

Department of Human Services

# Child & Family Life Education Center



## POLICY HANDBOOK FOR FAMILIES

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Child & Family Life Education Center  
Family Policy Handbook

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Abbreviations:

HSL – Department of Human Services

“Center” or CFLEC – Child & Family Life Education Center

## **Mission of the Child & Family Life Education Center**

The Child & Family Life Education Center (CFLEC) provides the learning environments that include families and preschoolers where University students expand their knowledge of, experience with, and skills regarding:

- early childhood programming;
- child and family development;
- research-based practices for working effectively with multi-generational families and children;
- family education and involvement;
- inclusion encompassing culture, differing abilities and lifestyles;
- support and social services; and
- observation, assessment, and case study construction.

The faculty-supervised laboratories provide students with direct and practical experiences where the University students apply knowledge and theory while planning programs, teaching, guiding, and caring for children and interacting with families. In addition to a practicum site, the CFLEC functions as a site for faculty/student research; graduate assistantships; and graduate internships.

## **Vision Statement of the Child & Family Life Education Center**

The Child & Family Life Education Center is a state-of-the-art site that involves students in program development and planning and supporting families across the lifespan. Infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, adolescents, emerging adults, and families through the life cycle are included and integrated in the teaching, learning, and support programs available in the Center. We strive to be a place where students, children, families, wellness/health care practitioners, educators, human services personnel, and community members can participate and experience supportive and enriching early childhood and community programming. Academic excellence along with mutual respect and a perspective of inclusion provides the foundation for collaboration and collegiality in serving the University, community, and region.

## **Purpose and Philosophy**

The purpose of the Child & Family Life Education Center is to provide an exemplary child-family oriented program for Eastern Illinois University students who are studying Human Services; and an early childhood observation venue for classes with an observation component such as in the departments of Human Services and Psychology.

The CFLEC provides the dynamic setting for students to work with and learn about young children while developing skills in managing and evaluating quality early childhood programming. Students are preparing for community and agency leadership roles as they participate in daily program planning, self-evaluation, written reflections, engagement with academic content, and development of a child case study, all under the direct supervision of HSL faculty.

The Center includes an enriched learning environment where young children can play, explore, interact and learn. The faculty and staff model developmentally appropriate practices while teaching, guiding, and directing the university students. The Center is focused on program planning, teaching, caregiving and child guidance techniques that promote development encompassing the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of each child in the program.

## **COVID Information**

We will keep everyone up to date with the latest Covid policies set in place by EIU and the State of Illinois. We will provide masks if needed.

**Please note that the students and faculty providing care may not be vaccinated for COVID and vaccination status is not documented.**

## Goals

The program goals are designed to meet the needs of the University students, young children, families, and University community.

### University Students

- Provide exemplary preschool-family oriented programs for students to observe young children and family interaction.
- Provide exemplary preschool-family oriented program in which students can participate with young children and their families.
- Provide an opportunity for students to conduct special projects and research.

### Young Children

- Provide a loving, respectful, and sensitive atmosphere to foster the development of a positive self-concept for each child.
- Provide an enriched learning environment for young children to explore and manipulate.
- Provide developmentally appropriate practices to encourage the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of each child.

### Families

- Provide a cooperative and supportive relationship with parents and other family members.
- Provide family education meetings on topics relevant to family needs and interests.
- Provide family information via conference, newsletters, handouts, letters, and memoranda.
- Encourage family involvement.
- Serve as a referral service to community resources.

### University Community

- Provide a preschool-family oriented program for approximately fifty families.
- Provide a model preschool-family program for observation by child care providers including family, center, Head Start, nursery school personnel, church-related preschool personnel, community college students and faculty, college and university students and faculty, high school child care vocational students and faculty, and other area vocational schools and programs.

## Arrival and Departure

### **Preschool Program (ages 3 years to kindergarten age):**

The preschool children in the morning session should arrive at their classroom at 9:00 am and be picked up at 10:50 am. When you bring your child to the Center, enter and exit Buzzard Hall room 1102 from the corridor. It is important to pick up your child promptly to assure feelings of security. Also, faculty and students have commitments at 11:00 and your punctuality facilitates their ability to meet obligations.

**Sign in and Sign Out:** Be sure to sign in your child and leave any important messages on the family sign-in clipboard. The person who picks up your child needs to indicate the time and sign the clipboard that they have picked up the child.

If at any time you need to change the names of the people on your Transportation Form, write the names and give them to the staff member. *We will not release your child to anyone whose name does not appear on the form. If a person we do not know comes to pick up your child, we will require identification of the person and verification that the person's name is on the Transportation Form.*

## Application, Admission, & Discharge

**Application:** Families will complete an online Mach Form to enroll their child each semester. The form can be found at <https://www.eiu.edu/hsc/machform/view.php?id=26959>

**Admission:** Children are admitted to the CFLEC on a first-come, first-served basis to fill vacancies in the Preschool Program.

**Discharge:** If challenges with a child should occur, the child would be carefully observed by at least one other faculty/staff member to study and assess the situation. The Coordinator would consult the family to collect more feedback and information. If deemed necessary, other resource persons would be included. After assessment, all efforts to address the challenges would be implemented. The child's enrollment would be terminated only with the full understanding and agreement among faculty/staff that the CFLEC has exhausted resources to meet the child's needs.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is expected. Since the University students are teaching, guiding and assessing children, regular attendance is important. Children's absences can negatively impact students' assignments. When children are ill or must be absent, please call the CFLEC at (217) 581-7917 or the Human Services Office Manager at (217) 581-6676. Voicemail is active at these numbers. Alternatively, you can reach us at [cflec@eiu.edu](mailto:cflec@eiu.edu).

## Discipline Statement

**Definition:** Discipline is a process, which is based on trust and respect. The process helps a child change her/his random, impulsive, testing-out behavior into controlled, purposeful, informed behavior (Read, 1976). Discipline includes loving, listening, teaching, directing, and guiding young children. Through respectful, mutually satisfying relationship children learn to solve problems, develop empathy and self-control, and build self-respect and self-reliance. Children learn “to do” what caregivers, teachers, and parents want them to do from an inner conviction, not from an outer control (Reynolds, 1996).

**Punishment:** Physical punishment and time-out are not among the “set of terms” in our problem-solving philosophy. Physical punishment is never used in the CFLEC. In family home and daycare programs, time-out methods sometimes are a useful and safe technique. Our program does not use time-out since we have the staff necessary for individualized attention and coping strategies.

## Guidance Philosophy & Policy

The faculty/staff practice the problem-solving philosophy of guidance and discipline. The approach nurtures and respects children as they develop independence, individuality, self-reliance, and a sense of responsibility.

The problem-solving approach is based on a set of terms and techniques which enhance the adult’s ability to respond to children with warmth, authenticity, understanding, and recognition of children’s individuality. In guidance situations, teachers are guided by the practices of:

1. Positively-worded instructions
2. Active Listening and providing choices
3. Encouragement and affirmations
4. Modifying the environment
5. Setting limits and negotiation
6. Facilitating and scaffolding
7. Removing and sitting apart

“**Positively-worded instructions**” means that adults clearly state what they want the child to do, as opposed to ‘don’t,’ ‘quit,’ or ‘stop’ statements of instruction. In “**Active listening**” adults interpret and reflect children’s feelings. “**Providing choices**” communicates to children choices they can make which are compliant with adult expectations, such as, “Which sink do you want to use to



## Guidance & Discipline Statement (Continued)

wash your hands?” The use of **“Encouragement and affirmations”** lets children know specifically what they are doing that is valuable and important. Often adults can **“Modify the environment”** for better spacing to eliminate conflicts, enrich for engagement, or remove items that are the focus of problems. **“Setting limits”** keeps children safely within bounds and **“negotiation”** helps children problem-solve and manage consequences. **“Facilitating and scaffolding”** supports children’s emerging progress in social, emotional and physical strides of development. When a child experiences difficulty with compliance and while solving a problem, the child may be **removed** from an activity or group until he/she is ready to return. This may include **“sitting apart”** with a staff member for safety.

## Fees & Fee Payment

Families are notified by letter, which includes (a) the amount of fees due, (b) instructions to write the check payable to Eastern Illinois University, and (c) the payment due date.

The fees are typically paid in full prior to the child’s attendance. Families are invited by letter to contact the Coordinator with any questions or concerns. Arrangements can usually be made to make partial or delayed payments as the need occurs. Contact the Coordinator at [cflec@eiu.edu](mailto:cflec@eiu.edu).

When children are enrolled during a semester/session, the fee is prorated based on the portion of the semester the child is in attendance. Fees are not prorated retroactively. Once a child begins attending during a semester/session, no fee refund is made if the child discontinues attendance.

The EIU Business Office is responsible for making refunds to families when plans change, and a child does not attend. This process requires the family to provide a Social Security number to the University to process the refund in compliance with Illinois State Auditor regulations.

## FEES for the Preschool Program

Each Semester is **\$100.00**

## Sick Children Policy

### Vomiting/Diarrhea

- If your child vomits or has diarrhea at school, the child will be isolated from the group. Family or emergency contact person will be notified to pick up the child.
- Keep child home until he/she can keep food down or is eating normally again.
- Keep child home if she/he has diarrhea.

### Rash/Itching

- If a child comes to the Center with or develops an unidentified rash, the child will be isolated from the group. Family or emergency contact person will be notified to pick up the child.
- Keep child home if he/she has a rash unless doctor says it is safe to take her/him to the Center.
- If your child comes to school with head lice or eggs (nits) on hair shafts, the child will be isolated from the group. Family or emergency contact person will be notified to pick up the child.
- Keep child home and treat if your child has head lice or their tiny white eggs (nits) are attached to the hair. After head lice or mite scabies are gone, children may return to the Center.

### Fever

- If your child has a fever at the Center, she/he will be isolated from the group. Family or emergency contact person will be notified to pick up the child.
- Keep child home if he/she has a fever. After free of fever for 24 hours, children may return to the Center.

### Colds and Coughs

- If your child has “heavy” cold or persistent cough at the Center, the child will be isolated from the group. Family or emergency contact person will be notified to pick up the child.
- Keep child home if he/she has a “heavy” cold and persistent cough.
- Keep child home if he/she has a sore throat and white spots in the back of the throat or if fever is present.

## **Snack Policy**

### **For Parents Participating in Special Events**

All food items brought to the Child & Family Life Education Center must be commercially prepared and packaged. The package must not be opened prior to arrival at the Center. Food items may be prepared at a bakery, but they too must be taken to the Center in unopened packages.

Family members need to talk with the CFLEC Staff about any special commercial snacks to serve to the children. The staff member will help the family decide what is most appropriate for the children in our program, taking into consideration children's allergies and the practice of providing nutritious food and avoiding high-sugar and highly-processed foods.

### **Personal Belongings Brought to the Center**

**Clothing:** Families need to take an extra set of clothing to CFLEC for use in the case of slipping into water or snow; getting wet sleeves while handwashing; or toileting accidents. Clothing should be placed in a Ziploc bag on which the child's name is clearly written. The plastic bag with extra clothing is stored in the child's cubby.

**Diapers:** Disposable diapers and diaper wipes are provided by the Center. Families are welcome to provide supplies if they choose to use cloth diapers; a particular type of diaper; and/or certain brand and type of diaper wipe.

**Security and Attachment Objects:** Children may take security objects to the Center. When the child does not need the item, it will be put in her or his cubby. Security objects can sometimes be lost, damaged, or picked up by another child. While we try to safeguard security objects, the nature of group child care settings includes some jeopardy. Families are encouraged to take the security object home at the end of each day.

**Food:** While family schedules sometimes are hectic, it is not acceptable for a child to enter the classroom with uneaten lunch or snack to be finished during the school day. Additionally, children should not take candy, food, or gum to the Center unless specific arrangements have been made with the staff.

**Toys, Books, or the Personal Items:** In general, children **are free to bring safe** items to school. When the children prefer not to allow other children to play or use the item, they will be encouraged to place items in their cubby or on the teacher's desk. **Staff cannot assume the responsibility for lost or damaged items.**

## **Release of Personal Information**

Personal information on children or families will not be released to another agency or institution without written consent of parents or legal guardians.

First name, date-of-birth, height, and weight of each child is posted in the Observation Booth for University students' observation assignments.

Since the Child & Family Life Education Center provides the learning environment for University students, personal information, photography, and videography are integrated into lectures and assignments. Students are instructed on confidentiality practices. Children's files are never removed from the Center and are stored in a locked office after hours.

Digital still, video, and audio recording/photography will be used for documentation of classroom activities and for academic instruction and research purposes. Occasionally WEIU, the Daily Eastern News, and EIU staffing will take photographs/videos of the children which will be used on platforms such as television, newspapers, websites, and Facebook.

## **Family Grievance Procedures**

When a family member has a suggestion, question or concern, the first point of contact is with the Lab Director in the child's session. The intent is to resolve the concern at the level closest to the difference. The Director shares the concern and status of the resolution with the Coordinator.

An additional recourse is that the family member/members who enrolled the child may communicate with the Coordinator in writing with a note or email to indicate that they have questions or concerns and request a conference.

**If the matter is not resolved, the family member's next step is to speak to the Chairperson of the Department of Human Services, under which the Center operates, at (217) 581-6348.**

Professional Organization Alignment:

**National Association for the Education of Young Children**

**National Council on Family Relations**

