



# Family Handbook

**Educational Child Care Center (EC3)**

**Universal Preschool | Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)**

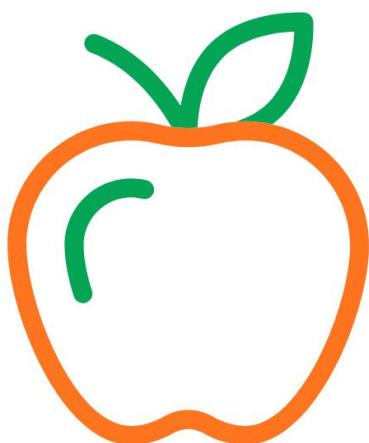
**1715 West Malcolm X Street**

**Lansing, MI 48915**

**Phone: (517) 485-6825**

**Fax: (517) 485-6848**

**[www.ec3kids.org](http://www.ec3kids.org)**



**2025-2026**



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## Introduction and Welcome

### Welcome Message

Thank you for choosing Educational Child Care Center (EC3), and welcome! We recognize that selecting the right early learning environment for your family is one of the most significant decisions you will ever make. At EC3, we are deeply committed to providing exceptional quality early learning experiences that nurture every child's potential.

We are especially proud of our partnership with the Ingham County Intermediate School District, through which we host Michigan's Universal Preschool (GSRP) program. This collaboration allows us to extend our commitment to high-quality early childhood education to even more families.

This handbook serves as your comprehensive guide, detailing the policies, expectations, and protocols that apply to all of EC3's general programs, as well as specific guidelines for our Universal Preschool (GSRP) offerings. We hope you will grow to love EC3 and find a welcoming fit within our "family," and we look forward to supporting your child's growth

and development for many years to come. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact EC3's Executive Director and/or Program Director.

## About EC3

### Our Mission and Philosophy

EC3's mission is to provide developmentally appropriate child care and early learning experiences in a nurturing, play-based environment that fosters the holistic growth of every child while actively partnering with families. This mission is upheld across all our programs, including our Universal Preschool (GSRP) offerings, which specifically adhere to Michigan's MDE Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-Kindergarten.

We believe in laying the strongest possible foundation for children's growth and development. Our loving and supportive learning environment fosters positive reinforcement, cultivates self-worth through personal accomplishment, and encourages acceptance and appreciation for all individuals. We emphasize robust social-emotional development, ensuring children feel valued and connected.

Understanding that families are their child's primary educators, we are dedicated to maintaining open, cooperative, and respectful relationships. Our experienced and caring staff work in close partnerships with families to meet each child's individual needs. We embrace the philosophy that children are naturally curious and develop at their own pace. Therefore, we provide rich, play-based learning opportunities that encourage exploration, problem-solving, and creative expression through hands-on activities, drama, art, music, movement, and language. For our GSRP program, we specifically utilize the research-based HighScope Curriculum Model to guide these engaging experiences.

As dedicated early learning professionals, EC3 staff members continuously engage in ongoing education and professional development, ensuring we remain at the forefront of best practices. EC3 is committed to being a premier educational center in the Lansing area, serving as a model program by consistently upholding the highest standards of quality.

### Our History

EC3 was conceived by the Lansing School District and the Michigan Department of Education in 1984 as a model for an ideal child care setting. Since then, we've grown into a self-supported early learning center that serves more than 100 children. Today, furthering our commitment to high-quality early education, EC3 proudly partners with the Ingham County Intermediate School District to offer Michigan's Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, extending our reach and enhancing our preschool services. EC3 practices and maintains the standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and participates in Great Start to Quality, Michigan's quality rating and improvement system for child care and preschool programs. EC3 also partners with

Lansing Community College, Michigan State University, and other area colleges to provide a variety of student training opportunities in early childhood.

## **Our Facilities**

EC3 offers ten age-specific classrooms along with a preschool and school age summer program. Each of the classrooms has either in-room or hallway bathrooms for older more independent children. EC3's classrooms are large, far exceeding state licensing requirements. We have an indoor gym for all ages, plus a toddler-specific indoor play place. We boast four fenced playgrounds tailored specifically to the different needs of infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

EC3's building was originally constructed in 1929 as part of the Lansing School District, and as such it was maintained to the highest environmental and safety standards. EC3 took ownership of the building in 2006 and continues to maintain it to these standards so that it is environmentally risk-free. In addition to the fire and safety inspections required of all licensed child care facilities, EC3 employs a facilities manager and contracts with licensed, local professionals for plumbing, electrical, and HVAC services. EC3 also conducts regular work days so families and staff can participate in facility upkeep.

EC3's building always remains locked. The primary entry is secured with a keypad code system, and the unlock-code is changed at least every three months. Only staff members and families of enrolled children are provided with the code; all others (including those with authorization to pick up children) must ring the doorbell and show photo identification to the office staff. Visitors (such as student observers and social workers) must sign in and wear a visitor tag while in the building.

## **Our Management and Governance**

EC3 operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit parent cooperative, governed by a Board of Directors and managed by an Executive Director, who is selected and evaluated by the Board. This governance structure oversees all of EC3's general programs and operations, with the Board holding final responsibility for all legal and fiscal matters. Additionally, for our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, policies and oversight are also guided by the Lansing School District and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), who serve as the primary funding and oversight bodies. A current list of our EC3 board members can be found at <https://ec3kids.org/people/>

## **Our Commitment to Nondiscrimination & USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

EC3 provides equal enrollment, employment, and service opportunities to all eligible people without regard to race, color, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation,

national origin, citizenship, marital status, membership in any labor organization, political affiliation, or any other category protected by federal, state, or local law.

## **USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>,

from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

program.intake@usda.gov

EC3 is an equal opportunity provider.

## **Child Care Licensing Notebook**

EC3's licensing notebook is located in the office and is available for families to review during regular business hours. The notebook contains all the licensing inspections, special investigation reports, and related corrective action plans. Licensing inspection and special

investigation reports from at least the past two years are also available on the child care licensing website at [https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-89334\\_63294\\_5529---00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-89334_63294_5529---00.html).

## EC3 Programs

EC3 is truly an exceptional place dedicated to the holistic growth of young children. Our overall approach to early childhood education is firmly rooted in a dynamic, play-based curriculum that thoughtfully targets the unique developmental characteristics and evolving needs of each child. This approach emphasizes an open, supportive partnership with families and is meticulously designed to provide engaging individual and group experiences. These experiences are crafted to enhance every child's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development, recognizing the profound interconnectedness of these areas and the rapid changes occurring during the crucial first five years of life.

## Accreditation and Quality Rating

EC3 maintains its accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for high-quality early childhood education and proudly holds a four-star rating from Michigan's Great Start to Quality Initiative. These esteemed distinctions are fundamental to our commitment to excellence and directly align with the rigorous quality standards expected by Michigan's Universal Preschool (GSRP) program. Our adherence to these benchmarks ensures a safe and healthy environment for all children, supported by well-trained teachers, excellent teaching materials, and curricula that are both challenging and developmentally sound.

Accredited centers like EC3 consistently demonstrate a commitment to:

- Promoting positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth.
- Implementing a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
- Using developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches.
- Providing ongoing assessments of a child's learning and development and communicating the child's progress to the family.
- Promoting the nutrition and health of children and protecting children and staff from illness and injury.
- Employing and supporting a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests.
- Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with each child's family.
- Establishing relationships with and using the resources of the community to support achievement of program goals.

- Providing a safe and healthy physical environment.
- Implementing strong personnel, fiscal, and program management policies so that all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

## Education Standards

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has established comprehensive early childhood standards, including the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten and the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs. These standards define the highest quality benchmarks for programs that effectively prepare children for lifelong success. EC3 proudly adopts both sets of these MDE standards for the operation and programming of all our relevant classrooms. This commitment is fully consistent with the requirements of Michigan's Universal Preschool (GSRP), ensuring that all our preschool programs meet or exceed the state's rigorous quality benchmarks.

## EC3 Teaching Staff

### Teacher-Student Ratios

EC3 maintains a commitment to small group sizes and low teacher-student ratios across all our programs, consistently meeting or exceeding state licensing requirements.

For our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, we adhere to a teacher-student ratio of **1:10**, with each classroom led by a **certified teacher and supported by a dedicated full-time teaching assistant**, ensuring individualized attention and a high-quality learning environment.

Our ratios for various age groups are as follows:

Age Group	EC3 Ratio	State Licensing Ratios
Infant	1:4	1:4
Toddler (ages 1-3)	1:4	1:4
Jr. Preschool (ages 2.5-3.5)	1:8	1:8
Preschool (ages 3 to 4)	1:9	1:10
Pre-Kindergarten (ages 4-5)	1:10	1:12

## Classroom Staff

Each EC3 classroom, including our Universal Preschool (GSRP) programs, is staffed by dedicated professionals committed to quality early learning.

For our GSRP classrooms, the staff includes a **certified teacher** and a **full-time teaching assistant**, fulfilling GSRP's stringent requirements. Teachers in all EC3 classrooms possess extensive experience in early childhood education and supervision, holding at least a bachelor's or associate degree in early childhood education (or a closely related field), or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Classroom assistants are actively encouraged and supported in working toward earning an early education credential, contributing to our team's continuous professional growth.

## Support Staff

EC3 also employs numerous support staff members. These staff members are fully trained in child development and work at the center regularly, filling in as necessary in each classroom. The support staff members are very familiar faces to every EC3 child and smoothly transition into the classrooms when primary caregivers are away from the classroom. All support staff are fully versed in children's individual needs and each classroom's procedures.

EC3's staff members strive to:

- Cultivate a safe, healthy, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment that is responsive to each child's needs.
- Foster curiosity and active exploration of their world through inquiry-based learning experiences.
- Nurture a positive self-concept and sense of belonging in every child.
- Support the development of mastery, build trust, and encourage a strong sense of agency and independence.
- Advance children's physical and cognitive development and build foundational skills essential for future academic success.
- Actively support and strengthen children's social and emotional competencies.
- Cultivate collaborative and positive partnerships with families, recognizing their vital role in a child's development.

## Staff and Volunteer Screening Policy

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our care, including those in our Universal Preschool (GSRP) programs, all staff and volunteers undergo a rigorous

screening process prior to hire, meeting or exceeding state licensing requirements and GSRP expectations:

- An in-depth interview is conducted with the Program Director and/or teacher to determine suitability for working with and around children.
- Professional reference checks (a minimum of three) are completed to confirm that prospective employees are responsible adults possessing the necessary maturity and knowledge to work effectively with children.
- A comprehensive screening process, compliant with state and GSRP regulations, includes:
- Approval in the Child Care Background Check system, which involves fingerprinting and a thorough review of the public sex offender registry (PSOR).
- Prospective volunteers, including family members of children in care, must also successfully pass a review of the PSOR.
- **NOTE:** Any individual registered on the PSOR is strictly prohibited from having contact with any child in care.

Prior to having any unsupervised contact with children, all caregiving employees and volunteers receive a formal orientation, delivered by the Program Director, covering:

- EC3's philosophy, policies, and practices (including health and emergency procedures), ensuring alignment with both EC3 and GSRP standards.
- Child Care Center Licensing Rules, as well as specific GSRP operational guidelines.
- A comprehensive facility and grounds tour.

## Program Descriptions

### Infant Program (Ages 0-1)

At EC3, our Infant Program cradles your little one in a world of warmth, security, and gentle predictability. We understand and celebrate the unique personality of every infant, crafting an environment where individuality blossoms. Our program is thoughtfully designed to foster profound relationships of trust and attachment between our nurturing caregivers and your baby, ensuring personalized care that harmonizes beautifully with their cherished home routines.

A cornerstone of our infant care is the "primary caregiver" model. Your baby will be lovingly assigned a dedicated caregiver, fostering a consistent and deep personal relationship that extends to your entire family. While our whole team provides compassionate care, this special bond ensures seamless continuity of care and open communication, allowing us to truly understand and meet your child's evolving needs.

Within this nurturing space, each day unfolds with rich opportunities for engagement. Caregivers share precious one-on-one moments with each baby, fostering individual

connection. Infants also delight in interacting with their peers, exploring social cues. Crucially, we provide peaceful moments for babies to observe, process, and simply "be" in their environment, always within the watchful, yet unobtrusive, supervision of our staff.

Every day is a tailored developmental journey, with individualized experiences crafted to stimulate and gently challenge each baby's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth. Specific, age-appropriate activities are seamlessly woven into their daily rhythm, targeting key areas such as large and fine motor skills, sensory and perceptual awareness, language acquisition, and social interaction. Even routine moments like diapering, feeding, and dressing become valuable opportunities for connection and learning. Our vibrant outdoor spaces offer essential outlets for burgeoning curiosity and joyful exploration.

To keep you intimately connected to your infant's day, families receive a detailed daily note via Child Pilot. This comprehensive update includes:

- A snapshot of the engaging activities your child enjoyed, even noting the books read and songs sung.
- Precise information on diaper changes, including time and type.
- A clear record of feeding and sleep schedules.
- Insights into your child's overall disposition and mood throughout the day.

To ensure your infant has everything needed for a comfortable day, we kindly request families to bring the following labeled items (please label with child's full first and last name):

- **Nutrition:** EC3 proudly adheres to USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program nutrition requirements, providing non-fortified formula for infant meals. Should you prefer to provide breast milk, your own formula, or baby food, please ensure bottles and "baby" food are sufficient for the day, clearly labeled with your child's full name (no initials, please) and dated.
- **Diapers:** A generous supply of diapers for the day (we recommend leaving at least a week's supply at EC3 for convenience), along with any necessary diaper cream.
- **Outdoor Comfort:** Appropriate outdoor protection, including a sun hat and sunscreen for infants over six months, to keep them safe during outdoor adventures.
- **Clothing Changes:** At least three complete changes of clothing, refreshed daily, to accommodate any spills or playful messes.
- **Emergency Supply:** Frozen breast milk, if applicable, for emergency use.
- **Sleep Comfort:** A cozy sleep sack for peaceful rest.

Feeding time is a cherished, individualized experience at EC3, providing a special opportunity for caregivers and babies to connect. We gently hold young infants during bottle feeding, adapting to family preferences and individual needs. As infants grow, we support their emerging independence, allowing older infants to hold their own bottles when appropriate. Our caregivers collaborate closely with families to introduce solid and

table foods, ensuring a smooth transition. Nutritious snacks are provided for infants enjoying solid foods, and meticulous care, including wiping gums after feeding, promotes excellent oral health from the start.

## **Toddler Program (Ages 1-3)**

Our Toddler Program is a vibrant world designed to nurture blossoming independence and boundless exploration critical foundation for this dynamic developmental stage. Typically welcoming children from approximately 14 months to 3 years, our toddlers transition from infant care once they confidently walk, enjoy solid foods, and comfortably manage a single, post-lunch nap, ready for new adventures.

Central to our Toddler Program is the "primary caregiver" model. Each toddler forms a consistent and cherished bond with a dedicated caregiver, ensuring emotional security and continuity of care. This special connection fosters strong communication with families and allows our educators to deeply understand and respond to each child's individual needs, complementing the positive relationships our entire teaching team builds with all children and families.

Our daily rhythm masterfully balances enriching group activities with personalized experiences, often woven around captivating themes. This thoughtful design is geared towards fostering crucial developmental milestones: vibrant language acquisition, joyful peer interaction, refined small and large motor skills, and keen sensory-perceptual development. Every planned experience is a stepping stone to stimulate each child's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional growth in a holistic and engaging way.

Empowering toddlers to grow, our teachers gently encourage burgeoning independence, supporting them in feeding and dressing themselves, and embracing both independent and cooperative play, all tailored to each child's readiness. Toilet training is approached with sensitivity and an individual plan, where our staff partners closely with families to ensure seamless consistency and success between home and EC3.

To keep families well-informed and connected, detailed daily notes are provided via Kaymbu, offering a transparent glimpse into your toddler's day. These updates include:

- Exciting activities and projects your child enthusiastically engaged in, encompassing both independent exploration and teacher-guided experiences.
- Comprehensive insights into eating, sleeping, and developing toilet habits.
- A warm overview of your toddler's overall disposition and cherished moments throughout the day.

To ensure your toddler has everything needed for a fulfilling day, we kindly request families to bring the following items, clearly labeled with your child's full first and last name: **Please note that EC3 provides a nutritious lunch for all toddlers.**

- **Hydration:** Any necessary bottles or sippy cups dated and labeled.
- **Outdoor Essentials:** Appropriate outdoor protection and seasonal clothing, including sunglasses, a sun hat, and non-aerosol sunscreen (labeled with your child's name), for sunny day adventures.
- **Nap Comfort:** Two cozy nap blankets – we suggest one thicker blanket to cover the cot provided by EC3, and a lighter one for comfort.
- **Clothing Changes:** At least two complete changes of clothing, to be refreshed daily, ready for any playful spills or adventures.
- **Diapering Supplies:** A sufficient supply of diapers for the day (we recommend maintaining at least a week's supply at EC3 for convenience), along with any applicable diaper cream.

**To maintain a harmonious and secure classroom environment, please refrain from bringing toys from home.** Personal toys can sometimes be challenging for sharing and are prone to getting lost or broken. However, we warmly welcome children to bring books or CDs to share with the group, or special comforting items like stuffed animals or dolls for nap/quiet time. For the safety and well-being of all, toy guns or other toy weapons are not permitted at EC3.

## **EC3 General Preschool Program (Ages 2.5-5)**

The EC3 Preschool Program offers a vibrant and adaptable environment where children flourish as they engage in developmentally appropriate activities within a dynamic group setting. Serving children typically ranging from two-and-a-half to five years old, our programming is thoughtfully tailored to meet the diverse needs and readiness levels of each developmental group. Our philosophy champions play-based learning, driven by investigation and engaging projects. The curriculum is meticulously designed to foster comprehensive development across language, social, cognitive, creative, and motor skills through a variety of enjoyable and enriching activities. We purposefully plan the physical environment and daily routines to maximize learning opportunities for every child, with our dedicated teaching staff continuously extending and enriching these experiences.

Within this enriching program, preschool children are thoughtfully guided and encouraged to develop key skills and concepts, including:

- Enhanced language skills through guided and spontaneous interactions.
- Robust social skills, nurtured through participation in diverse group activities and interactions with classmates and other children at EC3.

- Refined fine and gross motor skills, utilizing engaging manipulative materials, stimulating climbing equipment, and directed experiences in creative movement.
- Growing independence in daily living skills.
- Fundamental concepts of quantity, causality, and spatial relations through active exploration and experimentation.
- Emergent writing and reading skills, introduced at developmentally appropriate interest levels.

Families are an integral part of our preschool community and receive consistent communication about their child's day. This includes engaging daily conversations with teaching staff, informative periodic newsletters, and concise summaries posted on whiteboards outside the classrooms. These daily whiteboard updates typically highlight:

- The engaging activities and projects your child enjoyed, encompassing both independent exploration and teacher-directed learning.
- Important insights into eating and nap habits.
- Notifications of upcoming events and exciting activities.

To ensure your child is comfortable and prepared for a day of learning and play, we kindly request families to bring the following items, clearly labeled with your child's full first and last name: **Please note that EC3 provides nutritious snacks and a balanced lunch for all preschoolers.**

- **Outdoor Essentials:** Appropriate outdoor protection and clothing for all weather, including sunglasses, a sun hat, and non-aerosol sunscreen (labeled with your child's name).
- **Extra Clothing:** A complete change of clothing, refreshed daily, ready for any playful messes or accidents.
- **Nap Comfort:** A comforting nap blanket for rest time.
- **Personal Belongings:** **To maintain a harmonious and secure classroom environment, please refrain from bringing toys from home.** Personal toys can sometimes be challenging for sharing and are prone to getting lost or broken. However, we warmly welcome children to bring books or CDs to share with the group, or special comforting items like stuffed animals or dolls for nap/quiet time. For the safety and well-being of all, toy guns or other toy weapons are not permitted at EC3.

## EC3's Wrap-Around Care Program

EC3's Wrap-Around Care Program provides a seamless extension of our high-quality early learning environment **exclusively for our Universal Preschool (GSRP) families.** Designed to offer flexibility and peace of mind, our wrap-around care ensures continuous, enriching,

and supervised experiences before and after the regular GSRP school day, as well as during planned program off days.

**Purpose & Philosophy:** Our Wrap-Around Care Program is more than just extended supervision; it's an opportunity to further support your child's developmental journey in a comfortable and engaging setting. We aim to create a home-like atmosphere where children can decompress, engage in self-directed activities, and build on their learning through play and social interaction.

**Hours of Operation:** This program operates during hours that complement the GSRP school day:

- **Before School Care:** 7:15 AM - 8:30 AM
- **After School Care:** 3:30 PM - 5:45 PM
- **Full-Day Care:** Available during planned GSRP off days (e.g., in-service days, scheduled breaks), providing continuous care when the regular GSRP program is not in session.

**Activities & Enrichment:** During wrap-around care, children engage in a variety of age-appropriate, self-chosen activities designed to foster relaxation, social connection, and continued development. These may include:

- **Creative Play:** Access to art supplies, building blocks, and imaginative play areas.
- **Quiet Corners:** Opportunities for reading, puzzles, and calm sensory activities.
- **Outdoor Exploration:** Supervised time in our outdoor play spaces (weather permitting).
- **Structured Games:** Group games and activities promoting teamwork and fun.
- **Skill Reinforcement:** Gentle encouragement for continued learning through educational games and resources.

**Seamless Integration:** Our dedicated staff works closely with GSRP lead classroom teachers to ensure a smooth transition for each child between their GSRP program and wrap-around care. This continuity of care provides a familiar and secure environment, allowing children to comfortably move between structured learning and relaxed engagement. We prioritize consistent communication with families, keeping you informed of your child's experiences and well-being throughout their extended day at EC3.

## School Age and Preschool Summer Program

Our vibrant **School Age and Preschool Summer Program** transforms summer breaks into an exciting adventure of discovery and growth for children who have completed kindergarten through 3rd grade, and now, also for our graduating preschoolers. Designed to ignite curiosity and foster lasting memories, this dynamic day camp offers an unparalleled opportunity for every child to embrace the outdoors, engage in enriching educational activities, reinforce vital school skills, and above all, have immense fun!

It's a particularly cherished experience for EC3's "graduates," allowing them to reconnect with preschool friends and revisit treasured relationships. Through engaging peer interactions, children learn teamwork and collaboration, growing together in a supportive

environment. Our program kicks off as soon as Lansing schools conclude for the year and runs until just before Labor Day, structured around captivating, themed weeks. Activities span a wide range of interests, from immersive nature and ecology explorations to creative cooking, diverse arts and crafts, invigorating swimming sessions, ample outdoor time, quiet reading, enriching frequent field trips, stimulating library visits, and fascinating science and math projects. Dedicated quiet times allow children to work constructively on individual projects, fostering reflection through journal entries, reading, and artistic expression.

To ensure a comfortable and engaging summer experience, families of our summer program students are requested to bring the following items to EC3 (please label everything clearly with the child's full name): **Please note that EC3 provides nutritious lunches and snacks for all summer program participants.**

- **Outdoor Essentials:** Appropriate outdoor protection and clothing for sunny days and water play, including a bathing suit, towel, sun hat, sunglasses, insect repellent, and non-aerosol sunscreen.
- **Extra Clothing:** A complete change of clothing, refreshed daily, ready for any adventure.

**To maintain a harmonious and secure program environment, please refrain from bringing toys from home.** Personal toys can sometimes be challenging for sharing and are prone to getting lost or broken. However, we warmly welcome children to bring books or CDs to share with the group, or special comforting items like stuffed animals or dolls for quiet times. For the safety and well-being of all, toy guns or other toy weapons are not permitted at EC3.

To maximize engagement with activities and peers, and to foster an "unplugged" summer experience, electronic devices such as games, phones, or tablets are not permitted in the summer program. We kindly ask families to keep all electronic devices at home.

## A "Typical Day" at EC3

Although each classroom has a posted schedule of activities, there is a similar pattern throughout. Families should plan for their children to be at EC3 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities and physical activities.

**7:15-9:00**

**Child drop-off, breakfast in rooms, free choice activities**

**9:00-10:00**

**Lesson activities (small group, large group, etc.)**

**10:00-10:30**

**Morning snack**

<b>10:30-11:30</b>	<b>Lesson activities (small group, large group, etc.) and outdoor/gym time</b>
<b>11:30-12:15</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>12:15-2:45</b>	<b>Nap/quiet time</b>
<b>2:45-3:35</b>	<b>Lesson activities (small group, large group, etc.) and outdoor/gym time</b>
<b>3:45-4:30</b>	<b>Afternoon snack</b>
<b>4:30-5:45</b>	<b>Child pick-up, free choice activities (may include playground, gym, etc.)</b>

## **CURRICULUM**

As an early childhood education program, EC3 strives to provide high-quality learning opportunities for children from birth to age five. In all our classrooms, we proudly implement the HighScope Curriculum, a renowned research-based, whole-child approach to education. By fostering all aspects of the child's development, HighScope prepares them for success in school and life. The HighScope Curriculum incorporates robust guidance for individualized instruction, empowering teachers to effectively meet the unique needs of all learners. It also strongly encourages meaningful partnerships with families, an essential practice that seamlessly integrates family and school collaborations.

Weekly lesson plans are posted in each room to inform families of the range of fun, age-appropriate activities designed to challenge and support growth across all learning domains (social/emotional, cognitive, language, dramatic play, art, and gross and fine motor skills). Consistent daily routines help support a child's emotional comfort and promote abundant opportunities to learn in a hands-on, play-based environment.

## **ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING METHODS**

At EC3, our commitment to understanding and nurturing each child's unique developmental journey is reflected in our comprehensive approach to assessment and monitoring. We utilize a powerful combination of methods to meticulously track and celebrate every child's progress.

When a child embarks on their adventure in a new classroom, our dedicated teachers skillfully employ the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). This essential screening tool

provides a foundational baseline, allowing us to gain valuable insights into their current performance across a diverse range of developmental skills.

Central to our ongoing evaluation is the COR Advantage assessment, a cutting-edge, whole-child assessment tool developed by the renowned HighScope Educational Research Foundation. Built upon 36 rigorously researched items, COR Advantage is proven to be highly effective in preparing children for school success. Our teachers continuously engage in thoughtful observations, diligently tracking progress, and regularly enriching individual child portfolios. This comprehensive, observational assessment program empowers our educators to continuously monitor each child's developmental progressions, allowing for dynamic adjustments to lesson plans and tailored support to address evolving developmental needs.

Transparency and partnership are key: twice a year, our teachers engage in in-depth reviews of each child's progress and portfolios with families during dedicated conferences. For your convenience and continuous insight, these invaluable portfolios are also accessible in a digital format through Kaymbu.

## **Universal Preschool / Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)**

EC3 is proud to partner with the Ingham County Intermediate School District to offer a 5 day a week, full day, Universal Preschool at no cost for eligible four-year old children. Universal Preschool is funded by the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), which is a grant received through the Michigan Department of Education.

### **Eligibility**

To enroll in our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, a child must meet the following criteria:

- Be **four years old on or before December 1st** of the enrollment year.
- Be an **Ingham County ISD service area resident OR a current EC3 family residing in a neighboring ISD district.**
- **Priority for all preschool slots is given to current EC3 families and Lansing residents. Families within the 0-400% Federal Poverty Level will be given Highest Priority**

### **Program Philosophy**

Our prek program embraces a rich, **play-based philosophy** that fosters holistic child development. We utilize the esteemed **HighScope Curriculum Model** and rigorously adhere to the **MDE Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-Kindergarten**. This approach focuses on nurturing every child's self-esteem, problem-solving abilities, and crucial social-emotional development.

## Curriculum

EC3 offers a robust **Traditional Preschool program** grounded in the powerful theory that children learn most effectively through play. Our classrooms embrace both child-directed and teacher-directed play activities, specifically designed to prepare children for a smooth and successful transition to kindergarten.

The learning environment is thoughtfully planned to provide rich experiences across all areas of a child's development, including physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and language, all through an integrated and holistic approach. Daily opportunities for play are central to our philosophy, as we believe children's play is a primary vehicle for fostering mental growth, as well as crucial physical, emotional, and social development. Therefore, both child-initiated and adult-supported play are fundamental components of each day's activities.

Our Traditional rooms proudly utilize **The HighScope Curriculum Model**, in conjunction with the **MDE Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-Kindergarten**. HighScope is a research-based curriculum that focuses on providing children with diverse and engaging experiences across various key interest areas. These include dramatic play, language/literacy, writing, building/construction, sensory exploration, creative arts, music, movement, science discovery, and technology/computers. Children are dedicated at least one hour each day to child-directed exploration within these stimulating areas of interest.

The preschool curriculum is thoughtfully structured to include a balance of large group instruction, where all children learn together, and small group instruction, providing more individualized attention from the teacher. The daily schedule also integrates essential times for energetic outdoor play, peaceful rest time, and nutritious meals and snacks, ensuring a well-rounded and supportive learning experience.

## Assessment

Child development and learning are continuously monitored using the **Child Observation Record (COR)**. This authentic assessment tool helps our educators track progress through work samples, anecdotal notes, photographs and observations. Teachers use family reports a minimum of two times a year during conferences and share informally throughout the year.

## Developmental Screening and Referral Policy

As part of our commitment to early identification and comprehensive family support, EC3 implements a **Developmental Screening and Referral Policy** to ensure every child receives the resources they need to thrive. Teachers conduct the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)**, often during home visits, to monitor developmental progress.

If screening results indicate a possible developmental concern, **parents are promptly informed and actively involved at every step**. Staff will work in partnerships with families to discuss findings, explore options, and create a plan that supports the child's growth. This includes generating referrals to **Michigan Build Up** when appropriate, ensuring families have access to specialized early intervention services.

Beyond developmental needs, EC3 is committed to supporting families holistically. Our team assists with connections to community resources for **medical care, mental health services, food, clothing, and housing**. We believe in a collaborative approach—parents are engaged throughout the process, from identifying needs to selecting resources, so that decisions reflect family priorities and values.

## A "Typical Day" in GSRP

A detailed "**GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM SCHOOL-DAY SAMPLE ROUTINE**" is provided below. This structured yet flexible daily schedule ensures children benefit from a balanced blend of activities, including: Arrival, Breakfast, and Greeting Time; Large-Group Time and Music/Movement; Planning Time; Work Time (uninterrupted child-initiated choice); Cleanup Time; Recall Time; Small Group Time; Outside Play; Bathroom/Lunch Preparation; Lunch; Quiet/Resting Time; Wake-up, Bathroom, and Table Toys; Snack; and Afternoon Outside Time and Dismissal.

### Great Start Readiness Program "Typical day"

#### 8:30 - 9:15 Arrival/Breakfast/Greeting Time

Children enter the classroom at their own pace. Parents/guardians are encouraged to stay until children are ready for them to leave. Children have choices about whether to eat, spend time with books, or interact with adults and one another. Once all children have arrived, adults share the daily announcements.

#### 9:15-9:30 Large-Group Time/Music and Movement

All adults and children participate in activities planned around children's interests, developmental levels, music and movement, cooperative play and projects; and events meaningful to children.

#### 9:30-9:40 Planning Time

Children indicate their plans to adults in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Adults use a range of strategies to support children's planning (e.g., props, area signs, tape recorders, songs, planning individually, in pairs, in small groups).

#### **9:40 - 10:40 Work Time (children's hour of uninterrupted Choice Time)**

- Children always initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Work Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children's problem-solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.

#### **10:40 10:50 Cleanup Time**

- Children and adults clean up together keeping the spirit of play and problem solving alive. Children make many choices during clean up. Adults accept children's level of involvement and skill while supporting their learning.

#### **10:50-11:00 Recall Time**

- Gathered in small group settings, children choose Work Time experiences to reflect on, talk about, and exhibit. Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow children's lead and encourage children to share (e.g., individual props such as puppets, telephones or periscopes, group games using a hula hoop, ball or spinner, re-enacting, drawing, showing and describing a structure or painting).

#### **11:00-11:20 Small Group Time**

An adult-initiated learning experience based on children's interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials, and talk about what they are doing. Individual children explore and use the same set of materials in their own way.

#### **11:20-12:00 Outside Time**

- Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment, much as they do during Work Time indoors. Adults supervise children for safety and also join in their outdoor play, supporting their initiatives and problem solving.

#### **12:00 - 12:10 Bathroom/Wash Hands/Prepare for Lunch**

- Children assist in preparation and set up. Children choose where they would like to sit and are encouraged to serve themselves.

### **12:10 1:00 Lunch**

- Family-Style meals support children doing things for themselves (e.g., serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own snack space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.

### **1:00-2:00 Quiet/Resting Time**

- Resting is a time for sleeping or quiet, solitary, on-your-own-cot play. Rest Time plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each child. Quiet play could include books, soft music, baby dolls, or fine motor manipulatives.

### **2:00-2:30 Wake/Bathroom/Table Toys**

As children wake up, adults and children work together to put away cots and children initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Work Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.

### **2:30-2:50 Snack**

(refer to lunch description)

### **2:50 3:30 Outside Time/Dismissal**

(refer to AM descriptions).

## **Transitions**

At EC3, we recognize that transitions between classrooms are pivotal moments in a child's developmental journey. As children grow and progress to the next level of programming, from the cozy infant room to the dynamic toddler space, and beyond, they embark on exciting new adventures. These transitions involve engaging with new teachers, exploring new physical environments, and forging new friendships. Understanding that such changes, even positive ones, can be significant for a young child's daily routine, we approach every room-to-room transition with immense thoughtfulness and care.

When the time for a transition approaches, our dedicated EC3 teachers engage in close consultation with families and directors. This collaborative process ensures that we identify the best and most appropriate fit for each individual child, considering their unique needs and developmental stage. Directors may offer recommendations, factoring in a child's birth date and classroom availability, all aimed at optimizing their placement and experience.

To ensure children are well-prepared and confident, transitions are carefully introduced over several weeks through gradual visits to their new group. These visits begin with short increments and progressively lengthen, allowing children to comfortably acclimatize. We facilitate transitions both individually and in small groups, always prioritizing the child's developmental readiness. Families are considered an integral and valued part of this process, and parental requests regarding a particular classroom and/or primary caregiver are thoughtfully considered whenever feasible.

Our general guidelines for transitions between classrooms reflect typical developmental intervals, though it's important to remember that every child is unique, and these are flexible guidelines:

- Infant Rooms: Typically accommodate children aged six weeks to approximately 12 to 15 months old.
- Toddler Rooms: Generally, cater to children aged 12 to 15 months up to 3 years old.
- Preschool Rooms: Designed for children typically aged 2.5 to 5 years old.

## Field Trips

Field trips are a part of your child's experience at EC3. You will be notified by the classroom teachers in advance of any field trip your child takes. When teachers plan transportation for field trips they will walk with the children, use public transportation, or ask families to drive (State of Michigan licensing rules required that families transport their own child or ask another parent to transport their child). For safety reasons, no child will sit in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger side air bag. Families are welcomed and encouraged to attend any of EC3's field trips.

## Children with Special Needs

EC3 is deeply committed to providing a positive and enriching learning environment for all children, embracing every child's unique abilities, special needs, and learning styles. We believe in fostering an inclusive community where every child has the opportunity to thrive. We work closely and collaboratively with families to implement necessary accommodations and individualized support plans, ensuring children can participate fully in the least restrictive environment possible. We strive to provide these accommodations to the greatest extent feasible without causing undue hardship on the program.

For children enrolled in our **Universal Preschool (GSRP) program**, it is a fundamental policy that **no child shall be excluded or expelled** from the program because of a need

for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or due to staff attitudes or apprehensions. Our commitment is to find solutions within the program.

In instances where a child's behaviors or developmental needs exceed our standard early childhood expertise, or if maintaining the mandatory teacher-child ratio becomes challenging despite accommodations, we will proactively engage with parents to discuss comprehensive alternatives. This collaborative process is aimed at determining the best course of action for all involved and may involve developing a customized plan that includes:

- Exploring alternative classroom placements within EC3.
- Recommending and assisting the family in seeking outside professional help, including referrals to the local Intermediate School District (ISD).
- In rare circumstances where comprehensive support cannot be adequately provided within EC3 for a child in our general (non-GSRP) programs, recommending alternative programs that may more closely meet the child's specific needs.

If, after exhausting all reasonable steps, continued enrollment is deemed unadvisable for a child in our general (non-GSRP) programs, EC3 reserves the right to make the final decision. In such cases, the center will provide the family with a two-week notice, unless immediate safety concerns dictate otherwise, and will actively assist parents in identifying alternative care options.

## Diversity and Cultural Competency

At EC3, we are profoundly dedicated to fostering a vibrant, culturally competent, and truly inclusive environment where every child and family feels valued, respected, and celebrated. Our program steadfastly upholds a strict non-discrimination policy in both employment practices and enrollment, ensuring equitable opportunities for all. Our exceptional teachers are deeply committed to designing and nurturing learning environments that authentically reflect and honor the diverse backgrounds, rich experiences, and unique needs of every child and family we proudly serve.

To continually reinforce this profound commitment, EC3 staff actively participates in annual, in-depth training sessions focused on diversity, equity, and culturally responsive teaching practices. These ongoing professional development opportunities empower our educators to grow, ensuring that our classrooms remain not only inclusive and welcoming but also relevant and enriching for all.

We firmly believe that meaningful and respectful communication is the cornerstone of cultural responsiveness. Strong partnerships with families are cultivated through genuine understanding and trust, initiated by clear, open, and respectful dialogue. EC3 makes every concerted effort to connect with families in ways that are most effective and meaningful for them, utilizing a range of communication tools including comprehensive home and program surveys, direct teacher interactions, timely email updates, and informative newsletters.

## Hours of Operation

EC3 is open for childcare from 7:15 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. Families must bring children to the appropriate classroom and notify a teacher that the child has arrived by signing the daily roster. Similarly, when the child and parent/guardian are departing at the end of the day, the families must notify staff on the roster. A child will be permitted to leave EC3 only with those adults indicated on the Child Information Record. Members of the office staff review the identification of any individual other than the parent/guardian before releasing the child, and classroom staff may request ID as well.

## Holidays and Center Closings

At EC3, we meticulously plan our operational schedule to ensure consistency while also supporting our staff's professional development and respecting important national holidays. We understand that our operating schedule impacts family planning, and we strive to communicate all closures well in advance.

### Scheduled Holiday Closings

EC3 will be closed in observance of the following national holidays:

- New Year's Day\*
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day\*
- Labor Day
- General Election Day (even-numbered years)
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following
- Christmas Eve Day\*
- Christmas Day\*
- New Year's Eve Day\* (\*or the state alternative recognized holiday)

In addition to these holidays, EC3 typically observes two (2) additional days during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. These specific dates are clearly marked on our annual calendar, allowing families ample time to plan.

## In-Service Days

To foster continuous growth and maintain the highest standards of early childhood education, EC3 schedules five (5) in-service days annually. These days are dedicated to staff training and professional development, during which the center will be closed to families. The in-service days are generally scheduled with two in early Spring and three in late Summer, with exact dates published on the annual calendar.

### **Tuition for Scheduled Closings (EC3 General Programs Only)**

For families enrolled in **EC3's general programs (Infant, Toddler, EC3 Preschool, School Age Summer Program)**, tuition is billed for each scheduled day of enrollment, including holidays and planned in-service days. No tuition credit or adjustment will be provided for these scheduled closings, or for sick days or family vacations.

**For Universal Preschool (GSRP) Students:** We offer the 5-day extended program which must operate 5 days per week for a minimum of 130 days spread over at least 30 weeks. To better align with the local k-12 calendar and operations, the GSRP program may schedule up to 4 days for family engagement including home visits or parent-teacher conferences. Up to two professional learning and or coaching days of 5 or more hours may also be scheduled and counted as instructional days. Also, in alignment with local K-12, the GSRP program is allowed up to six instructional days that may be forgiven for inclement weather cancellations.

## Unexpected Closings

The safety and well-being of our children and staff is our paramount concern. While we strive to maintain a consistent schedule, unforeseen circumstances may necessitate unexpected closings.

**General Guidelines:** EC3 generally follows the Lansing School District's operational decisions regarding closing. If the Lansing School District closes due to inclement weather or other emergencies, or if the State declares an emergency closure, EC3 will also close.

**Potential Unforeseen Circumstances:** EC3 may also need to close due to other unforeseen circumstances, including but not limited to:

- Extended loss of essential utilities such as power, heat, or water.
- Inability to maintain state-mandated teacher-to-student ratios.
- A determination by the Health Department or licensing agency of an imminent threat from contagious disease or illness.
- Hazardous weather conditions that prevent a sufficient number of staff from safely commuting to work, impacting on our ability to maintain required ratios.

**Communication:** In the event of an unexpected closure, the EC3 administrative team will make every effort to notify each family promptly through various channels, including phone calls, e-mail, text messages, and/or social media.

## Extended Closings

In the rare event that EC3 is required to close for an extended period, defined as more than two consecutive weeks (e.g., for major facility repairs or widespread public health emergencies like a pandemic), all family accounts for **EC3's general programs** will be frozen. No tuition will be charged after the initial two-week closure period. Families will be kept informed of reopening dates and when billing will resume.

If a family chooses to delay their child's return to EC3 following an extended closure, a charge equivalent to 25% of their usual tuition bill will be applied for up to four weeks to hold their child's spot. Families wishing to adjust their enrollment following an extended closure must notify the office in writing two weeks prior to the desired effective starting date.

**For Universal Preschool (GSRP) Students:** In the event of an extended closing, the GSRP program will follow directives from the Lansing School District and Ingham County ISD, and no charges will be incurred by GSRP families.

## Admission and Withdrawal Policies

### Admission Policy

EC3 offers high-quality early learning and care for children from infancy through school age, including our specialized Universal Preschool (GSRP) program. Our admission policies are designed to ensure a smooth enrollment process and the best possible placement for every child and family. Please note that admission procedures and eligibility criteria vary between our general EC3 programs and the GSRP program.

### EC3 General Programs Admission (Infant, Toddler, EC3 Preschool, School Age Summer Program)

Our general programs accept children from **six weeks to five years old** for pre-kindergarten care, and school-aged children (5-8 years old) for our Summer Program.

Enrollment is offered on a **full-time basis (five days per week)**. We do not offer drop-in care, single-day enrollment, or partial-day (morning-only or afternoon-only) care.

#### **Application Process:**

1. **Inquiry & Tour:** Families are invited to meet with the Program Director to tour our center, discuss operations, policies, and programming. A comprehensive tour packet, including instructions for online application, will be provided.
2. **Application Submission:** Submit a non-refundable application fee of \$75.00. Availability for desired programs (infant, toddler, preschool) will be indicated online. If space is unavailable, children may be placed on a waiting list, organized by application date and age group. In cases of multiple applications for the same age group on the same date, a random selection process will be used to order names on the waiting list.
3. **Enrollment Priority:** Priority is extended to families with other children currently enrolled at EC3, as well as families with a prior enrollment history.
4. **Enrollment Confirmation:** If space is available, families will be contacted to confirm an enrollment date and schedule classroom visits.

**Required Documentation:** All newly enrolled families must submit the following forms to meet licensing and food program requirements:

- Emergency Information and Immunization Records: Required on file by the child's first day of attendance.
- Health Appraisal Form: Must be on file no more than 30 days after the first day of attendance, signed by a physician.
- Child Information Record: Must be updated at least annually.

**Transition & Intake:** An intake meeting with classroom teachers may be arranged to ease the child's transition. Families must work with office staff to schedule three transition visits prior to the child's first day.

#### **Universal Preschool / GSRP Program Admission**

The Universal Preschool (GSRP) program is a **no-cost, full-day program for eligible 4-year-olds**. The enrollment process for GSRP is distinct from EC3's general programs and is managed in partnership with the Ingham County Intermediate School District.

#### **Application Process:**

1. **Online Application:** All enrollments for the GSRP program begin with an online application submitted through [www.inghampreschool.org](http://www.inghampreschool.org).

2. **Eligibility Verification:** Eligibility will be determined by the Ingham County Intermediate School District based on the criteria outlined in the Eligibility section of this handbook.
3. **Application Fee:** There is **no application fee** for the GSRP program.
4. **Enrollment Priority:** Priority for all GSRP preschool slots is given to current EC3 families and Lansing residents.

**Required Documentation:** To finalize enrollment for the GSRP program, families must submit all required documents to the Lansing School District Preschool Office. These include:

- Child Information Card (Emergency Card)
- Permissions and Consent Form
- Copy of State-Issued Birth Certificate, I-94, or Passport
- Copy of Immunization Records
- Other risk factor verification as requested
- Verification of Household Income (two check stubs, or a W2, 1040 tax return, SSI statement, etc.)
- Proof of Residency (utility bill, lease or rent receipt, mortgage statement, internet bill)
- Completed Health Appraisal, signed by a physician (on file within 30 days of a child's initial attendance)
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) documentation (if applicable)
- Custody/Divorce Papers (if the child is not living with both natural parents, a copy is required on file for release authorization).

**Transition & Intake:** Intake procedures and transition visits will be arranged by the GSRP program staff to support a smooth start for your child.

## Withdrawal Policy

Should your family's circumstances require the withdrawal of your child from EC3, we ask that you adhere to the following policies, which vary between our general EC3 programs and the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program.

### EC3 General Programs Withdrawal (Infant, Toddler, EC3 Preschool, School Age Summer Program)

For children enrolled in our general EC3 programs, a **two-week written notice or e-mail message** must be provided to a member of the EC3 office staff before withdrawing a child. Tuition for this two-week notice period will be charged, regardless of the child's attendance.

## **Universal Preschool / GSRP Program Withdrawal**

If you need to withdraw your child from the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, please inform your child's teacher and also notify **EC3's Executive Director** as soon as possible.

## **Disenrollment and Dismissal Policy**

Maintaining a safe, supportive, and consistent environment for all children is paramount at EC3. Our policies regarding disenrollment and dismissal are in place to ensure the well-being of every child and staff member, as well as the smooth operation of our programs. Policies may differ between EC3's general programs and the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program.

### **EC3 General Programs Disenrollment and Dismissal**

A family may be asked to disenroll, or a child may be dismissed from EC3's general programs for a variety of reasons, handled on an individual basis by the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director. These reasons include, but are not limited to:

- The child or parent(s) are not adjusting to the program.
- The child or parent(s) are disrupting the safety or well-being of other children and/or staff.
- Required enrollment forms have not been completed and returned promptly.
- Nonpayment or habitual late payment of tuition or fees.
- Habitual late pick-ups of children.

## **Universal Preschool / GSRP Program Policies**

The Universal Preschool (GSRP) program operates under specific attendance, late pick-up, and disenrollment guidelines established by the Lansing School District and MDE.

### **Attendance Policy (GSRP)**

Consistent attendance is crucial for a child's success in the GSRP program. Research indicates that chronic absences (missing 10% or more of school days) can lead to lower developmental outcomes, while children attending at least 90% of the time are better prepared for school.

- GSRP teachers actively monitor attendance and will make every effort to communicate with parents/guardians when attendance issues arise, offering support and guidance.
- Families are requested to proactively communicate with their child's teacher about any attendance problems, including transportation difficulties, family illness, or significant life changes. Universal Preschool staff are committed to supporting children and families through such situations.

## Late Pick-up Policy (GSRP)

To ensure the timely departure of staff and provide appropriate care, the following policy applies to late pick-ups for GSRP students:

- A teacher will begin contacting the parent/guardian at 5 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time. If the main parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts listed for the child will be called.
- **1st late pick-up:** A verbal reminder will be given by the classroom teacher regarding the importance of timely pick-ups.
- **2nd late pick-up:** A formal late pick-up letter will be issued to the parent/guardian.
- **3rd late pick-up and beyond:** A fee of \$15 will be charged to the parent/guardian's account, a letter will be sent, and the Universal Preschool Main Office will be contacted.

## Disenrollment and Dismissal (GSRP)

A child may be disenrolled or dismissed from the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program for specific reasons, with the goal of ensuring program fidelity and student engagement. In such cases, teachers and the Preschool Office will make every effort to contact the child's guardian/caregiver. Reasons for disenrollment include:

- The child/family has not attended the initial open house, and a home visit has not been scheduled, due to inability to contact parents after repeated attempts by the teacher (including calls to all phone numbers and emergency contacts), and the child has not attended the first week of school.
- A child has not attended school for two consecutive weeks without prior notice or communication from the child's guardian/caregiver.

If a child is unenrolled from the EC3 Universal Preschool Program, the main office will send a letter to the last known home address of the family.

## Tuition and Fee Policies

At EC3, we believe in transparent financial policies that ensure the continued excellence of our programs. Tuition payments secure your child's valuable space within our enriching environment. Please note that while our tuition rates are structured weekly or daily, no tuition credit is provided for absences due to sickness, holidays, or center closings. This policy supports our commitment to our dedicated, salaried staff who are compensated regardless of operational status. For children on a part-time schedule, missed days due to illness or holidays may, at the discretion of the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director, be made up on a space-available basis within the same week.

## **EC3 General Programs Tuition & Fees (Infant, Toddler, EC3 Preschool, School Age Summer Program)**

For convenience and consistency, tuition for our general programs is paid biweekly, in advance of care. We offer various payment options including cash, check, credit/debit card, or e-check. To simplify your payments, we encourage families to utilize our auto-withdrawal option; please note that any fees associated with credit or debit card payments will be the responsibility of the parent.

### **FULL-TIME TUITION RATES (EFF. 4/1/23)**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Weekly Rate</b>
Infant/Toddler	Baby bugs, Big Bugs Dolphins, Penguins, Seals Geckos, Frogs	\$337
Preschool	Lions, Tigers, Bears	\$289
Pre-k Wrap Around Care	Bears/Universal Pre-k	Before-50 After-75 Full day-\$50
Summer Camp	School age, Preschool	\$230/250

### **Tuition Assistance**

EC3 is committed to making quality early education accessible. We proudly accept various forms of tuition assistance permitted under Michigan law, including employer-sponsored aid, payments from the state's Child Development and Care (CDC) program, and grants from educational institutions or other organizations. These payments are applied directly to your family's account, potentially reducing or eliminating your financial responsibility. Our knowledgeable office staff will guide you through the process, clearly communicating any remaining balance and your payment schedule.

### **Late Tuition Payment Policy**

Timely tuition payments are essential for the smooth operation of our programs. A late fee of \$25.00 per week will be assessed if a tuition payment is not received by one business day following its due date. All outstanding balances must be settled in full before a child can be re-enrolled for the subsequent program year or summer camp. Our Office Manager meticulously monitors all accounts and works proactively with families to ensure timely payments. Should payment challenges arise, the following steps will be taken:

- One Payment Missed:** If one full tuition payment is outstanding by the time the next billing cycle occurs, we will contact the family to bring the account current.

- **Two Payments Missed or Balance Over \$500.00:** If two tuition payments are missed by the next billing cycle, or if the account accrues an overdue balance exceeding \$500.00, the family will be required to enter into a tuition payment plan. This plan will clearly outline the total amount owed, stipulate timely future payments (including the current billing cycle's tuition plus at least 25% of the outstanding balance), and explicitly state that non-compliance will result in immediate disenrollment. The plan must be signed and dated by both the parent and the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director of EC3.
- **Three Payments Missed or Balance Over \$1,000.00:** If three tuition payments are missed by the next billing cycle, or if the account balance exceeds \$1,000.00, the child(ren) will be immediately disenrolled from EC3.

## Returned Check Policy

A fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for each returned check. This will be in addition to any applicable late fees, totaling \$50.00. To ensure financial stability, after a second returned check, future payments will be required via money order or cashier's check.

## Hardship Clause

We understand that unforeseen and extreme hardships can arise. Families experiencing difficulties in meeting EC3's tuition or fee policies are encouraged to communicate these challenges in writing to the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director for individual consideration.

## Referral Incentive

We cherish our EC3 community and encourage our currently enrolled families to share their positive experiences! Refer a new family to EC3, and once their child is successfully enrolled and their first invoice is paid, you will receive a \$50.00 referral discount applied directly to your family's account.

## Universal Preschool (GSRP) Financial Policies

The Universal Preschool (GSRP) program is a **no-cost program** for eligible families. There are no tuition fees or application fees associated with enrollment in the GSRP program.

## Late Pick-up Policy (GSRP Specific)

Timely pick-up is crucial for student safety and staff scheduling. The following GSRP-specific Late Pick-up Policy is strictly enforced:

- **Initial Contact:** If a child is not picked up within 5 minutes of the scheduled time, the teacher will immediately begin calling the parent/guardian. If the main contact is unreachable, emergency contacts listed for the child will be called.
- **1st Late Pick-up:** A verbal reminder will be provided by the classroom teacher, emphasizing the importance of timely pick-ups.
- **2nd Late Pick-up:** A formal late pick-up letter will be issued to the parent/guardian.
- **3rd Late Pick-up and Beyond:** A fee of \$15 will be charged to the parent/guardian's account for each occurrence. Additionally, a formal letter will be sent to the parent/guardian, and the Universal Preschool Main Office will be contacted for further action.

## Service Contribution Policy

Because EC3 operates as a parent cooperative, it is the responsibility of families to contribute in a variety of ways toward the well-being of our program and property. Volunteering for events and special projects is the primary way we build our community, the 'EC3 Family,' and it is an important attribute of EC3's legacy in the Greater Lansing area. This active participation is also vital to our sustainability as an organization and helps instill a sense of community ownership in the children we care for.

**Please note:** The EC3 Service Contribution Policy detailed below **does not apply to families enrolled solely in the Universal Preschool / GSRP program.** This is in accordance with GSRP guidelines, which do not require parental volunteering as a condition of enrollment.

Families of EC3 students enrolled in our general programs are expected to contribute a minimum of five (5) service hours (per child) every six months within each fiscal year, from October 1st to September 30th. This policy will be administered as follows:

1. **Communication of Opportunities:** Service opportunities eligible for credits will be clearly communicated via email (including in EC3 newsletters), on the whiteboard, and through EC3's social media. These communications will specify the number of service credit hours each opportunity is worth.
2. **Form of Contribution:** For the purposes of this policy, service contributions must be made in the form of direct service. While donations of items or products are always greatly appreciated, they do not count toward service hours.
3. **Pre-Approval for Alternative Activities:** Families and members of the teaching staff may seek advance approval from the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director for alternative and/or special activities. Only pre-approved activities will be eligible for service credits.

4. **Service Deposit:** Each family will be charged a 'service deposit' of \$100 per child, applied biannually on October 1st and April 1st. This six-month framing and deposit system are designed to encourage consistent participation throughout the year, rather than concentrated efforts at one time.
5. **Tracking and Application of Credits:** Service hours will be meticulously tracked within our billing system as 'service credits.' For each hour of pre-approved service contributed by a parent or guardian, a \$20 credit will be applied to the family account. Service credits applied within any six-month period may not exceed the service deposit for that period, regardless of whether more than five hours of service per child were contributed.
6. **Non-Transferable Credits:** Service contributions are not transferable, either to one's own account for future use (beyond the six-month period it was earned) or to the account of any other family.
7. **Extended Family Participation:** Extended family members are welcomed and encouraged to participate in EC3's service events. However, their participation may not be substituted for the parent's or guardian's required contribution for the purposes of this policy.
8. **Deposit Allocation:** At the end of each six-month period (March 31st and September 30th), any remaining balance of the service deposit in each account will be directed to EC3's general fund to support efforts to complete tasks in other ways.

### **Sample Activities that Qualify for Service Contribution Credits**

EC3 offers many varied and valuable opportunities for service:

- Participate on the Board of Directors or one of its committees.
- Assist in planning and serving at special events, including (but not limited to):
  - Fundraising Events
  - Winter Festival
  - Fall Festival
  - Graduation ceremonies
  - Teacher appreciation week
  - Staff holiday parties
- Assist with facility improvements such as painting interior walls, performing minor repairs, or special cleaning projects.
- Participate in pre-selected and administratively approved classroom activities.

This list is representative, and many more opportunities arise throughout the year. Please watch for communications for current needs.

# Other Policies

## Food Policy and Nutrition Plan

At EC3, we are deeply committed to providing wholesome and nourishing meals, recognizing their vital role in healthy development. We proudly participate in the USDA's **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**, adhering strictly to its comprehensive guidelines for high nutritional standards across all age groups. An annual Child Enrollment Form helps us ensure that all children with special dietary requirements are carefully accommodated. Best of all, there is **no additional fee for the meals and snacks provided by EC3**. Daily menus are prominently posted in each classroom, with all substitutions clearly noted.

### Infant Nutrition

For our youngest learners, our Infant Program meticulously provides appropriate types and sufficient quantities of iron-fortified infant formula and infant solid food for all meals and snacks. We deeply respect family preferences: should you choose to provide your own breast milk, formula, and/or solid foods, please indicate this on the Food Sign-Off Statement accompanying the Child Enrollment Form. Rest assured, if no specific instructions are provided, EC3 will ensure your infant receives proper nourishment, and you will be promptly notified.

### Toddler & EC3 Preschool Nutrition

For our Toddler and EC3 Preschool Programs, we provide appropriate types and sufficient quantities of food and milk for a healthy breakfast, and two nutritious snacks daily. These meals are carefully planned to support the energetic demands of growing children. In the rare instance a child requires a meal and it hasn't been provided by EC3 (due to unforeseen circumstances), EC3 will ensure the child is fed appropriately, and the parent/guardian will be notified.

### Universal Preschool (GSRP) Nutrition Policy

For students enrolled in our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, EC3 provides a complete menu of nutritious breakfast, lunch, and two snacks daily, all thoughtfully designed to meet USDA and MDE guidelines.

**Crucial Statement: Grant requirements for the GSRP program do not allow children to bring food from home, with the exception of specific allergy accommodations as outlined in our Allergy-Aware Policy.** All meals and snacks are provided by EC3 to ensure consistency with program requirements and to support a healthy eating environment.

## **Mealtimes Philosophy**

We understand that healthy eating behaviors and attitudes are cultivated early and are vital for lifelong well-being. At EC3, mealtimes are cherished opportunities for social interaction, positive adult modeling, and relaxed enjoyment. Served family-style in individual classrooms, children are encouraged, never forced, to explore the nutritious foods offered, empowering them to develop an understanding of their own cues for satiety and food preferences.

## **Nutrition Training & Facility Excellence**

Beyond the plate, EC3 recognizes the profound impact of positive adult food modeling on children's eating habits. Our staff members regularly engage in comprehensive training on best nutrition practices, including strategies to prevent childhood obesity. Portion-size charts are visibly posted in each classroom, guiding staff in serving appropriate amounts of food, and we respectfully honor family preferences regarding portion sizes and food choices to the greatest extent practical. Our commitment to freshness means a diverse variety of food is ordered and delivered to our center regularly. EC3's main kitchen serves as a central hub for food storage and preparation, complemented by separate refrigerators and prep spaces in classrooms for utmost convenience and sanitation. Our licensed facility proudly upholds the highest standards of cleanliness, reinforced by continuous staff training on all licensing standards.

## EC3 Menu Sample

Site <u>Educational Child Care Center</u> Month <u>9/15-9/19</u> Year <u>2025</u> Classroom: _____					
<b>EC3 Menu Record for</b>					
* Whole milk is provided for children 1-2 years of age & skim milk is provided for all children over the age of 2. ** Water is always available. *** Cereal choices: Cheerios, Life, Rice Chex, Rice Krispies, or Corn Flakes					
<b>Breakfast</b> 1. Fluid Milk 2. Fruit/Vegetable 3. Grain/Bread or Meat/Meat Alternate* *Meat may be served to meat eaters in amount up to 3 times/week. 1 oz. of meat = 1 oz. grains					
Date 09/15	Date 09/16	Date 09/17	Date 09/18	Date 09/19	
<b>Breakfast</b> 1. Fluid Milk 2. Fruit/Vegetable 3. Grain/Bread or Meat/Meat Alternate* *Meat may be served to meat eaters in amount up to 3 times/week. 1 oz. of meat = 1 oz. grains	• Milk • Oatmeal • Strawberry	• Milk • Cereal • Mango	• Milk • Eggs • Peaches	• Milk • Cereal • Strawberry	• Milk • Pancakes • Mango
<b>Lunch</b> 1. Fluid Milk 2. Meat or Meat Alternate 3. Vegetable 4. Fruit 5. Grain/Bread ** Serve 2 of 5 components. Fruit may be substituted for veg.	Pizza Crust Ham/Cheese Tomato Sauce Broccoli Mango	Chicken Bites WG Mac and Cheese Green Beans Orange Slices	WG French Toast Sticks Sausage Diced Potatoes Blueberries	Chicken Meatballs WG Buttered Pasta Corn Tropical Fruit	Turkey with Buttered Whole Grain Pasta Sweet Potatoes Pineapple Tidbits
<b>PM Snack*</b> 1. Fluid Milk 2. Meat or Meat Alternate 3. Vegetable 4. Fruit 5. Grain/Bread ** Serve 2 of 5 components	• String Cheese • Green Beans	• Tortillas • Pepperoni	• Graham Crackers • Milk	• Pretzels • Strawberry	Teacher's Choice 1. 2.
Infants under 6 months of age are provided iron-fortified formula or breast milk. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.					

## Allergy-Aware Policy

EC3 is dedicated to maintaining an **ALLERGY-AWARE facility** where children with a range of allergies and food sensitivities receive exceptional care and protection. Our robust policies apply throughout the building and during all EC3 events off-site. For children enrolled in our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, specific food policies, including restrictions on outside food, are also in place to ensure safety.

The following guidelines are meticulously followed:

- Allergy accommodation will be made based on each individual child's needs. For example, a child with a wheat allergy will be given alternative foods when the menu calls for items containing wheat. When substitutions are not easily available, families may be asked to provide other suitable choices for their child.
- Allergy accommodation will be made on a room-by-room basis if the condition is life-threatening. For example, in a classroom which includes a child with a severe nut allergy, no nut products will be served.
- In the case of an allergy so severe that it is dangerous for the child to touch small amounts of the food or breathe in its odor, staff will take reasonable precautions outside the classroom with the understanding that complete protection is not

possible. An allergy action plan will be developed in conjunction with the family's physician for any child with severe allergies.

- Allergies that pose a major health risk will be communicated in writing to all other families in the classroom, and visible notices will be posted on classroom doors and in other relevant locations (e.g., on tables or near diaper changing stations).
- Groups using the center for parties or meetings must ensure all food is removed and all traces are cleaned when the event concludes.
- **Specific for GSRP Programs:** Due to grant requirements, children enrolled in our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program are **not permitted to bring food from home** for meals or snacks. All meals and snacks are provided by EC3, with special provisions made for diagnosed allergies as detailed below.

## Family Participation

Effective communication is the most critical step in ensuring the safety of allergic children. Open communication from the parents of the allergic child to EC3 and to the other families within the school is paramount. While food allergies can lead to severe reactions and death, the risks can be greatly reduced through proactive education, vigilant management strategies, and robust emergency procedures.

## Allergy Prevention Strategies

### Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Read this Allergy-Aware Policy and initial the appropriate section of the parent contract to acknowledge you're understanding and compliance with the policy.
- Inform anyone else dropping off your child to EC3 of this Allergy-Aware Policy.
- Send a note attached to any unpackaged or homemade snacks intended to be shared with other children, listing the ingredients.
- **Inform EC3:** Provide comprehensive information regarding the severity and scope of your child's allergy. For Universal Preschool (GSRP) students, please inform the **Universal Preschool office** directly, and provide written documentation from your child's physician for any diagnosed food or milk allergy. This documentation is crucial for making special dietary provisions.
- Provide an emergency treatment plan signed by your child's doctor and supply any necessary medications for the allergic child. Ensure this information is communicated with EC3 staff when transitioning between classrooms.
- In high-risk cases, work collaboratively with EC3 staff to ensure your child with food allergies consumes only food provided by EC3, unless explicitly arranged for severe, diagnosed allergies with proper documentation. Special provisions will be made for children with special dietary needs.
- In high-risk cases, work with your family physician to develop a detailed allergy action plan for use at EC3.

- Always adhere to the guidelines outlined in this Allergy-Aware Policy.

## EC3 Responsibilities

- Provide annual training to all EC3 staff on the Allergy-Aware Policy, prevention strategies, and treatment protocols. Introductory training on the Allergy-Aware Policy is provided to new EC3 staff upon hire.
- Encourage children to NOT share snacks, drinks, or utensils.
- Ensure all children wash hands thoroughly with soapy water before eating.
- Communicate allergy information effectively between EC3 staff and classrooms as children transition.
- Ensure all children's hands and faces are wiped clean with individual facecloths by EC3 staff after eating.
- Ensure all unpackaged or homemade snacks intended to be shared with other children are checked for an attached note listing the ingredients.
- In consultation with the family in high-risk cases, develop a comprehensive emergency plan in the event of accidental allergen exposure.
- Ensure that classroom-specific allergies are communicated to families of all children in the class so they may plan/pack lunches accordingly (for non-GSRP programs).
- Ensure that all activities adhere to the guidelines of this policy, both inside and outside the center (e.g., cooking, crafts, and field trips).
- On outside activities and field trips, ensure staff carry necessary medication (i.e., Epi-pen, Benadryl) and emergency plans, and are aware of potential exposure risks (i.e., food & insects).

## Response in the Event of Allergic Reaction

If any signs or symptoms of an allergic reaction are perceived by EC3 staff, EC3 administrative staff will be notified immediately. The emergency treatment plan will be implemented as necessary, and families will be promptly notified.

## Outdoor Play Policy

At EC3, we believe that outdoor play is a vital component of a child's holistic development and physical well-being. In accordance with state licensing regulations and our commitment to a rich learning environment, our teachers make every effort to ensure children spend time outdoors each day, weather permitting.

### Outdoor Play Guidelines for All Programs (including GSRP):

#### Daily Outdoor Time

Children will have at least 30 minutes of outdoor play scheduled in both the morning and afternoon, whenever conditions allow.

### **Weather Conditions**

Our outdoor play decisions are guided by Department of Health & Human Services guidelines and best practices for child safety:

- **Cold Weather:** Children will go outside if the wind chill is above 0 degrees Fahrenheit. For temperatures between 0- and 32-degrees Fahrenheit (wind chill), teachers will utilize specific Winter Weather Wind Chill Guidelines to determine the appropriate length of outdoor time, ensuring children are adequately protected.
- **Warm Weather:** During warmer months, staff will use the heat index to determine safe outdoor play times, minimizing exposure during peak heat.
- **Inclement Weather:** In instances of severe weather, heavy precipitation, or extreme conditions (e.g., wind chill below 0°F, unhealthy air quality, dangerous heat index), outdoor play will be minimized or eliminated. During such times, engaging indoor alternatives for large motor experiences will be provided to ensure children still have opportunities for active play.

### **Family Partnership in Outdoor Preparedness**

To make outdoor play possible and enjoyable in varying conditions, we ask families to ensure children arrive with **appropriate outdoor clothing and amenities**. This includes items such as:

- Water bottles
- Seasonal attire (e.g., hats, gloves, appropriate coats for cold, sun hats and lightweight clothing for sun)
- Snow boots (for winter)

### **Health Policies**

At EC3, the health and safety of every child and staff member are our highest priorities. We understand that managing illness in a group setting demands collective care, patience, and understanding from both families and caregivers. We diligently minimize the spread of infection through comprehensive health protocols and conscientious daily practices.

### **Infection Control and Hygiene Practices**

Our commitment to health is evident in our daily routines:

- **Proactive Screening:** Ongoing, routine screening of children and staff for any signs of illness or injury throughout the day.
- **Rigorous Handwashing:** Strict handwashing protocols are meticulously followed by staff and children, especially during food service, diapering, toileting, and after handling nasal secretions.
- **Sanitized Care Routines:** Diapering is exclusively performed in designated areas using disposable gloves, and we utilize flush toilets rather than potty chairs to ensure optimal sanitation.
- **Personal Hygiene:** Careful washing of children's faces, with saliva and nasal discharge removed using disposable wipes and tissues.
- **Environmental Cleanliness:** Toys, room surfaces, and all areas are frequently washed, disinfected, and cleaned to maintain a pristine environment.
- **Outdoor Health:** Regular outdoor play periods (as outlined in our Outdoor Play Policy) promote fresh air and physical activity, contributing to overall health.
- **Illness Isolation:** Children exhibiting signs of contagiousness are promptly isolated in EC3's designated sick room, under constant supervision by a staff member, until a parent or designated caregiver can pick them up.

## Required Child Health Care Information (Including GSRP Requirements)

To ensure comprehensive care and compliance with state regulations, especially for our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, it is essential that every enrolled child has current health information on file. Families are required to provide and maintain up-to-date:

- **Child Information Card:** Detailing emergency contacts, authorized pick-ups, and essential medical information.
- **Health Information Form:** Including complete immunization records, detailed health concerns (such as chronic health conditions and life-threatening allergies), physician information, and insurance details. This vital documentation must be current and updated promptly whenever circumstances change regarding your child's health, contact information, or emergency contacts.

## Medication Administration Policy

EC3 strictly adheres to the State of Michigan's rigorous standards for medication administration. Our priority is your child's safety, and the following procedures are meticulously followed:

1. **At-Home Administration:** Whenever feasible, medication, especially initial doses, should be administered at home so families can closely monitor for any side effects.
2. **Staff-Only Administration:** Only trained EC3 child care staff members are authorized to administer prescription or nonprescription medication to children; self-administration by children is strictly prohibited.

3. **Written Authorization Required:** All medication (prescription or nonprescription) will only be given with prior, complete written permission from a parent or guardian.

4. **Required Forms & Procedures:**

- For all oral prescription or nonprescription medications, as well as topical prescription medications, a comprehensive **Medication Permission and Instructions form** must be accurately filled out by the parent. This form must clearly indicate the medication name, dosage, administration times, and duration.
- **Medication Drop-off:** Families must deliver all medications directly to the EC3 office. Our administrative staff will verify all details before securely transporting the medication to the child's classroom, where it will be stored in a locked medication box/cabinet. Families are welcome to inquire about or retrieve medication from the classroom at any time.
- **Classroom Transitions:** If a child transitions to a new classroom, the medication will be returned to the family, who must then submit a new Medication Permission and Instructions form along with the medication to the office.

## Illness and Exclusion Policy

EC3 maintains a proactive approach to illness prevention. All children are routinely screened throughout the day for signs of illness or injury, and staff members are required to stay home if they exhibit symptoms of illness. To safeguard our entire community, we strongly discourage bringing children to EC3 if they present with any of the following symptoms:

- A fever exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (measured under the arm).
- Difficulty breathing, wheezing, or uncontrolled coughing.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- An unidentifiable rash.
- Any signs of possible severe illness, including unusual lethargy, persistent crying, severe pain, or symptoms requiring one-on-one adult attention.
- Known contagious conditions (e.g., pink eye, mouth sores with drooling, etc.).

## Procedure for Illness at EC3

If your child becomes ill at EC3 with any of these symptoms, we will contact you immediately to arrange for pick-up. Generally, a child will be sent home if they appear contagious or are too uncomfortable to participate in daily activities without constant adult attention. The decision regarding a child's dismissal will be made by teachers and directors. A child appearing contagious will be isolated in EC3's designated sick room, supervised by a staff member, until picked up. Upon departure, families will receive a 'Sent Home Sick'

form detailing return-to-care requirements. We highly recommend having backup care providers available for such instances.

**Information Calls:** If your child does not meet exclusion criteria but is unwell (e.g., fever below 100.4°F with other symptoms), EC3 may issue an 'information call' to allow you to assess the situation and prepare accordingly.

**Reporting Communicable Diseases:** To protect our community, families must notify the EC3 office (via phone or email to [adminteam@ec3kids.org](mailto:adminteam@ec3kids.org)) within 24 hours if your child is diagnosed with a communicable/contagious disease, such as COVID-19, strep throat, RSV, conjunctivitis, fifth disease, chicken pox, or influenza.

**Importance of Rest:** Time at home facilitates your child's rest and recuperation, and critically, prevents the spread of infections. We strongly advise planning alternate childcare arrangements for when your child is ill.

## Return to Care Guidelines

For the safety and well-being of all children and staff, a child may return to group care only when all of the following conditions are met:

- The child has been fever-free (temperature below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication like acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- At least 24 hours have passed since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
- Any rash has subsided or has been confirmed in writing by a physician as non-contagious.
- Signs of possible severe illness (e.g., lethargy, persistent crying, severe pain, uncontrolled coughing) have been medically evaluated and ruled out in writing by a physician.
- The child is no longer considered contagious and feels well enough to comfortably participate in all regular activities.
- If an antibiotic has been prescribed, the child may return 24 hours after the first dose, or sooner with a physician's written note confirming they are no longer contagious.

Generally, the absence of symptoms is the primary indicator of readiness to return. A physician's note may be required by EC3. We are committed to supporting children who are ready to resume full activities, and our staff will make every effort to assist with their comfortable re-entry. Please refer to the 'Notification Procedures' under the Center-Family Communication section for related information.

## Promoting Healthy Smiles: Oral Health

At EC3, we believe in instilling excellent oral hygiene habits from the earliest age. Unless medically contraindicated, toddlers and preschoolers are actively encouraged to brush their teeth daily after lunch. EC3 provides a designated toothbrush for each child, stored using stringent sanitary methods. For toddlers, brushing with water only is recommended, while preschoolers are supplied with non-fluoride toothpaste. For our infants, gentle gum wiping after each feeding is a consistent practice to promote optimal oral health from day one.

## Protecting Against the Sun: Sun Safety

EC3 prioritizes protecting children from the sun's harmful rays during outdoor play. Our staff members regularly undergo training on comprehensive sun-safety practices to prevent skin damage. We partner with families in this effort and strongly encourage children to come prepared with appropriate clothing for sun protection, including hats (suitable for both cold and hot weather), sunglasses, and coverings for arms and legs. To ensure consistent application, families are requested to provide **non-aerosol sunscreen**, clearly labeled with their child's name, for use during outdoor activities.

## Creating a Secure Space: Environmental Safety

Maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children, families, and staff is non-negotiable at EC3. To uphold this commitment, smoking or vaping is strictly prohibited anywhere on EC3 property, including inside vehicles within our parking lot. Furthermore, for the security of our entire community, weapons of any kind are expressly forbidden and are not to be brought onto EC3 property.

## Convenient and Safe Arrivals: Parking Policy

EC3 offers a spacious parking lot for the convenience of our families and staff, thoughtfully separated from the playground by a designated walkway. Access to our property is available via entrances on West Street and Nipp Avenue. To ensure safety and smooth traffic flow, we kindly request adherence to the following guidelines:

- **General Parking:** Families and staff are welcome to park in any available non-handicap designated spot.
- **Handicap Parking:** Two clearly marked handicap parking spots are located in the Nipp Avenue section of the lot. A valid, visible handicap parking tag is required for use, regardless of the duration of your stay.
- **Speed Limit:** For the safety of all children and pedestrians, please observe a slow and cautious speed while driving in the parking lot.

- **Vehicle Idling:** To promote environmental health and safety, vehicles should not be left idling in the parking lot. Exceptions are made only in extreme weather conditions (intense heat or cold) to maintain interior cabin temperatures.
- **Unattended Children:** For no duration, not even for a few minutes should young children be left unattended in a vehicle. Should you require assistance, EC3 office staff are available to help.

## Responding to the Unexpected: Accident, Incident, and Injury Policy

While EC3 implements robust safety measures to proactively prevent accidents, we are fully prepared to respond swiftly and effectively should an incident occur. In the event of an accident or injury:

- **Immediate Action:** EC3 staff will take appropriate first aid measures and, if necessary, contact parents and/or 911 without delay.
- **Prompt Notification:** Families will be notified immediately if professional medical attention is required for their child.
- **Detailed Documentation:** Caregivers will provide thorough written details of the incident and any first aid procedures administered.
- **Licensing Reporting:** If a parent seeks medical care for a child due to an accident, incident, or injury that occurred at EC3, it is crucial that the parent informs EC3. This allows us to fulfill our reporting obligations to the licensing agency and record where the child received medical care and the diagnosis.

For comprehensive details on communication protocols, please refer to the 'Notification Procedures' under the Center-Family Communication section of this handbook.

## Discipline, Seclusion, and Exclusion Policy

At EC3, we believe that all behavior is a form of communication, and every discipline situation presents a valuable opportunity for children to develop crucial problem-solving skills, enhance self-control, and cultivate respect for themselves and others. Our comprehensive Discipline Policy, applied across all EC3 programs including our Universal Preschool (GSRP), is rooted in positive behavioral supports and explicitly designed \*not\* to be punitive. Instead, it focuses on guiding children in creating constructive behavior patterns and fostering self-discipline.

## Positive Guidance Techniques

Our dedicated staff members prioritize age-appropriate, non-severe positive guidance techniques. Whenever possible, we employ strategies such as positive redirection, gentle distraction, or humor to guide children towards acceptable behaviors. Teachers

thoughtfully avoid power struggles, focusing instead on children's expressed desires and capabilities, utilizing each moment as a "teachable moment" to help children acquire new behavioral skills. Children are also offered the opportunity to self-regulate by removing themselves to a quiet space when needed. For older children, collaborative behavior contracts may be established with teachers to outline clear expectations and logical consequences.

A key tool in our positive behavior management approach is the **\*\*Positive Redirection Statement\*\***, which follows a four-part model: Reflect-Feel-Reason-Behavior. This structured communication helps children understand expectations and consequences:



## Prohibited Punishments

- Physical punishment or language that demeans children is strictly unacceptable and is never permitted at EC3, for any child, in any program. The following means of punishment are unequivocally prohibited:
- Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting any other forms of corporal punishment.
- Placing any substances in a child's mouth, including but not limited to, soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.
- Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying them.
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
- Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities as a behavioral consequence.
- Excluding a child from daily learning experiences as a behavioral consequence.
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar enclosure.

## Time-Out Policy

Time-out must not be used for children under 3 years of age. For children 3 years and older, time-out is only used as a last resort to stop aggressive behavior or to allow angry or upset children to calm down. It is used solely to help the child regain self-control, will not exceed the time it takes for the child to calm down, and the child will remain supervised at all times.

## Non-Severe Discipline and Physical Restraint

Non-severe discipline or restraint may be used when reasonably necessary, based on a child's developmental stage, to prevent a child from harming themselves or others. This excludes any of the explicitly prohibited forms of punishment mentioned above.

## Seclusion and Physical Restraint Policy

EC3, including its Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, will not seclude a child from their peers. Physical restraint will be limited strictly to emergency situations involving

immediate physical harm to a child or adult. Any restraint will only be used by staff members who are trained in proper techniques to ensure no harm to the child. All incidents requiring restraint will be reported to the parents, and prevention strategies will be developed collaboratively.

## **Exclusion Policy (Program Access)**

Consistent with our commitment to inclusivity, children will not be excluded or expelled from any EC3 program, including the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, due to the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### **Proactive Preparation and Training**

At EC3, the safety and security of our children are paramount. Our dedicated staff members receive comprehensive training in emergency procedures upon hiring, with annual refresher courses to ensure preparedness. We regularly conduct vital practice drills, simulating various emergency scenarios such as a missing child, an active threat, and lockdown situations. Additionally, fire and tornado drills are performed routinely, both to prepare our children and to educate them on crucial safety protocols during a crisis. To further enhance readiness, classrooms typically undertake 'field trips' to our designated off-site evacuation location each year, allowing both teachers and children to familiarize themselves with the route and identify any potential considerations. Every classroom is equipped with an emergency kit and a binder containing EC3's detailed site-specific emergency plan, which is **readily posted on the family board** for your information.

### **Emergency Evacuation Protocols**

In the unfortunate event that a building evacuation becomes necessary, EC3 has established a secure agreement with the Montessori preschool on St. Joseph Street, located several blocks away. This ensures we have access to their gym and facilities, providing a safe and comfortable temporary refuge until families can be promptly notified and children can be picked up. EC3's CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director serves as our designated emergency response chief, maintaining accountability to all families throughout such situations.

### **Ensuring Safe Return Home**

Our commitment to your child's safety extends to ensuring their secure return home. EC3's emergency response policy addresses situations where a parent/guardian may appear

impaired and unable to safely transport their child. In such sensitive cases, a staff member will immediately alert the director on duty, who will discreetly manage the situation. Options may include arranging a safe ride home, contacting an alternate adult designated on the child's emergency information form, or, if necessary, alerting the appropriate authorities to ensure the child's well-being.

## Annual Parent Survey & Program Evaluation

At EC3, we are deeply committed to continuous improvement and ensuring the highest quality learning environment for all children. To uphold this commitment, we engage in comprehensive evaluation practices, combining both our internal feedback mechanisms and the rigorous requirements of the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program.

### EC3 Annual Parent Survey

At least once per year, all EC3 families are invited to participate in our Annual Parent Survey. This vital survey gathers valuable feedback on the program, our dedicated staff, and center management/governance. It includes questions mandated by EC3's accreditation and quality initiative programs, as well as additional questions designed to guide our ongoing efforts for continuous improvement. After tabulation, a comprehensive report, including raw data, is compiled and made available on EC3's website. Families are notified of the report's availability via newsletters, e-mail, and whiteboard communications, ensuring transparency and open communication.

### Universal Preschool (GSRP) Program Evaluation

Our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program operates under a robust evaluation framework mandated by the Lansing School District (LSD) and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). This framework includes:

- **Local GSRP Evaluation Component:** The LSD conducts a local evaluation, which includes a longitudinal follow-up study of GSRP children through second grade. This data collection facilitates communication between preschool and early elementary grades and provides insights into children's progress, referral to special services (such as Special Education and Title I), school attendance, school performance, retention rates, and parent involvement.
- **Classroom Assessment & Improvement:** An Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) utilizes state-approved assessment materials, including Classroom Coach and CLASS observations, throughout the year. This assesses classroom structure, processes, and outcomes, documenting program effectiveness and guiding continuous improvement efforts.

- **State-Wide Program Measurement:** The LSD Universal Preschool program is required to collaborate with the MDE to measure the overall effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program. Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families to assess program impact.

## Parent Participation & Confidentiality

As a crucial part of these evaluation processes, parents may be asked to provide feedback and evaluate the programming their child receives. Your insights are invaluable for assessing and improving our practices.

Please be assured that any information collected from you or about your child, whether through surveys, evaluations, or direct measurement activities (e.g., questions about your child and family, observations in the classroom, measuring knowledge of letters/words/numbers, or inquiries to teachers about learning progress), is handled with the utmost confidentiality. This information is protected by law and will not be shared with others in any way that could identify you or your child.

## Center-Family Communication & Engagement

At EC3, we believe that open, consistent communication and strong family partnerships are foundational to a child's positive developmental experience. Our approach is designed to enhance and support the family's crucial role in fostering growth. We recognize the importance of sharing information that may impact a child's day or evening, and we strongly encourage direct communication between families and their child's teacher or an EC3 Director. This philosophy underpins all our programs, including our Universal Preschool (GSRP), where active family engagement is a cornerstone.

### Ongoing Communication Channels

Families can expect regular updates and information through a variety of convenient channels:

- **Digital Platforms:** Many classrooms utilize Kaymbu and newsletters for personalized updates and communication.
- **Monthly Newsletter:** Our office staff produces a monthly newsletter highlighting center-wide activities, important announcements, and useful family information.
- **Website & Social Media:** EC3's website ([www.ec3kids.org](http://www.ec3kids.org)) serves as a central hub for the centers information, our annual calendar, board bylaws, contact information, and downloadable forms. Our social media presence (Facebook, Instagram) provides timely updates, photographs, and insights relevant to early learning and center events.
- **Whiteboard Communication:** A prominent whiteboard near the front entrance displays upcoming events, important reminders, and items for families to note.

## Formal Parent Engagement: Conferences & Home Visits

We facilitate structured opportunities for in-depth discussion about your child's development and progress:

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** For all EC3 programs, parent-teacher conferences are held at least twice per year to discuss your child's development and progress. Additional conferences can be requested as needed by families or teachers.
- **Universal Preschool (GSRP) Specifics:** As a participant in the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, every family is required to sign up for **two home visits** (one at the beginning and one at the end of the school year) and **two parent-teacher conferences** (scheduled in late fall and late winter). Home visits are approximately **45 minutes** in duration, while conferences are **30 minutes**, providing dedicated time to discuss your child's growth, development, and any concerns.

## Opportunities for Family Involvement

We highly value and encourage families to be actively involved in their child's educational experience at EC3. Beyond formal meetings, there are many ways to participate:

- **Share Talents:** Arrange to share special skills or experiences with the children.
- **Celebrate Milestones:** Join us in celebrating your child's birthday or special events in the classroom.
- **Cultural Sharing:** Share cultural celebrations and traditions with the EC3 community.
- **Classroom Volunteering:** Volunteer in the classroom (please speak to your child's teacher to arrange a beneficial time).
- **Visiting the Classroom:** Arrange time with your child's teacher to visit the classroom and observe our programs.
- **Community Leadership:** Serve on the Local Advisory Committee, Data Analysis Team, Great Start Collaborative Coalition, and/or School Readiness Advisory Committee (please notify your child's teacher if interested in an orientation to membership).
- **Chaperone Field Trips:** Serve as a chaperone on field trips. Please note that chaperones must complete the Lansing School District volunteer application and undergo a thorough clearance process. Only cleared chaperones are permitted to attend field trips.

## Notification Procedures for Accidents, Incidents, or Injuries

In the unfortunate event of an accident, illness, incident, or injury involving a child attending EC3, the following procedures are implemented to ensure prompt communication and appropriate care:

- **Emergency Situations:** If a situation is deemed an emergency by EC3 staff, we will immediately call 911. Families will then be alerted via telephone, text, and/or email.
- **Non-Emergency Situations:** In non-emergency situations, we will first contact the primary parent/guardian listed on the Child Information Record, utilizing all phone numbers provided until we make contact. If the primary parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will leave a voice-mail message and then proceed to contact the secondary parent/guardian on the Child Information Record.
- **Unreachable Parents:** If neither parent/guardian can be reached within a reasonable timeframe and the child requires pick-up, we will contact the first emergency contact listed on the Child Information Record and proceed down the list until suitable arrangements are made.
- **Reporting to Licensing:** Any accident, incident, or injury that leads a parent to seek medical care for the child must be reported to the licensing agency. EC3 will notify the parent that such a report will be filed and will request information regarding the diagnosis and treatment location.

## Confidentiality

At EC3, safeguarding the privacy and trust of our families and children is paramount across all our programs, including the Universal Preschool (GSRP). We are committed to maintaining strict confidentiality regarding all personal and developmental information.

Families are encouraged to openly share insights into their child's day-to-day activities, as well as any new, stressful, fun, or exciting situations or experiences. We understand that families often entrust us with important, private information for the benefit of their child's care and development.

For all EC3 programs, and especially for Universal Preschool students, **all child files are strictly confidential and meticulously maintained in a secure location.** Access to these sensitive files is limited to authorized individuals only. Our staff members are unequivocally expected **not to divulge any information regarding a child's development or personal details to anyone other than that child's parent/guardian.** This means:

- Confidential information about children will not be discussed among staff members unless it directly pertains to another staff member's care of that child.
- Any family information volunteered by families will not be released or discussed.
- Discussions about any child or family will not occur outside of the center.

We also recognize the importance of parents/guardians maintaining their own confidence as they learn about other enrolled children and families within our community. If you have

any questions or concerns regarding confidentiality, please speak directly with your child's teacher or the Universal Preschool Office.

**Please Note:** This confidentiality policy is subject to the legally mandated exception of the Child Protection Law of Michigan, which requires all staff to report any suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to Child Protective Services.

## Cooperative Problem Solving / Grievance Policy

At EC3, we are deeply committed to fostering an environment of open communication and mutual respect between our staff and families across all programs, including our Universal Preschool (GSRP). We believe that working together is essential for clarifying information, addressing questions, and collaboratively resolving any concerns that may arise.

We encourage families to follow a stepped approach to ensure their concerns are addressed effectively and promptly:

### Step 1: Classroom Teaching Staff

- **Initial Contact:** We encourage families to first attempt to clarify facts and/or concerns directly with their child's classroom teaching staff. This can be done in person, over the phone, or via e-mail. A private conference can be scheduled with prior notice if a more in-depth discussion is needed.

### Step 2: Executive Director

- **Escalation:** If a concern cannot be resolved at the classroom level, or if it pertains to broader issues such as policies, fees, or EC3 procedures, the next step is to contact the **Executive Director**. The Executive Director is available to discuss these matters with families and facilitate resolution.

### Step 3: EC3 Board of Directors

- **Formal Review (for all EC3 programs):** If a concern remains unresolved after discussion with the Executive Director, or if it relates directly to the center's governance, families may address the **EC3 Board of Directors**. The Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month and reserves time for public comment. Concerns can be discussed by submitting a letter, attending the meeting, or presenting the concern to a Board member who can then bring the matter to the full Board.
- **Grievance for Universal Preschool (GSRP) Students:** For GSRP families who are not satisfied with the outcome after contacting the Executive Director, the next step in the grievance process is to contact the **EC3 Board of Directors** to discuss your concerns.

### Step 4 (GSRP Specific): Ingham Intermediate School District

- **Final GSRP Escalation:** If a grievance pertaining to the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program remains unresolved after following the steps with the EC3 Board of Directors, the final step in the GSRP-specific grievance process is to contact the **Ingham Intermediate School District** for further review.

### Step 5 (General): State of Michigan Licensing Agency

- **Regulatory Oversight:** Families who believe EC3 is not operating in compliance with state regulations can directly contact a licensing consultant at the State of Michigan through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Community and Health Systems, Child Care Licensing Division, to initiate an investigative process.

### **Actions to Resolve Concerns**

To ensure thorough resolution, the following actions may be used when addressing concerns between EC3 staff members and families:

- **Fact-Finding:** Conducting a detailed investigation with the teaching staff, Executive Director, and parent(s) to gather all relevant information.
- **Resolution Meeting:** Organizing a meeting with the involved staff and parent(s) to openly discuss the issue, explore potential solutions, and agree upon a plan. This may involve, but is not limited to:
  - Monitoring the situation over a specified period.
  - Providing additional teacher training.
  - Implementing appropriate disciplinary action if warranted.

### **Rest Policy**

For all children enrolled in our full-day programs at EC3, we provide a dedicated opportunity for rest and quiet time each day. We understand the critical importance of rest for healthy development and strive to create a peaceful and supportive environment tailored to the unique needs of each age group. Families are welcome to send a favorite blanket or pillow to support their child's comfort during this period, and we encourage communication of any specific rest time needs with their classroom teacher.

### **EC3 General Programs Rest Policy (Infant, Toddler, EC3 Preschool, School Age Summer Program)**

For children in our general full-day programs, a flexible **two-hour period** is designated for rest and quiet time. Infants, recognizing their unique developmental needs, are accommodated with **sleeping on demand**, allowing them to rest according to their individual schedules. For older children, this period supports restorative rest while maintaining flexibility for individual needs.

### **Universal Preschool (GSRP) Rest Policy**

For children enrolled in our Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, the designated rest time period is **no longer than one hour**. This policy aligns with GSRP program guidelines, ensuring a balance between rest and active learning throughout the day.

## Shared Practices for All Programs

Across all programs, for children who do not sleep during the designated rest time, we ensure a serene atmosphere by providing engaging yet quiet alternative activities, such as puzzles, books, and small manipulative toys, allowing them to relax without disturbing others. All resting and sleeping areas are equipped with adequate soft lighting, enabling our child care staff members to continually assess and attend to the children. As children transition in and out of rest, our teachers provide gentle support by playing soft, calming music, awakening children with quiet conversation, and encouraging them to care for their own materials, fostering independence and a smooth transition back to activities.

## Child Protection Law

EC3 is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of every child in our care. In accordance with this commitment, all EC3 staff members, including those working with the Universal Preschool (GSRP) program, are legally mandated reporters under the **Child Protection Law of Michigan**.

This law requires us to immediately report any suspected case of abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation to Child Protective Services (CPS). It is important to understand that while our staff is legally obligated to report suspicions, the decision regarding whether to initiate an investigation rests solely with Child Protective Services.

## Contact Information

- **EC3 General Contact:**
  - [adminteam@ec3kids.org](mailto:adminteam@ec3kids.org)
  - 517-485-6825
  - 1715 W. Malcolm X St., Lansing MI 48915
- **Ingham Intermediate School District**
  - [communications@inghamisd.org](mailto:communications@inghamisd.org)
  - [517.676.1051](tel:517.676.1051)
  - 2630 West Howell Road, Mason, MI 48854
- **MDE Office of Great Start, Early Childhood Education and Family Services:**
  - [mde-gsrp@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-gsrp@michigan.gov)
  - 517-373-8483
  - 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909