

Staff Handbook

The Early Learning Center 2021/2022

ABOUT US

***Our Mission***

*To provide exceptional education and care for children in our dynamic community from birth to six years of age. We reflect the spirit of the Roaring Fork Valley through purpose, professionalism, partnerships, and play.*

***Our Vision***

*The Early Learning Center of Aspen, through its commitment to providing exceptional education and care for children of ALL community members, will be recognized as an outstanding choice for parents and caregivers looking for a best in class, innovative and progressive community-based early learning experience.*

***Our Values***

*Purpose | Nurturing the whole child to reach their fullest potential during their first years of physical, social, emotional, and academic learning and growth.*

*Play | Developing curiosity, problem solving, initiative, awareness, focused attention and persistence through playful activities inside and outside of the classroom.*

*Professionalism | Providing exceptional education and care, using the highest standards of teaching, learning, quality, training, operational excellence, and safety.*

*Partnership | Connecting to and working together with children, parents, caregivers, teachers, and the community to enhance the experience of each individual child.*

***Our Purpose****- To provide high quality Early Childhood Education to the community of the Roaring Fork Valley*

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

The ELC is licensed by the Colorado Department of Social Services and meets all state requirements. *We also continue to strive to be the highest quality school, and monster our areas of growth by having CO Shines rate the quality of our program every three years.*

Certifications

1. Colorado Department of Human Services License – Day Care Center 1995-20172. Colorado Shines Rated – 3 Stars

Welcome to the Early Learning Center

 The following pages contain information regarding many of the policies and procedures of the Early Learning Center. Adherence to these policies is a condition of employment.

If you have questions or need assistance understanding this document, please contact: Leslie Bixel or Mahyn Mata

Office hours are:

Monday through Friday: 8:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Our main phone number is 970-920-9201

For emergencies call Leslie Bixel at

503-367-9237 or 911.

**Disclaimer**

This handbook is intended only to outline the employment policies, procedures and benefits of the Early Learning Center. This manual is not intended to be all-inclusive and should not be considered to be an employment contract. The Early Learning Centerreserves the right to change employment policies, procedures, benefits or this manual at any time without notice. It is the responsibility of the employee to stay abreast of current policies and procedures. The Early Learning Center will make every effort to notify employees of any policy changes, additions or deletions. Said changes will immediately become a part of this manual.

**Code of Conduct**

The Early Learning Center staff follow the NAEYC code of conduct. Staff will be trained annually for this, and follow it through daily day-to-day decisions and when making decisions on how to handle workplace situations.

**Board of Directors**

 The Early Learning Center is a non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors, and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501 (c) (3). The Board of Directors consists of parents and community members. A list of current board members and their contact information is posted on the bulletin board outside of the office. Responsibilities of the volunteer board include:

* Setting Policy
* Adopting an annual budget
* Grant-writing and fundraising
* Hiring, firing and evaluating the Director

 The Board meets at least once a month. All regular sessions are open to the public, parents and teachers are invited to attend. To add an item of business to the agenda, contact the president of the Board two weeks before the meeting. Agendas are posted on the school bulletin board at least 3 days before the meetings and minutes are posted afterwards.

The Board of Directors supervises the Executive Director, who have an integral working relationship. The teachers are supervised primarily by the Executive Director, with assistance from the board, if needed.

**Career Opportunities**

It is our desire to see each and every employee achieve their highest potential. We will do our best to provide the opportunity and offer training, education and guidance whenever possible. See your immediate supervisor if you have questions.

**Open Door Policy**

It is our objective to provide a work environment free from elements that would deter employees from performing their best work. All concerns may be expressed through our open door policy. Management at the Early Learning Center maintains this open door policy to discuss any issues you may have. Feel free to express yourself about work related or personal matters. We welcome your input.

*If you feel you have been discriminated against in any way you are encouraged to express concern through this open door policy.*

**Code of Conduct**

 Employees of *ELC* are to conduct themselves in a responsible, legal, professional and ethical manner. Report any behavior which may violate these standards to your immediate supervisor.

 Reported activities will be investigated by appropriate *ELC* management team members. The management team will determine appropriate means for resolution. Employees found to be conducting themselves in an unethical, illegal, unprofessional or irresponsible manner may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Worker Documentation**

 The Immigration Reform and Control Act outline requirements for worker documentation, via a Form I-9, as follows:

* Every U.S. employer must have a Form I-9 in its files for each new employee, unless:

The employee was hired before November 7, 1986, and has been continuously employed by the same employer.

* Form I-9 need not be completed for those individuals:
* Providing domestic services in a private household that is *sporadic, irregular, or intermittent*;
* Providing services for the employer as an independent contractor (i.e. carry on independent business, contract to do a piece of work according to their own means and methods and are subject to control only as to results for whom the employer **does not** set work hours or provide necessary tools to do the job, or whom the employer does not have authority to hire and fire); and
* Providing services for the employer, under a contract, subcontract, or exchange entered into after November 6, 1986. (In such cases, the contractor is the employer for I-9 purposes; for example, a temporary employment agency.)
* The Early Learning Center requires employees to complete the employee section of a Form I-9. All new employees must complete Section 1 of a Form I-9 prior to commencement of work. The employee’s signature holds him/her responsible for the accuracy of the information provided. The Early Learning Centermay elect to copy the documentation used to substantiate Section 1 information provided by the employee.

The Early Learning Centerreserves the right to revise this policy without notice to comply with state and federal law.

Employment

**Equal Opportunity Employment**

 Employees are hired based solely on the Early Learning Centerpersonnel requirements and the qualifications of each individual candidate.

 We will not tolerate nor condone discrimination due to age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference, national origin or disability. We will comply with the spirit and letter of all local, state and federal laws pertaining to employment. Furthermore, we will not discriminate due to age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference, national origin or disability when making decisions regarding any aspect of employment status, i.e., training, compensation, assignments and termination of employees.

 Any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of this policy should be directed to the Early Learning Center.

**Eligibility for Employment**

 Federal law requires both new employees and re-hires to provide documentation of eligibility to work in the United States plus proper identity. A properly submitted form I-9 is required for employment.

**Children in the Workplace**

 Early Learning Center employees are not to bring children to the workplace except as permitted by this policy or for special pre-approved events (e.g., Take Your Child to Work Day). For purposes of this policy, a child is defined as an individual under the age of 18 years who is not an employee of ELC.

 Supervisors may make rare allowances for a temporary, unforeseen emergency, but no parent may have a child in the workplace without the supervisor’s permission. When child care arrangements fail, an employee must seek alternatives to bringing the child to the workplace. It is generally expected that where alternatives are not available, the employee would use vacation time. Sick leave may be used when a child is ill or physically injured and requires the employee’s care or service. No employee may bring a sick child to work. In considering whether to allow a child at work, employees and supervisors must consider issues of safety (for the child, co-workers and the public), confidentiality, disruption of services, disruption to other employees and appropriateness posed by the presence of children in the workplace.

Familial Employment

 The Early Learning Centerdoes allow family members and relatives of employees to be considered for employment, provided they are qualified for the position and no other conflict of interest exists. Hiring decisions will be the exclusive responsibility of the Early Learning Center*.*

**Part-Time Employment**

The Early Learning Center may offer part-time employment positions. Employees who work 32 hours or less per week will be considered part time. Direct all questions regarding benefits for part-time workers to the Early Learning Center Director.

**Minimum Wage**

 The Early Learning Centeradheres strictly to minimum wage standards as outlined by the United States Government and the State of Colorado.

**Criminal Convictions**

 Criminal convictions are taken seriously at the Early Learning Center. We reserve the right to disqualify any applicant for employment that has been convicted of a criminal offense.

 Furthermore, conviction of a crime may result in an automatic termination. The Early Learning Centerwill make every effort to evaluate the nature and circumstances of the conviction. With the safety and well being of co-workers and children at stake, convicted employees may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Violence**

 Threats of violence and acts of violence are strictly prohibited. Employees threatening or committing acts of violence will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Report any such activity to your immediate supervisor or to the Early Learning Center.

**Weapons**

 Weapons are generally defined as guns, knives and other objects universally considered a weapon by the vast majority of society. A “weapon” can also be any object which would do harm to another when used as such. The Early Learning Centershall deem any such object a “weapon” for the purpose of enforcing this policy.

 Possession of weapons is prohibited on company property and while on duty performing company business at any location. Any employee on duty or on company premises in possession of a weapon will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Report any weapon possession to your immediate supervisor or to the Early Learning Center.

**Alcohol, Drugs & Illegal Substance Abuse**

 Possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances is not permitted on company property, or while on duty in the employment of *ELC*. Furthermore, employees are not permitted to report for duty while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances. Employees failing to adhere strictly to this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Report any suspicious activity to your immediate supervisor or to *ELC*.

**Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment**

 It is the objective of *ELC* to provide a working environment free from discrimination and conduct commonly referred to as sexual harassment.

The E.E.O.C. (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) has provided a broad definition of sexual harassment. It is general in nature and may not always be clear when evaluating everyday situations.

 “Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment,
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.”

 Sexual harassment refers to behavior inappropriate in the workplace because it is offensive, unwelcome behavior which would not occur but for the sex of the offended person. Sexual harassment is disrupting to the work environment and will not be tolerated.

If you or a co-worker experiences what you believe to be sexual harassment report it promptly to your immediate supervisor or to *ELC. ELC* will investigate any employee, vendor, contractor or visitor regardless of position or status when such allegations are made. Based on available information, *ELC* will take appropriate action and communicate this action on a need-to-know basis only.

 Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination may be taken against any individual for sexual harassment charges determined to be valid.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

 Under the “Child Protection Act of 1987” (C.R.S. 19-3-301) in the Colorado Children’s Code, child care center workers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The law at 19-3-304 states that if a child care worker has “reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department or local law enforcement agency.”

 “Abuse” or “child abuse or neglect” means an act or omission in one of the following categories which threatens the health or welfare of a child; skin bruising, bleeding, tissue swelling, or death; any case in which a child is subjected to sexual assault or molestation, sexual exploitation, or prostitution; any case in which a child is in need of services because the child’s parents, legal guardian, or custodian fails to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision that a prudent parent would take.

At the school we have clear procedures to reduce the risk of allegations of child abuse or neglect. With team teaching we typically have two or more teachers supervising the children at any given time; bathroom doors are always left open; we have an open door policy for families; we have a daily sign in and out sheet; anyone visiting the school must sign our registry and identify themselves; and we consistently use accident reports for any indication of injury or trauma.

 If at any time a staff member reasonably suspects child abuse, it is the responsibility of that staff member to report or to cause a report to be made of this suspicion to the Statewide hotline number 1-844-CO-4-KIDS. Also, Pitkin County Adult and Child Services can be reached at 970-429-2040, and/or call the police. It is not the staff’s role to investigate suspected abuse — only to report it.

 Persons who make a good faith report are immune from civil and criminal liability. Additionally, the law provides for the protection of the identity of the reporting party. Parents should report suspected abuse or child neglect to the Statewide hotline number 1-844-CO-4-KIDS. Local contact with Adult and Child services (0405 Castle Creek, Suite 205, Aspen Colorado 81611). can be made at 970- 429-2040 and/or to the police.

**Job Postings**

 *The Early Learning Center* will post available positions per client company policy allowing current employees to apply for the position. All applicants must meet education and/or experience requirements for consideration. All positions for hire will be posted in office and local newspapers.

Interview Process

 When a new position is open teaching staff in the age range of the open position will participate in the hiring process. This will include, but not be limited to, the interviewee spending time in the classroom with teachers report back, teachers taking part in the interview, and administration staff listening to and taking into consideration teaching staff feedback in the hiring process.

**Seniority**

 The Early Learning Centerdoes consider length of continuous service, as well as other job related factors, when making decisions for advancement, job placement, layoffs or staff reductions.

**Employment Evaluation**

 All employees will be under “evaluation” for the duration of their employment. Your Director will be responsible for evaluating your performance, aptitude and compatibility with co-workers, children, and parents. During the first three to six months of new employment or transfer to a new job within the Early Learning Center, employees will be considered to be in “introductory status”. At the end of the “introductory” period, you may be invited to become a full time employee who may entitle you to additional benefits. In the event your evaluation information at any time during your employment indicates you do not meet the job performance standards your employment may be terminated or corrective action may be taken to bring your performance to an acceptable level.

 Each year staff will participate in a merit review from the administration staff of the Early Learning Center. You are asked to do a self-evaluation, are reviewed based on evaluations done by the administration staffed based on work merit and observations. This review will be used to review and set your yearly professional goals.

**Personnel File**

The Early Learning Center maintains a confidential personnel file for each worksite employee as required by law. Files are controlled by the Early Learning Center. Employees must acquire permission to view their personnel file from the Early Learning Center. These files are the property of the Early Learning Center; no documents may be altered or removed by the employee. Every reasonable effort is made to keep the information confidential; access is limited to staff members who require access to perform their job functions. Copies will not be distributed to any third party unless mandated to do so by a court of law or requested in writing by the employee. Documents pertaining to personal health information will be kept in separate files and will be held in strict confidence.

 Covered entities and business associates must protect the privacy of the Early Learning Center by (1) limiting access to only those who need it, (2) using passwords to restrict access and (3) storing records in locked cabinets. Methods of securing the Early Learning Center, including encryption and destruction, must make the data "unusable, unreadable or indecipherable."

 Employee Form I-9 and related documents will be stored separately and confidentially as well.

Policies & Procedures

**Attendance**

 Punctual attendance is mandatory for efficient job performance. In cases of absence for any reason notify your immediate supervisor as well as the front office as soon as reasonably possible. Poor attendance, absence without notification or habitual tardiness will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Work Schedule Requirements**

 With variations in workload and/or staffing shortage it is the responsibility of every employee to occasionally work outside their normal work schedule, sometimes with little notice. As a result, you may be required to work overtime, be it pre-planned or spontaneous.

**Staff Meetings**

 Every month the Early Learning Center will host staff meetings. These meetings consist of important information for the staff of the Early Learning Center to know. Please make these meetings a priority. All mandatory meetings are considered to be time worked and employees will be compensated as required by law.

**Strategic Planning**

 Staff are highly encouraged to participate in the strategic planning process of the Early Learning Center. This is an opportunity for non-administration staff to participate in the goal-setting and the direction of school.

**Curriculum**

 The Early Learning Center uses the Creative Curriculum in all classrooms. Each classroom develops their weekly curriculum schedule throughout the school year based on children’s developmental levels and needs, and the students and teachers interests.

**Child Observations**

 Teachers are required to assess children daily. Observations will be noted in TS Gold, and quarterly checkpoints will be completed. Once checkpoints are completed reports will be made to best facilitate care to the individual child’s developmental needs.

**Bulletin Boards**

 Bulletin boards placed in designated areas throughout the worksite display notices and announcements, including safety policies and procedures, for employees to review. It is the responsibility of each employee to review the bulletin boards to be aware of information posted. Postings include required information regarding equal employment opportunity, minimum wage rates, and Worker Compensation, as well as other appropriate employee information.

**Suggestion Box (Green box outside the office door)**

The Early Learning Centeralways encourages employees to submit suggestions, comments or new ideas which may benefit the Early Learning Center. If you wish to remain anonymous, every precaution will be made to preserve your privacy. *Directors* will check the suggestion box on a regular basis for new submissions.

**Shift Times**

 All employees that are scheduled to work at 7:30am, 8:30am, and 10:30 can clock in no earlier than 7:15 am or 8:20 am, and 10:20 am.  If employees are scheduled until 5:15pm please make sure that you clock out no later than 5:45pm. If a parent is late to pick up, please make sure that employee fills out a late pick up slip. The Early shift is done at 2:00 and the late shift starts at 11:30. You can add an hour to each end of these (10:30 and 3:00) for additional planning time. If an employee is not here at 7:30, 8:30, and 11:30 they are considered late. Continued tardiness will lead to an official write-up.

**Missing Punches/Sick Day Log**

 All employees are required to turn in vacation, sick days, holidays, or time log must be turned in accounting for these days/hours.

**Lunch Break**

Employees working the middle shift, and long shifts are required to take a lunch break. Please work with your immediate supervisor to schedule your breaks.

**Workplace Dress Code**

 The Early Learning Centerencourages employees to dress comfortably, with consideration given to maintaining a professional appearance and safety. Appropriate attire should be worn at all times in keeping with commonly recognized standards. If you interface with parents or are scheduled to meet with parents on an occasional basis, be prepared and dress appropriately. Be considerate of the center’s image as well as your image with parents and your co-workers.

**Medical Attention**

The Early Learning Centerrequires employees to notify a supervisor when medical attention is required for any reason, accident or illness. Employees requiring transportation to a medical facility must be taken by trained medical personnel. Transportation and medical costs are the responsibility of the employee.

**Compensation**

 Compensation for employment is based on the type of work and performance. Rates are established by the Early Learning Center. Raises also, are based on performance, growth and productivity. All requests for salary increases and/or promotion will be fairly considered by supervisors and by the Early Learning Center. Employment is based on an as-needed basis. Employees are not guaranteed tenure, severance, or retirement benefits.

 Every teacher in the school is allotted up to two hours paid planning time each week on top of their regularly scheduled hours outside of the classroom.

**Overtime**

 Hours of work performed by nonexempt employees over 40 hours in any seven day period, qualify for payment at a rate of 1.5 times the employee’s regular hourly pay in compliance to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). All overtime must be approved in advance by your immediate supervisor.

 All hours during a workweek that are calculated in the total for overtime must be hours actually worked. Vacation, sick days, personal days or any other non-working benefit days do not count in the calculation of overtime.

**Wage and Salary Disclosure**

 Compensation programs are confidential between the employee, and *ELC*. Disclosure of wages or compensation to any third party or other employee is prohibited and could be grounds for termination.

**Payroll Schedules**

 Employees are paid every two weeks. Regardless of shift schedule, the work week begins Monday and ends Sunday. Payday is every other Thursday. In the event payday falls on a holiday, paychecks will be distributed before or after the holiday.

**Paychecks**

 Payroll checks or automatic deposits to personal checking accounts will be distributed on payday as established in the Payroll Schedule (above) of this handbook. Federal, state and any other required taxes will be withheld from wages as will any voluntary deductions.

Payroll Deductions for Federal Tax, State Tax, FICA and Medicare

 As required by law, *ELC* withholds taxes from employee earnings, as well as social security (FICA) and Medicare.

**Working Away from School**

 The Early Learning Center DOES NOT allow employees to work from home, travel or purchase items after worked hours.

**Reporting Personal Information Changes**

 Employees must notify the Early Learning Center whenever there is a change in their personal information on file with the Early Learning Center*.* This includes address, phone number, income tax withholding information, emergency contacts and if applicable, any information which may impact your insurance coverage.

**Visitors**

 Due to the nature of our business, security clearances and non-disclosure agreements with our clients, visitors are not allowed in production or restricted areas. All visitors who are not visiting for business purposes will be restricted to the regular lobby area. All business visitors must have authorization to enter production areas. See your immediate supervisor for authorization. Notify a supervisor immediately if you become aware of any unauthorized visitors.

**Personal Property**

 *The Early Learning Center* is not responsible for personal property of employees in facilities, vehicles or parking areas. Any personal items brought on premises deemed inappropriate by the Early Learning Center will be removed without notice. As always, be considerate of the school’s image as well as your image with parents and co-workers.

**Personal Safety**

 At the Early Learning Center *the* safety of our employees is a top priority. We will make every effort possible to ensure the safest working environment possible. If you have suggestions or concerns, discuss them with your immediate supervisor. If you feel you are in danger performing your job duties, stop working and report the hazard to your immediate supervisor. Failure to comply with all health, safety and environment policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Food & Beverage**

 Without exception, food and beverage is strictly prohibited within immediate proximity of any computers, servers, related hardware, application storage areas or production equipment. In all other areas, employees should be mindful of potential center visitors within the work area. Meals should be eaten in the specified lunch area.

**Smoking**

 Smoking is prohibited on the Early Learning Centerproperty.

**Confidential Information Security**

 As a matter of course employees of the Early Learning Centermay have access to confidential and personal information regarding our children and/or their parents and families. It is a condition of employment that you not disclose this information to third parties during or after employment. Disclosure of the Early Learning Center confidential information without express written approval is prohibited.

**Facilities Security**

 Kids First staff and the administration of the Early Learning Center will secure the building at the end of the school day. Please wrap up your work in the classroom by 5:45 so that the security system can be set.

 Teachers are responsible for securing their own classroom doors and outdoor classroom doors.

 If you see any potential security risks please report to your immediate supervisor.

**Cell Phone Usage**

 Employees must restrict personal calls during work time, and should use personal cell phones only during scheduled breaks or lunch periods in non-working areas.  Employees should inform their friends and family members that personal calls should only be made during non-work time.  Employees are encouraged to use their cell phones in ways that benefit parent-teacher communication, i.e. taking photos for daily emails, staying in contact with parents should situations arise, etc. However, use of cellphones above and beyond the adult professional standard to which all employees are held is considered inappropriate and may result in disciplinary action. The cell phone should be stored in a safe place.  The Early Learning Center is not responsible for the loss of personal cell phones.

 Personal calls/text messaging is restricted to your break times and should not interfere with the employee’s work.  Please let your friends and family know that you are not available during work hours. If an emergency happens, please let them know they can reach you through the Early Learning Center office at 970-920-9201.

**Conservation and Recycling**

 Conserving energy and resources is a priority at the Early Learning Center. Employees are requested to conserve power and water in all reasonable ways. Recycling containers are provided throughout the facility for collection. Containers are marked for various materials. Please be certain to separate all recyclables and put them into the appropriate containers

**Internet**

 Company computer systems, connected to the internet, are connected for business purposes only. Accessing the internet for personal use is prohibited. Employees are expressly prohibited from allowing any third party to use company provided computers or internet services.

 Conducting company business on the internet must be done following all guidelines and policies for conducting business in conventional settings.

Do not expect privacy on company computers. Our software and systems have the capability of tracking each visit, each email, each chat and each file transfer, by every computer on the system.

 The Early Learning Centermaintains the right to limit internet access. The Early Learning Centerwill comply with any reasonable requests from law enforcement to review internet activities of any employee.

 While accessing the internet, employees should be fully aware of the global reach of the media. Employees are required to maintain a high level of dignity and be mindful that they represent *ELC* to the world at large while online.

Technology / IPads

 Every employee who uses the classroom IPad purchased by the Early Learning Center must sign an agreement that they understand the terms and conditions of the use of the IPads. The use of the IPad is restricted to :

* Use in the classroom for school use only. It **may not** be taken off the premises.
* All IPads must be placed on the IPad charging locker in the office every night by 5:30pm.
* Use for the observation, documentation, and assessment of children and communication of this information to families.
* Use for work related purposes only. It may not be used for personal use, games or applications.
* Staff of the Early Learning Center will be held liable for their classroom’s IPad with the understanding that if the IPad is lost, stolen, or damaged. The cost to replace an IPad is $650, which falls with equal weight to all the teachers who share it.

**Social Media**

 Social media is defined as online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information.  Some of the most popular social media are Facebook, Twitter, My Space, Linkedin and Digg.

 While social media can keep you connected with a broad range of colleagues and friends they also have inherent risks.

* Once information is released into cyberspace it is GONE FOREVER and CAN NEVER BE RETRIEVED.  It can be copied and passed to hundreds of people in a fraction of a second.
* You may think social media posts are private but they are NEVER PRIVATE.  They can be copied by your friends and passed to people you don’t know.

 Staff of the Early Learning Center are prohibited from posting anything onto any type of social network except for emails to parents. A staff member who posts information or photos on a social networking site will be given further assessment  and will be given subject to termination. For marketing and communicative purposes the Early Learning Center administration has the right to post applicable information pertaining to children. As your employer, we reserve the right to review sites to ensure adherence to this policy.

**Computers and Related Equipment**

 The Early Learning Centerprovides employees access to computers, printers and other equipment on an as-needed basis, to perform their job requirements. This equipment is to be used exclusively for the business activities of the Early Learning Center. Employees found to be using computer equipment for personal use may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

* Employees shall not use company systems to knowingly violate any the Early Learning Center,state, or federal laws.
* Computer games and personal software may not be installed on company equipment.
* Company equipment shall not be used to create or store personal information or projects.
* Company equipment shall not be used to store or display images depicting violence, sexually explicit material or racially offensive material.
* Software installed on company computers must be properly licensed and installed only upon approval of the Director.
* Employees are not permitted to download any software (free or otherwise) without express permission from the Director.

 When working with ELC supplies, equipment and materials, please use caution and care.  Our equipment and supplies are expensive to purchase and repair. Please treat equipment as if it were your own.

 The Director and Office Manager’s computers are not to be used by teaching staff at any time.  The Early Learning Center provides a computer for teaching staff use. This computer is primarily for planning and research, but can be used for personal reasons during breaks only if other staff members do not need access for school business.

**Company Equipment**

 Company property, such as printers, copiers, computers, tools, and equipment are to be used for Early Learning Centerbusiness purposes only. Unauthorized use of equipment may result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Acceptable | Unacceptable |
| Computer | - Creating lesson plans during nap time- Utilize computer to further develop classroom curriculum | - Creating lesson plans during circle time or group activity- Utilize computer for any number of unproductive purposes including but not limited to: social media, games, and internet browsing |
| Email | - Using class email address to send out daily email to parents- Contacting specific parents about issues that have arisen over the course of the day | - Using personal email to contact colleagues, friends, and/or family about topics unrelated to the workplace- Breaching parent-teacher confidence via email |

**Visual Technology**

 Cameras, televisions, camcorders and stereos should augment the classroom environment and children’s learning; however, these technologies are to be viewed as sources of education and communication, not informal sources of entertainment.  Please keep the children’s best interests in mind regarding the use of these technologies.  If management feels you are taking advantage of these materials, they will be removed from your classroom.

Employees are permitted to use the copy machine and fax machine for personal reasons on a very limited basis.  Permission should be received from the Director or Assistant Director.

**Email & Electronic Communication**

* Company provided email is provided for business purposes only. Personal use should be kept to an absolute minimum.
* All emails, sent or received, are company records and as such, are accessible to appropriate staff members.
* No anonymous emails can be sent from company systems. All employees are required to identify themselves by name and email address.
* Chat room participation is prohibited except for business related forums which require approval from the Director.

**Email Etiquette**

 Daily emails are one of the best ways to communicate with parents about daily curriculum and extracurricular activities.  These emails should be utilized to alert parents to the week’s plans, as well as to share valuable information relating to future events. These emails should be clear, concise, and professional.  No images, voice recordings or names are to be released in the emails without parental consent. Please make sure that your records are up to date concerning children in your class in this regard.

Policies for Leave of Absence

**Eligibility**

 Paid and non-paid leave of absence may be available to employees working at the Early Learning Center. To be considered for a leave of absence the employee must be a full time employee and have completed a minimum of ninety (90) days continuous employment with the Early Learning Center. Full time employees are employees who have been assigned a regular 36 hours per week work shift. Employees scheduled for less than 36 hours weekly are not eligible. The Early Learning Centerreserves the right to, without notice; revise these leave of absence policies.

If you have questions contact The Early Learning Center’s Director.

**Personal Leave of Absence**

 The Early Learning Centerwill make every reasonable effort to consider personal leaves of absence. Apply for unpaid personal leave of absence authorization from the Early Learning Center. Many factors are considered when determining eligibility for personal leave of absence and is granted or denied solely at the discretion of the Early Learning Center. When granted, the maximum allowable is 30 days per calendar year.

**Sick Leave**

 An employee who must be absent due to an illness should notify the office immediately. For those who are scheduled for the opening shift, you must contact the Director at home. The employee will receive up to 5 days sick leave per school year (35 hours). This time cannot be cashed out or used for vacation time. If the employee has not used the time by the end of the school year (August 30th) the time is forfeited. If an employee is out longer than 5 days, they may then use vacation pay or take time unpaid. Any employee that is out longer than 3 days must bring in a doctor’s note to the office. If you are sick and unable to attend work or if you must leave before the end of your shift because of illness, notify your immediate supervisor as early as reasonably possible. *If an employee is having a pattern of absences that goes far above the 5 granted sick days a supervisor can ask for a doctors note on the first day.*

**Personal Time**

 The Early Learning Centerdoes not offer paid personal time as part of compensation packages. Hours not worked will be deducted from the employee's check.

**Unpaid Family & Medical Leave**

 Early Learning Centeremployees may be eligible to take unpaid family medical leave. All requests are considered individually and approval of such leave is subject to the circumstances for the leave, the amount of time off requested, and the needs of the Early Learning Center.

**Funeral Leave**

 The Early Learning Centerwill provide reasonable time off for employees to attend funerals of friends and loved ones. In the event of a death in the immediate family of the employee, up to three days paid or unpaid time off may be granted to attend to family matters and funeral arrangements. Additional unpaid time off may also be granted. Contact the Early Learning Center concerning your specific needs.

**Jury Duty**

 Notify your immediate supervisor if you are summoned for jury duty. Time off from work will be granted as necessary in compliance with applicable law.

**Military Duty**

 In accordance with requirements of law, the Early Learning Centerwill provide military leave of absence and reinstatement for qualifying employees. The Early Learning Centerwill provide eligible employees up to two weeks paid leave for military leave of absence.

**Severe Weather Closings**

 In the event the school must close for the day due to severe weather or emergencies, the director will make every reasonable effort to notify you. Employees will be paid for the day up to a maximum of three days. If weather conditions are so severe that you are unable to travel to work, contact your immediate supervisor. Employees will be paid for the day when these instances arise and travel restrictions can be independently confirmed.

Benefits

**Overview**

 Benefits to employees are provided at the will of the Early Learning Centerand the Early Learning Center reserves the right to modify or eliminate benefits without notice under conditions of law. The benefits listed herein are intended to be a general description only. Details of specific benefits are outlined in the documentation for the benefit program.

**Eligibility**

 To qualify for benefits an employee must be considered full time and have completed a minimum of ninety (90) days continuous employment with the Early Learning Center. To qualify for vacation benefits a full time employee must have completed six (6) months of  continuous employment. Full time employees are employees who have been assigned a regular 36 hours and over per week work shift. Employees scheduled for less than 36 hours weekly are not eligible. The Early Learning Centerreserves the right to, without notice, revise these eligibility requirements.

**Group Medical Insurance**

 Following the successful completion of 60-days of employment, employees are eligible to participate in the Early Learning Center group health care plan. See Appendix for information on the current plan. Employees must complete the enrollment/waiver paperwork within 30 days of the end of the introductory period. Outside of this 30-day period, changes to participation in the group health insurance can be made only during the open enrollment period. Please contact the Director for information regarding qualifying events.

 The Early Learning Center pays 75% of employee premiums. Employees are responsible for the unpaid portion of their premium and 100% of premium for any dependents added to plan. Employee premiums are automatically deducted from the paycheck, on a pre-tax basis through the Flexible Spending Plan.

**Life Insurance Policies**

 Life Insurance Policies are available through AFLAC or Principle.

**AFLAC**

 The Early Learning Center sponsors AFLAC supplemental insurance plans for cancer, dental, long-term care, intensive care, hospital indemnity, accident, disability and life insurance. Employees are eligible after the successful completion of 60-days employment and are responsible for 100% premiums. The AFLAC agent will visit you at the Early Learning Center near the end of the 60-day period to explain coverage available. The employee must contact the agent directly. Please remember that this coverage is supplemental and should not be considered replacement for medical insurance.

**Wellness Benefit**
 The Early Learning Center will reimburse $500.00 towards a staff wellness memberships or passes. The membership or pass needs to be approved by the office staff before purchase is made. If a staff member takes advantage of this benefit and terminates employment before January of the school year they are responsible for paying the school back in full. After May of the school year if an employee terminates employment they are responsible to pay back 50% of the money paid by the Early Learning Center, and during the summer 25%.

**Worker’s Compensation**

 State and federal law governs eligibility requirements. Claims are paid directly to employees. All employees are expected to return to work immediately upon release by their physician when they are able to perform the essential functions of their previous or a new or modified job.

 Employees are required to report job-related injuries immediately. Failure to comply could result in difficulty with the employee’s claim.

Report to your immediate supervisor all accidents or injuries.

**Holidays**

 *The Early Learning Center* provides the following holiday schedule for all employees. Eligible employees qualify for paid holiday days. Non-qualifying employees are required to take the days off without pay unless otherwise approved in writing by your immediate supervisor.

Holiday Schedule: The Early Learning Center is closed on the following Holidays of the 2019-2020 School Year. \*Please see academic calendar

 Employees wishing to observe alternative national-origin holidays or religious holidays not listed in the Holiday Schedule must obtain permission from their immediate supervisor for time away from work.

**Vacations**

 The Early Learning Centerprovides paid vacation time for full-time eligible employees as provided below.

To qualify for vacation benefits, a full time employee must have completed six (6) months of continuous employment. On the first day of the fiscal quarter following a new employee’s six(6) month anniversary of being continuously employed by the Early Learning Center, the new employee will earn five days (35 hours) of paid vacation leave.  Thereafter, the eligible employee will earn vacation time as provided in the chart below.

 Eligible employees earn vacation time on a quarterly basis, and can be used once earned. Vacation days are earned on the last day of each fiscal quarter (see chart below). The employee must be employed on the last day of the quarter to earn the quarterly vacation days.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Years with the Early Learning Center  | Number of Vacation Days |
|  | Per Quarter | Maximum Accrued |
| 0-1 years | 2.5 (after 6 months of continuous employment) | 10 |
| 1-2 years | 3 | 12 |
| 2-3 years | 3.5 | 14 |
| 3+ years | 3.75 | 15 |

 An employee stops earning vacation time if they have accrued unused vacation time equal to the Maximum Accrued vacation days (see chart above).  Employees are encouraged to take a vacation every year. For full-time eligible employees whose first day of work was before 8/5/2013, the Maximum Accrued vacation days is 20 days (earned at a rate of 5 days per fiscal quarter). Vacation time will not be paid in lieu of taking time off.  Upon termination of employment, employees receive pay for earned unused vacation.

 Employees are encouraged to plan vacation time with as much advance of notice as possible. Vacation time must be requested in writing and approved in advance by the Director. Vacation time can only be taken in a maximum two week increments, regardless how much vacation time the employee has earned or accrued.  If the employee has accrued more than two weeks of vacation time, increments of more than two weeks of vacation at a time may be requested, and may be granted to the employee on a case by case basis as long as the essential functions of the school are maintained. The Early Learning Center’s fiscal year runs from September 1 through August 31.

 September 1 of each school year vacation time resets. *Unused vacation time can be rolled over to the school year. 20 paid vacation days are the max amount of vacation that can be used in a year.*

**Simple IRA**

 Any employee who received at least $5,000 in compensation during the preceding calendar year and who is reasonably expected to receive at least $5,000 in compensation during the calendar year, is eligible to participate in the SIMPLE IRA plan.  Employees will be eligible for up to a maximum match of 3% of your income after their first year of employment. By agreeing to this 3% match, employees are allowing ELC to take 3% out of his/her paycheck bi-weekly for the Fidelity Simple IRA plan. The total amount of 6% (3% match and 3% deferred income) will be invested for your retirement each month. Employees are responsible for the management of their simple IRA investments.

 The Early Learning Center has the right to opt out of matching the employee retirement plan if the Early Learning Center is not financially able to contribute the employee's retirement plan. This benefit runs on a calendar year from January to December.

**Required Continuing Education**

 If you are employed in a position that requires ongoing training per state regulations the Early Learning Centerfacilitates these requirements at their costs and you will be paid for attending such training.

**Continuing Education Assistance**

 Licensing requires a minimum of 15 clock hours of training each year and each staff member is required to have an annual staff development plan. All 15 hour in-service training will be done in house. Employees are encouraged to seek training opportunities beyond these minimum requirements at their own will.  Additional funds may be available from other sources, such as Kids First or TEACH scholarships. For all training opportunities, other sources of funds should be explored before the Early Learning Center funds any portion of the cost.

 Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information before registering for any training. Employees should consider their daily work schedule when choosing a training opportunity and discuss any conflicts with the Director. Funding may not be available, in full or in part, due to limited budget.

 Employees are required to complete and sign a Professional Growth Reimbursement Agreement. Due to the limited budget, employees are required to remain in the Early Learning Center employment for a 6 month time period after completion of training. If the time requirement is not met, the cost must be reimbursed to the Early Learning Center.

Discipline Policies

**Discipline Policy**

 Acceptable forms of discipline at The Early Learning Center are based on natural and logical consequences. As much as possible the discipline should be the natural result of the child’s action rather than an enforcement of the staff member’s will. We always attempt to explain to the child how their actions have resulted in the situation and consequences. We also model the behaviors we want children to emulate.

Acceptable forms of discipline are:

1. Distraction
2. Redirection
3. Removal from the situation
4. A child given space to allow the child to gather themselves together- never as a punishment.
5. Holding in an extreme temper tantrum

 An effort is made at the end of a discipline situation to re-establish positive relations with the child without undermining the discipline. We are consistent and demonstrate gentle care when following through on our promises.

**Following forms of discipline shall NOT be used:**

Corporal punishment, including but limited to the following:

* 1. Striking a child, directly or with any physical object
	2. Shaking, showing, spanking or other forms of aggressive contact
	3. Harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional and physical.
	4. Depriving of food or rest

Violation of any of the above may result in immediate dismissal.

Problem Resolutions

If a parent or a staff member has a worry, concern, suggestion, or complaint, we want to address the problem immediately and directly. Please follow the following procedure:

1. If the problem is simple or minor, please talk directly to the person involved. Talk with an open mind and a willingness to listen and compromise if possible.
2. If the situation does not get resolved at that time, please go to the director. Schedule an appointment and review the problem and what steps you have taken to try to work things out.
3. If the meeting with the director does not solve the problem, the next step is to go to the Early Learning Center Board of Directors.
4. The Early Learning Center Board of Directors has the final authority regarding all parent and/or staff differences and disputes.

If a parent or a staff member believes that a Early Learning Center school policy or procedure is wrong, unfair, or not correct then they need to follow this procedure:

1. Write down the policy or rule or situation that you feel needs to be changed.
2. Write down the reasons you believe there needs to be an adjustment or change in the policy, situation, or regulation.
3. Write down how you would change the policy so that your concerns are addressed. Specifically, what would you do differently and how would you 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 Early Learning Center Board of Directors has the final authority regarding all Early Learning Center School policies.
7. Any problems not resolved locally, or any suspected licensing violations, can be referred to the Dept. of Human Services, Division of Child Care, 1575 Sherman St., First Floor, Denver, Colorado, 80203-1714, and the phone number is (970) 434-7045.

**Violation of Company Policy**

 Employees found to be in violation of company policy will be given official notice of the infraction. All reasonable attempts to resolve the problem will be made to constructively resolve the situation. Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken if the violation requires it or if violations continue.

 Employees who believe they have been falsely charged with an infraction can appeal the charge to the Board President. All appeals must be in writing clearly defining the reason you believe the charge was false. The President will review all available information and make a ruling. All decisions of the Board President are final.

Notices of violation, appeals and final disposition documentation may become a permanent record in the employee’s personnel file.

Termination of Employment

**Termination**

 Employees of the Early Learning Centerare not given tenure. The employee of the Early Learning Centermay choose to terminate employment at any time. Employees choosing to terminate their employment with the Early Learning Center are required to return all company property to their immediate supervisor before leaving the premises on their final day of employment. Upon receipt of all company owned property, the employee will receive their final paycheck including any earned vacation pay, if applicable. If 6 months since completion of classes has not passed the employee will be responsible to pay the Early Learning Center back the fees paid by the school for continuing education. This amount will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

 The Early Learning Centermay terminate employment at any time for any reason. If an employee is terminated for a severe violation of policy they will be escorted from the premises immediately. Any personal property, plus their final paycheck including any earned vacation pay, if applicable, will be given to the employee upon receipt of all company owned property.

 The Early Learning Centerconsiders personnel files confidential. Any request for employment confirmation will be provided only with employment dates and positions held.

   

Staff Handbook Acknowledgement

 Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

 This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

 Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

 I\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have received the Early Learning Center Staff Handbook, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the Early Learning Center Admin. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Staff Handbook and to ask center admin for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the Early Learning Center Staff Handbook that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature/ Date



Admin Staff Signature/ Date

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