



# **mini einstein's**

## LEARNING CENTER

### Parent Handbook

### Sept 2025-August 2026

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# Welcome to Mini Einstein's Learning Center

This parent handbook serves as your guide to our center. Please read it thoroughly and let us know if you have more questions. We look forward to caring for your children, teaching, playing, laughing, and exploring the world together with them.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to serve families in the community by providing high-quality care for their infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and pre-K children in a safe, supportive, exciting, and nurturing environment, so that they can grow physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. It will come to understand that they are created and loved by God.

## Belief

Mini Einstein's Learning Center (MELC) is a Christian-based childcare and early learning center that is striving to promote Christian values in children. We believe that every child is a precious gift from God, and it is our duty to teach them so that they will understand that they are created and loved by God. MELC believes that every child is essential and is deserving of respect and guidance to reach their maximum potential and become successful individuals in the future.

## Goals

MELC is an organization with a vision to equip children to become distinguished individuals in the future. We understand that children love to experiment and explore new things every day. Their curiosity is our opportunity to guide them and help them grow each day. All activities are designed to meet their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.

At MELC, we would like children to:

- Learn Christian values.
- Build their social skills by making friendships.
- Learn simple manners and courtesies.
- Learn to be a team player.
- Have confidence and a positive self-image.
- Be able to listen to parents and teachers.
- Be able to identify and control their emotions.
- Enjoy learning.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### Ages of Children We Serve

4 weeks to 13 years of age

### Teacher-to-Child Ratios:

1 to 4 infants, 1 to 7 for Toddler classroom, and 1 to 10 for early preschool and Pre-K classrooms.

### Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Infant Rooms 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

## Closures

MELC will be CLOSED for the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day

MELC will be closed in observance of the holiday; the weekday before or after should it fall on a weekend.

MELC has two Teacher Workshop Days scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in March and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in August each year. MELC will be closed all day to allow teachers to participate in professional development activities.

MELC will close early for the annual Christmas program and the Summer Festival. All students must be picked up by 4:00 p.m. on these designated days. Exact dates are announced on the yearly calendar.

Please note that we do not provide credits or refunds for MELC holiday closures.

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## ENROLLMENT

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### Non-Discrimination Policy

MELC enrolls a diverse student body. It does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), national origin, disability, age, or genetic information.

### Procedures and Requirements

The enrollment packet may be filled out and submitted at any time before the first day of care. If enrollment at that time has reached capacity, parents will be placed on a waiting list and notified when space becomes available. Annual re-enrollment will take place each year before the start of the new school year, typically in September.

### Immunizations

The State of Washington requires that children's immunizations be up to date. Parents must provide a verified copy of their child's immunization record prior to the first day of care and provide an updated copy annually with re-enrollment.

Information from families is available only to the child care staff and is kept confidential. A certificate of exemption form is available for families, which your healthcare provider must complete.

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## TUITION AND SERVICES

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### Registration Fee & Deposit

A registration fee is charged upon enrollment and annually thereafter in September for the new school year. The initial registration fee is \$75 per family and annually \$50 thereafter, and is non-refundable. We also require a deposit of half a month's tuition, which is non-refundable but is applied towards your first month's tuition. Payments of the registration fee and deposit reserve a space in the program for your child.

A new enrollment packet with up-to-date immunizations and registration fees is required annually. If any information changes during the year, such as address, phone number, emergency contacts, or authorized pick-ups, please update the office with the new information.

### Waiting List

MELC maintains a waitlist for families interested in enrolling when there is currently no space available. There is a fee of \$50.00 to be added to the waitlist for the classroom appropriate for your child's age/development; however, the waitlist does not guarantee your child's enrollment. Should space become available, you will be contacted by phone and/or email and must confirm your intent to enroll by submitting the required registration form and deposit within 24 hours. If you do not confirm within this timeframe, the next family on the waitlist will be contacted. Your waitlist fee will be applied to your registration fees. If you have already submitted enrollment paperwork, but do not start on your agreed-upon start date, you will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list and forfeit your deposit.

### Full-Time Care

This service is defined as 5 days a week, with up to 10 hours of work per day. If you exceed the 10-hour allotment, a flat monthly fee of \$250 will be charged.

### Part-Time Care

This service is defined as either 2 or 3 fixed days a week, with a maximum of 10 hours per day. If you exceed the 10-hour allotment, a flat monthly fee of \$250 will be charged. Part-time care is not available for our infant rooms. (Swapping days is not allowed, even if the school is closed)

### Tuition Rates

*(Rates are subject to change.) \*You can expect an annual tuition increase every September. Updated rates will be announced by the end of April of each year. Prorated tuition is based on a 20-day average month.*

#### September 2025-August 202

Age	Full Time Care	3 day	2 day
Infants	\$3,075	Not Available	Not Available
Waddlers / Toddlers	\$2,555	\$2,011	\$1,543
Preschool	\$2,455	\$1,952	\$1,530
Pre-K	\$2,340	\$1,902	\$1,511

Tuition rates are based on your child's current classroom enrollment.

Legacy rates apply to eligible students enrolled prior to September 2023

### Tuition Due

At the time of enrollment, parents or guardians will be asked to complete and sign the Service Agreement Form. Bills are issued and tuition is due by the 1st of every month for the service that month. If the first falls on a weekend or holiday, payment is due the next business day.

Please pay by check, debit card, credit card (with a 3.5% service fee), or money order. Checks are payable to Mini Einstein's Learning Center. Checks returned for insufficient funds or other non-payment will incur a penalty of \$50. A money order is mandatory to make up the total due, plus the penalty.

### Subsidized Tuition / Enrollment

All families enrolled in any tuition subsidy program will be responsible for all additional charges and/or fees incurred during care, including, but not limited to, late pick-up fees, summer activity program fees, graduation cap and gown fees, field trip fees, diaper and wipe supply charges, and other similar expenses. All students enrolled in a subsidy program must maintain 90% attendance each month to retain their spot. If 90% attendance is not maintained, the student will be withdrawn from care, and that spot will be made available to another family in need of a subsidized spot.

### Drop-In Care

If you are enrolled in part-time care and require care for your child on a day outside of your agreed-upon schedule, you will be charged as your daily rate plus \$50.00 drop in fee. Space restrictions limit the availability of drop-in care and require advance pre-approval by management.

### Summer Activity Fee

Each summer, MELC students in Preschool through School-Age classrooms participate in approximately 10 weeks of specialized programming, which includes weekly in-house field trips. A program fee of \$100.00 is due with June Tuition.

### Late Payment

If the total charges due are not received by the 5th of the month, a late payment fee of \$50 will apply, plus \$10.00 for each additional day thereafter.

If your account is not brought current by the 5th, MELC regrets to inform you that the child(ren) will no longer be able to receive our service, and services will be terminated. Arrangements can be made to pay your bill no later than seven days after the 7th, but only upon approval of the MELC Director. A fee of \$10 will be applied to the bill for each day after the 7th that the bill remains unpaid. Tuition must be paid for the month in order for your child to attend the program. Accounts not paid as agreed upon will be subject to collection. Once submitted to the collection agency, all payments must be arranged and made through them.

### Family Discount

Parents with two or more children enrolled in full-time care will receive a 5% discount on the tuition of their additional children. This discount will apply to the oldest child enrolled.

### Veteran Discount

Parents who present a valid Military ID or a copy of their DD-214 will receive a 7% discount on full-time care.

### Referral Discount

Parents who refer another family to us will receive a one-time \$200.00 credit when the referred child begins attending MELC.

***Please note that no discount is given for part-time care, drop-in services, or Summer Camp programs. Discounts that your family may qualify for can NOT be combined. It is the parents' responsibility to notify management of any discount they believe their family to be eligible for or of any changes to that eligibility.***

## Classroom Assignment

Your child will be enrolled in the most age- and developmentally appropriate classroom, as determined by the Program Supervisor and/or MELC Director. Factors considered in classroom assignment include, but are not limited to: age, developmental milestones achieved, observed readiness, and space availability. Please note that, in general, there are no transitions to the next classroom during June, July, and August (in preparation for the PreK graduation and Kindergarten Send-Off) or November and December (in preparation for the annual holiday program). Expect that if your child has a summer birthday, they will not move to the next classroom until September 1.

## Withdrawal and Termination of Service

Withdrawal from MELC requires at least two full weeks' (10 working days) written notice. Please note that there is no refund of tuition if you withdraw your student without providing at least 2 weeks' written notice.

MELC will work in partnership with families to ensure the progress and success of each child. MELC reserves the right to terminate services at any time for any reason. A two-week written notice will be given to parents or guardians unless immediate termination of services is required for the safety and health of other students and staff.

## Tax Information (EIN #: 46-1778178)

Parents or guardians are advised to keep monthly receipts for tax purposes. In December, we provide an account record with our tax number for your income tax needs. Your tax statement will be emailed to you by the end of December.

## Vacation Credit Request

A maximum of 7 vacation days will be credited in a year for children enrolled in full-time care, following their enrollment year, not the calendar year. Parents need to fill out a Vacation Credit Request Form and email it to our operations manager, Ashley, at [ashley@melc-wa.com](mailto:ashley@melc-wa.com), by the last day of the month in which the vacation occurred; otherwise, the day(s) off will be accounted for as absence days. Please note that this credit is given only to full-time service, and not to part-time service. Vacation credit can only be redeemed on days your child has been absent. Credit will be given on the following month's tuition bill. Vacation credit has no cash value and cannot be carried over to the following year.

## Absences

Please notify us by phone, email, or Procure message if your child will be absent on their regularly scheduled day. If an emergency occurs and your child will be unable to attend the center, please notify us as soon as possible. Because our program and licensing require us to staff our facilities based on the number of children enrolled, we cannot provide tuition refunds for days your child is absent due to illness, weather, family events, or other similar reasons. If a prolonged absence is required, we recommend that you make arrangements to withdraw the child temporarily.

## Inclement Weather Closures

During snow or inclement weather conditions, our hours of operation will be updated via email, website, Procure, and Facebook. We will always strive to be open. However, adverse weather may affect the number of staff we have on site and the number of children we can provide care for. MELC will close if staff members are unable to come to work safely. Please call the center to confirm if the program is open if you are unsure.

***Please note: If MELC is closed due to inclement weather, tuition will not be credited or refunded.***

## Emergency Closures

In the event MELC must close due to urgent, unforeseen events (such as plumbing issues or loss of power, etc.), parents will be notified via Procure app, email, Facebook, and phone call, as necessary, and parents should plan to pick-up their child(ren) as soon as possible after receiving this message. Should MELC be mandated by local, state, or federal agencies to close for any length of time, tuition will not be credited or refunded, though all make-up options will be explored.

MELC will follow requirements made by the State of Washington and the Snohomish Health District. Recommendations will be taken into consideration and implemented as needed.

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## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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### Parent and Teacher Communication

Daily communication is essential for both parents and teachers. All classrooms will provide daily reports through the Procure app. Classroom lesson plans are posted near the entrance of each classroom, outlining activities for the week. Please check daily for notices, notes, artwork, and other miscellaneous information.

Effective communication between the school and families is essential to ensuring each child's health, safety, and well-being. Parents/guardians are required to provide and maintain accurate, up-to-date contact information and must be reachable during school hours.

### Emergency Contacts

Each family is required to provide at least two local emergency contacts who are authorized to pick up their child and can be reached promptly if a parent or guardian is unavailable. These emergency contacts:

- Must be available during school hours
- Must be able to arrive at the center within a reasonable timeframe when contacted

In situations where a child needs to be picked up—whether due to illness, injury, behavioral concerns, or other urgent matters—and we are unable to reach a parent or guardian, we will contact the designated emergency contacts immediately. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep this information current at all times.

### Required Pick-Ups

When a parent or guardian is notified that their child must be picked up—due to illness, behavioral concerns, or other urgent matters—a responsible adult is required to arrive within **one hour** of initial contact.

Failure to arrange timely pick-up may result in the following actions:

- Temporary suspension of care (tuition refunds will not be issued)
- Termination of enrollment in cases of repeated violations

Maintaining prompt and reliable communication is essential for the safety and well-being of all children in our care.

### Non-Urgent Communication

For non-urgent matters—such as supply needs and policy reminders — if we are unable to reach a parent or guardian, a continued lack of response may result in the temporary suspension of care until communication expectations are met.

## Communication Channels

Parents may contact teachers or administrative staff through the following approved methods:

- Email
- Procure Messaging
- Phone call to the center

Please note that these platforms are not intended for time-sensitive communication. Messages sent via email or Procure may not receive an immediate response, especially during instructional hours when staff are focused on supervising and engaging with children.

## Response Time

Staff will make every effort to respond to messages within 24–48 business hours, depending on the nature of the inquiry. Messages received after school hours, on weekends, or during holidays will be addressed during the next business day.

If your message is urgent (e.g., last-minute pick-up changes, immediate concerns), please call the school directly during operating hours. Phone calls are the most reliable way to reach staff promptly in time-sensitive situations.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we prioritize the safety and care of all children during the school day.

## When We Call Home

We want to be respectful of your work time and limit interruptions to your day. For minor concerns and general communication, we will most often send a Procure message or communicate with you directly at pick-up. However, there are times when we will make a phone call to one or both parents/guardians, such as:

- Most infant concerns (bumps, scratches, rashes, unusual demeanor, signs of illness, etc.)
- Fever and/or vomiting
- A significant fall or impact to the head and/or neck area
- Bites that break the skin
- New or unexplained rash (hives)
- Seizure, either known or unknown cause
- Behaviors that cause physical harm to other students, staff, or oneself
- Verbal threats of significant harm to self or others
- Running out of the classroom, gym, building, or away from visible supervision of teachers/management\*

\* This behavior is considered a severe safety concern and will result in a phone call for immediate pick-up and exclusion for the remainder of the day.

## Cameras

MELC offers free video access to your student's classroom. Video camera access will be granted solely to the classroom in which the child is enrolled, and footage can only be viewed during regular business hours. Our video camera system does not provide sound, but it does have a real-time feed. Log in at [www.childview.com](http://www.childview.com), click the cameras tab, and the camera(s) you are assigned to will populate. The images will appear to be lagging or in slow motion. This page is referred to as the preview page. Double click on a camera and watch a full-screen view in real time with little to no lag



(depending on internet connection speed). If you encounter technical difficulties viewing or setting up your account, please don't hesitate to contact us at [support@childview.com](mailto:support@childview.com) or (866) 343-3656. Please be patient, as they are located in Louisiana and may need some time to troubleshoot your issues.

## Personal Electronics & Surveillance Devices Policy

At Mini Einstein's Learning Center, our top priority is maintaining a safe, respectful, and developmentally appropriate environment for all children. In keeping with this, we do not permit the use or presence of the following personal electronics and surveillance devices on children while attending the center:

- Audio recording devices or hidden microphones
- Smartwatches or similar wearable tech

These devices may inadvertently compromise the privacy and safety of other children and staff, and can become distractions in the learning environment. In addition, some devices are capable of live recording, audio monitoring, or two-way communication, which conflicts with our policies and licensing regulations regarding confidentiality and supervision.

If your child arrives at the center wearing any of these devices, staff will store the item in the office and return it to you at pick-up. Repeated occurrences may result in a formal written notice and a potential review of enrollment.

We appreciate your understanding and partnership in protecting the integrity of our classrooms and the privacy of every child in our care.

## Helping Hands

MELC has an open-door policy. We invite parents to visit the center at any time during the day. We always appreciate parents helping with parties and field trips. If you would like to volunteer, please speak with the Program Director and complete a DEL background check form.

## Field Trips

Field trips are part of the program at MELC for the preschool and pre-K classrooms. Parents or guardians must sign a consent form, which includes providing medical information and emergency contact phone numbers. This form is taken on each field trip. You will be notified in advance of all planned field trips and departure times. MELC uses private buses. There is a charge for field trips to cover bus fare and admission fees, if necessary.

## Meals and Snacks

Breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided. Monthly menus are posted on the parent information board. MELC adheres to USDA Food Program standards to ensure your child receives proper nutrition. Parents/guardians must notify our staff if the child has an allergy to specific foods, as indicated on the Health History form, and/or if the child is a vegetarian or has special dietary needs. If you are providing food from home due to an allergy or dietary restriction, please be advised that we are required to provide additional food, as needed, to meet the USDA Food Program standards.

Additionally, we are unable to place personal food items in our refrigerators, so all lunches must be packed with a cold pack or not require to be kept cold. We are unable to reheat food items sent from home safely. An Individual Care Plan will be required for all such accommodations. Please be advised that mealtimes are at set times throughout the day.

## Allergies & Dietary Restrictions

Children with allergies must submit a completed Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan form with their enrollment packet prior to the first day of enrollment. Medication Authorization forms must be completed and submitted with the EpiPen (including the prescription label) as well as any antihistamine medication for allergies by the first day of enrollment.

At Mini Einstein's Learning Center, we strive to provide safe and nutritious meals for all children in our care. Our kitchen staff follows best practices for food handling, preparation, and sanitation. However, we would like to inform families that our kitchen is not a facility free from allergens. We cannot accommodate contact-based allergies (including airborne or skin-contact allergies). While we take reasonable precautions to maintain a clean and safe environment, we cannot guarantee that students will not be exposed to potential allergens. For this reason, we are unable to accommodate any child with an allergy that may result in a reaction from indirect exposure.

We do not accommodate dietary restrictions related to:

- Gluten
- Soy
- Sugar or artificial dyes

Families are not permitted to request menu modifications related to these restrictions, and we do not offer alternative meal options.

Despite our efforts to minimize risk, cross-contamination of certain foods and allergens may occur during meal preparation. Common allergens that may be present in our kitchen include (but are not limited to): dairy, eggs, wheat (gluten), and soy.

While we do our best to accommodate individual needs, families with children who have severe food allergies should be aware of the potential for cross-contact and assess the level of risk accordingly.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's dietary needs, please get in touch with the Mr. Ki (kitchen manager) or Mrs. Ashley (operations manager) to discuss individualized accommodations.

## Food Restrictions

Children with food restrictions must provide written notification to the office. They will be placed on an Individual Care Plan (ICP), which will automatically enroll them in the Red Dishes Plan (provided separately after the ICP is completed). We will do our best to accommodate food restrictions by offering a suitable substitution. Food Restrictions will not be treated with the same severity as an allergy. You may be asked to provide an alternative from home.

## Rest/Nap Time

As required by licensing standards of care, all children are offered a nap or quiet rest period. Please send a crib-size sheet and blanket for your child. MELC provides cots. They are washed and disinfected weekly. Blankets are sent home to be laundered every Friday, and parents or guardians must provide a clean replacement sheet with the blanket each week.

## Toilet Training

Staff will be happy to discuss your child's toilet training with you. As your child begins to show signs of readiness in our 2.5-year-old classroom, we will support them with the next steps of training, while you continue to assist them at home. For potty training to be successful, there must be consistency between school and home. Keep in mind, Mini Einstein's would like to see potty training begin at home and be supported at school. Additionally, please dress your

child in comfortable clothing that is easy for them to put on and take off independently, and bring plenty of extra clothing in case of unexpected accidents. Soiled clothing will be bagged and labeled, and parents will be notified for timely pick-up. In the interest of health and safety, all clothing soiled with urine, vomit, or feces must be collected and taken home for cleaning by the end of the third day after notification; failure to do so will result in its disposal.

**\*\*Students cannot advance to Pre-K until they have been fully potty trained. \*\* \*\***

## Clothing

The children are taken outdoors daily, rain or shine, and are involved in a wide range of hands-on activities. Dress your child in casual, comfortable clothing and shoes, ready to play. Also, dress your child appropriately for the weather. For example, a light jacket, cap, and rain boots for damp days in fall and spring, and a warm winter jacket, mittens, hat, and warm boots in winter. Please label all of your child's clothing.

## Extra clothing

Each child needs to have at least one set of additional clothing in case of an accident, spill, or water activities. Extras include pants, shirts, shoes, socks, underwear, and other essentials. Remember to label all of your child's removable and extra clothing. It is helpful to put all labeled clothing into a labeled bag or backpack.

If clothes are sent home, please bring a clean set the next morning.

## Masks

Should a public health crisis warrant, MELC may require the wearing of masks or other personal protective equipment for its staff, students, and/or families while on campus. This requirement will remain in effect for the duration of any local, state, or federal health and safety mandates that are currently in place.

## Lost and Found


MELC is not responsible for lost items. All unclaimed and unlabeled items will be placed in the designated Lost and Found area. Please check the lost and found regularly. At the end of each month, all unclaimed items will be donated to a local organization.

## Necessary Supplies

Below is the list of items that parents/guardians must provide:

**Infant-** (In addition to the items listed in the Waddlers section below)

- ✓ Formula or breast milk
- ✓ Baby Food
- ✓ Bibs
- ✓ Swaddle Sack, if used

 Please note that infants **DO NOT** need to supply wipes; MELC will supply Kirkland Brand (Costco) wipes or similar. If you prefer a different brand of wipes, you will need to provide them.

**Waddlers and Older:**

- ✓ Crib-size sheet and blanket
- ✓ 2-3 sets of clean clothing
- ✓ Disposable diapers and wipes, if needed (NO re-useable diapers)
- ✓ Pacifier, if needed

## MELC Provided Diaper/Wipes

Teachers will notify parents via ProCare app message when their child is running low on diapers and/or wipes, and will

be asked to replenish their supply the next day of care. Should parents fail to provide their child with the necessary supplies of diapers and wipes, your account will be charged a flat fee of \$10 per day for the supplies MELC provides. Diapers and wipes provided by MELC will be a variety of brands, including Kirkland, Huggies, and other readily available options.

### Toys and items from home

Children are not permitted to bring toys or other personal belongings from home, with the exception of "show and tell" items on designated days or a cuddle toy for naptime. MELC will not be responsible for any lost or broken items. Please be sure items are small enough to fit in your child's cubby. Do not send other toys, candy, gum, or money to school with your child.

### Birthdays and Special Occasions

Please let us know in advance if you plan to bring a treat. We encourage you to choose a nutritious treat for the students that is low in sugar and fat content. MELC is not a party facility, and celebrations must be limited to small snacks during designated snack times. Per licensing guidelines, only store-bought goods are permitted. Peanuts or peanut products are not permitted to be brought in. Balloons and party favors are not allowed for safety reasons.

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## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

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During the hours of 6:00–7:45 a.m. and 4:45 p.m.- closing, MELC students will remain in mixed-age groups, adhering to the teacher-to-child ratio for the youngest child.

### Signing In and Out

Parents/guardians or authorized adults (no minor siblings) are required to sign children in and out of MELC each day using the Procare app. Authorized pick-ups (non-parent) will sign out using the classroom's tablet sign-out function.

### Arrival

MELC opens at 6:00 a.m. Please do not bring your child prior to this time, as they will not be admitted even if staff are on site. After signing in your child, accompany them to their classroom. Ensure that your child's teacher is informed of their arrival. Do not let your child enter the building alone or remain on the playground unattended. Please adhere to the time you have declared to MELC regarding the drop-off and pick-up of your student.

### Late Drop-Off Policy

MELC's drop-off window closes at 10:00 a.m.

If your child has a **medical or other pre-approved appointment** that would delay arrival past 10:00 a.m., you may request **in advance** a late drop-off, in accordance with the following:

1. All late drop-off requests must be submitted **at least 24 hours in advance by email to [melclearningcenter@gmail.com](mailto:melclearningcenter@gmail.com)** for manager review and approval. You will receive an email response either approving or denying the request by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the requested date.
2. If an emergent or unexpected need for a medical visit arises on the same day, a request may be made by phone to speak directly with a manager. **Such requests must be made before 9:00 a.m. Additionally, a doctor's note confirming the visit and clearing the student for return to care will be required.**
3. If you have received manager approval for a late drop-off, please stop at the front desk of your child's assigned building on the approved date to confirm your arrival.

No requests will be considered via Procure message or in-person conversation with a teacher. All late drop-off requests must go through the process detailed above.

### Departure and Late Pick-up Policy

MELC closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Children who are not picked up by 6:00 p.m. will be charged a penalty of \$50 (to be paid the next business day) as well as \$10 per quarter hour after closing. The authorized adult picking up the child is required to sign an After Closing Pick-up form. After 6:15 p.m., the teacher will call the emergency person listed on your child's registration form and arrange for immediate pick-up. Pick-up anytime after 6:30 is an additional \$100 (total \$160 fee). By 6:30 p.m., if no emergency contact or arrangement can be made and our staff has not been contacted by parents/guardians or other responsible adults concerning pick-up arrangement for the child, our license requires us to call 911, and your child will be released to a police officer.

MELC encourages the authorized adults to call in advance for any late pick-up. If you are continually late, we may have to ask you to withdraw from our care.

Children may only be released to adults who are authorized on the child's enrollment packet. A picture ID is required to pick up a child. We are mandated by law not to release a child into the custody of an adult under the influence of alcohol or drugs; the police will be contacted.

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## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

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At MELC, we have reasonable expectations that children will maintain control of their behavior. It is the core value of MELC to facilitate children's development of self-control, respect, and good attitude and behavior, guided by our core values. All of our staff love and care about the children and want them to be the best they can be, leading and teaching by example, direction, and guidance.

We have developed our behavior management policies based on research, education, and decades of combined in-field experience. The policies outlined herein aim to provide clear expectations and boundaries, as well as to outline our process for responding to and managing observed behaviors.

MELC does not permit any child to cause harm to other children, staff, or property. If a child is observed to have caused harm to another child or staff member, and depending on the severity of the event, parents will be notified immediately by phone and may be asked to pick up their child. In the event the property is damaged, the parent will be expected to repair or replace the item. In the event a parent is called to pick up a child due to behavioral issues, it is required that the parent collect the child within one hour. An individual behavior management plan will be established for children who display repeated or severe behaviors.

MELC utilizes positive redirection to promote and reinforce safe, developmentally appropriate behavior, meaning that we do not use time-outs, exclusion (except as necessary for physical safety), shaming, or any form of physical discipline.

When a child is exhibiting unwanted or unsafe behaviors in the classroom or designated play area, the teacher(s) will first attempt to redirect the behavior to a more acceptable and safe alternative. If the behavior continues or escalates, management will be notified to assist. Management will provide additional assistance within the classroom. It may temporarily remove the child from the classroom, as needed, with the intention of returning the child to class when they show readiness. If a child is unable to be safely returned to the classroom, a manager will call a parent or guardian for pick-up.

The following behaviors are considered SEVERE, and will result in an immediate conference with our Director or manager

currently on-site:

- Endangering oneself or others, which includes:
  - Physical violence (hitting, kicking, or otherwise causing injury to others)
  - Running out of the classroom or building, away from teachers/managers
  - Severe, repeated, or developmentally inappropriate biting (see Biting Policy)
- Destruction of property
- Threatening harm with words or gestures
- Obscene gesture and/or talk

Repeated uncontrollable behavior will initiate the development of an Individual Student Support Plan (ISSP) and may lead to termination of services. If an ISSP is drafted, a meeting will be scheduled with parents or guardians before the plan is implemented. Such a plan will detail the identified behaviors of concern, outline the action plan to address the observed behaviors during care, and specify the course of action that will be taken should the behavior(s) continue. The plan may recommend and/or refer additional services intended to support the student and family. All ISSPs will be reviewed after one month and/or when a change of classroom occurs, or more frequently as deemed necessary.

As a group care center, we must provide a safe and attentive environment for all children in our care. Suppose a child is unable to gain control and requires more individual attention than can be provided within the "child-to-staff" ratios, or needs a significant amount of one-on-one attention with a manager outside of the classroom. In that case, the child may require a more individualized approach. In that case, pick-up may be required for the remainder of the day. If a child requires consistent one-on-one attention, an Individual Student Support Plan (ISSP) will be developed.

MELC does not allow the physical restraint of children. Physical restraint must only be used if a child's safety or the safety of others is threatened and must adhere to WAC 110-300-0335. Physical restraint is limited to holding a child as gently as possible to accomplish restraint, limited to the amount of time necessary to control the situation, developmentally appropriate, and only performed by early learning providers trained in a restraint technique pursuant to WAC 110-300- 0160(9).

## Biting

Biting is a normal part of development within the 1-year-old and young 2-year-old classrooms. The timing and experience of oral and dental development are individual to each child. With that in mind, we work to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all children while supporting them through this phase.

When biting is observed in a classroom, we will:

- Communicate with the child's family regarding the observation of the behavior, gathering basic information regarding the child's current stage of development, and any other relevant changes that may be experienced at this time
- Observe the child's interactions, engagement, and physical environment within the classroom
- Identify areas of focus within the classroom that may mitigate the behavior and initiate an action plan with the classroom teachers, which may include:
  - Providing a child with a frozen teether or RaZberry™ gum soother
  - Providing a child with additional space or individual activities
  - Temporarily removing the child from the classroom with the intent of offering a quieter or calmer environment
  - Maintaining close teacher-to-child proximity, as allowed by current activity/classroom needs
  - Teaching and reinforcing simple words, phrases, and gestures to communicate needs and emotions
- Should a child bite 3 times in one day, including attempted bites that are interrupted by teacher intervention, **or** any one bite breaks skin (defined as creating an opening in the skin that would allow for saliva, bacteria, dirt,

blood, etc. to enter or exit the area), the family will be called for pick-up and the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day.

If a child is going through a particularly difficult or prolonged phase of biting other children, specifically identified as either a) occurring for more than 1 month or b) 3 occurrences of being sent home for biting within 2 weeks, the following actions will be initiated:

- A meeting with parents will be scheduled to discuss the observed behaviors, the actions taken to address them within the classroom, and the next steps.
- We will request a visit to the child's pediatrician or a pediatric dentist specifically to discuss the child's individual development and the concerns surrounding the frequency and/or severity of the biting behavior.
- An individual behavior management plan will be created, outlining expectations and a timeline for significant improvement and/or resolution of biting behaviors.
- If markers of the individual behavior management plan are not met within the timeline given, a temporary suspension of care will be issued to allow time for the child to pass through this challenging phase.

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## Family Conduct Policy

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At MELC, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all children, families, and staff. We expect all parents, guardians, and family members to engage in courteous and professional communication at all times.

### *Respectful Communication*

All families are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully with staff, other parents, and children
- Follow all school policies and procedures as outlined in the Parent Handbook
- Partner with the school in a constructive and solution-focused manner

### *Prohibited Conduct*

The following behaviors are considered inappropriate and are grounds for immediate termination of care:

- Yelling, shouting, or using aggressive or threatening language toward staff, children, or other families
- Intimidation, harassment, or any form of verbal or physical aggression
- Making unreasonable demands, including requests for one-on-one care or accommodations outside of our program's capabilities
- Repeated disregard for MELC policies or refusal to follow program procedures

We understand that parenting can be stressful, and we are here to support families to the best of our ability. However, maintaining a positive and respectful environment is essential for the well-being of everyone in our community. Disruptive or disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

By enrolling in our program, families agree to uphold these standards as part of their partnership with MELC.

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## MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY POLICY

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### Health Check Prior to Enrollment

A physical checkup is recommended to determine if a child is free from any communicable physical conditions before the first day of service. Children may have an examination by their doctor and should be checked annually. MELC requires the date of your child's last physical examination upon application.

### Immunization Records

By state law, a completed and signed up-to-date immunization form is required before admission to the center. MELC also requires an updated Immunization Record every time an additional immunization is given, as well as during annual re-enrollment.

### Health Records

MELC requires the following health records to be maintained on each child in the program:

- Health and Social History
- Current immunization status
- Accident reports
- Record of authorization by a doctor for medication
- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan from a healthcare provider, if

applicable. Our staff will work to maintain the health, safety, and well-being of the children in their care.

### Medication Management

Should any medication be required, the parent or guardian must complete the Medication Consent Form immediately. "Blanket authorization" is permitted only for certain chronic or life-threatening conditions that require continuous medication. These authorizations must be accompanied by a signed statement from the child's healthcare provider on a prescription form, indicating that treatment is ongoing.

Prescription medications must be in their original container with the original prescription label attached. Non-prescription medications must be in their original container and labeled by the manufacturer. The child's name must be on the container. Medication, over-the-counter or prescription, may only be administered as directed by the printed label and/or prescription, unless alternative written authorization and direction are provided by a physician.

No medication will be administered without written permission from the parent or guardian. All medication brought to MELC will be stored in the office's medication cabinet and administered by a manager. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to fill out and sign the medication form. The form must be dated, and all unused medication will be returned or disposed of. No expired medication will be accepted.

### Illnesses

We strive to limit the spread of communicable disease in our center. We are committed to implementing policies that balance and respect the needs of children, families, and staff in these circumstances. MELC will not be held liable for any children who become ill while attending the childcare center. MELC follows strict hygiene and cleaning procedures, including disinfecting high-touch surfaces such as door handles and rotating toys to allow for more frequent sanitization. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, most children will have eight to 10 colds in the first two years of life



alone! However, if your child is sick or if you are ever concerned about their physical or emotional health, contact your pediatrician for a professional opinion.

MELC understands that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work; therefore, it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from the center may be necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the center is unable to meet the child's needs adequately. Mild illnesses are common among children, and infections are often spread before any symptoms appear. In these cases, we try to keep the children comfortable throughout the day. Reasons for MELC to exclude children include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities, such as going outdoors.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- An illness that poses a risk of spreading a harmful disease to others.
- Severely ill appearance (pale, glassy eyes, lack of energy).
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or above (axillary or an equivalent measure accompanied by behavior change or other signs and symptoms. Fever of 104 degrees or greater in a child of any age (requires immediate medical attention).
- Unexplained fever in a child younger than 4 months.
- Diarrhea: watery stools or decreased form of stool not associated with change of diet; stool not contained in the diaper; child unable to reach the toilet; or stool frequency that exceeds two or more stools above normal for that child.
  - Cases of bloody diarrhea and diarrhea caused by Shigella, Salmonella, Shiga toxin-producing E coli, Cryptosporidium, or Giardia intestinalis must be cleared for readmission by a health care professional.
- Blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- Vomiting more than 2 times in the previous 24 hours (unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration).
- Mouth sores with drooling (unless the child's medical provider or local health department authority states that the child is noninfectious).
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours; intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other signs of illness,
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes (unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease)
- Skin sores weeping fluid, and on an exposed area that cannot be covered
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctivae with white or yellow eye discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been started
- Strep throat (or other streptococcal infection) until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head lice or nits should be removed after the first treatment
- Rubella, until 7 days after the rash appears • Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has been started
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually 6 days after onset of rash)
- Pertussis (whooping cough) until 5 days of antibiotics
- Mumps, until 5 days after the onset of parotid gland swelling
- Measles, until 4 days after the onset of rash
- Hepatitis A virus until 1 week after the onset of illness or jaundice, or as directed by the health department (if the child's symptoms are mild)
- Tuberculosis, until the child's medical provider or local health department states the child is on appropriate treatment and can return

## Communicable Disease

Please immediately notify our staff verbally and in writing if your child contracts any of the following:

- |                 |                              |                |                 |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ▪ Chicken pox   | ▪ Measles/Mumps              | ▪ Lice         | ▪ Reye syndrome |
| ▪ Hepatitis     | ▪ Pertussis (whooping cough) | ▪ Shingles     |                 |
| ▪ Impetigo      | ▪ Conjunctivitis (pink eye)  | ▪ Meningitis   |                 |
| ▪ Mononucleosis | ▪ Ringworm                   | ▪ Strep Throat |                 |

Do not send your child to the center facilities until the appropriate contagious period is over. Parents will be notified by letter if their child has been exposed to an infectious disease while in care at MELC.

## Public Health Pandemic

MELC follows the guidance and direction of the Snohomish Health District regarding exclusion and/or closure due to a public health pandemic and may implement temporary policies to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, and families. MELC will keep families informed about any policy changes via email and postings on parent information boards within the center.

## Campus Gate Safety Policy

For the safety and security of all children and staff at Mini Einstein's Learning Center, all entry and exit gates must be securely closed immediately after use. Keeping the gates closed at all times helps prevent children from leaving the campus unsupervised.

### Policy Guidelines:

- All families, visitors, and staff are expected to close the gate securely behind them each time they enter or exit the property.
- Do not prop gates open.
- If a gate appears damaged or is not closing correctly, please notify the front office immediately.

### Enforcement:

Failure to close the gate will result in a verbal reminder upon the first documented occurrence.

A second documented occurrence will result in a \$50 safety violation fine, which will be charged to the family's account. This policy is enforced to protect everyone on campus and is in alignment with our licensing and safety protocols. Your cooperation is essential in helping us maintain a secure environment for all children.

## Child Abuse CPS Reporting

Under Washington State Law, Mini Einstein's Learning Center is required to report immediately any suspicion of physical, mental, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect. Guidelines are established by the State of Washington and the Child Protective Services. MELC is not required to report to parents that Child Protective Services or the Police have been contacted. MELC will not tolerate any intimidation, threats, or other negative treatment of staff that may dissuade staff members from performing their duties as mandated reporters. Such behavior may initiate a 2-week notice for termination of care.

## Confidentiality

MELC considers all information about the children confidential and will not share it with any other parties, unless it is related to their care.

## Babysitting

MELC does not offer babysitting services. MELC is not responsible for facilitating any babysitting requests between parents and teachers. Please refer to the babysitting waiver found in your enrollment packet. MELC is not responsible for teachers' actions outside of business hours, and all agreements between staff and parents regarding any interaction

outside of business hours are solely between those parties. It is the parents' responsibility to coordinate the terms of after-hours care with the individual they choose.

### Teaching Staff

MELC carefully selects its staff to a high standard, ensuring your child's best care. Our staff is loving, caring, fun, and dedicated to providing a friendly environment for the children to spend their days.

MELC requires all staff members to:

- Pass a WA State Department of Social and Health Services criminal screening check
- Train in infant and child CPR/First Aid
- Obtain a certificate in HIV/AIDS and Bloodborne Pathogen Education Training
- Hold a current Food Handlers Permit for staff who prepare/serve snacks and meals
- Complete 30 hours of basic training in STARS Early Childhood Development
- Complete 10 hours of STARS training continuing education annually
- Hold a High school diploma, CDA, AA, or BA