



[www.cooppreschool.org](http://www.cooppreschool.org)

# PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

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## **Philosophy**

At the Early Education Cooperative Preschool (EECP) we believe:

- ...that a parent is a child's first educator
- ...that the best academic environment for a young child is a play based environment
- ...that children should be given the gift of time

We use a hands-on, child-initiated curriculum in which all aspects of a child's development - cognitive, social, emotional and physical - are promoted. Each child is valued as a unique and capable individual. Our program maintains a warm, flexible environment where children are encouraged to make their own choices, to be responsible for their own behavior and to respect the physical and emotional space of others.

Parents receive support and guidance in the evolution of their parenting skills through education classes, participation in the classroom and staff modeling of positive language and parenting techniques. Informed parenting is fostered with the goal of instilling a life-long commitment to their children's education and overall development.

This philosophy is based on research and experience on how children learn and the best environments to foster their growth. More specific information about our classroom goals and expectations are discussed in a later section of this manual.

## **Diversity Statement**

At the Early Education Cooperative Preschool we believe that children have the best opportunity to understand, accept and appreciate differences within themselves and in the world through participating in a diverse learning community. We respect the inherent worth of all individuals, inclusive of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, family structure, neurodiverse learning styles, ability, nationality, immigration status, physical appearance, religion, belief systems, language, and more. We are committed to creating a welcoming environment where all members can learn, build friendships and work together while being celebrated as unique and valuable.

## **Program Description**

Originally started in 1961 and renamed as a 501C (3) in 2016, the Early Education Cooperative Preschool offers an early childhood program based on research and best practices in education and child development. Inspired by both the Reggio Emilia approach to learning and The Creative Curriculum, we provide developmentally appropriate classrooms which create a community of learners where the students are encouraged to play, explore and research the world around them. We believe that children excel at constructing knowledge when they are given opportunities to learn through unstructured play, using the environment as the third teacher, and the teachers and parents as guides and co-researchers.

## **Parent & Community Involvement**

Fostering a community of families, staff and students is an important goal of our program and integral to the curriculum and relationships formed. Community is created between the parents, students and teachers through incoming dinners each year, visiting the children at home during the summer, working together on school clean-up days, providing parent education meetings monthly, having multiple community events throughout the year, creating a range of committees for parents to participate in and having parents volunteer in the classroom twice a month. Together we form a community environment that enriches the lives of the families and staff, and allows the children to play and learn in a close-knit "village".

The EEC is regulated by:

Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Child Care Licensing  
150 N. 18th Ave, Suite 400  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 364-2539  
(602) 364-4768 Fax

Maricopa County Health Department  
Paradise Valley Fire Marshal's Office

***\*Inspection Reports are Available upon Request***

Our practices are in compliance with these regulatory agencies. Copies of inspection reports can be obtained in the director's office or by contacting the appropriate regulatory agency.

**Liability Insurance**

The EEC Preschool carries a liability insurance policy through Church Mutual. This covers activities on the school premises that meet state requirements. Liability insurance coverage is available for review in the preschool office/room 9. Due to the type of our liability insurance coverage, we do not, under any circumstance, transport children.

**Program Description**

The EEC Preschool provides child-centered, developmentally appropriate early childhood experiences to families with children ages 2-5 years old in the morning program and ages 3-10 years old in our aftercare program. Our program is committed to building a community of learners that includes children and their families. Our experienced, highly qualified staff of early educators create stimulating learning environments for young children that celebrate each developmental stage. However, our work doesn't end there. As a Parent Participation Preschool we are equally committed to supporting and guiding parents in the evolution of their parenting skills.

**Desert Doves**

- For 13 children two years of age by September 1
- Meets Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30am to 12:00pm
- 2 Professional Early Educators; Child/ Staff Ratio 1:7
- Picnic & Play afternoon option, 12:00pm-2:30pm

**Hummingbirds**

- For 18 children ages two and three
- Meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30am to 12:00pm
- 2 Professional Early Educators; Child/ Staff Ratio 1:9
- Weekly music is offered as part of the curriculum
- Picnic & Play afternoon option, 12:00pm-2:30pm

**Pre-Kindergarten Program (Owls)**

- For 18 children four years of age by September 1
- Meets Monday - Friday from 8:30am to 12:00 pm.
- 2 Professional Early Educators; Child/Staff Ratio 1:9
- Weekly music and physical education
- Picnic & Play afternoon option, 12:00pm-2:30pm

### **Picnic & Play Afternoon Program**

- Monday – Friday from 12:00pm to 2:30pm
- Children can participate one to five days a week
- Multi-age class- optional nap, indoor and outdoor play
- Lunch is eaten for Hummingbirds and Owls

### **Aftercare**

- Monday – Friday from 2:30pm to 5:30pm
- Children can participate one to five days a week
- Multiage (3-10 year olds) sports and games, art, music, science, and unstructured play
- Must be 3 years old and potty trained to participate

### **Parent Participation**

The EECPP is a parent participation preschool committed to developing strong families and fostering a network of support amongst those families. We chose to be a parent participation program because we believe that the foundation of strong relationships with our children and our peers is time together. We understand that the expectation of parent participation is high. We recognize that it is not a commitment every family can make. It is, however, what fosters the unique community of the EECPP that draws families to our program from across the valley.

It is our hope that the high levels of parent participation integral to the culture of our program allow parents to build positive relationships with their children and their peers that will last a lifetime. We've developed these requirements in a manner that will hopefully allow parents time with their children and adult time with their peers. We want to address the needs of the whole parent in a similar manner as we meet the needs of the whole child.

The foundation of a parent participation preschool is volunteerism in the classroom. Parent volunteerism exists to support parents on their parenting journey. It is a time for teachers to guide parents in setting age appropriate expectations and limit setting and model healthy, age appropriate adult/child communications.

### **Participation Expectations**

The family contract spells out these expectations for overall parent participation:

1. Co-op in the classroom and finding a substitute from other families if unable to attend on the assigned day.
2. Participate in at least two of the three community work days.
3. Serve on one of the parent committees.
4. Provide additional support with tasks such as laundry, library, and play dough.
5. Participate in parent meetings.
6. Participate in community building events like play dates, Fall Fest, Auction, Sing and Feast.
7. Fills out all required volunteer paperwork.

8. Obtains a Fingerprint Clearance Card before volunteering.
9. Obtains a negative TB test before or within the first year of volunteering.

### **CO-OP Responsibilities**

Your responsibilities when serving as the cooping parent in your child's class include:

1. Arrive at 8:15 (per teacher's request) to help teachers set up and greet children.
2. Prepare and distribute snacks.
3. Clean up snacks and sweep if necessary.
4. Engage with or observe children in activities. Watch and observe teacher interactions.
5. Follow the teacher's instructions to set up or take down activities or materials.

### **Health, Safety and Nutrition**

#### **Signing In and Out**

In accordance with Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) R9-5-306 we must maintain a dated attendance record for each enrolled child. This must include the date and time of drop off accompanied by a signature that includes at **least the first initial and last name** of a child's parent or designee authorized to drop off and pick up the child. This is mandatory and is checked daily. You must sign in at 8:30am or after and at whatever time you pick up your child. You can not sign out when you sign in, as this can result in a fine.

#### **Emergency Card**

In accordance with Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) R9-5-304 a parent must complete an ADHS provided Emergency, Information and Immunization record (the Blue Card) that is signed by the enrolled child's parent. This is done at the start of each year for every child in our program as well as any siblings that may participate in sibling care during parent meetings.

#### **Immunizations**

In accordance with ARS R9-5-305, the state of Arizona requires preschool children to be immunized before attending school. Your child cannot be admitted to an early childhood group environment without a record of up to date immunizations. In the event that a record of up to date immunizations is not available, it is the parent's responsibility to request an exemption. There are two reasons the state will accept an exemption with appropriate documentation.

**Medical Reasons** – If the immunization would be a health risk to the child because of pre-existing medical conditions, if you are on an alternate immunization schedule, you must submit a medical exemption form filled out by your healthcare provider.

**Religious Beliefs** – If immunizations are against your religious beliefs, you may request an exemption by each type of immunization.

#### **Community Immunity**

The EECF supports the rights of each family to make the medical decisions they feel are in the best interests of their children. However, we also take our duty to protect the health of the entire community seriously. For this reason, we believe in the importance of community immunity. Community immunity occurs when the vaccination of a significant portion of a population provides a measure of protection for individuals who have not developed immunity. While EECF respects the rights of parents to make choices in the best interest of their families, the total number of non-immunized children without medical immunity must be limited to protect the overall well-being of the school and the larger community.

The following policies apply:

#### **Non-immunized children:**

No more than 5% of the EECPP student population will be completely non-immunized.

**Partially immunized children:**

At least 90% of students at EECPP will have at least one dose of each vaccine or have documented immunity. This is intended to honor parents' ability to utilize an alternative schedule for immunizations while still providing protection to the entire student population.

**Plan Implementation:**

1. Require existing families to submit additional documentation.
2. Notify parents of missing immunizations and withhold attendance or enrollment as required.
3. Enroll only fully immunized children or children on a modified schedule who will be fully immunized.
4. Evaluate rates of immunization relative to policy.

**Documentation Required for Exemptions**

**Medical Exemptions** – Exemption form provided by the State of Arizona.

**Religious Exemptions** - In addition to the required form, parents who choose to not vaccinate or follow the required schedule of vaccinations must provide documentation to EECPP that the parents have been apprised of the medical risks of non-immunization for their child and the community at large by a medical provider. This process is modeled after state law in California and other states that require such documentation with personal exemptions.

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease for which you cannot provide proof of immunity for your child, your child will not be allowed to attend preschool until the risk period ends.

**Regulatory Verification of Immunizations**

The Maricopa County Health Department verifies the immunization status of each child twice a year. **It is the responsibility of the parent** to ensure that each child has up to date immunizations and/or waivers on file with the EECPP. The EECPP reserves the right to fine families who do not meet notification deadlines.

**COVID-19 Policy**

Our covid-19 policies are informed by state and federal recommendations, Maricopa County specific data, input from health officials in our community, and feedback from our Board of Directors.

**Masking**

For adults and children, mask wearing is optional both in our classrooms and outdoors, with the exception of exposure as outlined below. In periods of high community spread, mask wearing is strongly encouraged in all indoor spaces.

Return to School Policies for Staff, Students, and Co-opting Parents:

- If an individual tests positive for COVID, they may return to school after five (5) days at home if symptoms have resolved. The individual must have been fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. The individual must remain masked for an additional five (5) days upon return to school (for a total of 10 days from positive test/onset of symptoms).
- If an individual has had a prolonged exposure to COVID (such as a household member, caregiver, carpooler, etc.), they must wear a mask to school for five (5) days from the date of exposure, test regularly, and remain symptom free to be on campus.

Please note: these protocols are applicable regardless of whether an individual has previously tested positive for COVID-19. This policy may evolve as additional information becomes available regarding the COVID-19 virus.

### **Vaccines**

We know that vaccines are the best protection against severe illness with COVID-19. Vaccines are now available to individuals beginning at the age of 6 months. We strongly encourage all families to consider this option.

### **Other Illness**

All children become ill from time to time. It is important to understand that your child's health affects the health of their classmates, teachers and volunteering parents.

Please do not bring your child to school if s/he is showing signs of illness such as:

- has a temperature of 100 degrees or more
- has conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- has impetigo or other contagious skin rash
- has diarrhea, **or has had diarrhea within 24 hours**
- is vomiting, **or has vomited within 24 hours**
- has a severe cold with fever, sneezing and discolored nose drainage
- has a contagious disease
- seems really sick without obvious symptoms.

**Children cannot return to school until they have been symptom free with no medication for a period of 24 hours.**

### **Volunteer Illness**

If you are scheduled to volunteer in the classroom and become ill we want you to know your health is more important than your help. When this happens please stay home and take care of yourself.

### **Absence Reporting**

Getting parents in the habit of communicating absences is an important part of the preschool experience. Any absence for any reason should be phoned in or emailed to the preschool when it happens. This allows us to document absences and track any illness patterns across the school. Contacting your teacher via GroupMe helps to let the teacher know and to plan for the student's absence, but does not meet this requirement. Please make sure to contact the director(s) either by email, phone message or text.

### **Medication**

The EECF does not administer medication during its program day to any child with the exception of life-threatening emergencies such as severe allergic reaction. A Medication Consent Form must be on file at the pre-school in order for staff to administer emergency medication.

### **Incident and Injury Reporting**

Bumps and bruises happen when you are a little person learning to navigate the world. In the event of minor incidents and injuries in the classroom, you will receive an incident report at pick up time outlining what happened and how it was handled. In the event of more significant incidents, parents will be contacted and first responders will be called as necessary.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire Drills are held monthly in compliance with the Arizona Department of Health Services. Evacuation maps

are posted in each classroom near the door. The alarm can be quite loud and it is not uncommon for it to upset our children at first. We ask that adults stay calm and relaxed when the alarm goes off. This communicates to the children that everything is fine.

### **Sun Safety**

Water play is an integral part of the early childhood learning experience and it is important that our little ones are protected. Please apply a waterproof sunscreen as part of your morning routine to ensure it has time to set prior to your child going out in the sun. Sun hats, sunglasses and light colored, loose fitting clothing are encouraged both for daily attire and as changes for when children get wet.

### **Pesticides**

The UUCP utilizes the pest control services of Western Exterminator. Pesticides are applied outside the building on a monthly basis. It is our policy to notify you forty eight hours prior to pesticide application that the process is being done.

### **Child Development**

We take our role as child development professionals seriously. We have extensive experience with what typical behavior looks like in a 2's, 3's or PreK classroom. We are not, however, therapists or physicians. If we identify behaviors that are outside what we understand to be typical for a certain age group we will let you, the parent, know of our concerns and provide you with the resources necessary to help determine if your child is in need of additional support.

Parents and teachers at EECPP work as a team to best support each child. If your child is receiving services such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy or has an IEP, we ask that you share your child's goals and let us know if there is something that we can work on, help with in class, or adaptations that need to be made.

### **Nutrition**

Because children consume relatively small amounts when they eat, we do ask that the food provided be nutritious and healthy. That means ***no candies or other processed, sugary foods*** for snacks.

Parents provide community snacks for our morning preschool programming.

**Please be aware that snacks must either be prepackaged or prepared on site. This is a requirement of the Maricopa County Health Department for all schools and group care environments.**

### **Acceptable Snacks**

Include at least 2 food groups

#### **Fruits & Vegetables**

Fresh fruit  
Fresh vegetables  
Dried fruits  
Salsa  
Guacamole  
Olives  
Pickles

#### **Proteins**

Eggs  
Hummus  
Beans

Turkey  
Chicken  
Edamame  
Dairy (cow or goat)  
Cheese  
Yogurt  
Cottage Cheese

#### **Carbohydrates**

Whole grain (crackers, bread, tortillas, pasta, muffins, cereals...)  
Granola  
Popcorn  
Rice crackers



Veggie Chips  
Corn Chips

**If possible, please try to avoid snacks that include:**

Genetically Modified Organisms  
High Fructose Corn Syrup  
Hormones (RBST)  
Food Dyes

**Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions**

Allergies must be listed on the Emergency Information and Immunization Records. They will also be posted on the classroom refrigerators to remind all parents when shopping for class snacks or special treats to keep special food needs in mind.

If your child has a dietary restriction, please provide some acceptable alternate snacks that we can store in the classroom or refrigerator that he or she may eat in case someone else brings an item that they should not eat for snack. We will post dietary restrictions or allergy concerns on each refrigerator. Parents should try to respect dietary restrictions when planning snacks. Please consult the parents of children with allergies if you have questions about particular foods you might offer them.

**Lunch and Aftercare Snacks**

Children attending classes who have lunch at school, or who are staying for picnic & play need to bring their own lunch. Again, **candy and other sugary desserts or treats are not allowed in the lunches.** We want them to eat foods that will support their growth and play, not rob them of the energy they need for the afternoon. Children who attend or stay for afternoon classes must bring their own snack each day. If a child brings both a lunch and snack to school each day, please make sure that the snack is clearly labeled and separately packaged from the lunch.

**Field Trips**

A field trip is a visit to any area not licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services for EECF use. The EECF does not provide transportation for scheduled field trips. Parents are responsible for making arrangements. We welcome parent help and suggestions on trip destinations, but the final decision about appropriateness is up to the staff. Occasionally we take walks around the UUCP campus including the desert trails behind the lower parking lot and DVLC. We will have a blanket field trip form for all parents to sign for these nature excursions. Due to the type of our liability insurance coverage, we do not, under any circumstance, transport children.

**Parental Access**

As a parent participation program, there will be consistent parental presence in our classrooms. For security purposes the doors are locked during the school day. If you wish to gain entrance at times other than natural transition times simply ring the bell and someone will let you in. Our program works because of your participation. Volunteer paperwork must be on file for any individual volunteering in the classroom.

**Outside Visitors**

As one of the oldest early childhood programs in the valley, we hold a unique position in the early childhood community. What has allowed us to maintain our reputation is that we are always striving to create the best possible environment for young children and their families. As a result we receive many requests from advocates and quality improvement professionals to visit the school. We welcome these visitors into our community and hope they are able to carry some elements of what we do beyond our walls.

*Technical Assistance programs* are an integral part of our teacher's professional development. It is a model

that allows professionals in a variety of fields to observe the teachers as they interact with the children and provide concrete feedback about changes that will allow them to become better teachers. These visitors include representatives from programs such as First Things First, the Arizona Self-Study Project, Smart Support and a variety of other quality improvement initiatives.

Extended family members are welcome to visit the classroom with the permission of the teacher. All outside guests must first check in with the Director. Children will never be left alone with anyone who is not an EECPP employee.

### **Compassionate Communication**

The EEC Preschool uses Non Violent Communication (NVC) or Compassionate Communication as our conflict resolution model. We ask that you take your concern, anger or hurt directly to those involved. We recognize at times this may be uncomfortable; however as the important adults in our children's lives, parents and teachers should constantly model how to handle ordinary, as well as extraordinary, situations. We want everyone to "use your words." It is for this reason that we do not take anonymous feedback. Anonymous feedback is gossip and gossip is detrimental not only to the subject of the gossip but to the preschool as a whole. If you have a problem or a concern, it is your responsibility to address it in a calm, direct, and respectful fashion at the source.

**For More Formal Conflict Resolution, please follow these steps:**

#### **Stage 1 (informal resolution)**

Parent addresses the grievance verbally as soon as it is possible to do so.

Ex. Jamie, a parent in the 2's classroom, feels she was spoken to rudely by Teacher Marie, the 3's teacher subbing in the classroom.

*Jamie should approach Marie privately after class and express her feelings.*

Ex. Teacher Kimberly says something during circle time that Delores, a parent volunteer feels was inappropriate.

*Delores should approach Teacher Kimberly after class and express her concern. Teacher Kimberly then has an opportunity to explain why she chose to share that information with the children.*

#### **Stage 2 (mediation)**

If the issue is not resolved during Stage 1, the Parent should then reach out to the Preschool Director(s). It is not typically helpful or constructive to share your grievance with fellow parents until it has been resolved to your satisfaction. During this stage, the Director(s) will facilitate a meeting between the parent and the teacher/parent to resolve the conflict.

#### **Stage 3 (formal grievance)**

Compassionate Communication skills allow us to resolve all but a very few situations through direct communication or mediation. In the rare event that we are unable to resolve a conflict through mediation, there is a formal grievance procedure the parties will be given.

### **School/Parent Communications**

Whether face to face at meetings and conferences or in writing through the GroupMe app, email, handouts and newsletters we strive to provide timely relevant information about the happenings at the preschool.

- Regular classroom communications via GroupMe, the EECPP Parent Notes, special announcements,

letters from the Director(s) and communications from the EEC Committees are among the many written communications you will receive as a family participating in the EEC Preschool. We rely heavily on electronic communication via email and GroupMe and expect that families read the information.

- The tote bags can be used for communicating with other families. For example, invitations to a party to which **all** class members are invited can be distributed in the tote bags and posted in the room. However, we ask that you mail invitations to events to which only a few children are invited. Likewise, please make play dates outside of class to ease transitions, not only for your child, but for other children who may overhear arrangements being made.
- Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. This is a time to exchange information, concerns, and observations and generally touch base. Sign up sheets for the conferences will be sent a week or so in advance.
- The monthly parent meetings are a required part of your commitment to the EEC experience. This is a time when adults are given an opportunity to build their community of peers. Teachers address classroom housekeeping issues and provide parent education. Please reference the calendar and information on the GroupMe for updates.
- Due to the nature of the community, we expect and encourage frequent communication between the families and the staff. However, it is important to respect the personal boundaries of the teaching staff. Teachers choose to share their personal contact information of their own free will. Please do not abuse this privilege. GroupMe should be used for most communication with teachers outside of emergency situations.

### **Program Feedback**

Parents may be asked to complete a brief questionnaire and/or a full feedback form in the spring relative to teachers in their child's class, the director(s) and the preschool as a whole. While the process may seem elaborate, it ensures that everyone's opinion is heard and that a fair evaluation is the final result. These evaluations are confidential. We depend on the specific observations and comments of the parents to help improve our teaching and our program as a whole. It is the responsibility of each family to complete and return the evaluations on a timely basis.

### **Administrative**

#### **Financial**

Tuition is due on the **first day of the month** for all programs. Tuition must be paid for a full month regardless of individual absences or vacation days.

A non-refundable tuition deposit for May is paid at registration.

Non-payment of tuition by the 15th of each month will result in a late fee of \$50 assessed to your account. The preschool operates on a cash basis with fees, tuition and fund raising paying for our operating expenses, so other families and the preschool rely on everyone's timely payments. If you face serious or unplanned financial problems, please speak with the Preschool Director to set up a payment plan or apply for an Emergency Need Scholarship.

Any fees assessed by the preschool for checks returned for insufficient funds must be paid by the family responsible for writing the check.

### **Late Pick-Up**

Picking up your children on time helps to promote a sense of well-being and trust for your child. Our community is mindful that other programs such as Picnic & Play and Aftercare are starting and teachers have schedules to keep. If a family is found to be late more than twice, a late fee schedule will be introduced.

Please let us know through your child's GroupMe class if you are running late. After 5 minutes your children will be escorted to the office to wait for you there with the Director.

We encourage families that have pick-ups at other schools at the same time to coordinate with other parents to pick up children. We recommend picking up your preschool children first before picking up your DVLC children.

### **Admissions and Withdrawals**

Application forms are available from the Director; they must be completed by all families interested in entering the program and must be filled out each year by returning families. Merely applying does not guarantee acceptance into the program. Only after you are notified of acceptance into the program will you need to pay the non-refundable registration fee and non-refundable deposit which is May's tuition in advance. The children of current families have priority for available openings in each class.

Children must be the age of the class they are entering by September 1st of the year they would enter that class (for example, a child would have to have turned 2 by September 1 of the year he or she would start the two's class). Occasionally, there may be instances where the staff might recommend that a child repeat a class. The entire staff will make such a recommendation, working closely with the family. Families that might need to consider holding their child back for one year will be advised about that possibility in the fall conference, if possible, or no later than the spring conference.

If you choose to withdraw from the preschool, you must give 30 days' written notice to allow the preschool staff time to prepare all the children, as well as your own, for the separation and to announce the opening. During those 30 days you are still responsible for fulfilling your responsibilities to the preschool and the rest of the families.

EECP retains the right to expel a child or family who endangers other children, families, staff or themselves.

### **Facility Policies**

#### **Parking**

Please remember that the EECP is one of many programs on the UUCP campus on any given day. The main entrance for the preschool is off the northwest lot. Do not use the marked handicapped parking spots or the electric car charging station spots unless you are legally entitled to do so even if you think that no one will need them. This parking lot can be accessed from 40<sup>th</sup> street and is a one way only lot. You enter on 40<sup>th</sup> street and exit down into the main parking lot.

#### **Unattended Children**

NEVER leave other children in your car while you drop your attending child off. This practice is not only unsafe but illegal. Please be aware that all employees of the EECP, DVLC and the UUCP are mandated reporters to the Department of Child Safety.

#### **Smoking**

There is no smoking in any classroom or on the playground, nor is smoking allowed anywhere in the

congregation building.

### **Noise**

The Memorial Garden on the East Side of the congregation buildings, just south of the parking lot, serves as a place of meditation, reflection and solitude - it is a spiritual and sacred place. It is also the peaceful final resting-place for many congregation members; please enter the area with respect and consideration. The area is cared for by the UUCP as a wildlife habitat.

### **Daily Routines -**

The philosophy of the preschool is based on understanding and research of how children learn best. Children can truly experiment and learn only when they feel safe, respected and cared for. Regular routines are an important part of our programs. Having a regular routine that is consistent and predictable helps the child feel secure; each can frame their exploration and play within an environment they trust. The routines between the different classes vary slightly, so each class schedule is explained at the start of the year and can be found posted in the classrooms and on laminated cards in the parent's apron pockets.

You can greatly assist your child by respecting the routines we have established and by following some guidelines.

### **Important Reminders**

1. Arrive promptly at your scheduled class start time.
2. Bring water and extra clothes every day, especially in the warm months for water play.
3. Sign in using Jovial. You may not sign your child in prior to class start time.
4. If you are participating in the class that day make sure you arrive at 8:15 and sign yourself in to Jovial. Please arrange a substitute if you cannot make it.
5. If you are not participating that day, help get your child established in the class. When an appropriate time arrives for you to leave, clearly and calmly tell your child you are leaving and assure them you will be back at the end of the goodbye song. Then leave. Be sure a participating parent or teacher is there before leaving.
6. Be there promptly at pickup.
7. Sign your child out, again using Jovial. Parents assume responsibility for their child upon arrival for pick up.
8. Keep your emergency contact and immunization information up to date.
9. Check in with the GroupMe app for daily updates.

By law, we can only release each child to his or her parents or to the persons so designated on the Emergency Information and Immunization Record or other written notice. If someone other than you will be picking up the child, please give a written note to the teachers. Occasionally, there are emergencies when someone not listed on the Emergency Information and Immunization Record must pick your child up. The teachers must know in advance, in writing, who the person is and that person must identify themselves with photo identification, such as a driver's license. This is for your child's protection.

### **Clothing**

Please keep 2 changes of clothing for your child in their tote bag. Remember to change clothing with the seasons. You and your child should dress for a messy and active day, every day. For those children who are not yet using the toilet, please keep a supply of two or three disposable diapers in their bag as well. Label clothing clearly and check lost and found on a regular basis.

### **Toys and Costumes from Home**

Children sometimes want to bring toys or comfort items from home with them to preschool. If they do, we teach the practice that if they set it down, it is acceptable for another child to pick it up to play with it. Since children are attached to their own “stuff,” this usually leads to the item being put away in the child’s bag. If a child does have a comfort item such as a blanket, it can be helpful to use during separation, so please discuss this with your child’s teacher.

We love for children to dress up and engage in imaginary play, so we have many costumes and dress up clothes. However, it sets up a potentially negative play dynamic for children to come to school in a costume, so we ask you to refrain from sending your child to school in a costume.

### **Picnic & Play and Aftercare**

Enrollment in Picnic & Play is on a first come, first served basis for those whose tuition and fees are fully paid and have no outstanding balances. Since most afternoons are usually completely filled, please let the Director know if you will not be attending so that a drop-in child may attend.

Picnic & Play and Aftercare Registration is handled on a semester basis. Picnic & Play and Aftercare sessions must have a minimum of 3 children to cover the costs of the teacher.

### **Discipline**

All children at times will need to express their anger or frustration. It is our job to help children label their emotions and assist them in controlling the behavior. We read a child's difficult behavior as a non-verbal attempt on the part of the child to state a need. Every attempt will be made to figure out the need and help the child with it. No child will ever be physically disciplined. No child will be shamed or humiliated. We use redirection, choices, modeling, and conflict resolution to solve behavior issues.

The environment will be set up, as much as possible, to be a “yes” environment. Conflicts can sometimes be avoided between children and adults if a variety of equipment is arranged in an artful way. Conflicts between children can be avoided if duplicates of toys are available and choices of activities are always present. If prevention fails, then children will be redirected, diverted or will be confronted with the logical consequences of their behavior. We do not use time out in the typical way because we do not expect children this young to understand why they need to sit apart for a specified period of time. We will remove a child from a situation, explaining why they are leaving, and get them involved in some other activity.

If a child's behavior has been determined to be causing physical or emotional harm at the preschool, which continually disrupts the positive atmosphere and social environment of the class, the following actions could be taken to correct the situation:

1. The teacher will make written observations of the child's disruptive behavior for a one-week period. During this period, there shall be at least one observation by the Director. A meeting of the parents and the teacher will be made within 3 days of the completed observation period.
2. The parents and the teachers shall agree on appropriate intervention and a plan going forward. Possible lines of intervention could include but are not limited to:
  - Shadowing the child to help prevent disruptive situations
  - Modeling of appropriate words and actions in small group and whole group settings
  - Redirecting child/ren to new activities when disruption occurs
  - Removal from class for severe or repeated incidents within a given day
  - Observation by an outside professional to suggest alternative methods of intervention
  - Parents of child may be asked to be or provide a shadow for the child at their expense
3. The teacher and Director shall monitor the child's behavior and work with the family and child until

the needs of the child prove to be beyond the training of the staff. If necessary, we will assist the family in finding an appropriate alternative preschool.

4. At any time during this process, EECF retains the right to expel a child who consistently endangers other children or themselves.
5. Each situation is different and unique; therefore the teachers and director have the right to make decisions on a case to case basis for the safety and wellbeing of everyone.

### **Child Development and Classroom Activities**

The following list of characteristics or dimensions of competence are the distinguishing behaviors of well-developed children according to Burton L. White in *The First Three Years of Life*.

#### **Social Abilities:**

1. Getting and holding the attention of adults.
2. Using adults as resources after first determining that a job is too difficult.
3. Expressing affection to adults.
4. Expressing mild annoyance to adults.
5. Leading peers.
6. Expressing affection to peers.
7. Expressing mild annoyance to peers.
8. Competing with peers.
9. Showing pride in personal accomplishments
10. Engaging in role-play or make believe activities.

#### **Non-social abilities:**

1. Good language development.
2. The ability to notice small details or discrepancies.
3. The ability to anticipate consequences.
4. The ability to deal with abstractions.
5. The ability to put oneself in the place of another person.
6. The ability to make interesting associations.
7. The ability to plan and carry out complicated activities.
8. The ability to use resources effectively.
9. The ability to maintain concentration on a task while simultaneously keeping track of what is going on around oneself in a fairly busy situation (dual focusing).

### **Guidelines of Classroom Activities**

We help children acquire these abilities through a wide variety of activities, situations and choices. We vary the activities day to day and consciously structure the room to provide:

1. Activities which enhance the use and understanding of the body.
2. Activities which help children become willing and responsible learners.
3. Activities which encourage growth in the ability to work with others.
4. Activities which provide satisfying intellectual achievement.
5. Activities which allow adequate time for creative expression, initiated by the children.
6. Art activities which emphasize the process and practice of problem solving.
7. Dramatic play activities that relate to actual life.
8. Block building that represents purposeful learning.
9. Science activities which encourage observation and experimentation.

10. Activities which emphasize mathematical concepts.
11. Activities that encourage oral language.
12. Reading good literature every day.
13. Cooking activities offered throughout the year.
14. Musical activities every day.
15. Emphasis on skills of communication and cooperation.

These will not be obvious, measurable, discrete activities but integrated experiences that happen in a safe and well-planned environment that promotes growth. It is the teacher's job to establish the environments - it is the parents' job to observe and interact with the children.

### **Guidelines for Parent Participation in the classroom**

We recognize that participation once or twice a month in the classroom is not enough for you to become completely familiar with the rooms and routines. Refer to these guidelines throughout the year to refresh your memory about your role in the classroom.

First, prepare to enjoy the day you participate in the classroom - it is always a growth experience and if the children sense you are happy and cheerful, they will respond accordingly.

Try to arrive 15 minutes early, by 8:15 am, on your co-op day to assist in the supervision of the children as they arrive so the teacher can greet each one at the door. Talk with other adults only when it is necessary to help with the day's program - you are there to work with the children, not socialize with your peers.

Address children by name. Stay on the child's level and maintain eye contact when communicating. Help the teacher encourage all the children to attend circle time, music and engage in activities in the classroom. Suggest an activity to a child if he or she cannot find one.

Take your cues from the teacher. She or he will let you know how you are needed in specific activities, and what help he or she would like to have. Make an effort to be near groups of children as they move through the rooms and outside. Cover all areas of your designated location by being aware of all the children playing there.

Clean-up time can sometimes be turned into a game with the children. Encourage everyone to help while putting all the toys and equipment away.

Snack time is a special occasion. Encourage the children to talk with each other as a special sharing time. Try to have one adult at each table.

Let the children explore; give them a feeling of freedom even though you are supervising them. Help out when asked, but let the children do as many things as they can by themselves. "I did it all by myself" and "I can do it" are evidence of growth in our children.

Encourage the children, particularly the younger ones, to use language to tell how they feel and what they are doing. Help them to increase their observation skills by describing what they are doing, or ask them to describe what they see, hear or feel.

Reinforce behaviors that should be repeated. Encourage cooperation by praising specific observations (e.g., "I like the way you are taking turns with the ball", "It works out for everyone when you wait patiently for your turn to wash your hands".)

When talking with a child, get down to his or her physical level - stoop, squat, or sit on a low chair so that the



child can see your face and eyes (not your knees). Always try to use positive language by choosing your words carefully. Say, "you may do this", rather than "don't do that". For example,

**Try saying**

Blocks are for building  
Use both hands when you climb  
Turn the pages carefully  
After Sue is done, you may have a turn

**Instead of saying**

Don't throw the blocks,  
You'll fall if you don't watch out  
Don't tear the book  
Don't grab Sue's toy

A good technique is to tell the consequences of an action, rather than label a behavior, such as "The sand will hurt John's eyes if you throw it. You may dig in it or pile it up."

Talk in simple, concrete sentences, but aim slightly above the child's level. Children comprehend far beyond their ability to produce language. In conversing with a child, give time for responses. When a child is working with a friend, do not talk to them and interrupt their conversation. A smile or a hug can often say more than a long stream of words.

Don't intrude in play unless you are needed and then withdraw quietly. You may need to model a play sequence when two or three children seem to want to be together but cannot coordinate their play constructively.

Offer a child a choice only when there truly is a choice and he or she is free to do either. When there is no real choice, don't confuse the children by giving directions as if they are choice questions. Tell them calmly what they need to do "It's time to go inside" or "Put the toy on the shelf" rather than "Shall we go inside?" or "Let's put that back, O.K.?"

Try to deflect conflict situations as you see them developing. Prevention can be achieved with early intervention or by redirecting the children to other activities, finding a substitute or second item, or for the older children modeling negotiating techniques. Help the children identify and label the emotions of the moment and clearly express what they want and hear what the other child wants. Try to use encouragement rather than enforcement. If you are unsure about handling a particular child or situation, ask the teacher for help.

It is normal for a child to behave differently on the day when his or her parent is participating, especially at the beginning of the year. You may find your child clinging to you, whining, or behaving in ways that are embarrassing or annoying or simply puzzling to you. Remember children tend to make the biggest fusses (and reserve the most love) for their parents. Your child simply finds it difficult to share you with the group.

Because preschool is an experience in trusting people, your child needs to know that he or she can trust you especially. Try to be reassuring, cheerful, understanding and calm. Let your child know that you are his or her parent always, even though you will be helping other children. Your apron signals to your child that you have a job to do and an area to cover. Your child may stay with you, move away or challenge your resolve to do your job, but do not let him or her keep you from participating in the day. If you set this routine from the  
ll feel freer to participate.



## 2023-2024 Early Education Cooperative Preschool Calendar

**August 2023**

9	Wednesday	Fingerprinting event (time TBD)
19	Saturday	All School Workday 8:00am-12:00pm
21	Monday	Parent Orientation 6:30-8:30pm
21-25	Mon-Fri	Home Visits
28	Monday	First Day of School for Three's and PreK
29	Tuesday	First Day of School for the Two's Class

**September 2023**

4	Monday	No School/Labor Day
19	Tuesday	2's Parent Meeting 9:00-10:30am Pre-K Parent Meeting 11:00-12:30 pm Coffee Cart 8:15-9:00am
27	Wednesday	3's Parent Meeting 8:45-10:15am

**October 2023**

9-13	Mon-Fri	No School/Fall Break
18	Wednesday	No School/Fall Conferences
19	Thursday	Fall Conferences cont'd (school will be held as usual)
21	Saturday	Fall Fest

**November 2023**

7	Tuesday	2's Parent Meeting 9:00-10:30am Pre-K Parent Meeting 11:00am-12:30pm Coffee Cart 8:15-9:00am
10	Friday	No School/Veterans Day
15	Wednesday	3's Parent Meeting 8:45-10:15am
22-24	Wed-Fri	No School/Thanksgiving Break

**December 2023**

14	Thursday	EEC Sing and Feast 10:00-11:30am Coffee Cart 9:30-10:00am
15- Jan 2	Fri - Tues	No School/Winter Break

**January 2024**

3	Wednesday	School Resumes
15	Monday	No School/Martin Luther King Day
16	Tuesday	2's Parent Meeting 9:00-10:30am Pre-K Parent Meeting 11:00am-12:30pm Coffee Cart 8:15-9:00am
20	Saturday	All School Workday 9:00am-1:00pm
24	Wednesday	3's Parent Meeting 8:45-10:15am

**February 2024**

3	Saturday	Open House 9:00am-12:00pm
13	Tuesday	2's Parent Meeting 9:00-10:30am Pre-K Parent Meeting 11:00am-12:30pm Coffee Cart 8:15-9:00am
19	Monday	No School/Presidents Day
21	Wednesday	3's Parent Meeting 8:45-10:15am
23	Friday	Returning Families & Sibling Commitment Day 24/25

**March 2024**

8 Friday 24/25 Enrollment for New Families Begins  
18-22 Mon-Fri No School/Spring Break

**April 2024**

3 Wednesday No School/Spring Conferences  
6 Saturday Spring Dinner & Auction  
16 Tuesday 2's Parent Meeting 9:00-10:30am  
Pre-K Parent Meeting 11:00am-12:30pm  
Coffee Cart 8:15-9:00am  
22 Monday No School/Teacher Professional Development Day  
24 Wednesday 3's Parent Meeting 8:45-10:15am  
25 Thursday Pre-K Family Tea 11:00am-12:00pm

**May 2024**

10 Friday Mud Day 8:30am-12:00pm/No afternoon classes  
15 Wednesday 3's Last Day of School  
16 Thursday 2's Last Day of School  
Pre-K Last Full Day of School  
17 Friday Pre-K Bridging Celebration 8:30-11:00am  
18 Saturday EEC All School Workday 8:00am-12:00pm

Purple = All School Events

Red = Day Off/School Breaks

Updated: 8/22/23