

Hello and welcome to Eastside Early Learning Center! We hope this handbook will be helpful to you. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to ask.

About the Center

The East Side Early Learning Center (EELC) is a nonprofit childcare center and preschool that has been providing quality care and education to children since 1980. We are a small Center, serving children ages 6 weeks through 5 years old. Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7am to 6pm.

Our Philosophy

We believe that young children learn best through purposeful play in an environment structured to the abilities, interests, and development of young children. Play is child's means of discovery, communication, and expression. Our programs support this idea through curriculums that provide a variety of learning opportunities in each of the developmental areas: cognitive, social and emotional, physical growth and language development. We provide positive guidance and encourage children to understand themselves and the world around them. Our staff consists of truly dedicated professionals who will not only give children a safe environment but also the love and devotion of an extended family. The growth of children is our number one priority.

Our Community

We want you to be part of your child's every day experience. We encourage regular parent-teacher communication. In addition to daily written reports and parent-teacher conferences at each transition stage, parents can feel free to contact the director or any teacher at any time. We also offer several social opportunities for families to see their children in action- from Family day to our Thanksgiving Feast.

Our History

The EELC (formerly called The Child Care Center) opened in 1980 and provided childcare and preschool for employees of Butler hospital. Since then, we have opened to all families in Providence and the surrounding communities.

Our Standards

We are fully certified by daycare licensing to serve a total of 44 children, 20 preschool children and 24 infants and toddlers. Our teacher to child ratio complies with, and in many cases exceeds, state regulations. Our preschool program is also accredited by the Department of Education.

Staffing:

The EELC is staffed with loving, enthusiastic teachers who have a range of experience and training in Early Childhood Education. The longevity of our teachers is extraordinary; many have been employed here between 10 and 20 years.

Staffing ratios are maintained in accordance with, and many times exceeds regulations as follows:

Infants

6weeks-18 months.....1 to 4

Toddlers

18-24 months.....1 to 5

24-30 months.....1 to 5

30-36 months.....1 to 6

Preschool

3-4 years.....1 to 9

4-5 years.....1 to 10

We have a registered nurse on staff four mornings a week, as well as a full-time teacher assistant who serves as a float between classrooms.

About our Board of Directors

As a nonprofit organization, East Side Early Learning Center is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors. The Board consists of parents as well as representatives from the community. The Board is responsible for setting policies and procedures, and for supporting the work of the Director and the Center as a whole.

Schedules and Operating Hours:

The EELC is open from 7:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday. We are closed for most legal holidays; please refer to the school calendar. We offer 2-day (T/TH), 3-day (M/W/F), or 5-day programs in each age group. Half-day programs are available in preschool.

Curriculum

Infant Program

The basis of our infant curriculum is the relationship the caregiver establishes with each child and family. While no one replaces mom or dad, our caregivers are truly dedicated to each and every infant, providing a safe, nurturing environment. Daily reciprocal communication between parents and caregivers is essential to providing the best of care. By meeting the needs of your infant in a timely, consistent manner, we hope to provide a feeling of security in a very loving atmosphere.

We understand the need for individualized care of your infant. We will work with you to establish eating, sleeping and playing patterns for your infant. As infants get older, we adjust to their need for a more routine schedule.

Each infant develops at his/her own pace and style. We provide opportunities for growth for every stage of development. Play is a child's way of learning about themselves and the world around them. We support this through providing interesting areas for them to explore. Our caregivers interact with each infant in a way that encourages the emergence of gross and fine motor skills, expressive and receptive language skills, self and social awareness, as well as cognitive skills. The types of toys and activities offered to your infant will depend on where he/she is in the process of development.

Toddler Program

Our toddler program is also based on the relationship the caregiver establishes with each child and family. While no one replaces mom or dad, our caregivers are truly dedicated to each and every toddler, providing a safe and nurturing environment. Daily reciprocal communication is essential to

providing the best of care. By meeting the needs of your toddler in a timely and consistent manner, we hope to provide a feeling of security in a very loving atmosphere.

Each toddler develops at his/her own pace and style. We provide opportunities for growth in every area of development, including; gross and fine motor; expressive and receptive language; social/emotional; and cognitive. Children learn and develop these skills through play; play is a child's way of learning about themselves and the world around them.

Toddlers need routines and predictability throughout their day. It is within these daily routines that many natural opportunities for learning take place. We follow a daily routine that is designed to meet the eating, sleeping and playing needs of toddlers.

Our day involves small and large group activities, as well as one on one activities. Children have the opportunity to participate in creative arts, pretend play, discovery and exploration, gross and fine motor activities, music and movement, as well as daily social interaction with other children and teachers. You will also get a monthly calendar highlighting special projects and theme days.

Preschool Programs

Our preschool programs are based on enrollment and the ages of the children at the Center. Some years we like to offer separate programs for 3 and 4 year olds. At times, we may have combined 3 and 4 year old classrooms. In both cases, we combine a balance of nurturing care as well as opportunities for growth in every area of development including; gross and fine motor, expressive and receptive language; social/emotional; and cognitive. Because

each child develops at his/her own pace in each developmental area, we use assessment and planning to best meet his/her needs.

3-Year Olds

Three year olds strongly believe in their own opinion, yet are beginning to develop a sense of the needs of others. They are growing out of their toddler ways, and will often follow the adult's directions. Our program is based on their natural curiosity of everything around them. We provide structure and routines that help them explore their surroundings and engage in positive social interactions. Our classroom is divided into the following learning areas: blocks, creative arts, dramatic play, literacy and table toys. We offer many opportunities for growth through a combination of guided activities and free play in both individual and group settings.

4-Year Olds

Four year olds are enthusiastic, try hard to be helpful, have enormous imaginations, and begin to make more sense of the world around them. We help the children build on the emerging skills they have developed to prepare them for kindergarten. We are working toward aligning our program with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. The Standards are based largely on developing the eight learning domains (described below) through play, with much attention given to assessment and family involvement. We offer age-appropriate activities to help develop skills in these domains as follows: approaches to learning, social and emotional development, language development and communication, literacy, mathematics, science, creativity, and physical health and development.

Dropping-Off/Picking-Up

Children's Schedules

Young children like to have routines and schedules. Infants and toddlers should arrive no later than 9:30; preschool children should arrive no later than 9:00. This will help your child acclimate as well as take part in our morning activities. In the best interest of your child, we ask that his or her daily stay with us does not exceed 9 hours. Parents of children who are with us in the late afternoon should arrive no later than 5:45 in order to allow for enough time to gather belongings. While we understand that there may be times when a change to your schedule is unavoidable, we do ask that that you inform us in advance so that we may make any necessary accommodations.

Drop-off

Drop-off can be a difficult time for both children and parents. Try to remain calm and positive, and your child will take your cues. It is best when you can establish a morning ritual with your child. We suggest that you not rush your child to say good-bye, but do not take too long either. As hard as it is to leave to a crying child, it is best to say goodbye once, and know that you are leaving him/her in good hands. "Sneaking" out is not a good idea. It can leave your child feeling as if adults can just disappear, leading to an unsafe feeling. Returning only prolongs the inevitable and makes the transition more difficult for the child. Most children are able to join the activities within a few minutes of your departure.

Pick-up

Pick-up tends to be a very busy time, as every parent wants to know how his or her child's day was. Please pick up your child's daily report on your way in. This will answer most of your questions. While we do encourage communication with our teachers, it is sometimes difficult to have a real

conversation at this time. If your child's teacher is unavailable, give us a call the next day; afternoons from 12:30-2:30 are usually the best time to call. It is important to note that infants and toddlers are not allowed in the preschool classrooms. Not only is this potentially unsafe, it is also not fair to the preschool teachers to arrive to a messy room in the morning.

Release Policy

The only people allowed to pick up your child are those who you have designated in your enrollment packet. If we have never met someone, we will ask for identification and make a copy for your child's file. In case of custody arrangements or restraining orders, the EELC must have a copy of said order in the child's file. By law, we cannot keep a parent away from a child unless we have this paperwork. Also, it is a parent's responsibility to make sure the EELC has the most updated contact information for each authorized person. Some update forms are available on our website, www.eastsidelearning.org.

Parent-Center Relations

Confidentiality is held at all times here at the EELC. We do not share information about you or your child with other families, personal or otherwise. This applies to health issues, injuries resulting from other children, etc. Parents often ask which child hurt their child; please understand that we just can't give out this information. Because there can be so many sensitive issues involved, we ask that parents respect this policy at all times.

Each child will have a mailbox where you will receive daily reports, receipts, and any notices. We also send notices and newsletters via email if that is your preference. For the most part, you will have daily face-to-face

communication with your child's teacher. However, feel free to call during the day or leave a note in the teacher's mailbox if you need to. A parent-teacher conference will be held when your child reaches a transition period to enter the next age group. This conference will include a progress report on how your child is developing as well as future goals and any other information you would like.

We hold several events throughout the year to celebrate holidays, graduation, etc. Families, including extended families, are encouraged to attend these events. These events are usually a lot of fun, and the children enjoy having you at their school.

We also hold two parent meetings throughout each year. These meetings are a means for us to relay any significant information and progress here at the EELC. It is also an opportunity for you to ask questions or share concerns as well as meet other parents.

We also do a few fundraisers throughout the year, and occasionally ask for parent volunteers for various projects and events. Your involvement plays a key role in the atmosphere and relationships here at the EELC.

Meals/Snacks

Infants are always fed according to their own schedule, with the formula or breast milk provided by you. You must provide infant food until the child is eating center meals and snacks. Please refer to the daily schedule posted for your toddler or preschooler. Because we don't serve breakfast, we ask that you give your child his/her breakfast before arrival, with the exception of infants. We offer a catered hot lunch that includes a meat, vegetable, starch, fruit and milk daily. In the best interest of your child, we ask that all

children at the EELC use this service with the exception of children with food allergies or for health reasons. Morning and afternoon snacks are provided as well. We try to provide healthy choices that always include at least two food groups. All snacks and lunch are included in tuition for children 14 months and older. You will find a menu in your mailbox at the beginning of each month. A report will be sent home so you will be informed of how your child eats on a daily basis.

Naps

Infants nap according to their own schedules. Older infants who take only one nap, toddlers and preschoolers nap after lunchtime. Older children who are phasing out naps are asked to rest quietly on their cots for at least 45 minutes, but are then offered a book or another quiet activity. No child is required to take a nap.

Diapers and Toileting

Diapered children are changed every two hours or as needed. Our changing area is wiped down with a bleach-and-water solution between each change, and staff always wear gloves.

We will be happy to create a plan with families for older children who are potty training. According to regulations, we are not allowed to do this until your child is at least 2 years old. This process must be a team effort with open communication and a common goal.

What To Bring

Clothing

Please dress your child for play. This means comfortable, non-restrictive clothing that can get a little dirty. While at the EELC, children

will explore and play with a variety of “messy” materials. Our playground does tend to get dusty and the children just love playing with everything they find outside. When you come to pick up your child and he/she is a little dirty, just think of all the fun he/she had!

All children should have extra, season-appropriate clothing in their cubby. We play outside daily, weather permitting. In the winter, please bring coats, hats, mittens, etc. In the summer we do water play so you will be asked to bring in a swimsuit, towel, water shoes and sunscreen for your child.

Toileting

Infants and toddlers should also bring a supply of diapers, wipes, any creams or powders used for diaper changes. Potty training children should have several sets of clothing, including underwear, in case of accidents.

Sleeping

Families of infants must provide a portable crib (pack-n-play). Parents are responsible for making the crib at the beginning of the week, with a sheet, blanket, any lovies, etc. You will find these items bagged, above your child’s cubby at the end of every week so that you may launder them over the weekend.

Toddlers and preschoolers sleep on cots. We suggest a sheet (crib size), blanket, and any lovies or a pillow if desired. These items can be left in or above your child’s cubby at the beginning of each week. You will find them bagged, above or in your child’s cubby at the end of the week so that you may launder them over the weekend.

Additional Infant Items

Please bring a supply of breast milk or formula that will be used daily. Bottles can either be prepared here, or you may bring them in pre-made. All bottles will be sent home at the end of each day to be sterilized. Once on solid food, a supply of jarred food can be stored in our kitchen. We supply sippy cups. You may also want to remember a back-up pacifier, gas drops, bibs, etc. Please ask your child's teacher if you are unsure what to bring.

Toys From Home

While we encourage a soft "lovie" or doll for rest time, toys should be kept home to prevent damage or loss of said toys. The exception to this is in our preschool program, where they have "show and tell" days.

Health Policies

Immunizations

Regulations require that all children have a preadmission health examination, reporting any health conditions affecting the child's general health. In addition, evidence of current immunizations must be provided. You may use our form or another form from your child's physician so long as it is complete and signed or stamped by the physician. Our nurse will track the immunization schedule, but it is your responsibility to provide proof of subsequent immunizations. We suggest asking for an update at the time of your child's appointment.

Medication

Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home. In order for any of our staff to administer any medication, a parent must complete a medication permission form for each medication. This includes both prescription and over the counter medications. This form must be complete

in order for us to administer the medication. A “standing order” may be written for medicines such as Tylenol or cough medicine, etc. This order is good for 6 months. Permission forms are located next to the health board in the lunchroom as well as on our website. Place completed forms in the medication box next to the board and alert the nurse or your child’s teacher.

All medication must be in its original container. All prescription medications must be accompanied by a written physician’s order (which may include the label on the medication). Never leave any medication in your child’s cubby or belongings. All medication is stored in the locked cabinet in the staff kitchen.

Illness

While we understand that it is difficult to pick up a sick child or keep a sick child at home, we have a responsibility to all of the children at the EELC. Excluding children who are ill is a way to prevent the spread of illness as well as ensure the comfort of your child. We ask for your cooperation and understanding when these policies are enforced. It is a good idea to have a back up plan in mind for these circumstances.

Exclusion/Early Dismissal Due to Illness

We use guidelines set by the American Academy of Pediatrics for exclusion and/or early dismissal due to illness. It is important to remember that your child must feel well enough to participate in all EELC activities. If your child is not able to participate or needs one to one care, you will be asked to pick him/her up. We allow you up to an hour if you have to pick up your child.

The following are reasons for exclusion/early dismissal:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in center activities.
- Illness that results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Any of the following conditions suggesting possible severe illness: fever (defined as greater than 101 degrees), lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or other manifestations of severe illness.
- Rash with fever or behavioral change.
- Pink eye/suspected pink eye – defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep and eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye – until 24 hours after treatment is initiated.
- Vomiting 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus.
- Diarrhea (2 or more watery bowel movements that cannot be contained in a diaper).
- Mouth sores associated with drooling, unless the child’s physician states that the child is noninfectious.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Head lice, until after the first treatment.
- Pinworm, until after the first treatment.
- Scabies, until after treatment has been given.

- Varicella (chicken pox), until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Hand, foot and mouth disease, until at least 24 hours of fever-free.

Re-admittance

If your child is sent home from the EELC on any given day with a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, he/she may not return to the EELC the following day. Also, if these symptoms persist once leaving the EELC, we ask that the child remain at home until he/she has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours. The child must be fever-free without a fever-reducing medication.

It is important for caregivers to recognize that even after the initiation of treatment for many illnesses such as ear infections, the child may continue to exhibit subtle symptoms that preclude them from participating comfortably in center activities despite resolution of more overt symptoms like fever or vomiting. We ask that caregivers assess their child's ability to participate comfortably before returning.

Severe Childhood Illnesses

Though they are rare due to immunizations, if your child were to develop a severe childhood illness, we would follow the recommendations from the RI Department of Health, www.health.ri.gov for return to the EELC.

Injuries

If your child is injured at the EELC, we will give him/her appropriate first aid. If the injury is not serious, you will get a copy of an "injury report" at the end of the day and be asked to sign a copy for us. If the injury is serious (but not a 911 call) or questionable, you will get a call immediately. If you are unreachable, we will call your emergency contacts.

Discipline

We define discipline as a way of guiding young children in a positive way to help them learn what behaviors are acceptable. Disciplinary actions are not intended to be punitive, but rather teachable moments.

Children are encouraged to follow child-friendly rules here at the EELC. There are four basic rules as follows: 1.) Use gentle hands 2.) Use walking feet 3.) Use inside voices, 4.) Use our listening ears.

If a child does not follow one of these rules, we remind him or her, and try to redirect to a different area or activity. We rarely use the word “no”. We do use the phrase “uh-oh” in an effort to redirect the child. If the behavior continues or the child is in danger of hurting himself or others, we have the child “take a break” by sitting away from other children, doing an activity one on one with a teacher, or doing a quiet activity by him/her self until he/she is calm and ready to rejoin the group. This time shall last no longer than 1 minute per year of the age of the child. “Take a break” is never appropriate for infants and young toddlers.

Notice of Incident Reports

We want to make sure that you are fully informed of your child’s day here at the EELC. In the event that your child is involved in an incident with another child or teacher, a Notice of Incident Report will be sent home for you to sign and return. Examples of such incidents are biting, scratching, or otherwise causing significant harm to another child or teacher. We will also send a notice home for any significant unusual or unacceptable behaviors, such as inappropriate language or not following safety rules. We hope you understand the importance of documenting such incidents; it is essential that we have open communication so that we may better serve your child. In

cases where these incidents occur on a more regular basis, the EELC's teachers and director will work with each family on an individual basis to best support the child. In cases where a child's behaviors are unmanageable or pose a risk to other children at the EELC, we may request that a family have the child evaluated by a licensed child psychologist or other mental health professional to help develop an individualized behavior plan. If at that time, the behavior plan is ineffective, the director may request a meeting with the family to determine continued enrollment for that child.

Biting

Biting is a very sensitive, but very real part of group care. For parents of both the biter and the victim, this can be stressful and emotional. Most biting incidents occur in the infant and toddler groups. While we cannot prevent all biting incidents, we can identify children with patterns of behavior and work with each family to reduce the risk of biting. In order to do this, we all must first understand that biting is a natural part of children's development. There are many different reasons why young children bite. Through observation and communication we can work together to identify and prevent frequent biting. Depending on the child, we have a variety of approaches. A specific plan and further information will be made available to each family as needed. In addition, all infant and toddler teachers here at the Center participate in a training titled "Reality Bites: Biting at the Center".

Financial Policies

Tuition

Upon enrollment, first and last weeks' tuition is collected. In addition, a registration (\$50) and an annual materials fee (\$30) are collected. The materials fee is then collected annually every September.

The EELC relies solely on tuition. Therefore, it is essential that tuition be paid in a timely manner. Tuition may be paid weekly or monthly, so long as it is in advance of care. Checks should be placed in the tuition box, directly in front of you as you enter the front door. Collection begins every Monday and is considered late if not received by Tuesday afternoon. If tuition is habitually late, a \$5.00 late charge may be assessed.

Because it is our desire to ease the burden of childcare for families with more than one child, we offer a discount of 10% off the lowest tuition for families with two children and a discount of 15% off the lowest tuition for families with three children.

Parents are responsible for the full tuition regardless of absence due to illness or vacation. Emergency closings due to inclement weather or unforeseen acts of nature are not reimbursable. Because we have several children with part-time schedules, we are not able to offer a replacement day for such closings. If enrollment allows and with the director's approval, a family may be able to add a day, providing the difference in tuition is paid for.

Late Pick-Up

The EELC closes promptly at 6:00. Many of our staff have other obligations in the evening, so it is imperative that children be picked up no later than 6:00. Again, we do ask that you arrive by 5:45 in order to gather your child's belongings. In the event that you pick up your child after 6:00, a late fee will apply as follows: The first time, a \$1.00 per minute charge will be assessed. Upon subsequent occurrences, the fee will be increased by increments of \$5.00 per minute. If late pick-ups become habitual, you will be asked to make alternative arrangements for your child to be picked up.

Extended Leaves

We understand that extended vacations or extenuating circumstances may warrant leave in excess of 3 weeks from the center. The following policy applies to full-time students:

During extended leaves and with the approval of the EELC director, your child's place will be held provided that your family reduces your child's schedule to no less than two days per week and continues to pay tuition on the basis of such reduced schedule. We will hold your child's place for a maximum of thirteen weeks. At the expiration of thirteen weeks, if your child does not resume his/her original schedule, your child's place will be forfeited and offered to another family. This policy applies to leaves in excess of three weeks. The reduced tuition rate begins in the fourth week of the leave, unless the Director can make other arrangements. Full tuition is due during leaves of three weeks and less.

The policy for families of part-time students requiring a leave in excess of three weeks is as follows:

Families of part-time students must maintain their original schedule and rate in order to hold the child's spot. While we understand that this may be difficult for some families, the Center must maintain full classrooms whenever possible. The Center director will work with families, if at all possible during such times and as our enrollment allows.

Withdrawal

Because we are a small center, we appreciate as much advanced notice of intent to withdraw as possible. We do require that this notice be at least 2 weeks.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather closings and delays, the Center follows the Providence school system. If Providence schools are closed, then the Center is closed. If the schools are delayed, then the Center will delay opening for the same amount of time. You can watch Channel 10, listen to WPRO-AM, or check online at www.turnto10.com for listings. You may also register with the RI Broadcasters Association to be alerted immediately via cell phone, pda, or email. The EELC's voicemail message will also be changed with the details of the closing/delay. Early dismissal is at the discretion of the director with Board approval. We do not follow the school system for dismissal. However, if we have a day of bad weather, we do ask that you take travel time into consideration. In order for you, your child, and our staff to make it home safely, we ask that you pick your child up in a timely fashion.

We are happy to have you and your family in our EELC community! Please call with any additional questions, (401) 272-3959.