



Family Handbook

Educational Child Care Center (EC3)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT EC3	1
OUR MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY	1
OUR HISTORY	1
OUR FACILITIES	2
OUR MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE	2
OUR COMMITMENT TO NONDISCRIMINATION	2
EC3'S PROGRAM	4
ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY RATING	4
EDUCATION STANDARDS	4
EC3 TEACHING STAFF	5
STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY	5
PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS	6
A "TYPICAL DAY" AT EC3	10
CURRICULUM	10
ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING METHODS	11
TRANSITIONS	11
FIELD TRIPS	12
ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS	12
HOURS OF OPERATION	12
LATE PICK-UP POLICY	12
HOLIDAYS AND UNEXPECTED CLOSINGS	12
CHILD SAFETY	14
SPECIAL NEEDS	15
DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY	15
ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICIES	16
ADMISSION	16
WITHDRAWAL	17
DISENROLLMENT AND DISMISSAL	17
TUITION AND FEE POLICIES	18
FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME TUITION RATES (EFF. 10/1/22)	18
FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME TUITION RATES (EFF. 4/1/23)	18
TUITION ASSISTANCE	19
LATE TUITION PAYMENT POLICY	19
RETURNED CHECK POLICY	19
REFERRAL INCENTIVE	19
OTHER POLICIES	20
FOOD POLICY AND NUTRITION PLAN	20
ALLERGY-AWARE POLICY	21
OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY	23
HEALTH POLICIES	23
PARKING POLICY	26
ACCIDENT, INCIDENT, INJURY, AND ILLNESS POLICY	26
DISCIPLINE POLICY	27
SERVICE CONTRIBUTION POLICY	27
ANNUAL PARENT SURVEY	29
CENTER-FAMILY COMMUNICATION	29

This Parent Handbook is subject to periodic review and revision by the EC3 Board of Directors. Policies and/or procedures may be changed by the Board as circumstances demand. Updates or revisions to the handbook will be published for and distributed to families.

About EC3

Thank you for choosing Educational Child Care Center (EC3), and welcome. We realize that finding the right early learning environment for your family is one of the most significant decisions you will ever make. We are honored that you have placed your trust in us.

We hope you will grow to love EC3 and find a welcoming fit within the EC3 “family.” We also hope you will be with us for many years to come and that we will be able to grow with your family. This document is intended to serve as your guide to center policies, expectations, and protocols. If you have further questions, please contact EC3’s CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director.

OUR MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

EC3’s mission is to provide developmentally appropriate child care in a nurturing environment that promotes growth of the whole child while responding to the needs of the family.

EC3 believes it is important that children be given the best foundation to enrich their growth and development. This will occur in a loving, supportive learning environment that provides positive reinforcement, promotes self-worth through personal accomplishment, and encourages acceptance and appreciation of one another and the world around us.

Meeting the individual needs of each child is both a rewarding and challenging task that requires the supportive efforts of caring staff and families. Families are the first and most important teachers a child has; as such, they are valued and treated with respect. EC3 is committed to maintaining an open, cooperative, supportive relationship with the family. It is through this sense of cooperation and community that we are able to create the most positive and enriching experience for our young children.

Children are individuals who develop at their own pace. They are naturally curious, so at EC3 they are provided with many opportunities to explore their curiosity through hands-on activities, and they are encouraged to creatively express themselves through drama, art, music, movement, and language.

As early learning professionals, EC3 staff members are engaged in their own ongoing education to better serve our children and families. EC3 strives to be a model program for other centers as it pursues its vision to be the Lansing area’s premier educational center.

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. 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 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 eleven age-specific classrooms. 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 remains locked at all times. 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 is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit parent cooperative governed by a Board of Directors and managed by a CEO/Executive Director, who is selected and evaluated by the Board. The Board of Directors has the final responsibility for all legal and fiscal matters. A current list of our board members can be found at <http://ec3kids.org/board>.

OUR COMMITMENT TO NONDISCRIMINATION

EC3 provides equal enrollment, employment, and service opportunities to all eligible persons 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.

EC3's PROGRAM

EC3 is an exceptional place for young children. The center's play-based curriculum targets the developmental characteristics and needs of children, and focuses on the maintenance of an open, supportive relationship with the family. Our program is designed to provide individual and group experiences that enhance the physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development of each child while appreciating the interconnectedness of the developmental areas and the rapid changes that take place during the first five years.

ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY RATING

EC3 is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for high-quality early childhood education. EC3 also has a four-star rating from Michigan's Great Start to Quality Initiative. Programs that meet these standards provide a safe and healthy environment for children, have teachers who are well-trained, have access to excellent teaching materials, and work with curricula that are appropriately challenging and developmentally sound. Accredited centers (such as EC3):

- Promote positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth.
- Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
- Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches.
- Provide ongoing assessments of a child's learning and development and communicate the child's progress to the family.
- Promote the nutrition and health of children and protect children and staff from illness and injury.
- Employ and support 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.
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's family.
- Establish relationships with and use the resources of the community to support achievement of program goals.
- Provide a safe and healthy physical environment.
- Implement 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) adopted two sets of early childhood standards: Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten and Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs. These standards outline the highest quality programs that will ultimately help children learn and prepare for success in life. The Board of Directors at EC3 has adopted both sets of MDE standards for the operation and programming at EC3, and all classrooms strive to reach the goals and standards set forth in these documents.

EC3 TEACHING STAFF

Teacher-Student Ratios

EC3 offers small group sizes. Each classroom maintains low teacher-student ratios that equal or exceed the standards of state licensing requirements.

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)	1:7	1:7
Preschool (ages 3 – 4)	1:8	1:10
Pre-Kindergarten (ages 4 – 5)	1:9	1:12

Classroom Staff

Each classroom has at least two full-time teachers and a classroom assistant. Teachers in each classroom have experience in teaching and supervision as well as either a bachelor's or associate's degree in early childhood education (or a closely related field), or CDA credential. Classroom assistants typically are working toward an early education credential.

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. All of 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 on children's individual needs and each classroom's procedures.

All of EC3's staff members strive to:

- Provide a safe, healthy, nurturing, and challenging learning environment.
- Encourage discovery learning and exploration of the world around us.
- Promote a positive sense of self-worth to the children.
- Promote a sense of mastery, trust, and autonomy to the children.
- Advance children's physical, intellectual, and academic competence.
- Support children's social and emotional development.
- Establish positive and productive relationships with families.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY

All staff and volunteers will be screened in the following manner prior to hire:

- Interview with CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director, and/or teacher to determine suitability for work with and around children.
- Professional reference checks (minimum of three) to confirm prospective employee is a responsible adult with the maturity and knowledge necessary to work with children.
- Completion of screening process:
 - Prospective staff members must be approved in the Child Care Background Check system, which includes fingerprinting and a review of the public sex offender registry (PSOR).

- Prospective volunteers, including volunteers who are families of a child in care, must pass a review of the PSOR.
 - NOTE: any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from having contact with any child in care.
- Proof of negative TB test within the previous six months.

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

- EC3’s philosophy, policies, and practices (including health and emergency practices);
- Child Care Center Licensing Rules; and
- Facility and grounds tour.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Infant Program

The program for infants is designed to provide a warm, predictable environment in which each child’s uniqueness is respected. The program is structured to promote relationships of trust and attachment between caregivers and babies, and to provide individualized care consistent with each child’s home environment.

Each infant is assigned to a “primary caregiver.” This provides continuity of one relationship and allows for the teacher to form a special bond with the child and families. While all of the teachers that care for the children work to form effective relationships with the children and families, having a “primary caregiver” provides the teacher and family the opportunity to create a special bond that results in strong communication.

There are opportunities each day for caregivers to interact alone with each baby, for babies to interact with each other, and for babies to have time alone to observe and process experiences without the interference of direct adult interaction (although they are always being supervised by sight and sound).

Daily experiences are individualized to stimulate and challenge each baby’s physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development. Specific activities are planned for each child and integrated into the daily routine, in the following areas: large motor, fine motor, sensory and perceptual, cognitive, language, and social. Diapering, feeding, and dressing are used as opportunities to encourage development and interaction. Outdoor experiences provide outlets for curiosity and excitement.

Families are provided a daily note concerning their infant’s day which includes:

- Activities that the child engaged in throughout the day, including which books and songs were used
- Number, time, and type of diaper changes
- Feeding and sleep schedules
- Overall disposition throughout the day

Families are requested to bring the following items to EC3 for their infant (please label everything with the child's first and last names):

- EC3 adheres to the nutrition requirements specified in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, which means we provide non-fortified formula for infant meals. If families prefer to provide breast milk or their own formula/baby food, families should bring bottles and "baby" food sufficient for the day. All food and bottles should be labeled with the child's first and last name (initials are NOT acceptable) and dated.
- Diapers sufficient for the day (we recommend that at least a week's supply of diapers be left at EC3), and diaper cream, if applicable.
- Appropriate outdoor protection and clothing, including a sun hat and sunscreen (infants over six months)
- At least three complete changes of clothing (check each day for soiled or wet items).
- Frozen breast milk (if applicable) for emergency use
- Sleep sack

Feeding of infants is structured as a special time in which each baby and his or her caregiver have time to be together. Our practice is to hold young infants while giving bottles unless alternate arrangements are made with a family to meet the needs of the infant. Older infants may sometimes hold their own bottle depending on the individual and the situation. Caregivers work together with families to introduce solid and/or table food. Snacks are provided by EC3 for infants eating solid food. Infants' gums are wiped after each feeding to promote oral health.

Toddler Program

The program for toddlers provides a comfortable and stimulating environment that encourages the development of independence and exploration critical to this developmental stage. Children in the toddler program range in age from approximately 14 months to 3 years. Children are ready to move from infant care to toddler care when they can walk, eat solid foods well, and get by on one nap per day (after lunch).

Each toddler is assigned to a "primary caregiver." This provides continuity of one relationship and allows for the teacher to form a special bond with the child and families. While all of the teachers caring for the children work to form effective relationships with the children and families, having a "primary caregiver" provides the teacher and family the opportunity to create a special bond that results in strong communication.

There is a balance of group and individualized activities (typically arranged around themes) designed to foster language development, peer interaction, development of small and large motor skills, and sensory/perceptual development. Daily experiences are planned to stimulate each child's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development.

Based on each child's readiness, teachers encourage children to feed themselves, dress themselves, and play both independently and cooperatively. Toilet training is planned on an individual basis; staff members work with families to ensure consistency between home and EC3.

Daily notes are provided for toddler families regarding their child's day with information that includes:

- Activities and projects your child engaged in during the day, including both independent and teacher-directed activities.
- Eating, sleeping, and toilet habits.
- Toddler’s disposition throughout the day.

Families are requested to bring the following items to EC3 (please label everything with the child’s first and last name):

- Bottles/sippy cups, if needed (dated and labeled).
- Appropriate outdoor protection and clothing, including sunglasses, sun hat, and non-aerosol sunscreen labeled with child’s name.
- Two nap blankets (we recommend a thicker one to cover the cot provided by EC3, and a lighter one to cover your child).
- At least two complete changes of clothing.
- A lunch each day. All lunch boxes/bags must be dated and labeled with the child’s name. You are welcomed to bring a “heat-able” lunch, as long as it takes a minute or less in the microwave. We encourage families to pack healthy and appropriately-sized lunches, which will be stored in the classroom refrigerator until served.
 - NOTE: Mondays are “pizza days” at EC3, and families do not need to pack a lunch on those days because we have it delivered. The pizza day menu follows nutritional standards, and includes fresh fruit, vegetables, and appropriate amounts of protein.
- Diapers sufficient for the day (we recommend that at least a week’s supply of diapers be left at EC3), and diaper cream if applicable.

Please do not bring toys from home. Toys brought from home are difficult for children to share and may become lost or broken. However, children may bring books or CDs to share with the group, or special nap/quiet-time toys such as stuffed animals or dolls. Children will not be allowed to play with toy guns or other toy weapons at EC3.

Preschool Program

The program for preschoolers is individualized within the group setting so that children can work at specific developmentally-appropriate skills as part of the larger group activity. Preschool ages vary widely—classes are for children who range in age from two-and-a-half to five years old, so programming will vary based on the specific developmental group. The prominent philosophy in the preschool classrooms is play-based learning using investigation and projects. The curriculum provides a range of developmental levels in language, social, cognitive, creative, and motor skills that are administered through various enjoyable activities. The physical environment and daily routines are planned to provide learning options for any activity in which a child may be engaged and it is the function of the teaching staff to develop and extend learning situations within any of a child’s activities.

Preschool children will be encouraged to develop:

- Language skills through guided and spontaneous interactions.
- Social skills, by participating in large and small group activities, and interactions with classmates and other children at EC3.

- Fine and gross motor skills, through the use of small manipulative materials, large climbing equipment, and directed experiences in creative movement and motor skills.
- Independence in daily living skills.
- Concepts of quantity, causality, and spatial relations through directed exploration and experimentations.
- Writing and reading skills appropriate to development interest level.
- Kindergarten readiness skills for all pre-K children.

Families of children in the preschool program receive communication through daily conversations with teaching staff, periodic newsletters, and summaries written each day on whiteboards outside the classrooms.

Daily communication on the whiteboards typically includes:

- Activities and projects your child engaged in during the day, including both independent and teacher directed activities.
- Eating and nap habits.
- Upcoming events and activities.

Families are requested to bring the following items to EC3 (please label everything with the child's first and last name):

- Appropriate outdoor protection and clothing, including sunglasses, sun hat, and non-aerosol sunscreen labeled with child's name.
- A complete change of clothing.
- A nap blanket.
- A lunch each day. All lunch boxes/bags must be dated and labeled with the child's name. You are welcomed to bring a "heat-able" lunch, as long as it takes a minute or less in the microwave. We encourage families to pack healthy and appropriately-sized lunches, which will be stored in the classroom refrigerator until served.
 - NOTE: Mondays are "pizza days" at EC3, and families do not need to pack a lunch on those days because we have it delivered. The pizza day menu follows appropriate nutritional standards, and includes fresh fruit, vegetables, and appropriate amounts of protein.

Please do not bring toys from home. Toys brought from home are difficult for children to share and may become lost or broken. However, children may bring books or CDs to share with the group, or special nap/quiet-time toys such as stuffed animals or dolls. Children will not be allowed to play with toy guns or other toy weapons at EC3.

School Age Summer Camp

Each summer EC3 offers a day camp program for children who have completed kindergarten through 3rd grades. Summer camp is an opportunity for each child to enjoy the outdoors, participate in a program with educational value, keep their school skills updated, and most importantly, have fun. Summer camp is especially enjoyable for EC3 "graduates" who re-connect with their preschool friends and revisit preschool relationships. Peer interaction allows children to be part of a team while they learn and grow together. Our summer program begins as soon as the

Lansing schools finish for the year, and ends just before Labor Day. It typically includes themed weeks and incorporates nature and ecology exploration, cooking, arts and crafts, swimming, outdoor time, reading time, frequent field trips, library visits, and science and math. Quiet times provide children with the opportunity to work constructively on projects without interruption. Time is spent reflecting upon thoughts through journal entries, reading books, and creating art projects.

Families of summer camp students are requested to bring the following items to EC3 (please label everything with the child’s name):

- Appropriate outdoor protection and clothing, including a bathing suit and towel, sun hat, sunglasses, insect repellent and non-aerosol sunscreen.
- Complete change of clothing.
- A lunch each day. All lunch boxes/bags must be dated and labeled with the child’s name. You are welcomed to bring a “heat-able” lunch, as long as it takes a minute or less in the microwave. We encourage families to pack healthy and appropriately-sized lunches, which will be stored in the classroom refrigerator until served.
 - NOTE: Mondays are “pizza days” at EC3, and families do not need to pack a lunch on those days because we have it delivered. The pizza day menu follows appropriate nutritional standards, and includes fresh fruit, vegetables, and appropriate amounts of protein.

Please do not bring toys from home. Toys brought from home are difficult for children to share and may become lost or broken. However, children may bring books or CDs to share with the group, or special nap/quiet-time toys such as stuffed animals or dolls. Children will not be allowed to play with toy guns or other toy weapons at EC3.

Electronic devices such as games or phones are not allowed in the summer camp program. Families are asked 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.

7:00-9:00	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
10:30-11:30	Lesson activities (small group, large group, etc.) and outdoor/gym time
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-2:45	Nap/quiet time
2:45-3:35	Lesson activities (small group, large group, etc.) and outdoor/gym time
3:45-4:30	Afternoon snack
4:30-6:00	Child pick-up, free choice activities (may include playground, gym, etc.)

CURRICULUM

As an early childhood education program, EC3 strives to provide high-quality learning opportunities for children from birth to age five. In all the classrooms, we use Creative Curriculum,

a research-based, whole-child approach to education. By fostering all aspects of the child, we prepare them for success in school and life. Creative Curriculum incorporates guidance for individualized instruction, helping teachers meet the needs of all learners. It also encourages meaningful partnerships with families, an essential practice that 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 in 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 opportunities to learn in a hands-on, play-based environment.

To learn more about Creative Curriculum, please visit <http://teachingstrategies.com/curriculum>.

ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING METHODS

EC3 uses a combination of methods to monitor and assess each child's progress. When a child enters a new classroom, teachers use a screening tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to establish a baseline of his/her performance in a variety of skills.

The Ounce Scale for infants and toddlers, and Work Sampling System (WSS) for preschoolers are nationally-recognized, research-based assessment tools. Teachers make observations, track progress, and regularly add to child portfolios as part of our observational assessment program. This comprehensive method allows teachers to continuously monitor children's progressions and adjust lesson plans as needed to address developmental levels. Twice a year, teachers review progress—and the portfolios—with families during conferences.

Portfolios move with each student as they transition to new classrooms at EC3. Families are given their child's completed portfolio upon "graduation" or exiting EC3's program.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions between different aged classrooms are very important at EC3. Not only are children growing up and getting ready for the next level of programming (moving from an infant room to a toddler room, for example), but they are also preparing to meet exciting changes as they move. Transitions often mean that children begin to interact with new teachers, move to a new physical environment, and meet new friends. We know this is a very big change in a small person's daily routine, so we handle room-to-room transitions thoughtfully.

When it is time for a transition, EC3 teachers consult with families and directors to ensure the best and most appropriate fit for each child. The directors sometimes make additional recommendations based on a child's birth date and the available space in different classrooms.

Children are prepared prior to the transitions taking place through visits to the new group over the course of several weeks; these visits grow in small increments of time. Children make transitions individually as well as in groups based on the developmental needs of the child. Families are an integral part of the transition process; as such, parental requests for a particular classroom and/or primary caregiver will be taken into consideration whenever possible.

Transitions between classrooms take into consideration the following intervals (remember that each child is unique, and this is only a general guideline):

- Infant rooms generally have children aged six weeks to approximately 12 to 15 months old.
- Toddler rooms generally have children aged 12 to 15 months to 3 years old.
- Preschool rooms generally have children 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.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

EC3 offers music enrichment as part of its regular program by bringing in a music professional for periodic sessions. Each classroom, from infant through preschool, is exposed to learning through music, instrument exploration, singing, songwriting, creative movement, and basic music theory such as tempo, volume, and pitch.

EC3 also offers movement enrichment as part of the preschool program by bringing in a yoga professional for periodic sessions. Each preschool classroom is exposed to learning through movement with calming activities and relaxation techniques.

HOURS OF OPERATION

EC3 is open for child care from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 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.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

To encourage that children be picked up on time, and to allow staff to get home to their families, a late pick-up fee is charged when families *arrive* after 6:00 p.m.: \$10.00 for any of the first five minutes and \$5.00 for each subsequent five-minute period after 6:05 p.m. Late pick-up fees are added to the account and must be paid in the next tuition cycle.

HOLIDAYS AND UNEXPECTED CLOSINGS

EC3 is closed in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Day*
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day*
- Labor Day
- General Election Day, even-numbered years
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Eve Day*
- Christmas Day*
- New Year's Eve Day*

(*or the state alternative recognized holiday)

There are also five (5) in-service days each year, two in early Spring and three in late Summer. During each in-service period, the center is closed to families. The specific dates are listed on the annual calendar so families may plan ahead.

Tuition is due for each day a child is enrolled in EC3, whether enrolled on a full-time or part-time schedule. There is no tuition credit for sick days, holidays, scheduled and unexpected closings, or vacation days.

Unexpected Closings

In general, EC3 will be open when the State of Michigan is open. If the State has an emergency or weather-related closing, EC3 will be closed.

We make every effort to keep our children and staff healthy and safe, so please be aware that EC3 may also close for unforeseen circumstances, including (but not limited to):

- When we lose power, heat, or water for an extended period of time.
- When we are unable to maintain state teacher-to-student ratios.
- When the Health Department or licensing agency determines there is the threat of a contagious disease or illness.
- When hazardous weather prevents so many teachers from coming to work that we cannot maintain state teacher-to-student ratios.

EC3 management makes its best efforts to adhere to a “we only close if the State of Michigan offices close” policy. However, it may be necessary to close EC3 on some additional days. If EC3 will be closed for any of these emergencies, the administrative team will make every effort to notify each family in advance, via phone, e-mail, text and/or social media.

Tuition is due for each day a child is enrolled in EC3, whether enrolled on a full-time or part-time schedule. There is no tuition credit for sick days, holidays, scheduled and unexpected closings, or vacation days.

Extended Closings

In the event that EC3 is required to be closed for over two weeks due to issues such as facility repair or pandemic illness, all accounts will be frozen and no tuition charged after the end of the initial two-week closure. Families will be notified when a date for reopening is set, when billing will resume. If a family chooses to delay their return to EC3, a charge of 25% of their tuition bill will be charged to hold their spot for up to four weeks. Families wishing to make changes in their enrollment must notify the office in writing two weeks prior to the effective start date.

CHILD SAFETY

Sign-in / Sign-out Procedures

Families are required to sign each child in and out every day with the accurate time of drop-off or pick-up. A clipboard with the sign-in sheet is located near the entrance of each classroom. Sign-in sheets are used to ensure all children are accounted for when the children move from the classroom to the gym or playground; these rosters are required by the State of Michigan licensing agency.

After a child is signed out at the end of the day, he or she is the responsibility of the parent, and is no longer in the care of EC3 staff members, even if he or she is in the building.

It is important that families contact their classroom teacher or the office if their child will not be in attendance, or will be unusually late. As a courtesy to families, EC3 will check in with families if their children are absent without notice, to assure that the child is safe.

Emergency Procedures

EC3 staff members are trained on emergency procedures when they are hired, and updated trainings are conducted for all staff each year. EC3 conducts practice drills for what to do in case of a missing child, active shooter, or the need for a lockdown. In addition, fire and tornado drills are conducted on a regular basis to prepare children and teach them how to be safe in such a crisis. Classrooms typically take “field trips” each year to our evacuation site so both the teachers and children can learn the route and understand in advance where issues might arise, and each classroom is equipped with an emergency kit and a binder containing EC3’s site emergency plan. This plan is available to families upon request at any time.

In the event that it is necessary to evacuate the building for a real emergency, we have an agreement with the Montessori preschool located on St. Joseph Street several blocks away to utilize their gym and facilities until families can be notified to come and pick up their children. EC3’s CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director is the emergency response chief and is accountable to all families in these situations.

EC3’s emergency response policy extends to circumstances where a child’s parent/guardian appears to be too impaired to safely get the child home. In cases such as this, the staff member alerts the director on duty who will manage the situation either by offering a ride home, contacting one of the adults designated on the emergency information form, or alerting the police.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff members at EC3 are mandated by Michigan law to report any suspected child abuse and neglect. If an EC3 employee suspects that a child is being abused or neglected they are obligated to report their suspicions to Child Protective Services.

SPECIAL NEEDS

EC3 strives to respond to the needs of all children and families by providing a positive learning environment for all children enrolled in the program regardless of ability, special needs, or learning style, and we work with families whose children require special accommodations to meet their needs and allow children the opportunity to participate in their least restrictive environment. We will provide these accommodations to the greatest extent possible without undue hardship on the program. We may find that our program does not fit a child's needs. If behaviors or the developmental needs of a child exceed our early childhood knowledge, or if they prevent us from maintaining the mandatory teacher-child ratio, we will meet with parent(s) to discuss alternatives such as outside intervention. Appropriate efforts will be made with the family to determine the best course of action for all involved. A plan will be developed which may involve one or more of the following:

- Changing classroom placement.
- Recommending to the family that they seek outside help. Assistance with a referral with the local ISD
- Recommending to the family that they seek another program that more closely meets the child's needs.

If all of the above steps fail to resolve the issue, EC3 reserves the right to make the final decision on whether continued enrollment is advisable. The center will provide the family with a two-week notice, except where such notice is not reasonable because of safety concerns. Center staff will offer to assist the parent(s) in obtaining alternative care.

DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY

EC3 is committed to providing a culturally-competent and responsive experience. Our program adheres to a strict non-discrimination policy in both employment and enrollment, and our teachers are dedicated to providing a learning environment that is relevant to all children who are currently enrolled, and to their families. Annual training on issues related to diversity and appropriate practice help EC3 teachers to continually grow in their practice.

EC3 knows that in order to be culturally relevant and responsive in the classroom, communication with families is paramount. We recognize that the backbone of a strong relationship with both children and families relies on an ability to communicate in ways that are most meaningful to each family and child. We strive to communicate with families in a variety of ways including home and program surveys, direct teacher communication, e-mails, blogs, and newsletters.

ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

ADMISSION

Children aged six weeks to five years (pre-kindergarten) are accepted. EC3 also enrolls school aged children (aged 5-8) in our summer camp program. Children are enrolled at EC3 throughout the year. The admission procedure, as space allows, is as follows:

Children aged six weeks to five years (pre-kindergarten) are accepted for care on either a full-time or part-time basis.

- **Full-time care** is defined as care that is delivered *four* or *five* days per week.
- **Part-time care** is defined as care that is delivered either *two* or *three* days per week.
- EC3 does *not* offer care for the following schedules:
 - drop-in care,
 - just one day per week,
 - just morning care,
 - just afternoon care.

Children are selected for enrollment on a first-come-first-served basis when they submit an application (with the required fee) for vacancies within the appropriate age/development groupings at EC3. Occasionally, when more people wish to enroll than there are spaces for, there is a waiting list organized by date of application and age of child. A random selection process will be used to order names on the waiting list of those children within the same age group who have the same date of application. Selection for enrollment is made as quickly as possible to allow families time to prepare for the transition into EC3. Priority is given to families with other children already enrolled at EC3, as well as families who have a prior history at EC3.

The admission procedure, as space allows, is as follows:

- Parent(s) meet with the Program Director to tour the center, discuss center operation, policies, programming, etc. This tour includes time in one of the classrooms to observe the center “in action.” A tour packet is provided to the family, which includes instructions for submitting an enrollment application online.
 - When completing the online application, families will be able to learn whether space is available in the program they seek (infant, toddler, preschool), or whether they will be put on a waiting list. A non-refundable application fee of \$75.00 must be submitted.
 - If there is space available in the program of their choice, the family is contacted to determine an enrollment date and schedule classroom visits.
- All newly-enrolled families will be emailed a link to complete the forms required for licensing and the food program. State regulations require that the emergency information and immunizations records be completed and on file by the first day a child is in attendance without a parent. The Health Appraisal Form must be on file no more than 30 days after the first day of attendance. The Child Information Record must be updated at least annually so EC3 is able to contact families in an emergency.

- An intake meeting with the classroom teachers may be arranged for families to ease the child's transition into the program. Families must work with the office staff to schedule three transition visits prior to the child's first day.

WITHDRAWAL

A two-week written notice or e-mail message must be provided to a member of the office staff by the family before withdrawing a child from EC3. Tuition will be charged for this two-week period even if the child does not attend.

EC3 does not offer tuition credit for sick days, holidays, unexpected closures, or vacation days since staff are salaried and, consequently, are paid whether the center is open or not. If a family must be absent for an extended period of time, (i.e., families who are teachers during the summer, or families traveling,) they may be allowed to pay 25% of their tuition rate to hold the spot, provided there is no waitlist for the spot; if there is a waitlist, the family must pay the full tuition rate in order to hold the spot. Alternatively, in such a case, the family may withdraw according to procedures provided in this Handbook and reapply when ready. Tuition credit for extended leave from EC3 may be granted in rare circumstances at the discretion of the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director.

DISENROLLMENT AND DISMISSAL

A family may be asked to leave EC3 for any of the following reasons, although there may be others. Each disenrollment/dismissal will be handled on an individual basis by the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director.

- The child or parent(s) are not adjusting to EC3.
- The parent(s) or child is disrupting the safety or well-being of children and/or staff.
- Families have not completed and returned required enrollment forms promptly.
- Nonpayment or habitual late payment of tuition or fees.
- Habitual late pick-ups.

Tuition and Fee Policies

Tuition is paid to secure the space within EC3's program and is due for each enrolled child. Although tuition rates are calculated by the day or week, there is no tuition credit for sick days, holidays, or days the center is closed, because EC3's staff members are salaried and consequently paid whether the center is open or not. When a child with a part-time schedule misses a regularly scheduled day due to sickness, holiday, or vacation day, families may be permitted to add a day during that same week on a space available basis, at the discretion of the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director.

Tuition is to be paid biweekly, in advance of the care received. Tuition may be paid using cash, check, credit/debit card, or e-check. Families are encouraged to pay by auto-withdrawal from a bank account, fees incurred by the use of credit or debit cards will be paid by the parent.

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME TUITION RATES (EFF. 10/1/22)

Full-Time Tuition Rates

Group	Classroom	Weekly Rate
Infant/Toddler	Ladybug / Bumblebee/ Dolphins / Penguins / Seals / Geckos / Frogs / Otters	\$317
Preschool	Lions / Tigers / Bears	\$273

Part-Time Tuition Rates

Group	Classroom	Daily Rate
Infant/Toddler	Ladybug / Bumblebee/ Dolphins / Penguins / Seals / Geckos / Frogs / Otters	\$73
Preschool	Lions / Tigers / Bears	\$62

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME TUITION RATES (EFF. 4/1/23)

Full-Time Tuition Rates

Group	Classroom	Weekly Rate
Infant/Toddler	Ladybug / Bumblebee/ Dolphins / Penguins / Seals / Geckos / Frogs / Otters	\$327
Preschool	Lions / Tigers / Bears	\$281
Summer Camp		\$227

Part-Time Tuition Rates

Group	Classroom	Daily Rate
Infant/Toddler	Ladybug / Bumblebee/ Dolphins / Penguins / Seals / Geckos / Frogs / Otters	\$75
Preschool	Lions / Tigers / Bears	\$64
Summer Camp		\$45.40

TUITION ASSISTANCE

EC3 accepts all forms of tuition assistance allowed under Michigan law, including employer-paid assistance, payments from the state's Child Development and Care (CDC) program, and grants from institutions of higher education and other organizations. Such payments are applied directly to family accounts, reducing or eliminating the amount owed by the family. EC3's office staff will calculate whether the family will be responsible for any portion of tuition and will communicate the payment schedule to the family.

LATE TUITION PAYMENT POLICY

A late fee of \$25.00 *per week* is assessed if a tuition payment is not received by one business day following the due date.

All balances must be paid in full before a child can be enrolled in the next program year or summer camp.

The Office Manager will monitor all accounts and work with families to ensure that tuition is paid in a timely manner. The following policies will apply:

- If **one** entire tuition payment is not made by the time the next tuition is billed, the family will be contacted asking that the account be made current.
- If **two** tuition payments are not made by the time the next tuition is billed, or if the account has an overdue balance of more than \$500.00, the family will receive a tuition payment plan that states the total amount owed; requires that all future payments be made on time; requires that all future payments include the full tuition owed with that billing cycle plus at least 25 percent of the outstanding balance; states that failure to comply will result in the child/children being immediately disenrolled from EC3; requires both the parent and the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director of EC3 to sign and date the plan.
- If **three** tuition payments are not made by the time the next tuition is billed, or if the account has an overdue balance of more than \$1,000.00, the child(ren) will be immediately disenrolled.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY

A fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for each returned check in addition to the \$25.00 late fee for a total of \$50.00. After a second returned check families will be asked to pay by money order or cashier's check.

Difficulties in complying with any EC3 policy regarding tuition or fees, due to extreme, unforeseen hardships should be addressed in writing to the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director.

REFERRAL INCENTIVE

Currently-enrolled families are encouraged to refer new families to EC3! If you refer a family who subsequently enrolls a child, you will receive a \$50.00 referral discount on your family's account after the referred family pays its first invoice.

OTHER POLICIES

FOOD POLICY AND NUTRITION PLAN

EC3 participates in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which requires us to plan and follow guidelines of high nutrition for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; it also requires us to collect a Child Enrollment Form annually from families of each child at EC3. All children with special dietary requirements will be fed to meet their individual needs. There is no fee for meals or snacks provided by EC3. Menus are posted in each classroom and all substitutions will be noted on it.

For Infants: EC3 provides appropriate types and sufficient quantities of iron-fortified infant formula and infant solid food for all meals and snacks served to infants at EC3. Families may elect to provide their own breast milk, formula, and/or solid foods to be served to their child if they have so indicated on the Food Sign-Off Statement that accompanies the Child Enrollment Form; if none is provided, EC3 will feed the child appropriately and notify the parent/guardian.

For Toddlers/Preschoolers: EC3 provides appropriate types and sufficient quantities of food and milk for breakfast and two snacks served to toddlers and preschoolers. Families must provide a healthy and appropriately-sized lunch each day; if none is provided, EC3 will feed the child appropriately and notify the parent/guardian.

Children's eating behaviors and attitudes towards food are formed early in life and influence their health and nutrition throughout their life. EC3 fosters social interaction, positive adult modeling, and relaxed meal time experiences for toddlers and preschoolers by serving food in individual classrooms. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to eat food that is served. This allows children to recognize and utilize their internal cues about satiety and food preferences.

EC3 recognizes that positive adult food behavior modeling influences children's attitudes and feelings towards food. EC3 staff members regularly receive training on nutrition practices to prevent childhood obesity. Portion-size charts are posted in each classroom, and staff members are encouraged to serve appropriate amounts of food to children regardless of how much food the family sends in. Food and portion size preferences expressed by the family are honored to the greatest extent practical.

A fresh variety of food is ordered and delivered regularly to our center. EC3's main kitchen functions as the main food storage and preparation area. Classrooms contain separate refrigerators and small prep spaces for convenience and sanitation. Our facility is licensed and maintains a high standard of cleanliness. Staff regularly receives training on licensing standards.

EC3 Menu Sample

Site/Room _____ Educational Child Care Center
 Month _____ March _____ Year _____ 2020

EC3 Menu Record for March 9th- March 13th

* Whole milk provided for children 1-2 years of age & skim milk provided for all children over the age of 2.

** Water is always available.

*** Cereal choices are: Cheerios, Life, Rice Chex, Rice Krispies, or Corn Flakes

	Date 3/9/20	Date 3/10/20	Date 3/11/20	Date 3/12/20	Date 3/13/20
Breakfast 1. Fluid Milk 2. Fruit, Vegetable 3. Grain/Bread or Meat/Meat Alternate* *Meat may be served to meet grain component up to 3 times/week. 1 oz. of meat = 1 oz. grains	*Milk **Apple Slices ***Cereal	*Milk **Oatmeal w/ Raisins ***Bananas	*Milk ** Cereal ***Blueberries	*Milk **Apple Slices ***Bagel w/ Cream Cheese	*Milk **Mixed Fruit ***Cereal
AM Snack** 1. Fluid Milk 2. Meat or Meat Alternate 3. Vegetable 4. Fruit 5. Grain/Bread ** Serve 2 of 5 components	WG Bread w/ Jelly & Soy or Peanut Butter	Sliced Ham & WG Cheez Its	WG Animal Crackers & Bananas	Yogurt Cup & Craisins Dried Cranberries	Celery Sticks & Cream Cheese w/ Raisins "ants on a log"
Lunch 1. Fluid Milk 2. Meat or Meat Alternate 3. Vegetable 4. Fruit or Vegetable 5. Grain/Bread Other:	*Milk **Chicken/Ham & Mozzarella Pizza Crust ***Broccoli ****Pineapple Tidbits	Lunch From Home	Lunch From Home	Lunch From Home	Lunch From Home
PM Snack* 1. Fluid Milk 2. Meat or Meat Alternate 3. Vegetable 4. Fruit 5. Grain/Bread ** Serve 2 of 5 components	Cheese Stick & Oyster Crackers Or Keebler Crackers Packs	Celery Sticks & Cream Cheese w/ Raisins "ants on a log"	WG Tortilla & Melted Cheddar Quesadilla	Sliced Ham Or Turkey & WG Cheez Its	WG English Muffin & Melted Provolone w/ Marinara Pizza

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ALLERGY-AWARE POLICY

EC3 maintains an ALLERGY-AWARE facility where children who have a range of allergies and food sensitivities receive care and special protection to the greatest extent possible. The following guidelines are followed throughout the building and with EC3 children when they are away from the building for an EC3 event.

- Allergy accommodations 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 accommodations 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 heat able posted on classroom doors and other locations around the room as needed (e.g., on tables or near diaper changing stations).
- Groups using the center for parties or meetings must remove all food and clean up all traces of food when the event is concluded.

Family Participation

The most important step in ensuring the safety of allergic children is communication. Communication from the parent 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 the use of education, management strategies, and emergency procedures.

Allergy Prevention Strategies

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Read this Allergy-Aware Policy and initial the appropriate section of the parent contract to acknowledge your understanding and compliance with the policy.
- Inform anyone else bringing 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 of the severity and scope of a child's allergy, provide an emergency treatment plan signed by the child's doctor, and supply any medications for the allergic child. Communicate this information with EC3 staff in new classrooms as a child transitions.
- In high-risk cases, work with EC3 staff to ensure a child with food allergies eats only food from home, unless previously discussed with EC3 for special occasions.
- In high-risk cases, work with the family physician to develop an allergy action plan for use at EC3.
- Follow the guidelines as outlined in this Allergy-Aware Policy.

EC3 Responsibilities

- Provide annual training to EC3 staff on the Allergy-Aware Policy and on prevention and treatment strategies. Provide introductory training on the Allergy-Aware Policy to new EC3 staff upon hire.
- Encourage children to NOT share snacks, drinks, or utensils.
- Ensure all children wash hands with soapy water before eating.
- Communicate allergy information 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 attached note listing the ingredients.
- In consultation with the family in high-risk cases, develop an emergency plan in the event of accidental exposure to allergen.
- Ensure that classroom-specific allergies are communicated to families of all children in the class so they may plan/pack lunches accordingly.
- Ensure that all activities adhere to the guidelines of this policy, both inside and outside the center (e.g., cooking, crafts, and field trips).

- Outside and on field trips, take medication (i.e., Epi-pen, Benadryl) and emergency plan, and be aware of exposure risk (i.e., food & insects).

Response in the Event of Allergic Reaction

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

OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY

In accordance with state licensing regulations, EC3 teachers make every effort to have the children spend time outside each day. In extreme temperatures or conditions, this time may be minimized or eliminated. However, families should make sure children have sufficient clothing and amenities, such as water bottles and snow boots, to make outdoor play possible.

HEALTH POLICIES

The issue of dealing with sick children in a group situation requires care, patience, and understanding on the part of families and caregivers. EC3 minimizes the spread of infection by a conscientious use of the following procedures.

- Routine screening throughout the day of children and staff for illness
- Strict hand washing procedures for staff and children in situations involving food service, diapering, toileting, and nose blowing
- Diapering carried out in a designated area using disposable gloves
- Use of flush toilets and not potty chairs for sanitary reasons
- Careful washing of children’s faces, removing saliva and nasal discharge using disposable wipes and tissues
- Frequent washing and disinfecting of toys and room surfaces
- Cleaning all rooms frequently
- Going outdoors each day for play periods (when appropriate—see “Outdoor Play Policy”)
- Isolating children from care who may be infectious (in EC3’s designated sick room, with a staff member) until they are able to be picked up

Medication

This policy adheres to the standards established by the State of Michigan. The following procedures must be followed:

1. Whenever possible, medication should be administered at home. Initial doses should be given at home so that families can monitor for side effects.
2. Medication, prescription or nonprescription, must be given to a child by a child care staff member only; children may not self-administer any medication.
3. A child care staff member shall give or apply medication, prescription or nonprescription, only with prior written permission from a parent or guardian.
 - a. For oral prescription or nonprescription medications and topical prescription medications, the Medication Permission and Instructions form must be filled out

completely by the parent indicating the dosage, times given per day, and the number of days to be given.

- b. Topical nonprescription medication, including but not limited to diapering cream, triple antibiotic, sunscreen, and insect repellent, requires written parental authorization annually. Topical nonprescription medication does NOT include hand sanitizer, lip balm, or hand/body lotion, including petroleum jelly-based products such as Vaseline.
4. All medication (including all nonprescription topical medications) must be in its original container, stored according to instructions, and clearly labeled for a named child.
5. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's first and last name, instructions, name and strength of the medication, and it must be given according to those instructions.
6. A child care staff member shall give or apply any prescription or nonprescription medication according to the directions on the original container, unless otherwise authorized by a written order of the child's physician.
7. If nonprescription medication states "See Doctor" for the student's age group, the medication must be accompanied by a signed doctor's authorization with dosing instructions.
8. For children with severe illness or conditions such as seizures, asthma, or allergies requiring an epi-pen or inhaler, EC3 requires an emergency action plan signed by a physician.
9. Emergency medications such as epi-pens or inhalers will accompany your child whenever they leave the classroom (playground, gym, fieldtrip, etc.).

EC3 employees receive training (upon hire and annually) on medication administration.

When bringing in medication for a child, families must deliver them to the office so administrative staff can verify it; the office will then deliver the medication to the classroom, where it will be stored in the locked medication box/cabinet. Families may inquire in the classroom at any time to check or remove the medication.

If the child transitions to another classroom, the medication will be delivered back to the family, who must then submit a new form with the medication to the office.

Illness

All children are routinely screened throughout each day for signs of illness or injury; all staff are encouraged to stay home if they experience signs of illness. In an effort to minimize the spread of illness to our children and staff, **families are strongly discouraged from bringing children to EC3 when they display any of the following symptoms:**

- Fever over 100.4 degrees (measured under the arm)
- Difficult breathing, wheezing, uncontrolled coughing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unidentified rash

- Signs of possible severe illness, including unusual lethargy, persistent crying, severe pain, or anything else that will require one-on-one care
- Contagious conditions (e.g., pink eye, mouth sores with drooling, etc.)

If your child becomes ill at EC3 with any of the above symptoms, you will be called to take your child home as soon as possible. Generally, a child will be sent home if he/she appears contagious or is uncomfortable enough to require constant one-on-one adult attention. *The teachers and directors will determine whether or not a child should remain at EC3.* A child who appears contagious may be isolated from the rest of the group, in EC3's designated sick room under the supervision of a caregiver, until the parent can pick him/her up. Families will receive a "Sent Home Sick" form indicating when the child may return to care. Families are encouraged to have back-up care providers available to pick up your child when you are unavailable to due to conflicts.

If your child does not meet the above criteria for exclusion from the program, but is not feeling well, you may receive an information call from EC3. Information calls will be given when your child is running a fever of less than 100. 4 degrees, and/or is exhibiting other symptoms. The information call allows you time to assess the situation and prepare accordingly.

In order to ensure the safety of staff and other children at the center, you must notify the EC3 office (via phone or email to contact@ec3kids.org) within 24 hours if your child is ill with a communicable/contagious disease, such as COVID-19, strep throat, RSV, conjunctivitis, fifth disease, chicken pox, or influenza.

Time at home allows your child to rest and recuperate. It also prevents infections from spreading to other children and staff members. We strongly suggest that alternate arrangements be planned prior to those occasions when your child is ill.

All the following guidelines will be used, collectively, to determine when a child can return to group care after an illness:

- The child's temperature has been below 100.4 degrees for 24 hours *without* acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- It has been 24 hours since the last episode of vomiting and or diarrhea.
- The rash has subsided or has been confirmed in writing as non-contagious by a physician.
- The signs of possible severe illness (including lethargy, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, severe pain, and uncontrolled coughing) have been checked and ruled out in writing by a physician.
- The child is no longer contagious, and is feeling well enough to participate comfortably in the usual activities.
- If an antibiotic has been prescribed, the child may return 24 hours after the first dosage, or sooner with a physician's note confirming them as non-contagious.

In the case of a COVID-19 infection, please refer to our COVID-19 Response Plan, which can be found on EC3's website.

Generally speaking, it is the lack of symptoms that indicate your child is ready to return to EC3. A note from a physician may be required. EC3 will make every effort to accommodate a child who is not ready to resume full activities after an illness upon return to the center.

See “Notification Procedures” under the Center-Family Communication section of this handbook.

Oral Health

Except when contraindicated, toddlers and preschoolers at EC3 are encouraged to brush their teeth after lunch each day. Toothbrushes are provided by EC3 and are designated for each child; they are stored using sanitary methods. Brushing with water only is recommended for toddlers; preschoolers are provided non-fluoride toothpaste. Infants’ gums are wiped after each feeding to promote oral health.

Sun Safety

EC3 staff members regularly receive training on sun-safety practices to prevent skin damage during outside play time. Families are encouraged to provide appropriate clothing to protect children from sun exposure, including hats (for cold and hot weather), sunglasses, and coverings for arms and legs. Families must provide non-aerosol sunscreen with their child’s name on it to be used for outdoor play.

Environmental Safety

Smoking or vaping is not allowed on EC3 property, including inside a car in EC3’s parking lot. No weapons of any kind are to be brought onto EC3 property.

PARKING POLICY

EC3 has a large parking lot (separated by a walkway between the building and the playground) available to families and staff. One entrance is located on West Street, and the other entrance is located on Nipp Avenue.

- Families and staff may park in any available non-handicap spot.
- There are two handicap parking spots, located in the parking lot on Nipp Avenue. A valid handicap parking tag is required to use these spots, even for a short period of time.
- Families must drive slowly in the parking lot.
- Families must not leave vehicles idling in the parking lot, except in cases of extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.
- Families must not leave young children unattended in the car, even for a few minutes. Families may ask EC3 office staff for assistance in such cases.

ACCIDENT, INCIDENT, INJURY, AND ILLNESS POLICY

Good safety measures will prevent most accidents but if an accident does occur EC3 staff will call the parent and/or 911 as appropriate. Families will be notified immediately if professional medical attention is required for their child. Caregivers will also provide written details of the incident and record any first aid procedures used.

If a parent seeks medical care for a child due to an accident, incident, illness, or injury that took place at EC3, the parent must alert EC3 so it can be reported to the licensing agency. Families must indicate where the child was taken and what diagnosis was made.

See “Notification Procedures” under the Center-Family Communication section of this handbook.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

EC3's discipline policy makes great use of age-appropriate, non-severe, positive behavioral supports. Whenever possible, staff members use the technique of positive redirection, distraction, or humor to change unacceptable behaviors. Teachers try to avoid power struggles by focusing on children's expressed desires and capabilities. Teachers utilize the "teachable moment," and help a child learn new behavioral skills to use in the future. Children also have the opportunity to remove themselves from the situation in order to regain control or have quiet time.

Older children may establish and enter into a contract with their teacher that specifies expectations of behavior and the logical consequences that follow.

Physical punishment or language that demeans children is unacceptable and is never permitted at EC3. All of the following means of punishment are prohibited:

- Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting 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 him or her.
- 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.
- Excluding a child from daily learning experiences.
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar enclosure.
- Time out must not be used for children under 3 years of age. In children 3 years and older, time-out is only used to stop aggressive behavior or to allow angry or upset children to calm down; it is used only as a last resort to help the child gain a better sense of self-control. The time out will not last longer than it takes for the child to calm down, and the child remains supervised at all times.
- Children cannot be excluded from outdoor play or participation in large gross motor activities as a behavioral consequence.
- Children cannot be excluded from daily learning experiences as a behavioral consequence.

SERVICE CONTRIBUTION POLICY

Because EC3 is 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. It is also vital to our sustainability as an organization. Serving the community at EC3 is also something we hope to instill in the children we care for.

Families of EC3 students 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. Service opportunities will be clearly communicated as eligible for the credits 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. Service contributions for the purposes of this policy must be made in the form of *service*—although the donation of items or products is always appreciated.
3. Families and members of the teaching staff may seek advance approval of alternative and/or special activities to the CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director; only pre-approved activities will be eligible for the service credits.
4. Each family will be charged a “service deposit” of \$100 per child each October 1st, and again each April 1st. The framing of the requirement in six-month periods, and the charging of the deposit every six months, is intended to encourage participation throughout the year rather than all at one time.
5. Service hours will be tracked within our billing system as “service credits.” For each hour of *pre-approved* service time a parent or guardian contributes, a \$20 credit will be applied to the family account. Service credits applied to any account in either of these six-month periods may not exceed the service deposit of that period, regardless of whether more than five hours of service per child were contributed.
6. Service contributions are not transferrable, whether to one’s own account for future use (see above) or to the account of any other family.
7. Extended family members are welcomed and encouraged to participate in EC3’s service events, but their participation may not be substituted for the parent’s or guardian’s contribution for the purposes of this policy.
8. At the end of each six-month period (March 31st and September 30th), any remainder of the deposit in each account will be directed to EC3’s general fund in order to support efforts to complete such tasks in other ways.

Sample Activities that Qualify for Service Contribution Credits

There are many opportunities for service at EC3:

- Participate on the Board of Directors or one of its committees
- Help to plan and serve at special events, including (but not limited to)
 - Annual auction
 - “Cookies with Santa” event
 - Winter movie showings
 - Graduation
 - School selection forum
 - Kindergarten readiness forum
 - Teacher appreciation week
 - Staff holiday party
- Perform yard work at one of EC3’s scheduled work days
- Paint interior walls at one of EC3’s scheduled work days
- Perform minor repairs and special cleaning at one of EC3’s scheduled work days
- Participate in **pre-selected** and **administratively approved** classroom activities

Once again, this list is a mere representation of service opportunities; many more exist.

ANNUAL PARENT SURVEY

At least once per year, families are invited to participate in a survey of the program, the staff, and the management/governance. A large number of survey questions are required by EC3's accreditation and quality initiative programs, and additional questions are added to guide our continuous improvement efforts. After each survey is tabulated, a report is compiled and made available to families on EC3's website, along with the raw data. Families are made aware of the report's availability via newsletter, e-mail, and whiteboard communications.

CENTER-FAMILY COMMUNICATION

EC3 is designed to provide children with a positive developmental experience that enhances and supports, but does not supplant, the family in fostering child growth and development. Therefore, we strongly encourage good communication between families and staff. It is important for families and staff to share information about those things which may have an impact on the child's day or evening. When possible, it is best for families to communicate directly with the child's teacher or with one of EC3's Directors.

Families may expect communication from EC3 in any of the following ways:

- Many classrooms use notes and newsletters to communicate with families.
- The office staff produces a weekly newsletter that highlights center activities and useful family information.
- EC3's website contains center information, a center calendar, board bylaws and contact information, form downloads, and information about the programs.
- EC3's social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest) provides families with photographs and timely information about early learning and events that are relevant to followers.
- A white board by the front entrance posts upcoming events and items to take note of.
- Parent-teacher conferences are held at least twice per year for families to talk in-depth with teachers about their child's development. Additional conferences may be requested as needed.

Notification Procedures

In the event of an accident, illness, incident, or injury involving a child attending EC3, the following procedures are implemented:

- If the situation is deemed an emergency by EC3 staff, we will call 911 first and then alert both families via telephone; text and email may also be utilized to reach the families.
- In non-emergency situations, we will call the first parent listed on the Child Information Record, using all the phone numbers provided until we reach the parent. If we cannot reach that parent, we will leave voice-mail messages and proceed to call the second parent listed on the Child Information Record, also using all the phone numbers provided.
- If neither parent can be reached in a reasonable amount of time and the child needs to be picked up, we will call the first emergency contact listed on the Child Information Record, proceeding down the list until someone agrees to pick up the child.

- Accidents, incidents, and injuries that cause 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 request that the parent provide information about the diagnosis and where the child was treated.

Confidentiality

At EC3 families and families are encouraged to share information regarding their child's day-to-day activities, as well as any situations or experiences the child may be having that are new, stressful, fun, or exciting. Many times families share important, but PRIVATE information with staff for the benefit of their child. Staff members are expected not to divulge any information regarding a child to anyone but that child's family. This means that staff members do not discuss confidential information regarding children with other staff members (unless it directly concerns another staff member's care of that child), release or discuss any family information volunteered by families, or discuss any child or family outside of the center.

Cooperative Problem Solving

Occasionally families have suggestions for improvement or questions about EC3's program and policies. EC3 always encourages open communication between its staff and families. If an issue arises that needs clarification or information, working together is important. Options for solving problems include any one or a combination of the suggestions below.

- Families should attempt to clarify facts and/or concerns with the teaching staff directly, in person, on the phone, or via e-mail. A private conference can be scheduled with prior notice.
- The CEO/Executive Director and/or Program Director is available to discuss issues with families, particularly ones involving policies, fees, and EC3 procedures.
- The Board of Directors meets the third Tuesday of each month and includes a time for public comment. Your concern can be discussed by submitting a letter, attending the meeting, or presenting your concern to a Board member who can take the matter to the Board.
- EC3 is licensed by the State of Michigan through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Community and Health Systems, Child Care Licensing Division. Families can initiate an investigative process by contacting a licensing consultant there.

The following actions may be used to resolve concerns between EC3 staff members and families:

- Fact-finding with the teaching staff, Program Director, and parent.
- A meeting with the staff and parent to discuss the issue and explore solutions, which may involve, but are not limited to:
 - Monitoring the situation
 - Teacher training
 - Disciplinary action