

**Columbus Early Learning Centers**

**Family Guide**

**TAX ID # 31-4379619**

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Dear Families,

Welcome to Columbus Early Learning Centers (CELC)! We have been providing nurturing care and meaningful early learning experiences to our city’s children for over 130 years. Our tradition of affordable access to high-quality early childhood and school-age education has strengthened the lives of thousands of children and families and the communities in which they live. Our program provides nurturing relationships, positive interactions with peers, stimulating learning environments, child-directed play, enriching experiences with community partners, and nutritious meals.

This handbook has been written to help you understand the policies and procedures, as well as privileges and opportunities, at CELC. It is very important that you read this handbook and keep it handy as long as your child is enrolled in our program. It will answer many of the questions you may have about CELC. CELC does make updates to this handbook at least annually. We will post changes to our website immediately and reprint the handbook every August to distribute at the beginning of our school year.

If you require information in a language other than English, please speak to an administrator. If you have questions, please talk to an administrator for clarification; we are here as a support to you and your family.

We want you to think of CELC as much more than a child care center! We are a school with a curriculum based on developmentally appropriate practices and qualified teachers who work hard to individualize your child’s learning experiences. **Please try to have your child arrive at CELC by 9:00 am so that he or she won’t miss out on valuable learning time!**

The information contained in this handbook is intended to help us work in partnership to care for your children; it does not create any contractual rights or obligations for staff or families. Because CELC is subject to various external legal and regulatory agencies, the information in this handbook may be subject to change at any time. When changes must occur, every effort will be made to keep families well informed. Our formal ways of sharing information with families are through the handbook, website, mail, memos, and newsletters. However, we feel the best way for you to know about our program is to talk with us. Someone is always available to respond to your questions, concerns, and comments. It is important to us that you feel you are always welcome and that we are partners with you in supporting your child’s growth and development.

Sincerely,

Columbus Early Learning Centers

**About Us**

**Our Mission:**

Columbus Early Learning Centers is committed to doing what it takes to deliver the best early learning experiences and family support so that every child we serve succeeds in school and in life.

**Our Values:**

* Access to all families through affordable tuition structure
* Access to all children, particularly those at risk for later school challenges
* Mutually respectful environment in which children, families and staff work together toward success
* Nurturing family atmosphere in which children, families and staff are physically and emotionally safe and secure
* Inclusive environment in which diversity of people and ideas is an organizational commitment
* Evidence-based curriculum emphasizing meaningful play, exploration and discovery
* Continuous professional development of qualified staff
* Reflective thinking, creative problem-solving and innovation
* Community collaboration
* Responsible, efficient financial and business practices
* Relentless advocacy for children, families, staff and early childhood education

**Our History**

In December 1886, a meeting was held in the chapel of the First Presbyterian Church to discuss plans to offer child care to working families. Those plans became reality when on January 23, 1887 two children were provided with child care services by The Women’s Educational and Industrial Union. During the first year of operation 11 children were served. Families with one child paid five cents per day; those with three children were given a discount at twelve cents per day.

**CELC Timeline**

1887 – Day Nursery opens at 65 S. Fourth St.

1892 – Day Nursery moves to 266 Oak Street

1904 – Ohio Ave. Day Nursery opens at 162 N. Ohio Ave

1917 – Ohio Ave. Day Nursery building erected through the Tuttle Fund, a legacy from Miss Catherine Tuttle

1923 – Mrs. William Miller donates land and funding for the Northside Day Nursery on Third Ave.

1927 – Mrs. William Miller donates funding and land for the Westside Day Nursery on N. Grubb St

1937 – Mary Miller Lodge completed at Westside Day Nursery

1992 – Broad St. Infant and Toddler Center opened in Broad St. Presbyterian Church

2007 – Northside Child Development Center and Westside-Eastside Child Care Centers Association merge to form Columbus Early Learning Centers

2013 – Northside and Westside Centers close in order to build a sustainable future for CELC

2014 – Eastside Center moves to new location at 240 N. Champion Ave.

2017 – CELC opened a preschool classroom at Linden’s Early Childhood Education Center

2018 -- CELC incorporated the Broad Street Achievement Program offering afterschool care and school-age summer programming

**Center Operations and Emergency Policies**

**Operations**

Columbus Early Learning Centers currently operates out of four locations. CELC is a licensed child care

provider in the state of Ohio and all centers participate in a voluntary quality rating and improvement

system (Step Up to Quality). Our centers are open Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM until 6:00 PM.

CELC observes national holidays and the centers close periodically to provide professional

development to its staff. A comprehensive CELC Holiday Schedule is included in your enrollment

packet and available upon request from your Center Director.

CELC is responsible for adhering to all state guidelines for licensed child care centers; including staff

education and training mandates, health and safety guidelines, and child development guidelines.

As such, all CELC staff members are trained in licensing requirements and held to strict health and

safety standards. All child care staff members are trained in First Aid, CPR, Communicable Disease

Recognition and Prevention, and Child Abuse Recognition. All centers are smoke free and firearms

are forbidden to be on our grounds.

**Center Program Information**

**CELC Locations**

**East Broad Street Champion Avenue**

**Broad Street Presbyterian Church Champion Intergenerational Center**

**760 East Broad Street 240 North Champion Avenue**

**Columbus, OH 43205 Columbus, OH 43203**

**614-221-6102 614-253-5525**

**shannah@columbusearlylearning.org awilcox@columbusearlylearning.org**

**East Main Street Linden Early Childhood Education Center**

**Central Community House Former Linden Park Elementary School**

**1150 East Main Street 1400 Myrtle Avenue**

**Columbus, OH 43205 Columbus, OH 43211**

**614-253-7267 614-365-7962**

**mwilson@columbusearlylearning.org gmilligan@columbusearlylearning.org**

Check out our website at [www.columbusearlylearning.org](http://www.columbusearlylearning.org) for updates to this guide, family and community events, and helpful information about child development! Like us on Facebook to get updates on what the children and teachers are learning!

You will find the following information on the Parent Bulletin Board that is located near the front entrance door at the center.

* Center name, address, and phone number
* Days and hours of operation
* ODJFS Child Care License & Administrator’s Office hours
* Menus
* Staff/Child ratios and group sizes
* ODJFS licensing inspection reports

**Our Staff**

The staff of Columbus Early Learning Centers works together to support the mission, values, goals and policies of Columbus Early Learning Centers (CELC). Our goal is to promote a mutually respectful center environment in which children, families, and staff work together toward success. All CELC staff must undergo rigorous background checks and be examined and found fit for duty by a medical practitioner.

**Lead Teachers** are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the classroom. It is the Lead Teacher’s job to ensure that Ohio’s child care licensing rules are followed to maintain safety in the classroom. Lead Teachers are also responsible for creating lesson plans that follow the Ohio Department of Education’s Early Learning and Development Standards and assessing and guiding children’s growth and development.

**Assistant Teachers** are responsible for assisting the Lead Teacher in the day-to-day operations of the classroom. In the absence of the Lead Teacher, the Assistant Teacher assumes responsibility for the classroom.

**Teacher’s Aides** are responsible for assisting in classrooms as needed, acting as substitutes for other members of the teaching team, supporting classroom routines and structures, and providing responsive caregiving.

**Administrative Team**

**Executive Director**serves as leader of the agency and is responsible for: business operations, facility management, regulatory agency compliance, communication, fundraising, outreach, and community relations.

**Director of Finance** is responsible for accounting, technology, and human resources services.

**Director of Program Operations** isresponsible for supporting the center directors and managing the uniform operation of contract and government regulation across all centers.

**Projects Director** is responsible for overseeing the personnel and budgets for supplemental projects.

**Development Director** manages all aspects of development, marketing, and volunteer coordination for the agency.

**Center Directors**are responsible for the day-to-day operations of each facility concentrating on quality programming, staff development, family involvement and volunteer management.

**CELC Board of Directors**

The Board plays a crucial role in the governance of our organization. Our Board consists of elected volunteers who are committed to our mission in the community. The Board determines strategic direction and actions to advance the mission, establishes management policies and procedures, assures that adequate human and financial resources are available and actively monitors the operational and programmatic performance.

**Emergency Procedures**

Columbus Early Learning Centers may need to close for emergency situations or inclement weather. If

CELC closes, it will notify parents by using the automated REMIND messaging system or posting the

closing on Channel 10 WBNS news. We also ask parents who are unsure of the weather conditions

to call the center to make sure it is open before venturing out in bad weather.

The Emergency Plan for medical, dental, and general emergencies is located at each center in all

classrooms and licensed spaces. CELC has procedures to follow in the event that an emergency

would occur during operating hours. Written instructions are posted in each classroom, describing

emergency evacuation routes and the procedures to follow. In order to prepare children for the

unlikely need to evacuate, CELC conducts monthly fire drills and periodic tornado and lock-down drills.

In the unlikely event we would need to evacuate for a period of time due to a fire, weather conditions, or

the loss of power, heat or water, our off-site Evacuation Assembly Points are:

* Broad Street: Nova Care Rehabilitation – 720 E. Broad St., Columbus OH 43215
* Champion Ave: Poindexter Place Apartments – 231 N. Champion Avenue, Columbus OH 43203
* East Main St: East Central Health Center – 1180 East Main St., Columbus, OH 43205
* Linden ECE Center: Linden Community Center 1254 Briarwood Ave., Columbus, OH 43211

A sign will be posted on the front door of the child care center indicating that we have evacuated and

noting the location where you can pick up your child. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible via the

Remind Alert System.

**It is very important that families notify CELC immediately of any new phone numbers, address changes,**

**or changes to a child’s Authorized Release paperwork. In the event of an emergency, we need to have**

**the correct contact information. Please see your Center Director if you need to make changes.**

**Any and all changed to a child’s Authorized Release form must be done in writing and in person by**

**the child’s parent or guardian. Changes may not be made over the telephone.**

**Enrollment Information**



**Eligibility and Enrollment**

CELC does not discriminate in the enrollment of children on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability or family composition. A child is considered to be enrolled at CELC only after the administrator confirms the availability of space, the paperwork is received, and an enrollment meeting is completed.

CELC is licensed through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The state requires the following paperwork to be completed, reviewed by the administrator of the child care center, and on file prior to the child’s first day of attendance:

* Enrollment & Health Information for Child Care Centers (JFS 01234)
* Authorized Release Form
* Child Medical Statement for Child Care (JFS 01305) and a current copy of immunizations\*
* Any legal custody or parenting agreement
* Birth Certificate or legal verification of birth paperwork from government agency

***\*CELC’s Afterschool Program does not require children to provide a Child Medical Statement for Child Care (JFS 01305), but we do require proof of immunizations for all enrolled children.***

**CELC requires parents/guardians to grant permission for emergency transportation on the Enrollment and Health form**. Any change to contact information must be communicated to the office immediately so that current information is always on file. Families will be asked to review and update their information annually. The Child Medical Statement must be updated annually.

Columbus Early Learning Centers also requires the following forms to be completed and on file before the child’s first day of attendance:

* Permission for Photo Release
* Family Information
* Demographic Survey
* Payment agreement
* Routine Trip Permission Forms (vary by center location)

**What to bring to CELC**

* Because children in our program are interacting with their environments, it is important that they wear functional play clothes that can get dirty or messy. Sturdy shoes made for active play will provide safety and comfort. We ask that children do not wear flip flops or sandals.
* All children will need to bring at least one extra set of clothing in case of accidents. Families with infants and toddlers must supply diapers and wipes as well as necessary extras during potty-training times. Families should check with classroom staff for additional details.
* Children are often comforted by items from home. For toddler and preschool naptime we encourage small, travel-sized pillows and cot-sized blankets; we do not have appropriate storage space for larger items. Infant rooms furnish all crib linens. Children may also bring comfort items such as small stuffed animals or dolls; however, infants may not have these items placed in their cribs.
* School aged children are encouraged to bring homework assignments, text books, and reading material so child care staff members can assist them with their school assignments.

**What NOT to bring to CELC**

* Please do not use your cell phones in our buildings. It is very important to take the time to wish your child well at drop-off and check in with our teachers when you are here.
* Please do not bring your child’s personal toys (other than comfort items listed above) to the center unless a teacher has specifically asked that your child bring something to share with the class (Show and Tell Day, etc.). Columbus Early Learning Center is not responsible for any toy that your child brings to the center.
* Please do not give your child food that is not being served by the Center. If your child is having breakfast or snack in the car or on the way to the center, please dispose of it before entering the building.
* Please do not bring lotions, hand sanitizer, medication, etc. to the center in your child’s backpack or diaper bag. It is against ODJFS licensing rules for us to have them on the premises and accessible to children.
* Please do not dress your child in expensive clothing. Remember, your child’s work here is to play and play can be messy! CELC is not responsible for any clothing that is stained or damaged while your child is at the center.
* No firearms, ammunition, knives, or weapons of any kind are permitted on CELC property.

**CELC is a drug, alcohol, and smoke free campus. Please refrain from using any of these substances on or around our grounds and when participating in any of our family events.**

**Child Medical Statement for Child Care and Immunization Requirements**

The state of Ohio requires that each child enrolled in a child care center be examined by a medical professional and deemed suitable for participation in group care. Parents are responsible for obtaining this verification prior to the child’s enrollment at CELC and every 13 months thereafter.\*

Children who do not have the required Child Medical Statement for Child Care (JFS 01305) on file as mandated by ODJFS licensing rules will not be permitted to attend the center until the medical statement is on file.\*

Medical professionals will review the child’s immunization records and must attach a copy of these records to the medical statement Children must be immunized against the following diseases:

Chicken pox Mumps

Diphtheria Pertussis

HIB Pneumococcal Diseases

Hepatitis A Polio

Hepatitis B Rotavirus

Influenza Rubella

Measles Tetanus

Child care staff members are also required to be immunized against the following diseases:

Measles Diphtheria

Mumps Tetanus

Rubella Pertussis

***\*CELC’s Afterschool Program does not require children to provide a Child Medical Statement for Child Care (JFS 01305), but we do require proof of immunizations for all enrolled children.***

**Important Note regarding Immunizations: CELC will only accommodate medical exemptions for state-mandated immunizations. For the health and well-being of all enrolled children, we accept only children who have been immunized into our centers. If a certified medical practitioner has made the decision that immunization against a certain disease poses a significant health risk to a child, the parent/guardian must provide written documentation from the medical practitioner stating that the child has not been immunized due to health reasons.**

**Health Concerns for**

**Enrolled Children**



**Children with Health Concerns**

**A Medical/Physical Care Plan (JFS 01236)** is required whenever a physician or parent has determined that a child has a medical condition that requires child care staff to monitor the child or provide supportive care for the condition. It is the family’s responsibility to train all identified staff in the proper care of the child, use of medical or special equipment, and administration of medication. Plans are updated annually or any time a change is indicated.

If the type or extent of treatment for a condition is considered to be beyond the range of services, CELC has the right to deny administration.

**A Request for Administration of Medication for Child Care (JFS 01217)** is required if an enrolled child has a medical or health condition that requires emergency medication to treat a life-threatening condition until trained medical staff can treat the child**.** The Request for Administration of Medication form must be completed and reviewed by the Center Director prior to CELC accepting the medication.

**A Parent/Guardian must provide the medication in its original container along with prescription label, doctor’s dosage orders, and dosing tool BEFORE any medication will be accepted into the center**.

**Medication Guidelines**

CELC may only receive and administer medication to children when the medication is needed to treat a life-threatening condition. Parents or Guardians are solely responsible for administering any and all non-emergency medications, topical products, and food supplements. CELC staff members will not accept any medication, topical product, or food supplement into the center unless a licensed medical professional has documented that the child needs emergency medication to treat a life-threatening condition.

**All medications must be approved by an administrator. Parents must schedule a time to meet with the Center Director to review medication, complete paperwork, and train staff BEFORE medication will be accepted. Children who need emergency medication but have not had medication approved by the Center Director MAY NOT stay at the child care center until the medication has been approved and all necessary paperwork and staff training have been completed.**

**\**School-aged children may carry and administer their own medication as long as child care staff members have been trained on the proper administration and dosing guidelines and all paperwork has been completed, signed, and is on file with the Center Director.***

**Administration of medication by staff --** Only staff members who have been trained by the child’s parent/guardian on proper procedure will administer medications. The medication will be administered according to the directions on the Request for Administration of Medication (JFS 01217) form. Staff will record the time(s) the medication is given and will sign the form after each administration.

The child must have received at least one dose of medication prior to CELC staff member administering medication unless it is an emergency medication.

**Storage of Medication**

Medication will be stored in a designated area inaccessible to children.\*

**Medication or topical preparations may NOT be stored in a child’s cubby, diaper bag or book bag.**

Medications that are no longer needed or that have expired will be returned to the family.

**\**School-aged children may carry and administer their own medication as long as child care staff members have been trained on the proper administration and dosing guidelines and all paperwork has been completed, signed, and is on file with the Center Director.***

**Illness & Caring for Sick Children**

**Prevention**

* Staff completes a Management of Communicable Disease course and uses this information to observe each child daily upon arrival for signs of illness.
* Staff receives instruction on and implements proper hand washing and sanitation techniques. Children are also assisted in proper hand washing throughout the day.
* Staff or children who are diagnosed with a communicable disease cannot attend until treated for the illness.
* Families are notified if a staff member or enrolled child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease and given written instructions on how to notice symptoms of that illness.

**Management**

All children are observed as they enter the center to quickly assess their general health. **We ask that you do not bring a sick child to the center.**  In order to keep everyone healthy, we will send children who are ill home. Please plan ahead and have a backup care plan in place if you are not able to take time off from work or school to stay home with your child.

**When a child is observed with signs or symptoms of illness, the parent or guardian is immediately notified and should make arrangements to pick up the child within one hour**. The child is cared for in a portion of the classroom isolated from other children yet still within sight and hearing of a staff member. The cot and any linens used will be washed and disinfected before being used again.

When a child is sent home, an Illness Notification form is given to the family. In addition to information about the child’s symptoms, information on when the child may return is recorded on the form. Decisions about when a child may return are determined by the Ohio Department of Health Communicable Diseases Chart posted in the center**. Children must be symptom and fever free without the aid of medication for at least 24 hours in order to return.** If they are not symptom free, a physician’s note will be required stating that the child is not contagious. However, physician directions do not over-rule licensing regulations.

CELC will not admit children with the following symptoms and requires that children who develop these symptoms be picked up within one hour:

* Temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit with or without any other signs or symptoms of illness
* Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools in one day)
* Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
* Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eye lashes, burning and/or itching of the eyes
* Difficult or rapid breathing
* Yellowish skin or eyes
* Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
* Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness
* Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
* Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
* Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
* Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
* Inability to participate in normal activities

When a parent notifies CELC that a child has been diagnosed by a physician with a communicable disease, an exposure notice will be posted. Families are urged to consult their own physician for advice about precautions to take with their child.

**Bed Bugs, Head Lice & Fleas**

Head lice, bed bugs, and fleas can easily become epidemics when children share close quarters. It is very important that if your family is having an issue with either one of these common ailments, you let your child’s teacher or Center Director know as soon as possible. We will treat this information with the same confidentiality as we treat all other health-related information about your child. We need to know about the problem so that we can address any potential issues at the center.

We also ask that if you have an active infestation of bed bugs, lice, or fleas you keep your child away from the center until you have completed at least one session of treatment to exterminate them. You will need to show proof of the treatment. Proof can be in the form of a document from a licensed exterminator in the case of bed bugs or fleas and a medical release from a nurse or health care worker in the case of head lice.

**Serious Incidents or Injuries**

Through appropriate supervision and low staff/child ratios, staff is able to prevent many serious incidents, accidents and injuries from occurring.

If an incident, accident or injury does occur, the following steps are taken:

* Most accidents and injuries that occur are minor and can be resolved quickly. Staff members with first aid training respond to the child’s immediate needs.
* An Incident/Injury Report for Child Care Centers (JFS 01299) is completed for any injury or illness that requires first aid. Parents are asked to sign the report upon receipt, a copy of the Incident/Injury Report will be placed in the family’s mailbox, and a copy is kept in the child’s file.
* Any bump or blow to the head or dental injury will be reported to parents, even if it appears to be minor, and an Incident/Injury Report for Child Care Centers (JFS 01299) will be completed.
* If it is determined that the injury or illness may be severe, staff may call 911 immediately or may consult with an administrator to determine if 911 should be called.
* If needed, 911 is called for assistance. The family is contacted at the same time or immediately after the emergency call is placed.
* Emergency personnel or parents will determine further treatment.
* If transportation to a hospital is needed, emergency personnel or parents will provide transportation as indicated on the child’s Enrollment and Health form. Staff will travel with the child if a family member is not present.
* The cost of all medical care is the responsibility of the family.
* Should a serious incident occur, such as a child being exposed to a threatening person or being left unattended, parents will be notified and an Incident/Injury Report for Child Care Centers (JFS 01299) will be written. Serious incidents must also be reported to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services by an administrator.

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**Development and School Readiness for Infants, Toddlers & Preschoolers**



**Curriculum**

Columbus Early Learning Centers uses a research-based, validated curriculum that is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn. The curriculum we use is called ***The Creative Curriculum***. The infant/toddler curriculum focuses on daily routines and experiences while individualizing the curriculum planning for each child. The preschool curriculum is a framework addressing academic content standards as well as focusing on the children’s interests and creativity in the classroom.

*The Creative Curriculum* aligns with the Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards and has its foundation in research that shows that play is the primary way young children develop concepts and understanding about the world. Play provides benefits for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Play helps children develop the skills necessary for critical thinking and leadership. To provide these benefits, play must be consciously facilitated by skilled teachers, who are well‐trained in observing children and in understanding how play contributes to children’s mastery of concepts and skills. This kind of curriculum implementation has several important features:

* It places the child at the center of the experience. Teachers develop environments, activities and experiences that are appropriate for children’s development and will be most engaging for them.
* It is individualized. Because each child in a classroom is unique, teachers develop environments, activities and experiences that enhance the development of each child as an individual.
* It extends and expands children’s interests. Teachers develop environments, activities and experiences that children will be motivated to explore.
* It is flexible. While teachers provide an engaging environment and materials, as well as develop activities and experiences, they must also remain responsive to the unexpected interests and plans of the children themselves.
* It is active. Children use their whole bodies to learn and grow, so teachers plan activities and experiences that meet the needs of the whole child and incorporate indoor, outdoor, large and small environments.
* It encourages family involvement. Teachers work in partnership with families, fully recognizing that the family is the first teacher and family experiences enrich the curriculum.

**Field Trips**

* We will take periodic field trips to enhance our curriculum. Parents must give written permission to allow the child to leave the center and go to the designated destination. The approximate departure time will be noted on the permission slip. If a child arrives to the center after the departure time, the parent may need to provide transportation to the destination or take the child home. CELC cannot guarantee that staff will be available to care for a child who does not go on the trip with his class.
* Child care members maintain strict safety guidelines and ratios during off-site trips. Only approved agencies can provide transportation to child care centers, and all bus drivers must have a background check and papers on file with the center.
* Staff members take a first aid kit, any necessary emergency medications for the group, and a cell phone on all field trips.

**Assessment**

Thoughtful observation and assessment of children helps staff learn more about children’s unique qualities, develop individual goals, plan and implement effective curriculum, and make referrals as appropriate.

Children are observed in authentic ways – in their classrooms, involved in typical activities whenever possible. Observations are used to aid teacher in assessing each child’s development, learning styles, and challenges. Observation and assessments are used for multiple purposes:

* Identifying children’s developmental needs and assisting in setting individualized goals
* Improving curriculum and enhancing teaching practices
* Referral for diagnostic evaluations

The assessment tool used by Columbus Early Learning Centers to assess all enrolled infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children is called Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG). This is an online assessment that aligns with *The Creative Curriculum.* Teachers enter observations about each child into a database and use those observations to monitor each child’s growth and development along a continuum that focuses on 39 learning objectives that have been proven to correlate to academic success. Assessment data is captured approximately every 13 weeks when teachers complete “checkpoints” on each enrolled child. This data is printed in the fall and again in the spring. The printed Individual Child Profile reports are kept in each child’s Education File. Parents may access this data at any time and may give written consent to local education agencies and other professionals to access this data as part of a child’s care plan. CELC may allow state agencies to view this data pursuant to rule 5101:2-17-02 of the Ohio Revised Code, but will redact a child’s identity upon parental request.

Teachers are also required to formally assess each preschool child’s development using Ohio’s Early Learning Assessment. Teachers rate each child’s progress based on observations, work samples, and checklists. This data is also kept in each child’s Education File. Parents may access this data at any time and may give written consent to local education agencies and other professionals to access this data as part of a child’s care plan. CELC may allow state agencies to view this data, pursuant to rule 5101:2-17-2 of the Ohio Revised Code, but will redact a child’s identity upon parental request.

ELA data on all children who participate in the Ohio Department of Education’s Early Childhood Education grant for pre-kindergarten services is reported to the Ohio Department of Education in the fall and spring. Children participating in this program are given identification numbers to protect their privacy.

Parents are welcome to access these observations as well as the curriculum plans for their child’s classroom. If you are interested in having access to TSG, please let your child’s teacher or Center Director know. You will also be invited to participate in at least two formal parent-teacher conferences every year to discuss your child’s development and help set goals for your child.

**Developmental Screening**

At CELC, we provide developmental screening for all children within the first 60 days of enrollment. The screening tool we use is called the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire, or ASQ.** This questionnaire is completed by the child’s parent or guardian, because the parent is the child’s first and most important teacher! It is then scored by trained staff and the results are shared with the family within one week of receiving the completed questionnaire. Parents are provided with a list of activities that will help their children continue to develop and learn. Within 30 days of the screening, CELC will make referrals for children who show signs of struggling in a specific domain so that the parent can get assistance through Help Me Grow, Columbus City Schools, or another provider. Children are subsequently screened at least annually to ensure that they continue to grow and develop.

**Health Screenings (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Schedule)**

The federal government has developed a schedule of recommended procedures to ensure that each child has access to the medical care he or she needs to grow up healthy and strong. CELC encourages parents to be aware of and follow this schedule and to discuss any questions or concerns about their child’s physical growth and development with their health care provider. A copy of this schedule is located in the back of this School Family Guide.

**Preschool Vision Screenings**

With the help of Prevent Blindness Ohio, CELC has trained staff members who can screen a preschool-aged child for vision acuity and binocular vision. Parents are notified of vision screening results and assistance is available to help families find vision specialists if follow up is necessary.

**Preschool Speech and Hearing Screenings**

CELC partners with Columbus Speech & Hearing to provide speech and hearing screenings for preschool children. Parents are notified of speech and hearing screening results in writing and assistance is available to help families find follow up care if needed. Columbus Speech and Hearing’s licensed speech pathologists can also offer speech therapy to children who qualify during school hours.

**Infant and Toddler Screenings**

Infants and toddlers who are enrolled in Early Head Start are required to follow the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment schedule (EPSDT). Family advocates will assist families in the completion of these screenings and getting any follow-up care.

**Daily Schedules**

Children’s daily schedules are flexible enough to provide adaptability when necessary, but structured enough to provide predictability. The goal is for children to see CELC as a place of safety and comfort where they know what to expect and when to expect it. Each classroom develops a schedule to meet the needs of the children in the room based on the program’s overall guidelines and philosophy.

**All children must arrive by 9:00 AM so they can participate in all planned classroom activities with their friends.**

**INFANTS**

Schedules for infants are a guide for the day. Teachers adjust the schedule in order to be responsive to individual children’s needs. Teachers plan individualized activities for infants based on developmental needs and interests.

Parents/Guardians will be asked to complete forms sharing information about the specific needs of each infant and to update that information periodically. A parent may choose to have CELC provide formula (Similac Advanced), provide a different brand of formula, or choose to provide breast milk for infants. Parents will be provided a private place inside the infant classroom to nurse or pump breast milk upon request.

Please Note: Feeding, diapering and napping for infants occur according to each child’s individual needs. CELC staff check/change diapers every two hours unless parents request a different schedule on the Enrollment & Health Information for Child Care Centers (JFS 01234).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **7:00-8:30 am** | Welcome families and children; developmental activities |
| **8:30-9:00 am** | Handwashing and breakfast for older infants |
| **9:00-10:00 am**  **10:00-11:30 am** | Large motor/outside time; snacks on demand  Individualized developmental activities, small group activities |
| **12:00 pm** | Hand washing and lunch for older infants |
| **12:30-1:00 pm** | Story Time, quiet activities |
| **1:00-3:00 pm**  **3:30 pm** | Quiet rest time; developmental activities  Hand washing and PM snack for older infants |
| **4:00-6:00 pm** | Large motor/outside time; individualized and small group activities |

**TODDLERS**

Toddler classroom schedules are more responsive to the whole group experience, although flexibility for individual needs is still a primary consideration.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **7:00-8:30am** | Welcome families and children; table toys |
| **8:30-9:00am** | Hand washing and breakfast |
| **9:00-10:00am**  **10:00-11:30 am** | Large motor/outside time  Individualized developmental activities, small group activities |
| **12:00 pm** | Hand washing and lunch |
| **12:30-1:00pm** | Story Time, restroom/diapering, quiet activities |
| **1:00pm-3:00pm** | Quiet rest time |
| **3:30 pm**  **4:00-6:00 pm** | Hand washing and PM snack  Large motor/outside time, individualized and small group activities |

**PRESCHOOL**

Preschool classrooms reflect the increasing independence of children and emphasize their social nature. Activities are play-based, but teachers use small group interactions and experiences to teach appropriate school-readiness skills such as letter recognition, numeracy, and phonological awareness.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **7:00-8:30 am** | Welcome families and children; self-directed activities |
| **8:30-9:00 am** | Hand washing and breakfast |
| **9:00-11:30 am** | Large Group Activities, Large motor/outside time, self-directed activities |
| **12:00 pm**  **12:30-1:00 pm** | Hand washing and lunch  Story Time, restroom break, quiet activities |
| **1:00-3:00 pm** | Quiet rest time, self-directed activities as children awaken |
| **3:30 pm** | Hand washing and PM snack |
| **4:00-6:00pm** | Large motor/outside time, self-directed activities, small group activities |

**Napping and Resting**

Naptime is an important part of a young child’s day. Young children need approximately 12 hours of sleep each day and typically at least one or two hours is gained through napping. Sleep is a vital need, essential to a child’s health, immune function, growth and development. Sleep enhances emotional health; children who get enough sleep are less prone to behavioral concerns and moodiness. Sleep also enhances alertness, attention and cognitive processes such as memory.

Infants nap on their own schedules; staff will work with families to accommodate individual sleep patterns. Infants must always be placed in their cribs for sleeping and are placed on their back to sleep unless a physician provides written instructions detailing the medical need for an alternate position. CELC furnishes all crib linens; infants may not have other items, such as blankets, stuffed animals or bumper pads, placed in their cribs.

Toddlers and preschoolers are provided with a two hour rest period each day, although not all children will sleep during this time. Children who do not sleep or wake early will be provided with quiet activities on their cots. To make cots more comfortable, we encourage families to bring small, travel-sized pillows and cot-sized blankets. We do not have appropriate storage for larger items. Children are also welcome to bring small stuffed animals, dolls or other small comfort items; however, these items cannot be placed in cribs.

**Child Guidance**

At CELC we strive to provide a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment that enhances young children’s:

* Recognition of themselves as persons of value
* Understanding of individuals who are different from themselves
* Respect for themselves and others
* Development of self‐regulation

In order to grow and develop in these areas, children must engage in relationships with both adults and

peers. Effective relationships and effective learning require effective social skills, emotional regulation skills, and communication skills.

The development of these skills is enhanced by child guidance strategies that:

* Promote pro‐social behavior
* Use appropriate language to communicate needs
* Emphasize problem‐solving
* Effectively use the environment as a primary support structure.

At CELC, child guidance is recognized as essential to helping children grow and learn. All guidance strategies used at CELC are chosen keeping this goal in mind. In addition, strategies are chosen that are responsive to the individual needs of the child. Each administrator, child care staff member, and support personnel is responsible for the appropriate guidance of children and the specifications of child care licensing rule 5101:2-12-22 apply to all CELC employees.

The following child guidance strategies are used:

**Involve the Family:** Parents and teachers are partners in creating successful experiences for children. Parents know their children best and can share important information about their child’s personality as well as the guidance strategies used at home. When concerns arise, teachers and parents work together to develop positive strategies and solutions.

**Provide Predictability and Consistency:** Children are more relaxed and comfortable when they know what to expect in their environment. Teachers provide predictability through the use of daily schedules and effective transitions. They provide consistency by involving children in the development of classroom rules and referring to them often. When teachers speak calmly, explain rationale, and accept children where they are in their development, they create a harmonious classroom environment.

**Listen:** Children need to know that they are valued members of the community and respected for the contributions that they make. Teachers show respect for children’s thoughts and feelings by being on their level physically and giving children their full attention when listening. Teachers also observe carefully for non‐verbal messages and reflect these ideas back to children.

**Problem-Solve:** In order to help children begin to manage their own social challenges, teachers must guide them through the steps many, many times. Teachers help children listen to one another and express their thoughts and feelings appropriately. They help children remain respectful even when upset. They help children develop negotiating skills so that satisfactory solutions can be agreed upon.

**Provide Choices:** Sometimes children’s behavior has unintended negative consequences that can naturally help children choose more effectively the next time. Other times, teachers must construct these choices to prevent children from being hurt or property from being damaged. Teachers may redirect children by diverting their attention to a more appropriate strategy or activity. Teachers may also offer a “limiting response” by stating two appropriate choices and allowing children to make the decision.

**Ensure Safety:** Children’s safety and well‐being is always our primary concern. When children are engaged in any behavior that may be harmful to themselves or others, teachers stop the behavior as quickly as possible and then follow with appropriate guidance strategies. It may be helpful for teachers to remove a child from an area or an activity for a short time, however, CELC does not implement the “time‐out” technique.

**Positive Behavior Support Plans**

Sometimes a child demonstrates a pattern of challenging behavior that is not being successfully guided using typical strategies. Challenging behavior is any behavior that: interferes with a child’s development, learning or success at play; is harmful to the child, other children or adults; and/or puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.

It is of the utmost importance that these challenging behaviors be addressed quickly and effectively. If a teacher believes that a child is demonstrating a pattern of challenging behavior, the following steps will be taken:

* Program staff will inform the family of the concern as soon as possible and collect information to share with the family in a meeting.
* A meeting with the family, teaching staff and administrative staff will be scheduled. The goal of this meeting will be to share information and develop a written Positive Behavior Support Plan, including specific guidance strategies to be used in the classroom to guide behavior in a positive direction. Appropriate follow‐up meetings will be scheduled to discuss progress.
* CELC staff and the family will communicate regularly while the plan is being implemented. Staff will implement specific guidance strategies defined in the Positive Behavior Support Plan, document observations of the child, and implement appropriate evaluation methods to determine if the plan is successful.
* At follow‐up meetings, the child’s progress will be discussed. If the Positive Behavior Support Plan does not appear to be successful, the family may be asked to allow external consultation or seek further evaluation. Additional guidance strategies may be proposed and implemented.
* If at any time a child’s behavior places the child, other children or adults at consistent or extraordinary risk of harm, it may be necessary to ask the family to withdraw the child.

**Transitions**

Transitioning to the next age group is an exciting, but sometimes stressful, time for children and families. Our staff works with families to ensure a positive transition experience. Children will transition to the next age group when they meet the age guidelines for the group and when staff and families agree that the child is prepared for the transition.

As transition time nears, informal conversation among families, teaching staff, and the Center Director will address any concerns and encourage sharing information that may be needed to help everyone feel comfortable with the transition.

**Transition Meetings:** Once a decision is made for a child to make a transition, the Center Director will prepare a transition letter detailing the basic transition plan. Each family will meet with the Center Director to review the basic transition plan, individualize the plan as needed, and provide information to ensure a smooth transition.

**Responsibilities of CELC Staff**:

* Current Lead Teacher will work with child’s family to complete an age-appropriate ASQ screening.
* Current teaching staff will conduct a transition conference with child’s family.
* Current teaching staff takes child to visit new room, gradually increasing the time spent in the room until the child can stay without support. For example:
  + Day 1 – Explore new room for 20-30 minutes
  + Day 2 – Visit during free play, 30-60 minutes after breakfast
  + Day 3 – Visit for a few hours after breakfast through lunch
  + Day 4 – Visit from breakfast time through nap time
  + Day 5 – Visit after breakfast through pick-up time
* Child’s current teacher will meet with new teacher to discuss transition information.
* Administrator introduces parents to teaching staff in child’s new room.

**Responsibilities of Families:**

* Parents will complete an age-appropriate ASQ questionnaire and attend a transition conference with child’s current teacher**.**
* Families are welcome to visit with their child in the new room each day of the transition week.

**Outdoor Play and Physical Activity**

* Research has shown that children stay healthier and learn more when they have daily outdoor play. Based on this information and state requirements, outdoor play will be included in our program on a daily basis for all toddlers and preschool children.
* Children will go outside to play in all kinds of weather; if the situation requires we will adjust outdoor time due to rain, snow, ice, threatening weather, ozone warnings, pollen warnings, etc.
* When the temperature (wind chill and heat index factored in) drops below 25 degrees Fahrenheit or rises above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, we will stay inside.
* Please send your children with the proper clothing so that they may be comfortable and safe whenever we are outside; this includes hats, coats, mittens and boots.
* Please do not send your child to school with flip-flops or sandals that have no heel strap, as they are a fall hazard.
* When we must stay inside, children will engage in large muscle play in their classrooms, hallways, or gathering spaces.
* It is our goal that each child has at least 60 minutes of active play while in our care.

**Water play**

Children will be provided with outside water play opportunities during the summer months. CELC does not engage in swimming activities. Water play is limited to the use of sprinklers, water tables and small wading pools. Parents will be asked to sign written permission slips prior to children engaging in water play. Please remember to send bathing suits, water shoes, towels and a lightweight T-shirt to protect your child from sunburn.

**Routine Walks**

Routine walks on the grounds surrounding the centers are permitted with written permission. Permission must be renewed annually.

**Partnership & Communication**



**CELC Statement about Professional Relationships**

Columbus Early Learning Centers is committed to nurturing positive, professional relationships with families and care givers, community stakeholders, teaching staff, employees, volunteers, and visitors. We expect all CELC representatives to use the language of respect and encouragement in all of their interactions with families, community members, volunteers, and children. We also ask that families, community members, volunteers and visitors treat CELC representatives with the same respect and courtesy.

If you experience a situation in which you did not feel you were treated respectfully by CELC representatives, please contact the administrative office at 614-525-5525. We value your feedback and will take action to ensure that your experience with CELC is a positive one.

Please understand that if a family member, visitor, volunteer, or community member treats CELC staff or children disrespectfully, that person may be asked to leave the premises. If the behavior continues or becomes severe, the family member, visitor, volunteer, or community member may be asked not to return to CELC property.

**Communication and Participation**

Families are encouraged to participate whenever possible in the activities of the center. Parents and guardians have complete access to all areas of the building used for child care during hours of operation. Noncustodial parents have the same rights of access unless limited by official court documentation. Visiting parents or guardians are required to notify the office and classroom staff of their presence and may need to be escorted through the building for security purposes.

Families should plan to visit the center before their child's first day and again after their child is enrolled. Visiting will help both you and your child feel more comfortable. Plan to come as many times and stay as long as you and your child need.

We encourage family involvement at all levels of our organization. High quality early care and education is a partnership between families and our program. Should your family require a translator, please speak with an administrator.

**Absence/Late Arrival Notification Policy**

**Please notify your Center Director by 9:00 AM if your child will be absent that day.** If your child is experiencing an illness, please let the Center Director know about the illness so that she can notify families if the illness is considered highly contagious.

If your child will be arriving to the center later than 9:00 am, please let the Center Director know in advance so that nutrition staff can be notified and CELC can ensure that there is proper coverage in the classroom. **If your child arrives after 9:00 am and you have NOT notified the Center Director in advance, we may not be able to accommodate your child that day.**

**Cell Phone Policy**

CELC is committed to keeping your child safe! We ask that you refrain from using your cell phones while you are in our centers so that your undivided attention can be on your child while you are walking through the building.

**Learn about your child’s classroom**

* **Classroom Documentation** – Each classroom posts information for parents to read, such as daily schedules and activities, curriculum plans, and project documentation.
* **TS GOLD** – You may access our online assessment tool and see the teachers’ observations about your child’s activities throughout the day and the weekly lesson plan for your child’s classroom. Just let your child’s teacher or the Center Director know you’re interested and provide us with an email address!

**Partner with your child’s teacher**

* **Talk Daily** – The best way to develop a partnership with your child’s teachers is to spend a few minutes chatting with them. Remember, though, that teachers who are engaged in prolonged conversations with parents cannot be actively supervising children, so if you need to have a more in-depth conversation please schedule a conference.
* **Call** – If you have a question or just want to check in during the day you can call. Again, because our teachers are busy supervising children, you may need to contact the Center Director so that she can ensure that staff/child ratios are maintained while the teacher is engaged on the telephone.
* **Parent Conferences** – Teachers offer individual parent conferences twice each year. However, you are welcome to schedule a meeting with your child’s teachers at any time.
* **Home Visits** – Teachers in the Early Head Start and Head Start programs offer two educational home visits each school year.
* **Volunteer** – Please speak to your child’s teacher or the Center Director if you are interested in volunteering at the center. Some ways you can volunteer include: assisting in the classroom by engaging in activities with the children; assisting teachers in preparing materials for activities (cutting things out, making playdough, etc.); helping the center in preparing for special activities, etc.

**Learn about our program**

* **Family Mailboxes** – Family mailboxes are located at the front entrance of each CELC center. Teachers and administrators put important information regarding your child’s enrollment and development in these mailboxes. Please check them daily!
* **Information Boards** – Each facility posts important information, including the administrator’s schedule, operating license, and most recent compliance reports in administration area. There is also an information area for sharing valuable and informative program and community resources.
* **Website** – CELC maintains a website providing information, including the Family Handbook, and printable forms at [www.columbusearlylearning.org](http://www.columbusearlylearning.org) . You can also like us on Facebook!

**Connect with other families**

* **Family Events** – Each year brings several opportunities for families to participate in interesting events such as the Fall Festival and Week of the Young Child. These are great opportunities to meet the children and families your child talks about every day.

**Addressing Concerns**

Sometimes a family has a concern about a classroom incident or a program policy that requires assistance from program staff. We believe that in order to provide the highest quality child care for you and your family, we must work in partnership. It is important that we work together to quickly bring concerns to a satisfactory resolution. If such a concern exists, we recommend the following action steps:

* If the concern is about a classroom incident, discuss your concern first with the classroom Lead Teacher. Because it is difficult to have this kind of discussion in the classroom, schedule a time to meet with the teacher privately. Teachers want to be able to focus on you and your child during these times.
* If the concern remains or if the concern is about a program policy or procedure, you may discuss your concern with your Center Director.
* If the concern remains, it should be discussed with the Director of Program Operations. Most concerns can be resolved with a concrete plan of action and continued communication.
* If the concern remains, further steps may be taken that support the specific need.

**Confidentiality**

We respect the right to privacy of both the children and the families in our care. CELC staff will refrain from disclosure of private or confidential information, including information about other children in the classroom. Incident reports will not list names of other children involved in an incident. If it is deemed appropriate to share information about a situation for the positive development of the classroom community, all involved families will be requested to give permission prior to the implementation of any plan of action.

The information contained in children’s files is confidential. The information may be compiled and viewed by administrative staff and classroom staff for the purpose of healthy, safe, and appropriate care and to ensure compliance with regulatory agencies.

Disclosure of children’s records beyond family members, program staff and authorized consultants require family consent, except as follows below:

* **Mandated Reporters**

As child care workers in the state of Ohio, all Columbus Early Learning Center employees are legally mandated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the local child protective agency. If we have reason to believe that a child’s welfare may be at risk, we may share confidential information with agencies or individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child’s interest.

* **Media and Research**

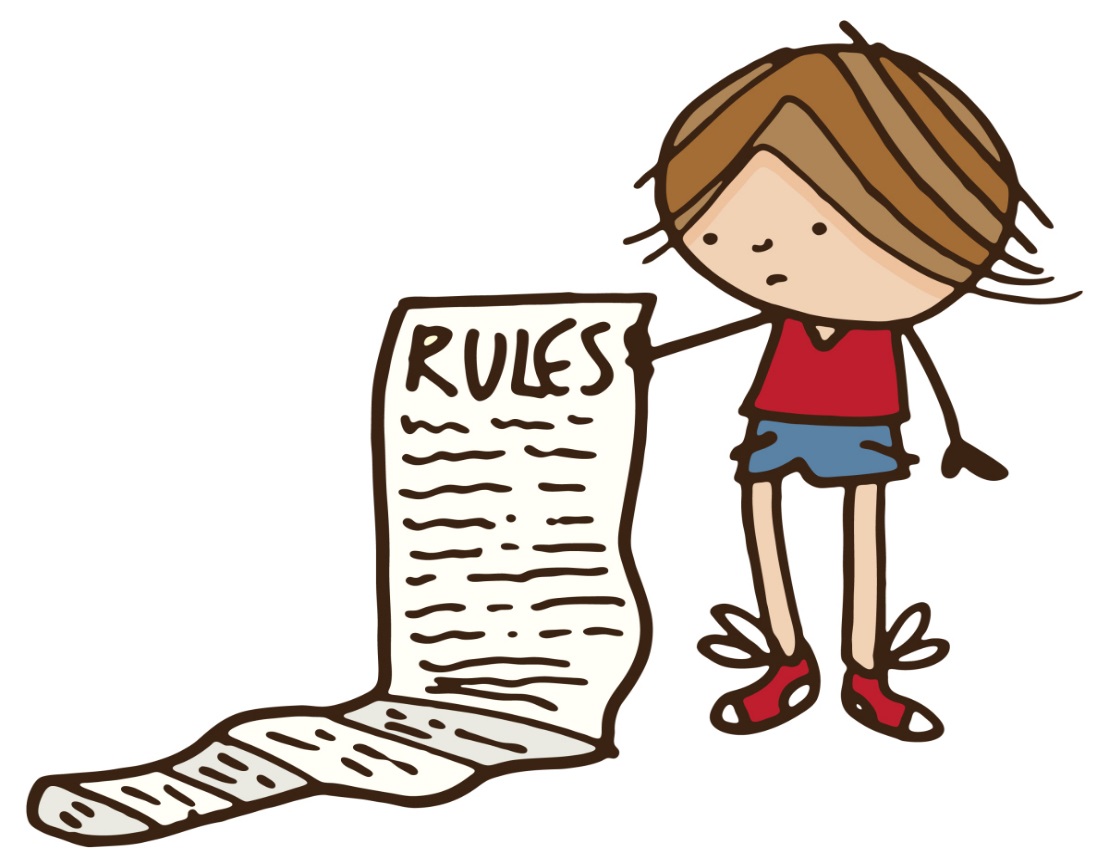
In order to support the United Way, the Champion Intergenerational Enrichment and Education Center, and our own fundraising and public relations efforts, photos and/or videos of children and staff at CELC may be used. In your enrollment packet you have been asked to sign a general release to use videos/pictures of your child. This release is required for enrollment in the program.

At times CELC children and staff have been involved in research projects that add to the body of knowledge about early care and education. Your specific written permission will be obtained in order for your child to be part of any research project.

**Photo Policy**

While participating in CELC activities and/or special events, we understand that you may want to take pictures of your child with your personal cell phone, camera, or recording device. CELC asks that you refrain from taking pictures of other children in the classroom or center. If you do have pictures of other children engaged in an activity, we ask that you respect the privacy of that child and his family and NOT post any pictures of another child on your social media pages such as Facebook or Instagram.

**Policies and Procedures**



**Supervision of Children**

Nothing is as important to us as ensuring the safety and security of the children entrusted to our care.

**Daily Supervision**

* All children are actively supervised at all times by qualified and trained child care staff members.
* Children are marked in attendance upon arrival and an attendance roster accompanies each classroom group as it moves throughout the building, outside, or on field trips.
* Staff completes face-to-name attendance checks before leaving any area to move to another (i.e. from classroom to multi-purpose room, from playground to classroom, etc.)

**Staff/Child Ratios and Maximum Group Size**

In order to provide active supervision and a safe early learning environment, CELC will not exceed the following child care licensing regulations required ratios:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age of Children** | **Staff/Child Ratio** | **Maximum Group Size** |
| Young Infants (0-12 months) | 1:5 or 2:12 | 12 |
| Older Infants (12-18 months) | 1:6 | 12 |
| Young Toddlers (18-30 months) | 1:7 | 14 |
| Older Toddlers (30-36 months) | 1:8 | 16 |
| Young Preschool (36-48 months) | 1:12 | 24 |
| Older Preschool (48 months-Kindergarten) | 1:14 | 28 |
| School Age (K-age 11) | 1:18 | 36 |

Staff/Child Ratios may be doubled for up to 2 hours during nap/rest time for classrooms compiled of children over the age of 18 months.

**Arrival and Departure Policy**

**Arrival**

* No child may ever be left unsupervised. Children may not be unaccompanied in the building and should never be sent inside the building or down the hallways alone. Children must be accompanied by an adult when they are outside the building, on the sidewalk, or in parked cars. Children may not be left unattended in a car.
* The person bringing a child to CELC must bring the child to the child care staff member who is responsible for the child’s care and ensure that the assigned staff member is aware of the child’s presence before departing.
* To ensure that access to the program is limited to families and authorized persons, all facilities have a secure entryway. Visitors must be permitted entry by staff. Children who arrive from another educational program by contracted transportation to CELC have a written plan, including appropriate contact information for transportation and program authorities and methods for determining the child’s whereabouts should he or she fail to arrive as scheduled.

**Departure**

* No child may ever be left unsupervised. Children must be accompanied by an adult when they are inside and outside the building, on the sidewalk, or in parked cars. Children may not be left unattended in a car. The person who picks up a child from CELC must alert staff and ensure that staff is fully aware of the child’s departure.
* When a child custody issue exists, it is the responsibility of the residential parent to provide official court documentation if there are restrictions or limitations placed on the nonresidential parent. The program may not deny a parent access to his or her child without proper documentation. CELC will follow all visitation schedules and release requirements as written in official documentation.
* The only people who may pick up a child from CELC are those listed on the Authorized Release Form. Staff will not release a child to anyone not listed on the form without additional written instructions. Staff will ask to see photo identification of anyone who they do not recognize.
* People under the age of 18 are not permitted to receive a child from the center without prior approval from the Center Director.

**Custody Agreements**

All enrolled children whose parents operate under the guidance of a custody agreement directed by the courts must provide custody papers during the enrollment process.

* If at any time a question arises regarding enrollment, medical issues, etc., CELC will operate under the guidance of the custody papers provided.
* CELC will communicate with the custodial parent. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to communicate with the non-custodial parent regarding issues affecting the enrolled child.
* Under a Shared Parenting Agreement, CELC will communicate with both parents regarding the child’s progress, development, health, nutrition, or safety concerns.

**Nutrition**



**Family-Style Mealtime**

Mealtime is a great way to help children develop positive attitudes about healthy foods, learn appropriate mealtime behavior, and improve communication skills. Meals at CELC are served family-style. Family-style meals are a great way to introduce healthy foods, model healthy behaviors, and provide opportunities for nutrition education.

Serving family-style meals means serving foods in dishes and eating together at the table. It is also an opportunity for children to have meaningful conversations with adults and develop social relationships. Some important benefits of Family Style Dining are:

* Introduces healthy foods to children and encourages them to try new ones
* Provides opportunities for nutrition education such as teaching serving sizes or talking about healthy foods and food groups
* Allows children to see adults model healthy eating habits
* Builds independence by allowing children to make decisions about the food they eat
* Develops fine and gross motor skills by asking children to pour milk, scoop food, and pass serving bowls and pitchers
* Enhances language and social skills when children practice table manners and learn appropriate meal time behavior

**Child and Adult Care Food Program**

CELC participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which assists child care sponsors in serving nutritious meals by providing funds to supplement food costs. Families help CELC receive these benefits by completing an income eligibility application every year.

Each meal served at CELC meets or exceeds the standards defined by the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The meals and snacks provided are listed below.

**Breakfast**

* Served from 8:30–9:00am
* **\*If your child arrives to the program after 9:00 am, please make sure you provide him with breakfast before bringing him to school**.
* Includes 3 foods from the USDA Food Groups (Grain, Fruit, and Liquid Milk)

**Lunch**

* Served from 12:00-12:30 pm
* Includes 5 foods from the USDA Food Groups (Grain, Protein, Fruit & Vegetable, Liquid Milk)

**P.M. Snack**

* Served at 3:30 pm
* Includes 2 foods from the USDA Food Groups

Unflavored whole milk is served to children aged 12-24 months for all meals.

Unflavored skim milk is served to all children over the age of 2 years for all meals.

CELC does not serve flavored milk, sugared drinks, soda, or sports drinks to children.

Water is offered at all meals and is available to children at all times.

Food is never given as a reward or withheld as a punishment.

**CACFP Nondiscrimination Statement**

The U.S Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department.  (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Complain_combined_6_8_12.pdf), found online at <http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html>, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Special Mealtime Considerations**

* **All CELC locations are nut-free.** No nuts, food containing nuts, and/or nut butters are served.
* Religious and dietary restrictions are respected and CELC will make substitutions when possible. If CELC cannot provide a substitution; it is the responsibility of the family to do so. Families must provide substitutions only from the USDA food groups.
* All CELC locations are pork-free.
* **The elimination of an entire food group (for example: dairy products) requires written documentation from the child’s physician**.
* For infants, iron-fortified formula is provided by CELC. If a different formula is preferred, it must be supplied by the family. Formula will be prepared on-site by staff according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Any deviations from these instructions must be provided in writing by the child’s physician.
* Formula may also be prepared at home, labeled with the child’s name, date of preparation and date received by CELC.
* Nursing mothers may choose to nurse on-site in a quiet area of the child’s classroom, provide a supply of breast milk or formula, or use the formula provided by CELC. Expressed milk must be labeled with the child’s name, date expressed and date received.

**Healthy Celebrations**

Some of our children have severe allergies to other foods, including, but not limited to, milk, eggs, soy and wheat. Because of dangers associated with food allergies, we request that families always check with lead teachers and the Center Director before bringing foods from home to share with the classroom community.

Families often wish to celebrate their child’s birthday or other special days with the classroom community. Children eagerly await these special times and like to share them with their friends. We encourage families to keep these celebrations simple and creative. Some ways children have celebrated include:

* Bringing a favorite CD and having a dance party
* Purchasing a book for the classroom (or sharing a favorite from home) and having a parent read to the group
* Singing a favorite song
* Bringing materials to make party hats

**Financial Policies**



Columbus Early Learning Centers strives to provide high quality early care and education services to our families while keeping costs down. We accept payment from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Publically Funded Child Care program and collaborate with a variety of community organizations to keep our tuition affordable.

**Tuition – Private Pay**

* Columbus Early Learning Center offers tuition rates that are typically 25% lower than comparable child care centers.
* Tuition is charged weekly and payment is due in advance on Monday of each week.
* Full tuition is charged regardless of child absences or center closures.
* Tuition is overdue if not paid by Wednesday of the week for which it is owed.
* The multi-child discount for families with more than one child enrolled is applied to the oldest child’s tuition (and in descending order of age if more than two children): two children – 15% discount; three children – 25% discount; four or more children-30% discount.
* When a child is in transition to an older age group, the new tuition rate is not charged until the child begins full enrollment in the older group.
* Accounts must be kept current. Nonpayment of tuition is cause for termination of child care services.

**Tuition-Community Sponsored Programs**

* Tuition is charged in accordance to the program’s specifications. Tuition may be due weekly or monthly.
* Weekly tuition is due the Monday of each week. Monthly tuition is due the first Monday of each month. Late fees will apply to community-sponsored programs. (See Late Fee Policy)
* Full tuition is charged regardless of child absences or center closures.
* Accounts must be kept current. Nonpayment of tuition is cause for termination of child care services.

Tuition payments may be made in the following forms: check or money order made payable to Columbus Early Learning Centers or cash. We do not have the ability to accept credit or debit card payments at this time. If a check is returned to CELC for insufficient funds, an additional $30.00 fee will be charged to the family’s account.

**Publicly Funded Child Care**

**Application Process:**

* Families meeting eligibility requirements must apply for publicly funded child care through their County Department of Job and Family Services prior to enrollment at CELC. Applications usually require 30-45 days for processing.
* CELC Center Directors can assist families in the application process Families will be required to provide at least the following items when applying for PFCC:
  + Signed Application for Child Care Benefits
  + Verification of Household Composition
  + Proof of Residency
  + Verification of qualifying activity for all adults in the household (employment or enrollment in accredited education or job training program)
  + Verification of citizenship for children needing care (birth certificate)
  + 30 days of pay stubs (if applicable)
  + Employment Verification Form (if applicable)
* Children may attend CELC while an initial application for PFCC is pending under these conditions:
  + Family must provide CELC administrator with Document Receipt from DJFS showing that the initial application for child care benefits has been submitted prior to enrolling at CELC.
  + Family must inform CELC administrator of any correspondence/request for documentation from DJFS in regards to application for PFCC.
  + **Family must pay a tuition co-payment of $25 every week while PFCC application is pending**.
    - Once the PFCC is approved with a required co-payment, the money that has been applied to the family’s account will be applied to any co-payment required by PFCC.
    - If PFCC is approved with $0 co-payment, money that has been applied to that account will be reimbursed to the family.
    - If PFCC application is denied because the family is over-income, the family must immediately begin to pay full tuition rate.
    - If PFCC application is denied because the application was incomplete and/or missing required documentation, the family may choose to keep the child enrolled at full tuition rate while they re-apply for PFCC. Tuition fees will not be waived or reduced during this time.
    - If PFCC application is denied because the application was incomplete and/or missing required documentation and the family cannot afford to pay full tuition for child care services, the child will be disenrolled upon notice of denial.
* Once approved for publicly funded child care, families are responsible for reporting any changes in income, work, school, etc. to the County Job and Family Services office within 10 days of the change.
* CELC limits the time a child can attend our program to 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the commencement of their qualifying activity.
* When families receive notification from DJFS that it is time to apply for re-determination of benefits, they will notify the Center Director.
* Families are responsible for maintaining eligibility for funded child care. If eligibility lapses, the family will be charged the full tuition for child care services received. If publicly funded child care is revoked for any reason, the family will be responsible for paying the appropriate regular tuition for child care services received.

**Late Pick-Up Fees**

Children must be picked up promptly by 6:00 pm when the center closes. If someone who is authorized has not arrived by 6:00 pm to pick up your child, CELC child care staff members will follow this procedure:

* After 30 minutes, if CELC staff has been unable to contact an authorized person, Franklin County Children’s Services or the local law enforcement agency will be contacted.
* A mandatory late fee of $1.00 per minute will be charged to the family when a child is picked up after 6:00 pm. This fee is charged regardless of family’s participation in PFCC or any community-sponsored program. This fee must be paid at the next billing cycle. Teachers may not accept cash payment for Late Pick-Up fees.

**Continued failure to pick up your child within our stated operation hours (7:00 am-6:00 pm) may result in your child’s enrollment being terminated**.

**Late Payment Fees**

An account is considered to be delinquent if the weekly tuition or co-payment has not been received by Wednesday of the week for which payment is due. A late fee of $5.00 will be added to the family’s account if payment has not been received by Wednesday of each week.

Monthly co-payments are considered delinquent if they have not been received by the first Wednesday of the month for which payment is due. A late fee of $5.00 will be added to the family’s account each week the payment is late, starting on the first Wednesday and accruing of the month.

**An account that has not been paid for two weeks will be closed and the child will be disenrolled.**

**Attendance Policy**

**Private Pay/Community Sponsored Programs**

* **Please plan to have your child arrive at the center by 9:00 am so he or she can enjoy a full day of education and enrichment activities.**
* Please call the center by 9:00 am if your child is unable to attend school that day.
* Some community sponsored programs have attendance requirements and your child may lose the opportunity to participate in the program if he or she does not attend regularly.
* Please inform your child’s teacher or the Center Director of any prolonged absences/vacations at least one week in advance.
* Full weekly tuition is due regardless of your child’s absence or vacation.

**Full-Time Hours**

* Children approved for full-time care must attend at least 25 hours per week. If a child is approved for full-time care but attends less than 25 hours per week, CELC will only receive partial payment. **Families who are approved for full-time hours who do not attend at least 25 hours a week will be charged the remainder of the regular tuition rate for that week.**

**Withdrawal from CELC**

* Families must notify the Center Director of a child’s withdrawal from the program two weeks prior to the child’s last day. Withdrawal forms are available in the office.
* Families are billed for child care services during the two week notice period and are responsible for full payment of the account.
* Upon withdrawal or termination of service, any balance is due immediately.
* Accounts with a balance not paid at time of withdrawal or termination of service will be sent to an outside agency for collections.

**Ohio Child Care Time, Attendance, and Payment System (CCTAP)**

* Families who are approved for PFCC assistance will be given a unique username and will create a password on the CCTAP website. It is the family’s responsibility to use the CCTAP system to record attendance by swiping the card daily upon arrival and departure.
  + Center Directors will monitor attendance and will notify family of any missed sign-in’s. Once a family has received notification in the form of a “Backswipe Form,” the family has 2 business days to correct the attendance record using CCTAP.
  + If attendance records have not been corrected within the allotted time period, CELC cannot bill the state for child care services and therefore will charge the family for child care services provided at full tuition rate.
  + Failure to use the CCTAP system to record attendance may lead to the disenrollment of the child.
* PFCC will pay for 10 days of absence in a six month period from Jan. 1 to June 30 and from July 1 to Dec. 31. When a child exceeds 10 absent days, CELC will not receive full payment for the child’s enrollment. For children approved for full-time care, attendance of 25 hours per week meets the requirement for attendance for the week, whether or not the child has attended every day. It is the responsibility of the family to monitor their child’s absences.

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

**CENTER PARENT INFORMATION REQUIRED**

**BY OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This license is posted on the parent information board in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility’s license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing law and rules governing child care are available for review at the center.

The administrator and each employee of the center is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children’s services agency.

Any parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the center shall be permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting his or her children, evaluating the care provided by the center or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

The administrator’s hours of availability and child/staff ratios are posted on the parent information board in a noticeable place in the center for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

For more information about child care licensing requirements as well as how to apply for child care assistance, Medicaid health screenings, and early intervention services for your child, please visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/families.stm>

Appendix A

EPSTD Chart

