



BRIGHT MINDS START HERE.

Columbus Early Learning Centers Family Guide

TAX ID # 31-4379619

Table of Contents

About Us	4
Center Operations	5
Our Team	6
Emergency Procedures	7
Enrollment	8
Eligibility and Enrollment Process	9
Child Medical Statement & Immunizations	9
Health Concerns for Enrolled Children	12
Medical/Physical Care Plans & Medication Guidelines	13
Illness Policy	14
Serious Incidents & Injuries	15
Development and School Readiness	17
Curriculum	18
Assessment	19
Developmental Screening Procedure	19
Health Screenings	20
Daily Schedules	21
Rest Time	22
Child Guidance Policy	22
Transitions Procedure	24
Outdoor Play & Physical Activity	25
Partnership & Communication	27
Communication	28
Absence & Late Arrival Policy	28
Addressing Concerns	30
Confidentiality Policy	30
Mandated Reporting	30
Policies & Procedures	32
Supervision of Children & Staff/Child Ratios	33
Arrival & Departure Policy	33
Custody Agreements	34
Nutrition	35
Family-Style Mealtime	36
Child and Adult Care Food Program	36
Special Mealtime Considerations	37
Healthy Celebrations	37
Financial Policies	39
Private Pay Accounts	40
Publicly Funded Child Care	40
Attendance Policy	42
Withdrawal from Center	43
Center Parent Information	45
Ohio Healthchek Benefits	46

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 updates this handbook at least annually. We will post changes to our website 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 your Center Director for clarification. We are here to support 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.

The information contained in this handbook is intended to help us work in partnership to care for your child; 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 occur, every effort will be made to keep families 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,

Stacy Butler-Chopek, Chief Program Officer

About Us

Our Mission:

Columbus Early Learning Centers is committed to helping young learners develop, families succeed, and neighborhoods thrive.

Our Vision Statement:

We see a future in which all children have an early learning experience that gives them a foundation for future success in school and in life.

Our Values:

Access, Equity and Inclusion

We welcome all children and families regardless of background and need.

Safe Haven

The physical and emotional safety of our children and families is the foundation of our work.

Play to Learn

A child's freedom to explore and create fosters meaningful cognitive, physical and social-emotional development.

Growth Mindset

We promote organizational sustainability through learning and collaboration in our classrooms, conference rooms, board rooms, and the neighborhoods we serve.

Making a Difference

Our team and community partners, together, do what it takes to advocate for changing the landscape, systems, and policies for 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.

CELC Timeline

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

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

1917 – Ohio Ave. Day Nursery building erected through the Tuttle Fund

1923 – Mrs. William Miller donates land and funding for the Northside Day Nursery on 3rd Ave.

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

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

2007 – Northside and Westside-Eastside Centers merge to form Columbus Early Learning Centers

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

2016 -- CELC assumed responsibility for the Child Care Center at Central Community House creating CELC @ Main Street

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

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 from January through December, 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 Schedule Of Center Closings is included in your enrollment packet and available upon request from your Center Director.

CELC is responsible for following 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 staff is trained in Child Abuse Recognition and there is always at least one staff member who is trained in First Aid, CPR, and Communicable Disease Recognition in the building during our hours of operation. All centers are drug and smoke free and weapons of any kind are forbidden to be on our grounds.

Center Program Information CELC Locations

East Broad Street
Broad Street Presbyterian Church
760 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43205
614-253-5525 Option 5

Champion Avenue
Champion Intergenerational Center
240 North Champion Avenue
Columbus, OH 43203
614-253-5525 Option 4

East Main Street
Central Community House
1150 East Main Street
Columbus, OH 43205
614-253-5525 Option 6

Linden Early Childhood Education Center
Former Linden Park Elementary School
1400 Myrtle Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
614-365-7962

Parents may view our website at www.columbusearlylearning.org for updates, family and community events, and helpful information about child development! Follow us on Facebook to get updates on what the children 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 Team

The staff of Columbus Early Learning Centers works together to support the mission, values, goals and policies of Columbus Early Learning Centers. All CELC staff undergo rigorous background checks and are examined and found physically 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.

Classroom Aides are responsible for assisting in classrooms as needed.

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

Chief Financial Officer is responsible for accounting, family billing, and maintaining the budget.

Chief Program Officer creates policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state and local mandates, programming options, and best practice in the early childhood field.

Director of Program Operations supports the center directors and maintaining compliance with state mandates and CELC policies across all centers.

Enrollment and Compliance Director maintains enrollment and licensing compliance across all centers.

Education Director provides professional development and coaching for members of the CELC teaching staff.

Director of Development assists with fund-raising, community partnerships, and monitoring volunteer projects.

Human Resources Director ensures compliance with labor laws, handles employee relations, and assists in the maintenance of CELC's staff.

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

CELC Board of Directors 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 using the automated REMIND messaging system and/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
- Champion Ave: Poindexter Place Apartments – 231 N. Champion Avenue, Columbus OH
- East Main St: Primary One Health Center – 1180 East Main St., Columbus, OH
- Linden Center: Linden Community Center 1254 Briarwood Ave., Columbus, OH

Unless it poses a safety risk, 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 messaging 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.

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 Enrollment and Compliance Director confirms the availability of space, all enrollment paperwork is received, and an enrollment meeting is completed.

CELC's Enrollment and Compliance Director will assist families in the enrollment process and is available to answer questions about enrollment. You may reach the Enrollment and Compliance Director at 614-253-5525 #222.

Columbus Early Learning Centers requires the following forms to be completed and on file **prior to the child's first day of attendance**:

- Enrollment & Health Information for Child Care Centers (JFS 1234) *
- Authorized Release Form
- Child Medical Statement for Child Care (JFS 1305) and a current copy of immunizations***
- Any legal custody or parenting agreement
- Birth Certificate or legal verification of birth paperwork from government agency**
- Copy of current health insurance card for child**
- Acknowledgement of Receipt of CELC's Family Guide
- CELC's Health Screening Consent Form
- ASQ-3 Screening
- Permission for Photo Release
- Family Information
- Demographic Survey
- Payment agreement
- Routine Trip Permission Forms (vary by center location)

* CELC requires parents/guardians to grant permission for emergency transportation on the ODJFS Enrollment and Health Information form.

** Required for all children enrolling in preschool programs

*****CELC does not enroll children who are not current on their immunization schedules unless the Medical Statement includes a written letter from a certified health care provider stating that the child's health would be jeopardized by a specific vaccination.**

If a child is following the Catch-Up Immunization schedule, the family must provide CELC with a copy of the child's immunization schedule provided by a certified health care provider AND it is the family's responsibility to give the Center Director a copy of the child's immunization records each time the child receives a new vaccination.

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 1305) on file as mandated by ODJFS licensing rules will not be permitted to attend the center.

Medical professionals must review the child's immunization records and 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

Important Note regarding Immunizations: For the health and well-being of all enrolled children, CELC only enrolls children who are current on the state recommended immunization schedule.

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 against a particular disease due to health reasons.

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 families to provide small, travel-sized pillows and cot-sized blankets. We do not have appropriate storage space for larger items. Infant rooms furnish all crib linens. Toddlers and preschoolers may bring one comfort item such as a small stuffed animal or doll; however, infants may not have these items placed in their cribs.

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 personal item 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, lip balm, 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.**

Health Concerns for Enrolled Children



Children with Health Concerns

A **Medical/Physical Care Plan (JFS 1236)** 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. This includes dietary restrictions. 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. Medical/Physical Care Plans must be 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 1217)** 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 and updated annually or any time a change is indicated.

Medication Guidelines

CELC will 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 the child's health condition and need for 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.**
- **All mandatory paperwork must be renewed annually. Failure to complete and renew all mandatory paperwork will result in a temporary or permanent suspension of your child's enrollment at CELC until the necessary paperwork is on file.**

Administration of medication by staff

Only staff members who have been trained by the child's parent/guardian on proper procedure may administer emergency medication. The medication will be administered according to the directions on the Request for Administration of Medication (JFS 1217) form. Staff will record the date and time 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

- Approved medication will be stored at the center in a designated area that is inaccessible to children.
- Medications that are no longer needed or that have expired will be returned to the family and must be removed from the center immediately.
- **Other medication, lotion, diaper ointment, lip balm, hand sanitizer and/or other chemicals may NOT be stored in a child's cubby, diaper bag or book bag on CELC property.**

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 implements proper hand washing and sanitation techniques. Children are 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. Failure to pick up the child within one hour will result in the family being billed a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute.

1. Parents must ensure that the center has current contact information so that we can notify the family if a child develops symptoms of illness or is injured while in our care.
2. If parents do not answer the phone when we call to inform them of an illness or injury, we will call the child's emergency contacts.
3. Someone who has authority to pick up the child must respond to our calls within one hour.
4. If we cannot reach anyone to notify the family of a child's illness or injury and more than an hour has passed, we will notify the local child protection agency.
5. CELC reserves the right to suspend a child from attending the center for 2 days if parents do not respond within one hour when we call them about a child's illness or injury. If your child receives PFCC benefits and is suspended for this reason, the family is responsible for any lapse in payment if the child does not attend at least 25 hours per week.
6. The ill child is cared for in a portion of the classroom isolated from other children yet still within sight and hearing of a staff member.
7. The cot and any linens used by this child 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 Center Director as outlined by the Ohio Department of Health Communicable Diseases Chart posted in the center. A physician's release does not override the recommendations of the Communicable Disease Chart.

Children who have been excluded from care due to illness must be symptom and fever free without the aid of medication for at least 24 hours in order to return to the center.

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 or higher
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool in a 24-hour period)
- 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 one of these common ailments, you let your Center Director know as soon as possible. We will treat this information with the same confidentiality that 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.

If you have an active infestation of bed bugs, lice, or fleas in your home, you must 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, our 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 will respond to the child's immediate needs.
- An Incident/Injury Report for Child Care Centers (JFS 1299) is completed for any injury or illness that requires first aid. Parents or Authorized Adults will be asked to sign the report upon receipt. A copy of the Incident/Injury Report will be placed in the family's mailbox before the end of the center's business day and a copy is kept in the child's file.
- Any bump/blow to the head or dental/oral injury will be reported to parents as soon as possible. An Incident/Injury Report for Child Care Centers (JFS 01299) will be also be completed and provided to the family.
- If it is determined that the injury or illness is serious, staff will call 911 immediately. *CELC does not enroll families who do not give the center consent to contact emergency services.*
- In the rare circumstance that 911 is contacted for a child, the family will be contacted immediately after the emergency call is placed and emergency personnel or the parents will determine further treatment.
- If transportation to a hospital is needed, emergency personnel or the child's parents will provide transportation to the hospital or emergency facility. If the parents are not available, CELC staff will accompany and stay with the child until a family member or Authorized Adult can take responsibility of the child.
- 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 1299) will be written. Serious incidents must also be reported to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services by an administrator.

Development and School Readiness



Curriculum

Columbus Early Learning Centers uses a research-based, validated curriculum that is based on child development principles. The curriculum CELC uses 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. *(Please note that preschool classrooms located at the Linden Early Childhood Education Center may use the Big Day for Pre-K curriculum, which is very similar to The Creative Curriculum.)*

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 and return times will be noted on the permission slip. *If a child arrives to the center on the date of a scheduled field trip after the departure time, the parent will need to provide transportation to the destination or take the child home.*
- 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 assist teachers 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
- Referring children for diagnostic evaluations if necessary

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 the child's growth and development along a continuum that focuses on 36 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 a report for each child 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.

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 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.

Teachers are also required to formally assess each preschool child's development using the Ohio 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.

Developmental Screening

At CELC, we provide developmental screening for all children at the time 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 upon enrollment and periodically as recommended by the manufacturer. It is then scored by trained staff and the results are shared with the family. Parents are

also provided with a list of home-enrichment activities that will help their children continue to develop and learn.

If a child's score indicates that there may be a need for further evaluation, CELC staff will meet with the family to review the results of the screening and assist the family in contacting the child's pediatrician, Help Me Grow, Columbus City Schools, or another provider for further evaluation.

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 follow this schedule and to discuss any questions or concerns about their child's physical growth and development with their health care provider.

Preschool Vision Screenings

CELC has trained staff members who can screen a preschool-aged child for vision acuity and binocular vision. Parents or Guardians will be asked to give consent for CELC and/or its community partners to administer vision screenings to all enrolled preschool children. If consent is not given, it is the family's responsibility to get a copy of the enrolled child's vision screening results to the Center Director upon enrollment. Families will be notified of the vision screening results in writing and assistance is available to help families find vision specialists if follow up is necessary.

Preschool Speech and Hearing Screenings

Parents or Guardians will be asked to give consent for CELC and/or its community partners to administer speech and hearing screenings to all enrolled preschool children. If consent is not given, it is the family's responsibility to get a copy of the enrolled child's speech and hearing screening results to the Center Director upon enrollment. Parents will be notified of the speech and hearing screening results in writing and assistance is available to help families find follow up care if needed.

Preschool Dental Screenings

Parents or Guardians will be asked to give consent for CELC and/or its community partners to administer dental screenings to all enrolled preschool children. If consent is not given, it is the family's responsibility to get a copy of the enrolled child's dental screening results to the Center Director upon enrollment. Parents will be notified of the dental screening results in writing and assistance is available to help families find follow up care if needed.

Preschool Lead Screenings

Parents or Guardians will be asked to provide CELC with their child's most recent lead screening results at the time of enrollment. If the child has not been screened for lead poisoning, family members will be asked to give consent for CELC and/or its community partners to administer lead screenings to all enrolled preschool children. If consent is not given, it is the family's responsibility to get a copy of the enrolled child's lead screening results to the Center Director upon enrollment. Parents will be notified of lead screening results in writing and assistance is available to help families find follow up care if needed.

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

CELC is not just a “babysitting service!” Our teachers work hard to establish routines and consistency for the children, create enriching learning environments, and implement engaging developmentally appropriate learning experiences so that each child can thrive! It is our goal to prepare children for academic success in Kindergarten and beyond. We want every child to be able to engage in all aspects of the day, including Circle Time, Center Activities, Story Time, Outdoor Play, and Small Group Instruction. In order for your child to receive the full benefit of our program, he needs to be at the center by 9:00 am every day.

Infants’ Daily Schedule

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 (Gerber Good Start), 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 1234).

Sample Infant Classroom Daily Schedule

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	Large motor/outside time; snacks on demand
10:00-11:30 am	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	Quiet rest time; developmental activities
3:30 pm	Hand washing and PM snack for older infants
4:00-6:00 pm	Large motor/outside time; individualized and small group activities

Sample Toddler Classroom Daily Schedule

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	Large motor/outside time
10:00-11:30 am	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	Hand washing and PM snack
4:00-6:00 pm	Large motor/outside time, individualized and small group activities

Sample Preschool Classroom Daily Schedule

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	Hand washing and lunch
12:30-1:00 pm	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. CELC 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. Toddlers and preschool children are welcome to bring a small stuffed animal, doll or other small comfort item; however, these items cannot be placed in cribs.

Child Guidance

CELC strives to provide a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment that enhances young children's:

- Recognition of themselves as people who have 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

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. 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, volunteers, visitors, contractors, and family members while on CELC property.

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.

Problem-Solve: In order to help children learn to manage their own emotions and behavior, teachers and family members 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 as it isolates a child and does not support social growth.

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 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:

- CELC staff will inform the family of the concern as soon as possible and collect information that may assist in guiding the child’s behavior while at the center.
- The family may be asked to complete a social-emotional development screening tool (ASQ:SE) to assist the center staff in understanding the child’s development.
- 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. If a child’s behaviors are severe, CELC administrative staff may not allow the child to attend the center until a meeting with the family has been completed.
- CELC and/or the family may request that community partners assist in the process of developing a Positive Behavior Support Plan to ensure the highest possible care for the child.
- CELC staff and the family will communicate regularly while the plan is being implemented. CELC teachers 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.
- *Families must be actively engaged in this process, attending meetings and complying with the Positive Behavior Support Plan.*
- **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:

- The Center Director will work with child's family to complete an age-appropriate ASQ screening.
- The Center Director introduces parents to the teaching staff in child's new room.
- The Center Director will conduct a transition meeting with the child's family.
- The child's current teacher will meet with his new teacher to discuss transition information.
- The current teaching staff will take the transitioning child to visit his 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

Responsibilities of Families:

- Parents will complete an age-appropriate ASQ questionnaire and attend a transition meeting with Center Director.
- 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, 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, 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.
- If there are severe weather alerts, heat or wind chill advisories, or air quality alerts, 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 in the winter and sunhats and clothing that protects against damaging ultraviolet light in the summer.
- 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 other indoor spaces.
- It is our goal that each child has at least 60 minutes of active play while in our care.

Water play

Children may 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 and water tables. 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 expect that families, community members, volunteers and visitors treat CELC representatives with the same respect and courtesy.

If you as a parent or caregiver of a child enrolled in a CELC center experience a situation in which you do not feel you were treated respectfully and professionally by any CELC representative, please contact the administrative office at 614-253a-5525. We value your feedback and will act to ensure that your experience with CELC is a positive one.

If a family member, visitor, volunteer, or community member ever engages in any of the following activities, that individual will be asked to leave the premises and cease the disruptive activity immediately.

- Threaten violence against any CELC employee, CELC representative, enrolled child, or a family member of an enrolled child
- Use profanity or derogatory terms when speaking to any CELC employee, CELC representative, enrolled child, or a family member of an enrolled child
- Encourage any CELC employees or enrolled families to end their professional relationship with CELC
- Make disparaging remarks either verbally or through electronic media about CELC as an agency, any CELC employee, CELC representative, enrolled child, or a family member of an enrolled child
- Escalate a situation in a manner that disrupts classroom activity or normal CELC business operations

If the behavior continues or is severe, the family member, visitor, volunteer, or community member will be asked not to return to CELC property. This means that any enrolled children connected to that person will be immediately disenrolled from all CELC centers and any outstanding balance for child care services provided by CELC are due immediately.

CELC respectfully asks parents and family members to refrain from giving gifts to CELC staff members.

Communication and Participation

Families are encouraged to participate whenever possible in the activities of the center. Parents and guardians have 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 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 your Center Director.

Absence/Late Arrival Notification Policy

Families are required to notify the Center Director by 9:00 AM if the enrolled child will be absent or tardy that day. If a child arrives after 9:00 am and the Center Director was not notified in advance, CELC may not be able to accommodate your child that day. The decision as to whether or not we can accommodate the child is based on several factors, including staff schedules, programming requirements, etc.

If your child is absent from the center and we have not heard from you, the Center Director will be contacting you as is required by funding regulations. If your child is experiencing an illness, please let the Center Director know about the illness so that families can be notified if the illness is considered highly contagious.

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 progress 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, please call the center. Again, because our teachers are busy supervising children, you will 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.
- **Family 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. Two additional Family Conferences may be offered in lieu of Home Visits.
- **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.
**Families enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start are required to complete 3 hours of In-Kind/Volunteering every month. This time is logged on the Family In-Kind Documentation Log.*

Learn about our program

- **Family Mailboxes** – Family mailboxes are located at 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, at www.columbusearlylearning.org . You can also like us on Facebook!

Connect with other families

- **Family Events** – CELC offers several opportunities for families to participate in events such as Back to School Night and the Fall Festival. 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 your concerns during this time.
- 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, families are invited to complete a CELC Family and Community Grievance Form. These forms are available in each classroom and the Center Director’s Office. Once completed, the Grievance Form should be placed in the provided envelope and given the Center Director. CELC’s Executive Team will review and investigate the Grievance, keeping families informed of any pertinent developments.

Confidentiality

We respect the right to privacy of 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 parents/guardians, program staff and authorized consultants require parental 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 our community partners and our 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, unless the child is in foster care or protective custody.

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



Daily Supervision of Children

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

- 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

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

- Children need to be at the center by 9:00 am daily unless prior arrangements have been approved by the Center Director. The Center Director reserves the right to deny entrance for the day if a parent attempts to drop off a child after 9:00 am without prior notification.
- 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. Staff will ask to see photo identification of anyone who they do not recognize.
- CELC is mandated to report any form of neglect to child protective services and/or the police. Picking up a child while under the influence of any substance that may affect one's ability to properly supervise that child is considered to be neglect. CELC will contact child protectives services and/or emergency services if an adult who appears to be intoxicated attempts to pick up a child from a center.

- People under the age of 18 are not permitted to receive a child from the center.

Custody Agreements

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that CELC staff is aware of any and all custodial agreements at the time of the child's enrollment or immediately upon any change. CELC requires that copies of current parental custody agreements, kinship care contracts, foster care contracts, and any other court ordered instructions about the custody of a child be on file in order for the affected child to attend the center.

- 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.
- CELC will not share a child's information with anyone other than the named custodial parent/guardian of the enrolled child unless written consent is on file by the courts or the child's legal custodial parent or guardian.
- 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 time to help children develop positive attitudes about healthy foods, learn appropriate mealtime behavior, and improve communication skills. Meals at CELC are served family-style.

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:

- 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.

Children may not consume food brought from outside the center while attending CELC programming unless the child has a documented food allergy or special diet. If you are serving your child a snack or meal from home prior to dropping your child off at the center, please do not allow your child to bring the food into the center. Please do not bring candy, cookies, or other snacks into the center, including leaving the items in your child's backpack, diaper bag, or jacket pockets.

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 provide him with breakfast before bringing him to the center.
- 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.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), 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. 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. This includes nut beverages, such as almond or cashew milk.
- Meals and snacks provided by CELC's kitchen are pork-free. (*Please note that children attending the Linden Park Center may be served pork products as Columbus City Schools provides those meals.*)
- 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.
- **The elimination of an entire food group (for example: dairy products) requires written documentation from the child's physician.**
- For infants, Gerber Good Start brand 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 do not bring in

food. CELC's nutrition staff will supply a special treat on the last Friday of every month to help celebrate birthdays.

Families may wish to celebrate their child's birthday or other special days with the classroom community. 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 Publicly Funded Child Care program and collaborate with a variety of community organizations to keep our tuition affordable.

CELC does not charge registration fees, materials fees, or any other programming fees. CELC does not charge tuition to families who are determined to be eligible for community sponsored pre-Kindergarten programs unless the child also receives PFCC assistance, in which case the family is responsible for any co-payment determined by ODJFS.

Late pick-up fees are charged to all families regardless of eligibility and/or enrollment in PFCC or community sponsored programs. (See Late Pick-Up Fee Policy)

Private Pay Accounts

- Tuition is charged weekly and payment is due in advance on Monday of each week.
- Tuition is overdue if not paid by Wednesday of the week for which it is owed and will be subject to a late fees and or termination of services.
- Full weekly tuition is charged regardless of child absences or center closures, unless the center is closed for more than three (3) days in one week.
- A 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.

Full Time Tuition Rates (25 hours or more a week) as of February 2019

Please contact our administrators at 614.253.5525 for the most up to date tuition rates.

Publicly Funded Child Care (Title XX)

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 30-60 days for processing. CELC requires proof of submission to the county prior to enrolling the family.
- The Enrollment and Compliance Director and your Center Director can assist 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:
 - The family must provide CELC with Document Receipt from JFS showing that the initial application for child care benefits has been submitted prior to enrolling at CELC.
 - The family must inform CELC of any correspondence/request for documentation from JFS in regard to application for PFCC.
 - The family must sign the PFCC Agreement and Financial Agreement prior to enrollment
 - **Family must pay a tuition co-payment of \$25 per child every week while the 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 after CELC has received full payment for child care from the state.
 - If a family's initial PFCC application is denied for any reason, the family will be billed for the full tuition rate from the first date of the child's attendance. Failure to pay tuition will result in disenrollment.
- 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.
- Families must maintain eligibility for PFCC by paying any and co-payments in a timely manner and ensuring that the child's account is kept current.
- CELC limits the time a child can attend our program to 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the commencement of the parent's qualifying activity.

- Children may attend CELC while an initial application for PFCC is pending under these conditions:
 - When families receive notification from JFS that it is time to apply for re-determination of benefits, they must notify the Center Director.
 - It is the family's responsibility to complete the re-determination process BEFORE the benefits expire. The Center Director can assist in this process, but it is the responsibility of the family to complete the process.
 - Families are responsible for paying tuition while PFCC eligibility is being redetermined:
 - Families who previously had no co-payment or an established co-payment of less than \$25.00 per week will be charged tuition of \$25.00 per child per week while the PFCC redetermination is being processed by the county.
 - Families who have an established co-payment of more than \$25.00 per week must continue to pay that amount while the PFCC redetermination is being processed. had a co-payment.
- Families are responsible for maintaining eligibility for funded child care. If eligibility lapses, the family will be charged the full tuition for all child care services received as of the last date of eligibility.
- If PFCC is revoked for any reason, the family will be responsible for paying the appropriate regular tuition for child care services received.

Full-Time Hours

- CELC does not offer part-time child care services. Exceptions must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Children approved for PFCC full-time care must attend at least 25 hours per week. 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 a child's absences and ensure that children who qualify for full-time care attend a minimum of 25 hours each week so that CELC receives full payment for that child.
- **Families who are approved for full-time hours who do not attend at least 25 hours a week will be charged a set fee based on the age of the child for each week that the child fails to attend at least 25 hours:**
 - **Infants** **\$80.00 per week**
 - **Toddlers** **\$90.00 per week**
 - **Preschool** **\$60.00 per week**

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

- Families who are approved for PFCC assistance will receive a unique user name and will create a password on the CCTAP website. It is the family's responsibility to use the CCTAP system daily 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-ins. **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.

Attendance Policy

- Families must call the center by 9:00 am if the child is unable to attend school that day OR if the child will be arriving to the center after 9:00 am. Failure to notify the center of your child's late arrival to the center may result in your child not being able to attend that day.
- Community sponsored programs (including Early Head Start, Head Start, and pre-Kindergarten programs) require that children arrive by 9:00 am daily and maintain at least 85% attendance. Your child may lose the opportunity to participate in these programs 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.

Vacation Time & Holidays

Families who take extended breaks from the child care center (more than a few days) must notify the Center Director at least two weeks prior to the child's absence. Full weekly tuition is charged regardless of a child's attendance. No tuition credit is given for a family's vacation or extended absence. No tuition credit is given when the centers are closed in observance of holidays, due to inclement weather or other catastrophic events, or due to scheduled teacher training time (except as listed below).

CELC closes its centers twice every year. All centers are closed during the week of winter holiday and the last week of August every year for teacher training. Families are not charged tuition for those two weeks.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Children must be picked up promptly when the center closes. If an Authorized Adult has not picked up your child by the time the center is scheduled to close, CELC child care staff members will follow this procedure:

- CELC staff will attempt to call the parent/guardian and any one listed on the Authorized Release Form.
- After 30 minutes, if CELC staff has been unable to contact an authorized person, Franklin County Children's Services and/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) or non-payment of late pick-up fees may result in your child's enrollment being terminated.

Late Tuition Payment Fees

An account is considered to be delinquent when any weekly tuition, co-payment, or late pick-up fees have 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.

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

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.
- CELC is required to inform JFS of any unpaid co-payments for PFCC.

**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 in a noticeable place for review.

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

The administrator's hours of availability and child/staff ratios are posted in a noticeable place in the center for review.

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

Any parent 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 their 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 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 job and family services.

It is unlawful for the center 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>

Information about Ohio's Healthchek Program Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Benefits



Apply for healthcare:

- online at Benefits.Ohio.Gov,
- by phone at (800) 324-8680, or
- in-person at your County Department of Job and Family Services.

Find your local office at
JFS.Ohio.Gov/County.

Call the Medicaid Consumer Hotline at (800) 324-8680 for help completing an application or other questions.

Additional information is available at
Medicaid.Ohio.Gov.

Ohio | Department of
Medicaid

Healthchek

Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit.

Individuals younger than age 21 who are covered by Ohio Medicaid can receive important preventive services through Healthchek, including:

- physicals,
- hearing, vision, and dental screenings,
- nutritional screenings,
- mental health screenings,
- developmental screenings,
- vaccinations, and
- blood lead screenings

Babies should have at least 8 Healthchek exams by their first birthday.

Children should have Healthchek exams at 15, 18, 24 and 30 months.

One exam per year is recommended for children over 30 months old.

Any doctor that accepts Medicaid can provide Healthchek services. Ask your doctor to give your child a Healthchek exam.

Healthchek support services are also available to help you with making appointments, transportation and referrals to community services for food, clothing and other needs.

For more information about Healthchek services:

- contact your County Department of Job and Family Services,
- go online at Medicaid.Ohio.Gov/Healthchek,
- contact your Medicaid managed care plan, or
- call the Ohio Medicaid Consumer Hotline (800) 324-8680.