

The Early Learning Center

First United Methodist Church

Parent Handbook

2019-2020



930 North Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70802

(225) 387-4229

email: elc@firstmethodist.org

website: www.elcbr.com

Welcome from the Director:

On behalf of the entire staff, we welcome you and your family to the ELC.

We at the ELC understand the importance of the first years of a child's life. Research has taught us that more brain development occurs during the first five years than any other time of a child's entire life. A high quality program that focuses on what's known as "best practices" will give your child the best start in life, and we are thrilled you have chosen us to provide that for your child. We believe that children benefit most from a program that helps them develop physically, mentally, socially, and educationally, as well as spiritually.

We also believe the family is the main influence on a child's success in school and parents are their child's first and best teachers. We welcome you into our "family" here at First United Methodist Church's Early Learning Center. We thank you for giving us the opportunity to share your young children's lives with us and look forward to the time we get to spend with your family. Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact or visit the office.

Sincerely,

Pam Brignac

Director
FUMC Early Learning Center

MISSION

The Early Learning Center (ELC) is a non-profit ministry of the First United Methodist Church of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is dedicated to providing quality care and education to young children within a Christian environment.

PHILOSOPHY

The Early Learning Center uses a hands-on approach to learning. It adheres to the philosophy that children learn best by doing; therefore, at ELC, the child experiences a variety of activities in which he/she is an active participant. It is important to provide an environment that will foster the positive development of the total child. Implicit in this philosophy is the awareness of a child's need to be taught of God's love as expressed by the Christian faith.

GOALS

It is the goal of the Early Learning Center to encourage each child's growth in all areas: spiritual, emotional, social, cognitive and physical.

The Early Learning Center strives to foster independence and to provide an accepting and challenging environment appropriate for the age and stage of development of the individual child. The Staff of the Early Learning Center, as well as the Early Learning Center Committee and the entire membership of the First United Methodist Church, strive to foster the family through parent education and by being active child advocates, promoting those issues in the best interest of children and the family structure.

LA CHILD CARE LICENSING STANDARDS:

The Early Learning Center is a "Type III" center. As a licensed center, the ELC must follow the Louisiana Early Learning Site Licensing Regulations –Title 28 Education, Part CLXI. Bulletin 137 updated in October 2018.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Early Learning Center is licensed to operate by the State of Louisiana Department of Education – Licensing Division. It is our hope that problems or disagreements can be resolved on a local level with teachers, administrative staff and/or the center director. Parents with any significant unresolved licensing complaints may call or write:

LDE Licensing
P.O. Box 4249
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
Phone: (225) 342-9905 FAX: (225) 342-2498
www.louisianabelieves.com

The ELC Center is under camera surveillance. Monitors are located in the Center Director's office. See the ELC Camera policy found in the appendix.

ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSIONS

The ELC center accepts children from the age of 6 weeks through Kindergarten.

The ELC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national, or ethnic origin, handicapping condition, or ancestry or whether the child is being breastfed.

APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS POLICY

Waiting list applications are obtained from the Early Learning Center office or the ELC website. A \$50.00 non-refundable fee will be charged. The order of acceptance for the Early Learning Center is as follows:

1. A child presently enrolled* at the Early Learning Center.
2. A child of a parent who is a member of the ELC staff or First United Methodist Church staff. (At the discretion of the Director, every attempt will be made to accommodate the child of an ELC staff member).
3. The sibling of a child enrolled* at the Early Learning Center whose parents are active members** of First United Methodist Church for at least one full year. Kindergarten students will be considered current siblings for the upcoming Fall term enrollment decisions, only.
4. The sibling of a child enrolled* at the Early Learning Center whose parents are not church members. Kindergarten students will be considered current siblings for the upcoming Fall term enrollment decisions, only.
5. A child whose parents are active members** of the First United Methodist Church.
6. Sibling Alumni- A sibling of a child who was formerly enrolled at ELC in the last 10 years, with active FUMC members having priority over non-church members.
7. A child whose parents are FUMC members but who have not yet met the definition of “active” church member and non-church members, with FUMC members having priority over non-church members.

** “Enrolled” is defined as a child who is participating in the program, including paying the weekly tuition for childcare. Families with children currently enrolled maintain sibling status as long as they have a child at ELC who is currently enrolled and who has been accepted for enrollment for the upcoming school term. If a family chooses to remove their currently enrolled child from ELC and enroll them into another program, your youngest or unborn child*

on the waiting list is then no longer eligible for sibling status. Your family will be considered "alumni."

*** "Active" is defined as a member of the FUMC congregation who faithfully participates in its ministries through prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness, including but not limited to attending worship and/or Sunday school or participating in other disciple making ministries for at least 75% of the time allotted for their activities and making contributions in a regular manner according to financial ability. A FUMC member must be an active member for 1 year to qualify for priority status.*

APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

Applications for admission may be submitted to the ELC at any time. Once an application is received, the child will be placed on the ELC's waiting list. In the Spring of each year, the ELC Director will announce a deadline for applications to be submitted for the upcoming Program Year. Applications received after this deadline will be considered in order of priority only after the current waiting list has been exhausted and to the extent that any vacancies remain for the upcoming Program Year.

Once the application period closes and admissions decisions made, the ELC will begin notifying parents whose child(ren) has been accepted for enrollment for the upcoming Program Year. Parents must respond within 72 hours of being contacted by the ELC. If no response is received, the spot will be offered to the next child on the waiting list, in order of priority. It is the Parents' responsibility to keep their application up-to-date with their current email address and phone number. Additionally, if a child's parents fail to respond to two separate, consecutive enrollment offers, the child's application will be removed from the ELC's waiting list.

Parents may decline the spot offered and remain on the ELC waiting list for the next program year or enrollment opportunity. However, after two declines, the application will be removed from the ELC's waiting list.

If a child's application is not accepted for the upcoming program year, the application remains on file until the child is either placed, parents request that the application be removed or the application is removed for the reasons stated above.

OPT-OUT POLICY

The ELC's program year is from August to July and consists of three sessions Fall Session, Spring Session, and Summer Session. The ELC allows families to opt-out for the Summer Session while maintaining their enrollment for the upcoming program year. Families may opt-out for the Summer Session upon 1) acceptance of enrollment for the upcoming

program year and payment of the annual registration fee (per child) and 2) payment of the \$350 (per child) opt- out fee. The deadline for opting-out of the Summer session and payment of these fees will be set each year by the ELC Executive Director. Families who fail to meet the deadline and pay the required fees may be permitted to opt-out for the Summer session on a case-by-case basis.

DISMISSAL OF CHILD FROM THE CENTER

The following situations may cause a child's dismissal from the ELC:

- Unusual and/or extreme behavior on the part of a child or family of the child may result in disenrollment of a child from the ELC.
- Failure by the child or the child's family to follow the policies and procedures of the Center as stated in this handbook may result in a child's dismissal from the Center.
- Parents who are consistently tardy at pick-up time may be asked to withdraw their child from the ELC.
- Failure to keep tuition and other financial obligations current may result in a child being asked to leave the ELC.

REQUIRED FORMS

The following is an explanation of the forms necessary for the registration and enrollment of each child into the ELC. After enrollment has been confirmed, all completed forms must be returned to the ELC office before a child may attend class.

- Registration Form
- Current Immunization Record: A current State of LA, Certificate of Immunizations must be received prior to a child attending class. State Licensing and the Office of Public Health require that immunizations remain current. **This form must include a health professional's signature.**
- Emergency Contact Form: In cases of an extreme medical emergency, the signed emergency card may be used to obtain medical help as deemed necessary. If you change doctors, a new card should be filled out, signed and returned to the office immediately.
- Child Release Form: **Children will be released only to parents or an adult listed on the child release form. If no one but the parent is to pick up the child, the form must state this.**
- Photo Release Permission: The Early Learning Center may display photographs of children involved in center activities. Parents are asked to sign a photo permission

form giving the Early Learning Center permission to use these pictures on our website, private classroom sites created by parents, in the ELC newsletter and/or on our bulletins boards. Pictures are selected to highlight activities during school, our class environments or school or church events.

- Video Awareness: Classrooms are under video and audio surveillance; see Camera Policy for more details.
- Water Activities Permission: The children participate in several types of water activities each year: water table play, sprinklers, etc.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Children's record shall be the property of the ELC and shall be kept in the Admin office. The director shall supervise the maintenance of these records and shall secure the records against loss, tampering, or unauthorized use. Children's record shall be held in confidence. No employee shall disclose or knowingly permit the disclosure of any information concerning the child or his/her family, directly or indirectly to any unauthorized person. The center will obtain written, informed consent from the authorized parent or guardian prior to releasing any information or photographs from which the child might be identified, except for authorized state and federal agencies.

DAILY OPERATIONS

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents or guardians are welcome to visit the Center at any time during regular hours of operation as long as their child is enrolled at the Center. However, staff cannot visit or hold a conference with a parent or guardian while supervising children. If you wish to schedule a conference with a teacher, please contact the office. We ask that parents not visit classrooms during nap times.

HOURS AND DATES OF OPERATION

The center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am until 5:30 pm. The Center will be closed on the following days:

	Closed Days
2019	
August 2, 5, 6	Staff Development Days
August 7	Parent Orientation/Open House
September 2	Labor Day
November 27	Staff Development Day
November 28, 29	Thanksgiving
December 24 -27	Christmas
December 30	Staff Development Day
December 31- Jan 1	New Years
2020	
January 20	Martin Luther King Day
February 24-25	Mardi Gras
February 26	Staff Development Day
April 10	Good Friday
April 13	Staff Development Day
May 22	Staff Development 1/2 Day
May 25	Memorial Day
July 3	Independence Day

BUILDING ACCESS

The entrance to the Early Learning Center is through the FUMC youth building on America St. Parents need to visit the office to have their fingerprint scanned into the system. Your fingerprint will give you access into the Center between the hours of 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Monday – Friday.

The front entrance on North Blvd. may be used:

1. by downstairs parents
2. when children are picked up or arriving in the middle of the day
3. during inclement weather
4. by grandparents
5. if you are picking up after 5:15 pm.

Please try not to use this entrance if you are going upstairs unless absolutely necessary. Please do not linger in the center if you are using this driveway; traffic quickly backs up onto North Blvd. at busy times of the day.

CHILD DROP OFF/PICK-UP POLICY

Parents **must sign their child into** the class each morning.

Parents or authorized persons picking children up from the Center **must sign the child out.**

Only those persons listed on the **Child Release Form** can pick up a child up from the Center. If anyone other than those authorized on that form is to pick up a child, written permission must be given to the Center by the parent/guardian. Written permission must include the person's full name, date, and signature of authorized parent or guardian.

Every child enrolled in the Center must have an **Emergency Contact Form** on file. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the Center of any changes on this form.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is scheduled daily, morning and afternoon, for all children. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. Washable clothes are recommended. All children (Toddlers – K) are required to wear shoes every day. All children go outside, unless it is raining. The gym may be available for inclement weather. A child cannot be permitted to remain inside the center when their class is on the playground. All children are expected to participate in outdoor play. If a child is unable to participate in outdoor play, they should not be brought to school unless it is cleared through the office.

DRESS CODE

Children should wear clothing and shoes that are appropriate for play and creative exploration. If the weather permits (above freezing, no severe weather warnings, and no air quality warnings) we will take the children out to play. Label all clothing and belongings with your child's name. Each child should have at least one set of weather appropriate extra clothing left in his/her Nap Bag. Infants and toddlers should have two or more sets of clothing.

We will mark any unmarked clothing. **Flip flops, crocs, cowboy/girl boots and sandals/shoes that do not stay on during the day will not be allowed. Shoes with shoestrings that need to be tied are only allowed for children who can tie shoes on their own.** If your teacher requests that particular footwear no longer be worn to school, please honor her request. The most common reason for children's accidents has been inappropriate footwear. The best choice for children safety is a closed toe, Velcro shoe.

Pacifiers attached to strings or ribbons shall not be placed around children's necks or attached to children's clothing. Pacifiers attached to sleep sacks or stuffed toys are not allowed in cribs.

Please refrain from asking teachers to change children's clothing for extra-curricular activities after school. This is often impossible for teachers to accomplish while also supervising the remaining children. Please plan to arrive early enough at pick-up time to help your child change.

PHOTOGRAPHING CHILDREN

The Early Learning Center may display photographs of children involved in center activities. Parents are asked to sign a photo permission form giving the ELC permission to use these pictures on our website, private classroom sites created by parents, in the ELC newsletter and/or on our bulletin boards. Pictures are selected to highlight activities during school, our class environments or school events.

The Early Learning Center is not responsible for any photographs of children taken at private non-ELC functions.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

The Early Learning Center does not provide transportation to or from the center for children. Walking field trips for preschoolers and kindergarteners are scheduled regularly; however, parent volunteers are needed for these events to ensure children's safety.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The ELC has many opportunities for parent involvement. While you are welcome any time, please do not feel obligated to attend all of the events. Depending on the age and temperament of your child, you may want to plan to attend a few of these events or many.

Parents arriving and leaving in the middle of the day is often confusing and stressful for younger children, causing distress for some. Some parents may not have the option of missing work to attend events. You can speak with your child's teacher about other ways you can make special contributions to the classroom as a form of involvement.

FEES & FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ELC offers several different tuition payment options, allowing families to pay biweekly or monthly, as described below. Any child entering the ELC mid-month will have their tuition fees pro-rated using a daily rate based upon the date the child begins in the program.

Families interested in prepaying tuition by the program session (Fall, Spring and Summer) or full program year should contact the ELC Administration office to determine the total amount owed.

Registration and Summer Opt-Out Fees

A **\$ 350.00 registration fee** for the Program Year (Aug – July) per child is due for each Program Year. A **\$150.00 registration fee** is for Summer Only attendees. The registration fee is non-refundable. The **Summer Opt-Out fee is \$350 per child**.

The annual Fees are due within 30 days of notification of your child's acceptance for the upcoming Program Year or Summer, as applicable, unless a deadline is determined by the admin office. If the annual Registration Fee is not paid within 30 days, the child may be removed from the upcoming Program Year and the spot given to the next child on the waiting list.

Bi-Weekly Tuition Payments through the Auto Draft Program

For Families enrolled in the Auto Draft program, tuition is paid biweekly. Through this program, the ELC will initiate an ACH withdrawal from the bank account designated by the family every other Monday which covers tuition for the week of the withdrawal and the following week. To enroll, please contact the ELC office for the appropriate form. If you need to stop an ACH draft due to change in banking information or withdrawal from ELC (a written 2 week notice for withdrawal is required per our policy), please contact the ELC office immediately.

Late Fees / NSF Fees

If a check or ACH withdrawal is returned or rejected due to insufficient funds, a \$25 NSF fee will be assessed. The outstanding payment, the NSF fee and applicable late fees must be paid within 3 days of being notified that the payment was returned. After three payments in a program year are returned or rejected due to insufficient funds (whether an ACH transaction or check), the family will be removed from the Auto Draft program (if applicable) and tuition and other fees must be prepaid by the month by cashier's check, certified check or money order. After 6 months of timely payments, the family may request to re-enroll in the Auto Draft program or resume payment by personal check.

Failure to bring tuition and fee payments current may result in the child's dismissal from the Center. Additionally, families who have a balance from a prior program year or other unpaid

fees will not be permitted to start the upcoming Program Year until their account is brought current.

Supply Fee

Supply fees are determined annually for each class and are due by the date set by the ELC.

Withdrawal

When a child is withdrawn by the parent, a two-week written notice prior to the withdrawal is required, including any unpaid tuition and fees. If this two-week written notice is not given, the parents will be held responsible for payment of tuition for a maximum of two weeks, unless the position is filled within that two-week period. Should a child be withdrawn from the center at the request of the director for violation of policies, the parents shall not be charged for a two-week period even though such children shall be removed immediately from the center.

When a child is withdrawn from the ELC, a new registration fee must be paid before he can be re-enrolled, provided there is an opening. Openings cannot be held unless tuition is paid for the opening.

Late Pick Up Fee

The Center is open from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Late fees go into effect at 5:30 p.m. Parents of children who are in the ELC after the scheduled departure time will be charged a late fee. The fee is \$1.00 per child for every minute the first time the parent is late picking up their child(ren). Thereafter, the fee will increase \$1.00 per child every minute for each successive occurrence (example: \$2.00 for every minute the second time, etc.). Payments must be made by the next tuition payment. ELC reserves the right to remove any child from its program upon the third such instance in any term.

TUITION RATES 2019-2020

Age Range	Tuition
Infants, Toddlers, Two's	\$210.00 per week
Preschool/Kindergarten	\$180.00 per week
Church member discount	\$ 5.00 per week
Sibling discount	\$ 10.00 per week

Tuition will remain due during the absence of a child or during Early Learning Center holidays or emergency closures.

CURRICULUM

Infant/Toddler/Twos

The Creative Curriculum, published by Teaching Strategies, for Infants, Toddlers & Two's is a comprehensive curriculum designed to help teachers and caregivers implement developmentally appropriate practices and offer responsive daily routines and meaningful experiences that nurture learning and development. It allows us to focus on providing experiences that best highlight the child's interests, needs, and strengths.

The Creative Curriculum:

- is based on 38 objectives for development and learning, which are fully aligned with the *School Readiness Goals for Infants and Toddlers* and the state's early learning standards.
- offers daily opportunities for teachers and caregivers to use assessment information to individualize routines and experiences for young children.
- provides built-in guidance for building the kind of meaningful partnerships with families that are an essential factor in how infants, toddlers and twos experience your program and how much they gain from it.

Preschool and Kindergarten

The Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers and Kindergarten focuses on intentionality in play while its project based approach encourages children to explore and discover. One can see how projects provide the narrative and structure to both the children's and teacher's learning experiences. Based on our belief that children learn best by doing, discussing and revisiting ideas and experiences is essential to gain better understanding and learning. Children's learning can cover many disciplines during a single unit of study. The length of each project is determined by the children's interests. The investigations in each study allow teachers to include what they want and need to teach children, as well as the children's questions and interests about the study to deepen their understanding of the world around them. To further complement this, we are moving towards a "Reggio Inspired Approach", which integrates well with the curriculum. Both approaches believe that children, as well as adults, grow in knowledge through exploration of their physical environment and their interactions with people.

We also use the accompanying assessment tool, TS Gold. We find it fits well with our belief that all children share certain needs, and they can learn best in a comprehensive child development program designed to meet those needs. We believe that children benefit most from a program that addresses their social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth, as well as developmentally appropriate academic growth.

TRANSITIONS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

TRANSITION FROM HOME TO CENTER

Before leaving your child at the ELC for the first time, please be sure you understand everything about your child's care. Be sure to read this Parent Handbook and plan a visit to the center. Ask every question you might have about the center, the policies and the staff. Any anxiety or reservation in the parent may affect the child's feelings about being at the center.

You may bring a familiar object – blanket, stuffed animal or soft doll – to leave in your child's cubby for the day. You may want to bring pictures of the family for the child to look out throughout the day. You are welcome to call the center at any time to ask about your child's day.

Toys from home are not allowed in the classrooms, unless specifically requested by a teacher.

TRANSITION FROM THE INFANT ROOM TO TODDLER CLASSROOMS

A child entering the center in the infant room will move to a Toddler classroom between the age of 12 and 18 months depending upon availability of space.

The Director, Curriculum Coordinator and/or Infant Room teacher will consult with parents regarding their infant's move to a Toddler classroom. The move typically happens in August or December. Before any move, the toddler room staff will visit the infant room to "get to know" the children who will be entering their classroom and children will have opportunities to visit the classroom.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED YOU TO BRING TO THE CENTER

- Before your child's first day at the ELC, bring all forms necessary to complete your child's registration, including a current immunization record.
- **Nap Bags (supplied by the center) are to be used for each child. Clothing items and blankets should be placed in the bag.** Backpacks are not to be used in addition to Nap Bags due to limited space for storage in the classroom. Infant bags should contain only supplies to be left at the center. If your child is going home with a different person at the end of the day, overnight supplies can be left in the center office, just please be sure the child's bag is labeled.
- **Nap Bags are to be taken home each and every Friday.** Please be sure to laundry all bedding supplies before returning them to the classroom.

- An extra set of clothing including socks and underwear should be placed in your child’s Nap Bag. Please label all clothing with your child’s name and place in a labeled zip lock bag. Check clothing in your child’s bag as the season changes and/or your child grows.
- Toddlers and Twos will bring a child-sized blanket for your child to use at naptime. You may also bring a travel-size pillow and/or a small comfort toy for your child. Threes and older will bring a tri-fold nap mat and a “nap roll”.
- On Splash Days, children should arrive in their swimsuit, have sunscreen already applied and have a cover-up and towel. A hat may also be worn for extra sun protection. Please be sure they bring a change of clothes on splash day.
- Infants should bring two sets of extra clothing, labeled bottles (in a small insulated bottle bag), extra formula, and an extra pacifier (if applicable). Infants should also bring a “sleep sack” for naptime. Blankets are not allowed in cribs per licensing guidelines.
- **Toys from home are not allowed in the classrooms, unless specifically requested by a teacher.**

EMERGENCY/EVACUATION PLANS

Fire drills are practiced monthly. We are required to practice drills at various times of the day during the year, including naptime. If you happen to be in the building when the alarm signal is sounded, please respect the drill and do not try to leave with your child during the drill. Teachers are responsible for your child’s safety and take these drills seriously.

Tornado drills are practiced during the months of March, April, May and June.

If the center closes for an emergency or weather related reason, to the best of our ability, you will be notified by phone, email, radio and/or television. The ELC will follow East Baton Rouge Parish School closing for inclement weather. The ELC reserves the right to close the center for other weather-related events after consultation with the ELC committee and FUMC when it is deemed to be in the best interests of our students, staff, and the Center. Check with your local TV/Radio stations for closing announcements.

In emergencies of an immediate nature such as hurricanes, fires, flooding, chemical spills, etc., parents will be expected to pick up their children immediately. ELC may also be closed if an incident in the downtown area threatens the safety of the ELC children and staff.

HEALTH/ IMMUNIZATIONS

- The state requires that each child enrolled in a child care center have an immunization record signed by a Physician or Designee. This form is due at the time of admittance. **It is the parent's responsibility to keep this form current and to update all immunizations records in the center office.** The schedule set by the State Health Department will be used.
- If for some reason your child cannot receive an immunization on schedule, a note from the doctor stating that fact must be on file in the ELC office. A note excusing a child from an immunization is in effect for thirty days. After thirty days, the child must either have the immunization, or an updated note explaining why the immunization was not given.
- Every morning, each child will be checked by a staff member for signs of illness, bruises or other injuries. If an injury is noted, the parent will be asked to explain how the injury happened. If a child has an illness or infection - fever, rash, diarrhea, etc. - he/she will not be allowed to stay at the center.
- If your child becomes ill at home with a contagious illness or you detect lice, please contact the office as soon as possible so that other families can be alerted.
- Occasionally a child will become ill while at the center. For the safety and comfort of your child and to protect staff and other children from contracting illnesses, you will be contacted and will be expected to pick up your child. Your child will be sent home if he/she:
 - Is running a fever of or above 100 auxiliary,
 - Has two or more loose bowel movements or any that cannot be contained in a diaper,
 - Has a contagious disease,
 - Is vomiting, or
 - Has lice.
- Children who become ill while at the center will be taken to the office. Parents should go to the classroom to pick up items that need to go home and to sign your child out from the center. Parents should then proceed to the office to pick up your child.
- **If a child is sent home from the center with one of the above conditions, he/she must be free from symptoms of illness including fever without medication for 24 hours.**
- In the event of a medical emergency, every effort will be made to notify the parent or guardian immediately. If the parent or guardian cannot be notified, the center will try

to reach the persons listed on the child's emergency contact form. In the case of extreme circumstances, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to the hospital. The parent or guardian will be simultaneously notified in such extreme cases.

- Immediate notification will be given to the parent or designated person if the following situations should occur with their child:
 - Blood not contained in an adhesive strip
 - Head injury
 - Human bite that breaks the skin
 - Any animal bite
 - An impaled object
 - Broken or dislodged teeth
 - Allergic reaction
 - Skin changes, e.g. rash, spots, swelling etc.
 - Unusual breathing
 - Dehydration
 - Any temperature reading over 100 axillary
 - Any injury or illness requiring professional medical attention

All parents, guardians, children and staff are asked to wash their hands when arriving at the Center. Staff, parents or guardians should assist younger children with hand washing.

Please see the Appendix for the licensing required Medication Policy.

MEALTIMES

A mid-morning snack, mid-afternoon snack and mid-day meal will be served to the children. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child; there is a \$5 lunch fee that can be paid at the office.

Parents of infants are responsible for providing formula or breast milk. Bottles shall be labeled with the child's name or initials and the date. Infant bottles with formula premixed or with breast milk must be transported to the Center on ice or in an insulated bag.

Parents must have authorization from a licensed health care provider (physician, dentist, nurse practitioner) in order to put cereal in bottles with infant formula.

Sippy cups brought from home to the Center must be emptied and taken home by the parent. Sippy cups containing liquids cannot be left in the Center refrigerators overnight.

HOLIDAY FOOD

Refreshments for special occasions and holidays may be brought to the Center. Holiday refreshments should be co-coordinated by the teachers and room parents. No other food may be brought into the Center. No peanuts or peanut products may be brought into the center. The ELC is an **"Allergy Aware Zone"**.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays may be celebrated in the classroom on each child's birthday. Should the parent(s) wish to do so, birthdays will be celebrated at the regularly scheduled snack time. Please do not plan parties involving favors, themes, gifts, etc. **Parents must consult with your teacher about your plans beforehand.** In the event of numerous birthdays in one week, you may be asked to coordinate with other parents to possibly limit the amount of sweet treats served in a short period of time.

SPECIAL DIETS

Parents must provide a written statement from a medical authority when the child requires a special diet. No food or drink other than infant food/formula may be brought into the Center unless the parent has authorization from a licensed health care provider (physician, dentist, nurse practitioner).

Parents must provide a statement from a licensed health care provider (physician, dentist, nurse practitioner) informing the center of a child's food allergy. The center will make accommodations for the child's allergy whenever possible. Parents may be required to provide special diets, if so, it should mimic the ELC menu as much as possible.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Chapel– On Thursday morning upstairs classrooms (3 year-old through kindergarten) visit the chapel for a short service of prayer and music.

Spanish Lessons – A Spanish teacher visits weekly to engage children 3 years and older in Spanish lessons.

Tumbling with Ms. Lisa – Once a week, beginning with the 2 year-old classrooms, children visit with Ms. Lisa White for tumble lessons.

Pumpkin Decorating/Halloween – Families are welcome to bring decorated Pumpkins to adorn the hallways as Halloween approaches. Halloween is celebrated on the last Friday before 10/31.

Harvest Feast – A Thanksgiving lunch is served for ELC families the week before Thanksgiving. Parents and teachers collaborate to display classroom artwork, and children join their families for lunch.

Christmas Celebrations – A center-wide “Family Chapel Service” is held in the FUMC Sanctuary. Following this service, individual classroom Christmas parties take place.

Mardi Gras -. On the Friday before Mardi Gras break, an event will take place to celebrate.

Easter - During the week prior to Easter the downstairs classrooms have Easter Egg hunts at the center. The upstairs classrooms have their hunts at a special location. The ELC is closed on Good Friday.

Week of the Young Child - The Week of the Young Child™ is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers and families. This week occurs in the Spring with special events planned for each day. **Grandparents day** is celebrated at the end of this week.

Teacher Appreciation – On one designated day of each month, ELC staff will be appreciated by a scheduled classroom.

Art Show/Promotion Celebration – The PreK 4 and Kindergarteners celebrate the end of the school year in May. The children participate in a ceremony and display different types of art they have studied in their classrooms during the year.

Picture Day - A professional photographer will take individual pictures of the children in the fall. Class pictures are taken in the spring. These dates will be posted on the ELC website.

Summer Camp - Kindergarteners and school agers begin Summer Camp on the Wednesday

after Memorial Day and continue through the months of June and July. There is limited enrollment with priority given to ELC families, past and present. Activities include: weekly field trips, swimming, games, arts & crafts, etc.

Speech & Hearing Screenings - For a minimal fee, parents can schedule a speech and hearing screening on a pre-determined date in early Fall for their child or as needed year round. The dates will be announced in early August.

Barnes & Noble Bookfair - Twice a year, usually around Christmas and Easter, we hold a Bookfair to raise funds for classroom books and/or toys.

APPENDIX

BITING POLICY

Children biting children is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors in group childcare. It can occur without warning, is difficult to defend against and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the parents and the caregivers involved.

For many toddlers, the biting stage is just a passing problem. For other children, biting is a persistent and chronic problem. Children may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

When a child is bitten:

- The child is separated from the biter.
- The bitten child is comforted.
- First aid is administered – the area is cleaned with soap and water – ice is applied.
- An incident/accident report is written and the parent is notified.

For the biter:

- The biter is immediately removed from the situation and is told, “Biting hurts, and we don’t bite our friends.” No emotion is shown to the biter. Caring attention is focused on the bitten child.
- The biter is redirected to another area of play.
- A caregiver shadows the biter.
- An accident report is written. The parent is notified.

For the staff and parents:

- In cases of repeated acts of biting, the staff will meet with the Director and/or Assistant Director for advice, support and strategy planning.
- Biting activity in the room will be charted.
- Children who are biting or children who have a tendency to be bitten will be shadowed.
- A conference will be held with the parents of the biter to develop a behavior management plan.
- Communication will be maintained with the parents of the biter. If it is deemed in the best interest of the child, the center, and the other children, the family may be asked to withdraw from the center.

Camera Policy

Camera surveillance shall be limited to classrooms only. The ELC reserves the right to place cameras in a location known to require a greater need for surveillance (such as the playground) at a later date. Surveillance shall not occur in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as restrooms.

The Surveillance system and all resulting recordings are saved digitally on the system located in the ELC Director's office and access to the system and recordings shall be strictly limited by the director or designee. Images shall be viewed by authorized ELC personnel as necessary. The system is motion activated and will retain information for approximately 7-10 days. Video is stored longer only when initiated by staff and shall be kept on a flash drive stored in a secure area. There shall be no internet access to recordings.

Recordings will be used to investigate accidents and/or supervision issues. Cameras will also be used as a coaching tool for training purposes when working with teaching staff at the ELC.

A written consent form shall be obtained from a parent prior to releasing any information, recordings and or photographs from which their children might be identified, except that any information, recordings, or photographs may be provided to authorized state and federal agencies with no prior notice to or consent from parents (as required by licensing regulations).

Behavior Management Policy

The Early Learning Center encourages the use of positive reinforcement. Appropriate behavior is praised, thereby encouraging it. When a child is disruptive to the group, or involves the safety of or physical harm to another child, we explain to them why they cannot persist in this activity and restrict them from group activities for a period of time as determined by the teacher under careful supervision (one minute per year of age of the child, and shall not be used for children under 2 years of age). We have found that this method is very effective and is not frightening to the child. The children enjoy their group activities and do not want to be left out of them, even for a short period of time.

Under no circumstances will a child will be deprived of meals or any part of meals for disciplinary reasons. No child will be allowed to discipline another child. No cruel, severe, unusual or unnecessary punishment will be used for disciplinary reasons. No corporal punishment, physical punishment or verbal abuse or threats will be used. Discussions about families or specific children will be held in the proper place and time. These discussions will not be held in front of children.

If a child is having excessive problems with behavior, he/she will be taken aside, talked with, and given a quiet time to think about the problem. If the inappropriate behavior persists, a parent-staff conference will be scheduled to discuss the situation and possibly develop a behavior management plan. Communication will be maintained with the parents about the child's behavior.

We ask that parents inform our staff of any changes in your child's routine. This will enable our staff to better understand your child and any changes in behavior.

Medication Policy

§1917. Medication Administration (LA Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations)

A. Written Authorization. No medication or special medical procedure shall be administered to a child unless authorized in writing by the parent. Such authorization shall include:

1. name of child;
2. drug name and strength;
3. date(s) to be administered;
4. directions for use, including the route (oral, topical), dosage, frequency, time and schedule and special instructions, if any. It is not acceptable to note “as indicated on bottle”; and
5. signature of parent and date of signature.

B. Required Container/Packaging

1. For prescription medication to be administered at the center, the center shall maintain the original pharmacy container with the complete pharmacy label.
2. For non-prescription medication to be administered, the center shall maintain the original bottle packing for the medicine or a printed document from the manufacturer’s website, which shall include the drug name and strength and clear directions for use.

C. All medication shall be sent to the center in its original container, shall not have an expired date, and shall be clearly labeled with the name of the child to ensure that medication is for individual use only.

D. If a non-prescription medication label reads “consult a physician,” the early learning center shall also maintain a written authorization from a licensed health care provider for the child to take the medicine.

E. Aerosol. All aerosol medications shall be delivered to the center in pre-measured dosages.

F. Topical. The center shall not apply topical ointments, sprays or creams without a written authorization signed and dated by the parent.

G. Self-Administration. Children shall not administer their own medications without written authorization from the parent and such children shall administer medication in the presence of a staff person. Children downstairs will not be allowed to self-administer medication.

H. Records. Medication administration records shall be maintained for all children regardless of who administers the medication. Records shall include the following:

1. name of the child and medication name and dosage administered;
2. date and time medication administered;
3. documentation of telephone contact with parent prior to giving “as needed” medication;

4. signature of person administering medication or witnessing the child administering own medication;
5. signature of person completing the form; and
6. when a parent administers medication to his/her own child on center premises, the medication administration record shall be documented by either the parent or a staff member.

I. Authorization for “as needed” prescription and non-prescription medication shall be updated as necessary or at least every six months by the parent, and shall include circumstances for administering “as needed” medication and any applicable special instructions.

J. Medical Procedures. Children that require medical procedures such as tube feeding shall have specific instructions from a health care provider as part of the overall care plan for the child.

1. Administration of feedings or medications through a tube-feeding apparatus shall be performed by a staff member trained and authorized by the parent or individual designated by the parent.
2. Parental authorization and training shall be documented and shall include the name of child, date of training, name of staff trained, signature of staff trained, and signature of parent.
3. Documentation of feedings and medications administered shall include the name of child, date, time, what was administered, and signature of administering staff member.

K. Emergency Medications

1. Children who require emergency medications, such as an EpiPen or Benadryl, shall have a written plan of action that shall be updated as changes occur or at least every six months, and shall include:
 - a. method of administration;
 - b. symptoms that indicate the need for the medication;
 - c. actions to take once symptoms occur;
 - d. description of how to use the medication; and
 - e. signature of parent and date of signature.
2. Medication administration records for emergency medication shall be maintained and include the following:
 - a. symptoms that indicated the need for the medication;
 - b. actions taken once symptoms occurred;
 - c. description of how medication was administered;
 - d. signature of administering staff member; and
 - e. phone contact with the parent after administering emergency medication.

Please do not put medication in children’s cubbies or in diaper bag.

Please arrange medicine schedules so that it is necessary to give medicine only once daily, preferably at lunch time. Tylenol, acetaminophen products and anti-diarrheal products may not

be given at school, as they mask symptoms. Only trained staff is allowed to administer medication.

Please find the required medication forms at the end of the handbook:

Authorization for the Application of Topical Products – this needs to be completed once annually for any topical product such as sunscreen, diaper rash ointment, insect repellent, etc. Sunscreen and insect repellent should be applied to children before arrival at the center.

As Needed Medication Authorization Form – this is for medication that is not given on a prescribed schedule – only given “as needed”.

Medication Authorization Form – this is for medication that needs to be given at a certain time of day. Again, please try to schedule medications so that is only given once a day, preferably at lunchtime.

Provisionally Employed Staff Member Policy

This policy shall be used in the event a staff member is employed on a provisional basis due to an incomplete CCCBC-based determination for child care purposes.

1. A center may provisionally employ as a staff member, a person for whom it has requested a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes, and for whom the department has received a satisfactory fingerprint-based Louisiana or federal criminal history information record, pending the department's receipt of the other CCCBC results and determination of the person's eligibility for child care purposes.

2. A provisionally-employed staff member may be counted in child to staff ratios, but must be monitored at all times in accordance with the following.

a. A monitor of a provisionally-employed staff member must be an adult staff member for whom the center has a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes, (or prior to October 1, 2018, a satisfactory CBC), who is designated by the center to monitor a specific provisionally-employed staff member.

b. The center will designate a monitor for each provisionally-employed staff member present at the center.

c. The monitor shall be physically present at the center at all times when the provisionally-employed staff member is present at the center.

d. The monitor will remain within close enough physical proximity of their designated provisionally-employed staff member to be able intervene at any time if intervention is needed.

e. The monitor will perform at least one visual observation of each designated provisionally-employed staff member every 30 minutes.

f. The monitor will not be designated any more than a maximum of five provisionally-employed staff members at any given time.

g. At least one monitor will be physically present at all times in any room during naptimes if a provisionally-employed staff member is present.

3. The center shall keep written documentation of the monitoring of provisionally-employed staff members that identifies each provisionally-employed staff member, the designated monitor for each, and the times of the visual observations.

Safe Sleep Policy

§1909. Safe Sleep Practices (*LA Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations*)

- A. Only one infants shall be placed in a crib.
- B. All infants shall be placed on their backs for sleeping.
 - 1. Written authorization from a physician is required for any other sleeping position.
 - 2. Written notice of the specifically authorized sleeping position shall be posted on or near the crib.
- C. Infants shall not be placed in positioning devices, unless the center has written authorization from a physician to use a positioning device.
- D. Written authorization from a physician is required for a child to sleep in a car seat or other similar device and shall include the amount of time that the child is allowed to remain in said device.
- E. “BACK TO SLEEP” signs shall be posted in the room where infants sleep.
- F. Infants who use pacifiers shall be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, but it shall not be placed back in the mouth once the child is asleep.
- G. Bibs shall not be worn by any child while asleep.
- H. Nothing shall be placed over the head or face of an infant

Toilet Training Policy

Please let us know when you plan to begin toilet training your child at home. After your child has been successful at home we will begin training at the center. No child will be forced to use the toilet. Your child must want to use the toilet and also be able to let us know that they need to use the toilet.

Please keep in mind that at school, children tend to be much busier than at home, playing with their friends, participating in daily activities, etc. The activity level in school tends to be much higher than at home; it can easily distract your child which means that they will forget to use the toilet. At home the distraction level is lower and they will do a much better job. It can take a lot longer to toilet train a child at school than at home.

We will need to use diapers or pull-ups (parent-provided) until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom. Your child may be toilet trained at home, but until he/she uses the toilet at the center, they will need to be in diapers or pull-ups. Once your child starts letting us know that they have to use the toilet, and actually uses the toilet then they can start coming in underwear.

Classrooms have a number of rugs and it is unsanitary to have children urinating on them. Until we feel safe that they are going to regularly use the toilet, they need to be in diapers or pull-ups; once they start using the toilet on a regular basis with no accidents then we will start using underwear.

If your child has too many accidents in underwear, they may have to go back to pull-ups until they are completely ready.

While your child is toilet training please send your child in easy to remove clothing. Overalls and other hard to remove clothing make it very difficult for your child to be successful. Your child will want to help pull up and down his/her pants and clothing; too many "buttons, snaps, etc." makes it harder to get the child on the toilet in time.

Once your child has begun wearing underwear, during toilet training time we ask that you keep us supplied with at least 3 sets of clothing, including socks. We want this to be a successful experience for your child at school.

Other Policies:

The Center prohibits the use of alcohol and the use or possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances, firearms, and pellet or BB guns (loaded or unloaded) in the Center or on the playground.

The Center prohibits the use of tobacco in any form in indoor areas of the Center, or on the playground.

ELC Administrative Staff

Pam Brignac – ELC Director, pam@firstmethodist.org

Jill Burr - ELC Assistant Director, jburr@firstmethodist.org

Kamille Watson- Curriculum Coordinator, kamille@firstmethodist.org

ELC Committee

Amanda Stout, Chair (parent) – astout1203@gmail.com

Pam Voelker- Finance Committee representative (non-parent)

John Montgomery – SPR Committee representative (non-parent)

Chris Dykes– Children’s Counsel representative – (parent)

Jim Howell – Building & Grounds Committee representative (non-parent)

Rhonda Kemp– at large member (non-parent)

Corry Tannehill – at large member (non-parent)

Lance White – at large member (non-parent)

Jackie Moffitt – at large member (non-parent)

Linda Vannoy- at large member (non-parent)

Pam Brignac, ELC Director, ex officio

Jill Burr, ELC Asst. Director, ex officio

Rev. Brady Whitton, ex officio

Beth Fraser, Ex. Director of Finance & Administration, ex officio

Sirena Brock - Children’s Ministry Director, ex officio

** parent/non-parent status as of August 2018*

