

Parent Handbook



Early Development Center (EDC)

Early Head Start (EHS)

Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP)

**403 N. Van Buren Street
Wilmington, DE 19805
302-655-7338
www.thelatincenter.org**

WELCOME

Dear Parents:

We are honored that you have entrusted the care of your child to the teachers and staff at the Latin American Community Center. As a parent myself, I understand how important and difficult your decisions about child care can be.

What we offer to you and your child is much more than just a baby-sitting service or a daycare. We offer an extended family support system that nurtures all of us. A unique setting that caters to the emotional and developmental needs of all children. We offer a safe, loving environment where your child will be accepted, loved, nurtured, and stimulated. A self-discovery learning framework that enables children to learn deeply at their own pace.

We will use our knowledge, training, and experience to offer stimulating, developmental activities when your child is ready for them. They include music and movement, outdoor play, practical life and sensory activities, arts and crafts, pre-reading and pre-math skills, quiet story and sharing times, manipulative, dramatic play, and lots of laughter.

We will strive to meet your child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs. We feel children learn best in a loving, organized, natural learning environment. Your child will learn something new every day. Your child will learn important values such as patience, sharing, responsibility, compassion for self and others, communication, and teamwork. Your child will also learn the basics of education such as recognizing letters, numbers, colors, shapes, and how to paint, play with dough, cut with scissors, color with crayons, and literacy skills. Your child will always be encouraged to use their imagination while creating artwork, manipulating ideas and thoughts on paper, or other concrete materials.

Our commitment to you starts with your commitment to us. For this relationship to thrive, we must have open, honest communication. Please feel free to share with us your concerns, problems, and situations that will affect your child.

The following pages contain important information about our program. Please familiarize yourself with the material and keep this handbook handy for easy reference. If you have any questions or need clarification on anything in this handbook, please do not hesitate to ask.

It is our hope that you will find peace of mind in knowing LACC's Early Development Center is committed to providing the very best care for your child. Thank you for choosing the Latin American Community Center's Early Development Center.

Faith Scheibe, Director

Contents

WELCOME.....	2
Mission Statement.....	6
Governing Body	6
Contact Information.....	6
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	6
Expeditionary Learning.....	6
Dual Language / Language Immersion.....	7
Delaware Stars	7
Creative Curriculum & Teaching Strategies Gold	8
Teaching Staff.....	8
Activities & Lesson Plans.....	9
Program for Infants	9
Program for Toddlers.....	10
Program for Pre-School Age Children	10
REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT	11
Enrollment Procedures	11
Admissions	12
Tuition & Fees.....	12
Fees.....	12
Payment options.....	12
Additional Fees	13
MEALS AND SNACKS.....	13
Family Style Dining	13
Feeding Infants & Toddlers	13
Food	14
Formula and Baby Foods	14
Food Allergies, Therapeutic Diets and Food Intolerances.....	14
Allergies	14
Religious Restrictions.....	15

Organic and Vegetarian Meals	15
Food for Birthday Celebrations.....	15
Security Measures	15
Entering and Exiting the Building	15
Signing Children In & Out.....	15
Release of Children	16
Emergency release of child.....	16
Non-custodial parents.....	16
Other Information	16
Surveillance Features.....	16
Additional Facility Safety/Security Features	17
POLICIES & PROCEDURES.....	17
Abuse Policy	17
Accidents: Children	17
Administration of Medication	18
Allergies	19
Anti-Bias Statement	19
Attendance and Absences.....	20
Babysitting Policy	20
Birthdays & Holidays.....	20
Book Bag/Back Pack	21
Bottles (for Infants)	21
Breast Feeding.....	21
Cell Phones & Texting	21
Child Abuse Reporting Policy.....	21
Clothes	22
Confidentiality	22
Continuity of Care	22
Diapers.....	23
Discipline/Positive Guidance	23
Fire Drills.....	25
Health Appraisal (Child Physical)	25

Health: Children.....	25
Holidays & Days Closed.....	27
Inclement Weather	27
Inclusion Policy	28
Lost & Found.....	28
No Shoe Policy (Infant Rooms).....	29
Parent / Adult Code of Conduct	29
Parent Communication	29
Parent Concerns	30
Parent Engagement Activities.....	31
Parent’s Right to Know	31
Parent Surveys & Feedback.....	31
Personal Belonging & Toys	32
Purchase of Care (State Subsidized Child Care Funds)	32
Ratios	32
Sleeping	33
Smoking, Alcohol, Illegal Substances & Firearms	33
Transitions.....	33
Transportation	34
Weather Policy for Playing Outdoors.....	35
Withdrawal Policy	35
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	35
Maintaining relationships with Local Education Agencies (LEA)	35
Community Resources.....	36

Policies and procedures are reviewed periodically and subject to revision.

Mission Statement

The Early Development Center (EDC) at the LACC offers children and their families a comprehensive program that meets the highest academic standards and prepares children from six-weeks to five years of age to meet developmental goals for their age group.

As a program that provides services to primarily low-income, minority families, who reside in urban communities, we strive to provide quality, affordable and neighborhood-based educational programming to their children. Our program offers a safe, secure and enriching environment that allows for physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and language development of the children.

Governing Body

La Fiesta and La Fiesta II are an outreach of the Latin American Community Center. Faith Scheibe has been designated as the Early Childhood Director of La Fiesta and La Fiesta II at the Early Development Center with responsibility for and authority over the operation of the Preschool.

Board of Directors – can be reached via Sindy Rodriguez – (302) 655-7338 ext 7702

CEO & President, Latin American Community Center – Maria Matos –
via Sindy Rodriguez (302) 655-7338 ext. 7702

Contact Information

The address of the LACC's Early Development Center is 403 N. Van Buren Street, Wilmington, DE 19804. The website is: www.thelatincenter.org

Important phone numbers:

Director – Faith Scheibe – (302) 655-7338 ext. 2782

Instructional Coordinator – Gloria Acosta - (302) 655-7338 ext. 7741

Family Service Coordinator – Cindy Felix - (302) 655-7338 ext. 2783

FACET worker – Griselle Rodriguez – (302) 655-7338 ext. 7726

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Expeditionary Learning

The Early Development Center utilizes the Expeditionary Learning model where children participate in in-depth learning expeditions – interactive, hands-on projects that spark

curiosity, promote active learning, encourage teamwork, build character, and capitalize on children's innate spirit of adventure. This framework values how children learn, as much as what they learn, challenging them to think critically and take leadership roles in their classrooms and communities.

Students attending Expeditionary Learning programs have shown significant gains in reading and math and consistently outperform students in neighboring programs. Furthermore, the model's focus on character highlights the importance of developing traits such as grit, persistence, responsibility, empathy and care and concern for their world.

These components of EL are in direct alignment with beliefs about early learning and our work as a bi-lingual and bi-cultural environment, working to develop well-rounded children.

Dual Language / Language Immersion

Research indicates that language acquisition occurs during the earliest years of a child's life. Therefore, our program has the unique opportunity to educate our students as bilingual learners.

Our children in the Infant and Toddler 1 and 2 classrooms are taught entirely in Spanish, immersing the children in the language, regardless of the student's home or native language.

Once our students enter our Toddler 3 and PreK4, they receive instruction in both Spanish and English. Classrooms are staffed with either fully bilingual teachers or mono-lingual teachers (one English and one Spanish), so that children will have the opportunity to learn in both language thus increasing proficiency in both languages. Working collaboratively, the teachers provide the necessary supports for children as they develop both languages.

This design allows our students to build fluency in both languages during the time when developmentally, their brain is most equipped to learn new languages.

Delaware Stars

The Early Development Center (both La Fiesta and La Fiesta II) are participants in the Delaware Stars program because of our alignment with their mission that all children enter life and school ready to succeed, as well as the program's emphasis on quality improvement.

Delaware Stars for Early Success is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which is a method used to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education. It establishes quality standards for programs and provides technical assistance and financial support to programs involved in Stars as they engage in quality improvement efforts.

Source: Delaware's Institute for Success in Early Childhood

Delaware Stars is designed as a voluntary system that expects programs to work on improving quality by moving up the Star Levels. During the 2013-2014 school year, both La Fiesta and La Fiesta II were assessed as Star Level 5 Quality Early Childhood programs.

[Creative Curriculum & Teaching Strategies Gold](#)

Curriculum at the EDC includes the child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to the children that support and enrich their growth across a broad spectrum of developmental areas.

Each classroom uses the research-based, Creative Curriculum to promote age appropriate development and learning for each of our unique learners. This curriculum focuses on social emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and art objectives in order to promote comprehensive development for our students.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is the assessment tool used by the program to evaluate and track all children's individual development during their time in our program. It is an on-going assessment system, meaning that teachers are continually watching, observing, and documenting each child's development. The same tool is used from birth through kindergarten, to provide a more complete and aligned picture of your child's development. By tracking a child's development, our teachers are able to plan activities that are appropriate for each child. In addition, three times per year parents have the opportunity to learn about their child's development through student growth conferences.

[Teaching Staff](#)

The EDC staff consists of 22 teachers, 4 Rotating Instructor, 2 family service workers, an instructional coach, an instructional coordinator and a director---all of whom have significant experience in teaching younger children, are certified by the state of Delaware and are trained in CPR and First Aid. Our teachers come from a variety of backgrounds and countries and we celebrate the diversity we are able to bring the children in our care. Our staff provide a safe and nurturing environment for children, while implementing age appropriated activities.

Our staff is committed to holding ourselves to high expectations surrounding culture, citizenship, emergent learning, problem solving, language, reflective teaching practice, assessment, early childhood professionalism, and more. Among these high expectations exist our philosophy of learning:

- Emergent learning through play and discovery
- Process not product oriented work
- The belief in creating and fostering good work and good citizens
- Student centered lessons, classrooms, projects, and environments

Our program's staff is high-quality, caring, dedicated, and nurturing and receives on-site training, professional in-service days and attends professional workshops throughout the year

according to the DELACARE: Rules for Early Care and Education and School-age Centers, Office of Child Care Licensing, Division of Family Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families, State of Delaware.

Activities & Lesson Plans

The EDC has a written plan of developmentally appropriate activities designed to help all children reach goals. The lesson plans are current and accessible to parents/guardians and staff – being posted outside the classroom. Activities are planned that allow children to choose to participate with the whole group, part of the group, or independently. Lesson plans reflect that children have free-choice to participate in different activities each day.

- A. Lesson Plans are varied, developmentally appropriate, are related to expeditions, culturally meaningful and educationally valuable and promote the development of language, literacy, reasoning and problem-solving skills, understanding of numbers and other mathematical and scientific concepts, large and small muscles skills, social skills, understanding and self-regulation of emotions, self-esteem and positive self-image, as appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of children in care. Adaptations of activities are made for children with disabilities to enable them to reach goals described in IEPs, IFSPs, and Section 504 plans.
- B. Lesson plans are based on best practices and accepted research in the field of early care and education and in alignment with principles of foundations of learning and development as set forth by the Delaware and/or United States Department of Education.
- C. Delaware Early Learning Foundations for School Success regarding preschoolers is on the Delaware Department of Education website at:
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/early_childhood/Standards/preschool.htm
- D. Delaware Infant and Toddler Early Learning Foundations: A Curriculum Framework regarding infants and toddlers is on the Delaware Department of Education website at:
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/early_childhood/Standards/InfantToddlerFoundationStandards.pdf

Program for Infants

- A. La Fiesta accepts infant as of 6 weeks old. Each child has his/her own crib and crib bedding along with labeled containers for extra clothing, bibs, blankets, pacifiers, diapers, wipes, etc. Staff ensures that the children are following a daily schedule and they monitor, document and report all naps, bowel movements, urine, and feedings on the daily log sheet.
- B. Infants are given time to play on the floor, including tummy time. All toys and activities are developmentally appropriate and children are encouraged to play with them in a manner that will enhance their development.

C. Hygiene: Toys and sleeping equipment are sanitized at the end of each day. Sheets are changed/washed daily and all dirty clothes given to the parent at the end of the day. Each infant is offered:

- Frequent face to face interaction while they are awake
- Time for being held and cuddled
- When infants are awake, the time they spend in confining spaces such as cribs, seats, swings, high chairs and play pens is to be restricted to less than a half hour. Free play is offered after the child is removed
- Talking with infants during play, feeding and routine care
- Reading to and looking at books

Program for Toddlers

Curriculum that is used for toddlers include Expeditionary Learning framework, Creative Curriculum, Mudpies to Magnets, and Sesame Street: Healthy Habits for Life. These curriculums offer developmentally appropriate opportunities that enhance learning. Staff interacts with children at their eye level when appropriate and provides the following opportunities throughout the day:

- Frequent face to face interactions with the toddlers
- Conversations with toddlers during play, feeding and routine care
- Read books individually and in small groups
- Encourage children to play with one another
- Provide materials and encouragement for pretend play alone and with other children
- Provide opportunities for children to increase their social, emotional, motor and cognitive development
- Respond to toddlers' words and actions with interest and encouragement
- Offer sufficient opportunities to develop physical skills through running, jumping, climbing and balancing each day

Program for Pre-School Age Children

Expeditionary Learning framework, Creative Curriculum, Mudpies to Magnets, and Sesame Street: Healthy Habits for Life are the curriculums used for this age group and all allow for individualization of plans specific to each classroom / student. Children are prepared for kindergarten and beyond with a "learn through play" philosophy that enhances the individual development of each child.

Teachers speak to and interact with children at their eye level and all activities are age and developmentally appropriate and provide the following opportunities throughout the day:

- Frequent face to face interactions with students

- Conversations with toddlers during play, feeding and routine care
- Read books individually and in small groups
- Encourage children to play with one another
- Provide materials and encouragement for pretend play alone and with other children
- Provide opportunities for children to increase their social, emotional, motor and cognitive development
- Respond to students' words and actions with interest and encouragement
- Offer sufficient opportunities to develop physical skills through running, jumping, climbing and balancing each day
- Assist children to develop math, science and social thinking skills through play, projects and investigations
- Respond to child's words and actions with interest and encouragement

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Procedures

Contact the Early Childhood Development Center at (302) 655-7338 to schedule a tour and answer any questions you may have. The EDC Director and/or Family Service Workers will discuss the philosophy, curriculum, and policies of our school with you.

You will be given an admissions packet required to be returned to the EDC Family Services Office before enrollment is considered complete.

All necessary financial forms and contracts will be explained and signed. The Office of Child Care Licensing requires that the following forms be kept current during the school year:

- Identification and Emergency Information
- Child's Pre-Admission Health History and Parent Report
- Physician's Report
- Personal Rights
- Consent for Medical Treatment
- Admission Agreement
- Immunization Record (Health Department)

Once all paperwork has been submitted and reviewed, you will receive a Notification Letter informing you of your child's acceptance into Early Development Center (EDC) program (birth to 4 years old), the Early Childhood Academic Program (ECAP) program (income eligible 4 year olds), or the Early Head Start (EHS) program (income eligible birth to 36 month old). You will be notified of your Enrollment Appointment to complete all required documents. At that time, you can also visit your child's classroom and meet her/his teachers.

Admissions

Admissions are based on availability of space and income eligibility of the family. Those students with the most needs (financial, etc.) are given first priority at registration. Returning students and siblings of current students are given next priority. Remaining vacancies are filled according to date of application. If there are no vacancies, children are placed on a waiting list and enrolled into the program when a spot becomes available.

ECAP and EHS have income requirements and parents have to comply with certain requirements before being accepted into the program. Admissions are decided after July 1 of the enrollment year. Each family is selected based on need and the points received.

The Latin American nondiscrimination based on sex, race, religion, cultural heritage, disability, marital status, economic status, or other protected class;

Tuition & Fees

Fees

Fees for the program depend upon age level as well as program. If a family is income eligible, they may be enrolled in a program that does not have any fees or reduced fees (for example: EHS or ECAP). For information purposes only, here are the fees for each age-level.

- Infant = \$204.00 / week
- Toddler 1 = \$143.55 / week
- Toddler 2 = \$132.50 / week
- Toddler 3 = \$132.50 / week
- PreK4 = \$132.50 / week

Please see a family service worker to determine what the fees/costs will be for your family.

Payment options

- Full POC
- Partial POC with Co-pay
- Private
- Scholarship
- Income eligible for EHS or ECAP

Please see a family service worker to determine what the best option for payment is for your family.

- Tuition must be paid by each Friday for the upcoming week in order for the child to attend. This includes your co-pay from purchase of care. Repeated late payments can be considered grounds for suspension and possible termination from LACC programs.
- Two weeks' notice is necessary when you withdraw a child from our program. We will charge your account for two weeks if you fail to notify the center in writing.
- There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather, or acts of God.
- Parents will be charged a \$25.00 fee for any returned checks. Parents are responsible for reissuing a second check. Tuition payments will be made by cash, certified check, or money order if at any future time the bank returns a check.

Additional Fees

The EDC opens at 6:45am and closes at 5:30pm. In the event a child is picked up after 5:30pm, the family will be charged a late pick up fee of \$5.00 for the 15 minutes and \$1 per minute per child for each additional minute. Late pick up fees are due the next business day.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Family Style Dining

Classroom staff will guide the children during meal times using the family style dining model. Children will be encouraged to participate in: setting the table, serving appropriate foods (those not requiring staff assistance) to themselves and cleaning up. Staff will: eat with the children and model portion control by putting the appropriate serving size on their own plate following the Child and Adult Care Food Program meal pattern requirements. They will also encourage children to develop independence and self-help skills that match their current developmental levels, set a good example by demonstrating a positive attitude toward all foods served and sit at the table with the children in order to participate in language development. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and eat the food presented but are never forced. We encourage children's good health by serving nutritious meals & snacks and by teaching proper hygiene including hand washing and tooth brushing.

Feeding Infants & Toddlers

Infants unable to sit are held for bottle-feeding. All others sit or are held to be fed. Infants do not have bottles while in a crib or eat from a propped bottle at any time.

Toddlers do not carry sippy cups or regular cups with them while crawling or walking.

Food

Our meals and snacks meet the current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Delacare meal pattern requirements based on the age of each child. The EDC does not serve peanut or tree nut products, however we are not able to guarantee a nut free environment.

The menu is developed by LACC staff, reviewed by CACFP representative, and approved by a registered dietitian. Copies of the monthly menu are posted on each classroom parent board and are available in the main reception area. We understand that hectic schedules sometimes lead to eating meals or snacks on the run but because we stress healthy, planned eating, we respectfully request that your child not arrive at the center with food in hand.

Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack -- for children who are old enough to eat table food -- are included in the cost of tuition. Meals and snacks are served on the following schedule:

- Infants: (for those who are eating table food): Breakfast 8:00am – 8:30am; Lunch 11:00am – 11:30am; Afternoon Snack 3:00pm
- Toddlers: Breakfast 8:30am – 9:00am; Lunch 11:00am – 11:30am; Afternoon Snack 3:00pm
- Preschoolers: Breakfast 8:30am – 9:00am; Lunch 11:45am – 12:15pm; Afternoon Snack 3:15pm

Regulations require that meals be served within a limited time after leaving the kitchen to ensure proper temperatures, therefore, children must be present within these time frames in order to be served.

Formula and Baby Foods

For children not yet eating table food – formula and baby foods are included in the price of tuition. The EDC provides one brand of formula; families may provide alternative formulas and/or breast milk based on their infant's needs. Families are responsible for providing sterilized plastic bottles. The EDC provides Sippy cups for older infants and toddlers.

Food Allergies, Therapeutic Diets and Food Intolerances

Allergies

If your child requires nutritional accommodations for medical reasons, please provide documentation and a care plan from the child's pediatrician. Provisions of food substitutes is the responsibility of the family and must adhere to the Delacare Regulations and container specifications listed above.

Religious Restrictions

If a meal component listed on the menu is not permissible due to religious reasons, it is the responsibility of the family to provide substitutes that meet the Delacare regulations and container specifications listed above.

Organic and Vegetarian Meals

If children require vegetarian or organic food or beverages, substitutions are to be provided by the family and must meet the Delacare regulations and container specifications listed above.

Food for Birthday Celebrations

Please consult with your child's teacher prior to bringing in food. Delacare regulations require that any food that is brought to share be in commercially prepared, factory-sealed containers with the ingredients listed. The EDC requests that all food be free of peanuts, nuts or nut byproducts. Most celebrations take place in the afternoon so please limit the snack to a small portion since children will soon be going home to eat dinner. Some suggestions: mini-cupcakes, mini-muffins, small low-fat oatmeal cookies, whole grain fig cookies, 100% fruit juice freezer pops, prepackaged fresh fruits or fruit cups in a light syrup.

Security Measures

The health and safety of your child is of paramount importance. Some important information:

Entering and Exiting the Building

- EDC Building - Families and other authorized individuals are required to enter and exit our building through the front door only. Ring the bell to gain access.
- First Floor EDC/EHS classrooms - Families and other authorized individuals are required to enter and exit our building through the N Van Buren Street entrance only. Ring the bell to gain access.
- Second Floor EDC/ECAP classrooms - Families and other authorized individuals are required to enter and exit our building through the N Harrison Street entrance only. Talk with the receptionist located at the entrance to gain access.

Signing Children In & Out

You must escort your child to/from the classroom and sign him/her out of the building so we know exactly who is in the building in the event of an emergency. It is essential that you leave a telephone number where you can be reached in the event of an emergency when you sign your child in.

Release of Children

To protect the safety of the children in our care, it is critical that children only be released to authorized individuals. If a staff person does not recognize the person picking up, we will ask for identification, and if possible make a photo copy of the ID. If a person is not on the authorization list, we cannot release the child.

Emergency release of child

In the event of an emergency, the parent may call to grant permission to have someone pick up who is not on the list. We will confirm that the caller is the parent. The parent must provide verbal or written permission, as well as the person's name and description. Upon arrival, this person must present identification. If a person arrives to pick up the child and appears to be intoxicated or otherwise incapable of bringing the child home safely, EDC staff will call LACC Security for assistance as well as another contact person listed on the Child Information Card to request their assistance.

Non-custodial parents

Unless the EDC has a copy of a valid court order barring a noncustodial parent from contact with his/her child, the EDC cannot refuse a parent access to the child.

Other Information

- If a family wishes to add or delete people authorized to pick up their child, they must provide the EDC this information in person and in writing to their Family Service Worker. The change will be noted in our files and the staff will be notified. It is essential that all contact information be kept current for authorized pick up persons. Four times a year, you will be requested to update your child's emergency card. This is a system in place to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information.
- If a child is left at the center past pick-up time, the parents and other persons listed as authorized to pick up will be called. If there is no response at any of the provided numbers, messages will be left. If there is no response to pick up the child within a half hour, the Delaware Division of Child Protective Services will be called to assume responsibility for the child.
- At no time may any child be left unsupervised in the Early Development Center or on LACC grounds. Once an adult signs a child out of the EDC, they are responsible for the close supervision of that child while on EDC property.

Surveillance Features

The LACC is equipped with security cameras both inside the building and outside.

Additional Facility Safety/Security Features

- All employees of the LACC are identified by a badge that they wear or have on their person at all times.
- All EDC staff are required to have training in first aid, CPR, and the operation of a fire extinguisher. Before working with children, staff must have a criminal background check, including a child abuse registry check and adult abuse registry check. In addition, all staff is required to have a periodic health exam and TB test.
- Ten foot fencing surrounds the perimeter of the EDC playground.
- Classrooms are equipped with age appropriate furniture, toys and equipment, as well as safety outlets throughout the room, and finger guards on bathroom doors. Infant rooms have diffused lighting to protect developing eyes.
- Internal intercom system. Telephones in each classroom.
- Each classroom has a fully stocked first aid kit and a smaller kit is prepared for field trips.
- Smoke, sprinkler, and fire alarm systems are present throughout the LACC facilities.
- Staff practice universal precautions and are required to always wash their hands and follow safe sanitation practices. Gloves are worn while diapering or assisting a child with the bathroom, when handling food and when bodily fluids are involved (mucus, blood, urine, etc.).
- The EDC and staff follows all of Delaware's state regulations and Head Start safety practices to ensure each child's safety. Toys, equipment and used spaces are safe and do not pose a hazard if used appropriately. Staff reviews equipment daily and any that is deemed to be unsafe, is removed from the area immediately.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Abuse Policy

Staff accused of abuse or neglect will be thoroughly investigated, will be removed from direct contact with children until the investigation is closed, and if found guilty, will be terminated from the Latin American Community Center.

Accidents: Children

Children are monitored at all times while in the center. Any equipment that is considered to be unsafe, is removed from the area where children are and either fixed or discarded. Please be aware that accidents do happen and that even though our staff does try to prevent injuries at all times, some might occur.

When an accident or injury occurs to a child during the hours of care, the EDC will take the necessary emergency action to protect the child from further harm and will notify the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). The EDC will complete an accident/injury report and give a copy to the parent/guardian.

All employees of the EDC are trained in first aid and CPR. If an injury is minor, requiring only a band aid or ice, staff administers appropriate first aid and completes an accident/incident form. If it is more serious, staff consults with Administration and calls the parent to ask you to pick up the child. If it is determined that the child needs to be picked up and the parent/guardian is not available, another authorized pick up person will be contacted and asked to pick up your child.

Should a child require emergency medical treatment, we will dial 911 and contact the parent (or other authorized person) to apprise them of the situation. If emergency services arrive before the parent, and it is not in the best interest of the child to wait, a staff person will chaperone the child to the hospital, taking with them the child's emergency consent form.

Administration of Medication

Only those employees who have a Delaware Licensing issued Administration of Medication certificate will administer medications to children. All paperwork required by the State will be maintained by the person administering medications.

- The Early Development Center cannot give medication on an as needed basis. Licensing does not allow us to decide whether or not a child needs medication. Parents/Guardians must specifically identify the date and time for any medication to be given on the medication log.
- Anyone giving medication must be certified. Medication must be kept in a location that is secure and not accessible to children. When dropping off medication please make sure that you give it directly to a teacher so that it can be secured.
- Parents/guardians must sign in medication (on the medication log) - indicating what is to be given (name of medication), how much is to be given (please make sure you provide an appropriate measuring device so that the exact amount can be measured and given), route the medication is to be given (ex: by mouth) and when (time).
- Medication must be in its original container and have proper labeling including the child's name and instructions for giving the medication. If it is a prescription the medication must be in the prescription bottle with the child's name on it. If the medication states, "under a certain age (for example 6), consult a physician", then the Early Development Center must have a note from the doctor stating that it is okay to give that particular medication to the child and how much is to be given. If this dosage changes and the child is still under the identified age, the doctor must update the

directions. (Most pharmacies will provide two prescription bottles upon request when filling a prescription).

- Cough medicine, Tylenol, etc. cannot be kept 'just in case'. Parents should bring in these medicines as the need arises. These medicines must be in their original container and labeled with your child's full name.
- For sunscreen and diaper ointment: parents can sign on a monthly basis. Sunscreen should be sent home at the end of the summer- (unless it is a child who needs to wear it on an ongoing basis) Sunscreen needs to be replaced each summer because it loses its SPF strength.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent must be included on forms authorizing staff to apply to your child. The bottles should be labeled with your child's name. Insect repellent should not contain DEET and only be used for children who are older than two months.

Allergies

Parents are required to notify the EDC of any allergy to medications, food or the environment. A list will be posted in each room and in the kitchen. Parents must provide an individualized care plan from the child's health care provider if the child has special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutritional needs. This plan will be placed in the child's file and will be posted in the child's classroom.

The Early Development Center is a "nut free environment" to protect our children with allergies to nuts. Please do not enter our facility with any foods containing nuts or nut products listed in the ingredients.

Anti-Bias Statement

The EDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, economic status, marital status, cultural heritage, national origin, mental or physical disability or handicap, veteran status, sexual orientation, or other protected class.

The early childhood education professionals at the EDC understand that at an early age, children can absorb our society's biases of gender, age, color, language and physical characteristics. We believe that the anti-bias curriculum that we embrace supports children as they explore, celebrate and understand differences.

Our approach acknowledges that children and adults can be empowered to stand up for their rights and the rights of others and to recognize and question social injustice. We challenge the children and ourselves to:

- explore issues of fairness as seen from a child's perspective;
- see conflict as a challenge in problem-solving;
- be open to differing perspectives, ideas, attitudes and behaviors;

- monitor our words and actions for unconscious bias or prejudice;
- recognize and demonstrate respect for diversity among people.

Attendance and Absences

Families enrolled in the EDC are encouraged to ensure that their children maintain regular attendance. Staff will assist families in identifying and eliminating barriers to achieving regular attendance by providing appropriate support services.

- If families are not willing or able to participate on a regular basis and chronic absenteeism (consistently more than 5 absences per month) persists, after exhausting all preventative measures, they may be terminated from the program and another child from the waiting list will be given the opportunity to attend.
- Classroom attendance will be recorded daily by the teaching staff using the Child and Adult Food Program attendance and meal log sheet. This information is then recorded into the ETO System for reporting and tracking. Attendance is reviewed and monitored regularly.
- Notice for all vacation and/or planned absences must be submitted in writing. All fees still apply while child is not in center but is still enrolled.
- If a child is out for more than three days, a doctor's note explaining the absences is needed in order for a child to be allowed to return to class.
- If a parent receives Purchase of Care and is absent for more than five days, the parent will be responsible for any absences above five days.
- If your child is out due to sickness, and you have a doctor's note, you may be eligible for a credit to your account. This needs to be discussed with the Finance Department.

Babysitting Policy

The Latin American Community Center requires that by signing the Family Handbook Acknowledgment you are releasing liability for a parent/guardian who employs a staff member to baby sit their child/children or for any other reason. Should you chose to employ one of our staff as a babysitter, or for any other purpose, this arrangement is completely between you and the staff member. The Latin American Community Center assumes no responsibility or liability for the staff member's performance. Employment by The Latin American Community Center is in no way a recommendation of the staff member.

Birthdays & Holidays

Every family has special days and certain ways of celebration. Learning about other cultures is part of discovering how people are unique and yet the same. Children enjoy sharing their own special events and sharing in others' joy. At the EDC, we hope to expose children to the diversity in the world: to help them understand the universality of celebration with foods, music, dance, songs and stories; and to help them develop a respect for differences. The

teachers work with families to develop celebrations which are appropriate to the children's level of understanding, their abilities, their attention span, and the center's nutrition policy.

If you wish to provide a special snack to celebrate a birthday, cultural event or holiday please discuss your request with your child's teacher at least one week in advance. We encourage healthy choices instead of sugary items. The Office of Child Care Licensing regulations require that these foods be commercially prepared and in a sealed container upon arrival at the EDC. As stated in this handbook (under Meals and Snacks), the EDC strives to be a peanut and tree nut free center, therefore, none of the ingredients in the food may contain nuts or nut byproducts.

Book Bag/Back Pack

Please have your child carry a book bag to and from school each day for notes and papers. This bag is important: please make sure your child brings it each day and check the bag for notes or other important papers.

Bottles (for Infants)

Glass bottles are not permitted in the EDC even if the manufacturer states it is shatter-proof.

Breast Feeding

The Early Development Center encourages nursing mothers to breast feed their children. A private breast feeding area is available upon request.

NOTE: Breast milk must be in bottles that are labeled with the child's name and the date and time that the milk was pumped; this must be completed by the parents, not the teachers. Any leftover milk will be returned to the parents at the end of the day and will not be kept in the classroom for use the next day.

Cell Phones & Texting

The EDC respectfully requests that families refrain from using their cell phones and texting while in the building unless there is an emergency. This will allow you to focus on talking with your child and the staff who care for your child when you are at the Center.

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Safety and well-being are top priority at the Latin American Community Center. Our staff are required by Federal Law to report any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Youth & Family Services. Children will be observed on arrival for unusual

symptoms of neglect or abuse. Staff are trained to recognize signs of neglect and abuse. If a staff member suspects any type of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect), the Child Abuse Hotline will be called immediately. Parents will not be notified if this occurs.

Clothes

Children should come dressed appropriately for active, messy play. To ensure their safety, all children should wear shoes that will protect and stay on their feet while running and engaging in play activities (No flip-flops). Except in extreme conditions, children will go outside daily and should be dressed appropriately. Layers and warm outer clothing, including hats, gloves and boots should be provided during cold, wet or snowy weather conditions. Hats for sun protection as well as sunscreen should be provided by the parent to protect your child during sunny weather conditions. Sunscreen should be labeled with your child's name and signed in on your child's medication log. (See Administration of Medication policy)

Each child needs at least two changes of clothing at the EDC. For children who are still in diapers or who are learning to toilet, it is recommended that three changes of clothing be available (including socks, underwear and if possible, shoes). Please be certain all clothing is labeled.

Confidentiality

Your child's records are confidential. The staff will not share your child's records with anyone without written parental consent. Parent has access to their child's records at any time and may request additional relevant information be added to the records.

Continuity of Care

To maintain consistency of care, children typically stay in their classroom for a full year. Most children enter their classroom in the fall, stay in that classroom for the entire year and then transition into the next age-level classroom when the new school year starts the following fall. Our school year runs September through August.

In addition, the Early Development Center maintains consistency of care by hiring two permanent teachers for each classroom. When Rotating Instructors or Substitutes are in the classrooms, all attempts are made to send the same person to rooms in which they have experience. The EDC attempts to minimize transitions in order to provide continuity of care. Children transition from infant to toddlers, toddlers to young preschool and young preschool to older preschool classrooms. Transitions to Kindergarten from the older preschool program are varied depending on their next placement which can be to public, private or charter schools.

Classroom staff schedules are staggered to provide children as much time during the day with their primary caregivers – the teachers. For infant staff lunches every effort is made to provide

substitute coverage that is consistent for the children. During opening and closing times, children may be moved to another room within their age range with the teachers in that classroom assuming the responsibility of care until parents arrive.

Diapers

Families provide diapers and wipes for their children. Please send a full box of diapers and wipes labeled with your child's name. Staff will inform you when you need to replenish your supply.

For the comfort of the child, children who are wet or soiled will be changed upon discovery. Staff will check diapers no less than every two hours, upon awakening and will refer to the diapering procedure posted at all changing stations and on the portable changing table for appropriate diapering procedures. In addition, staff will ensure that parents provide extra clothing and diapering supplies for their children.

Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed bag and returned to the parent at the end of the day. To protect the health of all children, soiled clothing will not be cleaned in the center's washing machine, including cloth diapers.

Cloth Diapers: Staff may only use commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use. The child's health care provider must document in writing the medical reason. When using cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit. (This means parents must provide ample outer coverings since they cannot be used twice at the center).

Cloth diapers that are soiled are placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing) that is able to be sealed – such as a Ziploc bag. This bag will then be placed in another bag and put in the child's diaper bag in the cubby. Soiled diapers are to be removed by parents daily from the center. Bags cannot be reused unless they are disinfected at home by parents using soap & water, then a bleach water solution rinse (1 part bleach: 10 parts water) and air dried.

All other diaper procedures will be followed as stipulated by the Office of Child Care Licensing. When using a portable diapering table, staff will ensure it is placed no more than 5' from a hand washing sink.

Discipline/Positive Guidance

The EDC employs positive guidance as a method of behavior management, with a strong emphasis on preventative measures. Strategies are appropriate to the child's age, developmental stage and individual needs. One goal is to help each child develop self-control.

We recognize that it is important to work together with families to encourage the child's positive behaviors.

Teaching staff never use threats or derogatory or humiliating remarks and neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. At no time will any staff member or volunteer of the EDC engage in psychological abuse or coercion and will not use any form of corporal punishment.

The most important step in the process entails teacher's use of preventative strategies. Teachers recognize the essential role that relationships play in their ability to facilitate children's social competence therefore they take intentional steps to ensure that every child feels accepted and gains a sense of belonging.

Teaching staff promote pro-social behavior by interacting in a respectful manner with all staff and children and by modeling behaviors such as; caring, turn-taking, listening, negotiating, comforting and by intentionally facilitating children's efforts in these areas. Teachers actively teach social communication and emotional regulation skills and they assist children in resolving conflicts. Staff assist and guide children who hurt other children, encouraging them to learn and follow the rules of the classroom.

When challenging behaviors occur, teachers observe to identify events, activities, interactions and other contextual factors that predict challenging behavior and may contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. Information regarding the behavior is recorded on a Behavior Incident Recording form. Teachers identify skills that need to be taught and incorporate these into their activities and routines. Teachers use environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.

Teaching staff respond to a child's challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and others, is respectful and provides the child with information on acceptable behavior. If challenging behavior persists then teachers meet with their administrator to re-examine collected data and to plan how to proceed. Next steps might include one or more of the following: development of Behavior Support Plan, classroom consultation and/or technical support, and referral to outside agency. Throughout this process teachers and administrators work collaboratively with families to support the needs of the child.

Though the EDC strives to meet the individual needs of every child, enrollment may be terminated, if a child continues to put himself or others at risk of injury after reasonable interventions have been implemented.

Fire Drills

The EDC conducts monthly fire drills. All children, staff, families and visitor who are in the building when the drill is occurring are expected to participate.

Health Appraisal (Child Physical)

In accordance with child care regulations, the Early Development Center cannot permit any child to be admitted to the center without presenting an immunization record indicating adequate immunizations for the child's age. A full health appraisal must also be completed and submitted to the EDC prior to attendance. Health appraisals are to be updated annually or more frequently as needed.

Health: Children

Upon arrival every morning, each child will be observed for common signs of communicable disease, physical injury or other evidences of ill health.

Children shall be excluded from care if they have symptoms of illness specified below, unless written documentation from a licensed physician, or verbal with written follow-up, states the child has been diagnosed and poses no serious health risk to the child or to other children. The symptoms of illness for possible exclusion shall include, but not be limited to any of the following:

- Temperature: infants four months old and younger, equivalent to 100 degrees or greater even if there has not been a change in behavior;
- Temperature: children older than four months, equivalent to 101 degrees or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness - until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the facility.
- Digital thermometer under the arm – in the armpit area - are used. Rectal temperature shall be taken only by a licensed health care professional;
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs) - until medical evaluation allows inclusion;
- Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is, increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper - (three (3) or more episodes of vomiting in the previous twenty-four (24) hours) until diarrhea stops;
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools;
- Vomiting illness (two (2) or more episodes of vomiting in the previous twenty-four (24) hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the cause of the vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration;
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than two (2) hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms;

- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines that condition is noninfectious;
- Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease;
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until after twenty-four (24) hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated;
- Scabies, until twenty-four (24) hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Pediculosis (head lice), until twenty-four (24) hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend care;
- Impetigo, until twenty-four (24) hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until twenty-four (24) hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever;
- Varicella-Zoster (Chicken pox), until all sores have dried and crusted (usually six (6) days);
- Shingles, only if sores cannot be covered by clothing or a dressing; if not exclude until sores have crusted and are dry;
- Pertussis, until five (5) days of antibiotic treatment;
- Mumps, until nine (9) days after onset of parotid gland swelling;
- Hepatitis A virus, until one (1) week after onset of illness, jaundice or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis (currently, immune serum globulin) has been administered to appropriate children and staff;
- Measles, until five (5) days after onset of rash;
- Rubella, until six (6) days after onset of rash;
- Herpetic gingivostomatitis (cold sores), if the child is too young to have control of oral secretions; or
- Unspecified illness if it limits the child's comfortable participation in activities or if it results in a need for greater care than can be provided without comprising the health and safety of other children.

Your child may return to the Center when the symptoms are no longer present for 24 hours or a licensed physician indicates the child poses no serious health risk to the child or to other children. The EDC reserves the right to request a doctor's note to have the child return to care.

The Center will not permit a child with a reportable communicable disease, as specified by the Delaware Division of Public Health to be admitted to or remain at the Center, unless written documentation from the child's licensed physician states the child has been evaluated and presents no risk to the child or to others; or the Center has reported the illness to the County Health Officer of the Division of Public Health and has been advised the child presents no health risk to others. If there is conflict in the opinions of the physician and the County Health

Officer regarding the exclusion of a child, the Center shall follow the instructions of the County Health Officer. Please refer to the Division of Public Health's web site for a list of communicable diseases at <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/rptdisease.html>

When a child has been diagnosed as having a reportable vaccine-preventable communicable disease, all children who have not been immunized against the disease will be excluded from the Center in accordance with Division of Public Health procedures.

If a child who has already been admitted to the EDC manifests any of the illnesses or symptoms of a vaccine-preventable communicable disease, the Center will remove the child from the group of well children to a separate area until the child can be picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized pick up person; or a licensed physician indicates verbally or in writing that the illness/symptoms pose(s) no serious health risk to the child or to other children.

While a child is cared for in the separate room/area, the EDC will ensure that the child is supervised and the child's individual needs for rest, comfort, food, drink and appropriate activity are met.

Holidays & Days Closed

The Early Development Center is closed on the following holidays each year:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving & the day after
Memorial Day	Christmas
Independence Day	

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday before. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, we will be closed the Monday after.

In addition, the EDC closes seven days per year for staff training. The Director will determine the dates annually and families are provided a calendar of holidays and closings yearly.

Inclement Weather

Notification of any closing, due to inclement weather, will be broadcasted on the local radio station and Internet (WDEL 1150AM or www.wdel.com). This information can also be found on the agency's website: www.thelatincenter.org and by calling 302-655-7338 ext. 7748. Parents will be notified, by phone and text, if any early dismissal is necessary due to an emergency situation.

Inclusion Policy

The EDC embraces an inclusion approach that strives to provide opportunities for all children to actively participate in all aspects of the program. We support the inclusion of children who require additional support because of a physical, cognitive, social or emotional need. We make changes to our daily program when possible to meet the needs of each child. We respect and value the input from parents and encourage them to be part of the decision making process for their child. We request that families share the IFSP/IEP with us. We support families by consulting with early intervention professionals when possible. All teachers have knowledge and training in inclusion best practices. The goal is to create an environment in which all children are valued and respected in order to support their optimal learning and development

- Children with Special Needs: The Early Development Center will do their absolute best to accommodate children with special needs. Working together with parents and service providers, accommodations will be made where needed and possible to ensure the safety and proper development of each child. The EDC will recognize and implement any and all Individualized Education Plans or Individualized Family Service Plans. If at any point, the EDC or the family feels that this center is not the best or proper location for a child with disabilities, we will assist the family in finding a better equipped facility. The EDC will not discriminate against children with disabilities.
- If a child who is already enrolled in one of our programs is believed to have a disability, determined through the developmental screening tools: Ages and Stages 3 and/or Ages and Stages – Socio-emotional (ASQ3 and ASQSE) or through ongoing assessment with Teaching Strategies Gold or Response to Intervention (RTI), the program will take the necessary steps to refer the children for assessments and evaluations to determine whether or not a disability is present. Depending upon the age of the student, either Child Watch Development (birth to 36 months) or ChildFind (36 months to 60 months) will be contacted. If it is determined that the child does have a disability, the center will do its best to accommodate the child as mentioned above. Please be aware that the programs will need parent support to ensure that evaluations and assessments are performed in a timely matter.

Lost & Found

If your child is missing anything, please inquire with their teachers as soon as possible. Remember to label everything. We have a lost and found box by the first floor entrance. Unclaimed items are given to charity after a reasonable period of time. Please note: We strongly encourage parents not to send their child to school with money, jewelry or other valuables. We are not responsible for any lost items.

No Shoe Policy (Infant Rooms)

Our infant rooms have a “no shoes” policy. Please remove your shoes prior to entering the room. Socks or booties must be worn. No bare feet allowed.

Parent / Adult Code of Conduct

One of the goals of the EDC is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the staff at the EDC but is the responsibility of each and every adult who enters the center.

- Adults are expected to foster a positive environment by interacting with children and other adults in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy and respect.
- No adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on LACC property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. This includes mobile phone conversations.
- Verbal and physical threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Adults may not use corporal punishment or harsh verbal criticism of children on LACC property. Parents are encouraged to discuss behavioral concerns with the EDC staff and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.
- Adults are prohibited from correcting or disciplining a child that is not their own. If an adult witnesses a child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their child, the adult should direct their concern to the classroom staff and/or the Director.

Any adult who violates the Parent / Adult Code of Conduct will not be permitted on EDC property thereafter and such violations may result in termination of enrollment.

Parent Communication

- A. Family-Teacher Partnership: Families enter into a partnership with teachers and other staff from the EDC where each understands they play a crucial role in the child’s development and educational life. All parties must work together to ensure that each child grows and learns at a rate that is suitable for their development. The EDC agrees with all current research which shows that children tend to perform better if parents are involved in their educational life. We encourage and support all parents to become involved in their child’s education through conferences, meetings, classroom visits and volunteer opportunities.
- B. Child’s Teacher: Teachers will communicate to families about their children in this way:
 1. Infant, Toddler 1, and Toddler 2 Classrooms

Daily communication provides families with information about their child's health and well-being: includes eating, sleeping and diapering routines; and well-being includes information about the child's social-emotional development. Daily communication also shares information about activities that take place in the classroom.

2. Toddler 3 and ECAP / PreK4 Classrooms

Weekly Newsletters are sent home every week. Classroom newsletters include information on children's learning experiences and activities.

- C. **Family Communication:** Each child has a cubby. Any communication for the parent (i.e. daily reports, incident reports, information on trainings, etc.) will be placed in the cubby or given to the parent at pickup. Parents are encouraged to check these during pick up and drop off. Also, each program has a Parent Information Bulletin Board where important information is posted. This board is updated regularly so make sure you take time out to read it.
- D. **Assessment and Student Growth Conferences:** Along with other methods of ongoing family communication utilized to exchange information regarding a child's progress, at least three times a year (Fall, Winter, and Spring), teachers meet with families to review and discuss their child's progress. At this meeting, teachers will solicit input from families regarding goals for their child's individual plan. We use a variety of assessment instruments and methods to support all children: infants through preschool, including:
- Ages & Stages – ASQ-SE and ASQ-3 (all of our teachers have completed the 6 hour training and are qualified to administer the tool)
 - Teaching Strategies GOLD (all of our teachers have completed the 6 hour training and are qualified to use the assessment program)
 - Anecdotal notes/observations
 - Children's work samples

Information gleaned from multiple assessment sources along with family goals serve as the foundation/starting point for teacher's planning.

- E. **Meetings:** Lifelong Learning holds monthly parent meetings where information can be shared, parents can share their concerns and trainings will be offered. We strongly encourage all parents to attend these meetings.

Parent Concerns

Should you have a question or concern regarding your child's care, please contact your child's classroom teacher first. If your concern is not addressed or resolved to your satisfaction,

please contact the Instruction Coordinator or your Family Service Worker. Should the situation still not be resolved, ask to meet with the Director.

Parent Engagement Activities

Parent engagement in their children's education is an essential support to children's learning in early care and education programs and throughout the school years. Here at the EDC we offer a variety of ways to be engaged in your child's learning:

- Workshops (example parent-child reading interventions which have positive effects on children's oral language skills, especially since parents are trained to encourage their child's conversation about the book during reading)
- FACET Lending Library - a parent resource center. Materials are provided on issues of concern to parents, such as child development, health and safety, drug education, special education, and so on. Information/resources available includes local parenting and social services agencies as well as extension activities, software, and audio and videotapes.
- Monthly Parent meetings – both informative & social [sponsored through FACET – includes dinner & child care (if event is a workshop)]
- Whole family holiday celebrations (for example – Valentine's Day Dance, Cinco de Mayo activity, Polar Express Event, etc.)
- Family Literacy events in each age level
- Book Fair
- Age-level Family nights (in classrooms)
- Expedition Showcase

Please see the Family Topics & Activities Calendar for more details

Parent's Right to Know

UNDER THE DELAWARE CODE YOU ARE ENTITLED TO INSPECT THE ACTIVE RECORD AND COMPLAINT FILES OF ANY LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITY. TO REVIEW A CHILD CARE FACILITY RECORD CONTACT: Ms. Debra Helman, Office of Child Care Licensing, 4417 Lancaster Pike, Building #18, Wilmington, Delaware 19805, (302)892-5800.

You may also view substantiated complaints and compliance review histories for the past three years by visiting: <http://www.apex01.kids.delaware.gov:7777/occl>

Parent Surveys & Feedback

The EDC conducts an annual survey and seeks feedback continually for a multitude of reasons:

- promote shared decision making by asking for family input on program-specific practices and policies;
- assess family needs, wants, and program satisfaction to guide program quality improvements;
- learn about family expectations for their child's learning, for parent-teacher conferences, and other aspects of the of the program; and
- learn whether families are taking advantage of the opportunities the program provides.

Personal Belonging & Toys

Bringing toys, electronic devices (i.e. iPod), cell phone and/or handheld games (i.e. PSP and Nintendo DS) to school is not encouraged. If a child is sharing a toy or game, it may become lost or broken. The EDC will not be held responsible for the loss, damage or misuse of any toys or games brought to center. It is best to leave all personal items at home to enjoy there!

Young children who have a transition object such as a blanket or stuffed animal may bring that item to the Center, but the EDC is not responsible if it is lost, damaged or broken in any way.

Purchase of Care (State Subsidized Child Care Funds)

It is the family's responsibility to ensure that POC authorization remains current. POC reauthorization must be given to the EDC by the family before the expiration of current authorization. For example if your POC authorization expires at the end of the month, the EDC must receive the reauthorization before the first of the next month. The reauthorization form must physically be presented to the EDC by the family. If POC expires you may withdraw your child from the center or pay the full tuition rate.

Parent co-pays are assigned by the state and are due in advance of service. Families with co-pays will be charged for the six holidays allowed by the State; New Years, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. Any day the center closes beyond the six holidays above will not be billable to POC clients.

Ratios

Every attempt will be made to maintain EDC ratios, however there may be occasions – such as drop-off and pick-up – when classrooms will move toward, but not exceed, State ratios.

Age Group	EDC Ratios	State of DE Ratios
Infants 0-12 months	1:4 Group size of eight	1:4 Group size of eight
Toddler 12 – 24 months 24 – 36 months	1:4 Group size of eight 1:6 Group size of eight or twelve	1:6 Group size of twelve 1:8 Group size of sixteen
Preschool 3 year olds 4 year olds	1:8 Group size of fifteen 1:10 Group size of twenty	1:10 Group size of twenty 1:12 Group size of twenty-four

Sleeping

All cots/cribs will be a minimum of 18" apart and labeled with child's names. Children sleep head to toe to prevent the spread of air-borne illnesses. To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) the following guidelines are followed:

- Infants, unless otherwise ordered by a physician and documented in writing, are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment that meets the standards of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. After being placed down to sleep on their backs, infants are allowed to assume any sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.
- Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft items are not allowed in cribs for infants.
- Blankets are not used in the infant program. We use sleep sacks and provide them for the children.
- Mattresses will not be propped up using a wedge unless a physician provides a written reason why this would be necessary and for what period of time.

Smoking, Alcohol, Illegal Substances & Firearms

No smoking, alcohol, or illegal substances are permitted on EDC grounds, including all interior and exterior spaces. Firearms are prohibited on EDC property.

Transitions

The EDC attempts to minimize transitions in order to provide continuity of care. Children transition from infant to toddlers, toddlers to young preschool and young preschool to older preschool classrooms. Transitions to Kindergarten from the older preschool program are varied depending on their next placement which can be to public, private or charter schools.

- Transitions for EDC: transition plans provide guidance and support for families and children either transitioning into one of our programs or out. The transition plan into our program includes an introduction letter sent to your home from our director and/or teachers, multiple child visits in the new classroom; gradually increasing until the child is comfortable within their new setting, parents can meet with new teacher and family service worker prior to the child's start date, etc. The transition plan out of our program includes an exit survey for families to complete as well as an exit checklist to ensure that all matters are addressed before leaving (ex. did you remember to take extra clothes from cubby, blankets, child art work, etc...)
- Readiness for Kindergarten: By following all federal Head Start performance standards, our pre-kindergarten classes ensure that each child is prepared for Kindergarten to the best of his/her ability. Taking into account each child's individual progress and development, they are encouraged to develop and advance in the four areas of development (social-emotional, language, physical and cognitive) that are necessary for success in kindergarten and life.
- Transition for Before & After Care: At the beginning of a new school year, each teacher is given a folder for each child in his/her class. The folder contains all pertinent information to assist the teacher in providing services, such as child name, date of birth, report card, progress reports, IEP if applicable and other documents. These files change classes along with the children.

Transportation

- We are unable to provide transportation to or from the Latin American Community Center. Families are responsible for getting their children to school and for picking their children up from school. Please see a family service worker for more information about public transit options.
- Parents will be informed of any field trip requiring transportation. Transportation for such trips, when needed, will be provided by contracted school or University of Delaware buses. Buses may not be equipped with child safety restraints. The National Highway Traffic Administration recommends that preschool age children be transported in school buses equipped for child safety restraints; however, child safety restraints are not currently required by Delaware State Law. The Office of Child Care Licensing permits us to transport preschool age children using this type of school bus as long as parents have been notified and have given permission.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer on field trips. Infants do not take field trips.
- There is a transportation permission that must be signed as part of the enrollment process and signing that release gives your child permission to be transported to off-site trips.

Weather Policy for Playing Outdoors

The Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards – written in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics – recommend children play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. **Children will participate in outdoor activities twice daily unless there is active precipitation or a public announcement has been made advising people to remain indoors.**

The EDC closely monitors www.weather.com and www.airnow.gov for all weather and air quality alerts. Alerts in Delaware are typically called with a wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and a heat index at or above 90 degrees F. Children should be dressed appropriately to accommodate these temperatures when outdoors. If children are not well enough to go outdoors they should not be brought to school.

Withdrawal Policy

If you wish to withdraw your child from the Early Development Center, please provide two weeks' written notice. We respectfully request that you include the reason for withdrawing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Maintaining relationships with Local Education Agencies (LEA)

Children's school readiness can be enhanced when Programs partner with their local schools. Information-sharing and participation in shared events and professional development are ways in which schools and Programs can work together as a team to support children and families' successful school experiences. Meetings between the Program and school system staff that specify the others' operational structure, learning expectations and delivery methods assure a continuity of learning that offers families and children a greater understanding and level of comfort as they move back and forth between the two types of learning systems.

The EDC works on fostering working relationships with local education agencies and other child care programs to establish comprehensive transition policies and practices that meet the needs of children, including children with disabilities and children experiencing homelessness.

Ways that we maintain our relationship with local schools, etc.:

- We have memorandum of understandings (MOU) which are a bilateral agreement between two parties. It expresses an agreement of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action with Red Clay Consolidated School District, Christina School District, & local charter schools.

- We visit these schools as part of our shared transition activities such as classroom visits in preparation of Kindergarten Transitioning
- We also host kindergarten registration at the LACC

Community Resources

At the LACC, we understand that local community's services and resources are an important component of a relationship-based program. We understand that you depend on us to offer information that may address children's needs or help you access community supports.

The vision of the Latin American Community Center is to be recognized as a leading Agency, championing the needs of our community, advancing its economic and educational well-being, helping its members achieve their highest potential as contributors to society.

The mission of the Latin American Community Center is to advocate for and assist the Latino Community by offering services in a continuum of care that promotes empowerment and an enhanced quality of life while celebrating our diverse cultures.

We offer many different services to our clients. Lifelong Learning concentrates on the educational needs of our client families, from quality pre-school programs to adult education. Life Empowerment focuses on life needs from short term case management to job placement, to mental health services. Some programs we offer:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| *Early Development Center | *Prevention Promoters |
| *Project P.A.C.T. | *Adult Basic Education – GED prep |
| *Healthy Homes | *Victims of Crime advocacy |
| *Domestic Violence | *The Healthy Families |
| *Short-Term Case Management | *Evening Enrichment (for teens) |
| *Breastfeeding Peer Counseling | *Workforce Development |
| *ESL classes | *Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) |

- A binder of descriptions of community agencies, their hours of operation, services provided, referral processes, etc. is available in the Family Services Office in the first floor.
- You will also find brochures and materials about community services are available to families at the first floor EDC entrance.
- In each classroom there is a Community Resources Directory – please talk to your child's teacher or a Family Service Worker for more information.