



Early Learning
Center of Aspen

Family Handbook

Early Learning Center 2023/2024

About Us

Our Purpose- We nurture our students, educators, and families by providing inclusive, creative, and individualized learning experiences.

Our Philosophy- Through interactions with a highly trained staff, play and learning activities and partnerships between teachers, families, and the community the children of the Early Learning Center will receive a high-quality education in their first six years of life.

The Early Learning Center is licensed by the Colorado Department of Social Services and meets all state requirements.

Certifications

1. Colorado Department of Human Services License- Large Child Care Center 1995-2020
2. Colorado Shine Rated- 4 Star
3. Member of the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Network.

Hours of Operation

Monday- Friday from 8:00am- 5:15pm

Drop-off procedures and hours: *subject to change

- Drop off will be at 8:00am
- Arrivals after 9am will be subject to a late drop-off fee
- Parents must sign into Procure and fill out their Child's Health Screening before drop-off.
- Please have every child already wearing sunscreen upon arrival.
- Any child who has a fever of 100.4 or above or any other signs of illness such as excessive cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath will not be admitted into the school.
- If your child has a fever of 99.2-100.3 we will monitor throughout the day.
 - Once the child has been assessed and signed in, one of the three classroom teachers will bring them into the classroom and wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Pick- up procedures:

- Pick-up will occur on the big playground or in the classrooms. Subject to change
- All children must be picked up before 5:15pm to avoid late pick- up fees. Children picked up after 5:15pm will automatically incur a \$5/min late fee.

Holidays- We are closed for all major Holidays, please refer to our yearly calendar for details. These days are accounted for in your prorated monthly tuition.

Inclement Weather Closure- For Information regarding closures or 2 hour delayed starts due to *snow or excessively* hot weather please look on the Aspen School District website. We follow the Aspen School District closures. If they are out of session the Director and Board President will call a snow day/ excessively hot weather day closure. This is based strictly on transportation safety for getting the children and staff to and from school. A snow day can be called by the Director and Board President based on the safety of the staff getting to school as well.

Admission & Enrollment

Prior to your child's first day of school all admission and paperwork must be submitted electronically to Procure, our online admissions platform and all enrollment fees paid. Electronic paperwork includes: **General Health Appraisal** completed by a physician, **Immunization Records** and an **Emergency Medical Consent Form**. All forms must be uploaded to Procure by the parents/guardians.

Admissions

Our program accepts children ages 8 weeks to 6 years of age before entering into Kindergarten. Families will be offered a 2 to 5 day a week spot in the program. The spot will be offered based on what is available in the classroom. If families need to adjust their days they need to email the Director and changes can be made if available. The ELC cannot guarantee additional days to a family, but will always reach out when days open in classrooms.

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Inclusion

The Early Learning Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs. The Early Learning Center refers to the family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Non-Discrimination

At the Early Learning Center equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential. All emails between parents and staff are to remain confidential and are intended for the recipient specified in message only.

Immunizations

The Early Learning Center requires up-to-date student vaccination records, or a certificate of exemption on file by the first day your child attends school.

Colorado law ([Board of Health rule 6 CCR 1009-2](#)) requires all students attending Colorado schools and licensed child care to be vaccinated against certain diseases, unless an exemption is filed.

Colorado follows recommendations set by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). You can view the recommended vaccine schedule for children 0 - 6 years of age at <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/public-immunization-information>. Please provide a copy of your student's updated vaccine record to school every time they receive a vaccine.

Your student may be excluded from school if the Early Learning Center does not have an up-to-date vaccine record or certificate of exemption for your student on file.

If someone gets sick with a vaccine-preventable disease or there is an outbreak at the Early Learning Center and your student has not received the vaccine for that disease, they may be excluded from school activities.

If you choose to file a non-medical exemption for your child you are required by Colorado law ([SB20-163 School Entry Immunization](#)) to have the exemption signed by the immunizing provider or you may complete the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's online education module prior to claiming a non-medical exemption, <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions>.

The Vaccinated Children's Standard for every Colorado school is for 95% of enrolled students to be vaccinated with each vaccine required for school entry in order to reduce the spread of vaccine-preventable disease and protect the health of all people in the school community, including students who cannot be immunized for medical reasons.

Colorado child care and school immunization and exemption rates can be found at COVaxRates.org.

Fees Due Upon Admission (per child)

- \$55.00- One time, non-refundable registration fee
- \$100.00- Materials fee that covers the months of September through May.
- \$75.00 - Summer materials fee due in June
- \$500 - Continuous Care Deposit (ages 0-3)/Security Deposit.

Continuous Care Deposit and Policy

The Early Learning Center of Aspen believes in the continuum of care for each and every child in our school community. Research tells us that consistency is vital to a child's development. We are committed to providing a nurturing pathway that adapts to each child's individual growth and development from infancy through Pre-k. In an effort to ensure we can foster the proven benefits of consistency that a continuum of care provides and bolsters the impact of our community for each family, we require that a continuous care deposit of \$500 be paid upon enrollment. This deposit holds your child's space and is non-refundable if you choose not to move forward with care. The deposit will become a security deposit when your child turns three years old. *The continuous care deposit will be forfeited if a child is pulled from the program before their third birthday.*

Upon extreme life circumstances leading to the need to withdraw your child from the school before the age of three at the Early Learning Center, please contact the Early Learning Center Director for a Policy Exemption Form. The Exemption Form will need approval from the Board of Directors for your deposit to be returned.

Security Deposit

The Security Deposit is returned to families upon withdrawal from the program under the condition that a 60 day notice is given in writing to the Early Learning Centers Director. The \$500 deposit will be returned when all invoices are paid in full and not outstanding bills are present. The Early Learning Center does not offer mid-month billing so please plan your child's last day accordingly.

Upon extreme life circumstances leading to the need to withdraw your child from the school

before a 60 day notice can be given at the Early Learning Center, please contact the Early Learning Center Director for a Policy Exemption Form. The Exemption Form will need approval from the Board of Directors for your deposit to be returned.

Tuition and Fees

Payment

Payment is due on the 5th, 20th or you may choose to split between the 5th and 20th of the month. Tuition is due in full each month with no deductions for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control.

If a child starts or ends in the middle of the month there will not be a prorated amount for the month. Prek children will be charged through the end of the last month of the school year. If a child is enrolled at the Early Learning Center and parents are separated or divorced, both parents are equally liable for the tuition bill. If parents have an agreement on who is paying, it is their responsibility to enforce amongst themselves.

Fees

Late Drop-off Fees: Late Fees of \$5 per minute will be charged after drop-offs occurring after 9am.

Late Pick-up Fees: Late fees of \$5 per minute after 5:15pm, will be charged to your account. Please respect our staff by being at school on time to pick up your child.

Late Payment Charges- If payment is not made by the 20th of the month a \$50 late payment fee will be applied to your bill. If your account has not been paid in full within 10 business days, your child may be discharged from the program. If payment is more than 60 days past due, we will attempt to recover payments in small claims court/and or your account may be sent to a third party collection agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Special Activity Fees- From time to time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

Returned Check Charges- All returned checks will be charged a fee of \$40. Two or more returned checks will result in a “cash only” status.

Schedule Changes- Two weeks notice must be given to the Director for permanent schedule changes such as adding or dropping days. There is a \$25 fee for schedule changes.

Vacation- To retain your child's spot during vacation, 100% of your regular tuition is due.

Buy A Days- Buy A Days will be charged to your account at the daily rate. **Please email mallory.radney@earlylearningaspen.org** to check availability.

Attendance and Withdrawal

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00 am, please call us at 970-920-9201 or email mallory.radney@earlylearningaspenspen.org. Please remember that absences are still part of your monthly tuition.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e. snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be sent via email from the Director. If the Aspen School District is closed, the Early Learning Center is also closed. If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

Inclement Weather Two-hour delayed Start

In the event that the Aspen School District calls a two-hour morning delay due to the inclement weather and road conditions, the Early Learning Center will also call a two-hour morning delay. If the Aspen School District is not in session, the ELC executive board members and the ELC Director will decide if conditions require a delayed start.

Withdrawals

A written notice to the Early Learning Center Office, 60 days in advance is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. If 60 days is not given your deposit of \$500 will not be returned. Deposits will not be passed onto a sibling and cannot be held for a later date of enrollment.

Transfer of Records

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where records should be sent is required.

What to Bring

Leave toys from home at home or in your car. They create many arguments among children because it is hard to share a special toy.

Infants and Waddlers

Bottles and milk for the day's use, diapers, wipes (enough for at least 6 diapers a day), diaper cream, change of clothes, crib sheet, sleep sack or wearable blanket (blankets are not allowed in the cribs per safe sleep regulations), a pacifier if needed, sunscreen and a sun hat. Winter- warm clothes, mittens, hats, snowsuits and boots.

Toddlers

Sippy cup or water bottle for the day. Diapers, wipes, change of clothes. Crib sized sheet for nap to fit the cots, pacifier if needed, sunscreen and hat. Winter- warm clothes, mittens, winter hat, snowsuit and winter boots.

Older Toddlers

Water bottle, at least two changes of clothing; more if they are potty training. Diapers, wipes, crib sized sheet for nap to fit the cots, sunscreen and hat. Winter- warm clothes, mittens, winter hat, snowsuit and winter boots.

Preschool

At least two changes of clothing for the day, water bottle, a mat sheet (napping is not mandatory, but by licensing standards the children must rest for 45 minutes), blanket, sunscreen, hat and backpack. Winter- warm clothes, mittens, winter hats, snowsuit and winter boots.

PreK

Extra clothing, water bottle, a mat sheet (napping is not mandatory, but by licensing standards the children must rest for 45 minutes), blanket, sunscreen, hat and a backpack. Winter- warm clothes, mittens, winter hats, snowsuit and winter boots.

***Please label all items brought from home. The Early Learning Center will not be held responsible for lost or damaged items.**

Pick-ups

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as either of those options to pick up your child, you must notify us in advance, by email. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child is required to show a picture ID as a verification. Please make sure your pick-up person is aware of this policy. Pick up person must

be 18 years or older.

If a child has not been picked up by closing time and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you and the contact listed on your contact list (emergency and release lists). A staff member will stay with your child, but if after 15 minutes we have not been able to reach you or someone listed on your approved list, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We reserve the right to refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired that may endanger a child. To protect your child we will request that another adult pick up your child. In the event of push back we will call the police for assistance. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Staffing

Child to Staff Ratios

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios. *We follow Colorado Shines recommendations for ratios and keep the number in the classroom below State ratios the majority of the time.*

- **Infant and Waddler** (8 weeks to 18 months) 4 children to 1 teacher.
 - Maximum group size 8 (waddlers move to 9 mid year)
- **Younger Toddler** (12 months to 2 years) 5 children to 1 teacher.
 - Maximum group size 10
- **Older Toddler** (2-3 years old) 6 children to 1 teacher.
 - Maximum group size 12
- **Preschool/PreK** (3-6 years old) 8 children to 1 teacher.
 - Maximum group size 16 Update all these

Supervision

Staff are required to actively supervise all children in attendance in their classroom at all times during the day. Staff will keep track of who is at school, and who has been picked up, count the children through transitions, and maintain knowledge of where each child is throughout the day.

Staff Qualifications

Early Childhood Teachers (ECT's) at the school have a BA in the field of Early Childhood Education or have taken required Early Childhood Education courses. These teachers have the required amount of experience hours through the State of Colorado.

Assistant Teachers are partaking in Early Childhood Education courses and working towards their Early Childhood Teacher Qualifications.

Aids work under the direct supervision of an Early Childhood Teacher, they have taken all required pre service training.

Communication & Family Partnership

Child, Staff and Family Relationships

The Early Learning Center knows how important it is to foster positive relationships between children, staff and families of our program.

Daily Communications

Teachers in Waddler through PreK will send out daily emails to parents. The older infant room will send an email at the end of the week, while the younger Infant room is communicating daily with individual parents so an email for that age group is not required. Emails will keep families informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center and important information. When they are able to, pictures will be included in the daily email (please keep in mind that things come up and emails may be missed from time to time).

Because pick up is such a hectic time, if there is an issue during the school day; an injury that requires further explanation, behavior problems or a behavior that needs to be addressed the teachers will send an email to the family of the child at the time of the incident. During these email communications a time can be set to talk to the teachers further.

Monthly Newsletters

Newsletters will be sent out bi-monthly to provide center news, events, announcements and upcoming community events.

Office Communication

Please read all office communications from the office. Included in these emails are school announcements, important policy updates, illness updates, and general updates. Please make sure to read all emails from the office. **All emails from the Early Learning Center are confidential and intended for the recipient only. It is strictly forbidden to share any part of the message with any third party, without a written consent from the sender.**

Family Visits *Subject to change

Family visits in the classroom are encouraged. Please feel free to visit classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Please communicate with your child's teacher that this is something you are interested in so they can let you know when a good time is. You will need to sign in with the office when you arrive. We value families as partners in the growth and developments of children in our program. We encourage families to be involved in the program, visit the classrooms, participate in events and provide feedback on the program. *Please understand that events may take place or circumstances may occur where the office will call and see if another day would work better. In this rare instance it would not be because we do not want families in the classroom, but with other children in the room we have to be respectful of situations that may arise.*

Family Nights/Events *Subject to change

Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age appropriate activities for families. Family nights allow families and children time to share, learn and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families. If you would like to participate in any planning please reach out to the office.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled for twice a year, late Fall and again in the Spring. These conferences are an opportunity to discuss your child's developmental areas, how they are doing in class and to set goals that we can work together on. Waddlers through PreK use Teaching Strategies Gold observation reports to guide these discussions. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We ask that you communicate any concerns you may have regarding your child.

Ways to be Involved

We offer ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program

Family/Parent Workshops

Our array of family/parents workshops changes annually. Please check the school calendar for when these nights are scheduled and look for an email from the office containing the topic of the discussion/workshop.

Open Door Policy *Subject to change

We are pleased to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular hours if it has been scheduled ahead of

time. The infant rooms welcome parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants. Please remember for the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times. Parents have their access to the building during school hours, other family members can sign in with Kids First.

Our team will always do their best to take time to speak with parents/guardians. Staff are devoted to caring for children. If they are busy with other children in the class and a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange a meeting with the teachers.

Publicity

Families will always be asked before a child's name or picture is used for publicity/website.

Fundraising

As a non-profit the Early Learning Center depends on parents to assist the program in a wide variety of ways. With parental help, everyone benefits and the quality of the children's experience at school is greatly enhanced.

The Early Learning Center is funded primarily by tuition, subsidies provided by Kids First and grants received throughout the school year. This money however, does not cover the cost of operating the school and each year there is a need to raise additional funds through grants and fundraising. Our fundraisers require the participation of both families and staff.

Fundraisers are scheduled each year and are subject. Participation is not required, but strongly encouraged.

Curriculum & Learning

Learning Environment

We provide a rich and positive learning environment with the use of Creative Curriculum, which is developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through learning centers. Our program is designated to enhance children's development in the following areas: social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development.

Curriculum

Each group of classroom teachers get together often to plan their weekly curriculum as well as talk about different development needs of their students. They use Creative Curriculum to plan

studies and activities. Teachers adjust curriculum to children's needs by observing them and planning activities for the classroom from the interests of the children. The room is then transformed into the theme. The learning centers in each classroom are set up to enhance and nourish the children, as they acquire knowledge and skills through play.

The Early Learning Center features eight classrooms. Each room is arranged into learning centers, filled with developmentally appropriate materials to enrich each student's play. In each classroom you will find learning centers that offer play with these types of materials/play; Art, Blocks and Accessories, Books and Posters, Dramatic Play, Large Muscle Equipment, Manipulative Toys, Musical Equipment, and Science Materials. Through facilitating play in these centers, children have exposure to concepts in the areas of math, science, literacy, art, and language. For more detail on what your child is learning in each of these areas in their specific classroom please feel free to talk to the director or your child's teacher.

Social and Emotional Development

At the Early Learning Center we largely focus on social and emotional development. We use teaching strategies to help children grow their attachment, self-regulation skills, friendship skills, ability to identify and react to emotions, and promote children's overall social and emotional competence. We use strategies for all children to thrive in this area, and when we need to we will intervene and support children and families who need extra support through developing a positive behavior support plan with the intent to reduce challenging behavior with our teaching team, parents, administration, and early childhood mental health consultant. Through the use of strategies and training our teachers in social and emotional development of young children we prove a socially and emotionally respectful learning and care environment.

TS Gold

TS Gold is our observation tool that is attached to our curriculum. From teachers' observations on each child, information is gathered about each child's developmental abilities and we are able to evaluate developmental progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to give individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families through a report given at parent/teacher conferences. If you would like to speak about your child's progress these reports are available. During the summer months classrooms do not use TS Gold, instead they focus on outings and field trips.

Outings & Field Trips

We are a community based school. We work with a lot of local organizations to enrich our students' learning experience at the Early Learning Center, which leads to a lot of field trip opportunities throughout the year.

Weather permitting- we conduct supervised field trips around the community of Aspen. Children are accounted for all the time. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included on Procure.

Often classrooms plan field trips outside of the school to places such as ACES, the Gondola, parks, nature walks etc. The safety of the children and staff is extremely important to us. The Early Learning Center does not provide in house transportation. In the event the field trip needs transportation the staff and children will use the local bus system. Parents will be notified of field trips before the day and are asked to arrive at the center in time for their child to depart with the class for the field trip.

TV Time

Our normal daily routine does not include screen time. From time to time age appropriate screen time will be used in the classroom as a teaching aid and discussion simulator. Occasionally classrooms will do movie/pajama day, and all movies will be G rated and appropriate and preplanned. Screen time will not be used as a filler for transitions or down time.

Electronic Media

In the case of the use of electronic media such as learning apps the children are limited to 20 minutes per or less per day per child. Apps are pre screened and are age appropriate and educational.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, games, music, games and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and the community.

Developmental Delays and Additional Resources

If you have any concerns about your child's development please speak with your child's teachers and the director. Our goal is to see each child thriving. If there is concern about developmental delays from the teacher or parents, the school will have a meeting with the teachers, parents, and administration staff. At this time we can make goals to work together on for your child, speak about strategies to help, and do a Child Find referral to have a student evaluated for developmental delays.

Routines

Each classroom has a flexible daily schedule that the teachers and children follow. Included in this routine are: play time, snack time, bathroom time/diaper changes, large group, small group, outside time, lunch, rest and other activities. Following this routine helps children to thrive at school by knowing what is next in their day to day routine.

Meal Time

Children are given individual snacks and lunches together at a community table. Children are given ample time to eat before moving on to the next activity. Teachers sit with the children as they eat and help as needed. Teachers who are trained in CPR/First-aid are present at each meal time.

Food Allergies * We are a Peanut Free Center

If your child has an allergy you must indicate it to us through Procure and in writing to the office. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated annually.

Breakfast

We do not provide or facilitate breakfast at school. Please make sure your child comes to school having already had a well rounded breakfast.

Snacks

Parents need to provide a labeled morning and afternoon snack for their child. Please provide a healthy option that includes at least two food groups. The Early Learning Center will have supplemental snacks, but if it becomes a habit that your child does not have snacks the family will be charged a snack fee.

Lunch

Please pack in a lunch box that can be out of the refrigerator for the day. We ask that food be brought to school in a container that the child can be served directly from, like a Bento Children's Lunch Box.

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions per state regulations:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children, for special occasions-i.e. birthdays, holidays, must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Per Public Health Guidelines, baked goods must be store bought with access to all ingredients.
- Please label food with your child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

Lunch Ideas for a Healthy Meal

Please see <https://www.superhealthykids.com/> for healthy lunch recipes for children.

Infant feedings

We adhere to the following procedures when feeding the infants in our care.

- Bottle-fed infants are fed while being held or sitting up.
- Infants are fed “on demand” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and typically not more than hourly).
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies.
- Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit.

Fresh breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to three months.

- Formula must be brought to the premises measured in bottles for the day, with the child’s name, and the measurement of water to be added to the formula written on the bottle.
- We encourage parents to come and do a feed during the day, whether formula or breastfeeding. This is a great opportunity to build your community with the teachers and other parents.
- Bottles will be sent home each day to be cleaned and brought to school the next day.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after consultation with the child’s family.

Toddler feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than four years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

Rest Time

Infants

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs for safe sleeping. Our staff are trained on the best safe sleeping practices for infants. If your child needs to be swaddled or placed in a position other than their backs please provide a waiver from your pediatrician. The waiver will go in their file, a notice will be hung on your child's crib stating a doctor has approved this.

Toddlers-PreK

After lunch, all children are offered a rest time of 30 minutes. Children are not forced to take a nap. If a child does not fall asleep after 30 minutes a quiet activity will be provided for them

inside the classroom.

Diapering

The staff change diapers at routine times of the day and as needed in between. The staff are trained in and follow the best practices for diapering and for cleaning and sanitizing the diapering area.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low- stress as possible is family/teacher partnership which supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Per state regulations there shall be no attempt to toilet train children under the age of 18 months. Toilet facilities must be provided for children two years of age or older, and are not required for children under the age of two.

Children in the process of potty training will be reminded frequently to try to use the toilet. Health laws prohibit the use of potty chairs. Supply LOTS OF EXTRA CLOTHES as it takes a while until children get the knack of using the toilet at school. If a child feels extremely uncomfortable using the toilet at school, if a child has three or more accidents in a row, or if a child is needing one on one help from the teacher excessively, the teacher will use diapers until the child is ready.

When your child is in the midst of potty training, please bring your child into the toilet at drop off time and pick up time. It reinforces the entire potty training experience. Please stay in communication with your teacher through this process to be able to best work together.

Transitions

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. We will schedule a meeting with you to discuss the transition period and allow for visiting your child's new classroom before starting at the school.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you. We will have a tour of the classroom and a time to meet with the teachers and director. During the meeting you can tell us about your child, and we can also share with you important information about the program and classroom. We encourage parents to bring their child in to play before starting the program to help with the transition. The teaching staff will send out individual communication through the first days to let you know how your child is handling the change. At the start of each new school year there will be an ice-cream social for you to meet your child's teachers and other parents in your class. There will also be an open house held in September.

Transitions at classroom move-ups

Children are transitioned to the next classroom based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability.

Transition to elementary school

As your PreK students get ready to enter elementary school we will host a handful of activities, such as: touring the elementary school, a visit from the Kindergarten teachers, holding a PreK graduation, and we will also do a Ready for Kindergarten study within Creative Curriculum. Please partner with us by having a conversation with your child about this transition, bring them to family events for incoming Kindergarten families, and be in communication with your child's school district about registration and their events.

Guidance

General Procedure

The Early Learning Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community. Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. Every child has the right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place

- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate and *positive* interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation. *This will be done in a gentle manner.*

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

All biting incidents are documented by the teachers and reported to the Executive Director. Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. In extreme cases where the biting poses a significant risk to the other children in the room, we reserve the right to suspend and/or expel the child who has bitten as provided below.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

Incidents of problematic behavioral issues will be documented by the child's teacher and reported to the Executive Director. If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program. In certain situations, such as continuous behavioral issues, we may ask the family to engage and work with a social worker or other early childhood professional to assist in developing a plan to correct the behavioral issues.

Suspension and/or Expulsion

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant suspension and/or expulsion from the Early Learning Center. The decision to suspend and/or expel a child will be made by majority vote of the Board of Directors after consultation with the Executive Director, the child's teacher and/or parents.

Examples of instances that may warrant suspension and/or expulsion include but are not limited to:

- A child appears to be a danger to others, such as repetitive or extreme biting or other aggressive behaviors, etc.
- A child brings a dangerous weapon to school.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

While the Early Learning Center will attempt to make reasonable efforts, as set forth above, to work with the parents and the child on the existing behavioral problems or other issues prior to the suspension and/or expulsion, the Early Learning Center reserves the right to suspend or expel a child without notice if circumstances warrant the immediate suspension or expulsion.

Health

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every January, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Children who are not immunized are excluded from coming to school during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department. These families will also sign an exemption from being immunized to be put in their child's file.

Immunization records are required to be up to date as your child receives them. Within 14 days of each new vaccination we are required to have a new immunization record on file for your child. Your child may not attend school without these records.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than six weeks after your child begins the program. A new physical form needs to be given to the ELC within 14 days of each new school year to be filed for your

child. Your child may not attend school without these records.

Illness Policy

Illness Policy

Children must be feeling well to attend The Early Learning Center. This not only prevents the spread of any illness but also gives your child time for rest and recovery. The Directors have the right to refuse a child who appears ill at dropoff. If illness is spreading through the school we will communicate to the parents what illnesses we are seeing within the school. Due to confidentiality we will not give details of which child or classroom.

The Early Learning Center will be following the Guidelines of “How Sick is Too Sick” from the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment. You can find the link to this information on our website or posted on the bulletin board outside the office.

Children who show any of the following symptoms will be asked not to attend school: fever of 100.5 or higher, diarrhea, chronic coughing, vomiting/throwing up, flu-like symptoms, or if your child does not feel well and cannot participate in normal activities. For example, a child is overly tired, fussy or will not stop crying, or the child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children (this will be at the discretion of the Director). Parents are asked to promptly come pick their child up. Children are asked to not return to the Early Learning Center until they are symptom free and fever free (without the use of any fever reducing medicine) for 48 hours.

If your child has been exposed to any contagious diseases such as, chicken pox, measles, hand-foot-mouth, pink eye, strep throat, head lice, R.S.V, impetigo, ect parents are required to notify the office of the exposure.

There are no exceptions to our sick policy. If your child is sick, please respect this policy and do not bring your child to school.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children’s food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing the child’s symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children’s allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

Medications will only be administered with a completed Medication Administration form in which your doctor has specified the frequency and quantity of dosages. This includes all medications including and not limited to; fever reducers, laxatives, teething tablets, diaper cream used to treat a rash, skin lotions used to treat a rash, inhalers, epi-pens, Benadryl, antibiotics,

vitamins, and more. Medicine has to be administered and recorded by a trained staff member who has been delegated to by our school's nurse. Medicine will only be administered as directed by a doctor and not given to children diluted in a drink.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following: Bacterial Meningitis, Botulism, Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Haemophilus Influenzae (invasive), Measles (including suspect), Meningococcal Infection (invasive), Poliomyelitis (including suspect), Rabies (human only), Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect), Tetanus (including suspect), H1N1 Virus , any cluster/outbreak of illness.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is one of the best tools in controlling the spread of infections. We ensure that all of the children perform good hand washing, which will greatly reduce the amount of sickness in your facility. The technique: Use soap and warm running water. Rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds when soaped. Wash all surfaces, including the backs of hands, wrists, between the fingers, and under fingernails. Rinse your hands well. Dry your hands with a paper towel. Turn off the water, using a paper towel, instead of bare hands.

Please wash your child's hands when they arrive at the facility and when you pick them up.

Our staff ensures that the children's hands are washed after they use the toilet and before they eat or drink. We wash the child's hands for them if they are too young to do it for themselves. We also teach children that good hand washing controls the spread of germs.

Safety

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care, so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Please inform us if your child sees a doctor due to a school related injury so we can document it appropriately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited. Any adult who appears to be

inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Legal Disputes between Parents/Guardians

As your child's school provider our main interest is the well-being of your child. We will not be involved in child custody disputes, divorces, separations, or any other legal dispute between parents/guardians. Other than complying with an order of the court, we will not write letters, testify, or otherwise provide support in any legal dispute between parents/guardians.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of suspected child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

If you suspect abuse or neglect happening to a child please call **1-844-CO-4-KIDS** to report it.

Emergencies

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with alarms, lights and rolling cribs etc.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis. In the case of a fire in the building the teachers will evacuate the building with their students, once the director has all the children and staff accounted for outside of the building the children and staff will walk to the Jewish Community Center at 435 W Main St, Aspen, CO 81611 to be reconnected with parents.

Lock-Out

In the case of an unsafe circumstance happening outside of the yellow brick building the school will be placed on Lock-Out. At this point the people inside of the building will remain safely in the building. No one will be let into the building during a lock out. The Director will be in communication with parents of the ELC and when the lock-out has lifted parents will once again be let into the school.

Lock-Down

In the case of immediate danger in the school building the school will be placed on a lock-down. The classrooms will all be locked and the teachers will keep their students out of sight from windows and doors. Once the police have opened and released the teacher and students from the classroom because the danger has been cleared the lock-down will be lifted. At no time during a lock-down will any person be allowed in or out of the building unless emergency personnel. The teachers of the ELC are trained to minimize fear for the children in such a situation.

Evacuations

If there is a need to evacuate the Yellow Brick building the staff and students of the ELC will safely evacuate to the Jewish Community Center at 435 W Main St, Aspen, CO 81611.

Parents/emergency contacts will be informed of the evacuation and able to pick their child up at that location.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Early Learning Center Complaint/Grievance Procedure for Parents

If a parent or staff person has a worry, concern, suggestion or complaint, we want to address the problem immediately, directly, clearly, and respectfully. We understand that conflict cannot always be avoided, and that not everyone has the same personality style when dealing with issues. We are committed to a process whereby we can work out differences in a fair, compassionate, and timely manner.

If you have a complaint or grievance please follow the below procedure:

- 1. If the problem is simple or minor, you should first talk directly to the person involved. It is important that each person has a chance to speak, and that each person not just hear, but also listen. It can be helpful to repeat the person's words back so that it is evident that a person is attempting to understand (and in fact that the person actually does or does not understand). Pick an appropriate and conducive time, and talk with an open mind. Be willing to work out an agreement as well as compromise if and when necessary. It may mean you give a little from your position and they give a little from their position. Be mindful of your tone, body language, and intentionality at all times. Gossip and carrying grudges are to be avoided at all cost. Work to not take things personally or to pass judgments. It can be helpful to give others the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes it helps to pick your battles. At no time is it helpful to lose your temper. Count to 10 or take a break if necessary.*
- 2. If the situation does not get resolved, you should then talk to the lead teacher in the classroom. Schedule an appointment and review the problem and what steps you have taken to try to work things out.*
- 3. If the situation does not get resolved at that time, you should then go to the Director. Schedule an appointment and review the problem and what steps you have taken to try to work things out.*
- 4. If the meeting with the Director does not solve the problem the next step is to go to an officer of the ELC's Board of Directors.*
- 5. If you or the Director believe that this is a subject that needs to be reviewed by the Executive Board of Directors, then schedule an appointment. The ELC Board of Directors has the final authority regarding all parent or staff differences and disputes. The ELC Board of Directors also has the authority to call in a mediator if deemed necessary. If a parent or a staff member believes that an ELC school policy or procedure*

is wrong, unfair, not correct, or illegal then they need to follow this procedure:

- 1. Write down the policy, rule, or situation that you feel needs to be changed. 2. Write the reasons you believe there needs to be an adjustment or change in the policy, situation or regulations.*
- 3. Write how you would change the policy so that your concerns are addressed. Specifically state what you would do differently and how you would make this policy better.*
- 4. Schedule an appointment with the Director to discuss your concerns. 5. If you or the Director believes that this is a subject that needs to be reviewed by the Board of Directors, then schedule an appointment and your concerns will be directly addressed.*
- 6. The ELC Board of Directors has the final authority regarding all ELC school policies. The ELC Board of Directors also had the authority to call in a mediator if deemed necessary.*
- 7. Any problems not resolved locally, including the reporting of suspected licensing complaints, should be referred to the: Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care at 1575 Sherman St. First Floor
Denver, CO 80203-171 or call 1-303-866-5948*

Parent name

Parent signature

Date

