



Verification of Receipt of Early Learning Center Parent Handbook

(This form is required as part of your child's file.)

I/We _____, the parents of
Please print name(s)

_____, acknowledge(s) that I/we have received
Name(s) of Child (ren)

a copy of the "Early Learning Center Parent Handbook," which contains the center's discipline policy and other program policies.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

____/____/____
Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

____/____/____
Date

If signing this form electronically, please check the box below:

I acknowledge that my electronic signature indicates the information provided on this form is accurate and complete. I authorize the Park District to utilize this information as required for enrollment in Early Learning Center.



Dear Families,

This handbook has been prepared to provide information about Early Learning Center's procedures and policies. I hope you will find it clear and to the point. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

These policies are important, but equally important are the things you won't find written in the handbook - the hugs your child receives, the notes from our teachers that highlight your child's successes, the friendships your child will enjoy. Please know that we see ourselves as part of a support team for your child, and we will do our best to work in partnership with you to foster your child's optimal growth and development.

We are happy to welcome you to our program.

Sincerely,

Heather Burns
Early Childhood Program Manager

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Welcome to Early Learning Center!

Early Learning Center's Daily Program

As you enter our classrooms you will note that they are divided into Learning Centers, with areas devoted to art, block play, large motor activities, dramatic play, and small motor experiences. Our materials are chosen to invite active participation and promote learning, and are geared to the particular developmental levels of the children in each room. We often supplement our offerings with items from home, the library or other classrooms. We may ask you to occasionally provide a carrot for "Stone Soup", provide photos of your family, or even to join us one morning to talk about your hobby or work.

Classroom curriculum is based on weekly themes that offer developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Daily activities include:

- ❖ Group times (music, stories, finger plays, etc.)
- ❖ Free Play/Free choice of learning centers
- ❖ Large Motor/Gym time
- ❖ Morning or Afternoon Snacks

We want you to know our plans. Each month we distribute the Early Learning Center Newsletter to keep you abreast of our activities and apprise you of upcoming themes. Weekly lesson plans are posted outside each classroom that detail each day's activities.

Classroom Child to Staff Ratios

The following minimum ratios have been established by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, by whom we are licensed.

Two-year-olds	8:1 Max. 16 children
Three-year-olds	10:1 Max. 20 children
Four-year-olds	10:1 Max. 20 children

In fact, target ratios in the Early Learning Center program are as follows:

- Two-year-olds - 15 students with 2 teachers
- Three-year-olds – 16 students with 2 teachers
- Four-year-olds – 18 students with 2 teachers

Sometimes we'll add extra staff to ease busy days and better serve the needs of your children.

Schedule of Hours and Holidays

The Early Learning Center follows the District 35 school calendar. School closing dates, as well as dates for upcoming special events, can be found on the ELC calendar provided to you at the beginning of the school year.

Drop-Off and Release Procedures

Families of 2's, please park and walk your child in to the classroom. Your child's teachers will greet you at the door. Please return to the classroom to pick up your child at the end of the program.

Families of 3's and 4's, you may line your car up at the front of the building and a teacher will come and get your child from the car. We require that you sign your child in upon arrival. Children may not enter the building without an accompanying adult.

At the end of the day **you must sign your child out on the form provided.**

Your child will only be released to those individuals who are listed on the enrollment forms. No other person will be allowed to pick up your child unless you have notified us in writing prior to the time of release. Release forms are available from your child's teachers. If you need to make last minute pick-up arrangements, you may fax an authorization to us before pick-up. Our fax number is (847)835-3024.

Photo identification is required before a child will be released to anyone other than the parents/guardians.

Late Pick-Up Policy

We know you'll do your best to pick up your child on time. Children worry if parents do not arrive as expected. If you know you will be later than the end of your child's class, please call us so that we can reassure your child that you are on your way. In the event that you are not here 10 minutes after class has ended, the following policy comes into effect:

If the parent has not arrived or contacted the center within 10 minutes of closing, Park District staff will begin telephoning parents' work, cell, and home phone numbers in an effort to reach the parents. If, after calling the available numbers, a parent cannot be reached, Park District staff will call the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Contact Information form, followed by any other names listed on the Pick-Up Authorization form. If, by 60 minutes past the end of the class, parents or another authorized for pick up have not come to pick up the child, staff will notify the Program Manager and/or Program Supervisor, and will contact Glencoe Public Safety.

If a parent or the designated pick-up person is more than 10 minutes late, a late fee of \$8 for each 15 minute segment of an hour past dismissal will be charged.

You will find a more complete policy statement in your enrollment packet. Please sign the acknowledgement and return it with your enrollment forms.

Parking

Parking spaces are available at the front of the building. Additional parking is also available at the rear of the building. Parking in the fire lane at the front of the Takiff Center is prohibited.

Safety and Security

A keycard security system has been installed at the Early Learning Center entrance. Families will be issued key cards at the time of enrollment.

Entrances to the building as well as the Early Childhood wing are video-monitored.

We take safety seriously. Many of our teachers are trained in first aid and CPR. Full-time administrative staff has also been trained to use the automated electronic defibrillator (AED). Fire drills are conducted each month. We model a calm, immediate response by exiting according to routes planned by Glencoe Public Safety.

Once a month our center is visited by our staff nurse, who spot-checks hygiene practices and conducts staff trainings.

Absences

Please notify us if your child will be absent. The Early Childhood receptionist is happy to take a message to your child's class. She can be reached at 847-835-3035.

Application Fee, Deposit and Tuition Payments

A \$250.00 non-refundable application fee is due at the time of enrollment. Tuition payments are due by the first of every month for that month's fee. Bills are mailed to your home between the 18th and 20th of the month. You may pay your bill by check, Visa or MasterCard. Payments may be placed in the metal drop box by the Early Childhood entrance. Checks should be made payable to the Glencoe Park District. For your convenience, you may elect to have your tuition automatically charged to your Visa or MasterCard. Please see the Program Supervisor for more information.

Accounts more than 30 days past due will be charged a \$25 late fee. An additional \$25 will be charged to accounts 60 days past due.

To Contact Us

When contacting Early Learning Center, please call (847) 835-3035. A message will be delivered to the Early Learning Center teachers. Heather Burns, Early Childhood Program Manager, and Naomi Kopelman, Early Childhood Supervisor, may both be reached at that number. You are welcome to communicate via email, however email may be inaccessible to ELC staff if the Manager and/or Supervisor are out of the office. Heather's email address is hburns@glencoeParkDistrict.com; Naomi may be reached at nkopelman@glencoeParkDistrict.com.

You may also call the Main Registration Desk at (847) 835-3030 and ask the front desk staff to page the program manager or supervisor. Our fax number is (847) 835-3024.

Illness Policy

For the protection of all the children and staff in the program, and for the comfort of your child, please keep your child home if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- a productive cough
- a fever
- diarrhea or vomiting
- a rash
- thick nasal discharge or discharging eyes or ears

Please remember that a virus is contagious even though it cannot be treated with antibiotics. When a child's physician has determined that symptoms are caused by a virus, that child should not return to the Center until he/she is asymptomatic.

When the Early Learning Center staff has determined that a child is ill, the parents will be contacted and asked to pick the child up.

Your child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to class.

Medication

We regret that state licensing regulations and Glencoe Park District policy do not allow us to give children over-the-counter medication without authorization from your physician. **Prescription medication may be given provided a medication authorization form is completed. Medications must be in the original prescription container.** Please see your child's teacher for medication consent forms.

Medical Records

State licensing regulations require a physical examination and immunization record on file for each child enrolled in the program. This medical record should be **dated no more than six months before your child's first day of enrollment.** In addition to immunizations, a TB test and lead assessment are also required. Please return a completed medical form before your child's first day of enrollment at Early Learning Center.

Clothing

We love to see your child looking good, but we hate to feel bad when good clothes get messy! Your child will paint, splash in puddles, stretch "slime" and dig in the sand and dirt. Please dress him/her accordingly. We encourage the use of smocks and aprons, but these are not always enough protection.

Remember, too, that part of your child's day will be spent in the gym or on the playground. Be sure your child's clothes allow for active play, with no dangling strings or belts that may get caught on equipment. To prevent slipping on the floors, gym shoes or shoes with rubber soles are required. Sandals, clogs and dressy shoes are unsafe and should not be worn.

When weather permits, the children will go outside. Boots, hats, gloves and snowsuit are required during the cold weather.

Extra Clothing

Water activities, sand play and occasional bathroom accidents require that **1 complete set of extra clothing be kept at school**. All clothing should be marked with your child's name. If soiled clothing is sent home, please bring a clean extra set the following class day. Please change extra clothing according to the season.

If your child is toilet training, you may wish to supply multiple “bottoms.”

Diapering Supplies

Parents of children who are not toilet trained are responsible for supplying diapers and wipes. When your child's supply is low, a note will be sent home reminding you to restock them.

Toys

Early Learning Center supplies ample toys for each child to use. Therefore, we ask that children do not bring toys from home to school (we will, of course, make exceptions for cherished “loveys”).

Toys may be brought to school if your child's class has "show and tell" day. These toys should be labeled with your child's name and placed directly in your child's locker until the scheduled play time. In keeping with the non-violent philosophy of Early Learning Center, action figures such as Power Rangers and X-men should not be brought to school. It has been our experience that such toys prompt aggressive, fighting-based play.

Early Learning Center cannot be responsible for lost or stolen toys.

Food

DCFS licensing states that all foods consumed by children in a day care setting must be provided by the center. If children require a special diet due to medical reasons, allergic reactions or religious beliefs, a doctor's note must be on file at the day care center. Any special foods supplied by the parent must be labeled with the child's name, date and identity of the food.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate! Birthdays and holidays are special times and you are welcome to bring a treat to share with your child's class if you wish. Treats may include fruit roll-ups, cheese and crackers, small boxes of raisins, cupcakes or party favors. **State licensing regulations require us to only serve foods purchased from a store, bakery or caterer. Please discuss the planned treat with your child's teachers; many children have severe allergies and treats should be chosen accordingly.**

Holiday Policy

Classroom activities planned by the staff for holidays will reflect the following principles:

1. Holidays are a time of family celebration.
2. Holidays are a time of giving, receiving and sharing.
3. That in not acknowledging the holidays, we deny an aspect of many of the children's cultures.

If a student initiates a conversation about the religious aspect of a holiday we will not discourage the discussion. Rather, we will acknowledge that this is one of the many ways a holiday is celebrated. It is our hope that in dealing with the holiday season in this manner, we will help our students respect and appreciate cultural differences without offending any family traditions.

Field Trips

Field trips, nature walks and short excursions are an important part of our educational program (and they're fun!). Responsible adult supervision is critical to insure the success of such outings. Your permission for your child's participation in these activities is part of the release form agreement. A permission slip will be sent home for more lengthy field trips.

Family-Teacher Communication

Sometimes outside circumstances affect your child's behavior at school. A late night, a visit from relatives, an out of town trip for mom or dad - all these things may impact your child's day. We don't want to pry, but we do want to have enough information to respond appropriately to your child. You are welcome to touch base with your child's teacher at drop off, leave a note, or talk with the program manager or supervisor.

Formal evaluations and parent-teacher conferences are held once a year for our 2's and twice a year for 3's and 4's. Families or staff may wish to schedule additional conferences as needed.

Once a year, usually in the spring, we ask you to give us your thoughts on our program by filling out a program evaluation. We value your input; if you have comments we welcome them at any time!

Early Learning Center Discipline Policy

Discipline should be administered as guidance that helps children develop appropriate social skills, gain self control and assume responsibility for their own actions. It is understood that young children are not born with these skills and it is the adult's responsibility to coach / guide a child in the development of these skills.

Discipline is implemented in the following ways:

To prevent discipline problems in the classroom, staff should maintain consistent classroom routines and provide a variety of activities and materials for the children to use. Since young children are still learning to share, duplicate toys should be available in the classroom whenever possible. Staff should establish written classroom rules, posted in the classroom and visible to staff, children and parents.

No one discipline method works for all children and discipline methods frequently will vary from one age group to another. Discipline should be administered by using the least restrictive to most restrictive approach. Methods include:

1. *Providing guidance for children in a positive manner.* Acknowledging children's appropriate actions should be an ongoing part of daily adult-child interactions.
2. *Ignoring children who may be acting out as a method to get an adult's attention.* When acting out has ceased it is important follow up by providing attention in response to positive behaviors.
3. *Use of a 1-2-3 warning system for some children over 3 years of age.*
4. *Redirection of a child to a different activity or area of the classroom* when inappropriate behavior is being used.
5. *Facilitating conflict resolution.* Whenever possible, children should be encouraged to work out their differences with each other. It is the staff's role to coach this process.
6. *Removing the child from the action.* As a method of helping a child gain control, a child may be separated from the situation through use of a thinking/timeout chair. The time away from the group shall not exceed 1 minute per each year of age. This strategy is not appropriate for our youngest children.
7. *Identifying the desired behavior.* Example: chairs are for sitting.
8. *Modeling the desired behavior.*

Home - school communication is an important aspect in providing guidance for young children. Staff members and families must communicate freely to set consistent guidelines for behavior. Ongoing disciplinary issues with a child will be discussed with the child's family. Since changes in a child's home life can affect a child's behavior, families are encouraged to inform staff of such changes.

No child shall be subject to any form of corporal punishment, verbal, emotional or physical abuse. Children are not to be disciplined for bathroom accidents. No child shall be threatened or deprived of regularly scheduled meals or snacks.

Dismissal from the Early Learning Center's Program

In accordance with the Glencoe Park District's program and facility participant conduct policy, a child may be dismissed from the Early Learning Center program when the health, safety and welfare of the child or any other member of the class is at risk. The Park District's Program / Facility Participant Conduct policy is stated below:

The Glencoe Park District reserves the right to suspend, expel, or deny participation in any program, event or facility to any person whose behavior materially interferes, or disrupts the quality of those offerings, the enjoyment of them by other participants, or the ability of staff to conduct or manage the activities of facility.

A child's parent or guardian will be notified of the first incident: the second incident shall require the presence of a parent at a meeting with the instructor and a Park District administrator/supervision; a third incident may result in an expulsion or suspension of the child from the program, event or facility.

If a child engages in a behavior which may result in bodily harm to others, an immediate meeting with the parent may be called. If such behavior warrants it, immediate suspension or expulsion may result.

An adult shall receive one verbal or written warning. The second incident may result in suspension or expulsion from the program, event or facility.

Counseling and Special Needs Referrals

Early Learning Center can provide referrals to appropriate agencies should you or the staff feel your child has a developmental concern or special need that requires attention.

Early Learning Center will be happy to refer you to a counseling service for any concerns that you may have for your child or family. Positive communication with our parents is essential to the quality of our program. Special concerns will be kept confidential.

Notes for New Families

What to Bring for the First Day

- ❖ a full set of extra clothes, in a zip-loc bag. Be sure they are labeled with your child's name.
- ❖ diapers and wipes if needed

Separation Issues

Some children walk into a new classroom and feel at home immediately! For most, however, getting comfortable is a process that may take from a few days to several weeks. During the adjustment period your child may be increasingly clingy, teary or angry. Try not to be too disturbed if your child displays these symptoms. Usually symptoms of separation anxiety will disappear once the child feels more comfortable with the teachers, program and classmates.

How can you help?

1. Be positive. If you are anxious about your child attending preschool, then you may be transmitting these feelings to your child.
2. Allow more time. Give yourself and your child a little more time for the home to school routine. Rushing can add to everyone's stress!
3. Bring a "transitional object" from home to school. Sometimes children feel more secure if they have something from home to hold onto. Some possibilities: a photo, a scarf of Mom's, a blanket, a loved stuffed animal.
4. If your child is enrolled in a program with curb-side drop-off, and tears develop as the teacher comes to help him/her from the car, catch the teacher's eye. She may indicate that it would be better to park and bring your child into the classroom. If your child's program requires that you bring your child to the classroom (as in the 2's classes) take your cue from the teachers if your child has trouble separating. Signal the teacher when you are ready to leave. Say a brief and positive goodbye to your child.
5. Avoid staying in the classroom too long if your child begins to cry. If you are an emotional parent, hold your own tears until you are out of view of the child. Smile!
6. Be supportive and understanding about your child's feelings. Explain to your child that it takes time to adjust to new people and places. Let your child know that there are people at school to help him/her if he/she needs it.

We know that starting a new program is a transition for you as well. Feel free to call and check in on your child. We're glad to give you an update. And as always, if you have questions and comments let us know. Our doors are open!