ECOS INFANTILES
LEARNING CENTER

FAMILY HANDBOOK

OF
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Welcome to Ecos Infantiles Learning Center

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center is a locally owned and operated early care and education program dedicated to providing excellence in the care and education of young children ages 6 weeks to 12 years.

We serve the families of Albuquerque with reliable, quality care and education conveniently located between Downtown Albuquerque and Albuquerque's North Valley:

5918 Edith Boulevard NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107

We are open Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Children must be admitted before 9:30 a.m. each day.

Our center offers well-equipped classrooms and beautiful playgrounds with plenty of shade. Our teachers are well-trained and meet all standards and licensing requirements for early childhood educators in the state of New Mexico.

It is our desire to exceed your expectations in providing quality care and education for your child. Being a well-informed parent helps make this happen. Please read this handbook carefully and refer to it throughout your family's time at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center. It is full of information for you regarding our policies and procedures as well as helpful tips for making your family's time with us a rewarding experience.

Please bring questions, suggestions or problems directly to the Center Administration, not to your child's teacher. Your Center Administrators can be reached by phone, mail, or e-mail:

Mayra Hernandez, Center Director
Mayra Iafeta, Assistant Director
Ecos Infantiles Learning Center, LLC

EcosInfantilesABQ@Hotmail.com
505-488-1224

https://www.ecosinfantiles.com
https://www.facebook.com/ecosinfantilesabq

Our Mission

The mission of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center is to serve children, families, and our community by providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment enriched by bilingualism and cultural understanding. We strive to develop kind, empathetic, and respectful children who are empowered to become lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and compassionate individuals confident in their ability to navigate a multicultural world.

Quality Defines Us

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center is committed to quality. We maintain the highest standards by meeting the State of New Mexico's regulations and participating in the FOCUS quality rating improvement system. FOCUS is a program designed to lead childcare facilities to the highest level of quality to earn a 5-Star rating in the state of New Mexico. FOCUS standards are implemented in all our classrooms every day, which ensures all our programs and services are being delivered at the highest quality.

High-quality early childhood programs have the following features:

- **Low adult-child ratios**

  Our ratios are kept at or below the state requirements.

- **Developmentally appropriate curricula**

  We use research-based curriculum and positive discipline. Please see pages 18-23 for more information.

- **Positive relationships between children, caregivers, and families are a priority.**

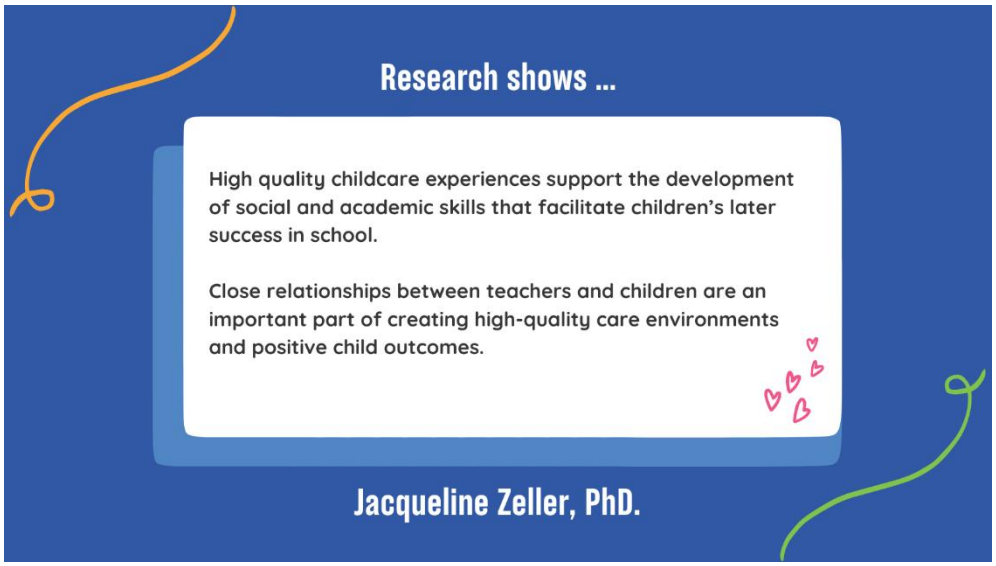
  In addition to daily interactions, we offer several opportunities for staff and families to gather throughout the year.

- **Highly trained Staff**

  All of our staff complete all state-required classes. They also receive a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education per year. Many of our staff are enrolled/certified…We also close the center one day per year to offer our staff a full-day of training and team-building. Staff members who are working towards an Early Childhood degree are encouraged and recognized.

- **Written Policies and Procedures**

  Please read about these in this handbook.



Licensing and Professional Affiliations

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center complies with all New Mexico rules and regulations governing childcare facilities. A copy of the New Mexico Child Care Regulations is available in the center's office and online at www.newmexicokids.org.

We participate in the State of New Mexico's FOCUS quality rating improvement system. As part of our FOCUS participation, all aspects of our program's services are reviewed regularly, which provides you with the confidence that our services are among the best in the state. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

We are members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children, (NMAEYC), and the New Mexico Early Childhood Association (NMECA.) These organizations contribute leadership, professional development, advocacy and public-private sector initiatives to early care and education programs to ensure New Mexico families have access to high-quality child care.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

The employees of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center are considered mandated reporters under the Child Protective Services Act. Mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in good faith.

Helpful Hints

The following tips will help you and your child build a successful relationship with Ecos Infantiles Learning Center:

- **Introduce your child to our center.**

  To help your child experience an easy transition into our center, we encourage you to bring your child in to visit their classroom and meet their teachers before their first day. Every child adjusts differently to new situations. If your child needs extra support with the transition, our teachers are experts at comforting them and getting them settled into the daily routine. We appreciate any insights you have about your family that will make the transition smooth for your child. Your child is also welcome to bring a special blankie or cuddly for nap time.

- **Stay informed!**

  Read this handbook and be aware of our policies and procedures. Our center has a 'parent board' located near our check-in area that contains important information. We post notices of upcoming events, center closings, etcetera, on the front doors and near the check-in area. Watch for new notices as you enter and leave the building. You also have the opportunity to receive information from EILC digitally via email and text messaging. Please inquire at the office for more information.

- **Communicate!**

  Communicate with your child's teacher and the Center Director about any changes occurring in your child's life that might affect his/her behavior, mood, or health. Pick-up and drop-off times are great opportunities to exchange this information. State licensing regulations require that you immediately communicate to us any changes in your contact information. This ensures we can always reach you in case of illness or emergency.

- **Let us know how we can help.**

  If you are experiencing a hardship or have concerns about your child's well-being, please speak with your Center Director or a member of the administrative team. They will honor your privacy and help in any way they can. If they are unable to help you directly, they are familiar with many different agencies and resources that may be able to serve your needs.

Our Philosophy

At Ecos Infantiles Learning Center (EILC), we strive to provide a warm, safe, and inclusive environment where children can explore, learn, and grow. We prioritize the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of each child, fostering a sense of belonging and well-being.

We recognize the value of language acquisition at an early age. EILC will offer a rich bilingual environment in English and Spanish and will aim to develop the children's proficiency in both languages through engaging activities, interactive play, storytelling, and exposure to cultural traditions.

At EILC, we will celebrate and embrace diverse cultures, incorporating multicultural experiences into our lesson plans. This will expose the children to different traditions, customs, and perspectives to promote empathy, respect, and understanding of others.

By incorporating play-based learning, we will help the children develop their creativity, problem-solving, social interaction, and physical development. The activities will be age-appropriate and will allow the children to learn and explore in a fun and engaging manner.

EILC will provide home-cooked meals prepared with fresh, wholesome ingredients. The meals will be planned to meet the children's nutritional needs, considering dietary restrictions and/or food allergies. The children will participate in family-style dining which will allow them to develop their communication, independence, and table manners.

We offer group care but recognize that each child is unique. We will consider the specific needs, interests, and abilities of each child, tailoring activities and experiences accordingly to support their overall development.

At EILC, we recognize the importance of family collaboration and strive to foster strong partnerships with families, recognizing their vital role in a child's upbringing. Open communication, regular updates, and involvement in decision-making processes are encouraged. This includes sharing cultural traditions, recipes, and language to enrich the childcare's bilingual and multicultural environment.

Our staff members are trained and passionate educators who are committed to providing high-quality care and education. Our staff members have knowledge of early childhood development and are bilingual. They will create a supportive and stimulating environment that nurtures each child's growth and learning.

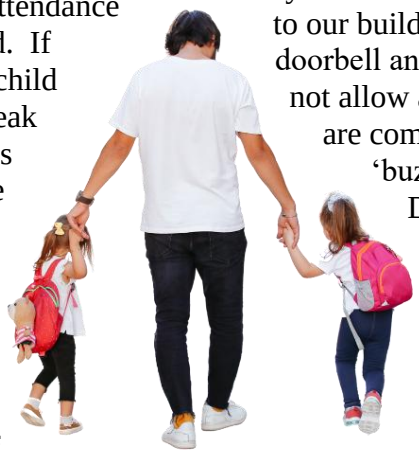
Enrollment

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center admits children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability, and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability.

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child in Ecos Infantiles Learning Center by completing the Enrollment Application. Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application packet, immunization records, signed Family Handbook receipt, registration fee, and initial tuition payment. The packet contains several forms that must be filled out completely, dated, signed by each parent or guardian, and submitted before your child can be admitted to our center. All records and personal information are considered confidential and are treated as such.

To maintain a quality program and proper staffing, we ask that you notify our center's administrative team if your child will be absent on a scheduled day of attendance or if you need to change your established enrollment schedule.

Your individual childcare needs **must** be arranged in advance with your center's administrative team and are based on space availability. Attendance on an unscheduled day is not permitted. If you need childcare on a day that your child does not normally attend, you must speak to the office staff **in advance** to discuss availability and additional charges. We will make every effort to accommodate you.



New Mexico State Law requires that all children be properly immunized. Proof of immunization MUST be presented prior to or on the first day of a child's attendance. Parents must provide Ecos Infantiles Learning Center with updated immunization information whenever new shots are received.

Continued enrollment at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center is contingent upon the parents', the emergency contact persons', and the child's adherence to the policies and procedures of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify Ecos Infantiles Learning Center immediately should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment, or any time thereafter, change. Failure to do so may result in the child being disenrolled from the program and forfeiture of any fees.

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

In the event you must *disenroll* your child for any reason, you must provide a two-week written notice to your Center Director. Failure to give a two-week written notice will result in you being charged for two weeks' tuition. Tuition refunds are not given for unused time upon withdrawal.

Daily Arrival & Departure Policies

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center has a secure entry system that allows administration to control access to our buildings. Families and visitors must ring the doorbell and be 'buzzed' in. We ask that you do not allow anyone to enter the building while you are coming or going. Please allow them to be 'buzzed in' separately by the Center Director. This will help prevent unauthorized visitors and protect the safety of all the children and staff. Any breaches of security should be immediately reported to the Center Director.

Children may not enter or leave the building without an adult. **Upon arrival and departure**, the

adult dropping off or picking up the child must sign the child **into and out of** care using our ProCare Touchscreen or alternative provided by the center. This is a state licensing regulation. If you need assistance with this requirement, please speak to the Center Director.

State regulations require children to be supervised at all times while in the childcare facility; do not send your child to his/her classroom alone. State regulations also require every person to wash their hands upon entering a classroom; therefore, parents must help children put away their belongings, wash the child's hands as well as their own, and help the child get settled for the day. This same procedure must be followed if a child is picked up and returned in the middle of the day.

Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. Early childhood research shows it is best for you to prepare your child ahead of time by telling them that, after all of their things are put away, you will kiss, hug and say goodbye to them. You can also assure them that they are safe and that you will be back to pick them up. It is important for you to follow through with that even if it is difficult. Leave quickly after saying goodbye; the longer you stay, the more anxious your child is likely to feel. Your child's teacher will comfort and assist through this anxious time. Our professional staff are available to discuss other options if your child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

When departing for the day, children must wait with their teacher until a member of the staff is available to escort them to you. Sometimes children see their parent and excitedly run to meet them at the door; this is a safety concern as children may not be supervised once they've left their teacher. Please help us keep our center safe by not allowing your child to leave his/her teacher without permission. Additionally, once you've signed your child out for the day, you are solely responsible for supervising your child while still on the center property.

We ask all adults to refrain from using their cell phones during the few precious minutes of arrival and departure. Not only is this a matter of safety, but these times of the day are also very significant transitions for a young child, and your child deserves your undivided attention. It is also an important time for you and the center staff to exchange information important to the continued quality care of your child.

Parents are required to notify the Center Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. For example, if you are picking them up early or sending someone else to pick them up. In addition, please notify us of any concerns of which we might need to be aware to best meet your child's needs throughout the day.

Late Pick-Up

You must pick up your child promptly at the center's closing time. **A late fee will be assessed of $1.00 per minute for the first 30 minutes past closing time. After 30 minutes, the late fee will increase to $5 per minute. The late pick-up fee is not an agreement to provide after-hours service.** Excessive tardiness will result in disenrollment of your child. Legal authorities will be contacted for children left at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center longer than one hour past closing time. Fees will apply despite the presence of staff and other children.

Notification of Absence

Parents are required to inform the center as soon as possible if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

Parents' Right to Immediate Access

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection Order) Ecos Infantiles Learning Center must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all related amendments. The orders of the court will be strictly followed.

In the absence of a court order on file with Ecos Infantiles Learning Center, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as allowed by law. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Ecos Infantiles Learning Center suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Center Director and are allowed in the childcare facility only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center will accompany visitors throughout the center at all times.

Persons Appearing to be 'Under the Influence' at Time of Pick-Up

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center will contact authorities if we suspect anyone picking up a child to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The staff of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center will attempt to notify someone from your emergency contact list to come pick up your child. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit Ecos Infantiles Learning Center from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is, or appears to be, impaired. However, Ecos Infantiles Learning Center staff will delay the impaired adult as long as possible while contacting the local police and/or Child Protective Services.

Emergency/Alternate Pick-up Forms

At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. New Mexico State Regulations require enrolled children to have two emergency contacts other than household members. Each contact must have a separate phone number and be able to pick up the child within two hours of initial contact. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any and all persons who, in the course of events, might at one time be authorized to pick up your child. In an emergency, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements can result in dismissal from the program.

Parents do not need to be listed on the Emergency Contact Form. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick up their child.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form will be required to provide a government-issued photo ID and/or code word verifying their identity prior to the center releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

If last-minute circumstances require you to phone us with the name of another person to whom we should release your child, you must provide your code word to verify that it is actually you calling. You will create the code word at the time of enrollment, and it will be noted on your enrollment form. The code word should be known only by the parents and guardians of the child. In the case of divorced parents or parents with specific custody

arrangements, it is important for the registering parent to indicate on the application who has legal custody and who may pick up the child. Supporting legal documents must be provided.

If last minute circumstances require you to send someone else to pick up your child, you must send an email with the person's full name to the center's main email address. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Emergency/ Alternate Contact Form for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/ procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Emergency/Alternate Form of our policies/procedures.

Dismissal/Expulsion

Our aim is to ensure that our center remains a place where every child can learn, grow, and flourish in a positive environment. We maintain an atmosphere of respect and inclusivity, where every child feels valued, supported, and able to thrive. However, there are instances where behavior may deviate from the standards we uphold, and it becomes necessary to address these situations in a thoughtful and responsible manner.

If a child's behavior raises concerns, we will work closely with parents/guardians to address the issues. Cooperation and open communication is vital, and we encourage you to share any relevant information that may help us understand and support your child better. If, despite our collaborative efforts, the behavior continues to negatively impact the child's own experience or the experiences of others, we may consider expulsion. If at any time, the behavior of the child or the parent jeopardizes the safety and well-being of others, immediate expulsion is a possibility. Additionally, any parent who violates our parents' code of ethics faces the possibility of dismissal from our program regardless of the child's behavior.

The Center Director or designee will gather your child's belongings at the time of dismissal. Parents are required to leave center property in a calm and respectful manner immediately. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative.

Any tuition balances remaining after 30 days will be referred for collection.

A dismissed parent may call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to center property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right of the dismissed parent. Due to the nature of behavior that leads to expulsions, and because expulsions are a last resort, expulsions of children from the center are permanent.

Following a dismissal, any family member who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the company by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law by Ecos Infantiles Learning Center.

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss any family at any time with or without cause.

Financial Matters

Enrollment/Registration Fees

A registration fee is due upon enrollment and annually on June 1st thereafter. This annual registration fee is non-refundable.

Tuition Payment Schedule

All tuition is due and payable in advance. Upon registration, you may choose to pay either monthly or weekly. Choosing to pay monthly provides a discount to you. Monthly tuition is due in full on the first day of each month and is considered late after the 5th of each month. Weekly tuition is due on the first day of each week and is considered late after Tuesday. Any changes in payment arrangements must be submitted in writing,

approved, and signed by the Center Director prior to taking effect.

Due to fixed costs averaged over a calendar year, there is NO reduction in tuition for holidays. 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.

All tuition and fees include meals. Tuition DOES NOT include occasional fees for field trips, special projects, and extracurricular activities. You will be given ample notice prior to any special activities. All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement at the time of their child's enrollment in Ecos Infantiles Learning Center. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

If your school-age child attends the center during school closures (such as parent-teacher conferences, in-service days, snow days, or other closings), you will be charged for any additional hours beyond their regular before-and-after school schedule. These charges will be added to your account at the current drop-in or full-day rate. Please visit with a Center Administrator for details.

Each family is eligible for **one week of vacation per year** in which no tuition will be charged. To use this benefit, families must provide at least **30 days' written notice** to the center. Vacation time must be used in full-week increments and cannot be carried over to the next year.

In the event you must *disenroll* your child for any reason, you must provide a two-week written notice to your Center Director. Failure to give a two-week notice will result in you being charged for two weeks' tuition. Tuition refunds are not given for unused time upon withdrawal.

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center reserves the right to revise its fees and/or policies.

Late/Missing Payments

Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center. Payments not received by close-of-business on the 5th of the month will be charged a $50 late fee. If you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Center Director immediately. You will be asked to make your request in writing. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved, you will be notified by the Center Director.

Your child will not be accepted into the center if your account is more than 10 days past due. Repeated late payments will result in disenrollment. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. If it becomes necessary to submit an account for collection and legal action, all court and collection fees will be added to the balance owed on the account.

Families Using State Subsidies

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center accepts families on state-subsidized contracts. All contracts must be full-time. Families are responsible for a co-payment which is determined by their state caseworker, as well as registration fees and all applicable taxes. All tuition policies stated above apply. *Current state regulations regarding Child Care Assistance contracts supersede our copayment, registration fee, and tax policy for families using Child Care Assistance.*

Parents of a subsidized child are responsible for:

- Completing all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center.
- Signing a fee agreement agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies.
- Maintaining and renewing the contract on time. Charges occurred during a lapse in the contract are the sole responsibility of the parent.

Discounts

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center offers a sibling discount for families who are not using childcare subsidies. If you are enrolling more than one child, you will pay a flat registration fee per year rather than per child.

EILC waives registration fees for Military, Veterans, and First Responders.

Forms of Payment

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center accepts payment through Tuition Express in our Procare system. All payments are made online, and you can choose a method of payment that works best for you such as MasterCard, Visa, or bank withdrawals. Should your payment be returned, any associated processing fees may be charged to your account. If a rejected payment causes your payment to be late, late fees will apply. You will receive a receipt/ confirmation of payment. It is your responsibility to save your receipt in case of discrepancy. We do not accept cash.

Confidentiality

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center strives to protect everyone's right to privacy. Children and families' confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of EILC who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents, and/or other children will not be shared with parents. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, health-related information, and behavior/discipline information regarding anyone associated with Ecos Infantiles Learning Center.

Outside of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law.

You may observe children at our center who have varying abilities or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. Parents are expected to honor the privacy of others in the same way.

Transportation

Ecos Infantiles provides transportation to and from nearby elementary schools, as well as occasional field trips for older children. Riding the bus is a privilege, and all children are expected to follow safety rules and demonstrate respectful behavior at all times. Repeated misconduct may result in the loss of transportation privileges.

Parents are responsible for notifying the center in advance if their child will not be riding the bus on a scheduled day. Failure to communicate absences may cause unnecessary delays in the bus schedule. Families who repeatedly fail to inform the center of absences may be assessed a fee and/or lose bus privileges.

School Calendar

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center is open year-round except for the following major holidays (or the day on which the holiday is observed):

- New Year's Day (January 1st)
- President's Day (3rd Monday in February)

- Good Friday (before Easter Sunday)
- Staff In-service Professional Development Day (Friday before Memorial Day – subject to change)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday thereafter
- Christmas Day

Please note:

- we are closed for one full day of staff training per year– typically the Friday before Memorial Day.
- We are closed for one week during the winter holidays. Please watch for official notices through Procare messaging and school postings, and check with your Center Director to see how any closings will affect your unique schedule.

Special Events

Throughout the year, we offer special events for our children and families. These include community service projects, parent nights, special breakfasts, lunch invitations, holiday celebrations, school pictures and more. Be sure to read our Procare notifications, postings, front door notices, parent newsletters, and check our website at https://www.ecosinfantiles.com.

Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather Information

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center reserves the right to alter our normal hours of operation in the event of an emergency, inclement weather or under any circumstances where we deem it to be in the best interest of the children and staff. Parents will be notified of the change/closing by one or more of the following methods: Procare app notification, phone, email, social media, posted signs, and/or local radio and television stations.

Should the center need to close in the middle of the day, the center staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick-up arrangements can be made. At the time of the call, staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person of the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the childcare center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Health and Safety

Hand Washing

According to the Centers for Disease Control, hand washing is the absolute, number one way to prevent the spread of communicable disease. Quality standards require our staff, children, and **any adults present** to wash their hands at the following times:

- upon arrival into the classroom
- before/after toileting and diapering
- after coming into contact with any bodily fluids
- after handling pets or other animals
- upon re-entering the classroom from outdoor play
- after messy play

Our staff members are highly trained in proper hand washing techniques using guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control.

Communicable Diseases/Illness

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the New Mexico State Child Care Regulations.

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center is not licensed to provide sick-child care. Your child may not come to the center if he/she:

- is feverish or has had fever within the past 24 hours

- has a bad cough
- has vomited or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- has pink eye or symptoms that might be pink eye
- has a sore throat
- has a chronic runny nose
- has been on an antibiotic for Strep for less than 24 hours
- has head lice
- has other symptoms of illness determined by the Center Director
- is too sick to play outside

Parents are required to pick up an ill child immediately after notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up immediately, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for an alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children may be required to present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center reserves the right to refuse a child's return if the Center Director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least **100 degrees** Fahrenheit or more.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occur three or more times in a 24-hour period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

A child cannot attend with any symptoms, including fever, unless you bring a statement from the child's physician stating the child is **not** contagious.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Center Director. This enables our staff to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center Director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Only the communicable disease, and no personally identifiable information, will be shared. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not), the reason for your child's absence from school.

Children with Severe Allergies

If your child has any allergies that cause adverse reactions, please be sure you have completed the following:

- noted the allergy and reaction-type on your child's enrollment form and
- notified the Center Director and
- notified your child's teacher.

Parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy. Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction, including epi-pens, must be provided by parents and will be administered in accordance with our Medication Policy detailed below.

If your child has a food allergy, we may post this in our kitchen area as well as your child's classroom.

Medication Policy

It is the policy of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center that staff will not administer routine medications to children during program hours. Parents or guardians who require their child to receive medication during the day may notify the center director in advance to arrange a time to administer the medication personally.

Staff members are strictly prohibited from assisting parents or guardians in the preparation, administration, or handling of any routine medication. Medications may not be left at the center or given to staff for safekeeping under any circumstances.

However, in accordance with state childcare regulations, staff are permitted to administer emergency or rescue medications, such as Epinephrine (EpiPens) or asthma inhalers, when required to address life-threatening conditions. These medications must be signed in with the center and accompanied by all required documentation, including:

- Written authorization from the child's parent or guardian.
- A physician's directive outlining the specific use and administration of the medication.
- Proper labeling of the medication.

Emergency and rescue medications must be stored securely in a locked cabinet, accessible only to authorized personnel, to ensure their safety and proper handling. Medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in a container within the refrigerator. Parents are responsible for ensuring that all emergency/rescue medication is replaced prior to the expiration date.

In the event that emergency or rescue medication is administered, the center will immediately notify the child's parent or guardian. A detailed incident report will also be provided, outlining the circumstances leading to the administration of the medication, the time it was administered, and any actions taken thereafter.

Diaper creams and over-the-counter remedies are considered medications under state regulations. Medications such as these must **not** be brought in the child's cubby or diaper bag.

Cell Phone Policy

Personal cell phone use within the center is discouraged. People who are using a cell phone cannot be 100% focused on the children in their care, and the cameras and recording abilities of phones could result in a breach of privacy putting children and EILC at risk. Therefore, we ask that you refrain from using your cell phone during the short amount of time you are in the building.

Incident/Accident Reports

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident while they are at the center, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. This form simply states the child's name, a brief explanation of the incident/accident, and the actions that were taken by the staff to remedy the situation (first aid, phone call, etc.) This form will be kept in the office and the Center Director can give you a copy at pick-up time.
The Center Director will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, if you need to speak to the teacher, you will need to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom.

Emergency Procedures

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center staff members are required to hold a current CPR and First Aid certificate. In case of an accident or emergency involving a child, parent, or employee, a staff member will administer first aid. The accident or

emergency will be immediately reported to the Center Director and appropriate actions will be taken.

Each center has an emergency preparedness plan in place which is accessible and available for review. In case of fire, storm, natural disaster, lock down or other emergencies, our basic emergency plan is as follows:

1. In the event of an evacuation, children will be taken to a pre-arranged meeting point. This location and phone number will be posted on the parent board. Staff members will have each child's emergency contact forms with them to allow for parent notification.
2. In case of an emergency that would require us to stay in the building, designated lock down areas and procedures have been identified and practiced.

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center conducts regular fire and emergency evacuation drills as well as 'lockdown' and 'shelter in place' drills. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real emergency, the director or designee will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. Parents already on site will be asked to wait until the director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. At this time, any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. Children must be picked up immediately after receiving the telephone call. It is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the emergency personnel and center administration during these situations.

Alternate Safe Location

As stated above, should the Administration of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center or any emergency services personnel determine the childcare center to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to a pre-determined location. This location is noted on the parent board.
Once the children are assembled there, the staff will begin contacting parents or an emergency contact person for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up immediately.

Liability and Accident Insurance

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center does not carry liability or accident insurance coverage for your child and does not cover your child's medical costs for injuries or illnesses that occur in our center.

We strive to maintain the highest standards of safety and supervision, and we understand that accidents can happen in any environment, even with the best precautions in place. We encourage you to consider your own family's insurance coverage and evaluate whether additional protection might be needed for your child's time at our facility.

Our Curriculum

Research has proven that the first five years of a child's life are most critical for brain development. For that reason, Ecos Infantiles Learning Center uses a research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum that maximizes opportunities for young children's learning through play and other hands-on activities.
Our classrooms follow a consistent daily routine. It is important for children to arrive early enough in the day to participate in the routine fully. For this reason, all children must be in attendance before 9:30 a.m. We do not admit children after 9:30 a.m.

The curriculum incorporates a ***large amount of time for children to engage in natural play and exploration*** while adults interact with them to challenge their thinking and further their development. To this end, most of our classroom activities are designed for children to focus on the experience and not the end product.

Our classrooms are rich in bilingual language experiences including songs, fingerplays, conversations and books.

Lesson Plans for each classroom are created weekly by the teachers with their children's developmental stages and interests in mind. They are posted weekly on the parent board near the front office and on the parent board in each classroom. Your child's daily schedule is posted on the parent board in your child's classroom.

EILC welcomes parents into the center. You are welcome to visit your child's classroom any time. Parents are also invited and encouraged to share their knowledge, culture, talents, and time with us. Please visit with your child's teacher and/or the Center Director to arrange a time to visit.

The following sections explore the early education we provide for each age group.

Infants and Toddlers

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center provides care for infants and toddlers starting at 6 weeks of age. We take great pride in the professionalism of our caregivers. Adults play a vital role in the positive development of your baby. We place a great emphasis on building warm and nurturing relationships with our infants/toddlers as well as their families. The strength of that relationship is critical for the healthy growth and development of your child.

The daily routine in the infant classroom focuses on smooth transitions between home and school, and a daily schedule customized to meet each child's individual needs. In the toddler room, there is a slow transition to a more common routine such as shared mealtimes, naptimes, small group activities and large group activities.

We understand that infants and toddlers learn by experiencing their environments through their senses. We ensure a safe and clean environment for them to explore freely. To maintain a clean and safe environment, the infant room is a **shoe-free zone**. Parents are not permitted inside the classroom; however, if entry is necessary, sanitary booties must be worn. Thank you for helping us keep our infants' space clean and healthy!

Mobile toddlers are exposed to new and interesting experiences such as water play, climbing, puzzles, painting and other exploratory activities that promote brain development.

We provide ample opportunities for children to practice newly acquired skills, such as sitting up, crawling, walking, talking, etcetera, and to build a positive self-image while doing so.

Our detailed diaper-changing procedures are posted in each classroom. Diapers, wipes and diaper creams are provided by parents. If you have any questions or special requirements, please ask the Center Director.

For infants, we accommodate individual needs and schedules for feeding and sleeping. Each infant at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center has his/her own assigned crib. Linens are washed daily. You are encouraged to bring a special blanket from home for which you are responsible for laundering.

We follow the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics' "Safe to Sleep" campaign to minimize the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). We place

babies to sleep on their backs on firm mattresses with no soft materials, loose bedding, or toys in the sleep area. For more information about SIDS, we recommend visiting the website www.sidscenter.org.

Toddlers have a regularly-scheduled lunch and nap time. Please refer to "Nap Time" for more information.

Be sure to check your child's cubby every day for artwork, notes from the teacher, and/or soiled laundry.

Two-Year-Olds

We take great care to offer a sensory-rich environment to enhance the two-year-olds' need to explore. This clean, safe classroom environment is structured with interest areas that are age appropriate, organized and clean. Two-year-olds are just beginning to understand the idea of sharing, so each area is supplied with ample materials and toys.

The daily routine in this classroom includes all the essentials such as meals, nap time, and bodily care, in addition to well-planned activities that take place in small groups, large groups, and individually. A large portion of the day is spent in "Work Time" which is self-directed play—because play is a child's work!

Language is developing quickly at this age and must be encouraged. Daily experiences are filled with bilingual language-rich experiences that include, but are not limited to, singing, reading and 'hands-on' activities.
Physical development is also rapidly maturing as well as new feelings of independence. Two-year-olds are confident walkers, they are potty training, and they are beginning to communicate their individual and unique developmental needs. They are encouraged to try new things and have new experiences.

Two-year-olds have a regularly-scheduled nap time which typically begins right after lunch. Please refer to "Nap Time" for more information.

When a child is ready for toilet learning, our teachers and Center Director work closely with the parent and child to assure a positive experience for all. Please see our policy on Toilet Learning for more information.

Be sure to check your child's cubby every day for artwork, notes from the teacher, and/or soiled laundry.

Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time.

Three-Year-Olds

Preschool-aged children are beginning to develop new cognitive skills and are more able to concentrate and remember. They can recognize objects by color, shape and/or size. They are developing basic math concepts and showing an interest in written language. Language has expanded and thoughts and emotions can be communicated.
Our three-year-old classroom environment fosters these new developmental achievements without stifling the natural ability to create and investigate. It is a classroom with clearly defined interest areas that are well-stocked with fantastic learning materials. It is an ideal place for your three-year-old to learn.

The daily routine in this classroom includes all the essentials such as meals, nap time, and bodily care, in addition to well-planned activities that take place in small groups, large groups, and individually. A large portion of the day is spent in "Work Time" which is self-directed play—because play is a child's work!

Three-year-olds have a regularly scheduled nap/rest time which typically begins right after lunch. Please refer to "Nap Time" for more information.

If your three-year-old is still mastering potty training, be sure to communicate regularly with

his/her teachers and **supply more than one complete change of clothing every day** in case of accidents. Three-year-olds can get very busy with their play and don't realize they need to use the bathroom until it's too late! Please see our policy on Toilet Learning in this handbook for more information.

Our three-year-old teachers offer three parent-teacher conferences per school year. They are typically held in Fall, Winter, and Spring, but parents can request a meeting with their child's teacher at any time.

Be sure to check your child's cubby every day for artwork, notes from the teacher, and/or soiled laundry.

Four-Year-Olds

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center's four-year-old room is designed to help prepare your child for kindergarten.

Four-year-olds are close to mastering most of their physical development; they can run, climb, jump and play with ease. Fours are full of questions and ideas; they want to explore and create. This classroom's daily routine includes time for large group, small group, and plenty of "Work Time" (self-directed play) in a carefully planned classroom environment. Our pre-kindergarten classrooms are arranged with clearly defined, well-equipped interest areas such as Science, Math, Art, Writing, Music and more. Teachers plan lessons focused on preparing four-year-olds for success in kindergarten.

Nap/Rest Time takes place after lunch. (See Nap Time for more information.)

Our four-year-old teachers offer three parent-teacher conferences per school year. They are typically held in Fall, Winter, and Spring, but parents can request a meeting with their child's teacher at any time.

Be sure to check your child's cubby every day for artwork, notes from the teacher, and/or soiled laundry.

Class Assignments

Children are assigned to classrooms based on which classroom will best meet their individual needs. Our classrooms have fun names and are filled with children of similar ages. We do not move children from room to room based solely on their birthdates but rather based on which room will provide the best environment for the child. If you have questions about your child's placement, please visit with your Center Director.

Nap/Rest Time

All children aged one year through four years have a daily nap time that takes place after lunch. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center requires each child to purchase a sleeping mat available through EILC. Each child is also required to provide a blanket no larger than a crib-size blanket.

All personal items need to be marked clearly with your child's name and need to be taken home for laundering on Fridays (or last day of your child's week.)

A few children do not need a daily nap, but all children benefit from a daily rest period. We provide these children with quiet activities they can do while resting on their mats.

Field Trips

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center occasionally supplements the in-class curriculum with off-site field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip with all pertinent trip information including destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. With the notification paper, teachers will include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance for your child to attend.

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center typically provides all required supervision for field trips, but certain field trips require additional volunteers. If the teacher extends an invitation to attend a field trip, and you wish to do so, please discuss the individual details with the teacher and/or Center Director. Parents will not be permitted to transport any child, other than their own, on a Ecos Infantiles Learning Center sponsored trip, and all policies regarding family code of conduct will apply.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip and you wish for your child to participate in the trip, please discuss this with your Center Director at least three days prior to the date of the trip.

Educational/Personal Care Supplies Needed

There are some things you can provide to make your child's time at EILC smooth and comfortable:

- **At least one complete change of clothing to keep in their cubby.** A complete change includes underwear and socks! (If your child is potty-training, please provide more than one change of clothing.)
  Several things can happen during the day that would require your child to change clothes such as a toileting accident, an extremely messy activity, or a spill during a meal. We will not leave children in soiled clothing at any time, so if none have been provided, you will be called to immediately bring clean clothes or pick up your child. Soiled clothing should be taken home and replaced with a fresh set the next day.

- **Appropriate clothing.** All children at the center have Outside Play Time every day. Please be sure your child has:
  - In the colder months, a coat, hat, and mittens.
  - In the warmer months, sunscreen and a reusable water bottle. The sunscreen should be applied at home while dressing for the day, and teachers will help your child reapply it as necessary throughout the day.
  - Closed-toe shoes. Young children are mastering new physical skills such as running, jumping, climbing, and pedaling. Sandals or loose-fitting shoes such as 'slides' or 'crocs' can make these things difficult and even dangerous.
  - Clothes that can get dirty with daily activities such as art, messy play, and outside play.

- **A blanket for nap/rest time.** Sleeping away from home can be made more comfortable if the child has a familiar object from home.

Toilet Learning

When a child is ready for toilet learning, our teachers and Center Director work closely with the parent and child to assure a positive experience for all. Before a child is ready for toilet learning, two things must occur together:

1. Physiological readiness
   They must show signs of bowel and bladder muscle control. Most children develop this control between the ages of 2 and 3. One sign that this is developing is the child being aware of when he/she is soiling the diaper (stops playing, points to diaper, and/or asks to have the diaper changed.)
2. Desire on the part of the child
   a. Some signs that the child would like to learn are sitting on the toilet with clothes on, trying to change his/her own diaper, and possibly using 'potty words' such as "pee", "poop", etcetera.

Attempting to potty-train children before they are ready often leads to bedwetting and pants-wetting later. On the other hand, beginning the process when children are ready usually results in a pleasant, naturally easy learning experience. Our daily routine allows for regularly scheduled 'potty breaks'. This helps children at all levels of toilet

learning.

Disposable underpants (such as Pull-Ups®) are not permitted. While they are a convenience for adults, they do not help the toilet learning process and, in most cases, prolong it. Disposable underpants feel and act like disposable diapers, and children cannot feel when they are wet. If a child isn't uncomfortable in wet pants, he/she will not see the reason to use a toilet. Faster, more effective toilet learning takes place with "real" underpants and lots of extra clothes!

Our staff will **never** pressure, nag, threaten, or bribe a child to use the toilet, and will **never** scold, shame, or punish a child for not using the toilet or for soiling their clothes.

We have additional resources on toilet learning available; please ask your Center Director.

Please remember to label all personal items with your child's name.
Ecos Infantiles Learning Center is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Discipline and Behavior

At Ecos Infantiles Learning Center, our teachers strive for calm, peaceful classrooms by

- being well prepared and organized,
- keeping children challenged and engaged in fun activities,
- providing classrooms with developmentally appropriate materials, and
- helping children learn to express their emotions verbally by teaching the children acceptable vocabulary to express anger, annoyance, happiness, sadness, loss, etc.

When this is accomplished, the need for discipline decreases automatically.

However, when situations requiring discipline do arise, we use positive discipline with firm but fair guidance and clear, consistent limits. Expectations are clearly communicated. The age and individual needs of the child are always considered.

Our positive discipline techniques include distraction or redirection, private talks, direct or indirect praise, and teaching by example. We strive to give the child a sense of responsibility for his or her own actions and give logical consequences when appropriate. The teacher may bring the child to the office if their behavior continues to disrupt the group.

For acts of physical aggression such as hitting, spitting, throwing objects, or other serious offenses, separation from the group, loss of privileges, or sending the child home might be necessary. If the Center Director or designee determines that the child's behavior will put himself or others, including other children or staff members, in danger, the parents will be contacted to pick up the child within one hour. The child will not be able to return to the center until the parents have a conference with the Center Director and a mutually agreeable Behavior Management Plan is created.

Parent cooperation is expected and critical to the child's success. If parents are uncooperative and/or the child's behaviors continue to be a safety risk, the child may be withdrawn from the program.

Biting

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through three-year-old classrooms.

We set up our classroom environments with purpose; keeping all areas visible and keeping enough developmentally appropriate materials for children to be engaged. However, despite our best efforts, biting does occur.

Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bitten or might bite another child.

The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future.

The staff will not punish or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior.

Children older than 3 years of age might occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report if their child is involved in a biting incident during the day. If the skin is broken, parents may be notified by phone.
The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is confidential and cannot be disclosed.

If you have questions about biting, please speak with the Center Director, your child's pediatrician, and/or childcare licensing.

Toys/Electronics from Home

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, misuse and loss, children are not permitted to bring personal toys or electronics from home unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum (e.g. show & tell). All toys brought in for use as part of the curriculum will be inspected by a staff member for safety and appropriateness and may be prohibited at the sole discretion of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center. Toys which are specifically brought for a classroom project must be kept in the child's cubby before and after the project period. Toys that are particularly meaningful, sentimental, or delicate should not be brought to school. Ecos Infantiles Learning Center accepts no responsibility for damaged or missing items brought from home.

Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. If the parents fail to enforce this policy with their children, the staff will confiscate the item and notify the parents. The item may then be picked up by the parent.

Sometimes young children are so intrigued by a toy or object from the classroom that they really want to take it home. We lose many classroom materials as they make it home in pockets and backpacks. Please help us keep our operating costs down by checking your child's pockets and backpacks each day for toys that belong to the center.

It is important not to punish your child for this normal developmental behavior, but instead to use the opportunity to lovingly teach your child that it is wrong to take things that are not his or hers.

Family Code of Conduct

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center requires the families of enrolled children to behave with decency, courtesy, and respect. At EILC, we provide a high-quality environment to promote children's growth, learning and development. Maintaining this environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of EILC, but it is also the responsibility of everyone who enters the center.

It is our expectation that the staff treat all children and families with respect and courtesy. It is also our expectation that family members treat our staff, children, and other families with respect and courtesy.

EILC reserves the right to restrict access to the center property for anyone who violates this Code of Conduct and may require an alternate pick-up person or disenrollment of your child.

Prohibited Items

The following items are always prohibited on center property and within 50 feet of center property:

- Alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, marijuana, and any illegal substance
- Firearms and weapons of any kind

Swearing/Cursing/Raising Your Voice

No one is permitted to curse, use other inappropriate language, or raise their voice towards another on center property at any time whether in the presence of a child or not. Such behavior is offensive and will not be tolerated.

Confrontational Interactions with Employees, Other Parents or Adults, or Children

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are strictly prohibited. Additionally, threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All family members must be responsible for, and in control of, their behavior always.

Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center practices positive discipline. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures. At no time is physical or verbal punishment of a child allowed, including your own child.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is expected that the parent will direct their concern to the Center Director.

Furthermore, it is wholly unacceptable for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the Center Director's attention. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All families enrolled in Ecos Infantiles Learning Center have privacy rights and are protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your family with another family.

Smoking/e-Cigarettes/Vaping

For the health of all Ecos Infantiles Learning Center employees, children and associates, smoking and vaping on center property is prohibited by state law. Center property includes the building, grounds, and parking lot. Parents who smoke in their cars must dispose of the cigarette **in your car** prior to exiting your vehicle. Do not dispose of your cigarette butts near our center. The wind blows these onto our playground, and the youngest children pick them up and put them in their mouths. Thank you for your cooperation.

Littering

The staff works to maintain a clean, safe learning environment for your child. Please help us keep the centers clean, inside and out, by not littering on center property. This includes, but is not limited to, cigarette butts, snack wrappers, paper cups, and other miscellaneous pieces of trash. We have a

garbage bin inside the building. Please dispose of unwanted items in the bin provided.

Safety Procedures

Families are required to always follow all safety procedures. These procedures are to protect the welfare and best interests sof the employees and families of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center. Please be particularly mindful of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center' secure entrance procedures. **Do not** allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you is polite; however, that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.

Violations of the Confidentiality Policy

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the company. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with Ecos Infantiles Learning Center.

Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential or pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy. Please see page 13 for the full policy.

Family-Teacher Relationships

Families are prohibited from soliciting any staff member for the purpose of employment. Employment refers to any relationship outside of the centers' services which involves an employee of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center interacting with a current or former client of Ecos Infantiles Learning Center. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, baby-sitting, house-sitting, mother's helper, nanny, and carpooling regardless of whether those services are voluntary or paid.

Our teachers are prohibited from fraternizing with clients.

Parent Participation/Volunteers

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the child care center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events.

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips.
Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, that parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

Family Style Meals and Dining

We are very proud of our meals and dining program here at Ecos Infantiles Learning Center. We maintain a nutritious and well-rounded meal program that includes breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack.

We have a full-time professional cook that takes great care to serve nutritional, well-balanced, made-from-scratch food. This enables our children to develop healthy minds and bodies. We use whole

grains and a variety of fresh foods. We like to explore different ethnic cuisines; please share your unique family recipes with us! Our menus are posted on our Parent Board near our check-in location.

Our meals are served 'Family Style' with a strong emphasis on table manners, social skills, and independence. Our serving bowls, pitchers, and utensils are all sized for children's small hands so they can serve themselves, developing motor skills and independence. Our teachers sit down at the table and eat with the children at every meal. They lead quiet, meaningful conversations with the children during this time.

We will make reasonable accommodations for children with special dietary requirements. For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instructions for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained in this handbook for further information.

Parents may be required to provide special food necessary for medical reasons, and additional documentation may be required. Please speak with your Center Director if your child requires a special diet.

Your child must be present at mealtimes to eat; we do not save plates for late arrivals. Be sure to check your child's daily schedule for their mealtimes. EILC serves breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack.

Children may not bring food or drink to school. This restriction may not apply to field trips where parent-furnished lunches may be required.

On special occasions such as birthdays, holidays, and multi-cultural celebrations, we appreciate parents who bring special snacks to celebrate. We strongly encourage nutritional snacks such as fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, etcetera. We ask that sweets and cakes with lots of icing be kept to a minimum! Please inquire about any special food allergies in your child's classroom. If you would like more ideas for nutritional treats, please ask your Center Director.

Infant feedings follow the individual baby's schedule as provided by parents. Parents are responsible for notifying us of your baby's changing schedules as he/she grows. Table foods are introduced as requested by parents. Due to individual infant nutrition needs, parents will provide the formula their baby needs. Baby food and table foods are provided by the center with the exception of special dietary restrictions. Staff will document each child's meals including when and how much they ate. Parents will have access to this information through our Procare app.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the classroom teacher. If you are providing breastmilk for your baby, please prepare one more feeding than you think your child will consume in a day to assure that your child won't be hungry. Prepared bottles will be stored in the designated refrigerator and will be warmed in a water bath prior to feeding. No bottles will be microwaved.

Ecos Infantiles Learning Center never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in meal or snack time. ☙

THANK YOU
for choosing Ecos Infantiles Learning Center.
We value your friendship and appreciate your business.

Play is the highest form of research.

Albert Einstein