individual needs of the children. Teaching staff include the family in curriculum development by seeking their input during parent/teacher conferences and through other means of communication (email, conversations, classroom participation, etc.). 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.

At the ELC, children actively explore and learn about their environments, their peers, their communities, and themselves. Curriculum at the Early Learning Center ensures that there is a strong, emotionally secure base for every child, and then uses children's natural curiosity and play as the foundation from which to support their cognitive, language, social, physical, creative and emotional skill development in order to prepare them for success in school and life. Lesson plans are reviewed by the Associate Director and are posted in the classroom.

Screening and Assessment of Children

Assessment of children is an integral part of all of the ELC programs.

All staff are required to be trained in the screening and assessment process. This training occurs throughout the year at regularly scheduled professional development days, new staff orientation, through one on one coaching and mentoring, and online training modules. Interrator Reliability and Quality Assurance are key factors in our assessment learning process.

Teachers and staff use screenings and assessments to identify children's interests and needs; document children's developmental progress and learning; improve curriculum and teaching practices; and to use in referral for additional diagnostic assessments. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods and tools throughout the school year to assess children across all areas of development. Screening and Assessment is both formal and informal, based on observation and interaction with children while they are engaged in activities.

ASQ:SE-2 is the screener used to support and monitor children's social-emotional growth and development.

ASQ-3 is the Developmental Screening used to support and monitor children's developmental growth.

Teaching Strategies Gold is the tool used to record observations daily and the results are shared with families tri-annually for infants and toddlers and biannually for preschoolers.

Information gleaned from assessments, along with family goals, serve as the foundation for teacher's planning. Teaching teams discuss assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of the children. Teachers keep assessment information confidential. Parents/guardians are always welcome to request a copy of their child's file.

Teaching staff value effective communication with families and share assessment information with families frequently throughout the school year. This communication may occur through journals, face-to face, phone, or email conversations. Family conferences are scheduled bi-annually for all age groups and are also available at any time upon request.

Based on observation, documentation and assessment, when teachers suspect that a child may have a developmental delay, this will be communicated to the appropriate Associate Director. The teacher and Associate Director will collaborate with the family of the child in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner to discuss the concern and recommend that the family request further evaluation through Child Development Watch, the Christina School District or another appropriate professional agency. The Associate Director will provide the family with

contact information for agencies to help support the child and family. If the family gives their consent, therapists who work in the center may be consulted concerning the need for evaluation.

Staff Qualifications

Each staff member is required to hold an appropriate certificate from the DE Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) which substantiates that s/he is fully qualified for the position held. The documentation required to complete the application for the OCCL certificate includes diplomas, college transcripts, training certificates, and staff training records.

Administrative staff must hold a minimum of a BA/BS degree in early childhood or a related field (MA/MS preferred). Teaching staff must hold an AA degree (BA/BS preferred) in early childhood or other related discipline, or current CDA and job-related experience. All positions require; knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices, ability to provide behavioral management and assessment in a supportive and caring environment, effective written and verbal communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively with individuals from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Security Measures at the ELC:

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

- All exterior doors are locked. Persons other than staff must enter and exit the building through the front reception area and must show ID if they are not known to the front desk staff.
- Children must be escorted to/from the classroom and the adult who is dropping off/picking up must sign the child in/out.
- Only persons authorized by families will be permitted to pick up a child from the ELC. Authorized persons must be a minimum of 16 years old and will be asked to present identification if they are not recognized by staff. (See section titled "Release of Children.")
- The ELC is equipped with security cameras outside the building. In addition, there are observation booths overlooking all spaces used by children.
- Observation booths are left unlocked. Classrooms may be observed, videotaped or audiotaped for a variety of reasons. Families or others outside the ELC are not permitted to video or audio tape without the consent of all families.
- All substitutes, students, researchers and volunteers are identified by a badge.
- All ELC staff are required to have training in first aid and CPR. All full time staff complete annual blood borne pathogens training. 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 are required to have a periodic health exam and TB test.
- All UD students, faculty and volunteers 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 and adult abuse registry check, as well as a health exam and TB test.
- Outdoor learning areas are available for each age group and are equipped with age appropriate equipment and a six-foot perimeter fence.

- Classrooms are equipped with age appropriate furniture, toys and equipment, safety outlets, finger guards on bathroom doors, each room is connected to an internal intercom system and the ability to lock the classroom door from the inside for lockdown purposes.
- Smoke, sprinkler and fire alarm systems are located throughout the building.
- Fire Drills are practiced on a monthly basis. The University of Delaware Environmental Health and Safety department and University of Delaware Police help to oversee all emergency preparedness activities.

Operational Policies (In Alphabetical Order)

Absences

If your child will be absent, please contact the UD Early Learning Center at (302) 831-6205.

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) if warranted. The ELC will complete an accident/injury report and give a copy to the parent/guardian.

All ELC staff are required to have training in first aid and CPR. All full time staff complete annual blood borne pathogens training. 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 call 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.

Allergies

Parents are required to notify the ELC of any allergy to medications, food or the environment. 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 ELC does not serve nuts in order to protect our children with allergies to nuts. Please do not enter the classroom with any foods containing nuts or nut products.

Arrivals and Departures

The ongoing family partnership is supported by daily routines. Ample family parking spots in designated locations are provided to ensure the decrease of stress for arrival and departure. Families and children are greeted upon entry to the building and as they arrive to their classroom doors. Classroom specific procedures are in place to receive families to ensure communication, relationship building and successful transitions between home and school. In

order to promote respectful interactions and engagement within the ELC community, please be conscious of your use of cell phones and other devices.

Birthdays & Holidays

The ELC values the rich diversity of cultures represented in our classrooms and encourages families to share cultural celebrations. The ELC uses the Anti-Bias Curriculum as its foundation in understanding, learning and honoring cultures, traditions and beliefs. Every family has special days and certain ways of celebrating. 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. None of the ingredients in the food may contain nuts or nut byproducts.

Breastfeeding

The ELC supports breastfeeding. A private, comfortable room for nursing mothers is located near the infant classrooms. Staff coordinate feeding time with the infant's mother. Expressed breast milk is accepted, stored and served; this should be provided in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name and date. It will be stored in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen). Staff gently mix the milk (no shaking).

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.

Closings Due to Inclement Weather or Emergencies

The Director of the Early Learning Center will work with the UD Office of Public Safety to determine appropriate actions during inclement weather.

If the University of Delaware is closed, has an early dismissal or delayed opening, the Early Learning Center will follow the University of Delaware's schedule. On rare occasion, even when the University is open, the ELC may have a delayed opening or early dismissal depending on the weather conditions. This ensures that staff are in place to greet children and that all children, families and staff can safely travel home in the afternoon.

Closures and early dismissals will be communicated in up to three ways:

1. On our website.: <http://www.elc.udel.edu>
2. Through our phone message by calling 302-831-6205
3. Through text messages sent through our ProCare system

Any time there is a chance of inclement weather, be sure to check for updates prior to leaving home.

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 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 ELC. Methods of communication used at the Center may include one-to-one contact, telephone calls, notes, daily reports, 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. All child files, including all medical documents, are kept in a locked filing system, centrally located behind our front desk. These files are accessible for review by the child's parent/legal guardian, administrators, teaching staff and regulatory authorities.

Continuity of Care Models

One of the cornerstones of the ELC's best practices is our continuity of care model which is designed to support the growth and development of all children. This ensures strong emotional security; by using learning strategies such as play and explicit modeling, we acknowledge each child's curiosity and need to discover as we support the foundation of their cognitive, language and literacy, social, physical, and emotional skill development.

To maintain consistency of care, the Early Learning Center hires one teacher and one classroom assistant for each classroom. When part-time staff are in the classrooms, attempts are made to send them to rooms in which they have experience.

Our infant/toddler program uses a continuity of care classroom model called "*looping*". This model focuses on relationship-based care where a group of infants, roughly the same age, starts the center at the same time and forms a family unit with their teachers. These babies, along with their teachers and families, spend the first year building trust and relationships and

then as an entire group – they transition down the hallway together to form their own toddler classroom. The family unit stays the same while the physical classroom, the materials and curriculum, and the schedule are different. This family unit then stays together as they age through the infant and toddler years- resulting in stronger bonds between children and adults and less transitions at the most vulnerable times.

We also offer a traditional infant classroom and a toddler classroom to provide some ease and flexibility to our enrollment process. Even in these traditional classrooms, we limit the number of transitions. A child will transition 1 time during their first 36 months of enrollment. This transition from infants to toddlers is well planned between teachers and families and will only happen when the child is developmentally ready to build new relationships in a different environment. Infants in this traditional classroom are typically transitioned between 14 and 18 months of age- they then stay with their new toddler family until they are ready for preschool at 3 years of age.

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 for appropriate diapering procedures. 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.

Cloth Diapers: 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.

Diapers and wipes will be provided for families enrolled in New Directions Early Head Start.

Discipline/Positive Guidance

The ELC uses the Pyramid Model of positive guidance as a framework to support the social/emotional development and learning of all children. This model is an evidence-based model for assuring the social emotional needs of all children are recognized and supported. More information about the Pyramid Model for Early Learning can be found here: <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html>

The ELC promotes relationship building as a strategy to support positive behavior. Relationship building describes the process of establishing emotional connections with others, starting from birth, which are based on trust and intimacy. Through relationships, children discover who they

are and learn to understand others. When young children experience people helping, understanding, and enjoying them, they approach the world with openness and enthusiasm, and they grow to be responsive and caring people. Babies are born with a drive to relate to and connect with others, and they continue to develop the social skills necessary to form strong, healthy relationships throughout their lives.

The ELC employs positive guidance as a method to support both social-emotional growth and relationship building, 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/self-regulation. 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.

Staff support each child's social emotional development through modeling and explicit instruction of friendship skills, self-care, and group dynamics.

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, and 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 and support children who bully, isolate, or hurt other children; helping them to replace the behavior with relationship-building skills and strategies.

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. 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 associate director to examine collected data and to plan how to proceed. After meeting with the age group administrator, the teaching staff meet with the family to share observations, discuss concerns and determine if there are any related issues that could contribute to the behavior. Families are also asked to assist in developing a plan to determine supports (possibly a more formal Behavior Support Plan) that would help the child while in the classroom and at home, if applicable. After implementation of the Behavior Support Plan, the team, including the family, will reconvene to review progress. Additional consultants, specialists and agencies may be consulted by the family or by the ELC, with family permission.

Next steps might include one or more of the following: continuation or revision of the Behavior Support Plan, classroom consultation (coaching) 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.

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. You will be asked to review the information on file annually to confirm that it is accurate. It is expected that you respond to a call from the ELC as soon as possible.

Environmental Health & Safety

The Early Learning Center is inspected annually by the Office of Child Care Licensing, UD Occupational Health and Safety and fire inspectors from the City of Newark. Fully working fire extinguishers and fire alarms are installed in each classroom and are tagged and serviced annually. Fire alarms are tested monthly during evacuation drills. Smoke detectors and the carbon monoxide detector, located in a separate mechanical room, are interconnected into a fire alarm control panel, which is constantly attended by the University on campus. The ELC facility including the outdoor learning area is entirely smoke free.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. In the event of an emergency (real or drill), staff must evacuate their area, take a written listing of all children present and their emergency contact information, and meet in the designated safe area. The ELC has periodic unannounced fire/evacuation drills. All children, staff, families and visitors who are in the building when the drill is occurring are expected to participate. For details see ELC Emergency Plan.

Expulsion/Suspension Policy (Please see Behavior/Positive Guidance)

The ELC will support all children, including children identified and supported with an IEP/IFSP, and work with outside agencies and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to support children's continuation in their current placement. The ELC follows the Pyramid Model of Behavior Supports and uses strategies from Conscious Discipline to support the social-emotional development of staff, children and families. Children will not be removed for challenging behavior unless it is a last resort option in cases that include: 1.) a determination of a serious safety threat; and only after 2.) a detailed progression of intermediate interventions for the child has been implemented and documented through a Behavior Support Plan and Team.

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 (those not requiring staff assistance) foods 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 to encourage conversation and language development.

Field Trips/Walking Trips

Families will be informed of any field trip requiring transportation. Transportation for such trips, when needed, will be provided by contracted buses. Buses are not equipped with child safety restraints. 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. Family members are encouraged to volunteer on field trips. Infants and toddlers do not take field trips to destinations which require formal transportation. All ages enjoy using the walking trail. Preschool and School Age children also take extended walking trips to explore their local community. Teaching teams take a head count before, during and after any trip. Teachers also take their sign in sheets, child tracking forms and first aid kits with them.

Health Appraisal (Child Physical)

In accordance with child care regulations, within one month following admission, the ELC must have on file a health appraisal - completed within the last 12 months before admission - which includes immunization records indicating recommended immunizations for the child's age. Health appraisals are to be updated within 13 months. If your child does not have Delaware department of health recommended immunizations, we must have a note from your child's physician or clergy. Religious or medical exemptions are permitted with appropriate documentation. Please reference www.dhss.delaware.gov for further information.

Health: Children including Inclusion/Exclusion of ill Children

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

The Early Learning Center may not permit a child who has symptoms of illness listed below to be admitted or remain at the center. The child may only return when the symptoms are gone - following the guidelines below - or - with documentation from a health care provider, stating the child has been diagnosed and the illness or symptoms pose no serious health risk to the child or to other children.

The symptoms for exclusion must include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Temperature of 100° or higher without medication even if there has not been a change in behavior for infants four months old and younger;
- Temperature of 101°F or higher without medication accompanied by behavior changes or symptoms of illness for children older than four months;
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness, such as unusual tiredness, uncontrolled coughing, unexplained irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs;
- Diarrhea; two or more times of loose stool during the past 24 hours, or if diarrhea is accompanied by fever, exclude for 48 hours after the symptoms end;
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools;
- Vomiting; two or more times in the past 24 hours, or one time if accompanied by a fever until 48 hours after the symptoms end or until a health care provider determines the vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration;
- Ongoing stomach pain (more than two hours) or off-and-on pain due to a fever or other symptom;
- Mouth sores with drooling;
- Rash with fever or behavior change;
- Purulent conjunctivitis "pink eye" (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment;

- Scabies, until 24 hours after starting treatment;
- Pediculosis “head lice” or nits, until 24 hours after starting treatment;
- Tuberculosis, as directed by DPH;
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment and sores are dry;
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment;
- 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 completing five days of antibiotic treatment;
- Mumps, until five days after onset of glandular swelling;
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after onset of jaundice, or as directed by DPH;
- Measles, until four days after arrival of rash;
- Rubella, until seven days after arrival of rash;
- Herpetic gingivostomatitis (cold sores), if the child is too young to have control of saliva;
- 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.

The Center will report any reportable communicable disease to the Division of Public Health in accordance with Division of Public Health procedures. The Center will not permit a child with a reportable communicable disease, as specified by Division of Public Health to be admitted to or remain at the Center, unless written documentation from the child's 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 Division of Public Health and they have advised the child presents no health risk to others.

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 specified here, 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 require children to wear safety helmets for using tricycles. Helmets are required and available for children when riding scooters with handles. Should a parent wish to bring in a labeled helmet for their child they may do so.

Infant Specific

- Bottles for infants may not be made of glass even if the manufacturer states it is shatter-proof.
- Infants unable to sit are held for bottle-feeding. All others may 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.
- The ELC encourages and supports breast feeding. A breast feeding room is located near Infant room 5 in Newark.
- Our infant rooms have a “no shoes” policy. Please remove your shoes prior to entering the rooms. Disposable booties are available in the hallway. No bare feet allowed please.

Meals and Snacks

Classroom staff at the ELC participates with the children in family style dining to support home living skills and socialization. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and eat the food presented but are never forced. We encourage children’s good health by serving nutritious meals & snacks and by teaching proper hygiene including hand washing and tooth brushing.

Our meals and snacks meet the current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Delacare meal pattern requirements based on the age of each child. The ELC does not serve peanut or tree nut products.

The menu is developed by the ELC Nutrition Assistant and is approved by a registered dietitian. Copies of the monthly menu are posted on the ELC website www.elc.udel.edu as well as on each classroom parent board and are available in the main reception area. We understand that hectic schedules sometimes lead to eating meals or snacks on the run but we respectfully request that your child not arrive at the center with food in hand.

Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack -- for children who are old enough to eat table food -- are included in the cost of your tuition.

Schedule for Meals:

Infants: (for those who are eating table food): Breakfast 8:15am – 8:45am; Lunch 11:15am – 11:45am; Afternoon Snack 3:00pm

Toddlers: Breakfast 8:30am – 9:00am; Lunch 11:30am – 12:15pm; Afternoon Snack 3:00pm

Preschoolers: Breakfast 8:30am – 9:00am; Lunch 11:45am – 12:30pm; Afternoon Snack 3:15pm

School Age:

- Before and/After Care: Breakfast 7:15am – 7:40am; Afternoon Snack 3:30pm
- Full Day: Breakfast 8:30am-9:00am; Lunch 12pm – 12:30pm; Afternoon Snack 3:00pm

Regulations require that meals be served within a limited time after leaving the kitchen to ensure proper temperatures, therefore, children must be present within these time frames in order to be served.

Formula and Baby Foods -- For children not yet eating table food – formula and baby foods are included in the price of tuition. The ELC provides one brand of formula; families may provide alternative formulas and/or breast milk based on their infant’s needs. Families are responsible for providing sterilized plastic bottles. Teaching staff offer children fluids from a cup as soon as

the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup. The ELC provides Sippy cups for older infants and toddlers.

Exceptions to the Scheduled Menu

If substitutions to the menu are necessary due to allergies or other medical reasons, food intolerances, religious restrictions or organic and vegetarian lifestyles, it is the responsibility of the family to provide substitutes. When food and beverage substitutes are provided from home, please ensure that these are healthy and nutritious including: dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt; protein such as meat, fish, chicken, eggs cheese, and beans; fruits and vegetables; grains such as bread, cereal, pasta and rice and 100% fruit juice – no sugar added.

All foods and beverages brought from home must be in unbreakable, single-serve containers that maintain the food or beverage at the proper temperature and are labeled with the date as well as the child's name. These items should be placed on the food prep counter in your child's classroom upon arrival.

Food for Birthday Celebrations

Please consult with your child's teacher prior to bringing in food. Delacare regulations require that any food that is brought to share be in commercially prepared, factory-sealed containers with the ingredients listed. The ELC requests that all food be free of peanuts, nuts or nut byproducts. Most celebrations take place in the afternoon so please limit the snack to a small portion since children will soon be going home to eat dinner.

Tooth Brushing

At least once daily, teaching staff provide an opportunity for tooth brushing and gum cleaning to remove food and plaque. (The use of toothpaste is not required.)

Medication, Ointments, Sunscreen and Insect Repellant

The ELC strictly adheres to the guidelines set forth in the Administration of Medication self-study guide which is available on-line at <https://kids.delaware.gov/occl/pdf/administration-of-medication-selfstudy-guide-en.pdf>. Only those employees who have an Administration of Medication certificate will administer medications to children. When dropping off medication, parents should give it directly to a teacher or classroom assistant so that it can be secured. Medication must be kept in a location that is secure and not accessible to children. Any medications that need to be refrigerated will be stored in a closed container that is separate from food in the refrigerator located in the laundry room.

The Early Learning Center cannot give medication on an as needed basis. 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. 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 (parent must 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). All paperwork required by the State will be maintained by any person administering medications. Medication that is expired cannot be given.

For sunscreen and diaper ointment parents can sign on a monthly basis. Sunscreen should be sent home and updated on a regular basis (dependent of expiration date). Sunscreen needs to be replaced because it loses its SPF strength. Spray sunscreen may not be used on infants and toddlers. If parents request application of insect repellent, a medication form should be used as described above. The bottles should be labeled with the child's name. Insect repellent should not be used on children younger than two months.

National Accreditation

To earn and maintain accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) the Early Learning Center Newark completes an extensive self-study process, measuring the program and its services against NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and more than 400 related Accreditation Criteria and successfully passes an on-site monitoring visit by NAEYC assessors every 5 years. National accreditation is currently held by about 10% of centers in the country.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The University of Delaware is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and Title IX institution. For the University's complete non-discrimination statement, please visit <http://www.udel.edu/home/legal-notices/>

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 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.
- Families are expected to park in the designated parking zone. UD Police monitor and enforce all traffic and parking laws in the ELC parking lot.

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/Conflict

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. Should the situation still not be resolved ask to meet with the Director. In the event a conflict arises between a family and the classroom staff, and a meeting with the Director is necessary, conflict resolution strategies will be used to support both parties. These strategies include providing an uninterrupted space for talking so both parties can be heard, and sharing ideas towards a mutually agreed upon solution. The Director will offer guidance to support an optimal solution for both parties, and a decision will be made to support both parties moving forward in support of everyone on the team, including the child.

Parking

A parking pass will be distributed to currently enrolled families of the ELC valid for up to one hour at drop off and up to one hour at pick up in the large designated parking lot to the right of the ELC as you enter off Wyoming Rd. Cars that do not have this pass or a UD grey 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. Use the main entry of the building to enter/exit the building.

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.

Program Evaluation

The ELC administrative team is committed to an ongoing strategic planning process and program evaluation with the goal of continuously moving the Early Learning Center forward as a center of world-class excellence. An annual Program Evaluation Report will be provided to families and staff which includes information about; demographics, accreditation and licensure compliance, staff and family survey responses, funding sources, staff recruitment and retention, professional development offered, child outcome data, research and clinical placements, and outreach to the broader community.

Release of Children

To protect the safety of the children in our care, it is critical that children only be released to authorized individuals as listed by the families in their enrollment packet and any subsequent updates.

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 (written is preferred and can be faxed or emailed). It will also be necessary for the parent to provide the person's name and description. Upon arrival, this person must present identification.

No child will be released to a person who appears to be intoxicated or otherwise incapable of bringing the child home safely.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS: Unless the Center has a copy of a valid court order barring a non-custodial parent from contact with his/her child, the ELC cannot refuse a parent. If the Center has a court order stating that a non-custodial parent is not allowed contact with the child and the non-custodial parents attempts to take the child, Police Officers will be called for assistance.

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.

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 photocopy of the ID. If a person is not on the authorization list, we cannot release the child.

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, Police Officers will be notified and the Delaware Division of Child Protective Services will be called to assume responsibility for the child.

School Age Program

The ELC offers before and after care for three local schools; Newark Charter School, West Park Place Elementary and Las Aspira Academy. Buses for each school picks up and drops off at the ELC. The school age calendar is created based upon the schools and is open for full day care when schools are closed due to Professional Development or some Holidays. There are a few days that Aspira Academy is closed that the ELC is not open for full day care. If the ELC is open during an inclement weather situation, we offer full day care for children already enrolled in the before and after school program. We do accept children on a 'drop-in' basis, when space allows. Contact the ELC to express interest in the School Age program.

Sleeping: Children

All cots in preschool will be a minimum of 18" apart. Cots/cribs in infants and toddlers will be at least 18" apart and preferably 3 feet apart when classroom space allows. 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 shall sleep only in cribs and be placed on their backs when laid down to sleep. An exception may be granted if the infant's health care provider documents in writing that the infant's physical or medical condition requires an alternative sleeping position or use of sleep-positioning device. The health care provider must stipulate the specific sleeping position in which that infant must be placed or stipulate the sleep-positioning device and how it should be used.

Pillows, bibs, blankets, bumper pads, cloth diapers other than those worn by an infant, comforters, flat sheets, quilts, sheepskin, sleep positioning devices (unless specified by child's

health care provider), stuffed toys, top sheets, and other items (except a pacifier if used) are prohibited in a crib. Toys or objects attached to cribs or cots are also prohibited.

Swaddling of infants requires written parent/guardian consent. The use of blankets for swaddling shall not be used when laying an infant down to sleep; swaddle-blanket sleepers may be used.

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.

A child’s rest equipment shall be labeled with the child’s name and only used by that child. Cots, cribs and mattresses shall be cleaned and sanitized weekly and when soiled or wet.

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-Child Ratios

Every attempt will be made to maintain ELC ratios, however there may be short periods of time when classrooms will move toward, but not exceed, State ratios.

Age Group	ELC Ratios	NAEYC Ratios	State of DE Ratios
Infants Under 12 mos.	1:3 Group size of 6	1:4 Group size of 8	1:4 Group size of 8
Toddlers 12 – 36 mos.	1:4, 1:5* Group size of 8-10*	1:6 Group size of 12	1:8 Group size of 16
Preschool 3-5 years	1:8, 1:10* Group size of 16-20*	1:10 Group size of 20	1:10 (3) 1:12 (4) Group size of 20 (24)
School Age K – 3 rd grade	1:8 Group size of 16	1:15 for school age Group size 30	1:15 Group size of 30

*ratios may vary depending on square footage of the room.

When children are in mixed age groups, the ratio for the youngest child will be maintained. During nap times when children are sleeping, the Delacare licensing permits ratio decreases to ½ of the normal staffing pattern with the exception that infant ratios remain the same, regardless of whether the children are awake or asleep.

At least two staff members must be in the building during all hours of operation, which is to include one member of the leadership team or a person designated by leadership to open/close the center.

Staff Working for Parents

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

Supervision of Children

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.

Visitors Under the Age of 16

Visitors to the Center who are under the age of 16 may not be considered volunteers and are considered to be an additional child for purposes of the staff/child ratios. Visitors under the age of 16 must be directly supervised by qualified staff at all times.

Volunteers

A person must be 16 years or older in order to volunteer in a licensed center, may not count toward staff/child ratios, may not be left alone with children and must be supervised at all times by a qualified staff person. All volunteers that are present more than 7 hours a week or 40 hours per year are considered as "staff" which requires them to have a volunteer personnel file which shall include a health appraisal, background check, 2 references, orientation, signed Child Abuse Reporting Law, and Declaration Form.

Whereas all volunteers who work more than 7 hours a week or 40 hours per year are required by Delacare regulation to obtain a background check and whereas the DE State Police fingerprinting division does not conduct background checks for persons under the age of 18, persons between the ages of 16-18 cannot volunteer more than 7 hours per week. Requests to volunteer should flow through an Associate Director and placement will be coordinated with the ELC Office of Research and Clinical Placement. Volunteers are required to sign in and out and will wear a badge indicating volunteer status.

Weather Policy for Outdoor Learning

Children will participate in outdoor learning activities daily. The Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards – 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. The Office of Child Care Licensing **requires** that children go outside when the wind chill factor is 32 degrees or higher or the heat index is 89 degrees or lower and the weather and environmental conditions do not pose a significant health or safety risk. Outdoor play during periods outside the temperature range is permissible – unless the National Weather Service (www.weather.gov) has issued an advisory regarding health or safety risks in the area.

The ELC closely monitors www.weather.gov for all weather and air quality alerts and will adjust the outdoor play schedules accordingly. 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
Birth to Three Offices.....	302-255-9134
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.....	302-283-7240
Child Mental Health Services.....	302-633-2600
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.....	302-451-2800
Delaware Guidance for Children and Youth.....	302-652-3948
Delaware Health and Social Services.....	302-255-9040
Delaware Helpline.....	302-577-3000
Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood	302-831-3239
Delaware Office of Early Learning.....	302-735-4295
Delaware State Housing Authority.....	302-739-4263
Developmental Disabilities Council.....	302-739-2232
Easter Seal Society.....	302-324-4444
Hudson State Service Center (Newark).....	302-283-7500
Jewish Family Services of Delaware.....	302-478-9411
KidsHealth from Nemours.....	kidshealth.org
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
Online Guide to Human Services.....	800-560-3372
Parents as Teachers.....	302-398-8945
Parent Education Partnership.....	302-633-2505
Parent Information Center.....	302-999-7394
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.....	302-571-6908

Appendix A

Families as Partners Agreement & COVID Assumption of Risk

Updated Families as Partners Agreement and COVID Assumption of Risk

Families are essential partners with the staff at the UD Early Learning Center as we all work to support the development of your child. Research indicates that the first years of life are critical for a young child's brain development. It is a time of tremendous possibilities and vulnerabilities when development hinges on both healthy environments and relationships. Working together, the ELC team and families make a difference in the lives of young children and lay the foundation for healthy school relationships for years to come. The home and school partnership is collaborative and respectful helping all children to flourish. This agreement outlines our individual responsibilities, so that as a community, we are strong and present for children.

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we must revise our Families as Partners Agreement to meet guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) to ensure the health and safety of children, families and staff. Items in italics marked with an asterisk, are updates required by the CDC and OCCL.*

*We have also included an Assumption of the Risk document that states you understand the risks associated with sending a child to the ELC during the COVID Pandemic. This **Updated Families as Partners Agreement and COVID Assumption of Risk** must be signed before your return to the ELC.*

The ELC responsibilities include:

- Welcoming families as active partners in their child's education- including ongoing goal setting, observations, and assessment
- Celebrating family diversity and cultures and providing opportunities for volunteering, talent, and idea sharing
- Scheduling Family Conferences twice a year as well as providing multiple vehicles for collaborative communication throughout the year.
- Offering daily opportunities- all year- for all children to explore in the outdoor learning environments
- Maintaining the highest health and safety standards - meeting or exceeding state and national recommendations- in our center and outdoor learning

environments.

- **Having a written plan to address requirements as well as additional practices to prevent the spread of and respond to COVID-19. The ELC's Re-opening Plan is based on the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF) template (which can be found here: [DSCYF](#)) and will be made available to current families prior to re-enrollment and new families prior to initial enrollment. The Re-opening Plan will include, but is not limited to, the following items:*
 - *ELC staff working in child care facilities must wear cloth face coverings while at work;*
 - *Each staff member and child (or the child's parent may answer on their behalf) is screened with a basic questionnaire each time they enter the child care facility;*
 - *Adhere to the guidelines for group size and mixing of groups per the [DSCYF](#); and*
 - *Adhere to additional cleaning and sanitizing practices per the [DSCYF](#) and [CDC](#) recommendations.*

The ELC Family responsibilities include:

- Sharing their beliefs, values, and culture with program staff
- Participating in their child's growth and development by attending family conferences, goal setting and collaborating with teaching teams, support in learning at home, and attending family events
- Communicating with teaching teams any questions, concerns, changes, or family events that may impact child comfort and success at the ELC
- Providing appropriate clothing for children to experience the outdoors throughout every season
- Following all health and safety policies and procedures as outlined by the ELC Family Handbook
- **Following the health and safety guidelines in the Re-Opening Plan as per the requirements of the CDC and OCCL for families of children in childcare settings. The requirements include, but are not limited to, the following items:*
 - *Families are to provide cloth face coverings for their child(ren) marked with the child's name and teacher's name. For more information, see: [Face Covering Guidance](#);*
 - *Report child's health condition each day upon arrival and/or have child screened at check in area.; and*
 - *Follow drop off and pick up procedures which limits adult interaction at the ELC.*

Our shared responsibilities include:

- Committing to being role models for all children at the ELC. This includes respectful communication in person and in writing, putting away cell phones, and being present for our children and our center community
- Completing all child assessments and screenings -following up on recommendations for additional supports and resources
- Advocating-families and ELC together- in IFSP/IEP eligibility meetings, annual review meetings, and transition meetings with school districts
- **Continuing a united commitment to provide a safe learning environment for children.*

ASSUMPTION OF RISK:

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, is a highly infectious disease declared by the World Health Organization to be a global pandemic. There is no current vaccine for COVID-19. COVID-19's highly contagious nature means that contact with others, or contact with surfaces that have been exposed to the virus, can lead to infection. Because of this highly contagious nature, it is currently very difficult to control the spread of COVID-19 or to determine whether, where, or how a specific individual may have been exposed to the disease (https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1). By signing this Updated Families as Partner Agreement and Assumption of Risk, I understand and agree that I am voluntarily enrolling my child at the ELC.

I understand that ELC has put in place new safety rules and precautions in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, which rules and precautions may be updated at any time. While acknowledging that these rules and precautions may or may not be effective in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, I agree that my child must reasonably comply with such rules and precautions which may include, but are not limited to, mask wearing, hand washing, hand sanitizing, and social distancing to the extent possible given the nature of the ELC program. I understand that if I, or my child, fail to comply with these rules and precautions the administration will work with the family to resolve the compliance issue but ultimately, my child (a) may be asked not to attend the ELC until he or she can comply or (b) may be asked to permanently leave the ELC.

I understand and acknowledge that given the unknown nature of COVID-19, it is not possible to fully list each and every individual risk of contracting COVID-19, which include quarantine requirements, serious illness, disability, and/or death. I acknowledge that ELC, and the University of Delaware, are an open campus, which limits ELC's ability to control students and visitors on campus. I recognize that ELC cannot limit all potential vectors for COVID-19 infection. In particular, I understand and acknowledge that ELC may not be able to adhere to social distancing in a childcare setting. I acknowledge that I have asked for and/or been given any information that I may need to determine the risks associated with my child attending ELC and to make an informed assumption of those risks.

I voluntarily assume full responsibility for any and all risks of illness or injury associated with my child's exposure to COVID-19. ***Beyond a good faith effort to comply with applicable laws and not engage in willful or reckless misconduct, neither ELC nor the University of Delaware will be responsible for the prevention of any particular injury or condition sustained during your child's attendance at the ELC.***

I understand my responsibilities in this partnership agreement and look forward to positively contributing to the healthy development of children and families in this learning community. My signature below indicates that I am at least eighteen years of age and that I have read and understand the above statements and intend to be bound legally by its terms.

**I understand that it is my responsibility to adhere to the amended Family as Partners Agreement, which include the recommendation of the CDC and OCCL*

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Administrator Signature