

Elizabeth's Early Learning Center

A nurturing community where every child can discover, learn, and shine.

Family Policy Handbook



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ELIZABETH'S EARLY LEARNING CENTER Family Handbook

History

Elizabeth's Early Learning Center, Inc. ("EELC", "the Center") was established in 1997, as a not-for-profit childcare center. EELC is the result of the community's effort and the vision of one special individual, Mrs. Elizabeth Forsyth. A lifelong resident of Lynchburg and active community-builder, Mrs. Forsyth demonstrated her commitment to EELC and to the local community by making financially possible the transformation of a shell building into one of the finest childcare facilities in Virginia. Additionally, she created an endowment that benefits all children at EELC. The Center also receives support from the local community, Lynchburg College, EELC staff, and parents. Everyone plays an important role in maintaining and enhancing EELC.

The Center provides year-round, full-day, childcare services and early childhood education for children, ages 6 weeks through pre-kindergarten (typically age 5). The Center embraces all children regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic levels, disabilities, or faith.

Philosophy

We believe that children are best served and educated in environments that are supportive, nurturing, and safe. Children thrive in environments that provide:

- a sense of community
- a strong connection between family and school
- the recognition that the rate of development varies dramatically from one child to another
- positive social interactions among all individuals within a community
- opportunities to develop and celebrate everyone's cultural heritage
- child-centered and active learning opportunities
- age and developmentally appropriate curriculum
- a recognition of the importance of imaginative play
- ample opportunities for early literacy development
- frequent involvement in the creative arts

We especially acknowledge the many positive benefits that result from recognizing and celebrating human diversity. With a culturally competent staff and curriculum, we believe that all children can gain a respectful disposition toward human similarities and differences.

Mission Statement

The mission of Elizabeth's Early Learning Center is to provide every child with affectionate and personalized care in a safe environment. We focus on providing for the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive developmental needs of children in an age-appropriate manner.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Licensing

EELC is licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Social Services. Information about licensing standards and regulatory requirements can be found at the Division of Licensing Programs web site at www.dss.state.va.us. An information hotline is maintained by the Virginia Department of Social Service (1-800-543-7545).

NAEYC

EELC adheres to the national accreditation standards set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These standards are research-based and are designed to ensure the quality of children's daily experiences in early childhood programs and to promote positive child outcomes. The ten standards address relationships between teachers and children, curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment of child progress, health, teacher qualifications, family involvement, community relationships, the physical environment, and leadership and management.

Staff

The EELC staff has a great deal of expertise and experience working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. EELC offers all staff members ongoing professional development training through workshops in topics such as effective classroom and behavior management, pediatric CPR and first aid, and developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction. All employees are required to submit to a criminal background check and periodic drug testing.

Volunteers

EELC is very fortunate to have the support of many volunteers, including area high school and college students, and various other people from our community. We welcome and appreciate volunteers. Volunteers are approved by our administration, wear name tags, and log in/out of the Center. An orientation is provided to all new volunteers. Safety is taken seriously at EELC; therefore, certain tasks can not be performed by volunteers. Some of the rules include (a) children are not allowed to be left alone in the care of volunteers...a staff member ***must always*** be with children, regardless of the teacher/child ratio when a volunteer is present; and (b) when holding an infant, a volunteer must be seated on the floor or in a chair with arm rests.

Hours of Operation

EELC is open year round, except for designated holidays and staff training/workdays. You should receive a calendar each year stating anticipated dates the Center will be closed. The director and Board have the right to change or modify these dates. Should such changes be necessary, you will be notified in a timely manner. Regular hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Closings for School Emergencies/Inclement Weather

In case of a school-wide emergency, our early alert SchoolCast system will be used to communicate with families. SchoolCast is also used to announce closings or changes in schedule due to inclement weather. Every attempt is made to stay open in inclement weather, however, to ensure the safety of our staff and families, we may choose to close or reduce our hours in extreme conditions. Closing information is also announced on WSET, Channel 13.

Curriculum and Assessment

The Creative Curriculum is used in all of the classrooms at EELC. It is a comprehensive system for establishing and sustaining a quality early learning program. The curriculum includes thirty-eight objectives for development and learning in the areas of Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and the Arts.

The development of each child is assessed throughout the year. Teachers communicate results of assessments to parents and parent input is an important part of the assessment process. Results of assessments are placed in each child's confidential file and are used for the purpose of improving curriculum, adapting teaching practices, planning program improvement, identifying children's needs and developmental progress, and arranging for referral for further diagnostic assessment when indicated.

EELC staff receives training annually on the following assessment methods:

- Ongoing teacher observation during the daily routine with input from parents.
- Student portfolios
- Creative Curriculum assessment completed in October and April
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire completed by parents and teachers in January
- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) completed on all Pre-K students in October and May.

If you would like additional information about specific assessment instruments used at EELC, please contact the Director.

There is an English Language Acquisition component to the curriculum, also, for students learning English as a second language and all assessment materials are available in Spanish, if needed. If you require the assistance of a translator during conferences with teachers, please notify the office and we will make arrangements for you.

Consistent Care Policy

Children are provided consistent care in order to develop dependable relationships and to build secure attachments. Each child is placed in a classroom, in August, based on their age. The child remains in that classroom with the same assigned providers and the same peers, for the entire year school year. During the first and last hour of the day, classes within the same age group combine for pick-up and drop-off.

Policies

Children's Records

Children's records are treated confidentially and are housed in the office. Only administration has access to children's records. They will be made available to parents on request, unless otherwise ordered by the court. Records may be shared or transferred to other parties only with the written permission of the parent. Records, reports, and results of screenings and assessments are maintained in the children's records and made accessible for two years after termination of services. They are then destroyed.

Parking Lot Safety

The traffic flow in our parking lot is one-way. Please pull into our driveway from Bedford Avenue (across from the 7-11 Convenience Store) and exit onto Magnolia Street. Please be mindful of your speed in the parking lot. Please remove all valuables from view in your car while in the parking lot. **For safety reasons, children are not to be left in the car without adult supervision.** [EELC is required by law to report to Child Protective Services instances when children are left unattended.] Due to NAEYC regulations, leaving a car running in the parking lot, while unattended, is prohibited. Please enter the building using our main entrance at all times. All doors are locked to ensure the safety of the children and staff. Families coming in through the main entrance may be granted access through the buzzer or by entering the access code into the keypad. Everyone should enter and exit through the front door.

No Smoking

EELC is a smoke free facility. No smoking is permitted within the building or on school grounds.

No Firearms

No firearms are permitted within the building or on the grounds of Elizabeth's Early Learning Center.

Child Abuse and Neglect

As required by Section 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia, all EELC staff members are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services (Child Protective Services) immediately when physical or behavioral indicators are observed.

Car Seats / Unsafe Conditions

EELC reserves the right not to release a child to an authorized pick up person who does not have an appropriate car seat. EELC also reserves the right not to release a child to a person that appears to be intoxicated or demonstrating unusual behavior. Typically, the police department is notified in such instances. Parents should not leave children unattended in cars parked in the parking lot. Such instances require us to inform Child Protective Services (CPS) immediately.

Enrollment

EELC provides care and educational experiences for approximately 140 children, on average. Children can be enrolled as young as 6 weeks and may remain enrolled until they start kindergarten. Former students who are 6 years old and have completed kindergarten may be enrolled during the summer months following their kindergarten year, depending upon space availability.

To enroll a child, parent(s) must complete an enrollment packet prior to the child's first day at EELC. A completed enrollment packet consists of:

1. Fee agreement
2. Child Registration Form
3. Emergency Information Card (must include two contacts with full addresses/phone numbers)
4. USDA Form
5. School Entrance Health Form with updated immunization records
6. Medical Authorization Form, if appropriate
7. Birth Certificate copy
8. Acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of the Family Handbook
9. Allergies and special needs of child, with doctor verification
10. Special custody information
11. Other (e.g., infant formula sheet, WIC acknowledgement, IEP copies, etc.)

Please note the following:

- **Parents'/guardians' are responsible for informing the Center, immediately, of any changes to critical information, such as address, phone number, authorized pick-up adults, etc.**
- Parents'/guardians' of children on scholarship are responsible for informing the Center, immediately, of changes in family/household income.
- The USDA form must be revised yearly.
- Health records must be up to date at time of enrollment and must remain current throughout enrollment. All sections of the health form must be completed by the physician, including vision and hearing screenings and immunizations. The office staff will inform parents if vaccines are overdue.
- Some medication administrations can be provided only with a physician's signature. Parents are responsible for ensuring that such signatures are acquired and remain updated.
- The Child Emergency Information card must include at least 2 contact names (other than parents) with addresses and phone numbers.

Typically, parent/guardian attendance at a classroom orientation session and completion of forms mentioned above is required before a child begins enrollment. *In the event that a family is unable to attend scheduled orientation sessions, parent-teacher conferences are to be scheduled by the parent.*

Immunizations

All children enrolled at Elizabeth's Early Learning Center must be immunized with all vaccines currently required by the Commonwealth of Virginia for school entry. No exemptions will be permitted. Any child whose immunizations are incomplete may be admitted conditionally if that child's parent provides documentation signed by a physician at the time of enrollment of having

received at least one dose of the required immunizations accompanied by a schedule for completion of the required doses within 90 calendar days. If the child requires more than two doses of Hepatitis B vaccine, the conditional enrollment period shall be 180 calendar days. The immunization record of each student admitted conditionally shall be reviewed periodically until the required immunizations have been received. Any child admitted conditionally who fails to comply with the schedule for completion of required immunizations, shall be excluded from school until his/her immunizations are resumed and shall be excluded promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

Child Attendance

Elizabeth's Early Learning Center's hours of operation are from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. All children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. An automatic charge will be assessed at \$1.00 per child for every 1 minute late a child is picked up past 6:00 p.m. If a family is late picking up a child more than three times in a year, an automatic charge of \$25.00 per child will be assessed for the first 10 minutes and an additional \$1.00 per child for each additional minute. If a child is not picked up by 6:00 p.m., the parents and/or emergency contact will be called. *Only those individuals listed on the emergency list* will be allowed to pick up a child; ID is required.

In the event that parents, guardians, and emergency list contacts can not be reached at the close of the day or for any other emergencies, including but not limited to illness, inclement weather, and natural disasters, the Department of Social Service's Child Protective Services (DSS-CPS) will be notified; DSS will take appropriate action for assuming responsibility for the child.

On occasion, the operating hours will be adjusted and parents will be notified of a change in opening or closing time. This is primarily due to weather conditions or other emergency or scheduling situations. The above mentioned fees for late pickup will also be applied in those situations.

Arrival and Departure

An adult is required to accompany a child into the classroom upon arrival and out of the classroom at departure time. If the class is on the playground, the adult must walk down to the playground and make contact with the teacher before leaving or picking up a child. **When arriving and departing, the adult MUST check the child in and out at the front office. This ensures that your child will be included in number counts in case of an emergency.** It is the adult's responsibility to keep the child with him/her and within sight at all times during arrival and departure. This includes the parking lot.

Breakfast is served between 8:30 and 9:00. No breakfast will be provided after 9:00. The instructional portion of the day begins at 9:00 so we request that all children be in their classrooms by that time. We understand that, on occasion, your child will have professional appointments (doctor, dentist, therapy, etc) and may need to arrive after 9:00 AM. You are responsible for notifying the classroom in advance or calling EELC by 8:30 AM to inform us if your child will be absent or tardy. If possible, please make professional appointments for early morning or afternoon. **No child will be permitted to be dropped off between the hours of 12:00 and 2:30, during nap time.**

The parent must notify the office and the child's teacher if a child is to be picked up by an individual unfamiliar to the teachers. People who are authorized to pick up will be asked to present picture identification at the check-in counter

Consistent communication with classroom teachers is very important and keeping us aware of specific needs or specific situations concerning your child will help us deliver the best care possible.

Tuition

For your convenience your yearly tuition rate can be divided into monthly, weekly, or bi-weekly installments. Parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to make a payment every Friday by 6:00 p.m. for the following week of childcare. These payments are due regardless of illness or school closings for holidays, or inclement weather as they are a part of your yearly tuition rate. A pattern of late payments may result in disenrollment.

Assessment of Late Fees

- If weekly payment is not received by 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday of the week care is provided, you will receive a reminder and a \$15 late fee.
- If payment is not received by the next Wednesday (following the week care is provided,) care may be terminated.
- If special payment arrangements are agreed upon and not honored, care may be terminated, immediately.

A family registration fee of \$50.00 will be issued at the time of enrollment and annually, each spring, to hold a position for children on the roster for the next school year.

Every effort is made by the Board of Directors to maintain reasonable tuition rates. Typically, rates are increased annually in August.

Vacation Week

After being enrolled six months, a child may earn one week of vacation at 50% tuition. Only one week of vacation time will be awarded per calendar year, and the child must be absent from the Center for the entire week in order to utilize the vacation week. The vacation week may not be carried over to a future twelve-month period or prorated for a Center holiday. Children receiving DSS support are not eligible for the vacation week.

Attire

Please send your child to school in comfortable, washable and safe play clothes and shoes. Children in diapers are expected to arrive in a clean, fresh diaper. If your child has soiled his/her diaper, you are expected to change the diaper before leaving your child in EELC care. In the event that a parent has been reminded to bring in diapers and the parent fails to do so, the Center will charge the parent \$1.00 when a Center-owned diaper is used. It is a regulation that children must be changed immediately following soiling.

Teeth Brushing

Parents are to provide a toothbrush for each child older than one year and staff will assist children with brushing teeth daily. The use of toothpaste is optional. Parents may provide toothpaste if desired.

Toileting

Parents must provide disposable diapers for their own children. Please send enough diapers for an entire week.

Toilet training is, first and foremost, a parent responsibility. When a child is ready for toilet training, the staff will support the training process by:

- 1) Taking all children to the bathroom every two hours and
- 2) Taking individual children to the bathroom at other times, upon request by the child.

Parents must consult with teachers before placing children in underwear for school. All children must continue to wear diapers to school until teachers indicate to the parents that the child is toilet trained at school. During the training process, EELC staff will never force a child to sit on the toilet if the child is unwilling to do so.

Belongings

All belongings, including extra clothes, must be labeled with the child's first and last name. For children not yet potty trained, please send enough diapers for the entire week.

Linens on cribs and cots must be taken home and washed once a week (usually on Friday) and returned the next day the child attends the Center. Please talk to our staff if you have questions or concerns regarding policies on blankets, comforters, and pillows.

No other toys or personal items should be brought to the Center unless the classroom teacher requests them. EELC is not responsible for lost items.

Rest Time

EELC's designated rest time is from 12:30-2:30 p.m. It is our Center's policy that children must rest quietly on their cots to relax their bodies and to allow the other children to rest without disruption. Children may bring one small, soft, quiet item to rest with. Children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes, may be given a quiet activity in which to engage. Classrooms resume normal activities and lights go on by 2:30p.m.

State licensing regulations require that all infants be placed on their backs to sleep. Pillows, comforters, stuffed toys and other soft items are not allowed in cribs. Infant sleep schedules are individualized based on the needs of each child.

Meals

Infants are provided individualized feeding plans, based upon their developmental needs and the approval of the parents. EELC provides USDA subsidized meals and snacks to all enrolled children, at no separate charge. Our menus follow the USDA guidelines. A copy of the two-week period menu is displayed on the front counter and is posted in each classroom. EELC reserves the right to change menu selections, as needed. Any menu changes are posted daily on the office white board.

Meal Policies

- Children need to arrive to school by either breakfast or lunch to be served the meal; meals are not held in anticipation of children arriving. Breakfast is served between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m., and lunch is served between 11:30 and 12:00 noon.
- Beginning at age 1, children will be served the USDA meal as listed on the menu.

- All children are served a snack in the late afternoon.
- Due to individual preferences, parents may choose to feed their child breakfast at home, before arriving, or may provide their child a lunch packed from home. All components of the lunch should be packed in a lunchbox labeled with the child's name. EELC is not able to refrigerate or heat up any food brought from home. Children bringing lunch from home will not be provided any of the school lunch. Children served the school lunch will receive all components. **NO NUT PRODUCTS ARE PERMITTED IN THE EELC BUILDING.**
- Children with allergies or medical conditions that require food restrictions must provide a statement signed by a physician. Please check with the office to obtain the appropriate forms.
- We welcome and encourage parents to join their children for lunch. Please notify your child's teacher a day in advance.

Illness

Children in childcare will get colds and illnesses frequently, especially in their first or new group experience. The Center takes all precautions possible to prevent the spread of illness.

Families are required to pick up a child and/or keep him/her at home if the child shows signs of illness. When the teacher/caregiver calls a parent to pick up a sick child, the child must be picked up within one hour. If a sick child is left at EELC beyond one hour after notification, a late fee will be charged at the rate of \$1.00 for every 1 minute late. Late charges will automatically be billed to your account. It is the parents' responsibility to provide alternate care for their child.

State licensing regulations require that we send a child home if he/she has a body temperature of 101° or higher, recurrent vomiting or diarrhea, or a communicable disease.

When a doctor's note is required for re-admittance, it must state all of the following: (1) when it is appropriate for the child to return after the illness, (2) the child is not contagious, and (3) the child is well enough to be in group care. EELC reserves the right to deny care to children who return and are still not well.

Please cooperate with us and communicate to teachers and caregivers any symptoms or illnesses your child might be experiencing. Help us as we strive to keep our children and staff healthy. The staff is instructed to conduct a quick morning health check. If a child is not well enough to participate in regular classroom activities, the child should not attend. In such cases, the family will be contacted and asked to pick up the child.

When to keep your child at home

Any child exhibiting the following is considered to be carrying a communicable disease and may not be admitted to the Center. Children who develop or exhibit these symptoms will be sent home. Parents will be notified of exposure to communicable disease in writing. Our aim is to ensure that your child is well enough to benefit from the program and is not unnecessarily exposed to communicable disease.

- ___ **Fever:** Body temperature of 101°F or higher. If the child runs a fever, they must be fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to the Center, unless a doctor’s note is provided indicating that the child may return to school.
- ___ **Conjunctivitis:** Eye infection commonly referred to as “pink eye”. The eye is generally red with some burning accompanied by thick, yellow or green secretions coming from the eye, which reappear when wiped away. Eyes must be treated with prescription drops for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to the Center.
- ___ **Bronchitis:** Severe coughing, rapid or difficult breathing.
- ___ **Rashes:** If a rash cannot be identified, or has not been diagnosed and/or treated by a physician a child must stay out of group care for 24 hours or must have a doctor’s note stating he/she is able to return.
- ___ Evidence of **lice, scabies,** or other **parasitic infection.** Child must have a doctor’s note and follow through on appropriate treatment to return to the Center.
- ___ **Vomiting**
- ___ **Diarrhea:** Children need to go home if they have two or more loose, watery stools in the period of an hour and/or the diarrhea is not contained in a diaper. The child must be symptom free for one day before returning to the Center.
- ___ Any of the following contagious diseases: **measles, chicken pox, mumps, roseola, and scarlet fever.** A child may return to the center with a doctor’s note stating he/she is no longer contagious.
- ___ If a Child is **not well enough** to participate in regular classroom activities and /or child is continuously crying and /or requires more attention than we can provide without jeopardizing the health and safety of other children in our care then the child should not be at the center.

EELC reserves the right to refuse care to a child if there is no evidence that a child has been seen and treated by a physician for debatable symptoms, and/or child is not well enough to participate in Center activities

Medication

Authorization

In order for staff to administer any medication, including topical ointments or sprays such as diaper ointment, sunscreen and insect repellent, a parent must first complete a Medication Consent Form. All products must be in the original containers and labeled with the child’s name. They will be used according to manufacturer’s recommendation and will not be used beyond the expiration date of the product. Sunscreen must have a minimum SPF of 15.

Authorization for Short Term Administration (10 days or less)

Written parental permission is required for short-term medication administration. Administration directions from the health care provider are not required, except for the use of a Nebulizer, inhaler, or EpiPen injections. Parent’s instructions for administration must be consistent with any directions for use noted on the original container, including but not limited to precautions related to age and special health conditions. If the instructions are not consistent, written instructions from the child’s health care

provider are required. All permissions for short term medication administration must be renewed or discontinued after 10 work days.

Authorization for Long Term Administration (11 days or more)

Long term medication administration requires both written parent permission and written instructions by the health care provider, with the exception of over-the-counter topical medications (which do not require health care provider instructions). For over-the-counter topical medication, such as sunscreen, diaper ointment, and insect repellent, where instructions from the child's health care provider are not required, the parent's instructions for administration must be consistent with any directions for use noted on the original container, including but not limited to precautions related to age and special health conditions. If the instructions are not consistent, written instructions from the child's health care provider are required. Medication Consent Forms must be updated every twelve months.

Packaging of Prescription Medication

Prescription medication should be in a child resistant container. It must have the original pharmacy label that includes the following items:

- Child's first and last names
- Authorized prescriber's name
- Pharmacy name and telephone number
- Date prescription was filled
- Name of the medication
- Route of administration
- Dosage of the medication
- How often to give the medication
- Date the medication is to be discontinued or length of time, in days, the medication is to be given

Medication samples supplied by the child's health care provider must be appropriately labeled with the same information that is required on a pharmacy label. Please remember this requirement so that the child's health care provider can label the samples with the required information.

Administration

All medication is locked in the office. Only staff members who have completed Medication Administration Training are authorized to administer medication to children at EELC. A log is maintained for each child receiving medication during school hours. Administration tools, such as dosing spoons, oral medication syringes, pill crushers, and medicine cups must be provided by the parent.

Parents must inform their child's teacher if their child has had medicine before arriving at school, and the time and the dosage, so that teachers can monitor any adverse reactions to the medicine.

Injury Prevention

The staff of EELC makes every effort to prevent injuries from occurring by following health and safety standards for licensed Child Day Centers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Children are supervised at all times and are provided with age-appropriate toys and equipment. The building, grounds, and toys and equipment are maintained to prevent injury. Parents are asked to assist us by reporting any observed hazards to the office.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

A. Center Emergency Officers

In the event of an emergency, the Executive Director will be point of contact to notify the proper authorities, staff, parents, media, and other persons necessary. In the absence of Executive Director, the Assistant Director will assume responsibilities of notification and reunification. Notification will consist of the use of telephone, e-mail, and SchoolCast, which is available at all times.

Executive Director: Jane Gerdy

Assistant Director: Amy Edge

B. Emergencies

EELC wants to be proactive about having a plan in case of an emergency, whether it is a structural danger or a dangerous person on the grounds. For a true emergency, the staff person who witnesses it is responsible for alerting the whole center. The person acting on the emergency needs to use their best judgment in deciding what is best to keep EELC's children and staff safe.

In ALL emergencies, staff members are required to take a classroom backpack with them to the designated emergency location. Backpacks are checked regularly for supplies and include class rosters, emergency contact information on each child, first aid kits, flashlights, and cell phones.

The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, nearest hospital, and Poison Control are posted by each phone in the school. Emergency contact information for each child and staff is available in the classroom emergency file, backpacks, and in the office. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along any time children leave the school.

E. Relocation (due to flooding, loss of utilities, etc.)

In the event of an emergency that constitutes relocating the staff and children, the procedures for evacuation will be followed and the children will be taken to our neighbor, Miriam's House at 409 Magnolia Street, and parents would be called to pick up the children.

Regular release policy of EELC remains in place when parents are called to pick up child. All designated persons will be required to show identification for a child to be released in their care.

F. Medical Emergencies

All staff will be trained in First Aid. First aid kits are located in each classroom, in the office, on each playground, on the bus, and in each emergency backpack.

For injuries or illness requiring emergency medical care:

1. The caregiver who is with the child will provide first aid.
2. Another caregiver will contact the office for help.
3. The executive Director (or the designated representative) will contact the Emergency Medical System by dialing 911 when immediate medical help is required.
4. The office will contact a parent or, if the parent cannot be reached, the alternate emergency contact person.
5. The Executive Director will alert the President of the Board of Directors.
6. The Executive Director will contact the emergency facility to find out what procedures are followed for emergency treatment of children not accompanied by a parent.
7. A staff member will accompany the child and remain with the child until the parent assumes responsibility for the child. The staff member will bring the child's file with insurance and medical

information with them. Staff-child ratios will be maintained for the remaining children by using office staff.

8. The caregiver will complete an incident report form as soon after the incident as possible. The form will be distributed to the parent and a copy will be placed in the child's record.

9. Within 2 business days, the Executive Director will submit, online, a report to Virginia Department of Social Services of any injury requiring outside medical treatment or death. (www.dss.virginia.gov/facility/iromt.cgi)

G. Other Emergencies

In the event of other emergencies such as an environmental hazard, loss of utilities, etc., EELC will follow the instructions of local authorities which may include executing shelter in place or evacuation procedures.

H. Reunification Plan

After an emergency evacuation, shelter-in-place or lockdown, EELC will contact parents/guardians by phone or school cast to notify of current situation and necessary action. Regular release policy of EELC remains in place when parents are called to pick up child. All designated persons will be required to show identification for a child to be released in their care.

Accidents/Incidents

Whenever a child receives a bump, cut, bruise, etc., the witnessing staff member completes an incident report in the KidReports app. After administration has signed and approved the report, it will be sent to the parent electronically. The incident report is also used when a child causes injury to another child or to an adult. We follow a strict confidentiality policy to protect all the children and families involved. Upon employment, staff members are instructed to respect the privacy of the families enrolled. Families are expected to respect the privacy of other families and staff members. This includes not having conversations about accidents/incidents in the presence of children and/or other families while at EELC.

EELC carries accident insurance on all children enrolled. This is an "in addition" policy and will cover any costs leftover after the child's regular insurance has paid medical expenses resulting from an injury incurred while in our care.

All EELC staff members have been trained in CPR/First Aid and will administer first aid for minor incidences. Each classroom and playground has a first aid kit that meets licensing regulations. Staff members are trained in taking universal precautions in handling blood and bodily fluids.

Field Trips

The Director will approve all field trips. Parents give permission for all walking field trips by signing the registration form when enrolling in the Center. Trips involving vehicular transportation on the EELC bus will require a parent to sign a separate permission slip for their child to participate. Parents are always invited and encouraged to participate on the trips but must drive separately. There are no additional seats on the bus for parents. Parents can choose not to have their child participate, but alternate arrangements for child care while the class is away from the Center must be made. In other words, the Center will not provide alternative services for a child on the day in which the child does not attend a Center-sponsored field trip. Information regarding child's location and teacher contact information for each field trip is located at the front desk.

A field trip may require additional, nominal financial support from parents. Field trips costs must be paid in cash to the classroom teachers. If this is a financial strain, please talk with your child's teacher or the Director.

If your child is scheduled to be given medication during a field trip, be sure to communicate this to your child's teachers. We are required to send a staff member who is trained in medication administration on all field trips in which a child(ren) are administered medication, or who have health conditions that put the child at risk.

Classroom Behavior Management

Teachers are trained to model and discuss appropriate behaviors with children, and to provide warnings and consequences when one child hurts another classmate. This is an important part of social development and communication skills for preschoolers and it often takes time and patience to teach positive communication skills, sharing and turn taking. Parents can help at home by consistently encouraging children to use their words and use "soft touches." Parents can also alert staff to any significant changes in the child's life that may be reflected in the child's behavior.

To prevent misbehavior we:

- Establish classroom rules
- schedule many activities to keep the children busy
- provide a variety of toys in duplicate
- encourage "soft touches" and hugs when children are interacting
- encourage children to use their words to express desires ("no, I want that puzzle", etc)
- position staff strategically and try to prevent incidences by redirecting children before an incident occurs.
- help children define the problem and give positive suggestions for solving the problem.
- Offer choices where possible.

Licensing standards prohibit staff from:

- Using physical punishment
- Enclosing a child in a small confined space
- Allowing punishment by another child
- Separating a child from the group away from the hearing and vision of a staff member
- Withholding or forcing food or rest
- Making verbal remarks that are demeaning to the child
- Punishing for toileting accidents
- Punishing by applying unpleasant or harmful substances

It is very common when young children are together for aggressive behaviors such as hitting, biting, and kicking to occur. This is especially common and challenging for toddlers and preschoolers who are not yet able to verbally communicate their wants and needs. Often, these incidences are prevented by teachers who anticipate such situations, but it is almost impossible to prevent every incident.

If a child's aggressive behavior continues after all teaching strategies have been attempted, a meeting will be scheduled with the teacher, parent, and director, to develop an individualized behavior plan for the child. The plan will require involvement of all parties. In extreme cases, when the aggressive behaviors of a child are causing continual harm to others, a child may be disenrolled.

Birthdays

You are welcome to celebrate your child's birthday in the Center. Please keep it simple! The "celebration" will be incorporated into our afternoon snack, unless other arrangements are made in advance with the classroom staff. Parents are encouraged to bring in a special snack that day to share with the classroom. **Please be mindful of foods that can cause choking and foods to which children may have allergies (nuts, eggs, etc).** Any other items that may be sent in, like candy or party favors, will be placed in the children's mailboxes to be enjoyed away from the Center. All food that is brought into the Center must be either (a) **whole fruits**, or (b) **commercially wrapped** (store bought) items with all ingredients listed on the package. Home-made foods are not allowed at the Center for classroom activities and events.

Please communicate with the staff if you plan to do something special for your child's birthday, so they can plan accordingly. *Please leave all the presents at home!*

Holiday Celebrations

EELC respects and supports the children's interests in holidays by participating in their conversations and role playing activities about the festivities. Classroom teachers provide materials to enhance the at-home and community preparations and celebration, but will strive not to impose any personal beliefs.

If you choose for your family (child) not to participate in parties, etc., it is your responsibility to talk with your child's classroom teachers. We encourage you to share your family holiday traditions with others.

Grievance Process

Parental concerns regarding child care conditions, Center performance, and Center services, may be discussed with the child's teacher, and then, as necessary, with the Director. These individuals shall provide a courteous response within a reasonable period of time to any request for information about child services. In the event of a serious, chronic, or sensitive concern that is not resolved through the chain of command, it is permissible for a parent to file a written grievance.

Any parent with a serious concern should present a letter describing the circumstances of discontent to the Director. The Director will review the grievance, provide written comment, and forward the document to the President of the Board of Directors for review. The President, either individually or collectively with other members of the Board, may offer suggestions for resolution. The President shall return the grievance to the Director for response to the parent within a reasonable period of time. For most routine concerns, a reasonable period of time is defined as ten working days. If the situation is not resolvable or answerable within this time frame, the Director shall provide written notice to the parent that the grievance is still under consideration.

Parents are discouraged from engaging in conversation with staff members related to issues of a confidential nature.

CHAIN OF COMMAND TO EXPRESS COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS:

1. CLASSROOM TEACHER/BOOKKEEPER/COOK
2. DIRECTOR
3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Withdrawal Procedure

- If you plan to disenroll your child, EELC requires a 4-week notice.
- An 8-week notice is required for 4 year-olds disenrolled after May.
- The exact date of disenrollment must be provided.

If you disenroll your child, and then wish to readmit him/her (either prior to or after the provided disenrollment date), EELC requires a two-week notice, at a minimum. EELC seeks to fill available openings as soon as we are aware of a disenrollment; therefore, there is no guarantee that a spot will be immediately available for your child to be readmitted. If you require immediate child care, and a spot is available, a \$10 per day surcharge will be added to your tuition rate for a two week period.

Involuntary Termination

The Center's mission is to provide appropriate, safe, affordable quality childcare. We strive to establish and maintain a trusting and respectful relationship with our parents and children. Occasionally, the Center's abilities and an individual family's needs may not be compatible. In such cases, the parent(s) may exercise their option to disenroll. The Center may exercise its right to discontinue service based on:

1. Failure of the family to remit fees.
2. Unethical behavior.
3. Inappropriate behavior towards a child(ren), or another family, or staff member. Please note that we encourage parents to express concerns through appropriate channels. These concerns should be expressed in a polite manner with teachers and administration. Yelling, cursing or any aggressive or threatening behavior will not be tolerated.
4. Failure of family members to comply with an agreed upon schedule or plan of services for the child, and/or referrals.
5. The Center's inability to meet the needs of the child and/or the family.
6. Creating, or assisting in the creation of, a hostile work environment.
7. Engaging in activities that prevent or handicap the Center from actualizing its mission.
8. Irreconcilable differences.

Family Involvement

Families-As-Partners

Elizabeth's Early Learning Center recognizes and supports the idea that families are the primary decision makers in a child's life. It is in the best interest of the children for families to have regular communication with EELC staff. In particular, it is important to share information regarding a child's development at home and school and family events affecting the child.

We recognize that parents and guardians may have many other commitments (work, family, school, etc.) and sometimes it may be difficult to have time to talk with teachers about children when dropping them off or picking them up. We would like to ask you to please take a few minutes at these times, so that important information can be passed from the family to EELC. At the end of each day, teachers will provide parents with a summary of the day, with special notes on the bottom that pertain to each individual child. Parents who wish to have a conversation with the teacher that requires the undivided attention of the teacher, should schedule an appointment for a time when the teacher is not responsible for the care of children. Drop off and pick up times are not appropriate for conferences.

We welcome and encourage communication and collaboration among EELC's families and staff members through visitation, volunteering, notes, and conferences. This communication helps us make each child's experience at Elizabeth's Early Learning Center a success!

Family Visitations

We encourage family participation and we welcome you to come and join in activities with your child's class. Observing your child may help you learn not only more about your child's interests and friends, but also new tasks and skills that he/she is acquiring. We encourage you to give suggestions to the staff regarding your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, as well as ways the program at EELC can improve. Your suggestions can help enhance your child's experience with us. When possible, please notify us in advance of your visit so that consideration can be given related to your child's temperament and how he/she may respond to your presence in the classroom. For some children, separation anxiety can make room visits more difficult. For this reason, we do not encourage visits from families before or during naptime, as separation anxiety may disrupt other children's ability to rest. Please remember that for most children, consistency is a key way in which anxiety is lessened. EELC allows parents to visit infants during the day for breast feeding purposes.

Family Volunteering

We appreciate, need, and welcome all families to volunteer their time, and talents with us. Please be aware that there are a variety of ways that you can serve EELC. Please complete the EELC Volunteer Form which indicates areas of need. We would also like to know of any special interests and skills that you have that can contribute to our program. Long-term volunteers will need to have a current TB test on file with us.

Restricted Parental Visits/Pick ups & Drop-offs

For some children, a parent may have court-ordered restricted visitation or pick-up rights. EELC adheres to the following procedures in such cases:

- Parents, who have the right to visit their child at the Center, but are not allowed to leave with him/her, are allowed to do so with the following conditions: (a) the parent visits the child in the classroom or on the playground, and is in clear view of the teachers, or (b) is placed in a separate space that is approved by the Directors. If the presence of the parent creates undue stress on the child or the classroom/Center, EELC has the right to decline visitation.
- EELC must release children to any parent, if there is no court document that prohibits us from doing so. EELC must be informed, via court-order documentation, of any pick-up restrictions.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

EELC has a Parent -Teacher Organization (PTO) that plans and implements meetings with parents and staff to consult on program planning and ongoing program operations, and to plan center-wide family events and fund raisers. Your ideas and suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. A PTO events are posted on the school calendar and on the parent bulletin board in the front lobby.

Family Education and Support

A parental role is both a rewarding and challenging experience and we are available to offer support to you during your child's stay here at EELC. We are able to give you information regarding agencies and services that are located throughout the greater Lynchburg area, and which you may find helpful. These Lynchburg community agencies can provide education, substance abuse services, mental health services, emergency assistance, food and clothing. We can also connect you with case managers to assist in linking you to needed services for your child and behavior specialists who can assist with behaviors at home. Please see the Executive Director for more information.

Additionally, we occasionally host educational, parenting programs during the year. Speakers are invited to discuss a variety of topics of interest to parents. If you have a suggestion for a topic you would like to learn more about, please talk to one of the directors. Information about special programs will be sent home to you.

Developmental Delays and Disorders

EELC can help families to seek expert advice and comprehensive evaluations when a developmental delay is noticed or suspected. Most of these evaluations can be completed at no cost to the family. Some common developmental delays that concern parents are speech and language delays and delays in motor development or social development. Members of our staff have extensive training and experience in observing and evaluating the development of children for parents who have concerns about developmental delays or autism. If you have any concerns regarding your child's development, please schedule an appointment with the Director. EELC welcomes children with identified and suspected disabilities. In cases, where a child may have a disabling condition requiring a significant level of support and services, enrollment and/or continued care may be based upon certain conditions being met (e.g., collaboration with early intervention specialists).

Program Evaluation

We would like for you and your child(ren) to have positive and rewarding experiences at EELC. It is helpful for you to communicate your feelings about EELC in order to help us better serve you and your children. Therefore, periodically you will receive a survey asking about your experiences at EELC. Please take your time filling out this survey to the best of your ability as this is important feedback. Please remember that although this survey occurs periodically, we encourage your input and suggestions year-round. For urgent concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Director.

Communication

EELC strongly believes in and promotes family partnerships and Center collaborative relations. These relationships are built on respect, trust, and courtesy that is extended on a daily basis. Open, honest, and ongoing communication is always in the best interest of the child.

Written communication occurs between teachers and families in our program using the KidReports app. Daily reports are sent in the younger classrooms and weekly reports in the preschool classrooms, as well as incident reports, when appropriate. Assessment reports are provided two times per year and opportunities are provided to schedule parent conferences. Verbal communication occurs daily in all classrooms. Each child has a journal which is used to share information and pictures between staff and families. Each classroom has a Project Board which displays current activities and a Parent Board that includes: caregiver/teacher names, pictures, schedules, menus, lesson plans, daily schedule, curriculum information, classroom newsletter, information on children with contagious illnesses, and other information. There is also a parent bulletin board in the front lobby. Parents should also visit our Facebook page and web site at eelc.info for regular updates and photographs of school activities.

Gifts and Donations to the Center

Families and friends of EELC can certainly make monetary donations to the Center at any time. Sometimes, families and friends designate funds to go to a specific family (e.g., tuition support). Toys and equipment can be donated to the Center, but they must first be inspected by the administration to insure that they are safe and appropriate.

