

ECDEC
Early Childhood Block Grant



Parent Handbook

EARLY CHILDHOOD BLOCK GRANT

Serving Children Ages 0-5 and their families living within School Districts 15, 23, 25, 26 & 57

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STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

OUR BELIEFS ABOUT CHILDREN

THAT IN ORDER FOR CHILDREN TO THRIVE, THEIR BASIC NEEDS MUST BE MET.

THEREFORE: We strive to provide for their physical and emotional well being by establishing a warm, caring, and consistent environment where children can feel safe and secure.

THAT CHILDREN NEED TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF SELF-ESTEEM AND A FEELING OF “I CAN.”

THEREFORE: We enthusiastically acknowledge their accomplishments, encourage their attempts at a new skill, and console their feelings when success is not attained.

THAT CHILDREN ARE UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS.

THEREFORE: We recognize individual strengths and weaknesses in each child and encourage each child’s growth. We support the development of the **WHOLE CHILD** and provide opportunities for learning which facilitate the child’s cognitive, emotional, communicative and motor development.

THAT CHILDREN HAVE IMPORTANT RIGHTS AS HUMAN BEINGS.

THEREFORE: Our approach to discipline and emphasis on interactive processes offers the children choices and reasons for setting limits. Since children need to learn self-respect as well as respect for others, cooperative, considerate and appropriate behavior will be afforded to and expected from each child.

OUR BELIEFS ABOUT FAMILIES

THAT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IS CRITICAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH CHILD AND TO OUR PROGRAM.

THEREFORE: We encourage parental input and participation in all aspects of our program. The assistance of parent volunteers in the classroom, participation in the parent support groups, and parent contributions to decision-making through site-based activities are all means of accomplishing this goal.

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THAT OPEN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND STAFF ENHANCES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOTAL CHILD.

THEREFORE: Formal and informal communication between staff and families is accomplished through newsletters, progress notes, recall notes, parent-teacher conferences, frequent telephone contacts, and home and office visits. Open communication facilitates the carry-over of goals from school to home.

THAT WE RECOGNIZE, ENCOURAGE AND APPRECIATE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.

THEREFORE: We provide opportunities for sharing cultural values, experiences and customs through classroom activities and family events.

OUR BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING

WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN LEARN BEST THROUGH ACTIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

THEREFORE: Our curriculum reflects the Illinois Early Learning Standards through an active learning and experience-based approach. We provide stimulating and varied experiences, encouragement for children to actively explore their environment, and ample opportunities for children to express themselves. These learning opportunities form a major part of the foundation for continued learning.

THAT LEARNING IS OFTEN THE RESULT OF A CURRICULUM THAT RESPONDS TO THE SPONTANEOUS, EVER-CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.

THEREFORE: Spontaneous events (i.e. a snowstorm, a child's birthday) are easily incorporated into the daily schedule of activities.

THAT CHILDREN NEED TO LEARN TO COMMUNICATE THEIR FEELINGS AND NEEDS.

THEREFORE: We facilitate their language and social interpersonal skills within the classroom (i.e. request help or verbalize feelings).

THAT CHILDREN NEED TO LEARN TO MAKE DECISIONS AND TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THOSE DECISIONS.

THEREFORE: We provide opportunities and experiences to help children make independent choices. By providing limits within the classroom and appropriate, natural consequences for appropriate behavior, children learn to become more responsible for their actions.

THAT CHILDREN NEED TO LEARN PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS RATHER THAN "CORRECT ANSWERS."

THEREFORE: We provide problem-solving situations in all aspects of our curriculum.

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OUR BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE

WE BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHILD'S FIRST LANGUAGE AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES USE OF THEIR HOME LANGUAGE.

THEREFORE: We accept and appreciate the benefits of developing more than one language. We create connections with families that encourage a child's language acquisition. We acknowledge an individual's home language(s) during planning, instruction, and assessment.

THAT TEACHERS AND FAMILIES SHOULD WORK IN A COLLABORATIVE AND PROACTIVE PARTNERSHIP.

THEREFORE: Families are the primary sources of knowledge and experiences who provide support for the development of languages. We strive for teachers and families to have a clear understanding of the inherent value of the home language and the role it plays in acquiring a second language. We identify the needs of families by creating a strong sense of community for a common purpose.



Curriculum... How Children Learn in ECDEC

ECDEC uses Creative Curriculum and Project Approach. We use The Pyramid Model for social emotional support in classrooms. These curriculums are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Development Standards. We teach by creating purposeful and productive play experiences that help children grow in all developmental areas. Children are assessed using the Early Learning Scale and an individualized portfolio is created for each student to show growth and learning throughout the year.

In our classroom you will see children and adults playing. Preschool children learn best through play. Teachers observe and follow the interests of the children to create meaningful learning. Children are encouraged to ask questions and to explore their environment. Teachers challenge the children to think further by creating centers, providing a daily schedule, and by planning organized activities. Children have many opportunities to make choices, come up with ideas, experiment, and take responsibility for their work.

Important information about ECDEC



ECDEC Monthly Calendar

Please look at the calendar the teacher sends home carefully because the ECDEC schedule may be different than the school district schedule. Also included in the calendar will be information like family events, parent workshops, parent conferences, home visit days, etc.



ECDEC Newsletter

You will be receiving a newsletter which will let you know what is happening across the entire ECDEC program. It also provides activities you can do with your child at home. Your teacher may also use an app that will allow you to talk with them and give you information.

You may also be receiving notes that tell you what your child has done or will be doing at school. These notes are helpful when talking to your child about their day. Teachers will also send home activities throughout the year that add to your child's learning.



Parent Teacher Conferences /Communication

Parent conferences will be held 3 times during the school year to discuss your child's progress. At conference time we will also be asking for your input so we can work together to support your child's learning. If changes in your family occur that you feel would be important for your child's teacher to know about, please call or send a note. We also have a Parent Advisory Council and all parents are invited to participate. Teachers will send home information before it starts.



Parent Advisory Council

The Parent Advisory Council members are parents who currently have a child enrolled in the ECDEC Program. Meetings are scheduled every six weeks. The Council plans and discusses topics that ECDEC parents have chosen to learn about. Guest speakers related to those topics are also scheduled to present. The PAC assists in planning our yearly "Week of the Young Child" event in April, which has been designated to celebrate all Early Childhood Children! Parents are invited and encouraged to attend all PAC meetings to be an active participant and "voice" for their child's education. Invitations

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will be sent home with your child from the teacher, and information can also be found in the ECDEC monthly newsletter.



Home Visits

Home visits are done periodically during the school year. You may be contacted by an ECDEC Family Educator to schedule a home visit time that works for your family. The purpose for the home visit is to strengthen the home–school connection between the teacher, family and child.



Classroom/Home Participation

Parent Participation is a very important component of our program. Parents are welcomed in their child’s classroom. Throughout the year, teachers plan activities, workshops, and cultural events. Families are encouraged to attend.

At home parents should ask questions about their child’s school day. For example: What was snack today? Was your friend _____ there today? What songs did you sing? Parents should also read to their child daily. You will show your child(ren) that school and education are important by doing this.



Transportation

Children need to be picked up and dropped off on time. Sometimes this is at a classroom, sometimes this is at a bus stop. Staff are not able to care for children before or after school.



Attendance

Parents are expected to get their child to school on a regular basis. Regular attendance is very important for your child’s success in the program. Your child should only miss school for illness, medical appointments, or family emergencies. Important numbers are listed on the first page of this handbook.



Emergency Contacts

Parents need to keep teachers informed of any changes to their address, phone number or emergency contacts. Your teacher needs two adult contacts other than the parent/guardian. Only parents or people listed

on the emergency card can take your child home or off the bus. For security purposes, staff may ask for identification from the adult picking up your child.



Backpacks

Please send your child to school with a large enough backpack to hold an average pocket folder. Please make sure your child has a backpack everyday. For safety reasons children should not bring toys, food or medicine to school. **Make sure you empty your child's backpack every night.**



Large



Small



Illness

Please do not send your child to school if he/she is sick. If your child has been vomiting, has diarrhea or has a fever he/she must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called immediately to pick your child up (sick children will not be placed on a bus).



Healthy

=



Sick

=





Dress for school

Please dress your child for messy, active play. Socks and gym shoes are suggested. We will be going outside in all kinds of weather. In the winter make sure your child is wearing a winter coat, mittens, hat and boots. Please label any items that your child wears to school.



Play Clothes



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Fancy Clothes



Gym Shoes



Flip Flops

We hope you find this information helpful and we look forward to working with your child this year! Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook.