

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



**West Market Street
United Methodist Church**

**312 West Friendly Avenue
Greensboro, North Carolina 27401
(336) 378-6093**

Website www.eccgreensboro.org

**Parent Handbook
2011-2012**

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Welcome to the Early Childhood Center

We have prepared this handbook to serve as a reference guide for parents. The following policy statements will serve as the basis of our operations. These policies are subject to change or revision, as needed, by the Early Childhood Center Board of Directors, based on recommendations by the West Market Street United Methodist Church Pastor of Education and Children. Three programs (Full Day, Half Day and Afterschool) are offered five days a week at the Early Childhood Center:

Full-Day

Ages 4 weeks – 5 years
7:00 am – 6:00 pm

Half-Day

Ages 4 weeks – 5 years old
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Half-Day Afternoon

Toddler, 2, 3 & Pre-K
1:00- 6:00 pm

Early Morning Drop off

7:00 am- 9:00 am

After- school

Pre-K - First Grade
After school – 6 pm
Teacher workdays & holidays – 1:00pm– 6:00pm

Summer School Age

7:00 am – 6:00 pm

The Mission of the Early Childhood Center

The Early Childhood Center is an outreach program sponsored by West

Market Street United Methodist Church. The Early Childhood Center offers quality child care and developmentally appropriate education for children of families in the community and in the church. Through our programs, the Early Childhood Center offers an environment where Christian values are demonstrated and young children's faith can grow.

Goals and Objectives

The Early Childhood Center seeks. . .

- To offer developmentally appropriate activities and experiences which will enhance growth in the areas of cognitive, sensorimotor, social/emotional and physical development.
 - _ Promote secure and loving attachments between children and staff.
 - _ Provide learning centers and a variety of curricula that generate curiosity, initiative, creativity and independent thought.
 - _ Exhibit appropriate use of language to develop communication skills.
 - _ Provide gross motor and fine motor activities to develop physical and coordination skills.
- To develop a partnership between parents and The Early Childhood Center staff in order to best meet the needs of the child.
 - _ Encourage open communication between parents and staff in order to share ideas, evaluate the progress of the child, and set goals and objectives to best promote the child's overall development.
 - _ Conduct regular conferences to monitor the child's development
 - _ Serve as an extended support system to the family unit.
- To promote a positive self-concept within the child, which gives the child the ability to develop respect for self and others.
 - _ Respect each child as a unique individual.

- Use concepts and teaching techniques that are relevant to the child’s learning.
- Help children develop self-control and the ability to make decisions.
- Provide guidance by setting clear, consistent limits for appropriate behavior.
- Encourage children to communicate feelings.
- Foster growth in understanding and appreciation of God’s love and of the world around us.
 - Demonstrate Christian values and beliefs.
 - Assist in building Christian spiritual and moral values in children.

Philosophy

The Early Childhood Center staff:

- Fosters growth in understanding and appreciation of God’s love and of the world around us.
- Builds Christian spiritual and moral values.
- Helps develop the child’s sense of self worth.
- Promotes feelings of security, comfort and belonging during time away from home.
- Helps children develop respect for others.
- Encourages appreciation of the joy and value of learning.
- Generates curiosity, initiative, creativity and independent thought.
- Develops communication and coordination skills.
- Stimulates expression through art and music.
- Provides opportunities for physical development.
- Affords parents an opportunity to be with their child at appropriate times during the day and to share common concerns about child

rearing.

Credentials

The North Carolina Division of Child Development rates the Early Childhood Center a “Five Star” center. The Early Childhood Center achieved this rating through high program standards, such as low staff/child ratios, high staff education standards, and a strong history of compliance with the NC Child Care Rules and Laws. Adults who are trained and understand child development and who recognize and provide for children’s needs staff all programs. We believe the quality of staff is the most important determinant of a quality program. We require all staff to participate in ongoing professional development programs.

Organization

As a non-profit corporation, the Early Childhood Center operates under a Board of Directors that is charged with the responsibility of assisting the Early Childhood Center in fulfilling its purpose. The Early Childhood Center Board of Directors is charged with the following basic responsibilities:

- To determine the mission and purpose of the Early Childhood Center and to ensure that the program operates satisfactorily to accomplish these goals;
- To make policy;
- To set goals in cooperation with the Early Childhood Center Directors and to plan for implementation and evaluation;
- To guide long range planning;
- To monitor finances;
- To advocate for the Early Childhood Center in the church and in the community.

The Board is not responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Early Childhood Center. This function is delegated to the Early Childhood Center Directors. The designated liaison person from West Market Street United Methodist Church oversees the programs.

Parent Appreciation Committee

The Early Childhood Center Parent Appreciation Committee (PAC) is composed of parent volunteers acting collectively to promote a positive supportive relationship between teachers, staff, and families through a variety of activities, including classroom and facility enhancements, teacher and staff appreciation, and parent outreach advocacy.

PAC meetings are held monthly on the first Thursday of each month at 12:15. Children are welcome. Meetings are open to parents of all currently enrolled children. Join us at our next meeting, or contact the Early Childhood Center Director for further information.

Christian Learning

The Early Childhood Center is a ministry of West Market United Methodist Church that seeks to reflect the highest Christian values and the best of care for children. Through this program, we offer the finest in early childhood education and direct attention to the Christian faith through value education. Parents are the primary faith sharers with children and parents choose the religious traditions in which children are reared.

Young children are concrete learners and learn primarily through their experiences. The Early Childhood Center recognizes the importance of adults as models of acceptable behavior for children. Adults reflect faith

in God through the ways they relate to each child and through the words used. Children who see caregivers exhibit such attitudes as thankfulness, sharing, patience, forgiveness, joy, fairness and obedience in their caregivers tend to pattern their own ways of acting and reacting as they live each day. It is important to:

- Affirm each child's self worth.
- Explore the meaning of living together and valuing the rights of others in the classroom, in the community and in the world.
- See the world as good, marveling at God's creation, the dependability of night and day, the changing seasons, as well as teaching the care for plants, animals and all living things.
- Name the children's actions so they begin to know what sharing, love, kindness, etc. means.

The primary value at The Early Childhood Center is that **God values every person**. Through all programs and relationships, we seek to provide an environment where all children have opportunities to develop a sense of self worth and their own unique gifts as a child of God.

Linked to this healthy self-concept is a positive feeling about God and about others. *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”* (Matthew 22:37-29 TEV).

Whether or not we use these words with children, our primary goal at Early Childhood Center is to conduct ourselves and our classes so that the children see these commandments lived out day by day.

Resources for Christian learning for young children are available for

families, and staff training encourages utilizing these resources. [Adapted from “*Educating for Christian Values in the Preschool Weekday Program*” by Mary Jane Pierce Norton, “*Weekday Programs for Children, Teacher’s Guide*” (Graded Press, The United Methodist Church.)]

Chapel Time:

Once a month, children are given an opportunity to go to the sanctuary of West Market Street United Methodist Church and hear Bible stories and a short message or music that reflects those values emphasized at the Early Childhood Center. Three and four year olds go to the church for this chapel time, which is presented by a West Market Street United Methodist Church minister, staff or church volunteers. Although United Methodists will be leading the children during this time, chapel will be designed for children of all Christian traditions. Chapel time will take place the third Tuesday of every month. Respecting parents’ right to choose the religious tradition in which their children are reared, parents will be asked to sign permission for their child to attend.

Learning Environment

The Early Childhood Center accepts and implements the criteria for quality programs set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The Early Childhood Center offers a developmentally appropriate program, implemented with attention to children’s differing needs, interests and abilities. Learning activities and materials are real and relevant to the lives of young children. Learning takes place as young

children touch, manipulate and experiment with things and interact with people. Additional opportunities integrated into our programs are music, computers, special visitors and field trips.

Children are grouped chronologically and developmentally. Each class has children of varying ages and developmental needs. The Early Childhood Center is inclusive of all children.

Children are moved to the next age group on the basis of developmental readiness and availability of space in accordance with teacher/child ratios and group sizes rather than on the child's birthday.

Teacher's Role:

It is the role of the teacher to facilitate a child's successful exploration of the environment by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity and verbal encouragement. Teachers recognize that children learn from trial and error and that children's misconceptions reflect their developing thoughts. The teacher can accomplish these goals and facilitate children's involvement by asking questions, making suggestions or adding materials or ideas to a situation.

The classroom must be arranged in such a way that the child is encouraged to choose and explore areas of interest. A spacious environment with well-defined centers encourages children to interact with the environment, as well as their peers and adults. Teachers emphasize language that accompanies the children's developmental concepts.

Guidance and Discipline:

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) describes the purpose of discipline for young children as the need to teach coping skills and discourage inappropriate behavior. The early years are a time for children to develop confidence and self-control. When adults create environments that respect each individual child, they set forth a

message that the world is a warm, friendly learning place. Positive discipline techniques that combine caring and direction are a part of this healthy environment.

Guidance techniques used by teachers are:

- Setting clear, consistent and fair limits for children's behavior.
- Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Using behavior as a learning experience.
- Using natural and logical consequences so children learn that their behaviors have repercussions.
- Children may be given an opportunity or time away from the group to calm down and cool off after a frustrating situation.

Field Trips

Children ages three years and older can take short field trips that are enjoyable and will enhance learning experiences. There is always adequate adult supervision and children are always transported in an age appropriate car seat. Parents are asked to provide their child's car seat for any field trip. Parents will always be notified in advance of any field trips and are invited and encouraged to participate. A Field Trip Permission Form must be signed before the child can be taken on a trip away from the center. This protects each child and meets insurance requirements.

Field trips are a part of our curriculum. Parents who do not wish their child to take part in a field trip will need to make alternate care arrangements for the time period of the field trip. In order to maintain ratios in classrooms, we cannot put a child into another classroom for a day.

Enrichment Activities:

The Early Childhood Center makes enrichment activities available to

children enrolled in our program. These programs are optional. Parents may elect to have their child take part in these programs at an additional cost. In the past these have included Tumblebus, Kindermusik, Nan's School of Dance and ComputerTots & Yoga. They will be offered depending on demand and enrollment.

Afternoons in the Art Studio:

One afternoon a week small groups of three, four year and five year olds have the opportunity to walk to West Market Street United Methodist Church to go into the art studio. Early Childhood Center teachers accompany them and supervise their time in the studio. There is no cost to parents for this program. Parents must sign permission for children to attend the program. An annual permission form must be filled out before a child will be taken to the studio. Half-Day program parents must sign the child out in the classroom. Children whose parents do not pick them up on time may lose the privilege of attending the art studio. The first 2 times a parent arrives late within a school year a written notice will be given the 3rd time your child may lose the privilege of going to the art studio.

DVD / Video Policy:

The Early Childhood Center recognizes that videos have the potential to be effective educational tools for children. Used constructively it can expand children's knowledge and promote positive social values. Each classroom with 2 year olds and over has one day a week that they have a television and VCR/DVD player available to them. Only age appropriate DVDs/Videos which have been previewed by teachers will be shown during these times. Other activities will always be available to children. No child will be required to watch videos. Video time will be no longer than thirty minutes. Commercial videos or full-length films will not be shown. Teachers will select videos that are relevant to the classroom

theme, that promote positive social skills or that are educational for children. We ask parents not to bring videos from home, as teachers may not have time to preview them nor are all parents ready for their children to be exposed to some of the themes in full-length movies.

Daily Schedules:

A developmentally appropriate daily schedule, established to meet the needs of the children, will be posted in each classroom. The schedule is flexible and will include the following:

- Learning through play and learning centers
- Group times for music, movement, stories, etc.
- Snack and lunch
- Outside play
- Quiet time

Communication

Day-to-Day Communication:

Please tell your child's teacher about anything special or different about your child's day, such as: an early pick up for an appointment; an approved substitute picking up your child; if your child is not eating breakfast, etc. Writing this information down is also encouraged to ensure the teacher understands the instructions completely.

File Folders:

Every child has a file in the classroom in a hanging file box that is used occasionally to send home written information. If you do not know where this file box is located, please ask your child's teacher. It is important to check your child's folder daily.

Infant/Toddler Communication:

The infant and toddler teachers provide parents with daily activity sheets. Parents may write instructions about feeding, sleeping, etc. for the teachers. Your child's primary caregiver/teacher records daily activities.

Website:

The Early Childhood Center has a website at www.eccgreensboro.org. This website contains general information about our center. Also, many of The Early Childhood Center forms (family information update form, enrollment packages, waiting list forms etc.) are available to download on this website. There is also a calendar with activities, closings, and other pertinent information for parents to consult.

Changes in Your Child's Life:

Your child's teachers should be notified about any unusual or upsetting experiences that may affect behavior, such as an illness or death in the family, a recent move, or a parent out of town.

Other Communications:

Classroom newsletters from teachers provide information about activities occurring in your child's class. Ideas and suggestions from parents for the newsletter are welcome. Lesson plans, a daily schedule and the snack menu are found posted in the classroom on the parent bulletin board. The Early Childhood Center newsletter, "Early Childhood Center Centerline," comes out 4 times a year - October, January, April and July.

ECC uses email to send quarterly newsletters and memos; these are sent to both parents. We ask parents to designate one email address for invoices and receipts.

Current Address, Phone Numbers and Emergency Information:

If your address, home or work numbers, or emergency contacts change,

please complete a Parent Information Update form which is available in the Early Childhood Center office or on our website www.eccgreensboro.org. Failure to provide current, accurate information may result in temporary termination of the child until the information is provided.

Grievance Procedure

Any parent who has a specific concern is encouraged to discuss it with the child's classroom teacher. If it is not resolved, parents should talk with the Director or Assistant Director of the Center. If the parent feels there is still not an adequate resolution, grievances may be taken to the designated staff liaison of West Market Street United Methodist Church. The final step in the grievance process is communication with the Early Childhood Center Board. It is important that parents follow this procedure.

Conferences/Parent Visits

Individual parent/teacher conferences are held each year. Other conferences may be scheduled by appointment. Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom, participate in classroom activities, and eat lunch with their child.

Mothers who are breast-feeding are welcome to breast-feed their child. A quiet private space is available for this.

Days and Hours of Operation

The Early Childhood Center operates year round Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. The three programs have differing schedules:

- Full Day operates from 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

- Half Day operates from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Before school care from 7:00-9:00 may be elected for an additional fee. Afternoon Preschool from 1:00p.m.– 6:00 p.m.
- Transitional Kindergarten operates from 7:00 am – 1:30 pm for half day students and from 7:00 am – 6:00 pm for full day students.
- After-School begins when buses bring children to the Early Childhood Center until 6:00 p.m. The Early Childhood Center is not prepared to take children when the schools close early or are closed for teacher work days, holidays or because of snow or inclement weather prior to 1 o'clock.

Arrival and Departure:

A parent or authorized, approved adult must bring the child to the Early Childhood Center and pick up the child each day. Please make verbal contact with the teacher and sign the child in and out upon arrival and departure.

Please call to notify the Early Childhood Center if your child:

Will arrive later in the day, is going to be absent, or needs to leave early. Please indicate who will pick up the child

Only those persons authorized by the parents may pick up a child. Parents must notify the Early Childhood Center in writing, by fax or email if anyone other than those named on the child's application form will pick up a child. The staff reserves the right to ask for identification of anyone picking up a child.

If an adult comes to pick up a child without parent/guardian permission and the adult is not listed as an emergency contact, the Early Childhood Center will not release the child until a parent/guardian is contacted.

Half- Day Program Departure:

Children in the full day end of the building and children staying for extended day in our half day program are napping immediately after and during the 1:00 pick up time. Please be mindful that these children need a quiet restful environment.

After Hours Departure Policy:

Our teachers work extremely hard while they are here with the children. To ask them to remain after program hours imposes a hardship for the teachers and causes anxiety for the child. We realize that emergencies arise.

- We ask to be notified as soon as it becomes apparent that parents will arrive after hours to get a child. We will let the child know and make arrangements for adequate staffing.
- The first two times in a 12-month period that a child is picked up late, the parent will be charged a \$1.00 per minute late fee per child. **This fee will be added to the parent account and must be paid within 5 days of the event.**
- The third time in a 12-month period that a child is picked up late, the parent will pay a \$10.00 fee plus \$1.00 per minute per child. The Director will then have a personal conversation with the parent to address the situation.
- If a child is picked up late four or more times in a 12-month period, the parent will be charged a \$20.00 fee plus \$1.00 per minute per child.

Late departures are not an option in our program. If the problem continues, it jeopardizes the child's enrollment.

Security Key Cards:

The Early Childhood Center utilizes a security key system to gain entrance to our facility. Every family enrolled is required to use a security key. We ask that parents not permit individuals they do not know to enter the

building. When the buzzer rings, an administrator can see and or speak to the individual to determine whether to permit them entrance to the building. Parents will need to buzz in until the keys are made. This is generally done within a few days of enrollment.

Every family enrolled is required to have a minimum of one (1) security key. There is a form to complete and submit payment to order/obtain security keys. Please order keys for those individuals who will bring or pick up the child on a regular basis.

Families who habitually buzz the door to gain entrance will have a new key issued and charged to their account. **It is not an option for parents or caregivers to not use their key to enter the building.** Keys are \$10.00 each and there is **no refund** for keys. Upon withdrawal from the Early Childhood Center, we ask parent to return all keys.

Parking Lot Car Tags

Parents and visitors are asked to display a parking tag in a prominent place in their car whenever they park in ECC's parking lot. Families are given 2 tags upon enrollment with their family identification number shown.

Visitors are asked to come into the building and sign out a green parking tag to display in a prominent place in their car.

Holidays and Closings:

The Early Childhood Center observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day (If on Saturday, then Friday is holiday; if it is Sunday, then Monday will be the holiday)

Martin Luther King Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

July 4th (If on Saturday, then Friday is holiday; if it is on Sunday, then Monday will be the holiday)

Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Thanksgiving Friday
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
(If Sat/Sun, then Fri/Mon are holidays;
If Sun/Mon, then Mon/Tues;
If Fri/Sat, then Fri/Mon)
The day after Christmas if it falls on a weekday
Staff Development Days

Closings and Delays:

The Early Childhood Center reserves the right to close due to inclement weather or in the event of an unforeseen emergency (including, but not limited to: power failure, water problems, heating and cooling problems which would affect the safe and reasonable operation of the Early Childhood Center. Parents will be notified in advance whenever possible. During the winter, watch WFMY's Good Morning Show (CBS, channel 2), WGHP's Morning News (Fox 8) for closing and delays. The Directors and the Senior Minister will make these decisions. Closings are also posted on the [calendar](#) page of the Early Childhood Center website www.eccgreensboro.org. When possible the automated message on our telephone system will announce changes in opening and/or closing times.

Enrollment

The Early Childhood Center strives to maintain a multi-cultural enrollment and to accommodate children with special needs. The Director is responsible for enrollment and for seeking to maintain diversity in an appropriate learning environment.

The programs begin registration at the following times:

Half-Day/TK	Fall/spring session	February
Half-Day	Summer session	March
After-School	Fall/spring session	February
School-Age	Summer	March
Full-Day	Year-round	Ongoing

The Early Childhood Center enrolls children using the following priority categories:

1. Children and grandchildren of the Early Childhood Center staff members
2. Children and grandchildren of West Market Street United Methodist Church staff members.
3. Children currently attending one of the Early Childhood Center's programs requesting to transfer to one of the other programs.
4. Siblings of children currently enrolled in one of the three programs.
5. Children and grandchildren of active members of West Market Street United Methodist Church.
6. Staff and students of Greensboro College
7. Children of other families in the community.

Requirements for Full-Day Enrollment:

1. Payment of non-refundable registration fee.
2. Payment of one half of the first month's tuition, which is non-refundable. Balance will be due on the 1st of the month of enrollment.
3. Completion of enrollment forms.

Requirements for Half-Day Enrollment:

1. Payment of non-refundable registration fee.
2. Payment of first month's tuition, which is non-refundable.
3. Completion of enrollment forms.

Waiting List:

If an application is received and class space for enrollment is not available, the child's name may be placed on the waiting list. The Director, according to the enrollment and date of application, maintains the list. Enrollment eligibility is determined by availability of class spaces, date of application and enrollment priorities. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee enrollment.

The waiting list is updated yearly in March, at which time parents are asked if they wish to remain on the waiting list. Updated forms also offer parents the opportunity to change the date of anticipated enrollment without changing the date of application. If forms are not returned to the Early Childhood Center by the designated date, the child's name is removed from the list.

When a name on the waiting list becomes eligible for enrollment, a minimum of two-week notice will be given. Parents have a designated date to sign a letter of intent to accept space, accompanied by a non-refundable registration fee and one half of the first month's tuition with the balance due on the 1st day of the month of enrollment.

If the parent is not ready for the child to be enrolled, but wishes to reserve the space, tuition must be paid for each month prior to actual attendance. The space will not be held without advance tuition.

If a parent declines a space for a period of three consecutive times or at the parent's request, the child's name will be removed from the waiting list.

To place a child's name back on the waiting list, parents must re-apply for enrollment.

Scholarships:

West Market Street United Methodist Church funds the Early Childhood Center scholarships through the church's annual outreach budget and special contributions to assist families in need. Scholarship funds are paid directly to the Early Childhood Center. Reduced fees are charged to the parent. Scholarships are available to those who meet the criteria established by the Early Childhood Center Board of Directors. Scholarship applications are available in the Early Childhood Center office and on the Early Childhood Center website at www.eccgreensboro.org. Scholarships are typically awarded for 6 months at a time, January through June and July through December.

Withdrawal:

A 30-day written notice to the Director is required if it becomes necessary to withdraw a child from the program. If the parent does not give such notice, tuition payment is required for the 30-day period beginning on the date of notification. The notice of withdrawal may be waived for the following reasons:

- Transfer between programs.
- Serious illness of the child.
- Delinquent account.
- Lack of cooperation by parents.
- Mutual agreement between the parent/guardian and the Early Childhood Center if the adjustment to school is unsatisfactory, or together we determine that the Early Childhood Center is unable to meet the needs of the child.

Once a 30-day notice has been given or the center is aware of your child leaving you must have your account paid current within 5 days or by the

5th of the month that your child will be leaving.

Dismissal from Program:

The Early Childhood Center reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program if there is difficulty with repeated behavioral problems or the safety of other children is endangered, or when all alternatives have been exhausted.

Before dismissal occurs, the following procedures take place:

1. Verbal and written communication from the teacher and/or Director to the parent about the specific behavior problems and why they are disruptive to the class.
2. Conference with teacher and parents to find the reason behind the problems and to develop solutions to rectify the problem.
3. Efforts of teacher and parents to implement the designated solutions in the classroom and, if necessary, at home as well.

If, after the above procedures do not change or modify the behaviors and the teacher and Director feel the other children in the class are still at risk, the Director will mandate dismissal in writing.

A parent's lack of cooperation or failure to comply with center policies is reason for dismissal.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due on the **first** day of each month. Statements/ invoices will be emailed to the designated email address by the 25th of each month or the next business day if the 25th is on a weekend for the upcoming month's

tuition. Arrangements can be made to print an invoice in the event the parent does not have an email address.

Please make checks payable to the Early Childhood Center or to ECC. Tuition checks may be mailed to the Early Childhood Center, 312 West Friendly Avenue, Greensboro, NC 27401. If tuition is mailed, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that tuition is received by the Early Childhood Center on or before the 5th of the month to avoid a late fee. Checks may also be brought to the Early Childhood Center office. **Please do not give tuition checks to staff members.** Place checks in designated tuition mail box at front desk. Do not put cash payments in the tuition box. The front office needs to receive those payments and issue a receipt for any cash.

Realizing that family emergencies, out of town trips, or unforeseen circumstances can occur, we have a grace period thru the 5th. A late fee of \$20 will be added to any account that is not paid by the 5th of the month. When the 5th falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday then tuition must be paid by 6:00 pm on the following Monday or next business day to avoid the late fee. If an account is not paid by the 10th of the month, your child may be dropped from the program. **If there are extenuating circumstances, payment arrangements must be made in advance with the Director.** Arrangements for a payment plan for any given month must be made before the first day of that month. A child may be readmitted to the program by the payment of all outstanding fees, provided that space has not been filled. Failure to cooperate in efforts by the Early Childhood Center to collect an unpaid balance will normally result in the matter being turned over to a collection agency.

Parents of children in our half day program may occasionally request that their children attend additional days. Parents must have prior approval for

this. **The tuition for those days is due the day the reservation is made.** Early morning drop off must be requested and approved at least one day prior to bringing your child. Once the program has begun and the child is attending for the registered days parents must submit a 30 day written notice to change the schedule. Without this notice parents are still responsible for that month's tuition. Additional days are charged at a daily rate, which is at a small premium to allow flexibility. You will still be responsible for payment at this daily rate. We will not charge the full day rate if your child has not been enrolled for full day.

Once a 30-day notice has been given or the center is aware of a child leaving, parents must have an account current within 5 days or by the 5th of the month that the child will be leaving.

There is a \$30.00 charge for any returned check, including tuition, field trips, fundraisers and any checks written to the Early Childhood Center for any purpose. All returned checks must be paid in cash or with a money order within 5 days of notice. If (3) three checks are returned within a 12-month period, we will require all payments for the next (12) twelve months to be paid in cash or money order.

Full-Day Program Annual Fee:

A non-refundable annual fee is charged in September for materials and supplies. The annual fee is not charged to children enrolling and paying a registration fee after June 1 of the same year.

Half-Day Program Registration Fee:

A non-refundable registration fee is charged for both the Fall and Summer Half-Day Programs. This fee must accompany the child's registration form. The registration fee is not charged to children enrolling after April 1

for the Fall Program or after August 1 for the Summer Program of the same year.

Prorated Tuition:

Tuition is prorated by the Director for the following reasons only:

- For the first month of enrollment, if enrolling after the first of the month.
- For children who withdraw mid-month at the end of the school year or re-enroll mid-month at the beginning of a school year.

Special Fees:

Additional fees or contributions may be requested during the school year for special activities such as field trips, cooking experiences, or special holiday activities.

Health and Safety

Environmental care:

In an effort to care for the environment and teach children the importance of preserving our resources, we serve children in reusable bowls and tumblers, and provide stainless steel spoons and forks as well as cloth napkins. We ask parents to provide lunch in reusable containers as much as possible. The child's name and the date should be clearly marked.

Nutrition:

Nutritious snacks are served each day. Foods high in sugar, fat or additives are not served. A beverage of either whole milk for infants and toddlers and 2% milk for preschoolers, or 100% fruit juice or water is served with the snack. No canned sodas or glass containers are used.

- Parents provide daily nutritional lunches for their child. The Early Childhood Center provides milk. Lunches should be packed in a

lunch box that is clearly labeled with the child's name and the date. See attached requirements (at the back of the handbook) for USDA meal patterns for children in child care. Please see that all required components are sent for your child every day. Children do not need the empty calories of chips or candy. Any food that does not qualify within a food group according to the child care food program lunch guidelines will be sent home.

- A child's special diet, food allergies, restrictions, etc. must be noted on the Enrollment Form in writing and discussed with the child's teacher. In cases of severe allergies, the Early Childhood Center requires the parent complete and the physician to sign an Allergy Action Plan. Special requirements or the Allergy Action Plan will be posted in the child's classroom and in the center kitchen. This plan must be updated annually.
- Parents of children under 15-months of age should give the teacher the required feeding schedule. Feeding schedules should be updated as the child ages and food requirements change. All formulas must be brought in labeled bottles and will be fed to that child only.

Refrigeration is provided for all lunches, formulas and snacks. No food or bottles can be left at the Early Childhood Center overnight.

Hand washing:

State policy dictates that children must wash their hands upon entering the classroom. The Early Childhood Center expects that parents supervise this activity before leaving the classroom, as teachers are busy interacting with all children at this time.

Immunizations:

A current immunization record signed by a health care provider must accompany enrollment. Each child must receive all immunizations required by the state of North Carolina at entry unless the child has a

Medical Exemption granted by the NC Department of Health and Human Services Immunization Department. When a child receives immunizations, the Center should be provided with current documentation.

Wellness Policy:

In order to protect the children in our center and offer excellent childcare, we need to ensure that we have policies in place addressing health and safety standards. Please help us by cooperating with the following policies for dealing with sick children in a group care setting.

- Please call the center if a child is going to be absent due to illness.
- If he or she has been diagnosed with something that may be contagious, we especially need to know so other parents can be notified. Parents will be alerted if the children have been exposed to anything contagious. In some instances a fact sheet will be provided so parents can be prepared for what symptoms may appear, how it is treated, and what the incubation period is.
- Once parents are notified that the child has become ill during the day, they will be expected to pick them up promptly. If parents' cannot be reached or cannot leave work, we will need to notify the people designated to pick the child up in an emergency.
- Please keep in mind that, although a child's symptoms may subside, they may still not feel well enough to return to group care. Children who cannot fully participate in center activities should not return to care.
- Our exclusion from care is based on recommendations from the public health department and include, but are not limited to the following:
 - **Fever:** Children should be kept home if they run a temperature of 100 degrees or more. They may return to care after being

fever free without medication for fever reduction for at least 24 hours.

- **Vomiting:** A child who cannot hold stomach contents down, must be excluded from care until they have had normal meals and the vomiting has subsided for at least 24 hours.
- **Diarrhea:** This is defined as loose watery stools that cannot be contained. If a child has three stools in a period of 2 to 3 hours that cannot be contained in the diaper or clothing, parents will be notified. Numerous germs can be passed through feces and if it is uncontrollable there is greater danger that it will spread, potentially infecting several children. The child may return to care once they have normal stools while eating regular meals.
- **Nose & Eye discharge:** Children who have thick, green, excessive discharge will need to be excluded from care until they have seen a doctor and it is under control.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Commonly known as pink eye, this is a condition that is very contagious. A child whose eyes are inflamed, red, itchy or draining with mucus needs to be removed from care. They may return once the child is on medication for 24 hours and there is no further drainage.
- **Open blisters or sores:** Any open place on a child's skin that is bleeding or oozes bodily fluid can be hazardous. The child needs to be excluded until the skin is crusted over.
- **Skin rashes:** All skin rashes need to have a doctor's note indicating the child is not contagious in order to return to care.
- **Sore Throat:** A child who has a sore throat especially if accompanied by fever or swollen glands should be kept at home. A child with strep throat must have had at least 24 hours of an antibiotic to return to the center.
- **Respiratory Symptoms:** This includes difficulty in breathing, or continuous coughing to the point that the child cannot rest

comfortably.

The teacher will fill out a “Symptoms of Illness” form and give parents a copy when they are called to pick up that child. This form has a space for the teacher to fill in when the child may return to care. If the child is sent home one day because symptoms appear that require exclusion from care, they may not return the following day.

Please understand we do not have adequate facilities and staff to meet the needs of both the ill child and the other children in the group. Therefore we have no choice but to exclude ill children from group care. This also serves to protect all the children and staff members in the center from contagious diseases. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Medications:

Children with non-contagious conditions may require medication during school hours. Prescription and non-prescription medicine must be in the original bottle and labeled with the child’s name, date, and dosage, the name of the medication and the doctor’s name. Doses of non-prescription medication cannot exceed recommended dosage for any age without a doctor’s written consent.

Written permission and directions from the parent are required before administering any medication. The medicine is kept in a locked container that is inaccessible to the children. Please give all medications to the teacher to ensure proper storage. Never leave medication out on the counter or in a child’s diaper bag.

If routine or extended periods of medication are necessary, arrangement for administration must be made with the Early Childhood Center Director. (Examples of conditions include, but are not limited to, diabetes, asthma and hemophilia.)

When a child is enrolled, parents complete forms authorizing emergency medical aid and list a minimum of two local emergency contacts other than the child's parents.

Diaper Bags:

We ask that parents not bring items labeled with "Keep out of the reach of children" in the child's diaper bag. These items include, but are not limited to diaper creams: lotions, medications (child's or parents), sunscreen etc. These items must be kept under lock and key.

Injuries:

For minor injuries, first aid is administered and an "Ouch" Report is completed and sent home. Parents are contacted immediately in the event of serious injury to a child. If the parents, contact persons, and the doctor are unavailable, the child may be taken to the designated hospital emergency room. If a child is treated by a medical professional for an injury that happened at the center, we are required to mail an Incident Report to the Division of Child Development within 7 days. Parents are asked to sign this form. The required number of Early Childhood Center teachers are CPR Certified. The Early Childhood Center provides in-house re-certification periodically for CPR and every three years for First Aid.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy:

The following policies are in place and will be practiced at the Early Childhood Center regarding sleeping infants:

- Babies will always be put to sleep in their cribs on their backs.
- For infants six months old or younger to use an alternative sleep position, we require an Alternative Sleep Position Waiver form to be completed by a health care provider. For infants older than six

months, the Alternative Sleep Position Waiver or a parent's written instruction will be allowed. The Alternative Sleep Position Form is available at the front desk.

- The room will not exceed 75 degrees.
- There will be no stuffed toys, bumper pads, pillows or comforters used in infant's beds.
- We will monitor sleeping babies. They will be visually checked periodically, at least every thirty minutes, as they sleep. Visual checks will be documented by the infant's primary caregiver and kept on a safe sleep calendar.
- We will only use firm, safety-approved mattresses in children's cribs.
- Staff is trained in safe sleep practices.
- Awake infants will have supervised tummy time.
- Babies will only be covered with a lightweight blanket while sleeping.
- Infant's faces will never be covered while sleeping.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

All children need to have at least one complete set of clothing that is to be kept in the classroom in case of accidents, spills, etc. The clothes should be in a container with the child's name on it and should be seasonally appropriate. Parents of children using diapers are to provide the diapers and wipes. While the Early Childhood Center cannot be responsible for objects brought from home, young children may feel more secure if they bring special objects such as a toy, stuffed animal, doll or blanket.

All war toys are prohibited. All clothing and objects brought from home should be clearly marked with the child's name.

Birthday Celebrations and Holiday Parties

Simple birthday celebrations are encouraged. Please schedule the celebration ahead of time with the child's teacher. We ask parents not to leave birthday invitations for private parties in children's folders or cubbies. If all children in the class are not included, it may result in hurt feelings or risk that the invitations may be lost. If you wish to mail invitations, please see the front office and we can provide parents with names and addresses of those children whose parents have given permission to release such information. The Guilford County Health Department requires that all foods consumed by groups of children must be obtained from sources that comply with the laws relating to food and food labeling (i.e. packaged foods purchased in stores or bakeries that have health inspections). This rule does not apply to individual lunches.

Parents are asked to sign up to host holiday parties for their child's class. Although everyone loves sweets, healthy and nutritious choices are encouraged. Please check with the child's teacher to plan appropriate food and drink. Teachers will provide sign-up lists for parents when help is needed to provide special foods and supplies for holiday celebrations.

End of the year celebrations are happy times when we celebrate the gifts of each child and the experience we have had together. If a celebration seems appropriate, the teachers of each classroom plan it and parental help is welcome. End of the year celebrations are especially important to our pre-K and the T-K classes because many of the children are leaving the Early Childhood Center. Some leave the four-year-old class for kindergarten in other school settings and some may stay at the Early Childhood Center for our pre-K or T-K program. The parents according to the needs of the child make the decisions.

Being a childcare center that seeks to follow developmentally appropriate

practice, we want to celebrate the accomplishments and the skills gained during the year for each child.

Your concerns and suggestions are welcomed. You are encouraged to speak with the Early Childhood Center Directors or designated staff liaison from West Market St. United Methodist Church at anytime.

Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs

When good eating habits and positive attitudes toward food are established at an early age, the chance of an individual enjoying optimal health throughout life is increased. For young children eating a nutritionally balanced diet is essential if they are to grow and develop normally.

Daily nutrient intake judged by the National Research Council to be adequate for maintaining good nutrition has been formulated and called Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA). The RDA is based on age, sex, weight, and height of an individual.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed for use by the Child Care Food Program meal patterns for breakfast/supplement/lunch that equal approximately 1/3 of the RDA. The meal patterns are based of the premise that if the meal pattern is followed, the food consumed will be equal to approximately 1/3 of the RDA.

The Child Day Care Commission approved use of the USDA meal patterns as the minimum amount of food which can be served to comply with the licensing standards for adequate nutrition. This publication is intended to assist centers and homes with the preparation of the correct quantities of food. The following meal patterns contain the minimum food components needed to comply with licensing requirements:

	Children 1 up to 3 years	Children 3up to 6 years	Children 6 up to 12 years
Breakfast:			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Juice or fruit or vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Bread, enriched or whole grain; or	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal, cold, dry, or	¼ cup	1/3 cup	¾ cup
Hot, cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Midmorning or Midafternoon Snack (supplement):			
(Select 2 of these 4 components)			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Meat or meat alternate	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce
Juice or fruit or vegetable	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Bread, enriched or whole grain; or	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal, cold, dry, or	¼ cup	1/3 cup	¾ cup
Hot cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Lunch or Supper:			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Meat or meat alternate			
Meat, poultry, or fish, cooked (lean meat without bone)	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounce
Meat alternates			
Cheese	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounces
Egg	1	1	1
Cooked dry beans and peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup	½ cup
Peanut butter	2 Tbsp.	3 Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.
Vegetable and / or fruit (two or more)	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Bread or bread alternate;			
Enriched or whole grain	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice

¼ cup (volume) or 1/3 ounce (weight), whichever is less

1/3 cup (volume) or ½ ounce (weight), whichever is less

¾ cup (volume) or 1 ounce (weight), whichever is less



2011 – 2012 Calendar

August 22	ECC Closed for teacher workday
August 23-26	Program Visitation
August 29	First Day of fall program
September 5	ECC Closed – Labor Day Holiday
September 13	Center Wide Parent Night 6:30PM-8:00PM
September 12-19	Scholastic Book Fair at ECC
October 26-28	Children's School Pictures Taken
November 11	ECC closes at 12PM Professional Development Day
November 17	Thanksgiving Luncheon
November 24 & 25	ECC Closed – Thanksgiving Holidays
December 23 & 26	ECC Closed – Christmas Holidays
January 2	ECC Closed – New Year's Holiday
January 16	ECC Closed – Martin Luther King Holiday
February	Registration Fall 2011/2012 Half-Day Program
February 15	ECC closes at 12PM Professional Development Day
March	Registration Summer Half-Day & School Age Camp
April 6	ECC Closed – Good Friday
April	Children's Spring School Pictures-Date TBA
May 28	ECC Closed – Memorial Day Holiday
June 1	Last Day of Half-Day Program
June 4	First Day of Summer Program
July 4	ECC Closed – Independence Day Holiday
August 23	Last Day of Summer Program
August 24	ECC Closed – Teacher Workday
August 27	First Day of fall program 2012
September 3	ECC Closed for Labor Day

