

FAMILY HANDBOOK



**Empower
Learn
Create™
at UC**

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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Commitment Statement

We See You.

Welcome to Empower Learn Create. Our commitment to equity in the classroom promotes inclusive policies and ensures that each child has the resources, skilled teachers, and supports they need to grow. Our diverse community allows us to engage in a variety of perspectives to help generate better ideas to solve complex problems of our evolving society, promote children's holistic development, and empower children to be future promoters of equity and inclusion. The Empower Learn Create environment provides children an optimal setting to engage in meaningful social and developmental opportunities. By encouraging growth and freedom inside the centers, we seek to create a better and more just world around us in our neighborhoods and encourage our children to become the next generation of leaders for equity and inclusion in our communities.

I. PROGRAM HISTORY

Welcome to Empower Learn Create, Inc.!

Empower Learn Create, Inc. (ELC) is an early learning program that aspires to prepare the whole child cognitively, emotionally and socially for future success. Our early childhood degreed teachers provide developmentally appropriate activities in a nurturing, purposeful environment with small group sizes and low ratios. We have beautiful outdoor space to extend the children's learning beyond the classroom.

Children are empowered to make choices, be independent, advocate for themselves and explore their interests and experience the joy of hands-on learning. Teachers are empowered to facilitate learning in all areas of development, helping children reach their potential. Families are empowered to collaborate with teachers and each other.

Children learn through play, interactions with peers and interactions with adults. Children use meaningful materials and engage in purposeful activities and relationships with peers and teachers to enrich their knowledge base and enhance their skills across all areas of development. Teachers learn through individualized on-going professional development. Teachers learn about children and families, building positive relationships and building on the strengths of each family. Families learn how children actively engage in the classroom and how to best support learning outside of the classroom.

Children create relationships with peers and our nurturing staff. Children create art, structures and imaginative play experiences to express themselves and create meaning about the world around them. Teachers create equitable learning communities in the classroom and community partnerships that are mutually beneficial. Families create positive relationships with each other and the staff, building a sense of community.

All of these experiences build on one another. Because teachers, children and families are empowered, they have the freedom and support to learn and grow together, creating the community that is ELC.

Quality childcare has been a growing concern of many constituencies in our society over the past four decades. This had been due in part to the tremendous increase in the number of women who entered the workforce or returned to college to complete their education. The latter reason caused various student organizations and other interested people at the University of Cincinnati to advocate a childcare program that would meet the needs of busy families, offer a convenient location and a quality program. In 1973, an evening childcare program was established and in 1975 the program was expanded to include a day program. Due to the lack of steady enrollments, the evening program was discontinued in 1977. The day program continued to grow and the demand for his service increased. By 1991, the program had expanded to three sites. Also in 1991, the University of Cincinnati purchased the building and property at 3310 Ruther Avenue in Clifton. In 1994, this center was named the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Child Care Center. In 2002, the center expanded and consolidated the two remaining buildings into one.

Today, ELC at UC has the capacity to serve 149 children ages three months to eight years. We serve a diverse population of children and families from different cultural backgrounds, socio economic backgrounds, different family make-ups, and children with special needs. The Center is licensed by the State of Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The laws and rules governing childcare operations are available at the Center for review upon request and the license is posted in the lobby. The Center has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of young Children (NAEYC) since 1993 and is a Gold Medal program with Ohio's voluntary quality initiative, Step up to Quality.

In 2018, ELC extended its reach by managing a childcare center at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). While this expansion allowed us to support a new community, we concluded our time at NKU in June 2024 after two successful terms. This decision enables us to focus on strengthening our legacy and deepening our impact at UC.

Celebrating 50 Years

In 2025, we were proud to celebrate ELC's 50th year of empowering children, families, and educators. This milestone marked not only our enduring commitment to high quality early childhood education but also an exciting new chapter focused on innovation, collaboration, and excellence at UC. We are honored to continue serving our diverse community and shaping the future of early learning together.

Empower Learn Create, Inc. is governed by the Board of Directors and is an independent not-for-profit 501(c) (3), separate from the universities. The Federal Tax Identification number is 31-1143832.

II. MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Mission:

Our mission is to serve a diverse population of children and families of the universities and the community by providing a high quality, inclusive, educational program sustained through a professional, nurturing staff.

Vision:

Where transformative learning experiences are cultivated.

III. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

ELC embraces the constructivist position. This position posits that children learn when they are engaged both physically and cognitively, with objects, people, and events. The program has a developmental focus which grants each child the opportunity to grow and learn at his or her own pace. The planned environment offers purposeful activities that support and encourage growth and exploration in math, science, literacy, music, art, as well as social skills, all which provide a solid foundation to prepare children for kindergarten. The program design reflects the belief that quality early childhood education involves constant interaction between and among the environment, the child, the teacher, and the family. We also believe:

- Environments foster trust and free children to take charge of their play.
- Children are encouraged to refine skills in self-direction, self-regulation and problem solving within the context of a program carefully planned to balance freedom with direction that meets both group and individual needs.
- Schedules are flexible to meet the unique needs of each child with a balance of active/quiet play, indoor/outdoor activity, and need for food and rest based on the developmental levels of the children.
- Teachers begin with the knowledge the child has and find ways to help the child figure out new thinking related to what the child understands, thus clarifying and moving forward with appropriate solutions.
- Teachers are engaged in frequent one-on-one purposeful interactions and conversation to encourage language, scientific inquiry, and creative expression, while supporting social and emotional well-being.
- Materials and supplies are selected carefully to enrich play and work with music/movement, literature/literacy, math concepts, scientific inquiry, sensory and art media and props for dramatic expression.

- Schedules are flexible to meet the unique needs of the individual child. Children are fed when hungry, sleep when tired and are changed as needed. Teachers encourage toddlers to move toward independence by supporting their attempts to self-feed, use the toilet and dress themselves.
- The daily program invites the young child to play and actively explore the environment during waking hours. Year-round opportunities for outdoor play are included in the daily routine.
- Teachers engage in frequent one-on-one interactions with each child throughout the day to encourage language, social, and emotional development. Included are opportunities for children to observe and interact with each other.
- Families and teachers communicate daily to share important information. Families are also encouraged to participate in the daily program, as their schedule allows.
- Play activities include music and movement, reading stories, sensory play (with water, play dough, sand), play with toys that stimulate intellectual and motor development, experiences with appropriate non-toxic art media and pretend play.

A typical day in a classroom may include the following:

The schedules below provide a sample. Schedules remain flexible to meet each child's individual needs, but follow a predictable pattern of play and routines to provide a sense of community and security. Diapering occurs as needed; at a minimum of every two hours. As children become proficient with using the toilet, they also become more independent with monitoring restroom needs.

INFANT

- 8:00 AM Arrival, greetings, Individual care, breakfast (available until 9:30 AM)
- 9:00 AM Individual and small group activities and care
- 11:00 AM Outdoor time
- 12:00 PM Lunch
- 1:00 PM Individual activities, care, naps
- 3:00 PM Snack
- 3:30 PM Individual care, activities
- 4:00 PM Outdoor time
- 5:00 PM Departure

Infants are placed on their backs to sleep. A sleep position waiver must be signed for alternative sleeping arrangements.

TODDLER

- 8:00 AM Arrival, greetings, individual care, and breakfast (available until 9:30 AM)
- 9:00 AM Individual and small group activities and care
- 11:00 AM Outdoor time
- 12:00 PM Clean-up, toileting
- 1:00 PM Naps/rest
- 3:00 PM Snack
- 3:30 PM Individual care, activities
- 4:00 PM Outdoor time
- 5:00 PM Departure

PRESCHOOLER

- Arrival (greetings, transitions, free play and individual activities)
- Prepare for breakfast (wash hands, set table)
- Breakfast (available until 9:30 AM)
- Clean-up
- Planned activities (art, music, dramatic play, math, language, science, motor)
- Outdoor/Indoor large muscle activities
- Group time
- Prepare for lunch (wash hands, set tables)
- Lunch (12:00 PM)
- Prepare for nap (brush teeth, music, stories)
- Nap time (1:00-3:00)
- Snack time (3:00 PM)
- Free play, individual activities
- Outdoor/indoor large muscle activities
- Departure

SCHOOL-AGE

- Arrival (greetings, transitions, free play and individual activities)
- Prepare for breakfast (wash hands, set table)
- Breakfast (available until 9:30 AM)
- Clean-up
- Planned activities (art, music, dramatic play, math, language, science, motor)
- Outdoor/Indoor large muscle activities
- Group time
- Prepare for lunch (wash hands, set tables)
- Lunch (12:00 PM)
- Clean-up (wash hands)
- Quiet time (journal writing, reading, relaxing)
- Snack time
- Outdoor/indoor large muscle activities
- Free play/individual activities
- Departure

All children must arrive no later than 9:30 AM. Arrivals after 9:30 must be preapproved. Late arrivals can be disruptive to the group and individual child. Please communicate any appointments or late arrivals to the office and all plans for this arrival/dismissal.

IV. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

ELC is a private, non-profit early care and education organization. The University of Cincinnati provides the building and subsidizes part of the Center's budget to show its support for early education services. The Board of Directors consists of university affiliates and members of the tri-state community and families. The Family Committee chair serves on the Board. The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing daily operations.

In an effort to aid the process of communication between families and staff, we have devised the following Directory, informing families where to call with various inquiries or concerns. Please keep this list handy so that your questions can be directed appropriately. We hope this directory will provide a more efficient service for you.

DIRECTORY FOR ASSISTANCE

(513) 961-2825

Executive Director, ELC, Inc.
bherron@empowerlearncreate.org

Barb Herron

- Scholarship/tuition assistance information
- program closings, special events
- concerns regarding building and facilities
- referral to other kinds of early education
- program policies and operations
- Board of Directors
- questions concerning all center supplies, equipment and center finances
- registration and enrollment information
- questions regarding waiting list
- questions regarding contracts and contract changes
- fundraisers, meetings and events

(513) 961-2825

Site Director, ELC, Inc.

- general program information, concerns, questions, complaints
- sickness, injuries, absenteeism
- questions concerning meals and meal times
- field trips
- questions concerning classroom activities, routines and teaching staff
- USDA food program, menus, kitchen
- Child medical, allergy and dietary needs

(513) 961-2825

Business Manager
hross@empowerlearncreate.org

Hayley Ross

- questions concerning tuition, payments and vouchers
- subsidized funding absenteeism
- invoices and bills
- USDA food program, menus, kitchen
- family vacation requests

(513) 961-2825

Administrative Assistant

Tamara Luck

tluck@empowerlearncreate.org

- clerical support
- scheduling of family tours
- maintaining filing systems, child enrollment documents, collecting updated documents
- attendance tracking and updates
- office management
- coordinating facilities maintenance and repairs
- Answering and directing phone calls

(513) 961-2825

Administrative Assistant

Jillian Rasnic

jshelton@empowerlearncreate.org

- clerical support
- scheduling of family tours
- maintaining filing systems, child enrollment documents, collecting updated documents
- attendance tracking and updates
- office management
- coordinating facilities maintenance and repairs
- Answering and directing phone calls

(513) 961-2825

ELC at UC Classroom Teachers

The best time to communicate with teachers is between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM OR set up an appointment to speak with the teacher or directors. *It is **NOT** appropriate to discuss your concerns in front of your child, other children or other families.*

- Any questions concerning the classroom, activities, events, discipline, daily routines
- Information regarding your child, his/her behavior, his/her interactions with other children, your child's progress, important events/changes at home.

NOTE: Teachers may be available to talk **briefly** at arrival and/or departure but are responsible for the supervision of their classroom during these times. **Please refrain from distracting teachers from classroom responsibilities. Teachers are not required to reply to communication outside of business hours.**

V. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

2. HOLIDAYS: The Center will be closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Presidents Day (in-service), Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the week between Christmas and New Years. Two Teacher In-Service Days (mid-August and Presidents Day), two conference days (mid-April and Veterans Day)

3. LICENSE CAPACITY:

160 children : (24 infants, 36 toddlers, 80 older toddlers /preschoolers, 20 school-aged children.)

4. CHILD/STAFF RATIO:

<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>RATIO</u>	<u>MAX. GROUP SIZE</u>
3 mos. -18 mos.	4:1	8
18 mos. -3 yrs.	6:1	12
2.5 yrs -3 + yrs	8:1	16
3 yrs. -5 yrs.	10:1	20
5 yrs.-9 yrs.	17:1	20

5. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family engagement an important aspect of our program. Families are encouraged to participate in all facets of the program's activities. They may observe the classroom, participate in family meetings and discussions, volunteer in the classroom and are encouraged to contribute in planning individual goals for their child. The Family Committee is open to all families with children enrolled in the center and organizes special events and programs for the children and families. This committee is responsible for the organization and implementation of special events, family enrichment programs and fundraising. The Family Committee is chaired by a family representative who sits on the ELC Board of Directors.

All custodial families, custodians or guardians of a child enrolled in the center have unlimited access to the Center during the hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their child, evaluating the care provided by the Center or evaluating the premises. A roster of names and telephones numbers of all families or guardians of children attending the Center is available upon request. Families, custodians or guardians may request to have their name excluded from the list. The Center licensing record: including compliance report forms from the Department of Children and Families (DCY) evaluation forms from the City Health, Building and Fire Departments are available from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

VI. PROGRAM POLICIES

SECTION I-CODE OF CONDUCT

ELC has a clear responsibility to protect and promote the pursuit of the Center's goals and educational mission which includes teaching children to resolve conflicts in non-violent and non-aggressive ways. In support of this responsibility, the Center's Code of Conduct governs your behavior and that of all adults at ELC. The Center Code of Conduct identifies unacceptable behaviors by families, staff and visitors while on ELC property. In addition, teachers, staff, families and visitors are to treat each other professionally and with respect, as role models to our children, the areas of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Profanity
- Threats, intimidation or harassment
- Mental or bodily harm
- Disruption and/or obstruction of the Center's normal operations
- Destruction of property
- Disturbing the peace
- Dishonesty or misrepresentation
- Violation of Criminal Law

Anyone found in violation of the Center's Code of Conduct is subject to termination of services.

There is no smoking permitted in ELC buildings or playgrounds.

All vehicles are prohibited from idling in the ELC parking lot while unattended.

Weapons are prohibited on site.

SECTION II-COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If custodial families, custodians or guardians of a child enrolled in the Center have any questions or concerns or wish to file a formal grievance, they may do so by putting concerns/grievance in writing to the Executive Director of ELC. All grievances or complaints will be responded to within 30 days of the date the Executive Director received the grievance. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has a toll-free telephone number (1-800-686-1581) which any person may use to report a suspected violation of childcare licensing rules.

SECTION III-GENERAL EMERGENCY

In case of a general emergency (defined as: any threat to the safety of children due to environmental situation or threats of violence, natural disasters, loss of power, heat or water) the University of Cincinnati Recovery Team Person-in-Charge for West Campus non-academic facilities (659-4251) will be contacted. We will, then, contact the University of Cincinnati Department Of Public Safety (556-1111) to transport or walk children and staff to Graduate (Kingsgate) Hotel, 151 Goodman Drive, 45267. The staff will bring the children's emergency files and families will be contacted to pick up their child. Emails, phone calls, closed Facebook group will be used for communication. Additionally a written note on the center front door will notify families of the relocation address if needed. At all times, ratios will be maintained, and the administrative staff will assist in the supervision of the children.

The building is key code protected. Only immediate family members and current staff have access to the code. This code is not to be shared with anyone not affiliated with the Center. All non-immediate family and non-staff are to ring the bell and report directly to the office.

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM TEACHING YOUR CHILD THE DOOR CODE.

SECTION IV-CHILD VISITATION/CUSTODY AGREEMENT

The custodial parent/legal guardian is responsible for the enrollment of the child. A copy of the court's custody agreement is required. We follow the custodial agreement requirements, and it is the family's responsibility to have current agreements on file. We will follow all custody agreements when releasing a child from ELC.

Enrolling families/guardians are always welcome to come to the Center at any time to visit their child. We do, however, discourage you from having other family and friends visiting your child because it can be disruptive to your child's routine.

If you would like to have a family member (or other person) occasionally visit your child at the Center, you must provide, in writing, the person's name, date and time of visit to the Executive Director or administration with your signed consent. The visitor will need to check in with the office staff and show a picture I.D. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the family or friend being denied visitation. The people you have listed on the escort sheet and as an emergency contact are only authorized to drop off and pick up your child. Entering and exiting the center must be through the main doors by the office.

The ELC may not be used as a neutral visitation site in a court ordered custodial/visitation situation.

SECTION V-MEAL POLICY

Meals are provided for infants, toddlers and preschoolers on a daily basis and are planned to meet nutritional requirements. The cost for meals is included in fees. Breakfast is served between 8:00- 9:30 AM lunch at 12:00-12:30 PM and snack around 3:00 PM. Monthly menus are posted in the center and in classrooms.

Menus are also available to families via Listserv. **Do not bring any food, candy or gum to the center for your child or other children. Please speak to the Site Director regarding special diets.** Families may elect to bring food and formula for their infants (less than 12 months). All infants follow individual schedules. Breastfeeding/pumping is welcome in any infant classroom as well as a designated private space on the second level.

The Center participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. Families' complete paperwork upon enrollment and annually thereafter to receive federal reimbursement for meals served. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1440 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (Voice) or (202) 720- 6382 TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. **Please reference pg. 32 for full USDA CACFP non-discrimination statement.**

SECTION VI - CELEBRATIONS AND A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

At ELC, we are proud to serve a diverse community of children and families and are committed to providing a multicultural, inclusive curriculum that celebrates diversity in meaningful and authentic ways. Our classrooms are enriched with materials such as pictures, books, puzzles, dolls, and dramatic play items that reflect a wide range of racial and cultural backgrounds, gender roles, and abilities. These resources are carefully selected to portray current, accurate representations of children and families from diverse backgrounds engaged in real-life activities. Additionally, our art and music curriculum include materials, songs, instruments, and artwork that celebrate cultures from around the world.

We strive to be a neutral space where holidays are not formally celebrated, allowing us to respect the wide variety of traditions and beliefs held by our families and staff. While holidays can bring excitement, we recognize that this excitement is not always positive or beneficial for all children. For some, holidays may evoke stress, overstimulation, or other challenging emotions. At ELC, our focus is on creating a consistent calm, supportive environment where children feel secure and can thrive.

Celebrating Our Differences Respectfully

With a rich tapestry of cultures and beliefs represented by our families and staff, we aim to be sensitive and respectful of everyone's traditions. While ELC does not plan or host holiday celebrations, we actively encourage children and families to share their traditions in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. Your child may be introduced to seasonal activities or cultural traditions brought in by other families to share with the class. If you would like to share a family tradition, holiday, or special interest with your child's group, we warmly invite you to coordinate with your child's teacher in advance so we can ensure the activity is age-appropriate and meaningful.

Our teachers intentionally create a curriculum that is child-centered and responsive. While holiday discussions and play may naturally emerge from the children's experiences and interests, these moments are organic and not planned by staff. Families have brought in items such as food, books, art projects, or photos to help classrooms explore and understand their culture and traditions. These contributions enrich our shared learning environment while respecting the diversity within our community.

Birthdays and Celebrations

To prioritize inclusivity, neutrality and promote healthy choices, our classrooms do not host birthday or holiday parties. Instead, we encourage alternative ways to celebrate special occasions. If you would like to honor your child's birthday, please arrange it in advance with the teachers. All food items must be pre-packaged and include a list of ingredients to ensure the safety of children with allergies or dietary restrictions.

We recommend celebrating with options like:

- Nutritious snacks.
- Invitations for sensory / imaginative play, such as playdough and cupcake holders
- Providing materials for a collaborative process art activity such as collage items for gluing.
- Donating a book to the classroom in honor of your child.

At ELC, we are dedicated to fostering an environment where every child and family feels valued and included, and we appreciate your partnership in helping us achieve this goal.

If you would like more ideas /examples of how to honor your child on their special day. Please reach out to the office for resources!

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at ELC

Empower Learn Create (ELC) is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse community where every child, family, and staff member feels valued and supported.

Our Commitments

- **Diversity:** We celebrate and respect the unique identities, backgrounds, and experiences of all.
- **Equity:** We ensure every child has access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive by removing barriers to participation.
- **Inclusion:** We create spaces where all individuals feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to share their perspectives.

Continuous Improvement

ELC regularly evaluates its DEI efforts, gathers community feedback, and sets annual goals to ensure our framework meets the evolving needs of our community.

SECTION VII-CONTRACT TERMS AND TUITION

1. All registrants and waiting list requests are required to pay a non-refundable registration fee per child.
2. Tuition for full-time enrollment is based on a weekly rate. Tuition for part-time enrollment is based on a daily rate (no part-time care is available for children under the age of three years). Tuition is based on the number of days you have contracted per week. NO REFUNDS OR CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN FOR DAYS THE CENTER IS CLOSED (including but not limited to holiday, in-service, snow days and/or Acts of God) OR CHILD'S ABSENCE.
3. Checks or money orders (please, no cash payments) are accepted as payment. Please make it payable to ELC. Payment must be delivered to the center **IN ADVANCE OF SERVICE**. A fee determined by the Banking Institution will be assessed for all returned checks.
4. If prolonged illnesses occur, the child's place may be ensured by continued payment of fees or the family may wish to discuss termination of the contract, thereby forfeiting the child's schedule. No credits or refunds will be issued.
5. Registrants are guaranteed only days/ hours for which they have contracted.
6. A child medical statement on the state prescribed form must be completed by the child's physician within 30 days of the child enrollment date and updated annually. A current record of immunizations must be on file on the child's first day of attendance.
7. Families who do not immunize their children must provide documentation and reasoning for this decision in writing. Children with this documentation and written release will be cared for at ELC.
8. A written emergency transportation authorization from the family or guardian must be on file prior to the child's first day in attendance. The Center reserves the right to refuse admission to any child whose families refuse to grant consent for transportation to the source of emergency treatment.
9. Late payments of fees will result in cancellation of contracts and/or scholarships. Payments received in the Center office later than 5 days after due date will automatically accrue a **\$5.00 per day** late fee.
10. Discounts are available to University of Cincinnati employees and students, and first priority is given to UC students and employees in filling vacant slots.

11. Families (at least one adult member of the family and the child to attend the program) are required to tour the Center and make a 1-2 hour visit prior to the child's first day.
12. Families are required to provide four weeks' written notice (Monday through Friday) to the Executive Director before withdrawing their child from the program and canceling the contract. This policy also applies to children transitioning to kindergarten. It is the family's responsibility to clearly communicate the child's last day at ELC with the full two weeks' notice. Please note that assumptions about your child's transition to kindergarten will not be accepted as notice.
13. The Center reserves the right to deny enrollment or discontinue service to any family at its discretion.
14. The children's files are kept confidential, but are immediately available to administrators or teaching staff, the child's family/legal guardian and regulatory authorities. If a transfer of records/information is requested, the family/legal guardian will be asked to sign a release of records form.

SECTION VII-FOLLOWING CONTRACTED SCHEDULE

Our daily schedule is intricate, and each child's schedule depends on families carefully following their contracts. Past abuse in this area involved families picking up children late or bringing children at unscheduled times. This behavior endangers our licensure; thus, the following cautions are outlined:

1. Children **MUST** arrive and leave the Center within the time that has been contracted **arriving no later than 9:30 AM.**
2. Families are expected to arrive on time to gather all of their child's possessions that will be going home with them and leave the Center by **5:00 PM**. If families wish to stay and observe, chat with other families, etc., they should allow extra time before closing time. This policy allows teachers the time to prepare the room for the next day and leave the Center on time.
3. Registrants who are late **THREE (3)** times in picking up their child may be dismissed from the program, forfeiting fees paid.
4. If there is an emergency which forces a family to be late, please call the center to inform the teachers and provisions will be made until you arrive. **IF THERE IS NO PHONE CALL, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE WILL BE TAKEN:**
 Child's family or emergency contact will be called to pick up child. If staff are unable to contact an alternative escort, staff will call the Hamilton County Children's Protective unit (241-KIDS) one hour after closing (6:00 PM) to make arrangements for emergency care for the child.
5. Anyone picking up a child for **ANY REASON** after the Center closes will be charged a late fee. **The fee is to be paid in full that evening or when your child arrives the next morning.**

LATE PICK-UP FEES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

5 MINUTES - 10 MINTUES LATE \$15.00

10 MINTUES - 20 MINTUES LATE \$30.00

More than 20 MINTUES LATE \$3.00 per minute

SECTION IX-VACATION POLICY

If you are a UC student and wish to have your child out during the scheduled university breaks, the Center will hold your child's space during that time. The time that your child is out of the center **MUST** coincide with the scheduled dates of the university's breaks. If you do not use the university breaks, then the regular vacation policy would apply. You may **NOT** use both the university breaks and other vacations. All requests four university breaks must be made in advance in writing to the Executive Director.

Vacation time is allotted to families based on the calendar year and must be requested in advance in writing. A vacation request form is available in the office. Vacation time must be used in full-week increments (Monday through Friday). For part-time schedules, a “week” is defined as the number of contracted days your child attends per week.

- **Vacation Allotment :**

Families enrolled before the last quarter of the calendar year are eligible for one week of discretionary unpaid vacation time during the calendar year. Families enrolling after October 1 are not eligible for a discretionary vacation week until the following calendar year.

- **Holiday Closure:**

The week between Christmas and January 1, during which time the center is closed tuition will not be collected from families.

SECTION X-WEATHER/CENTER CLOSINGS

Closing, delays and early dismissals related to weather or unforeseen circumstances will be made at the discretion of the Executive Director or a designee of ELC. This announcement will be listed on Local 12, and the family Listserv. You can sign up through the television website (www.local12.com) to arrange for text message alerts. During any time of inclement weather, please check your local news media to see what decision the Center has made. PLEASE NOTE We will be listed as our former name, **Early Learning Campus at UC**. Opening staff may be delayed due to adverse weather conditions. Please call the center before arriving during periods of inclement weather to be sure staff has arrived.

SECTION XI-CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT

You are choosing a specific Center for your child, not a particular teacher or classroom. Within every classroom, each child is assigned to a primary caregiver. While we recognize that consistency of care for the children is of primary importance, occasionally, staffing changes or room changes become necessary and will be made at the Executive Director’s discretion.

SECTION XII-TRANSITION AGREEMENT

Transition of children from one classroom to another is based upon several factors including, but not limited to: lengthened attention span, emotional maturity, physical dexterity, social maturity and toilet competency. Although a child may have reached the chronological age of three, four, or five, he/she may yet need to develop social and emotional awareness, certain cognitive skills or a lengthened attention span before moving into the next classroom. After consultation with the family and teacher and an assessment of the child’s progress, a transition plan may or may not be initiated.

Availability of space in each classroom also plays an important part in the transition. When space is not available in the next classroom, the child may remain in his/her present classroom, and a plan is formulated to meet his/her needs until space is available.

If a transition is indicated and space is available, a plan will be created and signed by the teacher and families. The transition agreement will include dates and details regarding time spent in the classrooms. The agreement will be updated as needed to meet the individual needs of the child. The child will be introduced slowly to the new environment by spending short blocks of time over several days or weeks, depending on the child’s progress in adjusting to the new setting, before being permanently placed in the new classroom.

All efforts are made to ensure infants, toddlers, and twos remain with their primary caregivers for an extended and consistent period to support continuity of care.

SECTION XIII-SICKNESS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

Illness among young children including colds, runny noses, coughs, and viruses is easily transmitted to other children and adults in the Center. Besides the physical discomfort these illnesses cause, they can cause other children, staff and volunteers to be absent from school and work. Children who become ill while attending the center will be cared for in a supervised area that minimizes exposure to other children while remaining within sight and hearing of a staff member until they are picked up. Families will be notified promptly when exclusion from care is necessary in accordance with Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) requirements. Please adhere to the following guidelines when your child is ill:

1. Please keep your child **OUT OF SCHOOL** when signs of illness are evident including cough, runny noses, fever, sore throat, earaches, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, and so on. **NOTE:** When a runny nose involves a colored rather than clear discharge, it is a sign of a possible infection.
2. In the past, we have found that some families do not take the initiative to keep their children at home. Therefore, the staff will have the option of informing families to keep a child out of school until his/her symptoms have disappeared. This is a measure to safeguard the health of all children at the Center.
3. Staff will administer prescription medicines only when an official form has been filled out by the family. NO over the counter medicines or ointments will be given without written instructions **SIGNED BY A PHYSICIAN**. Medication and paperwork are kept out of the reach of children or in a locked cabinet. Children with emergency medication as listed in a Health Care Plan will be administered as directed on the form. The medication must be current and have appropriate forms.
4. Children must be well enough to participate in all aspects of the daily program. A written statement signed by a physician must accompany any request to exclude a child from any activity, including outdoor play. **(The children play outdoors as long as the weather is suitable. Suitable weather is defined by Licensing to be at a minimum of twenty-five to ninety degrees Fahrenheit.**
5. **Children do not play outside during smog or heat alerts.)** When outdoor play is not permitted, the children will be scheduled to play in the muscle room. Please dress your child appropriately.
6. Special diets, supplements and/or dietary restrictions also require a signed physician's statement.

On-site early education staff must participate in both first aid training and training in the recognition and emergency treatment of communicable diseases. All staff are trained in disinfection and hand washing. Staff will observe each child upon arrival each day so the child can be returned immediately to the family if signs of illness are demonstrated. Center staff displaying signs or symptoms of illness is required to leave the Center immediately to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Substitute staff is called in to maintain staff/child ratios.

If, during the child's stay at the Center, any of the following signs of illness occur, the child will be isolated from the group. The child will be cared for in a designated supervised area that minimizes contact with other children while remaining within sight and hearing of a staff member. A cot or other comfortable resting place will be provided if appropriate and sanitized after The family(s)/guardian will be contacted via the medical emergency information provided, to pick the child up. Signs of illness warranting the above action include:

Appendix B to Rule 5180:2-12-16 Caring for Sick Children

- Temperature of at least one hundred- and one-degrees Fahrenheit (one hundred degrees Fahrenheit if taken axillary) when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness.

(Thermometers are sanitized after each use)

- Diarrhea (two or more abnormally loose stools within a twenty-four-hour period).
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or making a whooping sound.
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching

or eye pain.

- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes.
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature.
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations.
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptoms of illness.

Mildly ill children, those experiencing minor cold symptoms, will be cared for by the Center and will be closely observed for signs of worsening conditions. The communicable disease charts are posted in the hallways for easy reference by both staff and families. A physician's note of health must be provided for the staff by the families upon the child's return to the Center. Families of children enrolled in the center will be notified immediately in writing if their child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to a communicable disease. In the event of a serious incident, injury, illness or emergency or accident requiring the services of a physician or hospital, the Center shall notify the family. If this is not possible, the Center shall be guided by an Emergency Transportation Authorization required from the family (on file for each child enrolled at the Center) and call 9-1-1 to transport the child to the hospital. The child will be accompanied by a staff member. During emergencies, ratios will be maintained at all times and assistance will be provided by the administrative staff.

Notification of Disease Outbreak

At Empower Learn Create (ELC), the health and safety of our children, families, and staff are a top priority. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease within the program, the following steps will be taken to ensure the well-being of our community:

Outbreak Notification

- Upon confirmation of a vaccine preventable disease case, the Executive Director or designated staff will promptly notify all parents, guardians, and staff.
- The notification will include the nature of the disease, potential exposure details, and any steps families need to take.

Coordination with Health Authorities

- ELC will work closely with local health authorities to follow specific guidelines, including the duration of exclusion and any additional measures needed to prevent further spread.

Immediate Exclusion of Under-Immunized Children

- Parents or guardians of unvaccinated children will be informed of the immediate need for exclusion from the program.
- The exclusion will remain in place until the health risk has passed, or the child receives appropriate immunizations.
- Families will receive a clear explanation that the exclusion is based on health and safety guidelines to protect the entire community.

Documentation and Record-Keeping

- All communications with families regarding exclusion will be documented, including dates, times, and conversation details.
- Records of excluded children and their anticipated return dates will be maintained in accordance with health department recommendations.

Re-Admittance Criteria

Under-immunized children may return to the program only when one of the following criteria is met:

- The exclusion period, as determined by local health authorities, has passed.
- Documentation of full immunization against the disease in question is provided.

Follow-Up Communication

- Families and staff will receive regular updates on the status of the outbreak, any changes in health guidance, and when it is safe for excluded children to return.

This policy is designed to prioritize the health and safety of everyone in our program while maintaining clear and open communication with families.

SECTION XIV-SAFETY POLICY

In the interest of the children's safety, no child will ever be left alone or unsupervised. It is the family's responsibility to deliver the child to a staff member and to check with staff prior to departure. Families and escorts are further **REQUIRED** by the State of Ohio Licensing to sign their child in and out on the forms provided each day. You must sign in/out legibly and indicate the time as dictated by the clock in your child's facility. We **only** honor the time indicated on **the facility's telephone clock** due to the many variations of each individual person's watch/clock who attends the facility. No child will be released to anyone other than the family or guardian(s) without authorized permission from the family or guardian(s). Escorts will be required to show a picture I.D. and must be at least 16 years of age.

Fire, police and poison control numbers are posted in the classrooms and in the office. Monthly fire drills are planned and all children and staff participate in each drill. Severe weather drills are practiced monthly between March and September. Lockdown drills (uninvited Visitor Drills) are practiced quarterly. All emergency plans are posted in classrooms and are reviewed at least monthly by all staff. The use of spray aerosols is prohibited when children are in attendance. There is immediate access to a working telephone at all times.

ELC exercises eco-healthy practices. Please do not leave cars idling in the parking areas. ELC follows procedures to reduce and eliminate exposure to environmental health hazards such as unhealthy air, heavy metals and chemicals. Fruits and vegetables are washed prior to consumption, non-toxic art supplies and toys are purchased. Recycling is emphasized, air quality monitored before outdoor play and the program's use of least toxic and fragranced cleaning products are monitored.

Parental consent is required yearly for all neighborhood walks and routine trips. Any special offsite field trips will require parental consent at the time of the event. Parental consent for all water play activities (except water table play) will be obtained yearly before engaging in water play.

All staff must be trained in standard first aid. First aid materials are located in each classroom. A minimum of one staff member in each wing is trained in CPR during all operating hours. In case of a simple injury, the child will be cared for by staff. A written incident report will be given to the family, explaining what happened. In the event that a serious injury occurs, families will be notified at once, and if necessary, the physician they have designated will be called or emergency service will be contacted. We must have the names and telephone numbers of other people listed on file to contact in case the family(s) cannot be reached. An unreported injury found by the teacher after the family leaves will be recorded on an incident report form. The family will be asked to sign the report at the end of the day. **Families are responsible for any expenses incurred due to an injury.**

Families sign permission for ELC to secure emergency transportation of a child in the event of an illness or injury requiring emergency treatment on enrollment forms. ELC reserves the right to

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refuse enrollment and care of children whose families do not grant the Center emergency transportation permission.

SECTION XV-BITING POLICY

Biting is a common behavior in group care programs serving children under the age of three. At Empower Learn Create (ELC), we address biting with understanding and proactive strategies to support all children involved.

1. Immediate Care and Support

- The child who has been bitten is given immediate attention and care, including necessary first aid. Their feelings are acknowledged, and they are comforted.
- The child who bit is guided through a calm, firm, and supportive interaction to help them understand that biting hurts and is not allowed.

2. Recognizing and Expressing Feelings

- Both children are supported in recognizing and expressing their emotions. Teachers acknowledge feelings such as frustration, anger, or excitement to help the children feel understood.

3. Understanding the Behavior

- Teachers assess the underlying reasons for the biting behavior, such as teething, frustration, or difficulty communicating needs. Families are reminded to avoid playful biting at home, as it can unintentionally encourage children to experiment with biting in other settings.

4. Individualized Strategies

- Teachers collaborate with families to develop strategies tailored to the child's needs. This may include:
 - Providing sensory items, like teething toys.
 - Offering additional one-on-one attention.
 - Teaching language or hand gestures for communication.
- If a child seems to be frequently targeted for biting, teachers help that child develop assertiveness skills, using language such as "Stop" or "Walk away."

5. Creating a Safe Environment

- Teachers maintain active supervision and establish predictable routines to reduce stress and prevent biting incidents.
- Positive peer interactions are encouraged, and engaging, developmentally appropriate activities are provided to promote collaboration and reduce frustration.

6. Addressing Biting in Older Children

- Biting behaviors in children over the age of three indicate the need for a closer evaluation of the behavior. In these cases:
 - Families are required to actively partner with ELC to develop a plan to address the behavior.
 - Referrals to outside agencies for assessments or additional support may be recommended to help the child succeed in a group care environment.

7. Ongoing Communication with Families

- Families are kept informed of any biting incidents and the strategies being implemented to support their child.
- We emphasize that biting is a normal phase for many young children and assure families that our approach focuses on helping all children feel safe, valued, and understood.

The staff at ELC supervises the children closely at all times. Everything possible is done to keep all children at ELC safe and secure. However, just as all falls cannot be prevented, nor can all bites. Families who have further questions about biting are invited to discuss the matter with the Site Director. Specific questions can be answered and written information is available.

SECTION XVI-TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIP SAFETY

The Center plans routine neighborhood walks as part of our regular program. Field trips and special outings are also scheduled by all classrooms throughout the year. Field trip releases which include the child's name, the destination and the date of the trip must be signed and dated by families and are kept on file at the Center. On field trips, children are never left alone or unsupervised. Adult/child ratios are maintained and most often exceed the required ratios to ensure the children's safety. The first aid kit must be taken on each trip and staff trained in first aid procedures must accompany each group of children on any trip. Each child on the field trip will have identification attached to him/her containing the Center's name, address and telephone number in the event the child becomes lost. The emergency transportation authorization and health records of all the children will be taken on each trip in the event of an emergency. When transporting children, the Center will abide by the State's Child Restraint Law. Public transportation and chartered buses are used for some field trips. School Age field trips will follow all regulations that are required by the state and listed on the school age document.

SECTION XVII-DISCIPLINE POLICY

Most families are concerned about how discipline is handled within the classroom. This section is intended to explain the type of behaviors which will require discipline measures as well as the techniques which will be used. The goals of discipline are to:

1. Develop inner controls in the child.
2. Help the child verbalize his/her reactions instead of using physical actions.
3. Bring the child in touch with his/her feelings by identifying the emotions they are feeling ("I am angry").
4. Establish appropriate and constructive behavior.

We have defined aggressive behavior as any action which shows intent of injury to another. The teacher will use the following techniques in dealing with aggressive behaviors:

- The teacher will **MEDIATE** rather than give the child solutions.
- The teacher will **STRUCTURE CHOICES** for the child by letting him/her choose.
- The teacher will **REDIRECT** the child's attention by suggesting another activity (i.e., blocks, water play or books).
- The teacher will **INVESTIGATE THE FEELINGS BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR** the child that acts out against another child

- The teacher may report continual disruptive behavior to the administration who may recommend outside agency observations with permission or decide to cancel the childcare contract. A child who is disruptive to this extent will be considered inappropriate for care in our Center.
- **Physical punishment by anyone, including families, is not permitted at the Center.**

Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted and would be in the best interest of the child. If such measures are to be taken, the Center will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternate placement. The Center will comply with all federal, state and civil rights laws.

SECTION XVIII-APPROPRIATE DRESS AND TOYS

ELC provides a rich learning environment for children, encompassing a balance of indoor and outdoor activities. It is important to recognize that the “work” of childhood is play and ELC capitalizes on the principle that children learn through play. Your child should arrive at the center in clothing that is appropriate for the varied activities offered at the Center. Casual clothing and athletic shoes for outdoor play are strongly encouraged.

Toy guns, weapons and superhero action toys are prohibited at the Center. The Center provides educational toys and equipment for the children. Toys from home should not be brought to the Center unless approved by the teacher.

SECTION XIX-BABYSITTING

All employees of ELC are **PROHIBITED** from providing care for children served by ELC outside of the ELC facility.

SECTION XX-GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

The Center recognizes that at times, clients may want to express their gratitude to an individual employee or student worker with a gift. However, all personal gifts are discouraged and **in no cases may money be accepted by an individual employee-even during the holidays.** If you wish to give a gift, all families are encouraged to recognize the employee with a donation to the Center or by purchasing books or developmentally appropriate materials for the classroom.

SECTION XXI-CHILD ABUSE POLICY

RESPONSIBILITIES:

According to the Ohio Revised Code, childcare centers have responsibilities in the area of child abuse and neglect. The Board and staff of ELC accept these legal responsibilities to protect the well-being of the children on our care.

PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT:

“Any...administrator or employee of a child care center, or administrator or employee of a certified child care agency or other public or private children services agency, school teacher or school authority, social worker...acting in his official or professional capacity, having reason to believe that a child less than eighteen years of age...have suffered any wound, injury, disability or condition of such a nature as to REASONABLY INDICATE abuse or neglect of such child, SHALL IMMEDIATELY REPORT or cause reports to be made of such information...” (Section 2151.421)

PENALTIES

Whoever violates Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, by not reporting suspected child abuse, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.

PROCEDURES

When ANY EMPLOYEE of the Center has REASON to suspect a child has been abused or neglected, the employee, SHALL IMMEDIATELY REPORT THE SUSPICIONS TO THE HAMILTON COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENT (632-6224 OR 241-KIDS) or the CINCINNATI POLICE DEPARTMENT or YOUTH AID DIVISION at 352-3564.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

According to the Ohio Revised Code (Section 2151.01 to 2151.54) an “abused child” includes any child who: is the victim of sexual ACTIVITY, is ENDANGERED, “exhibits evidence of any INJURY or death inflicted other than by accidental means,” or whose injury is at variance with the history given of it. A child whose home is “filthy and unsanitary” or whose families (or guardians), when able, REFUSE OR NEGLECT TO PROVIDE him with the necessary CARE, SUPPORT, MEDICAL ATTENTION, and EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES...” is also considered to be abused.

SECTION XXII-NON DISCRIMATORY POLICY

ELC shall not discriminate against anyone for reasons of race, creed, color, gender, religion, disability, national and ethnic origin in its admissions, scholarship or educational programs and activities.

SECTION XXIII-CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children with physical, developmental, or other disabilities are fully included in all activities at Empower Learn Create (ELC). Inclusion benefits all children: children with disabilities have opportunities to develop personal, social, and learning skills alongside their peers, while children without disabilities gain valuable experiences in empathy, collaboration, and appreciation of human diversity.

ELC is committed to making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities. Our facility meets current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) architectural requirements, ensuring accessibility for all.

To meet the specific needs of each child, individualized plans are developed in collaboration with families. These plans may include the administration of necessary medications and other supports to ensure each child's safety, care, and successful participation in our program.

SECTION XXIV-ASSESSMENT AND REFERRALS

The first 5 years of life are very important to your child; this time sets the stage for success in school and later life. During infancy and early childhood, many experiences should be gained and many skills learned. It is important to ensure that each child's development is proceeding without concern during this period; therefore, we are interested in helping your child's growth and development. In addition to the primary caregiver's classroom assessment, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will be given to you annually. You will be asked to answer questions about some things your child can and cannot do, and to return the completed questionnaire to the office. You should not be concerned if your child cannot do every task. We will share the results of the questionnaire with you at the conference, held twice a year. If you are unable to meet at the Center, we do ask that you arrange a phone conference or virtual meeting with your child's primary caregiver. If there are concerns regarding your child's development, we will contact you directly. You may wish to have your child's doctor, or another agency conduct a further examination. All information about your child and your family will be kept confidential.

ELC has many tools on which information about the child and family is gathered. This includes, but is not limited to, an initial tour, family orientation, and collection of background information, teacher questionnaires, on-going observation and developmental screening tools and assessments. As the information is gathered and/or completed, it is assessed to see if the results warrant a referral to an outside agency. Teaching staff and administration is trained on administering and scoring assessments during employee orientation as well as professional development opportunities. Before a referral is made, there is an initial consultation with the family/guardian. A referral is made if the Center personnel need additional support to meet the individual needs of the child/family or if assistance is required that goes beyond the expertise of the staff. ELC works cooperatively with many outside agencies. If the Center is a participant/partner in the agreed plan, the administrative staff will work with the outside agency to secure any necessary paperwork and support the family with the completion of the information. The administrative staff will be the point person to schedule any appointments that involve the Center, the family and the outside agency. In other cases, the family may be responsible for contacting the agency and the Center will follow-up with the family to see that services were received. The Center offers support to the family, so that all parties can be successful in meeting the individual needs of the child. When relevant, the Center will be an active participant in any necessary training and will make accommodations to meet the needs of the child. When necessary, the Center will create an individualized education plan for the child.

Developmental Screening and Assessment Tools at ELC

At Empower Learn Create (ELC), we are committed to supporting the growth and development of each child in our care. To ensure that we meet the unique needs of every child, we utilize researcher-based tools to screen and assess developmental progress. Upon enrollment, we request families' consent to participate in this process.

Our tools include:

1. **Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition AS-3Q(screener)**
A developmental screener used to monitor your child's overall growth in areas such as communication, motor skills, problem-solving, and social skills.
2. **Ages & Stages Questionnaires®:Social-Emotional, Second Edition ASQ:S-2(screener)**
A screener designed to evaluate your child's social-emotional development, including their ability to regulate emotions and interact with others.
3. **Teaching Strategies GOLD®:**
A comprehensive assessment system that tracks ongoing development and learning across all domains, providing valuable insights for planning individualized instruction and sharing developmental progress with families. Teachers use the results to plan for the classroom and children by setting individualized monthly goals.
4. All teachers use anecdotal notes, running records and portfolios to assess children throughout the year.

These tools enable us to identify each child's strengths, celebrate milestones, and provide early support when necessary. We view this as a partnership with families, and we encourage open communication about your child's development throughout their time at ELC

The teacher shares the results of all screening and assessment tools with the family during conferences. If for any reason, a conference is not conducted, the family will receive the written results of the assessment. Families are encouraged to attend conferences. Phone conferences and virtual meetings can be arranged to meet the individual needs of family/guardians if there is not a time to meet at the center. It is a state of Ohio

childcare licensing requirement that a conference is conducted for each child annually. For children whose scores indicate a need for further assessment, the referral process is initiated. All information is kept confidential.

SECTION XXV-CODE OF ETHICS

At Empower Learn Create (ELC), we strictly adhere to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethics. This framework guides our professional conduct and decision-making to ensure the highest standards of respect, integrity, and professionalism in our interactions with children, families, and colleagues.

While the complete position statement is available at www.naeyc.org, we want to highlight an essential guideline to uphold professional boundaries **staff members are not permitted to "friend" families on personal social media platforms.** This policy is in place to maintain clear professional relationships and protect the privacy of all parties.

The full NAEYC Code of Ethics is included below for your reference. Please take the time to review it carefully. If you have questions, do not hesitate to reach out to the administration for clarification.

NAEYC CODE OF ETHICS

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CHILDREN

Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children's development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children's self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical well-being.

Ideals

- I-1.1-** To be familiar with the knowledge base of early childhood care and education and to stay informed through continuing education and training.
- I-1.2-** To base program practices upon current knowledge and research in the field of early childhood education, child development, and related disciplines, as well as on particular knowledge of each child.
- I-1.3-** To recognize and respect the unique qualities, abilities, and potential of each child.
- I-1.4-** To appreciate the vulnerability of children and their dependence on adults.
- I-1.5-** To create and maintain safe and healthy settings that foster children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development and that respect their dignity and their contributions.
- I-1.6-** To use assessment instruments and strategies that are appropriate for the children to be assessed, that are used only for the purpose for which they were designed, and that have the potential to benefit children.
- I-1.7-** To use assessment information to understand and support children's development and learning to support instruction, and to identify children who may need additional services.
- I-1.8-** To support the right of each child to play and learn in an inclusive environment that meets the needs of children with and without disabilities.
- I-1.9-** To advocate for and ensure that all children, including those with special needs, have access to the support services needed to be successful.

- I-1.10-** To ensure that each child's culture, language, ethnicity, and family structure are recognized and valued in the program.
- I-1.11-** To provide all children with experiences in a language that they know, as well as support children in maintaining the use of their home language and in learning English.
- I-1.12-** To work with families to provide a safe and smooth transition as children and families move from one program to the next.

Principles

- P-1.1-** **Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children. This principle has precedence over all others in this Code.**
- P-1.2-** We shall care for and educate children in positive emotional and social environments that are cognitively stimulating and that support each child's culture, language, ethnicity, and family structure.
- P-1.3-** We shall not participate in practices that discriminate against children by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs or activities on the basis of their race, national origin, religious beliefs, medical condition, disability, or marital status/family structure, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs or other affiliations of their families. (Aspects of this principle do not apply in programs that have a lawful mandate to provide services to a particular population of children.)
- P-1.4-** We shall involve all those with relevant knowledge (including families and staff) in decisions concerning a child, as appropriate, ensuring confidentiality of sensitive information.
- P-1.5-** We shall use appropriate assessment systems, which include multiple sources of information, to provide information on children's learning and development.
- P-1.6-** We shall strive to ensure that decisions such as those related to enrollment, retention, or assignment to special education services, will be based on multiple sources of information and will never be based on a single assessment, such as a test score or a single observation.
- P-1.7-** We shall strive to build individual relationship with each child; make individualized adaptations in teaching strategies, learning environments, and curricula; and consult with the family so that each child benefits from the program. If after such efforts have been exhausted, the current placement does not meet a child's needs, or the child is seriously jeopardizing the ability of other children to benefit from the program, we shall collaborate with the child's family and appropriate specialists to determine the additional services needed and /or the placement option(s) most likely to ensure the child's success. (Aspects of this principle may not apply in programs that have a lawful mandate to provide services to a particular population of children.)
- P-1.8-** We shall be familiar with the risk factors for and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse and physical, emotional, educational, and medical neglect. We shall know and follow state laws and community procedures that protect children against abuse and neglect.
- I-1.8-** To support the right of each child to play and learn in an inclusive environment that meets the needs of children with and without disabilities.
- I-1.9-** To advocate for and ensure that all children, including those with special needs, have access to the support services needed to be successful.
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- P-1.5-** We shall use appropriate assessment systems, which include multiple sources of information, to provide information on children's learning and development.
- P-1.6-** We shall strive to ensure that decisions such as those related to enrollment, retention, or assignment to special education services, will be based on multiple sources of information and will never be based on a single assessment, such as a test score or a single observation.
- P-1.7-** We shall strive to build individual relationship with each child; make individualized adaptations in teaching strategies, learning environments, and curricula; and consult with the family so that each child benefits from the program. If after such efforts have been exhausted, the current placement does not meet a child's needs, or the child is seriously jeopardizing the ability of other children to benefit from the program, we shall collaborate with the child's family and appropriate specialists to determine the additional services needed and /or the placement option(s) most likely to ensure the child's success. (Aspects of this principle may not apply in programs that have a lawful mandate to provide services to a particular population of children.)
- P-1.8-** We shall be familiar with the risk factors for and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse and physical, emotional, educational, and medical neglect. We shall know and follow state laws and community procedures that protect children against abuse and neglect.
- P-1.9-** When we have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, we shall report it to the appropriate community agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate actions have been taken. When appropriate, families or guardians will be informed that the referral will be or has been made.
- P-1.10-** When another person tells us of his or her suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected, we shall assist that person in taking appropriate action in order to protect the child.
- P-1.11-** When we become aware of a practice or situation that endangers the health, safety, or well-being of children, we have an ethical responsibility to protect children or inform families and/or others who can.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO FAMILIES

Ideals

- I-2.1-** To be familiar with the knowledge base related to working effectively with families and to stay informed through continuing education and training.
- I-2.2-** To develop relationships and mutual trust and create partnerships with the families we serve.
- I-2.3-** To welcome all family members and encourage them to participate in the program.
- I-2.4-** To listen to families, acknowledge and build upon their strengths and competencies, and learn from families as we support the, in their task of nurturing children.
- I-2.5-** To respect the dignity and preferences of each family and to make an effort to learn about its structure, culture, language, customs, and beliefs.
- I-2.6-** To acknowledge families' childbearing values and their right to make decisions for their children.
- I-2.7-** To share information about each child's education and development with families and to help them understand and appreciate the current knowledge base of the early childhood profession.
- I-2.8-** To help family members enhance their understanding of their children and support the continuing development of their skills as families.
- I-2.9-** To participate in building support networks for families by providing them with opportunities to interact with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services.

Principles

- P-2.1-** We shall not deny family members access to their child's classroom or program setting unless access is denied by court order or other legal restriction.
- P-2.2-** We shall inform families of program philosophy, policies, curriculum, assessment system, and personnel qualifications, and explain why we teach as we do- which should be in accordance with our ethical responsibilities to children (see Section I).
- P-2.3-** We shall inform families of and, when appropriate, involve them in policy decisions.
- P-2.4-** We shall involve the family in significant decisions affecting their child.
- P-2.5-** We shall make every effort to communicate effectively with all families in a language that they understand. We shall use community resources for translation and interpretation when we do not have sufficient resources in our programs.
- P-2.6-** As families share information with us about their children and families, we shall consider this information to plan and implement the program.
- P-2.7-** We shall inform families about the nature and purpose of the program's child assessments and how data about their child will be used.

- P-2.8-** We shall treat child assessment information confidentially and share this information only when there is a legitimate need for it.
- P-2.9-** We shall inform the family of injuries and incidents involving their child, of risks such as exposures to communicable disease that might result in infection, and of occurrences that might result in emotional distress.
- P-2.10-** Families shall be fully informed of any proposed research projects involving their children and shall have the opportunity to give or withhold consent without penalty. We shall not permit or participate in research that could in any way hinder the education, development, or well-being of children.
- P-2.11-** We shall not engage in or support exploitation of families. We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness working with their children.
- P-2.12-** We shall develop written policies for the protection of confidentiality and the disclosure of children's records. These policy documents shall be made available to all program personnel and families. Disclosure of children's records beyond family member, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require familial consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect).
- P-2.13-** We shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest.
- P-2.14-** In cases where family members are in conflict with one another, we shall work openly, sharing our observations of the child, to help all parties involved make informed decisions. We shall refrain from becoming an advocate for one party.
- P-2.15-** We shall be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources and professional support services. After a referral has been made, we shall follow up to ensure that services have been appropriately provided.

SECTION XXVI-USDA CACFP Non-Discrimination Statement**USDA CACFP Non-Discrimination statement:**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400
Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SECTION XXVII-Center Family Information

Center Family Information

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (OHIO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (DCY)). 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 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 administrator's hours of availability to meet with parents and child/staff ratios are posted in a noticeable place in the center for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the OHIO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (DCY) . Inspections are also online at <http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov/>. Parents may search for a specific program and sign up to be notified when the program's latest inspection is posted online.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. To file a discrimination complaint, write or call Health and Human Services (HHS) or OHIO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (DCY) . HHS and OHIO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (DCY) are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Write or Call:

HHS

Region V, Office of Civil Rights 233 N. Michigan Ave, Ste. 240

Chicago, IL 60601

(312) 886-2359 (voice)

(312) 353-5693 (TDD)

(312) 886-1807 (fax)

Write or Call:

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (DCY)

Bureau of Civil Rights

30 E. Broad St., 37th Floor Columbus,

OH 43215-3414

(614) 644-2703 (voice)

1-866-277-6353 (toll free)

(614) 752-6381 (fax)

1-866-221-6700 (TTY) or (614) 995-9961

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 childrenand youth.ohio.gov



TUITION RATES

(\$55 Registration Fee)

Current Community tuition rates:

INFANT:	\$375 per week
TODDLER:	\$335 per week
PRESCHOOL:	\$265 per week \$59 per day (daily rate)
SCHOOLAGERS:	\$230 per week plus one-time payment of \$220 flat rate for activity fee (\$20 per week @ 11 weeks)

Discounted rates for University of Cincinnati students, staff and faculty:

INFANT:	\$340 per week
TODDLER:	\$305 per week
PRESCHOOL:	\$250 per week
SCHOOLAGERS:	\$230 per week plus one-time payment of \$220 flat rate for activity fee (\$20 per week @ 11 weeks)

SECTION XXIX-Summer School Age Information

The Summer School-age Program at Empower Learn Create (ELC) is conditional on staffing availability and, if offered, runs from the day after Memorial Day through mid-August.

This program serves children ages 5-9 maintaining a 1:17 teacher child ratio with a maximum group size of 20. Children not currently enrolled as ELC preschoolers must have completed at least one year of kindergarten before enrolling.

Families are required to commit to the entire summer session and sign an agreement upon enrollment. Children must pack a lunch daily and adhere to all enrollment requirements applicable to currently enrolled children.

The summer program reflects ELC's core philosophy open-ended learning that prioritizes joy, exploration, and meaningful experiences for every child in our care.

Summer School-Age Program Waitlist Policy

Empower Learn Create (ELC) offers a limited-capacity Summer School-Age Program designed to serve University of Cincinnati (UC) students, faculty, and staff, with additional spaces available to the broader community. Due to high demand, a structured waitlist is maintained.

Waitlist Eligibility and Enrollment

To be added to the waitlist, families must submit a completed online application for a child who meets the program's age and eligibility requirements. UC-affiliated applicants are required to provide verification of affiliation at the time of application. Placement on the waitlist does not guarantee enrollment.

Priority for Enrollment

Waitlist placement is determined first by priority group and then by the date of application within each group. Priority is given in the following order:

1. UC-affiliated families with a child currently enrolled in ELC's early childhood program
2. UC students, faculty, and staff
3. Siblings of currently enrolled ELC community families
4. Community applicants

ELC remains committed to serving a diverse group of children and families.

Waitlist Structure

A single waitlist is maintained for the full summer session. The waitlist is specific to each summer and does not carry over from year to year. Submissions are accepted for the next summer program at the end of August.

Enrollment Offers

Offers are extended based on priority and application date. We make every attempt to make offers by the end of January to allow for families time sensitive planning needs. Families are typically given a limited timeframe to accept or decline. If an offer is declined, the application may be removed from the waitlist due to the time-sensitive nature of summer enrollment.

Enrollment Requirements and Payment

Families who accept a space must complete all required registration steps within the designated timeframe. An upfront, non-refundable activity fee and an initial tuition payment are required to secure enrollment.

Tuition Payment Method: School-age families who do not have another child currently enrolled in the ELC early childhood program are required to select weekly ACH payments only. This payment structure supports accurate, timely billing and helps prevent overcharging in this seasonal program.

The Summer School-Age Program is offered as a full-session commitment. Partial enrollment is not available. Each enrolled child is eligible for one week of scheduled vacation, which must be submitted in advance and taken as a full Monday-Friday absence.

SOCIAL MEDIA, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Empower Learn Create (ELC) recognizes that social media is an important means of communication for many families while also recognizing our responsibility to protect the privacy, dignity, and confidentiality of every child in our care. This policy is intended to maintain professional relationships, protect confidential information, and ensure the safety and well-being of all children.

Child Photographs and Identifying Information

Photographs, videos, or other images of children may only be taken by ELC staff using center-approved devices for educational documentation, classroom communication, and other approved program purposes.

At enrollment, families complete a Photo and Media Release indicating whether they grant or deny permission for their child's image to be used in classroom displays, newsletters, marketing materials, the center's website, social media, or other approved publications. Staff are responsible for reviewing and following each child's current Photo and Media Release authorization before any photograph, video, or identifying information is shared or published.

Children whose families have declined media consent will not be photographed or included in published images or videos used outside of classroom documentation. Staff are responsible for knowing and honoring each family's current consent status at all times.

No confidential information or personally identifying information about a child or family will be shared publicly without the appropriate authorization.

Staff Use of Social Media and Media Communications

To protect the privacy of children and families and maintain professional boundaries, ELC employees are prohibited from:

- Posting photographs or videos of enrolled children on personal social media accounts.
- Sharing confidential or identifying information about children, families, coworkers, or center operations.
- Discussing classroom incidents, child behavior, confidential matters, or internal business on personal social media platforms.
- Taking photographs or videos of children using personal cell phones, smart watches, or other personal electronic devices.

The Executive Director serves as the official spokesperson for Empower Learn Create. Any requests from television, radio, newspapers, online media, or other news organizations regarding the center, its staff, children, families, or operations must be referred immediately to the Executive Director. No employee is authorized to provide interviews, statements, photographs, or information to the media unless specifically designated by the Executive Director.

Official photographs, videos, website content, newsletters, marketing materials, and social media posts representing Empower Learn Create may only be published with the approval of the Executive Director after verifying each child's current Photo and Media Release authorization.

Appropriate Language, Media, and Behavior

To ensure a safe, welcoming, and developmentally appropriate environment for all children, Empower Learn Create expects all staff, families, volunteers, and visitors to use respectful language and demonstrate behavior that is appropriate for young children. The use or display of profanity, discriminatory or harassing language, sexually explicit or violent content, or other media, conversations, or behaviors that are not suitable for children is prohibited while on ELC premises or participating in ELC activities. Staff are expected to model positive, professional interactions at all times, and families are asked to support these expectations to help maintain a positive learning environment for every child.

ELC Family Facebook Community

Empower Learn Create maintains an official private Facebook group for enrolled families. The purpose of this group is to foster a sense of community by sharing program announcements, classroom highlights, family events, reminders, and celebrations.

Participation in the Facebook group is completely voluntary. Families who choose to participate are expected to communicate respectfully and help protect the privacy of all children and families.

Staff members participate in the group only in their professional role as employees of Empower Learn Create. The Facebook group is not intended for personal communication between staff and families and should not replace official center communication through email, telephone, scheduled conferences, or conversations with center administration.

To maintain appropriate professional boundaries, **staff members are expected not to initiate or accept friend requests, follow requests, or other personal social media connections with families of currently enrolled children. Likewise, families are respectfully asked not to request or expect personal social media connections with current ELC staff members.**

These professional boundaries help ensure confidentiality, maintain positive working relationships, and support an environment focused on children's learning and well-being.

Family Photography

Families are welcome to photograph or video their own child during center-sponsored events. We respectfully ask families to honor the privacy of other children by refraining from posting photographs or videos that include children other than their own on social media or other public platforms without permission from the child's parent or guardian.

Protecting the privacy and dignity of every child is a shared responsibility. We appreciate our families' partnership in maintaining a safe, respectful, and professional learning community.

NAP NOTES

Nap Notes are a way to celebrate the family/child relationship. How this happens is...

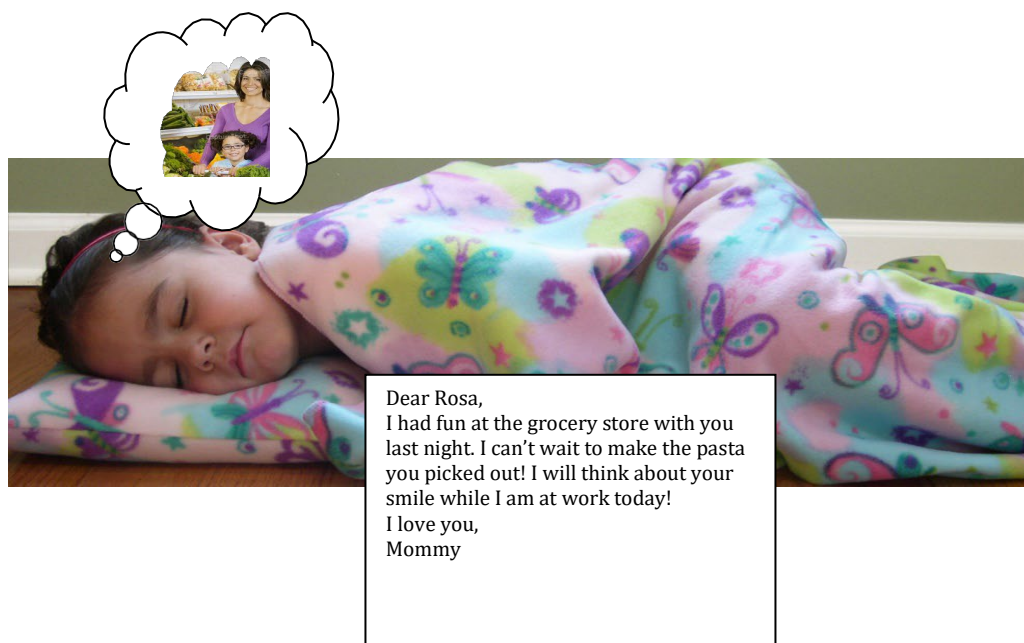
During the morning drop off, take a few minutes to jot down a message to your child. Nap Notes are a part of our nap time transition and drop off routine. Teachers will collect the notes each day from the special basket and individually read each child their note as they settle down on their cots for nap/quiet time.

This message will be read to your child as they settle in for this quiet time of the day. Nap time in group care is a unique experience and through the nap note we are working to support the child's emotional attachment, mastery of feelings around stress and separation, and supporting the child in building mental muscles. While they are physically separated from you during the personal experience of napping or resting quietly your special message brings you present.

So, you ask, what should I write? You might write about something that the two of you will do at pick up time, something funny that happened that morning or prior evening, or simply a quick message stating I Love you and will think about you today. There is no wrong way to write a nap note, this is a special connection between you and your child and no matter how brief it will bring you to mind. We do ask that teachers do not write notes in the case that you have forgotten to do so. In that scenario teachers can ask children to dictate a message to you to read when you are together at the end of the day.

Everything you need to write a Nap Note is available, including a basket for you to submit your note. Some families write a few notes in advance for those busy mornings when time just does not allow space to do so!

Thank you for taking the time to foster this special connection that further strengthens the home school relationships of ELC and your family. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with your child's teachers or office staff.





2026 CENTER CLOSINGS

(Dates subject to change)

January 5	Return from winter break
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 16	Staff Professional Dev. Day (Presidents Day) <i>(No care for children)</i>
April 3	Family Conferences <i>(Care for children provided during your conference time only)</i>
May 25	Memorial Day
June 19	Juneteenth Day Observed
July 3	Independence Day
August 7	Staff Professional Dev. Day <i>(No care for children)</i>
September 7	Labor Day
October 23	Staff attend 4C conference/P.D. <i>(No care for children)</i>
November 11	Family Conferences <i>(Veterans Day) (Care for children provided during your conference time only)</i>
November 26	Thanksgiving Day
November 27	Day After Thanksgiving
December 24	Christmas Eve
December 25	Christmas Day
December 28- January 1 (Return January 4 th)	Winter Break