



Early Learning Center

PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026



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our PHILOSOPHY

In Ephesians 2:10 Paul writes,

*“For we are God’s masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

Thank you for choosing the Early Learning Center (ELC) at Hubbard Hill as the first school for the masterpiece that is your child! We hope to serve you well with our personalized, inspirational education dedicated to Faith, Family and Foundation.

We believe to help your child grow, your child’s developing spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs must be met. To create and maintain a warm, nurturing environment, every child must feel a sense of belonging. Your child must feel they are understood and accepted as he or she is. Each child learns and develops best when they are part of a community of learners—a community in which all participants consider and contribute to one another’s well-being and growth. Children must be provided with the individual support they need to develop a relationship with Christ, with each other, and with the staff to feel part of a group and learn to the best of their ability. We believe that children learn best in an environment that promotes intentional play, where children can explore using their natural curiosity to make discoveries about the world around them. Through play experiences, children learn to solve problems and develop concepts that will become the foundation for language, literacy, and mathematics. Play provides a natural way to acquire important social skills. Children develop self-esteem as they participate in hands-on activities with a skilled teacher by their side.

With the global challenges created by COVID-19, isolation is an area where we focus on relationships, connecting, and reestablishing normalcy. Intergenerational programming is a critical piece of relationship-building, trust, socialization, and lifelong learning.

We believe that our program at Hubbard Hill is an extension of your child’s family, and as such, we strive to develop supportive relationships with you. We hope to partner with you to help your child have the very best school experience possible! In order to fully understand your child, we must have an awareness and understanding of your child’s home culture. To do this, we place a high priority on communication and inclusion of all families in the complete learning experience. We look forward to visiting you in your home setting to fully understand the strengths and needs of your child. And, of course, you are always welcome here at the Early Learning Center at Hubbard Hill.

In service,



Mandy Gibbons

Director, Early Learning Center at Hubbard Hill

we WELCOME YOU!

At the Early Learning Center at Hubbard Hill (ELC), we try our best to build a community of believers and learners. We want to work side by side with you to help your child develop and achieve their greatest potential. In this handbook, you will find information on all of our programs and services, but YOU are our greatest resource!

You can help us by:

1. Communicating with us when your child is absent from school.
2. Informing us about changes to your address, phone number or email.
3. Notifying us about changes in emergency names/phone numbers or people designated to pick up your child.
4. Alerting teachers of fears and emotional upsets that may affect school behaviors.
5. Notifying administrative staff if you have any questions regarding our program or our policies.
6. Offering your ideas for program improvement.
7. Participating in our Family Survey (results are published each year).
8. Welcome new families as they join the ELC throughout the year.

our HISTORY

Hubbard Hill was born out of the desire of its founders to be a loving, healthy community that would encourage friendships, provide holistic care, and foster a more vibrant life for their parents. The Living Wisdom Center for Dementia Care was opened in 2019 to serve our community and improve quality of life. For over 45 years, Hubbard Hill has achieved and sustained their mission to provide a better way of living for senior adults.

In 2010, the leaders of Granger Community Church prayed for guidance and asked the community for ways to have a greater positive impact as a church. There was an overwhelming response to use the existing children's space for preschool. The seeds for the ELC were planted and we established our roots there for 11 years, while developing children's readiness for kindergarten, and providing an unparalleled quality learning experience—all in a faith-based environment nurturing lifelong learners. GCC prayerfully decided to step away from offering preschool to the Granger community and Hubbard Hill stepped in to add the Early Learning Center to their robust campus. We've found the

perfect home—and have settled into the most beautiful space—to offer the same high quality preschool experience to families in both St. Joseph and Elkhart counties and beyond. The added benefits of intergenerational programming with our “neighbors” from Hubbard Hill allow us to offer something very unique and beautiful to our community. We are truly blessed.



How We Operate

MISSION

We partner with families to raise joyful, curious, caring children in a faith-filled community of lifelong learners.

VISION

An intergenerational community model of holistic early care and education that transforms lives across generations.

OUR ESSENCE

The Early Learning Center at Hubbard Hill is a holistic, faith-based, licensed center that provides an exemplary education for young children across the region.

Honoring the family as the child’s most influential teacher, our loving and professional staff partner with those closest to the child to support safe, active learning environments purposefully designed to inspire wonder and engage the whole child.

Because we believe early childhood is the most important time for intellectual and spiritual growth, the ELC is committed to helping children by meeting them where they are and helping them experience the love of God throughout this brief time of their lives.

Through programming that spans across ages, children learn to care for the environment, their community and each other.

The future of any society rests on its ability to foster healthy development in the next generation and beyond. In faith, we engage our community in an educational movement to captivate the hearts and minds of our children today and for generations to come.

OUR VALUES

We value **PEOPLE**: We honor people as God's greatest creation, with a common goal to help each person develop to their fullest potential in a loving community.

We value the diverse history and culture each person brings to the learning environment.

We value **LEARNING**: We believe the education of the whole person is an unending process that is nurtured at home with family and is extended to the learning center through healthy, loving interactions with people of all ages.

We value **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**: We support experiences with God that nurture the character and uniqueness of each child along with their family, extending to care for the greater community.

We seek nature as a way for children to connect with our Creator and explore the world in meaningful ways.

We value **COMMUNITY**: We cultivate a trusting community of people with shared goals to inspire joy, a sense of beauty, and to wonder deeply.

We hold each other accountable to bring our best to the holistic learning experience by strengthening our knowledge, skills and mindsets to connect and serve others.

We value **INNOVATION**: We embrace new methodologies for learning with people of all ages. We choose evidence-based methods and materials for our programs.

We value **INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**: We support sharing the innocence and curiosity of children with the wisdom of our seniors.

We challenge existing practices to pave the way for authentic thinking and problem-solving to occur in the context of trusting relationships.

our COMMITMENT

The Early Learning Center (ELC) is a licensed and nationally accredited center by both the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and HighScope infant, toddler and preschool program. According to the Paths to Quality (PTQ) rating system for the state, we are at Level 4, the highest level of achievement, and have maintained this rating for the past 12 years. A Level 4 requires national accreditation from NAEYC, the nation's oldest and largest association of early childhood professionals. You can find out more about accreditation standards at naeyc.org.

NAEYC Accreditation

In an accredited center, you will see:

- Warm interactions
- A safe and healthy environment
- Nutritious snacks and meals
- Two-way communication
- Specially trained teachers
- Low staff-to-child ratios
- Planned learning activities and materials
- Respect for cultural diversity
- Inclusive environments
- Effective administration
- Ongoing, systematic evaluation



Accreditation is a rigorous process that demonstrates our commitment to professionalism and to the quality of programming in early childhood. To be accredited, the ELC meets or exceeds hundreds of strict criteria related to the 10 Standards of Best Practice in programs serving young children. It is a year-long process of reflection and quality development in the following areas:

1. Relationships
2. Curriculum
3. Teaching
4. Assessment
5. Health
6. Teachers
7. Families
8. Community
9. Physical Environment
10. Leadership & Management

The accreditation process includes an on-site study of the program with a review of materials submitted to a three-member national panel. The process is repeated every five years. Less than 10% of the programs in the nation acquire this status. To learn more about what it means to be accredited please visit families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/10-naeyc-program-standards.

our PROGRAMS

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Cor 5:17 -Creation Room

Infant/Toddler Programs

Age 6 weeks-12 months (Infants)

Age 12-30 months (Toddler Rooms 1 & 2)

Building trusting relationships is the most important piece to serving our youngest children at the Early Learning Center! Infants and toddlers must perceive a feeling of trust of their caregivers to look after them and meet their needs on a daily basis. By experiencing respectful and responsive care throughout their day, infants and toddlers can count on their teachers for comfort, love, support, encouragement and kindness.

Our teachers model responsive care, which means they adjust their teaching to meet each child’s needs, respond to the child’s inner desire to understand and learn about the world around them, and respond to every child’s daily needs with love, care and respect.

The infant room schedule is the most flexible because each infant brings their own unique rhythm to the classroom. The **HighScope Approach** is built around their own personal daily schedule. The toddler room introduces more structure and routine to promote stability and security, which is the foundation for future growth and development. Teachers plan daily experiences using the **Indiana Early Learning Foundations** as well as the **HighScope Key Developmental Indicators (KDI)**.

“From the raising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.” Psalms 113:3 -Sunshine Room

“And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire... and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.” Isaiah 58:11

-Garden Room

Young Preschool Program

Age 2½ by August 1

“You, Lord, are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light.”

2 Samuel 22:29

-Lighthouse Room

The first school experience outside of the home is a huge milestone, and should rely on positive relationships, routines and predictable environments for each child to be able to thrive. We warmly welcome our young learners into this smaller and more intimate preschool classroom setting. Teacher-to-child ratios are typically at 1:7, with plenty of time to move at a slower pace of learning throughout the day.

The Daily Routine includes greeting time, small group time, large group time, extended outdoor time, eating time, rest time, arts time, and nature time. Faith experiences are incorporated into many active learning times throughout the day. Both the **HighScope Infant/Toddler** and the **HighScope Preschool Approach** are used to lead our littlest learners. We incorporate the beginning aspects of the **Project Approach** during the day to explore and enhance their interests in learning. Teachers plan daily experiences using the **Indiana Early Learning Foundations** as well as the **HighScope Key Developmental Indicators (KDI)**. Children do not need to be toilet trained to enter into this classroom.



Preschool Programs

Age 3 by August 1

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.” Hebrews 1:3

-Radiance Room

Children either transition from the Young Preschool classroom or begin their learning in these larger settings, depending on the timing of their entry into the program. Smaller “family groups” form, based on developmental progress, social integration, and ability. Highly trained teachers guide the family groups and build deep relationships with the children during unhurried days. Teacher-to-child ratios are typically at 1:10 in these classrooms.

The Daily Routine includes greeting time, small group time, large group time, extended outdoor time, eating time, rest time, arts time, and project time. Faith experiences are incorporated in many active learning times throughout the day. **The HighScope Preschool Approach** is used for these children. We incorporate the **Project Approach** with special interest studies designed to explore and enhance their interests in learning. Teachers plan daily experiences using the **Indiana Early Learning Foundations** as well as the **HighScope Key Developmental Indicators (KDI)**. Children do not need to be toilet trained for entry into these classrooms.

“As water reflects the face, so one’s life reflects the heart.” Proverbs 27:19

-Reflection Room

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Age 4 by August 1

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

-Journey Classroom

Pre-kindergarten is a unique moment in time for a young child. It is a time of growth and change as children prepare for more formal school environments the following year. Our pre-kindergarten class typically has a ratio of 1:12 children with a degreed Lead Teacher and two Associate Teachers. Faith experiences are incorporated in many active learning times throughout the day and woven into

service projects based on community needs. Our pre-kindergarteners investigate topics of interest and, with the thoughtful guidance of teachers, expand their learning using **HighScope** and the **Project Approach**. They discover how to generate questions and pursue knowledge actively through many resources. This allows ample time for personalized attention, allowing each child to grow in his or her preferred way of learning. We use the **Indiana Early Learning Foundations** to help us identify and guide each child's specific plan for learning during the pre-Kindergarten year. Children in this class naturally assume and develop greater leadership skills and learn the process of conflict resolution. They will continue to grow their skills in all areas of development: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, creative, and spiritual to transition smoothly to primary school experiences.

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40:31

-Explorer Room

The Arts & Nature | Enrichment

At the ELC, we are committed to art and nature experiences. Art engages a child's senses and develops cognitive, social-emotional and multi-sensory skills. We are thrilled to staff degreed teachers for weekly experiences in both art and music & movement classes. Singing, playing instruments, painting, drawing, and role-playing expand and enrich opportunities for self-esteem, expression, and creativity. Each year we seek to offer a variety of experiences that help children explore artistic expression in many ways with access to skilled artists from the community.

Intergenerational Experiences

The Early Learning Center is blessed to be part of the Hubbard Hill Living Wisdom Community. We work together to provide unique **intergenerational experiences** throughout the year, which bring our toddler, preschool and Pre-K classes and volunteers from Hubbard Hill together for intentional learning activities. These planned, ongoing activities purposely bring together different generations in shared settings to learn and play, resulting in a fun and mutually beneficial experience. The children and our treasured “neighbors” from Hubbard Hill form friendships that encourage feelings of trust, empathy and love.

our FAITH

Program Foundation | Faith-based Approach

We use the **Orange Strategy** to help children in our program experience God and the love of Christ throughout the school year with gentle support from our staff. Through a **Head, Heart, and Hands approach**, children will learn how to trust, love, and serve as emerging followers of Christ in everyday worship and activities. These activities include Bible verses, songs, prayers, devotionals, quiet moments, journaling, serving others, and discovering God’s creation. We help each child draw closer to God and develop dispositions that come from the fruit of the Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

Three main concepts of the Orange Strategy:

1. God loves me.
2. God made me.
3. Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

About God

God is the one and only true God, yet He exists in three persons: God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit. God is the Creator, so everything belongs to Him and is under His control. God is holy, so He is righteous, majestic, and loving. God is all-knowing and purposeful, so He is at work to bring about His will. No person, thing, or idea compares to God.

About the Scriptures

God reveals Himself to us through the Bible, and it is 100% accurate, reliable, and authoritative.

About People

People are made in God's image and for His pleasure. But everybody falls short of God's intention, or ideal, for people. In other words, everyone has sinned. As a result, we are all separated from Him, even though He wants an intimate relationship with each of us.

About Salvation

That's why Jesus, God's Son, came and lived on this earth, died, and rose again. God offers His free gift of salvation to all who believe in Jesus and accept Him as Savior, and it is the only way to be forgiven and reconciled to God. Anyone who accepts this gift is adopted as a son or daughter into God's family and will live with Him forever in heaven.

our FOUNDATION

Educational Approach: HighScope

HighScope's educational approach emphasizes **active participatory learning**. Active learning means students have **direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events, and ideas**. Children's interests and choices are at the heart of HighScope programs. They construct their own knowledge through interactions with the world and the people around them. Children take the first step in the learning process by making choices and following through on their plans and decisions. Teachers, caregivers, and parents offer physical, emotional, and intellectual support. In active learning settings, adults expand children's thinking with diverse materials and nurturing interactions.

The HighScope educational approach is consistent with the best practices recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Within this broad framework, however, HighScope has unique features that differentiate it from other early childhood programs. One feature is the daily **PLAN-DO-REVIEW** sequence. Research shows that planning and reviewing are the two components of the program that are most positively and significantly associated with children's scores on measures of developmental progress.

A second unique feature is the curriculum content; the social, intellectual, and physical building blocks that are essential to young children's optimal growth. The content areas are organized into **eight main categories** that correspond to state and national learning standards in the following manner:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Approaches to learning | 5. Mathematics |
| 2. Social and emotional development | 6. Creative arts |
| 3. Physical development and health | 7. Science and technology |
| 4. Language, literacy, and communication | 8. Social studies |

Within these preschool content areas there are **58 key developmental indicators (KDIs)**, formerly called key experiences. The KDIs are statements of observable behaviors that define the important learning areas for young children. HighScope teachers keep these indicators in mind when they set up the environment and plan activities to encourage learning and social interaction. They also form the basis of HighScope’s child assessment tool, the Preschool Child Observation Record (COR). Teachers determine what children already know with methods outlined in the ELC Assessment Plan. This information is used to develop a customized educational plan for each child.

HighScope is a comprehensive educational approach that strives to help children develop in all areas.

The goals for young children are:

- To learn through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas
- To become independent, responsible, and confident, ready for school and ready for life
- To learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out and talk with others about what they have done and what they have learned
- To gain knowledge and skills in important academic, social and physical areas

Assessment Plan

Assessment at the ELC will be used to support children’s learning, identify children’s interests and needs, assess children’s developmental progress, plan curriculum for individual children as well as an entire class, be used for documentation for referral and evaluation when warranted and share developmental progress of the student with families.

Children will be assessed in natural settings, both indoors and outdoors by their classroom teachers. Observation will be ongoing throughout the school year. Teachers will document observations by using anecdotal notes. Teachers will assess and document information for each child in all areas of development: **Approaches to Learning; Language, Literacy and Communication; Social/Emotional Development; Physical Development, Health, and Well-being; Arts and Sciences**, using the ELC and HighScope goals and objectives as guides for assessment.

Teachers will use Learning Without Tears, Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), and the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR) when

assessing children. For COR, we enter the child's information online, leveling the data according to HighScope rubrics and reviewing data periodically. Teachers assess with the knowledge that each child has their own unique developmental timing, personality, and learning style, following the guidelines of Developmentally Appropriate Practice outlined by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC) to plan curriculum and to meet the needs of all children.

Following the ethical standards of the ELC and NAEYC, all observations, anecdotal notes, home visit forms and Parent/Teacher Conference forms will be kept confidential and only shared with ELC staff, the family of the individual child, and administrators of the program when necessary. When parental permission is granted, the ELC will share observations and information with outside specialists for the purpose of accreditation and staff assessment.

Families will be involved with planning and implementing assessments through home visits, daily contact during greeting and dismissal, weekly emails, supplemental forms and Parent-Teacher Conferences held twice a year. Assessments will be sensitive to family culture, experiences, children's abilities and disabilities, and home language. A translator will be used to communicate information as needed. Assessments will take place in settings familiar to the child.

Assessment results will only be used for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum, and to report developmental progress to families. Again, assessment information is only given to outside specialists when necessary, with permission from families.



getting STARTED

Acceptance Process

Initial acceptance to our programs at the ELC is made on the basis of confirmation of (1) the information on the child's application and (2) a subsequent family meeting. When your child's application has been selected for enrollment, you will be notified of acceptance into the program via email. Please keep the center informed of your current email address and phone number and also notify the center of any vacation, sabbatical, sick leave, or scheduled time away.

To ease transition, we recommend that each child visit the center to help acclimate to our school.

Admission Procedure

Children apply to the ELC for the coming year, beginning in February, and gain entrance based on availability.

To admit a child into the program:

- Parent(s) and child(ren) **tour the center**.
- Complete online registration
- New parent(s) and child(ren) meet with the Director during **family meetings** to discuss their child(ren), school operations, policies, and programming and to answer any questions.
- Parent(s) and child(ren) attend classroom observation dates after classrooms are assigned to observe the center “in action” with their child(ren) for at least 2-3 hours, based on the needs of the child.
- Medical forms are updated in the child(ren)’s file **within 30 days of enrollment in the program**. Medical documents are required during the enrollment period to hold space in the classroom. This includes an immunization history and record of any medical conditions affecting school participation.
- **Individual Education Plans (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)** are on file if the child(ren) has received special education services, including speech therapy.
- **Legal custody documentation must be on file for families who are divorced** so that our center understands clearly who is allowed to access the child(ren) at the center
- Children with **allergies, medications or other pertinent information** must have this important information listed on their enrollment forms

The following forms are completed and returned before the child’s first day:

- **Birth Certificate Copy**
- **Emergency Information**
- **Enrollment Forms**
- **Letter of Understanding**
- **Licensed Child Care/Home Consent**
- **Physical/Immunization Record**
- **Policy on Guidance and Discipline**
- **Tuition Express**
- **Waiver and Release Agreeeme**

Application Fee

For consideration of enrollment to the ELC To secure your child’s classroom assignment, a non-refundable app fee, the **non-refundable Family Application fee of \$150 must be submitted**.

Families will be required to update forms yearly. After a family is enrolled, siblings have priority for future openings.

Parent Activity Committee (PAC) Activity Fee

Throughout the year, there are many events and activities that benefit the entire community of the ELC. These include Ice Cream Social, Fall Fun Day, Family Reading Night, Christmas Celebration, Easter Egg Hunt, Appreciation Days, etc. To support these endeavors, families contribute a **Parent Activity Fee of \$75 per child annually** (charged with October tuition).

Enrollment Periods and Changes

We realize that some of our families will need to make situational changes throughout the school year. If you need to make a change to your child's schedule, please give us at least a 30-day notice. **When families make a permanent change to decrease a schedule, the Office Manager must be notified and a fee of \$250 will be charged for changes prior to the beginning of the next school year or during the current school year.** Families may opt to enroll a child younger than our age requirements and pay the tuition rate to maintain entry into the program later in the year.

Enrollment Requirements

The Indiana licensing guidelines require that each child has a complete physical examination and documentation of current immunizations before he or she may begin attending the ELC. Parents must also submit a copy of their child's birth certificate, which will be kept on file at the center. Legal custody documentation, special education services, and allergies must also be filed to protect the child and help us meet their individual needs. Parents will receive all necessary forms at the time of enrollment.

Enrollment Termination

The ELC reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following:

1. Non-payment or habitual late payment of tuition
2. Incomplete/missing required enrollment forms
3. Habitual late pick-ups
4. Physical or verbal abuse of staff or children
5. Noncompliance with Indiana state law and licensing restrictions regarding centers

In a few instances we may find that our program does not fit a child's needs. If behaviors occur that exceed our early childhood capacity, we will meet with the parents/guardians to discuss alternatives, such as outside intervention. Appropriate efforts will be made with the family to determine the best course of action for all involved. On rare occasions, we may find it necessary to recommend a transition to another center. If needed, this would happen only after meeting with the parents and an outside consultant.

Please give us one month's written notice for withdrawals.

Priority Scheduling

1. ELC /Hubbard Hill staff and families currently in program
2. New families with full week schedule
3. New families with a partial week schedule

Availability of Vouchers

The Early Learning Center accepts the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) voucher program. CCDF is a federal program administered through the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (IFSSA), that assists low-income families by providing affordable childcare for working parents and/or those who are continuing their education.

Families who wish to enroll in CCDF must meet certain requirements and should contact CCDF directly at www.childrensbureau.org for more information and how to apply. If you qualify, you are responsible for maintaining your requirements and keeping your voucher current. By doing so you will maximize the amount paid by CCDF and reduce your costs **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY TUITION COSTS AND FEES THAT ARE NOT PAID BY CCDF.**



our SCHOOL LIFE

Birthdays & Celebrations

A great part of our work is to help guide and nourish a child's growing social skills and emotions in the context of family, school and community. Celebrations are a way to recognize each child and his or her unique God-given gifts. The ELC celebrates each child's birthday, generally on the closest

weekday to his or her actual birthday. Due to licensing guidelines, we ask that parents not bring food to celebrate their child's birthday. Please distribute invitations outside of school for private parties.

Each classroom at the ELC will create its own birthday tradition to celebrate birthdays. These may include a special activity, song, or project. Parents are encouraged to participate by visiting the center for a portion of the day!

We find many reasons to have special celebrations. Parents are strongly encouraged to help us celebrate these days and any other times that are important to your family. We welcome cultural and ethnic celebrations that we could include in our program. Please speak to your child's teacher to determine the best way for you to share special events from your family life, including your culture and unique family celebrations.

Clothing

The ELC is committed to active, engaging play inside and outside to develop the whole child. Please have your child dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes including non-slip, safe shoes so that he or she may feel free to participate in all activities. This also helps children be self-sufficient with toileting. **While we encourage the use of smocks, we cannot guarantee that children's clothes will not become soiled or stained from art or outdoor play.** Cowboy boots, flip-flops, and slippery-soled shoes are not safe on playground equipment, so we ask that you please send your child in sneakers or closed-toe shoes.

Off-Campus Experiences

If we are planning an off-campus field trip you will be given prior notice from your teacher along with a permission slip to be signed by the parent or guardian prior to the field trip. If space is available, parents and guardians are welcome to accompany the class on the trip.

On-Campus Experiences

Most experiences will take place on the Hubbard Hill campus. Please look for an **On-Campus Field Trip Form** that will be sent to you at the beginning of our school year. This signed form will be kept on file for the duration of the current school year

On-campus experiences may include:

- Trips to the ponds
- Campus walks
- Trips to our gardens

Items from Home

We are here as part of your child's home away from home. In a comfortable, supportive atmosphere, each child can learn and grow to their fullest potential. Below are some items to bring from home to help your child have the best experience in our school! Please send replacement items promptly following a toileting accident or other event.

- Pull-ups/diapers in a labeled, unopened container (as needed)
- Two changes of underwear
- Two complete changes of clothes
- Shoes and socks
- Extra outdoor water shoes/boots
- Special blanket
- Small pillow for rest time
- Picture of the family (very important!)
- **Infant/Toddlers ONLY:**
 - Pre-made bottles. We must send home any unused bottles daily
 - Baby food needs to be brought from home daily
 - Crib sheets will be provided for our Infants only



Meal Plan

Eating is a time for learning social and self-help skills. Children practice using small muscles as they pour their own drinks, help set tables and clean up after themselves. Good manners at the table are emphasized. The ELC works with a local professional caterer to prepare the freshest lunches from whole grains and seasonal offerings. Children who arrive at school before 8:15 am are offered a cold breakfast. Snacks are offered in the mid-morning and late afternoon. We prepare a hot lunch every day and serve nutritionally balanced meals and snacks as outlined by the Children's Nutrition Council. Menus for each week are posted in your child's classroom, at the welcome desk in the lobby, in the weekly electronic newsletter, and on our website.

Our staff does not offer solid foods or fruit juices to infants younger than 6 months of age, unless that practice is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by the family. Sweetened beverages are not allowed. If juice (only 100% fruit juice must be used) is served, the amount is limited to no more than four ounces per child per day.

Infants unable to sit are held for bottle-feeding. All others sit or are held to be fed. Infants and toddlers do not have bottles while in the crib or bed and do not eat from propped bottles at any time. Infant/toddlers do not carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups with them while crawling or walking. The staff will offer children fluids from a cup as soon as the family and teacher decide together that the child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

Except for breast milk, staff serve only formula and infant food that comes to the facility in factory-sealed containers (e.g. ready-to-feed powder or concentrated formulas and baby food jars) and will be prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless the child's healthcare provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. Staff discard after one hour any formula or human milk that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated.

If staff warm formula or breast milk, the milk is warmed in water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than five minutes. No milk, including breast milk, and no other infant foods, are warmed in a microwave oven.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to pump or feed their babies in designated areas at the Early Learning Center at any time. If providing breast milk for your child, please label the container with the infant's name and date. The ELC will store the breast milk in the refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the milk was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than three months. The staff will gently mix, not shake, the milk before feeding to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components in human milk. Staff will discard unfinished and unrefrigerated formula or breast milk after 2 hours.

Outdoor Learning Environment

Outdoor play is an important part of each day at the ELC! Children play outside each morning and afternoon. Please plan on your child playing outside every day, unless it is actively storming, the wind chill is below 25°F, the heat index is at or above 90°F or the air quality is unsuitable for outdoor play.

Children must bring appropriate clothing for outdoor play every day. In case of inclement weather or when air conditions outdoors could be hazardous to children's health, there is a large indoor playground available for use. We are unable to keep a child inside due to health reasons. If he or she is too ill to go outside, they are best kept at home.

Ratio of Teacher to Children

To help ensure a personalized education focused on quality interactions, we build classroom sizes based on the following Teacher to Child ratios.

Infant	6 weeks	1 teacher for every 4 children	8 maximum
Toddler 1	1 year	1 teacher for every 5 children	10 maximum
Toddler 2	2 years	1 teacher for every 5 children	10 maximum
Young Preschoolers	2½–3½ years	1 teacher for every 4–7 children	14 maximum
Preschoolers	3–4 years	1 teacher for every 7–10 children	20 maximum
Pre-kindergarteners	4–5 years	1 teacher for every 8–12 children	24 maximum

Rest Time

In compliance with NAEYC standard 5.A.12: infants, unless otherwise ordered by a physician with a medical reason, are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment that meets the standards of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft items are not allowed in the cribs or rest equipment for infants younger than 8 months of age. Blankets are prohibited to be used as per licensing. An infant sleep sack which has velcro or a zipper can be used to cover a child. The infant’s head remains uncovered during sleep. After being placed down for sleep on their backs, infants may then be allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves over.

A daily quiet time is part of a healthy preschool schedule of learning and playing for young children. The length of this time depends upon the age of the child and his or her individual needs, but all children will be offered time for rest. Rest time is a state licensing requirement. Research and our experience tell us that children’s brain development and physical well-being require regular rest periods during the day. If you have questions about your child’s individual schedule, please speak with your child’s teacher. After 30 minutes of rest, children are offered quiet activities if they are not asleep (e.g. puzzles, books, quiet toys).

Schedule

In keeping with our goals and philosophy, the ELC is an intentional program based on: following children’s interests, encouraging ever-deepening play activities, and scaffolding this play with foundational early childhood learning standards in mind. Each day, children are provided with time for free play (Work Time) with a variety of people, materials, and spaces. Each child can choose which activity, material or space they wish to use.

At other times during the day, there will be appropriate learning experiences directly facilitated by our teachers. The ELC also works with Hubbard Hill to offer planned and organic opportunities for intergenerational learning experiences that support the classroom curriculum. We strive to challenge

and support children at their individual developmental levels. Our daily schedule balances quiet and active play and provides opportunities for small and large group experiences to learn in the classroom. Throughout the day, we balance our faith education through Bible stories, songs, games, prayers, devotionals, and service opportunities.

The following elements are part of our full-day program each day for our children:

- Large Group Time
- Small Group Time
- Work Time
- Outside Time
- Lunch and Snack Times
- Rest Time
- Project Time
- Enrichment Times (art, drama, music, nature, and more!)

The Staff

The heart of a quality school lies in its teachers. At the ELC, we carefully select our teachers based on criteria centered on their education, their experience, and their passion for young children. Quality, continuity, and longevity of staff are priorities in our program. To that end:

- Lead Teachers have a minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education (or a related field) and experience working with young children or are currently working towards this degree.
- Associate Teachers have at least an associate's degree in early childhood education (or a related field) and experience working with young children.
- All staff members receive at least 20 hours of ongoing training per year and attend regular team planning meetings. All staff are certified in basic First-Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions.

Technology

We are committed to using technology to help our children learn about the world, as this is a developmentally appropriate practice and a special part of our work together. Each classroom is fully equipped with Wi-Fi, computers and iPads. Educational websites may be viewed occasionally as part

of an exploration of a particular topic or part of the faith curriculum, but we leave TV viewing for the home environment.

Toys from Home

Children need time to understand and become accustomed to transitions between their home and school environments. To assist children with their social and emotional needs, children may bring a comfort item for use to ease the transition from home to school or during rest time. Please label with the child's name and choose something small that fits in his/her cubby.

Please keep expensive games, electronic toys or toys as weapons at home.

our FAMILIES



Families are an especially important part of our program! Parents or guardians of enrolled children are welcome at the ELC at any time. Other members of a child's family are welcome, too, and are encouraged to participate in any activities that are of interest to them. Holiday celebrations, birthdays, and field trips are especially fun times to spend at the ELC.

Communication

We believe that building loving, caring relationships with our families is an essential part of our work. We try our best to provide the means to communicate effectively with each family in our program. There are many ways we provide information that is relevant to families on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis. Each classroom maintains a board with a posted daily schedule, calendar, special events, a link to our COR Advantage Parent Portal, menus, and more! A chalkboard near each classroom notes daily highlighted books and activities. Each teacher writes an email especially for their families, detailing upcoming learning experiences. A monthly electronic newsletter from the ELC office keeps parents informed about recent happenings and upcoming events. Teachers also provide information to their families via personal notes, email, text message alerts, and phone calls and via the **Brightwheel app**.

Families are invited to provide their comments, questions, and ideas in many ways here at the ELC. Opportunities come in the form of informal chats at the welcome desk in the lobby, home visits, family conferences, surveys, parent workshops, and more!

Social Media/Website

Sometimes pictures can speak louder than words! In an effort to help families remain connected to their children throughout the day, the ELC maintains active Facebook and Instagram accounts whereby parents can see firsthand the happenings in the classroom. Find our website at elcelkhart.com and like us on Facebook and Instagram to see the wonderful experiences of the children at the Early Learning Center. New content is added regularly.

Family Gatherings

To help our families share life together, we offer opportunities to meet with each other and the ELC staff several times a year. These gatherings are meant to provide a sense of community, where parents and children can get together to chat and play. Dates and times for these gatherings will be posted, but include: Open House, Back-to-School Night/Ice Cream Social, Fall Fun Days, Christmas Celebration, and parent workshops, to name a few.



Grievance Procedure

We try our best to meet the needs of each family at our school, but in the event that you have a concern regarding the policies and/or procedures of the ELC, please contact us directly:

1. Bring your concern to the attention of the Director. After a thorough discussion of the matter at hand, the parents and the Director work together to decide the best course of action.
2. If we are unable to solve the issue in an adequate amount of time, the parent(s) may request further assistance from the Director. All parties will discuss and decide upon a course of action. This may include involving the teaching staff, board members, and/or community resources.
3. If an adequate agreement cannot be reached, it may be necessary to terminate the relationship between the ELC and the family. This course of action will only be taken when all other options have been exhausted.

Lending Library

To help our families guide their children well, the ELC has a small resource library, which includes books and current articles on topics of particular interest to parents and families. Our families are encouraged to borrow materials that address childhood illnesses, behavior concerns, siblings, sleeping patterns and many other topics. The lending library is in the reception area in the main lobby.

Parent Activity Committee

To engage and involve our families, the ELC is served by a Parent Activity Committee (PAC), which meets regularly throughout the year. The group is comprised of parent and teacher representatives. PAC meetings provide opportunities for parents and teachers to work together to build a strong early learning community. At least one representative from the Parent Activity Committee is on the ELC Advisory Council.

Parent Bulletin Boards

Need to know something in a hurry? There is a bulletin board inside each classroom where important messages and notices are posted, such as menus, Parent Portals, field trips, schedules, and events. Be sure to check the monitors or welcome desk in the lobby area, which may include special events around our community that may interest our families with young children.

Parent Mail Slots

Each family is provided with a mail slot above their child's cubby. Please check these daily, as creative work and communication to families go home very regularly.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

As an integral part of our program, all parents are asked to participate in two parent-teacher conferences per year, one in the fall and one in late spring. Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed by teachers or parents.

Classroom Visits

You are the most influential person in your child's life. In recognition of this special bond, the programming at the ELC is designed to encourage and welcome parents into the classroom. Parents are invited to share cultural experiences, read stories or just come and hang out with us! You are welcome to drop in at any time or schedule a time to visit if you prefer. Please do not use this time to confer with the teachers, as their attention is focused on the children. If you need to address an issue, please leave a note or request a meeting with the teachers.



our ROLE: Guidance

One of the most important achievements in early childhood is learning how to be emotionally attached while growing toward independence. To help children achieve these goals, we provide an environment where children can experience positive relationships while practicing self-discipline skills, a place to develop confidence, and a healthy sense of self. The quality of these early relationships will influence how children relate to others for the rest of their lives.

We devote much time and attention to quality teacher/child interactions by showing encouragement, listening attentively, and taking the time for individual moments with each child. We help children express their feelings in words and solve their problems in a peaceful way instead of showing aggression. We help each child develop strong Christian habits and dispositions by using the Bible and by focusing on the Fruit of the Spirit in all our programming.

Guidance for Infants (6 weeks-1 year)

We use a positive guidance approach to discipline. Caregivers strive to form positive, trusting, and encouraging relationships with infants. Teachers and caregivers attempt to see things through the child's point of view and encourage their efforts and communications. Positive, consistent, ongoing adult support is critical in satisfying a child's need to actively explore and conduct a personal understanding of the world.

Adapted from Tender Care and Early Learning

Guidance for Toddlers (1-2.5 years) and Young Preschoolers (2.5-3 years)

We use a positive guidance approach to discipline. This means our teachers encourage cooperation, independence, and respect for self and others at this age, but realize the children's developmental limitations in expressing these ideals. Discipline at this age generally involves redirection and separation as we encourage their curiosity and exploration of their new world and playmates. Consistency in scheduling and planning appropriate and adequate activities helps to reduce a toddler's frustrations. Children are supported using the HighScope 6-Step Conflict Resolution Method.

Guidance for Preschoolers (3-4 years) and Pre-kindergarteners (4-5 years)

We use a positive guidance approach to discipline. Our teachers encourage cooperation, independence, and respect for self and others. We expect children to have occasional difficulties with self-control, as well as with conflict resolution. Teachers view these as opportunities for children to practice their developing social skills. When children are verbally, emotionally or physically harmful, we take the following steps until the problem is resolved:

6-Step Conflict Resolution Method

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
2. Acknowledge children's feelings
3. Gather information
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support

If necessary, children may be separated to cool off and think of better solutions. If needed, children may be removed from the room and taken to the office to calm down. Once children have regained control, they may return to their group and/or resume negotiations with the other child. If a child cannot gain control and participate in classroom activities, the child will be sent home.

Teachers will support children in their development of social skills and will communicate classroom observations with parents. There may be redirection (in the room) until the child demonstrates that they are able to rejoin the play. Most issues with young children involve space and materials. Helping a child realize when they need space is a tool they will use for the rest of their life. If a child is observed to be struggling behaviorally in the classroom for an extended period of time, a meeting will be called with the parents to create a Behavior Plan with a timeline to monitor progress.

We use the following guidelines for Positive Guidance:

- Never use guidance techniques or consequences which are meant to hurt or humiliate a child.
- Set limits that are clear and regularly enforced.
- Speak to children with respect, at their eye level.
- Listen when children communicate their feelings.
- Use positive directions and choices when possible.

- Help children develop problem-solving skills and self-discipline.

Guidance on Biting

Even in the best programs, periodic outbreaks of biting can occur among preschoolers. This is an unavoidable consequence of young children in a group. When it happens, it is frustrating and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. However unfortunately, it is a natural phenomenon, not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers. There are no quick and easy solutions.

Children bite for various reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking attention or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results– the desired toy, excitement and attention.

Here is what we do to try to extinguish the biting behavior:

- The caring attention is focused on the victim, not the one who bites.
- A review of the context for the biting incident occurs.
- We work with the child on appropriately resolving conflict of frustration.
- We try to adapt to the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- We make every effort to always ensure the safety of all of the children.
- We provide immediate logical consequences after a biting occurrence.
- We make every effort to manage the behavior quickly.
- We do not recommend delayed punishment at home

Positive Guidance | Positive Behavior Plan

A Positive Behavior Plan will be followed to help children gain control in the classroom to become successful learners at our school. In the early childhood setting, a child's disruptive behavior is identified in terms of visible actions that occur frequently enough to cause a sustained disturbance in the classroom that hinders learning.

First, the classroom teacher(s) objectively document the behavior in context on Behavior Reports, which are then reviewed by the Director. The teacher and the Director sign and date the report. Families are given a copy of the report, and one remains in the child's confidential file. Families are encouraged to discuss this with the teacher privately.

Then, a time for gathering perspective happens. After a period of sustained teacher documentation and/or upon removal from the classroom, the Director visits the classroom to observe the child. The

observation(s) is/are documented in the form of a timed running record. There is continued discussion with the family during a meeting between the teacher, Director, and the family. Home life is discussed, and comparisons are made between home and school. Conference notes are kept in the child's file.

Finally, a plan is developed by the Home/School Team to help with the behaviors documented in school. This includes perspective gathering, a review of behavioral data, the development of a hypothesis, identification of possible unmet needs, and strategies offered that may ameliorate the unmet needs. Resources are chosen to read which helps the Team better understand the child and the unmet needs. If the strategies are not helping the child, the Home/School Team will determine the next steps to assist the child to gain control in the classroom, with removal as a final option. We will not use suspension, expulsion or other exclusionary measures. We also comply with federal and state civil rights laws when addressing behavioral issues.

Separation Strategies

Consistency is one of the most important things a parent can provide for their child. Establishing and following a predictable routine, setting limits, and following through are essential steps in helping children learn to adjust to transitions. Separation anxiety is a common dilemma we face, especially at the beginning of the year. Here are a few suggestions for helping make the separation easier for both you and your child:

- Drop off and pick up your child at approximately the same time each day.
- Establish a routine for goodbye time. For example, say, "I'm going to read one book and then it's time for me to go." Then, read one book and start the separation process.
- Say goodbye to your child when it's time for you to go. It can be very frightening for a child to have a parent "sneak out." Saying goodbye, even if it causes more tears, will reassure your child that you will be coming back.
- Enlist the help of a staff member—we are here to make this transition easier for everyone.

our ROLE: Toilet Training

Toilet learning should be a positive experience for a child. It should take only a short period of time if the child is ready. Toilet learning is as individual as learning to walk. There is no right age by which all children should be using the toilet. Problems with toilet learning usually arise when adults do not pay attention to the child's lack of readiness.

It is our goal to maximize success and minimize frustration for children, parents, and teachers. Here are a few keys to identifying when your child is ready to start toilet learning:

- My child is dry at least two hours at a time or is dry after napping each day.
- My child’s bowel movements are regular and predictable.
- My child becomes uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers and asks for them to be changed.
- My child asks to use the toilet or potty chair.
- My child asks to wear “grown-up underwear.”
- My child can take off his/her pants and can walk to and from the bathroom.
- My child can indicate when he or she is about to urinate or have a bowel movement.
- My child knows when he or she needs to use the bathroom.



Before toilet learning with a child, parents and staff will meet to ensure that the process is not undertaken casually or half-heartedly. Two-way communication and consistency at both home and school will help ensure a positive experience. Here are a few helpful hints:

- Have your child wear loose-fitting clothing that he or she can manage independently, such as elastic waist pants that are easy to pull up and down. Overalls and t-shirts with a snap crotch are difficult for children to manage without help.
- Consider using regular, thin cotton underwear rather than Pull-Ups. Pull-Ups can hinder toilet learning because the child feels dry.
- Bring a bag with at least three sets of extra clothes, including socks, every day. Label all clothing. An extra pair of shoes is also recommended.

Consistency at home and at school is the most important factor in successful toilet learning.

our ROLE: Health & Safety

Child Abuse

According to Indiana State Law IC 31-6-4-3, any individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect must make a report. In agencies in which there are established

reporting protocols, the report may be made to the individual in charge or another designated agent, who also becomes responsible for reporting or cause a report to be made. This does not relieve individuals who make a report to another staff person of their own obligation to report directly to child protection services or law enforcement unless a report has already been made by the agency liaison. Anonymous reports are also accepted.

The protocol for reporting suspected abuse or neglect at the ELC is as follows:

- Staff members bring their concerns and/or documentation to the Director.
- The Director will decide as to whether the allegations can be substantiated by documentation or if more information is needed.
- The Director will notify the CEO of Hubbard Hill of the allegation.
- Within 24 hours, the Director and staff member will call Child Protective Services and make an official report.



Illness

To protect your child, the staff, and the other children, we request that your child remain home when he or she cannot participate comfortably in routine activities, including outdoor play. Teachers will contact parents anytime they observe symptoms listed below that indicate a child is not feeling well and should be picked up from school

If a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified, and the child will be kept in the office in a comfortable yet isolated location until the parent arrives. If a parent is unable to be reached, the ELC will contact designated Emergency Contacts.

Symptoms:

- Blood or mucus in stool
- Diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing
- Earache
- Extreme irritability or crying that cannot be consoled
- Mouth sores or drooling
- Red, inflamed or discharged eyes

- Skin sores oozing fluid
- Sluggishness or unusual drowsiness without explanation
- Swollen glands around jaws, ears or neck
- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or more
- Unexplained rash
- Vomiting

We provide this information so you can obtain appropriate treatment and/or plan for the possibility of your child needing to stay home. A child with the above symptoms must stay home for 24 hours after the symptoms cease before returning to school or whatever the CDC guidelines recommend. We will notify the family of the under-immunized child if there is a vaccine-preventable disease present here at the ELC so they can promptly be excluded to avoid illness.

Covid-19

The ELC will continue to follow recommendations on Covid-19 protocol as needed from the CDC, including recommendations through the State of Indiana for Early Childhood Education.

Communicable Diseases

We send messages to parents through our Brightwheel app when children have been exposed to any communicable disease. We will care for a child that has symptoms of a communicable disease until a parent or authorized adult arrives.

After leaving the ELC while ill, the general rule is that a child will not be allowed to attend the next day. He or she must be free of symptoms and fever for 24 hours before returning to school.

Chicken Pox	Giardiasis	Diarrhea by E. coli
COVID-19	RSV	Salmonella
Cytomegalovirus (CMV)	Shigellosis	Cryptosporidiosis
Fifth disease	Scabies	Diarrhea
Hepatitis A	Tuberculosis	Herpes
Influenza A or B	Lice	Vomiting
Measles	Group A streptococcus	Campylobacterium
Rubella	Meningococcal disease	Rotavirus
Whooping Cough	Ringworm	

While there may be some rare exceptions, it is important that your child is well enough to participate in activities and also not be contagious. If an antibiotic is prescribed, your child may return after taking the medication for 24 hours, if they are feeling better. We know this may be an inconvenience, but we also know that efforts such as these to contain illnesses benefit all of us. All parents must have emergency plans established to care for ill children.

Fever-reducing medications may not be given to children prior to attending the ELC for the day. These types of medication mask symptoms and can put the child and others in the center at risk for contagious illness.

Immunization and Health Records

The ELC maintains updated immunization records for each child, as required by the state of Indiana. A yearly physical form signed by the child's pediatrician is required. This updated health record will be maintained for each child as required by the State of Indiana.

Safe Sleep Policy

Providing infants with a safe environment in which to grow and learn is of extreme importance to us. Therefore, our childcare program has implemented policies and procedures to create a safe sleep environment for infants. We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Safety Commission for safe sleep environments to reduce the risk of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID).

NOTE: To lower the risk of SUID, infants are ALWAYS placed on their backs to sleep unless they have a signed alternate sleep position waiver from a medical provider that is approved by the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL).

Safe Sleep Procedures and Practices

We adhere to the following recommended safe sleep procedures:

- Infants 0 - 12 months are placed alone on their backs on a firm, tight-fitting mattress in approved cribs for ALL sleeps.
- Cribs are not placed near windows with corded blinds, shades, or other strangulation risks.
- Bouncy seats, sofas, swings, car seats, and other soft surfaces are not used as infant sleeping surfaces.
- Pillows, blankets, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft products are not allowed in cribs.
- Infants' heads are not covered during sleep.
- Infants are not swaddled.
- Infants are dressed in appropriate clothing to prevent overheating. Bibs, hats, hoods, headbands, etc. are removed prior to placing infants in their cribs.
- When infants can easily turn over from their backs to their stomachs, they are allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer as long as they are always initially placed on their backs.

Injuries

Children at this developmental level are very active and often attempt activities for which they have not fully developed the motor skills to master. As a result, injuries can and do occur on occasion. If your child is injured while at school, the teacher will submit an Accident Report for the child's file. At the same time, parents/guardians will be notified.

Emergencies

In case of a medical or dental emergency, the parent/guardian will be contacted and will take responsibility for obtaining the necessary medical treatment. If circumstances require immediate or professional care in the judgment of the ELC staff, 911 will be called. ELC staff will respond as

necessary until emergency services arrive. In the event of emergency transport, Elkhart General Hospital (600 East Blvd) is located nearby in Elkhart. **ELC staff will not transport a child to an emergency facility.** Costs incurred from the treatment of an injury or illness are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Medication

The giving or application of medication, providing dietary supplements and carrying out medical procedures will be done only on a written order or prescription from a physician to parents/guardians.

Parents are required to fill out an **Administration of Medication** form before any medication can be given to a child. Medications prescribed for an individual child must be kept in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label showing the:

- Child's name
- Child's Date of Birth (DOB)
- Prescription number
- Date filled
- Physician's name
- Directions for use

When no longer needed, the medication will be returned to the parents or destroyed. We cannot administer over-the-counter medication without written permission from a physician and are not able to administer the first dose of any medication.

***Special note: when filling a prescription for your child, ask the pharmacist to divide the medicine into two containers—one for use at home and the other to be kept at the center.**



our ROLE: Special Needs

At the ELC, we welcome children of all cultures and needs. Through ongoing education, our center provides for the special needs of children who are disabled or who require treatment for health conditions. While a child is receiving care and education in the center, the ELC will provide for the child in accordance with a written medical/physical care plan for the care of the child according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Our program supports a spirit of true collaboration and partnership among members of the family, school, and professionals to plan for the child's individual needs. We treat each family with dignity and respect for their individual needs and/or differences. We also support ongoing communication to share ideas. We make changes to our environment or our daily routine so that all children and families can actively participate. At the ELC, we know there are many benefits for including all children learning together at our school.

To support children with disabilities, our staff uses "people first" language, and we provide materials that reflect diversity. Classroom discussions encourage acceptance of differences in ability among other things. We partner with other community resources to better support children in our program and to help us make it more accessible to all children.

A family with a child having a diagnosed special need with either an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who has been identified as not functioning according to age-appropriate expectations in the areas of affective, cognitive, communicative, perceptual-motor, physical or social development to such an extent that the child may require special help will be involved in a written plan of care for the child.

The written plan for the care of the child:

- May be written by and approved and signed by the parent/guardian and the lead teacher
- Will include written instructions for any procedures necessary for the health of the child
- Will list any additional services and providers of services that the child is receiving
- May contain written permission from the parent/guardian for the center to contact providers of additional services

- Will be modified and revised as often as deemed necessary to meet changing needs and will be reviewed and approved by the parent and lead teacher after each revision, at least annually
- Will be on file at the center
- Referrals are made for a more formal diagnostic evaluation.

Only people trained by the parent or by a licensed or certified medical professional may attend to health conditions requiring special procedures. There will always be a trained person on-site whenever a child who is handicapped or who requires treatment for health conditions is present.

There will be a statement on file at the center which identifies the child, the nature of the required special procedure, and the person or persons who will be attending to the child and performing the special procedure. The parents will sign it, and any health professionals who have trained staff and the trained staff members to confer permission and accept responsibility for such procedures.

As a Christian center, we are committed to meeting the needs of all children and including them in learning about the love of Jesus, regardless of special health care needs or disabilities. The ELC will plan for and include learning experiences for all children and promote ongoing training for staff in teaching children with disabilities.

our ADMINISTRATION

Absence

We ask parents to please send a message via the Brightwheel App to report their child's absence. This information is helpful to plan each day and to talk with the other children about their playmates' absence.

Air Quality

Local weather and air quality conditions are monitored on an ongoing basis via AccuWeather and weather alert radio systems. All alerts are received in real-time and appropriate action is immediately taken. Staff and children will remain indoors when the air quality is poor and will cause hazardous conditions for outdoor play.

Eco-Healthy Practices

We only purchase non-toxic toys and art supplies and use fragrance-free cleaning supplies.

Allergy Plan

Families with a child with diagnosed allergies (such as asthma) will work with the ELC to develop an allergy plan for the ELC staff to follow in case of an emergency at the ELC. This plan will be reviewed and approved by the family's physician and kept in the classroom's emergency "GO BAG."

Arrivals/Departures

It is important that we know when a child arrives and departs so we can plan activities and special events. For the safety of the children, parents are required to walk in with their child and sign in using the Brightwheel App to establish our daily roster. Parents walk to the classroom with their child, place all items in their assigned cubby and contact a teacher, so that the child is acknowledged and welcomed for the day. **We ask that children be in attendance by 8:30 am so they can fully participate in the school day.** Children will only be released to a parent or guardian, or other person authorized by the parent who has proper identification.

Check-In/Out System: Brightwheel

We use web-based management software to assist us in our day-to-day management of the center and to establish daily attendance. As a part of the system, we have a pre-established authorization list for each child. If an exception needs to be made for pick-up, the child's parent/guardian will need to contact the ELC to inform you about the name and relationship of the new person who will arrive to pick up the child. The person picking up will need to check in at the welcome desk in the lobby and be prepared to show photo identification for us to release the child.

Confidentiality

To ensure the protection of children, their families, and staff in the school, information pertaining to admission, health, family or discharge remains confidential. This information is only released to the parent of the child in question; authorized staff from Hubbard Hill and the ELC; persons authorized by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA); Child Protective Services (CPS) and individuals of authorized agencies according to federal, state and local laws.

Confidential child records containing personally identifiable information, (except for directory information), are collected upon enrollment and annually thereafter. These records are kept in one central location in the ELC offices in a locked cabinet. They are updated as needed but reviewed at least quarterly. Only approved people who have a legitimate educational reason are allowed to

access a child's records without the parent's/guardian's permission. Parents/guardians may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours.

Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a Release of Information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, and when it expires.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedure

Our day begins best when parents can make their drop-off time consistent to create a predictable routine. A staff member will greet your child in the morning and help him or her to enter the program smoothly.

When entering our Infant room, we request all adults/children to remove or cover their shoes (no bare feet, please) that have been worn outside the classroom. Shoe coverings will be available for our families as they enter the room.

We will provide updated drop-off and pick-up guidelines to families for traffic flow and parking purposes. Once inside the building, please help your child remove their coat, boots, etc., and place all items in their cubby or on the hook. Please talk to your child's teacher for suggestions and help if the drop-off or pick-up time is especially difficult for you and/or your child. We want to help make drop off/pick up times pleasant and work towards building confidence in the children.

Food Allergies

The ELC makes every effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. We are a part of the Allergy Aware program, which means that we have established policies and procedures to meet the needs of children with food allergies. A confidential allergy list is posted in each classroom, the office, and the school kitchen area.

We have a firm policy that **parents may not bring food from home** to share with other children, even for birthdays. We do not allow peanut butter, nuts, or foods containing these ingredients.

Parents of children with diagnosed food allergies will fill out the **Food Allergy form** and meet with the Office Manager to communicate their child's specific needs to establish an action plan based on recommendations from their physician. If food must be sent from home for a special diet, we kindly request parents fill out a **Safe Transportation of Food Responsibility form** for our records.

Families with food preferences due to religious or strong cultural reasons (not simply a child's dislike for a food) may also fill out the **Food Preference form**, providing us with your family's religious or cultural background requiring this request. In response to specific allergies and strong cultural preferences, we offer a gluten-free vegetarian option daily.

Hours of Operation

The ELC opens at 7:30 am and closes at 5:30pm, Monday through Friday, according to our posted calendar. Our school day is from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm with Before and After School Care available at an additional cost. Parents are charged for Before/After School Care at a rate of **\$20 per hour. Note: this is a change from the past.** Families will no longer be charged by the minute or ½ hour. Parents must commit to certain days each week in advance. If you were to “drop-in” the charge is **\$25 per hour.** The request will only be granted if there is availability.

Late Pick-up Fees

Parents will be charged a \$1 per minute late fee for After Care pick-up after 5:30 pm. A phone call to the center to see if an emergency arises is appreciated and will be considered in assessing this fee. **After 3 late pick-ups a \$50.00 late pick-up fee will be charged to your account.**

We will attempt to contact the parents and emergency contacts in the child’s file at 5:30 pm, if we have not yet received a phone call explaining the late pick-up. If we can’t make contact by 5:45 pm we will call 911 to have the child picked up.

Legal Custody

The ELC cannot refuse to release a child to the child’s parent or legal guardian who shares legal custody of the child, and who is on file at the ELC. In most cases, both parents have equal custody rights unless a valid separation agreement states or provides otherwise. Therefore, if you do not want your child’s other parent or guardian to pick up your child, please provide the ELC with a certified copy of the Court Order or Separation Agreement awarding custody solely to you or denying custody to the other parent or guardian. If you are experiencing custody difficulties, we strongly urge you to keep the ELC staff fully advised of circumstances that might affect the ELC.

Outside Observers

During the school year, educational consultants and college students will visit the ELC to learn from and enrich our program. If parents have concerns about their child, other professionals also visit the center to help in the evaluation and therapy process. All outside visitors will sign in at the front desk and will be escorted to the appropriate classroom.

Photographs

Your permission to use photographs/video of your child(ren) is documented on a release form at the time of admission. Please notify the office of any special circumstances for your children.

We occasionally use photographs and videos of children and teachers at our centers in brochures, on our website, on social media, etc. No names or other information are provided in these instances. Pictures may be used in the newspaper and names may be provided.

Sick Days

Monthly tuition rates continue each month, regardless of absence for illness or any reason.

Suspected Intoxication

The ELC will not release a child at any time to a parent or designated individual who is visibly impaired due to alcohol consumption, substance abuse, prescription drugs or other substances. In the event a parent or designated individual is impaired, a member of the ELC's staff will telephone individuals on the child's Emergency Information Card to arrange for the child to be released. If a parent or designated individual is impaired and insists that their child be released to his or her custody, the ELC staff will immediately phone the proper law enforcement officials.

Translation

Translation services are available upon request for families who do not use English as their first language and are having trouble with communication.

Tuition

School year tuition is determined based on your child's selected schedule. Payment options include full payment (**a 2% discount will be applied for this option**) or the amount due divided into 10 or 20 equal payments. A separate charge will be posted for Before/After Care occurring after the service has been received. There is an annual, \$150 non-refundable application fee per family. Additionally, the Parent Activity Committee (PAC) collects a fee of \$75 to support the community activities for the year.

We use a web-based software system to withdraw payments for 10 months of the year from a checking, savings or credit account that is set up by each user. Families have the choice for payments to be withdrawn once a month on the first of the month or twice a month on the first and the fifteenth.

Payments are due regardless of a child's absence for any reason. These include a child's illness, family illness, vacations, weather closings, doctor appointments, parents' days off work, etc. If there is a permanent change in a child's schedule, please notify the office.

Our fiscal policy includes a fee of \$25 per transaction for any returned payments. This fee will offset the administrative time and additional fees charged.

Vacations

The monthly tuition fees are based on the actual cost of each day of school for the year, divided into monthly payments. Tuition fees remain the same, regardless of absence or scheduled days off on our school calendar.

Weather Emergencies

We recognize the important service that we provide for our families and we will make every effort to stay open during adverse weather conditions. We will cancel school per our own needs. The following criteria will be used in deciding to close the ELC for adverse weather:

- Local school districts are closed.
- A weather emergency is in effect for St. Joseph/Elkhart County.
- Staff cannot be present to provide appropriate staff ratios per state licensing.

Please use one of the following resources to confirm school closings:

- Brightwheel App
- ELC Facebook/Instagram page
- elcelkhart.com
- Local news station WSBT or WNDU



To best serve our families, the ELC WILL NOT DELAY school. When school closes due to unforeseen circumstances, monthly tuition rates will continue according to the established payment plan.

our SAFETY & SECURITY

According to Indiana State Law IC 35-47-9 and Indiana licensing rules, adults are prohibited to: smoke; use alcohol; use or possess illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances or use or possess a firearm (unless it is a condition of employment) on the campus of the Early Learning Center at Hubbard Hill.

The following procedures are used to ensure our programs are safe and secure:

- Children must be accompanied by an adult to and from the classroom.
- Classroom doors remain locked during school hours.

- Our playground is completely fenced and inspected by a certified playground safety inspector (CPSI).
- Staff carry cell phones in all areas of the center in case of emergency.
- First aid kits are in every classroom, in the office, and on the playground.
- Administrators are positioned to assist with the arrival and departure of children.
- Security cameras are located around the ELC building on the playground, and in the hallways to the classrooms.
- Visitors must check in with the Office Manager and sign a visitor's log in order to be granted access to the ELC.

Supervision of Children

- At the Early Learning Center all children are continually always supervised by sight and sound by an educator.

Regarding the release of a child for the day:

- Only regular staff may release children; substitutes may never release a child.
- A child will only be released to another adult with written or verbal consent by the parent.
- The person picking up the child must be listed by the parent on the child's emergency card.
- If someone comes to pick up a child without a parent's permission and his or her name is on the emergency card, we will call the parent before releasing the child.
- If a written letter is provided at pick up, we will call the parent to verify that the note was written by them unless the note is handed directly to a full-time staff person who knows the parent.
- If a person is unknown to staff, we will ask for picture identification. We will compare the picture with the person and make sure the name is listed on the emergency card.
- Parents or other adults who are picking up a child at the center must contact a teacher to acknowledge their release of the child.
- We will not release a child to anyone whom we feel is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- When in doubt, we will not release a child.



our EMERGENCY PLANS

Fire

In the event of a fire, the children will be evacuated from the center using the nearest exit and be moved to a safe place away from the building. All exits are clearly marked and the center practices monthly fire drills.

The ELC has sprinklers throughout the facility and is equipped with smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and alarm pull stations that are inspected regularly.

Tornado

In the event of a tornado warning during school hours, the children and staff will move to a designated, safe area (e.g. the interior of the building, away from doors and windows). Children and staff will remain there until an “all clear” has been announced by the city sirens or over the radio. Children will be introduced to the steps for a tornado drill and the sound of the tornado alarm to eliminate undue distress. The center practices tornado drills regularly during the tornado season.

Evacuation Procedure/Lockdown Policy

In the unlikely event that the center would have to be evacuated, the children and staff will follow the ELC Fire and Emergency Procedure Evacuation Plan. Parents will be notified as soon as possible if evacuation should be necessary. Any staff member has the authority to lock down the center should it become necessary. The center practices lockdown drills every month.

Please Note: If a child is getting dropped off late or picked up early (and we have a drill scheduled), the parent or guardian will need to wait outside of the school until the drill has been completed. It's important for all children to experience the drills so they know exactly what to do if we were to have a real-life situation. Thank you for your understanding.

Revised July 30, 2024

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” –Ephesians 2:10

At the Early Learning Center (ELC), we strive to weave three threads into our program: Faith, Family, and Foundation. We partner with families to nurture high-quality, faith-based education in young children. Together we can help young children grow in their faith and expand their curiosity, joy and sense of wonder through positive influences. Our goal is to provide a solid foundation for your child’s future.

Our partnership begins with the introduction and understanding of our program at the ELC, which can be found in the practical writings of our Parent Handbook. Through a trusting relationship, we can help sow the seeds for success in life. Your signature below, paired with the signature of the Director, confirms that we have taken the first step in getting to know each other through our Handbook.

(Printed Parent Name) (Signature of Parent/Guardian) (Date)

(Printed Parent Name) (Signature of Parent/Guardian) (Date)

(Signature of Director) (Date)