



College of Education &  
Human Development

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

# Family Handbook

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[www.elc.udel.edu](http://www.elc.udel.edu)

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# Welcome to the University of Delaware Early Learning Center

## Mission

As leaders of exceptional practices in early childhood education, we celebrate and honor each child and their family to promote optimal development for all. We design engaging environments with children where learning is fostered through play, conversations, and discovery. Engagement and collaboration with the academic and research programs of the University of Delaware and the broader community promotes innovative and reflective practices.

## Vision

The UD Early Learning Center is a community of learners where equitable learning experiences instill confidence, resiliency, compassion, and creativity.

## Program Design

The UD Early Learning Center provides high quality early care and education programs for children and their families annually while providing a model, learning laboratory 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 education, human services, behavioral science, nutrition, 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 220 children aged 6 weeks through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and their families. The population includes families who are UD employees as well as families from the broader community; approximately 35% of the families fall within the federal definition of a family living in poverty and 10% 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. The ELC has strong partnerships with New Directions Head Start (NDEHS) to support Infants and Toddlers and the Delaware Department of Education to support preschool children through the State Funded Early Care and Education Program (SFECEP). The ELC also supports full-time Pell Grant eligible UD students with tuition assistance for their childcare needs.

## 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 the first five foundational years. 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 in all aspects of development: socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and cognitively. Parents/Guardians and other family members are viewed as essential partners in this process. Using the foundation of the Creative Curriculum as a guide, we view curriculum as everything that happens during our time together with the children. We strive to be reflective in our practices by:

- Preparing engaging learning environments
- Facilitating as children play and interact with each other
- Observing and assessing interest, growth and development of individual children
- Designing experiences based on observations and assessment
- Supporting the whole child through all daily interactions
- Incorporate families in learning experiences and family events

Another critical piece to our learning is the support of social and emotional development. We use two different supplemental curriculum models: Conscious Discipline and The Pyramid Model. You can read more about this work under the sections: Curriculum, Positive Guidance Policies.

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 and language therapy for children with identified needs. Classroom teachers work closely with therapists to ensure that Individualized Family Support Plans (IFSP) and Individualized Education Plan (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.

## 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 an online application form on our website, [www.elc.udel.edu](http://www.elc.udel.edu). The application does not guarantee your child's enrollment. When an opening occurs for your child, you will be contacted. Once you accept enrollment offer, you will pick up or be sent the necessary forms and paperwork to complete.

## Tuition, Billing and Additional Fees

ELC tuition and/or co-pay is due monthly in advance of service by the first of each month, and payments will be considered late after the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. If an account is not current by the end of the month, attendance at the ELC will be restricted until the account is brought up to date. A daily breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack are included in the cost of tuition. Families have several options for making payment:

1. By check, payable to the University of Delaware, via mail or dropped at the front desk
2. Bi-monthly payroll deduction for UD employees
3. ACH online payment: <https://www.udel.edu/elc-feepay>
4. Cash payments will be accepted at the front desk for amounts due of less than \$100.00

Tuition is due in regular monthly payments, regardless of holidays, professional development days, announced closings as per the annual calendar, or inclement weather. There will be no tuition refund for days missed by children or when a classroom needs to close due to illness. Tuition must be paid to hold a child's spot at the ELC during extended absences, travel, or parental sabbaticals.

School Age before/after care tuition includes only before and after care when school is open. Any days off from school requiring full day coverage will be offered if staffing allows on a first come, first serve basis at an additional cost per day. Field trips and special activities may also include additional fees.

When a child is leaving the ELC, written notice must be provided to the ELC via letter or email ([ud-elic@udel.edu](mailto:ud-elic@udel.edu)) with *at least* thirty days' notice. If less notice is provided, full tuition will be due for the full thirty-day period from the date of written notification.

### **Purchase of Care (POC) (Delaware Subsidized Child Care Funds)**

The ELC accepts Purchase of Care (POC). 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 the current authorization. For example, if your POC authorization expires at the end of the month, the ELC must see the reauthorization in the online portal before the first of the next month. If POC expires or you are no longer eligible, 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 monthly in advance of service. The ELC is obligated to collect co-pays.

### **Hours of Operation**

The Early Learning Center is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Children will be admitted for attendance beginning at 7:00 a.m. Please allow time to pick up your child and exit the building by 6:00 p.m.

The routines your child develops during the early years will continue throughout their school career. Children are expected to attend every day to benefit from the educational components and routines of our programs. Children must be settled in classrooms by 9:30 am (or 8:45 am if they are eating breakfast). Drop offs after 10 am require notification and approval from a Co-Director in advance.

Repeated, unexcused absences or chronic tardiness during this time may result in termination of enrollment. Chronic late pickups and/or chronic late payments may result in termination of enrollment.

### **Holidays & Days Closed**

We are closed New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving & the day after, and Winter Break (typically Dec 23-Jan 2). 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 on 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 Directors will determine the dates annually and families will be provided with a yearly calendar in order to make alternate childcare arrangements. Please note, to provide the best 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 childcare regulations
- A website link of convicted sex offenders living or working in the area
- ELC Emergency Plan

## Operational Policies and Information

*(In Alphabetical Order)*

### Absences

If your child will be absent, please contact the UD Early Learning Center at (302) 831-6205 prior to 10:00am

### Accidents or Injury

When an accident or injury occurs to a child during 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 place it in the child's cubby. The parent/guardian is to read, sign the document and take the yellow copy home. The white copy goes back to the teacher.

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 consult with the Leadership Team and call 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 another 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/medical action 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. Any medications that are part of the action plan need to always be onsite at the ELC, given to the teacher. Medications must be in original packaging, with the child's name on it.

The ELC does not serve nuts to protect our children with allergies to nuts. Please do not enter the classroom with any food containing nuts or nut products. Children should not arrive at the center eating food as they arrive. We serve breakfast, lunch and snack with children seated at tables.

## **Arrivals and Departures**

The ongoing family partnership is supported by daily routines. Families agree to park only in the large lot on the western side of the ELC between the signs outlined in green with an ELC permit on the car dash. Parking anywhere else – including the small lot at the front of the building and in the fire lane - is not permitted and may lead to a parking ticket from UD Parking Services. Please do not leave your vehicle idling in parking areas. Children need to always stay with their parent(s) and cannot be left alone in a vehicle at any point.

Families and children are greeted upon entry into 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. To promote respectful interactions and engagement within the ELC community, please do not use your cell phone while present in the ELC, either by you or your child. Please refrain from playing music and/or programs and having conversations or facetime while dropping off or picking up. Being available and present for your child and your child's teaching team to continue open communication is critical for the ELC school family.

The routines your child develops during the early years will continue throughout their school career. Children are expected to attend every day to benefit from the educational components and routines of our programs. Children must be settled in classrooms by 9:30 am (or 8:45 am if they are eating breakfast). Drop offs after 10 am require notification and approval from a Co-Director in advance. Repeated, unexcused absences or chronic tardiness during this time may result in termination of enrollment.

Children in toddler and preschool/prekindergarten classrooms leaving between the hours of 12-3 will be assisted by the ELC. Parents are asked to wait in the lobby for staff members to bring child to lobby for departure. We limit the number of adults in and out of napping classrooms to provide respectful, peaceful classroom communities to encourage quiet rest time. Infant families are welcome back in classrooms throughout the day due to individual nap schedules of infants.

## **Birthdays, Holidays and Special Events**

The ELC values the rich diversity of cultures represented in our classrooms and encourages families to share cultural celebrations. Every family has special days and certain ways of celebrating and the ELC believes in honoring cultures, traditions and beliefs to promote learning and understanding. 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 the ELC 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 a few days in advance. Parents/guardians are welcome to join the class for the special birthday snack. 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 with listed ingredients upon arrival at the ELC. None of the ingredients in the food may contain nuts, nut byproducts or prepared in a facility that prepares nuts.

## **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 the milk was expressed. 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**

The Early Learning Center will provide each employee with written information governing the reporting provision of the Delaware child abuse and neglect law(s) and regulations. Each employee is required to read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse & neglect and outlining the employee's responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse or neglect according to State Law at time of hire and each subsequent year. The ELC will report any suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or neglect to the Division of Child Protective Services through the Child Abuse Reporting Number (800-292-9582) and will cooperate fully in the investigation of any incident.

As required by Delacare, the Early Learning Center will not employ or retain in any capacity any person whose child or children are removed from his/her custody because of abuse or neglect; nor will the Center employ or retain in any capacity any person convicted of any offense defined as sex abuse in Delaware Code, Title 11, Chapter 85, Subchapter IV, Subsection 8850.

### *Protocol for suspicion of neglect or abuse by a parent, guardian, or other adult:*

In the event an employee suspects abuse or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, or other adult, the employee should immediately contact a Co-Director to discuss their concerns. The Co-Director will assist the employee in contacting the Division of Child Protective Services. The ELC will not discourage, inhibit, penalize, or otherwise impede any staff member from reporting any suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or neglect.

### *Protocol for reporting an ELC staff member for suspicion of neglect or abuse:*

Any suspected abuse or neglect of a child by an employee or volunteer of the ELC must be immediately reported to a Co-Director. The ELC will immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect as required by Law and take remedial action to protect children from harm. Subsequently, the person suspected of abuse or neglect shall a) have no direct contact with any child, or b) be reassigned to other duties that do not involve contact with children, or c) be placed on Administrative Leave by the Director and/or the ELC Human Resources liaison, until the investigation of the incident has been completed. The ELC will take disciplinary action, up to and including

termination of employment as required by Delacare Rules #138-140 and by Law, against any staff member who commits an act of child abuse or neglect.

## **Child Study Team**

The ELC works as a team to support children, families and educators. The Co-Directors meet with the Assistant Director to review observations, progress, successes and concerns about individual children and their experiences in the program. This process can be prompted in various ways. Educators can prompt this process by filling out a child referral form to share information and observations. Families can ask for additional support. A member of the larger team can notice that additional support is warranted. Once this process is initiated, the Assistant Director completes an observation, either in the observation deck or in the classroom, or in a combination of both. The educator will meet with the Assistant Director to share more information. The Assistant Director talks/shares with the Co-Directors and the team develops a plan for support. This plan can be more classroom based and/or involve more connections and plans around home-school support. Families will be advised of this process and are expected to join the Child Study team in order to fully implement the plan. This is a comprehensive system, to meet the needs of the whole child. The Child Study team continues to meet throughout the year to discuss ongoing progress related to a child's developmental progress, IFSP or IEP, or behavioral interventions.

## **Closings Due to Inclement Weather or Emergencies**

The Directors of the Early Learning Center will work with the Dean's office, Children's Campus Directors and 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 occasions, 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 by:

1. ELC Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/UDearlylearningcenter](http://www.facebook.com/UDearlylearningcenter))
2. Email through Constant Contact
3. On our voice mail message. Call 302-831-6205 for message.

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

## **Clothing and Footwear for Active Daily Play**

Children should come dressed appropriately for active, messy play. To ensure their safety, all children should wear closed toe shoes that will protect them 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*) Please apply sunscreen prior to arrival at the ELC each morning throughout the summer and bright fall/spring days.

Each child needs at least one change of clothing at the ELC. For children who are still in diapers, pull-ups or who are learning to toilet, it is recommended to have two or three changes of clothing (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 educator to identify the preferred avenue for communication for each of you. Family conferences are scheduled bi-annually for all children but are also available at any time upon request. If a parent/guardian were to have a question and the teacher is unavailable, they can ask to speak to a member of the Leadership Team. If a concern needs to be discussed, we can arrange for a meeting time with the requested staff member.

Family involvement is a critical part of the ELC's program. We strive to incorporate families in a variety of ways; quick check ins during drop off and pick up, special visiting times, events, field trips, conferences, stay and plays, read alouds and home projects or ways to share from afar. If you have an idea for how you can contribute to the classroom or program, please share it with your child's educator.

## **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.

## **Curriculum, and Observation/Assessment of Children**

### Curriculum

The Early Learning Center is a NAEYC accredited center, applying high quality standards for all aspects of our program. Relationship-based developmentally appropriate practices guide our daily interactions and lesson planning so we can support development of the whole child. The understanding of how children learn, grow and develop is at the foundation of every decision made for lessons, activities and materials. The Delaware Department of Education, Office of Early Learning recommends the use of Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOFs) as our guiding standards. The Creative Curriculum® aligns with our belief that children learn best through hands-on, discovery learning with play-based experiences. The curriculum outlines interest areas: Library, Dramatic Play, Block Play, Manipulative Play/Toys and Games, Art, Sensory, Library, Music and Movement, Discovery/Science,

Outdoors and Cooking. The curriculum provides a research-based sequence of skill and knowledge development that is age appropriate and promotes an integrated approach to learning.

These curriculum guides are the starting point for educators, as they work to incorporate child interest and developmental stages. Each educator brings forth their own passion, interests and areas of expertise to their design of environment and activities. Educators watch for recurring themes and children's understandings, developmental concerns, and underlying questions. Children explore materials and activities so that they construct and discover knowledge, and develop skills through high quality, purposeful activities provided and supported by the educators. The curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the children. Educators include families in curriculum development by seeking their input during parent/teacher conferences and through other means of communication (email, conversations, classroom participation, etc.). Educators implement the curriculum in a manner that reflects responsiveness to the family home values, beliefs, experiences and language.

All age groups plan for and implement developmentally appropriate activities for our outdoor spaces. Outdoor play is a part of the daily routine, both in the morning and afternoon. Educators have planned the playgrounds to incorporate many opportunities for learning throughout the spaces. Many of the classrooms also go on walking trips together. Different age groups may also use additional curricular supports. Infant and Toddler educators may use Frog Street as an additional curriculum, which aligns with Head Start standards. Preschool and PreK classes use Heggerty: Phonemic Awareness and Early Literacy Programs to enrich their language and literacy thinking skills. 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.

The ELC directly supports social and emotional growth, using two curriculum frameworks called Conscious Discipline and The Pyramid Model. Both frameworks provide evidence-based understanding of emotional regulation and behavior as communication. Educators receive extensive training around the ideas of supporting children through self-regulation and prosocial skills. (See Positive Guidance Policy for more information)

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 Directors and are posted in the classroom.

### Observation and Assessment

Educators observe and assess children's current levels of development and plan activities designed to foster and support their growth. Educators understand the importance of authentic observation, captured over time in real experiences as the most important indicator of a child's developmental level. Educators use the online system, Smart Teach, for monitoring growth and development. This tool is aligned directly with the curriculum. Information gleaned from assessments and data, along with family goals, serve as the foundation for educator's planning. Educators discuss assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of the children, including large group lessons, small group activities and individual plans. Assessment information remains confidential. Parents/guardians are always welcome to request a copy of their child's file.

Assessment of children is an integral part of the ELC programs. Teachers and staff use assessment to identify children's interests and needs; document children's developmental progress and learning; improve curriculum/teaching practices, overall program improvements; and refer children 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. Assessment is both formal and informal. Our observations and assessments guide our curriculum, as we create customized opportunities for children to deepen their thinking, represent their understandings, and encounter new perspectives. Families participate in promoting developmental growth by sharing their hopes/goals for their children and communicating about experiences and observations with educators. Conferences are offered twice a year, with opportunities for additional conversations throughout the year. Educators value effective communication with families and share observations and assessment information with families frequently throughout the school year.

### Developmental Screening Tools

As part of our curriculum and assessment program, the ELC uses a screening and monitoring system through the Delaware Department of Education. Ages and Stages Questionnaires, both the developmental (ASQ:3) and social emotional screening (ASQ:SE) are meant to gather information about your child in a 'snapshot' view. This helps to capture your child's current developmental level. You play a critical role in this process, as you are your child's first teacher and caregiver. This screening tool is completed by families at least once a year, every fall. The screenings are best completed online. However, families can complete the form on paper and a member of the ELC team can input the data for the family. Families can request assistance/support completing the screening tools from their child's teacher. The QR code and/or links will be shared in the fall of each year. Families get information back from the State of Delaware and should share those results with the ELC. If the screener indicates an area in which your child might need support, we can review and make recommendations for the next steps. Our goal is to partner with families, to provide optimal support for the child. Educators and families decide to either directly support and monitor areas of need, or to make a referral for further evaluation. Even if the ASQ screeners do not pick up on concerns that a family or educator may have, it may be beneficial to pursue evaluations to rule out any concerns.

### Referral for Evaluation

When observations, screeners, or data suggest a need for further evaluation, families partner with educators and the Assistant Director to determine next steps. Families are supported in a sensitive and confidential manner to discuss the concern and recommend further evaluation. If the family agrees to pursue an evaluation, the Director will provide the family with contact information for agencies which conduct such evaluations such as Child Development Watch, the Christina School District and Nemours Behavioral Health. Early intervention is critical for overall development and growth. The optimal goal is for both the parent/guardian and the ELC team to work together to support further steps for referral and evaluation. Families receive the Home and School Agreement, outlining the ongoing partnership with open communication for support the whole child. As families work through the process, they will update the ELC team and invite them to any meetings. The ELC team will share information with the family and agency in order to complete a holistic view of child growth and development.

## **Diapers and Pull-Ups**

Families provide diapers or pull-ups 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 can 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 (NDEHS), and pull-ups are provided for children in the State Funded Early Care and Education Program (SFECEP).

## **Emergency Contact Information**

In case of urgent situations, the ELC will reach out to the parent/guardians first. Each child must have 2 additional emergency contacts beyond the parents/guardian. It is important that the center has 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 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 will respond to a call from the ELC as soon as possible.

## **Emergency Response Plan**

The ELC reviews and updates the Emergency Response Plan annually. It is located at the front desk and is available upon request.

## **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, grounds, and parking lots, 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 provided 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 (Positive Guidance/Behavior Supports)**

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. A child's enrollment will not be terminated 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 Assistance and Support**

When a family requires assistance to support their family, we provide a list of community services to guide them and offer help along the way. This list can be found at the back of the Family Handbook.

## **Field Trips/Walking Trips**

Families will be informed of any field trip requiring transportation. Permission slips will go home for each trip involving transportation and will need to be returned for the child to participate. 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 if 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.

Families sign a Walking Trip permission slip upon enrollment. All ages enjoy using the James Hall walking trail. Preschool and School Age children also take extended walking trips to explore their local community. Educators take a head count and record on their child tracking forms who is present before during and after any trip. Educators also take their sign-in sheets, child tracking forms, emergency medications and first aid kits with them.

## **Hand Washing**

All ELC Employees, children (independently or with staff assistance) and volunteers are expected to observe hand washing routines, regardless of glove usage, with soap and running water (rubbing hands together for at least 10 seconds) followed by the use of single service towel to dry hands at the following times:

- Upon arriving for work and before departure
- Before/after preparing, handling, serving, or eating meals

- Before/after using a sensory table with other children
- Before/after caring for a child who may be sick and/or administering medication
- After contact with body secretions such as blood, fecal matter, urine, vomit, nasal secretions
- After toileting or diapering children or self
- After removing gloves
- When moving from one group to another that involves contact with infants and toddlers
- After playing in a sandbox
- After playing outside
- After handling garbage or cleaning product
- After handling animals or their equipment, or after coming into contact with an animal's body secretions

## Health Appraisal (Child Physical) and Immunizations

In accordance with childcare 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 must also include results of lead tests at twelve and twenty-four months of age as required by Delaware law. 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](http://www.dhss.delaware.gov) for further information.

### Health Screenings

Health Screenings, such as vision and hearing screenings, are required per the child health appraisal at time of enrollment. Dental screenings are encouraged for all children as well.

### Immunizations

The University of Delaware Early Learning Center complies with the following Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing Regulations pertaining to immunizations:

- A. A licensee shall ensure that within one month of starting care, each child's file has a health appraisal that includes an immunization record. A health care provider shall have conducted this health appraisal within the last 12 months. A licensee does not need a child's health appraisal if other federal or State laws, such as specified in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, require the center to admit a child without one. Health appraisals and immunization records must be updated every 13 months.
- B. A licensee is not required to update health appraisals for children in grades kindergarten or higher after receiving one completed after the child began kindergarten or a higher grade.
- C. A licensee shall ensure a child whose parent/guardian objects to immunizations on a religious basis or whose health care provider certifies that the immunization may be harmful to the child's health will be exempt from the immunization requirement.
  1. A notarized statement or documentation from a health care provider is required for this exemption.
  2. A licensee shall place this documentation in the child's file.

Based on these regulations, there may be children enrolled who are not immunized due to legal exemptions. Federal laws mandate that health-related records be kept confidential, therefore, ELC staff persons are not at liberty to respond to specific questions pertaining to immunizations of children within classrooms beyond explaining that the Center adheres to the Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing Regulations and Delaware State law. Medical experts indicate that an immunization rate of 90% or above provides a solid basis for “herd immunity”. The immunization rate at the ELC historically and currently exceeds 95%.

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.

### **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 evidence 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 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. When a child is sent home sick, educators provide a list of the symptoms, plus information for returning to the ELC for each illness.

## **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.

## **Lesson and Experience Plans**

Lesson and experience plans are to be completed on a regular basis and submitted to the Co-Directors for approval. Per OCCL guidelines, plans must be posted in the classroom for families to view.

## Meals, Snacks and Dining

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.

Classroom educators sit at the table with children during meals to support home living skills and socialization. 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. Adults are encouraged to eat healthy food when eating with children. According to our CACFP guidelines, children will be served full servings of each meal component at every meal. Children are encouraged to eat the food presented but are never forced. Children are welcome to additional servings, if available. We encourage children's good health by serving nutritious meals & snacks and by teaching proper hygiene including hand washing and tooth brushing.

The menu is developed by the ELC Nutrition Coordinator. Copies of the monthly menu are posted on the ELC website [www.elc.udel.edu/menu/](http://www.elc.udel.edu/menu/) 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 3:15pm

*Toddlers:*

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

*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.

### 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 5.
- A bottle can be used for feeding for up to one hour but cannot be put back in the refrigerator or re-heated. Unused portions of formula or breast milk shall be discarded after one hour.
- Educators dispose of all formula/breast milk left over in bottles once the child has finished eating (or after one hour), rinse the bottle and place it in the child's cubby. Dirty bottles are all sent home to be washed and sanitized for the next day.

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. Microwaves are never used to heat children's food or beverages.

### 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 be shared 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.

## **Medical and Dental Management Procedure - Physician Ordered**

The University of Delaware Early Learning Center is an inclusive community that aims to support and welcome children with medical conditions and to provide all children with medical conditions with the same opportunities as others in the program. Families will be informed of the ELC medical health plan and policy during enrollment and can access this plan in the family handbook.

At the ELC, we understand that medical conditions should not be a barrier to development and learning, so we will ensure that all staff understand their responsibility to care for all children in the event of an emergency and feel confident in knowing what to do daily in care of the child.

This ELC understands that certain medical conditions are serious and can be potentially life threatening, particularly if ill managed or misunderstood. Therefore, we will ensure that all staff understand the common medical conditions that affect children in the program and assure all staff receive the necessary training. Staff will review the medical care and/or action plan and policy annually and participate in training to support each child's individualized care plan.

Staff are aware of the most common serious medical conditions at the program, and they understand their responsibility to care for children in the event of an emergency. All ELC staff are required to obtain First Aid and CPR certification and teaching staff complete the Administration of Medication training offered through the Office of Child Care Licensing. Staff who work directly with children in the program receive training and know what to do for the children in their care with medical conditions.

The ELC will consult closely with families and with permission, all community health providers who support each child's medical care plan. The ELC understands the importance of providing feedback to those involved in the development process and is committed to acknowledging input and providing follow-up to suggestions put forward. Families and staff of the ELC annually review the medical health plan and policy.

Medical care and/or action plan forms are completed by the family and in collaboration with the family's physician or health care provider. After being received by the program, they are reviewed by the Co-Director and classroom staff for clarity. If questions arise, the Co-Director will work with the family to help support the plan. The plan is then implemented by the classroom staff with support from the Leadership team. The plan is regularly monitored by classroom staff and the Co-Director to assure the steps taken are benefiting the health and wellbeing of the child.

## **Medication, Ointments, Sunscreen, and Insect Repellent**

The ELC strictly adheres to the guidelines set forth in the Administration of Medication training course and Delacare regulations when it is necessary to administer medications to children. 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 will 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 a refrigerator located near the classroom.

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 complete a Medication Administration Record when bringing medication to the ELC. The Medication Administration Record must include 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, and the ELC cannot give medication on an as needed basis.

For ongoing medications such as sunscreen, diaper ointment, or insect repellent, families must complete a Medication Administration Record monthly. The bottles must be labeled with the child's name. Sunscreen should

be updated on a regular basis (dependent on expiration date). Sunscreen needs to be replaced because it loses its SPF strength. Spray sunscreen may not be used on infants and toddlers. Insect repellent should not be used on children younger than two months.

Medication Administration Records (ongoing and limited) are available in the front lobby and from classroom teachers.

## **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation**

To earn and maintain accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) the Early Learning Center completes an extensive self-study process, measuring the program and its services against NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and more than 200 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-notice/>.

The ELC is also a participant in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and follows USDA nondiscrimination laws and regulations.

## **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 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 positive guidance strategies.
- 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 only in the large lot on the western side of the ELC between the signs with an ELC permit on the car dash. Families understand that parking anywhere else – including the small lot at the

front of the building and in the fire lane - is not permitted and may lead to a parking ticket from UD Parking Services. Families need to drive slowly in the lot and use the arrows to maintain safe driving measures. Non-compliance with safe parking lot behavior may require a meeting with a Co-Director and termination of enrollment.

- The routines your child develops during the early years will continue throughout their school career. Children are expected to attend every day to benefit from the educational components and routines of our programs. Children must be settled in classrooms by 9:30 am (or 8:45 am if they are eating breakfast). Drop offs after 10 am require notification and approval from a Co-Director in advance.
- Please refrain from using your phone while in the ELC. Children and staff need your full attention at drop-off and pick up. Children should also not be using a personal tablet or cell phone while at the ELC.

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 educator. If your concern is not addressed or resolved to your satisfaction, please contact the Assistant Director or the appropriate Co-Director. In the event a conflict arises between a family and the classroom educators, and a meeting with the Directors is necessary, conflict resolution strategies will be used to support both parties. These strategies include providing time for a scheduled meeting, in 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. Open communication is critical to ongoing partnerships. All parties should attend meetings and agree to next steps for supporting 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 in their front window or a UD grey parking permit may be ticketed and/or towed. ELC staff do not have the authority to waive parking fees assessed by UD Public Safety. Use the main entry of the building to enter/exit the building.

The small lot closest to the ELC is reserved for visitors and employees. This lot is not available for drop-offs or pick-ups. 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 our children and families, do not leave children unattended in your vehicle while at the ELC and do not leave your car idling in the parking lot unattended.

## Photographing and Videotaping of Children

Families complete a UD model release form related to photos/videos. Full time staff take photos of children to share with families and to use in their classroom activities/displays. Children who have permission to be featured online could have their photo shared on the ELC website or our FaceBook page. Families should consult with the teaching staff before taking photos of anyone beyond their own child due to photo restrictions.

## Physical Activity

The ELC will provide opportunities for physical activity for each child one year and older according to his or her ability. In addition, a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity indoors or outdoors will be provided every 4 hours when the child is in care and structured physical activities are adapted to allow inclusion of children of all abilities.

## Positive Guidance/Behavior Supports

The ELC uses two evidence-based positive guidance frameworks to support the social and emotional development and learning (SEL) of all children; The Pyramid Model and Conscious Discipline. Both frameworks support the ELC philosophy of education and align with the foundational curriculum, The Creative Curriculum.

The Pyramid Model ([www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)) is a positive behavioral intervention framework for early childhood programs that supports children's social and emotional development and prevents challenging behaviors through universal practices, targeted supports, and individualized interventions. It emphasizes nurturing and responsive relationships, supportive environments, and systematic and intentional teaching for children birth through age five.

Conscious Discipline ([www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)) provides a framework of support for positive behaviors for all members of the learning community. Conscious Discipline is a trauma-informed, brain-based program developed through evidence and research about social and emotional learning (SEL). 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 strives to create a positive, engaging learning environment that enables children to explore while feeling safe and supported. Our educators employ positive guidance as a method to support both social and 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. Our goal is to help each child develop self-awareness/self-control/self-regulation. We recognize that it is important to work together with families to encourage the child's positive behavior.

The most important step in the process entails educator's use of preventative strategies, by providing routines and engaging activities and positive interactions. 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. Teachers create safe learning environments, so children can answer three key questions with affirmation: Am I safe? Am I loved? What can I learn?

Educators support each child's social and emotional development through modeling and explicit instruction of friendship skills, self-care, and creating positive group dynamics. Strategies are appropriate to the child's age, developmental stage and individual learning styles.

Educators 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. Teachers scaffold learning opportunities for children to experience positive examples of self-awareness and conflict resolution with others each day, building a community of learners who work and learn together.

The following opportunities, among others, are provided:

- Respectful interactions
- Engaging learning environments with specific SEL spaces and materials that include and promote specific language when sharing feelings and needs.
- Clear, simple directions with positive reminders
- Expectations stated positively rather than negatively: "Walking feet" instead of "no running."
- Reinforcement of children's positive behavior with labeled praise
- Stating the emotion; giving value to feelings
- Encourage verbalization of feelings
- Sharing options for appropriate ways to express feelings
- Providing quiet spaces or independent learning opportunities
- Facilitating play and language between peers to promote healthy play skills
- Modeling of conflict resolution strategies and behaviors such as caring, turn-taking, listening, negotiating, and comforting

To support a child's growing self-regulation skills, we use:

- Redirection to a different activity
- Encouragement of a growing independence
- Teacher support during an activity
- Breathing and mindfulness techniques
- Picture schedules to predict routine
- Safe place/Calming corners

#### *Working towards a positive solution with challenging behavior*

When challenging behaviors occur, teachers observe to identify events, activities, interactions/other contextual factors that predict challenging behavior that may contribute to the behavior. Educators identify skills that need to be taught and incorporate these into their activities and routines. Educators also use environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.

Educators respond to a child’s challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides safety for the child and others, is respectful and provides the child with information on acceptable behavior. Staff guide and support children who are not making safe choices with self, teachers, or other children; helping them to replace their behavior with relationship-building skills and strategies.

The following list of de-escalation strategies is always what is tried *first* when challenging behavior persists that pose a risk to safety:

- Verbal redirection and de-escalation
- Visual supports
- Sensory supports
- Use of simplified language
- Positive reinforcement
- Staff redirection or swap out
- In classroom cool down
- Out of classroom cool down
- Providing alternative activities or choices
- Blocking (including blocking off an area)
- Environmental cleaning (removal of materials)

If immediate behavior persists despite the above interventions, the following safety plan is enacted in order to provide a safe environment for all. Notifications will be provided to parents/guardians should any of the listed actions occur.

The steps of that occurrence are as follows:

1. Direct Response: clear, concise, directions to stop the unsafe behavior
2. Voluntary Escort/Assist: walking/moving with the child to a calmer, safer location
3. Involuntary Escort/Assist: moving the child to a calmer, safer location in or outside of the classroom
4. Standing/Seated Hold: holding the child to minimize the risk of the child hurting themselves or those around them.
5. Repeat of steps above as necessary
6. Family support and family response will be expected if the behavior persists or continues to remain unsafe to the classroom, staff, child, or peers.
  - This can look like early pickups, shorter day(s), immediate pickups, or a modified schedule until the family and ELC can develop an appropriate plan.

### Behavior Incident Reports

Behavior is a form of communication. Behaviors can and do happen. Our goal is to communicate effectively about behaviors we observe during the day that may be unsafe, disruptive, challenging, or out of the ordinary. Educators will fill out a Behavior Incident Report, which will outline what happened, and more importantly, how our team supported the child in the moment. The primary goal is to create a clear and timely way to communicate with families when behaviors arise that may need additional context or support.

These reports help us:

- Understand what led to the behavior
- Record the specific behaviors observed
- Note the calming or supportive strategies staff used
- Document any follow-up or restorative actions taken

### Behavior Management Plan

If challenging behavior continues in a manner of concern across multiple days implying a pattern, educators will meet with Assistant and Co-Directors (Child Study Team) 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 will be asked to assist in developing a plan of support, called the *ELC Behavior Action Plan*. This plan includes positive behavior strategies to support the child, educator and family. After implementation of the ELC Behavior Action Plan, the team, including the family, will reconvene monthly to review progress. Family may be advised to submit a referral for further evaluation and support through their local school district and/or other outside agencies. If the child qualifies, they will be given a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) to assess the function of the challenging behavior(s). Once the function(s) are identified, a formal Behavior Support Plan will be given for the ELC staff and district providers to work collaboratively to implement.

### ELC Code of Conduct and Behavior Policy

If challenging behavior continues to present safety concerns despite the agreed-upon supports in place for the classroom, children, and ELC Staff, family and administration will come together to discuss the most appropriate next steps for child's placement, prioritizing both safety and the child's individual needs. If it is determined that the ELC is not the best fit for the child and their needs, we will assist the family in seeking alternative placement the best we can.

### Important Language from Office of Child Care Licensing and NAEYC:

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 volunteers of the ELC engage in psychological abuse, ex's include, shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection or coercion, ex's include, Rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up) and will not use any form of physical/ corporal punishment. Examples of physical punishment include: Shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; or requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.

## **Professional Development**

The ELC uses both a formal and informal process (adult and child data) to assess the overall health of the program and build our strategic plan. We collect information from various sources (observation, feedback, surveys and data) to complete the improvement process. This helps guide our overall Strategic Plan for professional development and coaching.

Educators participate in professional development related to the ELC Strategic Plan and their own professional individualized goals. Professional Development is provided throughout the year for educators to stay connected to current research and best practices in the field. Educators set their professional goals as part of their Professional Development Plan and seek additional training and/or coursework related to those goals. Educators often participate in committees, meetings, and other initiatives to contribute to the program and to the overall mission of the ELC.

## **Program Evaluation and ELC Strategic Plan**

The ELC leadership 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 excellence. The ELC conducts annual staff and family surveys, and ongoing evaluation of professional development opportunities, staff recruiting and retention, accreditation and licensure compliance, and child screening and assessment data. This information, along with feedback from our University and community partnerships guides our overall plan.

## **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 by asking child and family specific questions to the caller. The parent must provide verbal or written permission (written is preferred and can be scanned 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 under the influence of alcohol or drugs 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 access. 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, UD 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 with 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. 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 pickup will be called. If there is no response at any of the numbers provided, 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.

## 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. All research that takes place at the ELC is reviewed and approved by the UD Institutional Review Board (IRB). Research activities could involve children, families and staff. Information is posted in the ELC when opportunities for research involving families are available. All research that involves working 1-1 with children at the ELC requires explicit permission by the family ahead of the study.

## Schedule

Classroom specific daily schedules are posted in each classroom. Below is an overview of activities at the ELC on a daily basis.

### Center Wide Schedule

7:00 am	ELC opens, Free Choice and Morning Activities
8:30 am	Breakfast served to each classroom as appropriate by age and need
8:30 am - 11:30 pm	Classroom Activities/Outdoor Activities
11:30 am - 12:15 pm	Lunch Served to each classroom as appropriate by age and need
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Rest Time as appropriate
3:00 pm	Snack served to each classroom as appropriate by age and need
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Classroom Activities/Outdoor Activities
6:00 pm	ELC Closes

## Security and Safety Measures

The health and safety of our children 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 open for families to observe at all times. Families are asked to sign in the visitor log at the front desk if they are observing outside of drop off or pick up times.
- Families or others outside the ELC are not permitted to photograph, video or audio tape without the consent of the ELC.
- All ELC staff are required to have training in first aid, CPR, and bloodborne pathogens. 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 for 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. All systems are inspected and maintained regularly by professionals.
- Fire Drills are practiced monthly.
- The University of Delaware Environmental Health and Safety department and University of Delaware Police help to oversee all emergency preparedness activities.

### **School Age Program**

The ELC offers before and after care for two local schools: Newark Charter School and West Park Place Elementary. Buses for each school pick up and drop off at the ELC. This program is open to children who have current siblings participating in other programs at the ELC. Contact the ELC to express interest in the School Age program. Applications will open to internal PreK clients in the spring each year prior to the Kindergarten registration. Applications on the website for school age are open all year for the waiting list.

### **Screen Time**

Children younger than two years are prohibited from participating in screen time activities while at the ELC. Screen time activities include watching television, using a gaming device, tablet, phone, or computer. Screen time must be supervised by a staff member, age appropriate, and educational. Screen time activities require written parent/guardian permission and are limited to one hour or less per day unless a special event occurs.

### **Sleeping: Children**

Cots/cribs in infants and toddlers will be at least 18” apart and preferably 3 feet apart when classroom space allows. All cots in preschool will be a minimum of 18” apart. 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 1-12 Months old*

- Keep soft or loose bedding away from sleeping infants and out of safe sleep environments. Items including, but not limited to the following, are not to be placed in the crib or pack-and-play with an infant: toys, blankets, comforters, pillows, stuffed animals, bumper pads, sheepskins, flat sheets, cloth diapers other than those worn by an infant, etc. Items can impair the infant’s ability to breathe if they are close to its face. Attaching toys or objects, such as mobiles or busy boxes, to sleeping or rest equipment is prohibited.

- 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.
- 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. If infants arrive at the program asleep, or fall asleep, in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant is removed and placed in appropriate infant sleep equipment.
- The 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.

A child’s rest equipment shall be labeled with the child’s name and only used by that child.

### 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, unless the parent/guardian is a police officer and carrying a department-issued firearm, with his/her badge/shield clearly visible (uniform or detective clothing).

### 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
<b>Infants</b> Under 12 mos.	1:3 Group size of 6	1:4 Group size of 8	1:4 Group size of 8
<b>Toddlers</b> 12 – 36 mos.	1:4, 1:5* Group size of 8-10*	1:6 Group size of 12	1:8 Group size of 16
<b>Preschool</b> 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)
<b>School Age</b> K – 3 <sup>rd</sup> 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 half 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 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.

Leadership staff must hold a minimum of a BA/BS degree in early childhood education or a related field (MA/MS preferred). Teaching staff must hold an AA degree (BA/BS preferred) in early childhood education or other related discipline, or a non-related degree and a 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.

## **Staff Working for Families**

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

## **Supervision of Children**

The ELC requires educators to support “Active Supervision” This is the focused, intentional, and continual observation of young children by educators and program staff to ensure children of all ages are exploring learning environments in a safe manner. At no time may any child be left unsupervised in the Early Learning Center or on the ELC grounds. Staff may permit kindergarteners and school-age children to leave the teacher’s supervision (out of sight and sound) for no more than 10 minutes so long as the children are in a safe environment (e.g., go to hall bathroom, report to front desk, walk dishes to kitchen). The teacher checks on any children who do not promptly (within 10 minutes) return to the group as expected or if an adult at the child’s destination doesn’t confirm his or her arrival.

Support Staff and Volunteers do not work alone with children. They must be with, and supervised by, regularly scheduled teaching staff at all times. Support staff include an adult employed by the program, but not part of the teaching staff.

It is never permitted for infants, toddlers, or young two’s to be out of sight of classroom staff; all staff must be able to see and hear the children at all times. This is called Sight and Sound. As children age into preschool, there might be times when a child is in ‘sound’ distance, but not in sight (bathrooms). Educators are constantly scanning, supporting and counting children to ensure the class is together. Once a guardian 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 or similar items, should not be brought to school. Young children who have a transition object or rest time item 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.

## **Transitions**

The ELC transitions children to the next age group when there is a space available, when families and educators agree that the child is developmentally ready for the next learning environment, and when the child meets age requirements defined by state and federal guidelines. This transition period typically happens in the beginning of September, which is consistent with the school district movement for the school year. Infants move to toddlers, toddlers to preschool and preschoolers who are 4 years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> will move to prekindergarten. Children who are in the Preschool 3 program, which is a multi-age class with 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds, will stay with this group until they leave to go to Kindergarten.

### *Kindergarten School Choice*

The kindergarten registration process in Delaware is driven by School Choice. The school choice window for applications is November through January in the year prior to kindergarten. In October of the PreK year, the ELC sends home information about this process to all kinder bound children.

## **Transportation: Children including Before and After Care**

Buses for West Park Place and Newark Charter School pick up and drop off at the ELC. The movement of children in and out of the building during these times is documented on the bus checklist located at the front desk. This is also recorded at the classroom level on the child tracking sheet. If a child is unexpectedly absent at the bus return time, families are called to verify if other arrangements have been made.

## **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 5 days 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.

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 5 days or 40 hours per year. Requests to volunteer are approved by the leadership team. Volunteers are required to sign in and out.

## **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 beyond the temperature range is permissible – unless the National Weather Service has issued an advisory regarding health or safety risks in the area.

The ELC closely monitors [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.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 healthy enough to go outdoors, they should not be brought to school.

### **Withdrawal Policy**

When a child is leaving the ELC, written notice must be provided to the ELC via letter or email ([ud-elc@udel.edu](mailto:ud-elc@udel.edu)) with *at least* thirty days' notice. If less notice is provided, full tuition will be due for the full thirty-day period from the date of written notification.



## ADDENDUM A - 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.....	<a href="http://kidshealth.org">kidshealth.org</a>
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



## ADDENDUM B - USDA Nondiscrimination Statement



In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.