



*Creative Learning*

# *Early Learning Center*

## **Parent Handbook Program & Policies**



***"Come to Us...and you'll find, Active Kids with Active Minds!"***

**Lobo Gymnastics, Inc. dba Early Learning Center  
2500 Falcon Pass Houston, TX 77062 281-480-5626**

## Welcome to...

# Early Learning Center

Parents,

*We thank you for placing your trust and confidence in us for the care of your child. You are encouraged to become a part of our program by offering suggestions and comments. We strive to exceed your expectations in all areas by helping your child develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically; as well as to give you peace of mind.*

*Encouraging your child to grow and develop while having fun, gaining confidence and self-awareness, and maintaining high self-esteem and self-worth is of utmost importance to us.*

*In our caring, nurturing, and enriching environment with resolute and enthusiastic teachers, your child will have unlimited opportunities to imagine, grow, and learn.*

*Our purposeful and engaging curriculum that allows for child-directed and teacher-directed activities includes developmentally age-appropriate experiences for children.*

*We help to build a foundation for learning and understanding, which encompasses language and literacy, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) sensory and dramatic play, music, gymnastics, Spanish, computer technology and more.*

*We acknowledge that a well-rounded child is derived from more than academics. It is achieved from many other life experiences, observations, social interactions, conflicts, and challenges. We recognize that each child is unique in the way he learns and discovers how to conduct himself in the world around him.*

*Throughout your child's experiences with us, he will develop a strong character with a clear understanding of concepts that include sharing and generosity, kindness, and friendships, as well as integrity and respect.*

Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures and prevent any misunderstandings or disputes in the future. Our goal is to supplement your parenting and support you in your role as a working parent. We encourage you to become an active participant in our school activities and the programs we offer. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to your child's teacher or the Center's Director. We want the best for you and your child.



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### Days and Hours of Operation

Early Learning Center(ELC) Childcare and Summer Camps hours of operation are:

Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Infants-2 years of age: Hours are 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Check with office for Mother's Day Out hours.

Late pick-up fees apply.



### Holidays

NEW YEARS EVE – CLOSED	LABOR DAY – CLOSED
NEW YEARS DAY – CLOSED	THANKSGIVING DAY – CLOSED
GOOD FRIDAY – CLOSED	DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING - CLOSED
MEMORIAL DAY – CLOSED	CHRISTMAS EVE – CLOSED
FOURTH OF JULY – CLOSED	CHRISTMAS DAY – CLOSED

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, Center will be closed the Friday before and if it falls on a Sunday, Center will be closed the following Monday.

### Philosophy & Goals

We believe that excellent childcare depends upon consistent caregiving. Children grow and learn best in safe environments that provide opportunities to explore, create, and communicate with other children and adults. This program is designed to include all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning and developmental needs.

Our goals are to provide a positive and nurturing environment that enriches children's lives. This involves developing an engaging curriculum, hiring enthusiastic and qualified staff, and creating a warm, welcoming physical space. We give children the opportunity to gain experience and interact with other kids their age, which adds to their social-emotional development as well.

### Curriculum Goals

We understand that each child develops at their own pace. Our nationally acclaimed Frog Street curriculum for ages 0-5 covers all learning domains: literacy, math, science, social and emotional development, and family engagement. Social and emotional development, a crucial area in early childhood education focuses on a child's ability to form relationships, understand and manage emotions, and interact with others. This domain includes skills like self-awareness, self-regulation, developing positive relationships with adults and peers, and engaging in symbolic or pretend play. Pretend imaginative play is a fundamental aspect of child development where children use objects, actions, or ideas to represent something else, such as a stick as a horse or a cardboard box as a spaceship. This form of imaginative play helps children develop social understanding, language skills, and abstract thinking, allowing them to process and understand the world by creating their own scenarios and narratives.

Our goal is to facilitate the development of young children by providing the necessary tools for children to learn by utilizing play, planned activities, and exploration as the foundation. Our structured and stimulating environment caters to children's developmental needs and supports their learning and growth. This foundation creates conditions where academic learning can flourish.

Our Frog Street curriculum outlines what content will be taught in a unit and when. It provides a list of skills to be taught, a sequence for teaching them, and guidelines for when to expect student mastery. (Scope and sequence)

Lesson Plans for the younger children 0-5 are prepared carefully to include both child-directed and teacher-directed activities and posted weekly outside the classroom doors. These plans encompass language and literacy, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) sensory and dramatic play, cooking, music, outside play, and gymnastics, Spanish, computer technology and more as is age appropriate.

Engaging elementary lesson plans are carefully prepared to encompass both teacher-directed activities and child-directed activities that include creative arts and crafts, STEAM, clubs, creative writing, sports and physical activities, outdoor play, cultural exploration, gardening projects, board games and puzzles, cooking or baking, drama and theater, mindfulness and relaxation, and math games. These are posted bi-weekly on the parent bulletin board as well as in the instructors' notebooks.



### Physical Activity: Indoors and Outdoors

Our program emphasizes high-quality, age-appropriate play (both free and structured) that includes daily robust physical activity for children, rain or shine. Outside play is offered in the morning and afternoon each day, weather permitting. The play areas are checked daily for safety and are designed to encourage active play while minimizing conflicts, with adequate space for large-muscle movements. Opportunities for active play are available both indoors and outdoors. Both our outdoor and indoor play spaces are designed to allow for running, jumping, crawling, and climbing, with adequate equipment for all children to reduce competition. On days when we cannot go outside, your child will participate in activities in our gym or indoor playground for active indoor play.

The equipment available to children is quite extensive, varied and rotated to encourage movement, creativity and fun, new experiences. Examples of preschool age-appropriate equipment or activities include small wagons, riding toys, wheelbarrows, tricycles, push toys, slides, climbing equipment, and outdoor building materials such as blocks. Opportunities for active play: games such as hot potato and tag, dancing to music and singing, simple games and dramatic or imaginary play that encourages running, stretching and climbing, walking and marching. Examples of school-age-appropriate equipment or activities include active games such as tag and Simon Says, dancing and creative movement to music and singing, simple games and dramatic or imaginary play that encourages running, stretching, climbing and walking. Appropriate equipment is available indoors/outdoors. Our after-school/camp facility is 10,000 sq ft, open concept. It includes basketball, volleyball, soccer, flag-football, potato sack races, scooters & more. Outdoor play offers basketball, climbing structure that meets state guidelines, basketball, kickball, jump ropes, hula hoops & more.

School-age children are scheduled 60-90 minutes each 8 hour+ each day and preschoolers are scheduled 90-120 minutes. These times are split between free play and teacher-led activities.

Infants are provided with at least three daily sessions of "tummy time".

Our teachers facilitate, rather than just supervise, physical activity.

Parent are made aware of the frequency of physical activity through sharing slips which are emailed weekly as well as by viewing the posted weekly lesson plans.

### Developmental Milestone Checklists

We use developmental milestone checklists annually (at minimum) to support identifying developmental delays for children ages 0-5 years, make referrals when necessary, and share those completed checklists with families.

### Enrollment/Withdrawal Procedure/Update Contact Information

Enrollment at Early Learning Center is open to children ages 6 weeks-14 years of age regardless of race, nationality, or creed.

Programs at Early Learning Center are ongoing year-round, and each child is enrolled continuously until a one-month prior written withdrawal notice is given. Written notice must be sent via email to [earlylearningcenter1981@gmail.com](mailto:earlylearningcenter1981@gmail.com). It must be received on or before Monday to count as the first week of notice.

This notice is also required for school-age children who will not continue in the summer camp portion of our yearly program...withdrawal notice due by April 1st.

Enrollment papers must be renewed annually. It is your responsibility to update important information, such as emergency contact phone numbers and address, as it occurs through the parent portal and with the administrative personnel at the Welcome Desk.

### Fee Structure, Payments, Late Fees, & Refunds

Current fees and other fees are discussed prior to enrollment and are outlined on the Enrollment Agreement which all parents must read carefully and sign.

**Auto Draft (ACH-checking/savings account) is our preferred method of payment.** There is a convenience fee for all credit card transactions not to exceed 3.5% and \$2 on payment made through ACH checking/savings. Auto draft payments will be drafted on Friday of each week for the following week.

**Non-EFT payments:** Tuition increases \$10/per week/child for all forms of payment other than Auto Draft (EFT). Late Payment Fee of \$15 is assessed if payment is not received on the due date.

**There is no credit given for scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.**

**ALL FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.**

Additionally, a credit card must be on file and will be processed for payment if payment is not made by **Thursday** of each week for the following week. Child **will not** be received for childcare/camp or transported to and from school on **Monday** if payment has not been received.

Check with the office for current Mother's Day Out information.

### Enhancement/Maintenance Fee

Enhancement/Maintenance Fees are due and payable in August for the school year and in May for the Summer program.

These fees assist in refurbishing or replacing equipment and furnishings within our program as well as allowing us to add educational materials, bus maintenance, field trip deposits, and to provide continuing education for our staff.

### Supply Fee - Preschool and MDO

Our endless efforts to offer and maintain the highest standards in hygiene, quality care, education, and all other areas of our programs require a school year supply fee and a separate summer supply fee.

This fee helps to replenish classroom supplies such as sanitary gloves, foot covering for the infant room, math and science materials in the classrooms, arts and crafts supplies, supplies for cooking projects and gardening, as well as multiple other areas of need within our program.

### Vacation Credit

Early Learning Center offers two weeks of vacation credit annually, January-December. To use your vacation credit, you must notify the office in writing two weeks in advance. No vacation credit is given to children in the MDO program.

You will pay one-half *the normal weekly tuition* for those weeks of vacation, due and payable **prior** to the weeks of vacation. Late payment fees will be assessed for payments made after returning from vacation. Vacation credits are non-transferable.

For any additional weeks missed, full weekly tuition is assessed. Late payment fees will apply. Vacation credits **may not** be used toward your one-month withdrawal notice.

### Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Children are not allowed to enter or leave the building without parent or guardian. Parents must download the Smartcare parent app and check children in and out daily through the kiosk parent portal at the Welcome Desk area. Please do not allow your child to assume this responsibility.

*We do not allow children to be picked up and signed out by anyone other than an authorized adult (must be over the age of 18) per enrollment forms, unless previously authorized IN WRITING by the parent. Changes to the authorized pickup list on the enrollment forms must be made by you through the parent portal and ask the ELC employee at the Welcome Desk for your child's enrollment form to make these changes. **Faxed or over-the-phone authorization for a person not listed on the enrollment form to pick up a child is not acceptable; however, an email (on file) request containing a return phone number will be satisfactory.***

Parents may use their passcode to enter the classroom areas to pick up their children directly from his/her teacher. School age parents may choose to request that their children be called to the front desk for pick-up via the intercom system due to the open active environment. Parents are **not** permitted to join students in the activities unless it is part of an invite for a scheduled event.

All Parents are required to pick up by 6:30 p.m. (6:00 p.m. for infants-2 years of age). We allow a 5-minute grace period; however, **a late pick-up fee will be assessed of \$10 per 10 minutes or any portion thereof. Payment is due and payable at time of pick-up. Excessive or habitual late pick-up will result in expulsion. Parents will be given two weeks' notice to make other childcare arrangements.**

### Family Involvement/Parent Communication/Parent Feedback

Our goal is to keep the communication doors between the family and ELC open. We value feedback in our program. Parents are encouraged to make suggestions or comments via our Parent Suggestions and Feedback Box at any time. Additionally, parents are offered an annual written evaluation and/or survey. The information collected from these suggestions, comments, and evaluations/surveys will be integrated into the program operation to improve our program if applicable.

Parents will receive a monthly calendar that provides important dates and upcoming activities at the center via email. In addition, parents will receive daily sharing slips for infants and toddlers, and weekly sharing slips with photos and more are sent to parents via email from the teachers for preschool children. All parents are invited to our program events which include Open House, Mother's Day Breakfast, Donuts with Dad, Parents Night Out, Open Play, Parties and all other scheduled events that pertain to their children.

### Parent Conferences

Please do not use drop/off pick-up time to communicate lengthy concerns with your child's teacher, as this can distract the care of other children in the classroom.

Parents are offered conferences twice a year, but parents can request a conference to discuss child's progress or any concerns as needed. During conference time, each parent will receive information in writing on their child's development and can set goals with teachers based on the results of the developmental assessments conducted by the teacher.

Parent of school-age children will receive a sharing slip every two weeks with photos via email of planned activities, projects, STEAM, etc. that occurred during this timeframe.

### Community Resources

An archive of various community resources is available to our parents in the parent resource notebook/area for your reference. Also, within the parent resource notebook/area, there are resources available on nutrition, breastfeeding, and more.

### Parent Visits/Participation/Volunteers

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their children's activities at Early Learning Center. If a parent would like to visit the childcare center to observe our operation or their child; or to participate in special activities, they must sign in and out at the Welcome Desk. Prior approval/appointments are not required.

There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at Early Learning Center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available.

Parents not able to volunteer directly in the classroom may donate items, do maintenance work, or assist in the front office.

Visitation is for parents only.

### Emergency Information/ Updating Contact Information

In an emergency, we will immediately try to contact the parent and other emergency numbers. Please ensure that all contact information is up to date. You can update your contact information at any time through the parent portal or by notifying the ELC personnel at the Welcome Desk. They will pull your child's file for you to make the changes.

### Absences

If your younger child (0-5) will be absent, please call or email the office and let us know asap. If your school-age child is absent, you must contact us by 2pm so the bus driver is aware before making the afternoon pick-up from the school attended.

**Programs at Early Learning Center are ongoing year-round, and each child is enrolled continuously until a one-month prior written withdrawal notice is given. Written notice must be sent via email to [earlylearningcenter1981@gmail.com](mailto:earlylearningcenter1981@gmail.com). It must be received on or before Monday to count as the first week of notice. This notice is also required for school-age children who will not continue in the summer camp portion of our yearly program...withdrawal notice due by April 1st.**

Tuition fees will not be waived for absences. Your child's position in our program is secure regardless of the number of absences as long as fees are current; however, you are encouraged to bring your child to class regularly to ensure child remains comfortable in our program.

### Transportation To and From School

Children requiring transportation to and from school will be transported by Early Learning Center staff in an Early Learning Center bus/van or by other means as deemed necessary by management. Falcon Pass Elementary School students may be walked to and from school with a staff member as weather permits.

Please notify your child's school that he/she will be picked up by Early Learning Center. Early Learning Center picks the students up at the designated school each afternoon. The bus will not leave the school until all students have been accounted for.

**A No Call-No Show fee will be assessed each time Early Learning Center has not been notified that the student will not be attending the after-school program on any given day and the bus has already departed for pick-up.**

**Please notify Early Learning Center before 2 p.m.** We do pick up school-age children from school on early dismissal days; however, there is an additional fee for these days and for extended care required during holidays and teachers' in-service days.

### Personal Items

Please do not send toys from home unless the teacher has requested items for show and share.

Early Learning Center is not responsible for lost, stolen, traded or broken personal items including, but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, money, purses, toys, games, and gaming devices. Please leave these personal items at home. However, all consideration for personal property will be taken.

Cell phones, tablets and laptops are not permitted. If a child comes to the facility with a cell phone, it will be taken away and kept at the Welcome Desk until the parent arrives. If there is a second offense, parents will pay \$15 to get the phone back. (Our responsibility is to protect your child while they are with us in all areas. This includes accessing the internet.)

If your child needs to call you, they may ask to see the Director for permission.

## Dress Code



**Childcare Program:** Comfortable non-restrictive clothing is always best for young children. Please have children wear tennis shoes and socks daily. Open toe shoes are not permitted.

On **Swimming/Splash Days**, children must wear water shoes to school; and tennis shoes and socks must be brought to Early Learning Center to change into the following activity.

**After-school & School-age program:** For safety, proper clothing must be worn for your child to fully participate in activities at Early Learning Center.

Elastic waist shorts and t-shirt are highly recommended DAILY. Wearing denim jeans and other inappropriate/restrictive clothing may result in your child not being able to participate in some activities. Tennis shoes are mandatory. Jewelry should not be worn.

When participating in the gymnastics program, girls must wear a one-piece leotard; boys need to wear a t-shirt tucked into elastic-waist sport shorts.

## Special Events Notification

All special event notices are included in the monthly calendar and reminders will be posted on the computer sign-in screen, outside your child's classroom and sent home in the weekly Sharing Slip.

Some of these special events include open houses, holiday parties, Parents' Night Out, Mother's and Father's Day invites, pre-K graduation ceremony, and field trips.

## Immunization/Test Requirements

Parents are required to provide Early Learning Center with a copy of their children's immunization records, as well as a signed form stating that the child's immunizations are up to date if their children are not enrolled in the public-school system.

If the health department requests TB testing of the students, parents will be notified of the request in writing. Yearly doctor's statement is a requirement by Texas State Childcare Licensing. An Affidavit is required to be completed every 2 years for all exemptions from immunizations for Reason of Conscience.

## Hearing and Vision Screening

Parents are required to provide Early Learning Center with a copy of their children's hearing and vision screening upon entering our Pre-K program or immediately after turning 4 years of age per Texas State Childcare Licensing.

## Care for Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will fully be given the opportunity to participate in the program. Our program is committed to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of special health care needs or disabilities. We will keep our primary focus on each child's strengths and abilities as we work to make modifications and adjustments.

We acknowledge that the inclusion of children with special needs has been shown to enrich the childcare experience for all staff, children, and families of enrolled children. All families will be treated with dignity and with respect for their individual needs. We will be responsible for ensuring that confidentiality about special needs is maintained for all families and staff in the program.

The individual written plan of care for children with special care needs outlined by parents will be followed in all emergency situations.

All staff will receive general training on the benefits of inclusion of children with special needs and training on specific accommodations that any child in their classroom may need.

## Admission for Care

Children will not be admitted for care if one of the following exists:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in childcare activities & outdoor play.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than we can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
- An oral temperature of 101 degrees or greater, a rectal temperature of 102 degrees or greater, an armpit temperature of 100 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more

vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.

- If a health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
- Signs of head lice or nits are noted. \*Additional information on head lice treatment and prevention is available upon request.

### Illness

If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact you to pick up your child. Child will be cared for apart from the other children. We will give appropriate attention and supervision until your child is picked up.

### Medication

Early Learning Center Active will dispense medications only when it has been signed in by parent or guardian. Medication is given daily at 12pm & 4pm only. We will dispense only dosage prescribed by doctor or by recommended dosage label of over-the-counter medicines. Medication must be in the original container. Prescription medication must have a child's name. Do not leave medication in lunch bags or diaper bags.

If your children have allergies that require immediate medication, please discuss them with us so we can ensure our staff is trained accordingly.

### Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Employees are made aware of the recommended adult immunization schedule with certain risks related to their job per CDC; however, these are not required.

### Medical Emergencies

If a critical illness or injury requires immediate medical attention: Early Learning Center will contact emergency medical services or transport them to the nearest emergency room, give the child first-aid treatment or CPR if needed, contact the physician identified in the child's record, contact the child's parents, and ensure that the other children in the group are supervised.

### Accident/Incident Reports

Accident/Incident reports will be completed by staff and signed by parents and the Director when an event has taken place at Early Learning Center and at any outing supervised by Early Learning Center staff. Accident/Incident reports remain at Early Learning Center in the child's personal file.

### Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan

It is required that we have a food allergy emergency plan in each child's file with a known food allergy that has been diagnosed by the child's health care professional. The child's health care professional and parent must sign and date the plan. A food allergy emergency plan is an individualized plan prepared by the child's health care professional that includes:

- a list of each food the child is allergic to;
- possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list; and
- the steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction.

This food allergy emergency plan must be on file prior to first day of attendance. A current photo must be included in this plan.

### Meals

Breakfast is served between **7:00 - 7:30 a.m.**, lunch and am/pm snacks are provided daily for Infants on table foods through pre-kindergarten children year-round. A sack lunch may need to be provided by parents on special occasions. Early Learning Center provides one snack during the after-school program.

The summer program/holidays will consist of two snacks per day provided by the facility on the days that children are in the building. Parents must supply a healthy lunch and drink for summer/holiday hours. Licensing states: "Parents choosing to provide meals for lunch and snack understand the child-care center is not responsible for its nutritional value for meeting the daily food needs." NO microwave is available for lunches. We ask that each lunch kit contains a freeze pack. **WE CANNOT REFRIGERATE OR MICROWAVE LUNCHES.** You must provide your own forks, spoons, and bowls when needed.

Infant bottles must be prepared by parent and clearly labeled with child's name and date and cannot remain in center overnight.

### Health and Nutrition Practices

A 5-week rotation of meal planning (menu) is posted on the parent bulletin board along with any changes in the hallway near the kitchen. Parents are also given this menu upon enrollment and emailed subsequent menus when updated.

Policies and resources on oral health, farm to early care and education, and health benefit can be found in the Parent Resource Binder located near the Welcome Desk.

### Screen Time Policies

Electronic media is only used for educational purposes. Children are allotted under one hour of screen time per day. All screen time is:

- based on meeting educational goals,
- age-appropriate, and
- ad-free. Screen time is not used during mealtimes.

School-aged children who need technology to complete their homework will be provided with technology free of time restrictions. Screen time for children under two years of age is restricted.

### Breast Feeding

Parents have the right to breastfeed and provide breast milk for their child while in our care. We will provide a comfortable place to sit within our center or within the classroom that enables mothers to support this practice. A pillow will be available to support the mother's infant in her lap; as well as a stepstool for the mother to prop her feet and prevent back strain. Water will be available to help the mother to stay hydrated.

### Policy on Sippy Cups

Children are not allowed to walk around with sippy cups. We will provide cups for drinking water and milk. Sippy cups supplied by the parents can be used in the infant room.

### Water Activities

**School-age children:** Prior to any water activities, Early Learning Center requires each child to have a permission slip signed by a parent or legal guardian. Lifeguards and Early Learning Center staff will evaluate children's swimming skills on the first swim day & place them in assigned groups and swimming areas accordingly. Certified lifeguards will be present during water activities, as will Early Learning Center staff members.

Children participating in water activities in the summer camp program must arrive at Early Learning Center **already wearing their swimsuits & sunscreen**. A change of clothes, including tennis shoes and socks, must be brought to Early Learning Center as well as a waterproof bag for the swimsuit or swim trunks. Please provide a towel & spray-on sun block (if you would like it to be reapplied by the teacher) in a labeled bag separate from their sack lunch. Please put the child's name on the towel and sunscreen. Please note that we **CANNOT** share sunscreen from another child. If a child is a non-swimmer, parent or guardian must provide a US Coast Guard Approved life jacket; type 1,2 or 3 clearly labeled with child's name.

**Preschool children:** Prior to any water activities, Early Learning Center requires each child to have a permission slip signed by a parent or legal guardian. Children participating in water activities in the summer camp program must arrive at Early Learning Center **already wearing their swimsuits & sunscreen**. A change of clothes, including tennis shoes and socks, must be brought to Early Learning Center as well as a waterproof bag for the swimsuit or swim trunks. Please provide a towel & spray-on or stick sun block (if you would like it to be reapplied by the teacher) in a labeled bag. Please put the child's name on the towel and sunscreen.

### Field Trips

Parents will sign a permission slip upon enrollment, and Early Learning Center will require a parent signature on individual field trip permission slips as well. Premium field trips will require an additional fee.



Children participating in the field trip **must** wear an Early Learning Center Active t-shirt; Early Learning Center will keep the shirts at the gym & wash them after each use.

Children cannot be dropped off at a field trip location. All children must ride to and from the field trip in the Early Learning Center bus/van, even if their parent is going. Parents may not pick their child up from a field trip. If parents would like to come on the field trip, they must drive their own vehicle. Please see the Director for approval to participate.

Calendars will be given out with days, trip destination, and times of departure and return. Field trips are a privilege and can be revoked if behavior issues occur during transportation or on the field trip.

### Policy on Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Parents will supply sunscreen and insect repellent with instructions for reapplying including when, how often, and who will reapply. Parents can visit [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) or other websites for guidance on choosing sunscreen and insect repellent.

Sunscreen and insect repellent cannot be shared with other children.

### Infant and Safe Sleep Policy

- Infants will only be placed on their backs to sleep unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception Form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Infants will be placed on a firm mattress, with a tight fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for non–full size cribs.
- Infants who are younger than 12 months of age, will sleep in a crib that is bare except for a tight fitting sheet. No soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects, bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants will not have their heads, faces or cribs covered at any time.
- Sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional as these may increase the risk of suffocation.
- The sleeping areas are well ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- If an infant needs extra warmth, sleep clothing such as sleepers, or footed pajamas may be used as an alternate to blankets.
- Only one infant at a time will be placed in a crib to sleep.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep; but the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk.
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), the infant will be moved to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Our childcare program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas childcare operations. This includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers.
- Sleeping infants will be actively observed by sight and sound.
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, they will be placed on the infant's back for sleep and be allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.
- Infants will not be swaddled for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception Form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.

Parents can review information on safe sleep and reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS) at:

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx>

### Addressing Challenging Behaviors

We encourage each child to make appropriate choices and sometimes use the "calm down" and "think about it" area for children to take a moment away to calm down.

Staff are trained to help children with practices that help them calm down, process choices, and redirection.

The discussions on a child's behavior are framed around program objectives to allow children to safely engage in activities that give them the opportunity to gain experience and interact with other kids their age, which adds to their social-emotional development as well.

In cases where there is an issue of constant inappropriate behavior, parents must attend a parent conference to outline and agree on a behavior modification plan.

Follow-ups will be made with the parent daily until the issue is resolved.

## Discipline and Guidance

Early Learning Center staff will always supervise children. All children are encouraged to listen attentively to instruction and to follow all safety guidelines.

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.



A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking or hitting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

## Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Our program is designed to eliminate or severely limit expulsion, suspension, or other exclusionary discipline; these exclusionary measures will be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

We create positive climates and focus on prevention – and train our staff in:

- Promoting children's social-emotional and behavioral health and appropriately addressing challenging behavior.
- Forming strong, supportive, nurturing relationships with children.
- Conducting ongoing developmental monitoring, universal developmental and behavioral screenings at recommended ages, and follow-up, as needed.
- Collaborating with community-based service providers and connecting children, families, and staff to additional services and supports as needed.
- Forming strong relationships with parents and families.
- Having a strong understanding of culture and diversity.
- Employing self-reflective strategies and cultural awareness training to prevent and correct all implicit and explicit biases, including racial/national origin/ethnic, sex, or disability biases.
- Eliminating all discriminatory discipline practices.

### **Immediate Causes for Expulsion**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children, staff or self.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.
- Parents exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.
- Expulsion from public or private school. Documentation of expulsion must be provided so that we can determine our course of action.
- Drugs or drug paraphernalia.

### **Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion**

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.

### **Child's Actions for Expulsion**

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Prior to suspension or expulsion, a parent will be called, and correspondence will be sent home indicating what the problem is, and every effort will be made by both the center and the parent to correct the problem.

If, after one or two weeks, depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, behavior does not improve, and the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her.

Even in such extraordinary cases, our program will assist the child and family in accessing services and an alternative placement through, for example, community-based childcare resource and referral agencies.

### **Confidential Information**

Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Early Learning Center who have a "need to know" to care for your child most appropriately and safely.

Confidential and sensitive information about employees, parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Early Learning Center strives to protect everyone's right of privacy.

### **Accommodations**

Our program's policy and process in supporting families and children who may need additional accommodations to include home language, differing abilities, and cultural backgrounds. Parents have the right to be informed of all procedural safeguards and rights of appeal in a language easily understood by the public and in the parent's primary language.

Please notify the Director if you or your child requires accommodation, and we will ensure that we do our part to meet your needs.

Below are ways that our program will partner with families:

- We will provide space to accommodate sessions if specific therapies are needed during the day while the child is in our care.
- Participation in all comprehensive care meetings if needed.
- Complete supporting documentation from an authorized medical professional for any accommodations related to the child's physical or developmental needs.
- Provide materials and resources in parent's/child's primary language.
- Provide opportunities for cultural inclusiveness by hosting cultural events throughout the year.

### **Staff Employment/Interaction with Parents**

The staff of Early Learning Center are prohibited from being employed by any parent (current or former). Parents are prohibited from soliciting any staff member for the purpose of employment.

Parents or guardians who employ Early Learning Center staff will have their services terminated and any monies paid to Early Learning Center will be forfeited and they will be held to the one-month cancellation policy. Staff who become employed by current or former parents of Early Learning Center will have their employment with Early Learning Center terminated.

Employment refers to any relationship outside of Early Learning Center services which involves an employee of Early Learning Center interacting with current or former parent of Early Learning Center.

Such relationships include but are not limited to, social media interaction (Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, Twitter or otherwise) baby-sitting, nanny services, mother's helper, carpooling, house-sitting, attending birthday parties and other social activities regardless of whether those services are voluntary or paid.

### Child Abuse

Early Learning Center employees are required to have annual training focusing on prevention, recognition and reporting of neglect and child abuse; including 1) factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect, 2) warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect, 3) internal procedures for reporting any suspicion of child abuse or neglect and 4) community organizations that have training programs available to childcare staff, children and parents. Comments made by a child as well as any unusual marks or bruise will be noted and documented.

We will also present the employees and parents with methods for increasing their awareness of prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect by routinely sharing information on the types of abuse and neglect, causes of abuse and neglect, the warning signs of abuse and neglect and other related information; as well as inform the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect actions to take to obtain assistance or intervention program.

Early Learning Center will coordinate with community organizations who offer services for high-risk families. We provide information on programs for pregnant women that encourage prenatal care; teach childcare techniques, provide home health visits for newborns, and assist parents of children with special needs.

We will identify community and faith-based organizations that sponsor food banks and shelter programs. These programs address the lack of resources such as adequate shelter, childcare for working parents, appropriate nutrition, health and mental care, transportation, and education. We will also identify organization that provide aid in prevention through crisis and emergency services, parent education, domestic violence shelters, and health and mental health treatment for victims. You must act if you are aware of abuse or neglect.

There are two ways it may be reported. Call 1-800-252-5400, the Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week a week nationwide or make a report through the secure website: [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).

If this is a life-threatening situation or emergency, call the local law enforcement agency or 911 immediately.

### Inclement Weather Procedure

In case of inclement weather, (opening late, closing early due to the weather advisory, or not opening) we will notify all parents by text message via our Smartcare app, email, and on social media; Facebook/Instagram. If the center must close early, you will need to arrange for your child's pickup within an hour. If you need more information about an emergency affecting your center and are unable to reach us by phone, email us at [earlylearningcenter1981@gmail.com](mailto:earlylearningcenter1981@gmail.com).

### Emergency Preparedness Plan/Evacuation:

***\*In addition to information below, see addendum "Standard Response Protocol and Standard Reunification Method"***

In case of flooding, tornado watch, hurricane or other emergency situations, an email and text will be sent to parents.

Should evacuation be necessary, our first responsibility will be to move the children by walking them or transporting them in our center's buses/vans to the designated safe area known to all employees or to an alternate shelter where the local authorities may direct us. One alternate shelter is: **Stone's Gym at 16223 Moonrock Drive; Houston, TX 77062. Phone: 281-480-2255**

In some emergency situations, such as lockdown, we may be required to remain onsite. The authorities will let us know. A message will be placed on the facility's answering service, the front door and/or an email and text will be sent to parents.

Designated personnel will be assigned the responsibility to assist the classroom teachers in evacuating and relocating children with limited mobility or who otherwise may need assistance to a safe area or alternate shelter in the event of an emergency. Staff will hold the children's hands, and, in some cases, they may carry them. Rolling cribs may also be used as needed.

We will account for the attendance at the time of the emergency at the designated safe area or alternate shelter by checking the roll for each individual child. We will maintain communication with the parents by using the emergency telephone number or email address that is on file with us. You may contact us by calling **281-480-4661**.

We will communicate with local authorities (such as fire department, law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department), parents, and Childcare Licensing. We will have cell phones and will use your emergency contact numbers.

Essential documentation will be evacuated when possible that includes:

- Parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child in care.
- Authorization for emergency care for each child in care.
- The attendance record information for children in care at the time of the emergency.

Children will be released to parents when it is deemed safe to do so by management or emergency personnel. Parents must present photo identification and complete the Reunification Card to pick up child and sign out their children.

**Zero Tolerance Policy**

Children will not use profanities, violence, or gestures. Parents will be called to come and pick up their child for aggressive behavior.

**Gang Free Zone**

Texas Penal code: Any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang free zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

**Animals**

Early Learning Center does not allow pets or other animals to be brought into or kept at the facility.

**Texas State Minimum Standards**

The Texas State Minimum Standard rules and licensing inspection reports are available at the Welcome Desk for review. The book may not leave the building for any reason.

To obtain copies of the minimum standard rules, you may go online to: **[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)**.

**DFPS Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400**      **Licensing Phone Number: 713-287-3238**  
**DFPS Abuse Website: [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)**

Any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of Early Learning Center may be discussed with the Director.

*Early Learning Center reserves the right to make changes in policies to meet the needs of the children and the business.*

