



EARLY LEARNING CENTER

AT FIRST CHURCH

PARENT HANDBOOK OF OPERATING POLICIES

PLEASE READ ALL POLICIES UPON RECEIPT

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Please notify the Early Learning Center office if you need a translator.
Por favor notifique al aprendizaje a temprana edad oficina si necesita un traductor.
Veuillez demander au bureau de la Early Learning Center (la garderie) si vous voulez un traducteur
Early Learning Center Staff will call 211 to schedule a translator

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COMMITMENT TO READ & RELEASE FORM

RETURN COMPLETE FORM TO EARLY LEARNING CENTER OFFICE

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read or do commit to read the First Church Early Learning Center's Operating Policies, which have been given to me. In addition, I have read or do commit to read the Emergency & Release Information, which has been given to me.

If a Parent/Guardian gives permission for his/her child(ren) to attend an offsite trip, the Parent/Guardian agrees to indemnify and hold harmless First Church Early Learning Center from any and all accident(s) which may occur as the result of use of the bus including single vehicle collision(s) and/or any and all other accidents which may arise while embarking the bus, riding in the bus, exiting the bus and/or for any and all moving vehicle accident(s) and/or other types of accidents which may occur at, near or around the bus and/or otherwise touching and/or concerning the bus.

For services furnished by First Church Early Learning Center, I agree that if my account is not paid when due and the Early Learning Center should retain either a collection agency or an attorney for collection, I will pay a collection fee in the sum of 50 per cent of the unpaid debt plus reasonable interest as permitted by law and court costs and attorney's fees incurred in collection of the debt.

Please note: Signatures of family members legally responsible for the child(ren) are required.

Date _____ Parent or Guardian _____

Date _____ Parent or Guardian _____

Please print your child or children's name(s)

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

First Church is concerned about the needs of families in the surrounding community. In an effort to help meet those needs the idea of an infant/toddler/preschool program was born. The primary purposes of this program are to strengthen families and to facilitate optimal development of the children by providing high quality, developmentally appropriate, child nurturing care.

The Early Learning Center of First Church is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, an independent accrediting system sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals. The Early Learning Center voluntarily applied for accreditation and then engaged in an extensive self-study based on the Academy's Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs. The accuracy of the program's self-study was verified during a site visit to the program by trained NAEYC assessors. A national commission composed of recognized experts in childcare and early childhood education reviewed the validated self-study. The Center was judged to be in substantial compliance with the Academy's Criteria and was granted accreditation. The Early Learning Center has maintained accreditation since 1991. Information on the Academy and the accreditation process can be obtained from the Director, by calling the Academy at 1-800-424-2460 or logging on to their website at naeyc.org.

The Early Learning Center is licensed by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources. A copy of the Minimum Standards can be obtained by calling 205-942-7913 or by accessing their website at dhr.alabama.gov/documents/MinimumStandards_DayCare.pdf.

The Staff of the Early Learning Center and of First Church care about you. Welcome to the First Church Early Learning Center. We are so glad to have you as a part of our family!

It is important that each parent or guardian read this handbook in its entirety. If you have any questions about any of these policies, please contact the Executive Director.

MISSION STATEMENT

- **We believe that children learn through sensory experiences and through play activities designed to support each child's individual development.**
- **We believe that each child is unique and learns at their own pace. Childhood should be celebrated, not rushed.**
- **We believe that children should have time to explore and create because the process of learning is forever.**
- **We value children's sense of wonder and their individuality.**
- **We value our teachers because of their dedication to learning and the positive examples they set.**
- **We value our parents for their support, partnership, and participation.**
- **We value the support of First Church and their vision to create this program.**

Written by the Teachers and Director of First Church Early Learning Center

FIRST CHURCH EARLY LEARNING CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK OF OPERATING POLICIES

A. PHILOSOPHY

Research documents the importance of providing quality childcare for young children in order to ensure beneficial effects on their young lives. We consider many factors which have been shown to have a direct effect on the quality of child care programs including limited group size, low staff/child ratio, continuity of teachers and teacher training. Because providing a high quality program is a primary objective of the Early Learning Center (ELC), all necessary steps are taken to ensure that our program is based on the results of current research studies of children in group care who have more positive adjustments and outcomes.

The Early Learning Center implements The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers by Diane Trister Dodge et al. More information can be found at teaching-strategies.com. The curriculum is based on developmentally appropriate practice which means teaching in ways that match the way children learn and develop. The curriculum includes the creation of an age appropriate environment designed to foster learning and also addresses what children should learn in the areas of language acquisition, literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts and technology. The curriculum also addresses the teacher's role and the family's role in supporting each child's development. We strive to provide children opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired skills and offer challenges just beyond the level of their present mastery in an environment where they feel safe, secure and respected. The curriculum is not designed to address one specific area--either religious or academic--but to facilitate total development of each child enrolled. Each classroom is designed to invite exploration and include the following areas according to the developmental levels of the children: dramatic play, home living, block/transportation, science, math, language, reading/literature, gross motor and fine motor. Each child is actively encouraged to participate in the learning process. The Early Learning Center has identified four desired child outcomes: (1) positive social relationships, which includes initiating play, relating to other children and adults, understanding and expressing feelings, and listening to and understanding speech; (2) knowledge and skills, which includes building, drawing and painting, pretending, using vocabulary and complex patterns of speech, awareness of sounds in words, knowledge about books, using letter names and sounds, pre-reading and pre-writing skills, sorting, identifying and matching patterns, counting, sequencing, identifying natural and living things, and (3) action to meet needs, which includes making choices and making plans, solving problems, and learning self help skills and (4) music and movement, which includes singing, moving to music, listening to different types of music, and playing rhythm instruments.

The primary educational goal of the Early Learning Center is to provide daily opportunities to enhance the child's total development--physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. At parent orientation and several times during the year, parents will receive handouts outlining the goals and objectives of The Creative Curriculum in the areas of social/emotional development, physical development, cognitive development, and language development. Teachers facilitate socio-emotional growth as children build relationships with others, cope with difficult situations, and learn

skills for interacting with others. Physical growth is provided for through the planning of both indoor and outdoor daily large motor activities. Smaller muscles needed for writing cutting and drawing are developed as children work and play with toys in their classroom designed especially for these purposes. Children develop intellectually through hands-on exploration of their environment, problem solving, and language activities which teachers have designed to promote optimum experiences. Group times, learning games, experiments, and activities are also planned as children are ready to be challenged by more complex learning situations. Pets that are suitable for children and are in good health may be present in the classroom (for example, dogs, hermit crabs, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, fish). Teachers will always supervise interactions between pets and children. Please notify the teachers if your child has any allergies to animals.

In keeping with the Early Learning Center's philosophy and goals, teachers will conduct assessments to support children's learning. The assessments will be done in the Early Learning Center environment by the child's teacher using observations, developmental checklists, and assessment forms from GOLD Child Assessment Tool. This information will be kept in the child's confidential file, accessible only to Early Learning Center teachers, Director, NAEYC assessors (when necessary for accreditation purposes), DHR Licensing agents (when necessary for licensing requirements) and will be shared with the parents during regularly scheduled parent teacher conferences.

Parents are encouraged to get involved by sharing their observations of their children with the teachers. Daily activity, adjustment and developmental achievement will be monitored and recorded. The results of these assessments are to be used in conjunction with other recorded notations to acquire an accurate overall assessment of each child. Parents will be asked to participate in a conference with the teacher to maintain contact regarding their child's growth and change. This will also be a time when new expectations can be discussed and goals set. Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring but may be requested at any time. Please consult the school calendar for exact dates.

With parental permission, other professionals will be asked to evaluate children according to the child's need and the expertise of the assessor. Hearing, dental, and vision screening will be available periodically so that parents may have their child tested if they desire. Program staff will provide support and information to family members legally responsible for the care and well being of the child.

B. FAMILY FOCUS

The Early Learning Center places a unique emphasis on families by providing and encouraging specific opportunities that will strengthen family bonds.

*As a parent, you are invited to be in the building at any time. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, ongoing two-way communication with teachers. We encourage parents to be a part of our program--to nurse their infant, to read a story, to have lunch with their child (be sure you sign up), to go on field trips, or to come and play. For each individual child at each different stage of development, the teacher will assist the parent in scheduling interaction so that it can be a positive rather than a stressful event.

- *Initial visits are important. Come visit the Center with your child before the “first” day, and on that day, plan to stay as long as you and/or your child need. Parents are welcome to visit any area of the facility at any time during regular hours of operation.
- *Parent Orientation will be held at the beginning of each new school year and at enrollment for parents who enroll their children at other times of the year. Classroom rules, daily schedules, roles of teachers, and expectations of parents and children will be discussed. Teachers will also explain our program philosophy, curriculum objectives, educational goals and effective strategies families can use to promote children’s learning. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and share cultural information about their family.
- *Call the Center during the day if you have a question. Please ask teachers for the phone extension to your child’s class. If you should have trouble getting through on the Early Learning Center phone line (205-251-6059), call the Church office at 205-254-3186. The e-mail address is elc@firstchurchbhm.com.
- *Talk to your teacher daily because they can give you the most accurate information. Daily notes will be used to communicate information from the teacher about your child’s day. Please share with the teachers how your family defines your race, religion, home language, culture and family structure so we can use this information to plan meaningful experiences for the children.
- *Monthly newsletters will be sent home providing information about the Center and about your child’s classroom.
- *Parent Conferences are held twice each year and can be more frequent if you request them.
- *A Parent Group will be established yearly to provide feedback about the program, make suggestions, and work on center-wide projects. A member of this group will also represent the Parent Group to the Early Learning Center Board of Directors. All parents are encouraged to attend these meetings. Parents will be polled to see what meeting time is best for the majority. Notices of meeting times will be e-mailed to parents.
- *We also seek to provide parents with a support group and some learning opportunities through the “Lunch Bunch.” This will be a scheduled event when parents can bring their lunches to the Early Learning Center, discuss parenting concerns and parenting questions (i.e. childhood nutrition, discipline and guidance, growth and development).
- *Parent resources are available by contacting the ELC office.
- *Parents are encouraged to regularly contribute to decisions regarding their child’s goals and plans for activities and services. The staff and parents are encouraged to work collaboratively to find mutually satisfying solutions that staff can incorporate into classroom practice.
- *ALL parents are encouraged to volunteer at the Early Learning Center. Please share what your interests and talents are with your child’s teacher so we can schedule a time for you to come and share. Volunteer opportunities are open to all parents and (with your permission) grandparents. Volunteers will be selected in an unbiased way. Parents of children in the First Class Pre-K room are

required to participate in 12 hours of parent participation activities each school year. Parent conferences, field trips, classroom visits and center wide activities count as parent participation activities.

*Please alert the teachers and/or Director should a concern arise so we can work collaboratively to find a mutually satisfying solution. A parent suggestion box is located on the Parent Bulletin Board if you prefer anonymity. The program will make every attempt to negotiate in a language the family understands, any differences or difficulties that may arise in interactions between families and program staff through discussions with all parties, including the Early Learning Center Director. Members of the Early Learning Center Board of Directors and Parent Advisory Board members will act as mediators if necessary. Written communications, phone conversations and e-mails may also be used, if parents prefer.

The Early Learning Center has identified 4 desired family outcomes: (1) families will learn to understand their child's strengths, abilities and special needs; (2) families will help their children develop and learn; (3) families will form meaningful relationships with teachers and other parents; (4) families will learn to access desired services, programs and activities in their communities.

C. TEACHING STAFF

A professional staff will work with the children individually, and as a group, to facilitate their development. All teachers will meet the criteria set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Because of their levels of training and varied experiences, the teachers will be able to:

- *recognize and assess growth patterns of the children in their group.
- *plan and implement a challenging but success-oriented program.
- *provide a non-stressful structure for learning through a classroom arrangement and schedule unique to each group.
- *monitor the use and safety of classroom and playground equipment.
- *nurture and guide children in positive ways.
- *lovingly respond to the individual needs and personalities of children in their care.

Every attempt will be made to ensure your child is with the same teachers each day. We encourage children and parents to make frequent visits with other teachers and classrooms in the Early Learning Center prior to the child moving to a new classroom to facilitate a smooth transition from one classroom to another. Teachers will visit with enrolled children in their current classrooms prior to the children moving up to facilitate a smooth transition from one teacher to another.

Although the Early Learning Center teachers will have primary responsibility for the children, other persons may be involved in providing care on a temporary basis. Volunteers, students, interns and observers will be a welcome addition to our classrooms. Each of their experiences will be planned in advance with the best interest of your child, the program and the participant taken into consideration. Before these individuals participate in the classroom, they will be involved in an orientation and training program to prepare them for the experience.

Teachers will supervise children by sight and sound at all times. Teachers will position themselves to see as many children as possible at all times of the day. The Transitional Check-list, which documents each child's presence, will be used before leaving the classroom and upon arrival to the destination so that each child is counted before leaving the classroom and again upon arrival.

Teachers will plan field trips to enhance the curriculum for the three and four year old classes. Parents are encouraged to accompany their children. Teachers will notify parents of field trips by listing them on the monthly calendar, on daily reports and posting notes in the classroom parent information area. The Early Learning Center busses will be used to transport children. The Transitional Checklist will be used to account for all children at all times. Children will be under the supervision of a Early Learning Center employee at all times, unless the parent is present. Cell phones will be used to call for help, if necessary. The bus is equipped with a First Aid kit. If there is a problem with transportation during a trip, the alternate bus will be used, as well as the Church vans, a bus will be chartered, or parents will be called to pick up their children.

D. ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

1. ADMISSION POLICY

The Early Learning Center of First Church is open to any child regardless of race, creed or religion. No handicapped individual will be denied the right to participate in this program, or the benefits relating to it, solely by reason of his or her handicap. Classrooms are filled on a first come-first served basis. Priorities for admission are as follows:

- a. Children of First Church members, employees of our corporate sponsor Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings, and siblings of currently enrolled children according to date of application.
- b. Children on the waiting list according to date of application.

2. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Upon completion of the pre-admission form, a child's name is placed on the Early Learning Center waiting list. When a place becomes available, the parent is notified of the opening and asked to respond as to the acceptance or rejection of the position. Upon receipt of the enrollment fee and security deposit, the child is officially enrolled. The following forms must be completed and on file in the office prior to the child's first day of attendance in the program:

- a. Child's Pre-Admission Form (DHR-Early Learning Center-739)
- b. Blue Immunization Form (from your pediatrician and updated as needed)
- c. General Health Appraisal Form (to be updated as needed)
- d. Biographical Information
- e. Emergency & Release Information
- f. Commitment to Read & Release Form
- g. Additional forms for First Class Pre-K as required by the Office of School Readiness
All forms must be updated yearly and throughout the year should your emergency contact information change.

It is the responsibility of the parents to update any information on these forms. Health and safety information shall be updated quarterly. The content of the child's file and family information will be kept in the Early Learning Center inner office and will be kept confidential but may be available to regulatory authorities (Emergency personnel, Department of Health, Department of Human Resources, Fire Department, NAEYC, Early Learning Center teachers and Director) and to parents or legal guardians. Please notify the Early Learning Center office in writing if you request heightened confidentiality.

3. WITHDRAWAL

A thirty-day written notice is required before withdrawing a child from the Center or dismissing a child by the Center. Full tuition will be due if the child has attended for any portion of the month. The security deposit referenced in Section D.5.c will be forfeited if the Early Learning Center does not receive a thirty-day written notice or if the account is not paid in full. See Section D.5.c "Security Deposit". Prepaid tuition and yearly fees are non refundable.

4. TERMINATION

If the parents of a child or the staff of the Center feels that the needs of the child are not being met, either party may initiate termination.

5. TUITION AND FEES

A. TUITION

The Early Learning Center is a non-profit organization and is operated on the funds provided by tuition and fees. All payments are applied toward the acquisition, of high quality supplies, equipment, and teachers that ensure the best care for your child.

Tuition is due on or before the first day of each month and is considered past due if not received by the fifth working day of the month. A \$25.00 late fee will be charged to all accounts not current by the close of business on the fifteenth day of the month. If the tuition and late fee are not paid in full within thirty days of the late assessment the child may not attend the Early Learning Center until the total bill (tuition and late fee) is paid in full. If withdrawal is made during the calendar month, tuition for the entire month is required regardless of when withdrawal occurs.

Payment may be mailed to the Center or brought to the office. Checks or money orders should be made to "FCELC." Checks returned to the Center due to insufficient funds must be re-paid by cashier's check with a \$25.00 service charge. The ELC will not accept cash payments.

Tuition is based on the age of the child. Please contact the ELC office for current tuition information.

Financial arrangements are subject to adjustment annually.

B. ENROLLMENT FEE

A one-time, non-refundable, enrollment fee of \$100.00 is charged when a child is accepted and enrolled in the program. However, if a child withdraws and is re-admitted to the Center the enrollment fee must be paid again.

C. SECURITY DEPOSIT

Upon acceptance of a position in the Early Learning Center program, a \$200 deposit will be required along with the enrollment fee. The security deposit is refundable when a child is withdrawn from the program IF thirty days written notice of withdrawal is given and IF the account is clear. See also Section D.3., "Withdrawal."

D. SCHOOL SUPPLY FEE

An annual supply fee is payable each June 1 for children who are enrolled for the coming year. A summer activity fee will be payable June 1 for children enrolled for the summer months. The Director will quote these fees at the time of enrollment.

E. LATE PICK-UP FEE

Parents should arrive by 5:45 p.m. to pick up children and have enough time to collect their belongings. All persons should leave the building by 6:00 p.m. A late fee of \$10.00 for the first ten minutes or a fraction thereof after 6:00 p.m. will automatically be charged to your account if you are late in picking up your child. After the first ten minutes the fee charge will be \$5.00 per minute. Please call the Center if you see that you will be late. Understand that the late fee will still be charged.

F. TEACHER BONUSES & CLASSROOM PARTIES

Teacher bonuses are collected by the Chair of the Parent Advisory Committee and distributed to teachers twice during the school year - at Christmas (December 1) and at the end of the school year (May 1). The Chair of the Parent Advisory Committee will provide a reminder to the Classroom Parents approximately two weeks in advance.

Please note that the amounts below are suggestions only and are given at each parent's own discretion. Once the money is collected, the chair of the Parent Advisory Committee will distribute the money evenly to all the teachers. On average full time teachers will receive \$150 - \$200 each and part time teachers will receive \$100 - \$125 each depending on the how much is collected.

\$50/Child due the first week of December

\$50/Child due the first week of May

Classroom party fees are collected at the beginning of the year. This money is kept in the parent fund and distributed to teachers for the purchase of party materials for the children throughout the year. Planned parties are listed below but may change based on the interest of the children. Notifications before the parties will be communicated to parents

Christmas Party - \$10.00

Halloween/Fall Party - \$5.00

End of the Year Party - \$10.00

Total: \$25/Child due June 1st

E. SCHOOL SCHEDULE

1. SCHOOL OPERATING SCHEDULE

First Church Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The school year for non First Class Pre-K students (ages 6 weeks through three year olds) begins on June 1, and ends on May 31. The schedule for First Class Pre-K students is from. 9a until 3:30, August through May. Before and after care is available all year for Pre-K students. Rates will be quoted at the time of enrollment. The Center will be closed in observance of the following holidays during the school year:

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (*or two days for the New Year*)

Martin Luther King Day

Memorial Day

President's Day in February for Teacher Training

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the day after

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (*or two days at Christmas*)

Teacher Work Day (TBA)

The Center will also be closed a day for teacher training in late summer or early fall. Parents will be notified of exact dates at the beginning of each school year.

2. ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Children must be accompanied by a parent or adult into the building and to a waiting staff member in a classroom upon arrival each day. The Arrival/Departure Roster will be posted conveniently near the door for parents to sign children in and out of Center care. Alabama State Department of Human Resources requires the signing in and out of each child each day. You must sign in when you arrive (even if you plan to stay a little while) and you must only sign out when you actually leave the premises with your child. Please take time to share information about things your child is doing at home, events of the previous evening, and other information that will help teachers provide care that is responsive, attentive, supportive and culturally sensitive. Inform the teachers of any routine or information that will help ensure a smooth transition between home and the Center.

All children should have their hands washed immediately upon arrival as an aid to fighting the spread of disease. Children should arrive by 9:00 a.m. If your child will be arriving after 9:00 or if your child will be absent, please call the Center office so that the safety and well being of your child can be confirmed and an accurate lunch count can be taken. If your child is absent due to illness, please let the teachers know what the illness is and what symptoms your child exhibits so other parents can be alerted. These notifications will be posted by classroom on the white board under the Parents Suggestion box at the entrance.

Four parking places on our lot will be designated for parents to use during the early morning and late evening rush hours. Please be aware that others are using these spaces, so try to limit your use to ten minute intervals.

Parent should arrive by 5:45 p.m. to pick up children and have enough time to collect their belongings. All persons should leave the building by 6:00 p.m. Children should be signed out of the Center on the Arrival/Departure Roster located near the door of each classroom.

A late fee of \$10 for the first ten minutes or a fraction thereof after 6:00 p.m. will automatically be charged to your account if you are late in picking up your child. After the first ten minutes the fee charge will be \$5 per minute. Please remember that the Center closes at 6:00pm.

Children will be permitted to leave the Center only when accompanied by a parent or parent-authorized person as indicated on the child's emergency and release form. An ELC teacher must see the child and the adult leave the room. Siblings twelve years or older may bring younger children to and from the Center if the parent listed the older child on the Release Form. Under no circumstances may a child be allowed to enter or leave the Center by himself, nor will the child ever be released to someone not authorized by the parent on the Release Form. Staff will ask to see the ID of persons they do not recognize. Parents may update this form in writing at any time.

Although the Early Learning Center is open eleven hours each weekday, this does not mean that it is in the best interest of your child to be here the entire time. Please consider your child's needs when making your afternoon or evening plans. Being in a social situation all day long can be very difficult, especially to someone just beginning to learn social skills. Children do not tell time by the clock, but they do realize when you are late. Since children find security in predictable routines please try to adhere to your regular schedule. If you find it necessary to be late, please call so that we can prepare your child and ensure proper staffing ratios.

If we are concerned with the safety or well being of your child should we release that child to you, we will inform you of our concern and call another person on your Authorized List to pick up children. If we are concerned for your child's safety when a person on your Author-ized List picks up your child, we will phone you immediately and/or call another person on your Authorized List to pick up your child.

3. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All children will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of age-appropriate ex-tra-curricu-lar activities that have been coordinated with outside organizations specializing in specific activities. Although we want to provide you with the convenience of offering these extra-curricular activities for your children, please be aware that many times young children are over-stimulated from the undue pressure that too much outside activity places on them. To prevent this from happening we will use caution in allowing groups to provide additional experiences for children in the Center. When these activities are available you will have the opportunity to select those you feel will be most meaningful to your child. Activities may include, but are not limited to, instruction in computers, Spanish, music, creative dance, creative movement, chess, Teddy Tennis, Children's Theater and swimming. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

4. SPECIAL TIMES

BIRTHDAYS: A child's birthday is a special day at the Center. Parents may arrange to provide refreshments for this event and are encouraged to participate in this occasion. All food brought from home to share with other children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged food in factory sealed containers and must meet the dietary food guidelines of the USDA (*visit www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/*). Please plan the menu with the classroom teacher so they can notify you of any foods that cannot be served due to food allergies. No gifts, please.

PICTURES: Class pictures and individual pictures will be taken by a qualified school photographer. The purchase of these pictures is optional. Dates for picture days will be listed on the school calendar.

REST TIME: Rest time is a very important part of our day at the Early Learning Center. Because children need a balance of quiet and active activities and time to renew their systems, we will have a resting/napping period each day. Children will rest in their classrooms. Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. All children 12 months of age and younger who require a blanket in their crib when sleeping will need a written excuse from their pediatrician giving permission. Once children are walking, they will nap on cots. Parents are asked to purchase a cot mat from the ELC office to cover the cot. Cot mats will be sent home on Fridays for parents to launder. Children will be placed at least two feet away from others while resting. Toddlers and twos will have a two-hour rest time. Preschool age children will have at least a one-hour rest time. Children who awaken early can participate in quiet activities while waiting for their friends to arise. Although resting is essential, it is often a time of the day when mom and/or dad are especially missed. Often a favorite security item or a cuddly sleepy-time pal can make this time much easier for your child.

5. DROP-IN POLICY

The Early Learning Center endeavors to put your needs high on its priority list. For that reason, we allow families to enroll children on a part-time basis at a reduced rate. In addition, we allow those part-time children to “drop-in” on another date if an enrolled child is absent that day. Substitutions must be cleared through the Director and the teacher prior to attendance. The “drop-in” child will be charged \$50.00 per day. The absent child will pay the normal tuition that month.

6. INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, a determination will be made as to whether the Center will be opened or closed. The Center will usually follow the decision made by the Birmingham City School System unless a determination is made that the Early Learning Center can remain open because of unrelated circumstances. An e-mail announcing school closing will be sent to the address provided by parents on the child’s pre-admission application. Please be sure to provide the Early Learning Center office with your most current e-mail address. The ELC will also use the program “Remind 101” to notify parents via e-mail. Please make sure the Office Manager has a valid e-mail address. Parents and/or guardians are advised to check their e-mails for the most accurate information on Center closings.

7. CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Because children learn best from hands-on experiences, they their hands do get dirty! Despite our best efforts to protect clothing, clothes also get dirty. Children should wear play clothes that are comfortable and washable so that they can participate fully in the program and enjoy planned activities without worry. Clothes should also be easy to put on and take off so that children will not become frustrated while learning self-help skills. Remember the weather when you dress your child for the day; children will go outside almost every day throughout the year. Please keep sweaters, jackets caps and mittens in your child’s cubby during colder weather.

Each child should have a complete change of clothing at the Center that includes underwear, socks, shirt, and pants. Clothing that becomes soiled by urine or feces will immediately be placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home the same day for laundering. All personal items should be marked with the child’s name. This includes that change of clothing, feeding items, toilet articles, blankets, caps, sweaters, jackets, mittens, gloves and raincoats. Children often develop an attachment for a favorite blanket, doll, or stuffed animal. These security items are fine companions for nap time and hugs during the day. However, please do not let your child come to the Center with other toys, purses, mon-ey, jewelry, guns, candy or gum.

The following items should be supplied by parents according to the age-level of their child.
Please label all items with your child's name.

INFANT SUPPLY LIST *(Please, no diaper bags or backpacks. Only small bottle bags are allowed.)*

- * Disposable diapers and wipes
- * Four refill packs of unscented baby wipes for hand washing
- * Three rolls of paper towels
- * Three boxes of Kleenex tissues
- * Two changes of clothing
- * Prepared formula/breast milk in sterile plastic bottles labeled with child's name and date
- * Six disposable 7 ounce sippy cups
- * Baby food in factory sealed containers labeled with child's name and date
- * Comb and brush labeled with child's name
- * Fingertip toothbrush
- * Bulb syringe labeled with child's name
- * Two box of gallon-size Zip-Lock bags
- * Hat for outside play

ONES SUPPLY LIST

- * Disposable diapers & wipes
- * Three refill packs of unscented baby wipes for hand washing
- * Cot mat *(purchased through the Early Learning Center office)*
- * Comb and brush
- * Toothbrush and toothpaste *(to be replaced every three months or more as needed)*
- * Three rolls of paper towels
- * Three boxes of large Kleenex tissues
- * Two boxes of gallon-size Zip Lock plastic bags
- * Two changes of clothing *(including socks)*
- * Light sweater or jacket labeled with your child's name

TWOS, THREES AND FOURS SUPPLY LIST

- * Change of clothing *(including underwear and socks)*
- * Cot mat *(to be taken home and washed each Friday)*
- * Comb and brush
- * Ream of copy paper
- * Three rolls of paper towels
- * Three large boxes of Kleenex tissues
- * Two boxes gallon-size Zip Lock plastic bags
- * Toothbrush and toothpaste
- * Flushable wipes
- * Hand sanitizer for children

PLEASE, NO BACKPACKS OR DIAPER BAGS.
TEACHERS MAY DESIGNATE OTHER ITEMS AS NEEDED.

F. NUTRITION

The Center will provide a nutritious morning and afternoon snack and a nutritious lunch planned according to USDA guidelines for young children. Menus approved by a certified dietitian will be posted in advance on the parent bulletin board in each child's classroom and distributed to parents. Lunches will be served family style with teacher and children eating together, enjoying pleasant conversations. Teachers will encourage self-help skills appropriate for the child's developmental level. For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutritional needs, the child's health provider must give us an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialist in the child's care. For children with food allergies, parents must provide written consent for the Early Learning Center to post information about that child's food allergy in the food preparation area and in the classrooms. Please make an appointment with the Director to inspect all food labels of food provided by the Early Learning Center to identify any allergic ingredient. Parents may bring food from home in the event of a food allergy. The food must be labeled with the child's name and date and must be in factory sealed containers. Any food that requires refrigeration should be placed in the refrigerator. The following foods will not be offered to children under four: hot dogs, whole or sliced in rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas; hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; chunks of raw carrots or meats that can be swallowed whole.

Parents of infants will need to supply ready-to-feed formula or breast milk in sanitary plastic bottles and baby food in factory-sealed containers labeled with the child's name and date until the child is able to eat the food provided by the Center. Bottle feedings should not contain solid foods unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. Breast feeding is encouraged. The nursing mother room is located behind the Early Learning Center office and is equipped with comfortable chairs and lights that will dim. The Early Learning Center will accept, store and serve expressed human milk for feeding. Milk must be labeled with the infant's name and date. It will be stored in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen or in a freezer for no longer than three months. We will gladly work with parents to coordinate feeding times according to the baby's schedule. Bottles will be sent home at the end of each day. No formula, milk, breast milk or infant foods will be warmed in a microwave. A crock-pot will be used to warm milk at no more than 120* for no more than five minutes. Teachers must discard after one hour any formula or breast milk that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated. Infants unable to sit will be held for bottle feedings. **WE WILL NOT PROP BOTTLES AT ANY TIME.** Children will not be allowed to have bottles while in a crib or bed. Toddler and twos shall not be allowed to carry bottles, sippy cups or regular cups while crawling or walking. Teaching staff will offer children fluids from a cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

The teachers will work with families of infants to ensure that the food served by the Early Learning Center is based on the infants' individual nutritional needs and developmental stage. Early Learning Center teachers will not offer solid foods and fruit juices to infants younger than six months of age, unless this is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by families. Cow's milk will not be served to infants younger than 12 months and will only serve whole milk to children 12-24 months.

If your child is arriving before 7:30 a.m. and has not had time for breakfast, you may send a simple one with them. Please keep in mind that young children are often distracted upon arrival at day care and may not eat as well as parents hope. Morning snack will be served when children are interested in eating. Lunch will be served around 11:15 a.m.-12:00 noon and afternoon snack at about 2:30-3:00 p.m.

G. DISCIPLINE

Policies and techniques used for guiding young children are established with the knowledge that children need clear limits which are set in a way that do not negatively influence self esteem. Positive guidance and redirection are used to guide behavior. Expectations of the children will be developmentally appropriate. Teachers will give children choices to redi-rect behavior.

1. The child care staff member in charge of a group of children is responsible for discipline in that group. Only classroom staff can discipline a child not older children, visitors, or other group participants.
2. Limits must be clear to those children to whom they apply and must be expressed at the child's level. Discipline must be consistent and fair.
3. A kind, firm voice shall be used.
4. No cruel, harsh, or unusual punishment, including pinching and biting, will be used.
5. Physical punishment, including spanking, will not be used in any situation. No child shall be confined to an enclosed area or locked room.
6. No child shall be subjected to humiliating, shaming or frightening discipline, nor will profane language, derogatory remarks or verbal abuse be used.
7. Discipline shall not be imposed for failure to eat, sleep or for toileting accidents.
8. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
9. For children with persistent, serious, challenging behavior, teachers, families, and other professionals will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

1. BITING

We want to insure that every child is safe while in our care. Our program provides an envi-ronment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. Even in high quality settings, where staff is vigilant, a variety of activities are available, and all preventive strategies are used, biting may still occur. Every effort is made to extinguish the be-havior quickly.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions. Teachers works very hard to ensure that the biting incident is handled in a way that respects all families involved.

Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, 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, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this age's mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Procedures for handling a biting incident:

- * The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm "NO BITING." The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. Ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, then redirected. Teachers communicate that "biting hurts and we need to be gentle," explaining and demonstrating what gentle and acceptable behavior means.
- * A written or verbal incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
- * We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- * We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- * We make special efforts to protect other children. Some of the strategies that the staff may use to help prevent biting incidents from happening are the following:
 - * We give children frozen wash cloths or biting rings for biting. This reduces the sensitivity to their teeth and gums, satisfies their biting needs and reduces the likelihood that they will bite other children.
 - * We encourage children to use simple words and sign language to communicate their wants and needs. Each time there is a conflict, we remind the child to use their words/signs.
 - * We stay close to children who are in a "biting phase" and try to be ready to intervene quickly before a biting incident occurs.
 - * We provide a generous variety of toys and materials that encourage children to stay involved. Since a large majority of incidents occur when children want the same toy or object, we provide duplicates of favorite toys so children will not be tempted to have a tug of war with the toys.
 - * We are aware of times throughout the day when a child is tired or hungry or may be overstimulated and of transitional times such as moving to other rooms, indoor to outdoor play and vice versa, preparing for meals and preparing for nap time.
- * We use many positive reinforcement and redirection strategies, praising children when they are playing cooperatively, sharing and being kind to each other.

H. HEALTH AND SAFETY

FIRST CHURCH EARLY LEARNING CENTER IS A SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT. NO SMOKING IS PERMITTED IN THE PRESENCE OF CHILDREN OR ANYWHERE ON CHURCH PROPERTY.

NO FIREARMS ARE PERMITTED ON CHURCH PROPERTY AT ANY TIME.

1. Illness

The Center will make every effort to protect the health and safety of all the children. Cooperation of parents is essential in this effort. For your child's protection and that of others in the group, parents should wash their child's hands when entering their classroom each morning. Parents should keep their child at home when ANY of the following symptoms occur:

Fever of 101*	Thrush
Upset stomach	Unexplained rash/spots
Severe cold	Diarrhea
Severe headache	Vomiting
Head injuries	Other symptoms of illness
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	

CHILDREN MUST BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WITHOUT FEVER REDUCING MEDICATION (*TYLENOL, ETC.*) BEFORE RETURNING TO THE CENTER.

Please call and tell us when your child will be out.

Parents should report an illness or exposure to a communicable disease to the ELC teachers so that others can be alerted. Likewise, parents will be notified when the children at the Center have been exposed to a communicable disease. If needed, the County Health Department or the Early Learning Center's medical advisor will be contacted for advice. If children become sick with the aforementioned or other symptoms while they are at the Center:

- a. They will be isolated from the other children when possible, remaining under the supervision of Early Learning Center staff, and will be kept as comfortable as possible.
- b. The parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the child within the hour.
- c. They should remain out of the Center until the child has been symptom free for at least 24 hours or until diagnosed by a physician in writing as being no longer infectious.

Children with life-threatening medical conditions such as allergies, asthma, seizures or other conditions are required to wear a medical alert bracelet while attending the Early Learning Center. Specific instructions explaining what to do in case of an occurrence of the condition shall be provided in writing to the Early Learning Center along with written parental permission to post this information in the child's classroom.

FIRST CHURCH EARLY LEARNING CENTER RESERVES THE RIGHT
TO REFUSE ADMITTANCE DUE TO ILLNESS.

Children who are three months old and older should have the CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION (*blue slip*) and the General Health Appraisal form (*included with your enrollment forms*) completed and on file. The CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATIONS should be updated as immunizations are administered. Parents are required to keep the blue form (*immunizations record*) up to date, as the health department has the authority to send children home if immunizations are not current. The schedule for the General Health Appraisal Form is listed at the bottom of the form. Get copies of this form from the Early Learning Center office. The forms should be renewed at least annually. Early Learning Center staff will notify parents when forms need to be updated. Early Learning Center teachers will review information on screening tests and follow up with families to ensure any abnormal results are addressed. When a child is overdue for routine health services, parents must provide evidence of an appointment for services as a condition of remaining enrolled, except for any immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

Any child who is under immunized because of religious beliefs or medical condition that is documented by a licensed health care professional will be excluded promptly. Parents will be called to retrieve their child if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program. Tiny fingernails can be sharp and they also collect germs. For the protection of your child and others, please keep your child's fingernails trimmed.

The Administrator and each employee of the Early Learning Center are required under law to report evidence of suspected child abuse or neglect and to record such evidence in the child's records.

2. MEDICATION

Parents must complete the DHR Authorization for Administering Medication form (DHR-1949) which must be signed and dated by the parent/guardian for any medication, lo-tions, creams, etc. administered to children. If medication is to be given for more than a week a new form must be completed for each week. No medication can be left at the Early Learning Center without a current signed Medication Form (DHR-1949). Medications which are unused or expired will be returned only to the parent or discarded at the request or consent of the parent or upon withdrawal of the student from the Center. The time of all medications administered at the Center shall be provided, in writing, to the child's parents using the DHR Authorization for Administering Medication form. All medications will be kept in a locked container. Parents of children who require special medical procedures will be responsible for helping the Early Learning Center staff secure training in the procedures to insure competency in performing the procedure. Written documentation from the child's prescribed health care provider outlining the procedures must be provided by the parent to keep in the child's file.

Prescription drugs can be administered to your child only if they are in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, name of licensed health care provider, date filled, expiration date, manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on administering and storing the medication from a licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medications for the child. Medication will be administered only with written permission of the parent/guardian and as prescribed or as recommended by the manufacturer's instructions that detail the name and strength of the medication. No medication will be administered contrary to medication

directions unless written authorization from the licensed health care provider accompanies the parent request. Cough and cold medication is not recommended for children under 6 years of age and will not be administered without written orders from a health care provider. A note from the health care professional is required for OTC medications. Non-prescription sunscreen, or sun block formulated to provide broad spectrum UVA and UVB protection of SPF 15 or higher can be applied to exposed skin with permission on the medication form. When public health authorities recommend the use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET or an acceptable alternative approved by a public health authority will be used and these will be applied only on children older than two months, only once a day, and only with signed parental permission. Diaper cream can be administered but also requires a parent's signature.

3. MEDICAL AND DENTAL EMERGENCIES

In the event that a child becomes ill or suffers an accident while he/she is in the care of First Church Early Learning Center, the child's parents shall be notified.

All accidents and injuries are reported on the Injury Report Form with a copy going in the child's records and a copy given to the parents for their records.

If the accident or illness requires medical attention, the child's parents will be called immediately. If the parents cannot be reached immediately, the child's physician or dentist will be contacted. In an extreme emergency paramedics will be called and the child will be transported to Children's Hospital when appropriate, otherwise, the Early Learning Center staff may make a determination of which hospital will be used based upon all factors at the time of the emergency. An Early Learning Center staff member certified in pediatric first aid/CPR will take the child's file with familial consent forms and health insurance information, and will stay with the child until parents are located. Hospital staff physicians will be used if the child's doctor is not immediately available. The school and/or its designated employee shall be authorized to secure and consent to such medical attention, treatment and services for a child as may be deemed necessary. Cost of medical care provided is the responsibility of the parent (*Please read Emergency & Release Information Form*).

Parents of children who have known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (asthma, seizures, allergies, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions) must provide a written individual emergency care plan to the Early Learning Center teachers and Director. This plan will be kept in the child's file and a copy kept in the child's classroom.

Specific medical procedures are available for your review in the Early Learning Center office. Early Learning Center teachers have received training in Infant/Child CPR.

4. INFANT SLEEPING SAFETY

Infants, unless otherwise ordered by a physician, will be 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. Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft items are not allowed in cribs or rest equipment for infants younger than eight months. The use of blankets is not advisable. Please provide a lightweight infant clothing sleep sack or other clothing designed for sleep. If a blanket is required for children 12 months or younger, written permission from the child's pediatrician must be on file in the Early Learning Center office. The infant will be placed at the foot of the crib with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the infants' chest. The infant's head will remain uncovered during sleep. After being placed down for sleep on their backs, infants may be allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the supine position.

5. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Emergency safety procedures have been developed in the event of severe weather warnings. Fire and tornado drills are held routinely at the Center to maximize safety of the children in the event of real danger. These procedures are posted in each classroom in the Parent Information area. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the Center all parents will be notified by e-mail or Remind 101 to advise them of the situation.

The Early Learning Center staff utilizes Emergency Management Agency and Fire Marshall approved evacuation procedures in case of fire, tornadoes, toxic spills, civil disorder, nuclear fallout, gas leaks, bomb threats, or intruders inside the Early Learning Center building. Parents will be notified by telephone call or e-mail when necessary. See page 27 for more details.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY

A system of accountability exists so there will always be a delegated person to assume authority and to take action in case of an emergency, in the event of an absence of staff. Accountability is as follows:

Executive Director: Robin Pate
Office Manager: Illena Coley
Associate Teacher: Pat Palmer
Lead Teacher: Maria Grimes
Lead Teacher: Cassandra Copeland
Support Staff: Angela Harper
Support Staff: Patty Corvin

I. ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN

ELC POLICY FOR COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN

PURPOSE

It is the policy of First Church Early Learning Center to assess all enrolled children across all developmental areas (social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science, technology, social studies, creative expression, health, and safety). Curriculum goals and objectives guide teachers' ongoing assessment of children's progress. Assessment, both formal and informal, is an integral part of our program and is necessary in screening asymptomatic children for possible problems, in confirming intuitive suspicions with objective measures, and in monitoring children at risk for developmental problems. It is also helpful in identifying each child's interests and needs. The information gathered helps teachers to support children's learning and helps to better understand each child's individual needs and interests in order to plan challenging activities for the children as well as make informed decisions about what they are teaching. Assessment allows us to have authentic information to share with parents during parent conferences which describes the developmental progress and learning of children. Assessment also aids in planning program improvements by improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices as well as the environment.

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH CHILDREN WILL BE ASSESSED

Classroom teachers that are familiar with the children and who are trained to use Teaching Strategies GOLD Developmental Continuum will assess the child's performance on various age appropriate tasks in their classroom setting. No time constraints will be placed on children. Assessments will be done when children are well and interested in participating.

YEARLY TIMELINES

Assessment of child progress is an on-going cycle of gathering information, analyzing and evaluating said information, using the information to plan curriculum and sharing the child's progress with parents. Each child will be assessed by Early Learning Center teachers within the first three months of the child's enrollment. Formal assessments will be done twice a year using Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment forms. These formal assessments will be done in the fall and spring of each year. For more information about this instrument, contact the Early Learning Center office, or visit www.teachingstrategies.com.

PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSING CHILDREN

Teachers will use a variety of methods to assess children such as anecdotal notes, portfolios of children's work, observations of interactions and children's play, developmental checklists, Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment rating scales, and information from parents. Teachers will observe, talk to, and interact with infants to assess and encourage use of language (e.g., smiles, sounds, eye contact and cooing). Teachers will provide parents the opportunity to share the results of observations from home to contribute to the assessment process through conversations at pick up, drop off, phone conversations and parent teacher conferences. During parent teacher conferences, which are held twice a year and other meetings requested by parents, teachers will talk to parents about their child's development at home and school.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING AND REFERRALS

When teachers suspect that a child has a developmental delay or other special need, this possibility will be communicated to families in a sensitive, supporting and confidential manner. Parents will be provided with documentation and explanation for the concerns. The Early Learning Center teachers will support families by suggesting next steps and by providing information about resources for further assessment.

In working with families, the Early Learning Center staff will make every effort to arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment by an outside agency when indicated. Agencies that administer norm-referenced and standardized tests will be suggested to parents. Parents will make the primary decision about services their children need. The Early Learning Center staff will support these decisions and will partner with families to obtain needed services. The Early Learning Center staff will secure special training regarding any special needs of children in the program.

Specialized consultants, skilled in the appropriate areas of need, will be used in partnership with the family to support staff's efforts to meet the needs of children and families so that full participation in the program can occur, to include children with special needs, behavioral challenges, or other special needs. Every effort will be made by the Early Learning Center staff to secure the services of Early Intervention or Child Find for those who qualify for these services. The Early Learning Center teachers can make recommendations for private services through UAB Sparks Center, Mitchell's Place, United Cerebral Palsy or other private services. Should payment for the services provided be required, it will be the responsibility of the family to provide payment. Parents and teachers will meet with therapist to develop IEPs and IFSPs as needed. Space will be provided at the Early Learning Center for any outside assessment and therapy. Early Learning Center teachers will support and implement any therapies and treatment suggested by special consultants.

USES OF RESULTS

The information gathered in the assessments will be used to make decisions about curriculum content, teaching approaches and interactions with children. It will also be used by teachers to ensure that we are aware and can report to parents in areas where children may not be progressing along normal developmental milestones. If necessary, we can recommend future evaluation with specialists. Family members will be provided information about their child's learning on at least a quarterly basis, with written reports twice a year at parent conferences. Communication with families about assessments shall be sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language.

Each teaching team will regularly discuss assessment results and use the information to decide how they need to change teaching practices to meet children's needs, to design goals for individual children, to guide curriculum planning, and to monitor progress. Teachers will use interactions with children to inform curriculum development and individualize teaching. Teachers will attempt to work with the child's family on all aspects of the child's assessment plan, including explanation of all the measures used by the program and the purpose of each.

PROCEDURES TO KEEP INDIVIDUAL CHILD RECORDS CONFIDENTIAL

The results of assessments are confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than the child's family and Early Learning Center staff. Samples of some assessments may be shared with NAEYC representatives when required for accreditation purposes or with Alabama Department of Human Resources licensing agents for licensing requirements. Please notify the Early Learning Center office in writing if you do not want your child's assessment to be viewed by NAEYC or DHR. Written parental permission must be obtained before sharing the results of assessments with any other agency. Files will be kept in an area that is not accessible to the public.

INVOLVING FAMILIES

Every effort will be made to involve parents in planning and implementing assessments. Sensitivity to family background and culture and any special needs of the children are taken into consideration when choosing assessment methods. Staff will work to achieve consensus with families about assessment methods that will best meet the child's needs. Please communicate with the teachers if you feel assessment methods do not meet the needs of your child. Parents will be asked to give information about their children upon enrollment by completing the Biographical Information form and verbally give input to teachers on a regular basis. Families will also give teachers information about their children using the Parental Observation Form.

Families are asked for their input in the areas of cognitive, physical, emotional and language development of their child. Discussions about these areas will take place during parent teacher conferences and informal conversations with teachers via telephone, e-mail and at pick up and drop off times. Parents are also provided information in the parent handbook concerning the purposes, uses and confidentiality of records. Parents are provided with a copy of results, and participate with specialists when necessary. A language with which families are familiar with will be used. Other family members, approved by the parents, may serve as translators.

During parent conferences the Early Learning Center staff will share assessment results and other information with parents. Teachers and parents will identify the child's needs and interests so the teachers can plan meaningful learning activities. Teachers will also help parents by describing the developmental progress and learning of children. Based on the information gathered, teachers will improve curriculum and adapt their teaching practices and make adaptations to the learning environment. Teachers will also use information gathered to plan program improvement, and to communicate with families. If your family requires an alternate time for conferences, please talk with your child's teacher to coordinate a meeting time convenient for your family.

FIRST CHURCH EARLY LEARNING CENTER HEALTH, SAFETY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

All staff members shall be certified by the American Red Cross or American Heart Association in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid. Defibrillator is located behind desk in lobby on left side.

Teachers and support staff shall wash hands frequently during the day and wear latex gloves to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases (*see hand washing instructions, under G.*). Teachers shall use bleach solution to clean and disinfect surfaces, handles, etc. Bodily fluids will be cleaned up immediately by teachers and support staff.

IF HOSPITALIZATION IS DEEMED NECESSARY BY EMERGENCY RESPONDERS,
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL WILL BE USED FOR CHILDREN; UAB WILL BE USED FOR ADULTS.

MAJOR PHYSICAL INJURY

1. Keep calm and do not excite the person.
2. Following first aid guidelines stabilize person and stop bleeding. Keep person's file nearby.
3. Call paramedics: 911
4. Notify Director. Call parents if patient is a child.
5. If hospitalization is required, a regular staff person shall accompany the patient to the Children's Hospital or UAB. Be sure to take the person's file to the hospital.

SPECIFIC PHYSICAL EMERGENCIES

A. Puncture wounds and bites

1. Remain calm and reassure person.
2. Remove very small foreign objects that may penetrate the skin with sterilized tweezers. Larger objects should not be removed.
3. Wash wound with soap and water. Rinse thorough.
4. Blot dry with sterile gauze or clean cloth.
5. Apply a dry, sterile bandage.
6. Report accident to parent by phone and written accident report form if patient is a child.

B. Closed wounds (bumps and bruises)

1. Reassure person. Administer tender loving care.
2. Apply ice pack.
3. WATCH FOR VOMITING, UNEVEN PUPIL SIZE AND/OR DISCOLORATION, ALTERED LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS, AND CLAMMY SKIN. IF ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS PERSIST, CALL 911 AND THEN CALL PARENTS IF PATIENT IS A CHILD.

C. Choking and swallowed objects

1. Encourage person to cough. IF PERSON IS ABLE TO COUGH, DO NOTHING but watch for object to be expelled.
2. If person stops or has inadequate breathing, perform Heimlich maneuver and initiate or practice mouth-mouth, or mouth-nose breathing, finger sweeps, and back blows as learned in CPR course. Call 911 and notify parent if patient is a child.

D. Poisoning

1. Call Poison Control Center at 933-4050. Follow their instructions. DO NOT HANG UP UNTIL AFTER THEY HANG UP.
2. Have container and label of ingested substance present when making the call.
3. Have person's file accessible.
4. If the person loses consciousness, call 911.
5. Notify parent if patient is a child.

E. Convulsions

1. Move nearby objects away from person to prevent person from hurting himself/herself. DO NOT try to restrain person.
2. Keep person lying down and verbally reassure person during seizure.
3. DO NOT force mouth open and DO NOT block airway. NEVER put your fingers or other objects in the mouth.
4. When convulsions are over, loosen clothing and keep airway open. Person will typically be very sleepy and confused directly after seizure.

5. Turn head to side if vomiting occurs.
6. If breathing stops, give artificial respiration and initiate CPR as indicated.
7. Call 911 then the parent if patient is a child.

The Jefferson County Department of Health will be notified if any person contracts a notifiable disease or condition (*see DISEASE CONTROL IN THE CHILD CARE CENTER AND PRE-SCHOOL, Jefferson County Department of Health Manual, page 17 & 18 for the list and reporting procedures*).

F. Illness

1. Any person in attendance who becomes ill shall be isolated promptly from the group, but have continuous supervision by a familiar staff member. Use the Early Learning Center office or the empty Sunday School room to isolate sick child until their parents arrive. Keep person as comfortable as possible.
2. The parent shall be notified immediately to come and get children.
3. A person who does appear to be fully recovered from an illness shall not be re-admitted without a statement from an attending physician that the person is no longer contagious.
4. Staff members shall inspect each child daily upon arrival for injury or illness.
5. Teachers will notify other parents of communicable diseases by writing the date and illness on the Parent Bulletin Board at the doorway of the Early Learning Center. In order to maintain patient confidentiality, no patient identifiers will be used.
6. Teachers who become ill shall report their illness to the Director and remove her or him self from the group once another teacher/support staff is present to maintain ratios. Teachers shall not return until they are no longer contagious.

G. Hand Washing

1. Staff members and those children who are able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand washing procedures and are monitored by teachers. Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers and children to reduce the transmission of infectious disease.
2. Adults and children will wash hands:

On arrival for the day

After diapering or toileting (*use wipes for infants*)

After handling bodily fluids (*wiping noses, coughing on hand, or touching any mucous, blood, vomit*)

Before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food or after handling any raw food that requires cooking

After playing in water that is shared by two or more people

After handling pets or any materials such as dirt, sand, or surface that might be contaminated by contact with animals

When moving from one group of children to another (visiting other classrooms)

Adults also wash their hands

Before and after feeding a child

Before and after administering medication

After assisting with toileting

After handling garbage or cleaning

3. Proper hand washing procedures are followed by children and adults and include using liquid soap & running water, rubbing hands vigorously for 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under & around jewelry, under finger nails; rinsing well; drying hands with single use paper towel; and avoiding touching the faucet with just washed hands (use paper towel to turn off faucet). Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required) wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute for hand washing in any hand washing situation listed above.

4. Staff must wear gloves when contamination of blood may occur. Staff do not use hand washing sinks for bathing children or removing fecal material. In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff will clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

CALL 911 TO REPORT ANY EMERGENCY.

Know your various alarm signals

Fire: Continuous bell blasts.

Tornado: Siren from Emergency Management Agency

Know how many children are in your group AT ALL TIMES.

Use radios, mobile phones and weather radio.

CODE F: FIRE OR TOXIC SPILL INSIDE THE BUILDING

1. Proceed immediately to your designated area outside the building. This applies to all staff on the premises, including those not in the classroom area.
2. Know your emergency evacuation plan and map posted in each classroom. Know the main route and the alternate route. Evacuate using the route that is opposite of the location of the fire or spill.
3. Move children quickly and calmly to the appropriate EXIT. Director will assist two-year-olds, cleaning staff will help one year olds, cooking staff will help infants evacuate using portable cribs and strollers.
4. CHECK BATHROOMS AND CLOSETS. The associate teacher will do this to make sure all children are out.
5. TAKE ROLL BOOK. Count children as you are leaving using the Transition Checklist.
6. Once outside, proceed to the designated meeting spot. Move quickly and calmly away from the building.
7. IMMEDIATELY ACCOUNT FOR ALL CHILDREN and staff using the Transition Checklist. Notify Director if any children are not accounted for. If Director is not available, designate a staff person to go look for missing children.
8. Do not return until the "All Clear" signal is given.

CODE N (NOW!): FOR TORNADO WITH LESS THAN 10 MINUTE WARNING, MOVE TO INTERIOR ROOMS (EARLY LEARNING CENTER OFFICE & MIDDLE ROOM) AND HALLWAYS.

CODE B (BASEMENT): EVACUATE THE TO BASEMENT. USE THIS PLAN FOR TORNADO WITH 10 MINUTE WARNING TIME, CIVIL DISORDER, NUCLEAR FALLOUT, NATURAL DISASTER, OR TOXIC SPILL OUTSIDE THE BUILDING. USE WEATHER RADIO LOCATED IN THE INNER OFFICE AND REGULAR RADIOS IN CLASSROOMS.

1. Proceed immediately to your designated area. This applies to all staff on the premises, including those outside the classroom area.
2. Move children quickly and calmly to the basement hallways. Close all doors to rooms.
3. CHECK BATHROOMS AND CLOSETS. The associate teacher will do this to make sure all children are out.
4. TAKE FLASHLIGHT and ROLL BOOK. ACCOUNT FOR ALL CHILDREN USING THE TRANSITION CHECKLIST. Notify Director if any children are not accounted for. If Director is not available, designate a staff person to go look for missing children.

5. Stay away from windows and doors to avoid injury from broken glass.
6. Group children by classes in each corner of the room and account for everyone by using the Transition Checklist.
7. For a tornado, have children get under tables or baby beds. Everyone should put their hands and arms over their heads for protection.
8. Listen to weather radio and regular radio.

NUCLEAR EVACUATION OR TOXIC SPILL OUTSIDE BUILDING

1. Instruct custodians to turn off air conditioners.
2. Follow same evacuation procedure as outlined in the tornado section above.
3. Use duct tape to seal around top, bottom and edges of all doors. Duct tape is located in a box in the inner office. Also tape crack in middle of half doors. Seal windows, and other cracks. If duct tape is not available, use wet towels or sheets.
4. Contact Emergency Management Agency (254-2039) to get evacuation instructions.

CODE EV (EVACUATE USING VAN/BUS): USE FOR BOMB THREAT, GAS LEAK NEAR OUR BUILDING. CALL 911. KEYS TO THE VAN/BUSES ARE LOCATED IN THE LEFT CABINET IN THE INNER OFFICE IN A WHITE REGIONS BANK BAG.

1. At all times, keep the structure of the Church and Early Learning Center buildings between children and the location of the threat. As drivers start van/bus, load children on to the van/bus in their parked positions facing west.
2. Evacuate in the opposite direction of the threat. If the threat is at Alabama Power or South Central Bell area go to South Highland Early Learning Center at 2035 Highland Avenue South (969.1210) Drive south on 20th street, turn left at Highland Avenue, school is on the right. If the threat is at the Harbert Center area, go to Birmingham Southern Gymnasium. Drive West on 8th Avenue North, turn right at Arkadelphia, school is on the left. If the threat is at the Federal Building, go to Birmingham Southern Gymnasium.
3. Bus Assignments will be as follows:
 LITTLE BLESSINGS, NEW BEGINNINGS, SAFARI ROOM AND TEACHERS USE THE BUS ON THE LEFT OF THE GUARD SHACK AS YOU ARE FACING THE SHACK.
 Place infants in car seats in back of van/bus and use seat belts. Robin Pate will be the driver.

CREATIVE CORNER AND TEACHERS - USE THE 15 PASSENGER CHURCH BUS.
 Vicky Gilmore will be the driver.

RAINBOW CONNECTION, POOH'S CORNER AND TEACHERS USE THE BUS TO THE RIGHT OF THE GUARD SHACK AS YOU ARE FACING THE SHACK.
 Cassandra Cope land will be the driver.

Will Wesley will be the substitute bus driver for the 19 passenger buses;
Maria Grimes will be the substitute bus driver for the 15 passenger van.

4. Proceed cautiously to the gymnasium of Birmingham Southern College by driving west on 8th Avenue North, turn right on to Arkadelphia & left into the college.

CODE Y (YOUTH ROOM BELOW THE SANCTUARY): USE FOR BOMB THREAT WHEN YOU DO NOT HAVE TIME TO EVACUATE USING BUSES.

1. Evacuate children calmly to the entrance on 6th Avenue North and proceed left to the room at the back. Church secretarial staff will aid in this procedure
2. Take the roll book and flashlight. Check children by using the Transition Checklist. Notify Director if any children are not accounted for. If Director is not available, designate a staff person to go look for missing children.

CODE I (INTRUDER IN THE BUILDING)

1. Stay calm. Lock classroom doors from the inside.
2. Call 911.
3. If possible, escape through windows and evacuate to the nearest safe building (Alabama Power, Harbert Center, South Central Bell Building).
4. If children are outside, go to Alabama Power Auditorium.

SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR VAN/BUS USE

1. The driver shall be a least 25 years of age and hold a valid Alabama driver's license. Each driver shall be completely familiar with driving the van/bus before they are to drive a group of passengers.
2. The van/bus driver is responsible for determining that the van/bus is ready for safe use prior to leaving the grounds. This includes checking the following items:

oil level	brakes
fuel level	steering
mirrors	unusual motor noises
lights	turn signals
fluid leaks	windshield wipers
temperature	horn
flashers	tires

Once it is determined that the vehicle is safe for travel, it is the driver's responsibility to drive safely at all times.

3. Children shall be helped to board and exit the van/bus by a staff person. Each person shall be confined in a seat belt or car seat, which will be securely fastened. The staff shall double check before leaving to be sure all seat belts are appropriately fastened. Parents of children with special needs should meet with the Director to determine the supports necessary to normalize the child's arrival, departure, and transportation on field trips. The parents, in conjunction with the Early Learning Center will provide the necessary supports. Extra staff will be available to help children with special needs.
4. EACH CHILD WILL BE COUNTED UPON ENTERING THE VEHICLE AND AGAIN UPON DEPARTING THE VEHICLE. THE TEACHERS WILL USE THE DHR FIELD TRIP FORM FOR EACH TRIP TO COUNT AND DOCUMENT CHILDREN. TEACHERS WILL ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN ARE ACCOUNTED FOR BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER TRANSPORTATION.
5. After all children are out of the van/bus, the driver will check under every seat and behind every seat to make sure everyone is accounted for and safely out of the van/ bus.
6. First aid supplies and emergency telephone numbers of all children shall be on board at all times.
7. CHILDREN SHALL NEVER BE LEFT UNATTENDED IN THE VEHICLE. DOORS SHALL REMAIN LOCKED AT ALL TIMES.
8. There shall be one staff person, in addition to the driver, for each seven to twenty children, age two and one half to six, being transported.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Teachers will check the air quality indicator (TV station 33/40 gives reports when air quality is questionable) daily. Children and teachers will not go outside for extended periods of time when the air quality is in the danger zone. The upstairs gym or downstairs hallway will be used for large motor play instead. The Early Learning Center building has been assessed for lead, radon and asbestos and has been found to be clear of harmful materials. According to the Jefferson County Department of Health, additional assessments will need to be performed after or during any renovation or construction to the building.

To reduce the incidents of injuries (*falls, tripping, etc.*) teachers will keep pathways clear and unobstructed. Children will be encouraged to pick up toys. Teachers shall keep rugs secured to avoid tripping. Teachers shall report any hazardous situation/equipment to the Director or maintenance. In case of utility failure, parents will be notified to pick up children.