



Early Learning Center Parent Handbook 2024-2025

Mailing Address

**Eastern Mennonite University
Early Learning Center
1200 Park Rd
Harrisonburg, VA 22802**

Physical Address

**Park View Mennonite Church
1600 College Ave
Harrisonburg, VA 22802**

The Early Learning Center is located in the lower level of Park View Mennonite Church, on the east side. The Park Road entrance to the church is the closest entrance to the ELC.

Telephone: (540) 433-4002

Eastern Mennonite University admits students of any sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, regardless of handicap. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, handicap, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies and admissions policies.

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2024-2025 School Calendar EMU Early Learning Center

Home Visits (as needed)	Aug. 19-21
Classroom Open House Visits	Aug. 22-23
Parent Orientation (parents only) Park View Mennonite Church fireplace room	Mon., Aug. 26 (7:00 pm)
Parent/Child School Orientation Days	Thurs. & Fri., Aug. 29 & 30
Staggered Entry Days for Three Day Class	Tues. & Thurs., Sept. 3 & 5
Staggered Entry Days for Four Day Class	Tues. & Thurs., Sept. 3 & 5
Staggered Entry Day for (Th, F) Two Day Class	Thurs., Sept. 5
Staggered Entry Day for (M, T) Two Day Class	Mon., Sept. 9
Family Potluck and Activities Evening	Tues., Oct. 1 (5:30-7:00 p.m.)
EMU & Early Learning Center Mid-Semester Recess (NO SCHOOL)	Thurs. & Fri., Oct. 17 & 18
Parent-Teacher Conferences (NO SCHOOL)	Thurs. & Fri., Oct. 17 & 18
School Resumes	Monday, Oct. 21
Thanksgiving Vacation (NO SCHOOL)	Thurs. - Fri., Nov. 28 & 29
School Resumes	Monday, Dec. 2
Christmas Vacation for EMU and Early Learning Center (NO SCHOOL)	Dec. 16 - Jan. 8
School Resumes	Thursday, Jan. 9
Teacher Work Day (NO SCHOOL)	Mon., Feb. 17
Early Learning Center Mid-Semester Recess (NO SCHOOL)	March 3-7
Parent-Teacher Conferences (NO SCHOOL)	March 3-7
School Resumes	Monday, March 10
Easter Vacation (NO SCHOOL)	Friday, April 18
School Resumes	Monday, April 21
All School Family Picnic	Tuesday, May 6 (6:00 pm)
Last Day of (M, T) 2 Day Class	Tues., May 13
Last Day of (Th, F) 2 Day Class	Fri., May 16
Last Day of 3 Day Class	Thursday, May 15
Last Day of 4 Day Class	Friday, May 16

Updated May 2024

Mission Statement

Eastern Mennonite University Early Learning Center provides a developmentally oriented, child-centered program for children ages two to five years. The learning environment is set up to meet physical, cognitive, emotional, and social needs of young children. High priority is placed on the growth of trust, independence, and a positive self-image in the children served.

Introduction

The Education Department of Eastern Mennonite University bases its early childhood programs on principles of child growth and development within a Christian context. Many and varied experiences characterize the programs:

1. Many opportunities and various kinds of equipment are available to assist children in learning new and different uses of their developing bodies.
2. Unit blocks and other building materials encourage the expression of the child's creative resources as an art medium. These materials help children reproduce places and experiences in their world. They assist in discovering and working out mathematical and scientific findings for the child.
3. Cooking and woodworking activities build autonomy and understanding of the adult world. These activities also aid in the development of small motor coordination, introduce learning concepts in many curriculum areas such as science, math, and reading, and provide outlets for tense feelings.
4. Dramatic play is encouraged by many available props and a willingness by supportive adults to provide props as the need arises. In this way children have the opportunity to try the various roles they see in their ever-expanding world.
5. Opportunities to work with plants and animals and other things in the natural environment aid children in their growing understanding of the changing world of nature (science).
6. Field trips (3 & 4 day classes) are planned to aid in building and clarifying concepts in the world of work, people and nature. An attempt is made to utilize the work places of the parents in the programs (social studies etc.).
7. A wide variety of materials and techniques in painting, cutting, pasting, constructing, and coloring are explored and provide endless opportunities to choose and create.
8. Musical activities appropriate to the age such as finger plays, recorded music and rhythm instruments are provided and the opportunity to explore the world of sound is always available.
9. Puzzles and other manipulative materials encourage eye-hand coordination and the seeing of similarities and differences in color, shape, and size (math).

10. Story time is a time of quiet and relaxation. It is used to broaden the child's knowledge of the world and to aid in the understanding of personal feelings and the feelings of others. Mostly, it is used as a special time to enjoy the world of words as they relate to the young child.
11. Writing experiences that encourage creativity, drama, phonetic awareness, and fine motor skills are integrated throughout the day. (Language arts).
12. Opportunity to interact with peers, and assistance in learning and perfecting social skills are present throughout the total school program.

Goals

1. To provide the child with varied opportunities to interact physically with the environment.
 - a. The child will explore the physical world (field trips, P.E., movement, science etc.)
 - b. The child will interpret and represent the world and their experiences by creating with objects (blocks, wood working, art materials, sand etc.).
2. To provide varied creative opportunities for the child to learn through their natural ability to play:
 - a. Set the stage for the child to participate in dramatic play.
 - b. Support the children as they interpret the world and their experiences through dramatic play (housekeeping, drama, dance, etc.)
3. To promote the child's potential cognitive strategies that help to make sense of the world.
 - a. Focus on observation, discrimination, exploration, and discovery learning.
 - b. Provide math opportunities that involve predicting, graphing, ordering, estimating etc.
4. To foster the foundations of literacy through the development of spoken language and print related concepts.
 - a. Present varied opportunities to explore print (books, charts, posters, recipes etc.).
 - b. Use books and storytelling to develop a sense of story and drama.
 - c. Experience a wide range of written and oral language activities.
5. To provide opportunity to grow emotionally and socially.
 - a. Experience many opportunities for interaction with other children
 - b. Be introduced to a simplified mediation process.
 - c. Receive modeling, guidance, and affirmation for appropriate behavior.

Curriculum Description

The curriculum at Eastern Mennonite University Early Learning Center is based on the Developmental Interaction Theory of child psychology. This approach attempts to nurture the physical, emotional, mental, social, creative, and spiritual self of each child. It views children as developing human beings who pass through various stages as they mature and become competent individuals. It values nurturing leading to personal worth over the learning of skills and facts. It perceives children as learning most easily by actual involvement with people, activities and environment. Finally, the Developmental Interaction Approach to Learning allows children to be

children and develop in an unhurried way. It offers a good time of living, growing, and learning for each child.

At Eastern Mennonite University Early Learning Center the instructors model interpersonal relationships and peacemaking consistent with the teachings of Jesus. Spiritual views of the children's parents and significant others are honored as teachers respond to children's comments and knowledge constructs regarding God, the church, and faith.

In order to provide the children with a continuity of experiences important to the Developmental Interaction Approach to Learning, certain underlying themes are followed throughout the school year. The depth with which each theme is covered depends on the interest, materials and needs of the particular group of children. The teachers attempt to be sensitive to cues of the children and build curriculum on those suggestions whenever possible. This evolving curriculum changes yearly from class to class and daily from child to child and is called Emergent Curriculum. More specific information is provided by a calendar of activities.

For each theme, field trips, art media, cooking and/or science experiences, stories, finger plays, songs, poems, movement exploration, and the many available kinds of equipment and materials available in the environment are used as ways of constructing and extending the learning for the children. An attempt is made to use the talents, hobbies, expertise and professions of the parents in the program. Local people are also invited to demonstrate gifts.

Cultural diversity is seen as an important element in the curriculum. Celebrations, foods, and customs of the various cultures are explored with an attempt to practice sensitivity and eliminate possible stereotypes. If at all possible, we prefer to study diversity that exists among the children so that the learning is based in daily, observable reality and has concrete meaning for young children.

Integral parts of the early learning curriculum include outdoor play in all kinds of weather, a balance of large and small motor activities, "rough and tumble play," and health and safety as it relates to the children's needs.

In summary, the curriculum is designed to respond to the whole child. It attempts to nurture the emotional, social, cognitive and creative, and spiritual needs of the young child.

Background

The Early Learning Center was founded in 1977, when the Education Department of Eastern Mennonite University saw the need for early childhood students to work more closely in an early learning setting. The department wanted the students to have opportunities to observe and work with young children in a learning environment appropriate to their developmental needs.

The school is staffed by a director and teachers with degrees in Early Childhood Education (or related fields), and full time assistants. Students from the education department also serve as teacher aides as partial fulfillment for their education field courses.

Laboratory School

A laboratory school is the training ground for future teachers and persons working with children. Sending your child to a laboratory school not only provides the best care for your child, but also serves the community by helping train highly experienced and qualified teachers.

Most of the students who work with your child are practicum and student teachers in the educational field. However, students from other departments may also work with the children. These students help keep the ratio of adults to children at an excellent level and provide an opportunity for your child to make close bonds with several adults.

An effort is made to keep in communication with you about which students are working specifically with your child's class. Questions and comments are always welcome.

Licensing Information for Parents

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, we chose to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, a ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program, and record keeping. Criminal records checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health, and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs, or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of Social Services closest to you.

Virginia Department of Social Services
57 Beam Lane, Suite 303
Fishersville, VA 22939
(540) 332-2330

Governing Board

The governing board of the EMU Early Learning Center consists of the Director of Undergraduate Teacher Education, the Director of the Early Learning Center, and at least one representative from the Parents' Council. Meetings may be called as needed. The agenda for meetings is set by the Director of the Early Learning Center in cooperation with board members.

Parent Council

The Parent Council includes at least one parent from each class and meets periodically as necessary. The agenda is set by the Director of the Early Learning Center with input from the parents. Topics discussed include program, expansions, fund raising and parent meetings. The functions of the Council are:

1. To plan and implement fundraisers throughout the school year.
2. To be sensitive to needs of the school family and relate those needs to the lead teacher.
3. To assist the teachers when needs arise.
4. To give input to the Governing Board in making school-related decisions.
5. To help maintain parent involvement in a variety of ways.

Enrollment Policies

Children ages 2-5 are accepted on the basis of early registration. In general, for the 4-day program, children should be four years old by September 30. For the 3-day program, children should be three years old by September 30. For the 2-day program, children should be two years old by March 31. Children who are already enrolled in the program have first priority for the following school year. In December a new enrollment form will be distributed to the present school families. If those families are interested in enrolling their child or younger siblings for the following school year, they are to return the application and registration fee within the time stated in the letter. After those children have been accepted, any remaining spaces will be offered to those children who are next on the waiting list. New families may complete an application online (www.emu.edu/education/elc) beginning the first business day of January to be placed on the waiting list for the following school year. Hard copy applications can be picked up at the Early Learning Center or can be mailed out by calling EMU's education department at 540-432-4142. An attempt is made to balance the number of boys and girls enrolled in each program and to have a diverse group of children. Priority is given to the children of faculty and staff of EMU whenever possible.

Tuition

Tuition is to be paid in advance on a monthly basis to Eastern Mennonite University. Bills will be emailed to you by the tenth of each month. Even though tuition is broken down into monthly payments you will notice that the charge is based on a total year. For example, the months of December and May have fewer school days because we follow the university school calendar. The Business Office staff welcomes the opportunity to answer any questions you may have about your accounts and to help you explore ways of meeting payment due dates. A cashier is available in the Business Office to receive payments and to answer questions concerning the student account. Payment

may consist of cash, check or Discover/MasterCard/VISA. The office is located in the Campus Center next to the Post Office. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Please be aware that unpaid accounts will go before a review committee. If payment is not received, it will be necessary to cancel the student registration. School attendance in classes will not be permitted. Staff members will contact parents concerning balances before the review committee meets.

Online statements will be emailed monthly to the parents of students unless otherwise requested in writing. Failure to meet financial obligations is cause for denying the student the privilege of registering for or attending subsequent classes. Collection costs or charges along with all attorney fees necessary for the collection of any debt to the University will be charged to and paid by the debtor. All accounts in collection are reported to three major credit bureaus. Fees are added for late payments.

Withdrawal

Any child enrolled in the campus school is encouraged to attend on a regular basis. Monthly fees are to be paid regularly. A formal notice is required from the parents prior to withdrawal from the school. No reduction is given for family leaves for under one month. For a family leave of one month or more, the family is expected to pay 60% of tuition as a holding fee. The Early Learning Center reserves the right to withdraw a child after conferring with parents for the following reasons:

1. Serious illness of child
2. Lack of cooperation by parents
3. Mutual agreement between parents and teachers if the child's adjustment to the school is unsatisfactory
4. Delinquency in payment of fees
5. The school is unable to meet the needs of the child

In all cases of withdrawal, two weeks' notice shall be required, except in case of serious illness or accident.

School Hours and Attendance

The 2-day class sessions run from 9:15 – 11:15 a.m. on Monday & Tuesday or Thursday & Friday. The 3-day sessions run from 12:00 – 2:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday & Thursday. The 4-day class sessions run from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Please keep your arrival and pickup times as close to the scheduled times as possible to respect teachers' preparation time. If children arrive at school late, they miss part of the school day. At no time, however, will a proper and warm greeting be withheld by the teachers.

The instructor's planning time with university students and the teacher assistant is often limited. Tardiness in picking up children affects the effectiveness of the school program. Be aware that waiting after all their friends have gone at the end of a session is stressful to children and makes feelings of well-being difficult. While families are welcome to use the playground outside of school hours, the teachers are not responsible for children at these times.

A calendar is issued annually. It is located at the beginning of this handbook. The first weeks of school will be scheduled to allow for a gradual orientation to group life.

Parent Conference Days

A parent orientation meeting and a Parent-Teacher-Child Orientation is scheduled prior to school's start as part of the orientation to school for new students. During this orientation, parents and children are introduced to school routine. The child has an opportunity to build trust in the teachers while parents and teachers relate to one another. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled two more times during the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference each of these times and may schedule other conferences during the year as they feel the need. Informal conferences, telephone calls and notes are always welcome. A summary report is given to the parents twice during the school year.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Please check the **bulletin board in the hall** for information and parenting tips. In the event that you are car-pooling with one or more families, make certain to provide each family with all school information. Deliver all memos to the families the day they are provided. Check the cubby of each child in your charge each day at the close of the session to pick up any belongings or written communication.

A **communication folder** will be sent from school to home daily. Both teacher and parents will check the folder daily for notes and information. Teachers do not write in the folders every day but try to do it about once a week. If you write a note, we will respond.

A **calendar** of upcoming events will be issued. Snack menus, field trips, special activities or emphases will be recorded. Teachers will make periodic posts on the ELC Facebook page. Please visit and like the page to receive these communications. The instructors hope these communications will help you to converse with your child about their school experience and assist you in understanding your role in your child's early learning.

Art displays in the hallway are another means of communicating about your child's school experience. Along with providing beauty and decoration, these displays also give information about school projects and activities.

Behavior Philosophy

1. If the behavior is age appropriate we try very hard to make provision for that behavior in the program. We may need to rechannel it to a different place or a different time, but we accept the need and are grateful for age appropriate behavior. It tells us, as supportive adults, that the child is developing according to "schedule."

2. If the behavior demonstrates an emotional need in the child, we try to meet that need. We provide lots of "emotional nourishment" for the child. The emotional need may stem from immediate difficulties or it may be a deep-seated need having its basis in earlier and persistent problems. Generally, severe emotional problems take as long to heal as the child has lived with them. It is difficult for an emotionally disturbed child to learn. The stress the child is under absorbs the energy needed for learning.
3. Inappropriate behavior may be caused by some physical factor in the child. The child may be tired, hungry, or hurting. The child may be experiencing a hearing or vision disability. In the case of both the immediate physical need and a more complicated one, we work at meeting the need or needs as a way of correcting the inappropriate behavior.
4. Inappropriate behavior may be occurring because of the specific situation. In this case we change the environment. Usually many children in the setting resort to the negative behavior that is caused by present conditions. When we trap children into settings that are not right for children, we have no right to blame or punish. We must change the environment.
5. After having considered and deleted the above four possible reasons for present inappropriate behavior, we reflect on the possibility of ignorance or the impropriety of the behavior. The younger the child the greater the possibility that he/she does not know the behavior is wrong. When we decide that the child is ignorant in the matter, we talk, teach, persuade, and disciple. We stay away from punishment as much as possible. We may resort to that kind of correction when and if we must teach a tiny thing quickly. We stress over and over again the need for a safe emotional and physical environment for all children. We continually remind the children that any form of destructive behavior is totally unacceptable. We try to provide extra adult support whenever we detect a tendency toward unsafe or destructive behavior. We see restraining children from entering into unacceptable behavior as more growth producing than punishment afterward.

Virginia's Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers

The center adheres to Standard 22 VAC 15-30-484 "Behavior Guidance" and Standard 22 VAC 1530-487 "Forbidden Actions" in the Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers published by Virginia Department of Social Services Division of Licensing Programs, adopted and amended by the Child Day-Care Council, effective January 5, 2012. It reads as follows:

22 VAC 15-30-484. Behavioral guidance.

- A. In order to promote the child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being and growth, staff shall interact with the child and one another to provide needed help, comfort, support, and:
 1. Respect personal privacy;
 2. Respect differences in cultural, ethnic, and family backgrounds;
 3. Encourage decision-making abilities;
 4. Promote ways of getting along;

5. Encourage independence and self-direction; and
 6. Use consistency in applying expectations.
- B. Behavioral guidance shall be constructive in nature, age and stage appropriate, and shall be intended to redirect children to appropriate behavior and resolve conflicts.

22 VAC 15-30-487. Forbidden actions.

The following actions or threats are forbidden:

1. Physical punishment, striking a child, roughly handling or shaking a child, restricting movement through binding or tying, forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position, or exercise as punishment;
2. Enclosure in a small confined space or any space that the child cannot freely exit himself; however, this does not apply to the use of equipment such as cribs, play yards, high chairs, and safety gates when used with children preschool age or younger for their intended purpose;
3. Punishment by another child;
4. Separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member;
5. Withholding or forcing of food or rest;
6. Verbal remarks which are demeaning to the child;
7. Punishment for toileting accidents; and
8. Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances.

Transportation

Transportation is supplied by parents or car pools. Drivers are expected to come into the building with the child or children at the beginning of the session and make certain an adult knows of the child's arrival. Accompany your child to their cubby, and exit with them after school. Children should not be unattended at any time. Please do not use mobile devices at pickup and drop off time. Always keep your arrival time to scheduled class time to honor the teachers' planning time. At the end of the session drivers are expected to come into the building and assist their child with their belongings and accompany them to the car. Because teachers may be preparing for the next class, or cleaning staff may need access to the hallway, please exit in a timely manner.

The school may not release your child to anyone who has not been named by you as a responsible person on the Application.

If a parent does not pick up a child, the parent will be called and reminded. If the parent cannot be reached, one of the emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up the child. A note will be left on the door of the school as to the child's whereabouts and continued efforts will be made to contact the parent. If the parent and emergency contacts cannot be reached for prolonged periods of time, and it seems that an unforeseen incident has occurred, the child will be taken to Eastern Mennonite University's Education Department where a decision will be made to call social services or the police. At no time will the child be separated from an EMU teacher or representative.

Field Trips (3 & 4 day classes)

Teachers will notify parents about field trip opportunities. Attending a trip is a good way to spend time with your child and their friends. By not attending every field trip, you give your child the opportunity to develop independence and learn to know other parents. There may be field trips where all parents are asked to drop off and pick up at the field trip location.

Tips For Car Field Trips at Eastern Mennonite University Early Learning Center

1. The lead teacher will always have parent contact numbers, authorizations, and emergency information on field trips.
2. Teachers and parents will try hard to be "direction takers" for children. Repeat directions in a quiet whisper when behavior demonstrates that a child hasn't heard.
3. Be responsible to help a child get their turn at participation. Be the spokesperson. Add clarification statements in a whisper.
4. Help children move to the next area. Keep children in one group whenever possible unless other plans are made.
5. Be sensitive to anxieties. Field trips are exciting and do have a sense of uncertainty about them. Lend support and make the teachers aware of any anxiety. Avoid carrying your child instead of letting them walk.

Health

A school entrance health form is supplied by the school. The family physician must complete and sign this form prior to your child's enrollment date. Your child's first day of school defines the date of enrollment. At the beginning of each school year, EMU Early Learning Center carries activity accident insurance for each enrolled child.

Illness

In case of accident or illness a parent or authorized adult will be notified immediately. If your child does not feel well, please keep him/her at home. Children with fever, recurrent vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours, and communicable diseases should not be in school. Please call us if your child will be absent. No provision can be made for both indoor and outdoor supervision; therefore, your child will need to accompany the children for outdoor play.

Please report communicable diseases to school immediately so the information can be reported to the other parents to make them alert to the symptoms. The Code of Virginia requires licensed child day centers to report outbreaks of disease to the health department.

At no time may the school take responsibility to administer prescription or nonprescription medication to a child in the center. This includes antibiotic ointment, diaper rash ointment and sunscreen. Epi

pens may be administered if required procedures and paperwork have been completed. The school is required by law to report any suspected child abuse to local social services.

Clothing

1. Comfortable - Clothing should be comfortable, washable and easily managed by the child. The children are very active and are encouraged to enter into active play. Their actions should not be inhibited by clothing. Clothing that is warm or cool enough to be worn in school may not be heavy enough or light enough for children to play outdoors. Dressing in layers is helpful for this. We go outside every day unless it is raining or extremely cold. In the winter we often go outside in the snow. Your child needs to have a warm coat, boots and mittens as needed.
2. Washable - The programs provide many messy experiences and sometimes the smocks are not enough protection. Children should be free to engage in experiences with water, clay, paint, soil and mud without concern for clothes.
3. Manageable - The young child is working hard at doing things independently. Even though we try to minimize competition with peers in this area, it is important to feel successful; therefore, provide clothes with "do it yourself features."
4. Safe – Shoes (such as Crocs or flip flops) that skid or fall off when the child is running can be a hazard. We recommend shoes with a non-skid bottom.

Please provide a change of clothes to be kept at school, including underwear and socks. Remember to plan for seasonal needs. (All clothing items should be clearly marked with the child's name. Children do not recognize all their clothing items in a school setting.)

Emergency/Hazardous Weather

We will notify you by email by 7 a.m. for that school day's plans. When Harrisonburg City Schools are closed for the day, EMU Early Learning Center will not be in session. When city schools begin one or two hours late, EMU Early Learning Center will begin at the regular time. It is difficult to meet the wide geographical needs of the school families, therefore, please feel comfortable keeping your children at home when the weather is inclement. Inclement weather information will be broadcast on local radio stations and posted on websites. Snow make-up days will be left up to the teacher's discretion. In emergency situations parents will be notified by text alerts and email.

In the event of an emergency in which we cannot stay at Park View Mennonite Church, the children will be taken to the entryway at Park Place, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community. This is .3 miles southeast of the church on Shank Drive. We have a detailed emergency plan as required by VDOE. Monthly fire, tornado, and intruder drills are also required.

Phone Calls

The telephone number for the ELC is 433-4002. Please do not call the teachers during school hours unless there is an emergency or your child will be absent. If there is no answer leave a message on our voice mail, or call Eastern Mennonite University and leave a message with the Education Department (432-4142). The teachers may be called at home afternoons and early evenings. Please remember to confer with the instructors at some time other than when the children are their first responsibility. If you prefer, you may communicate via email.

Snacks

There will be a light, nutritious snack each day. Often the children will be involved in preparing it. Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are served with minimal use of added sugars or unhealthy fats. Teachers sit with children during snack time to model and encourage healthy eating. If your child has food allergies, please communicate with your child's teacher.

When you are responsible for a special snack (see Visits by Parents item), consider the nutrition value and food experience. **A small sandwich, muffins, fruit or vegetable portions, yogurt, cheese, cereal, or pasta are a few possibilities.** Please share the responsibility with the teachers to provide nutritious snacks. Healthy eating is important for all ages. Special napkins and cups are fun and often provide meaningful language experiences. Favors are acceptable but not necessary. They can provide an alternative to candy which is not nutritious. Many favors offer exploration in the areas of sound, air or visual discrimination. Consider the learning possibilities along with your child's wishes as you make those purchases. Make prior arrangements with the instructors at school or by telephone as to the date and nature of your contribution. We do not chew gum at school.

Child Care Food Program Recommendations

Supplemental food (snacks) should be served between other meal types and contain two of the following four components:

1. A serving of fluid milk as a beverage, or on cereal, or used in part for each purpose
2. A serving of meat or meat alternate
3. A serving of vegetable(s) or fruit(s) or full-strength vegetable or fruit juice, or an equivalent quantity of any combination of these foods. Juice may not be served when milk is served as the only other component
4. A serving of whole-grain or enriched bread; or an equivalent serving of cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc., made with whole-grain or enriched meal or flour; or a serving of cooked whole-grain or enriched pasta or noodle products such as macaroni; or cereal grains such as rice, bulgur, or corn grits; or an equivalent quantity or any combination of these foods

Visits by Parents

Parents are encouraged to visit the school several times during the year. Virginia state law stipulates that the custodial parent has the right to be admitted to the center. Observing your child in the school setting may provide new insights to aid in the understanding of your child's growth needs and may help you appreciate your child's individuality. Each school family is asked to provide a special snack at least one time during the school year. This snack may be your child's birthday celebration. If your child's birthday comes during the summer months you may plan a non-birthday school celebration. Please feel free to bring snack more often if you wish. We encourage you to plan a snack the children can prepare as a "cooking" experience.

Other Visitors

Whenever possible we suggest you leave other children at home when you come to school to observe or participate, so that your enrolled preschooler will have your full attention. No child who is not enrolled may "spend the day" unless accompanied by a parent. Please use Room 7 for visiting with other adults. The supportive adults in the classroom are expected to observe, lend assistance to, and facilitate relationships among the young children.

Parent Helpers

On occasions when college scheduling does not allow for student teacher aides, we may ask for volunteer parents to fill in as teacher aides. If a program is worthwhile, parents will learn much from the school when they become truly involved. The contributions the parents make with their varied interests are beneficial to the children and staff in the school.

Pets

If you have a pet you would like to bring from home for a visit to the school, make sure that the pet is appropriately immunized and is safe to have around children. Check with the teachers ahead of time about allergies or special fears class members may have.

Art

Our plan is that the children enjoy their creative art experiences. In order for this to happen, there must be an accepting atmosphere at school and at home. Young children are primarily interested in the feel of the media and the whole process of the task. The end product often has little importance as to its representation. When your child brings home his artwork, we suggest you remark on specific colors, lines, and shapes, or the hard and fun work the product represents. Refrain from asking, "What is it?" You may ask from time to time if they would like to tell you anything about their art. The wrong questions about a child's artwork may hinder his development through the various growth stages.

Toys and "Show & Tell"

Children may bring favorite dolls, teddy bears or other articles from home to share during greeting time. Such treasures often help the child feel more secure. They also help them to learn about property rights and eventually to share. Small toys that might get lost are discouraged. Some toys tend to be over stimulating to young children. The teaching staff will be responsible in determining which toys from home to place "off-limits."

Generally we do not use toys, stuffed animals, or jewelry as show and tell. Rather, we encourage children to bring a nature item, something they made, or a theme related item. The child should talk to the teacher about the show and tell item upon arrival. The teaching staff does not encourage "show and tell" but does recognize the value that it plays in developing self-esteem, verbalization, and independence.

Daily Schedule for Four Day Program

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 9:00-11:30 AM
(Schedule will vary as needed.)

- 9:00 Greetings among children and teachers.
- 9:10 Initial group time
- 9:30 Outdoor play if weather permits or indoor movement activities
- 10:00 Free activity period. Blocks and construction, art, sensory table, cooking, science center, pet care, dramatic play, snack, writing center, library, music, motor activities, etc.
- 11:00 Clean-up time.
- 11:10 Story time, closing group time
- 11:30 School dismisses.

Daily Schedule for Three-Day Program
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 12:00-2:30 p.m.
(Schedule will vary as needed.)

12:00 - 12:30	Children arrive, free choice play
12:30 - 12:45	Gathering time
12:50-1:20	Snack time
1:20 - 1:40	Classroom activities, free choice
1:40 – 1:50	Bathroom time
1:50 - 2:00	Cleanup
2:00 - 2:25	Outdoor time
2:30	Dismissal

Daily Schedule for Two-Day Program

Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday

9:15 - 11:15 p.m.

(Schedule will vary as needed.)

9:15	Free Play (Snack time at 10am followed by bathroom time)
9:35	Clean up
10:45	Circle Time
10:55	Recess
11:15	Dismissal