



EARLY LEARNING CONNECTIONS
*SERVING ARMSTRONG, BEAVER, BUTLER,
INDIANA & LAWRENCE COUNTIES*



CHILD CARE MANUAL

The mission of Butler County Children's Center is to provide a variety of high-quality early learning programs that foster a safe and positive culture through kindness and respect to meet the comprehensive needs of families.



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WELCOME

Thank you for choosing Early Learning Connections to meet your family's childcare and early education needs.

Committed to Quality

Early Learning Connections is a private, nonprofit childcare program that strictly adheres to all licensing regulations required by the state of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services. The Center has a strong commitment to providing quality care to Butler County's children and families. This commitment is emphasized by the Center's voluntary participation in the state's quality initiative Keystone STARS. The program has participated in the STARS system since 2004. Through the program's ongoing efforts to meet the highest quality standards, the Children's Center has maintained the highest rating as a STAR 4 childcare program. The center operates the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots program according to the ITCS Program Guidelines and follows Head Start performance standards in the Head Start Supplemental Assistance classroom as well.



Mission and History

The mission of Early Learning Connections is to provide a variety of high-quality early learning programs that foster a safe and positive culture, through kindness and respect, to meet the comprehensive needs of families.

Early Learning Connections, a private, non-profit, United Way Agency has been providing a variety of children's programs since 1973. Early Learning Connections is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors that is composed of community members who have a vested interest in high quality early care and education services for children and families.

In addition to providing comprehensive childcare services, Early Learning Connections is the grantee for a variety of federal and state funded programs. The agency is the grantee for Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K Counts, Region 3 Early Learning Resource Center and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Title	Phone Number	E-mail
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Amy Lumley	Billing and Payments	724-287-2761 x 122	alumley@earlylearningconnections.org
Elisa Spadafora	Chief Executive Officer	724-287-2761	espapdafora@earlylearningconnections.org
Beth Glew	Director of Early Learning Programs	724-287-2761	bglew@earlylearningconnections.org

Center Holidays

The center is closed 9 days during the upcoming calendar year. Weekly fees remain the same for weeks containing a holiday. Weekly fees for each age group have been calculated with consideration for holiday closures.

Child Care Services will not be provided on the following holidays:

New Year's Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
July 4th
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day After Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day

HOURS OF OPERATION

Childcare services are provided Monday through Friday between the hours of **7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

Unscheduled Late Care

Unscheduled late care that is provided beyond the program's normal hours of operation is billed at a family rate. Charges for unscheduled late care are billed after 5:00 p.m. The charge of \$7.50 is billed in 15-minute increments.

If the parents cannot be reached, the adults on the emergency form will be contacted and called to come and pick up the child.

TUITION AND FUNDING SOURCES

Tuition for preschool and school age childcare is based on the age of child and the number of days of enrollment. Sibling discounts are available. ITCS is a tuition free program for eligible families of children 6 weeks to 3 years old. ELRC Region 3 determines a family's eligibility. The center provides full time care which is defined as 4-5 days per week. Part time care, less than 4 days per week (school-aged children only). Tuition is subject to change in accordance with the Department of Human Services subsidized eligibility regulations and or as determined by the program's Board of Directors.

Additional funding sources may be available, please contact the ELRC or the Enrollment Specialist to see if you are eligible.

PAYMENT

As per the fee agreement, payment is due every Friday prior to the upcoming week of care. For your convenience a payment box with envelopes, is located in the childcare lobby. The program accepts payments in the form of cash, check, debit cards, credit cards and money orders. Delinquent Copayments established by the tuition funding sources (i.e., ELRC, United Way funding assistance) are reported to the funding source. Delinquent payments may result in a discontinuation of childcare services. All accounts are tracked for nonpayment by the program's fiscal department. Failure to respond to notifications for past due tuition are cause for termination and may result in the account being turned over to collections.

Checks returned to the center for insufficient funds are considered delinquent. Insufficient fund charges imposed by the bank will be added to the family's account.

Late charges will be added to accounts if the payment is not received prior to the upcoming week of care.

Although ITCS is a tuition free program charges will apply if child is in care past operating hours. Families will be billed as outlined in unscheduled late care.

Questions about your account and the need for payment arrangements can be addressed by the calling the agency's billing department, located in our administration building at Mt Chestnut. The billing department can be reached at 724-287-2761 between the hours of 8am and 4pm, Monday through Friday.

Planned Absences

Families who pay privately are eligible for two weeks of tuition vacation in which no payment will be due. The two weeks of unpaid tuition are available per calendar year.

Two weeks is defined as 2 separate blocks of 5 consecutive days, Monday through Friday, when the child will not receive childcare services. Contact the enrollment specialist prior to the week the child will not be in care to allow for our billing department to adjust your account.

Families who receive childcare subsidy, scholarship are subject to the rules of attendance and payment requirements established by the individual funding source. The family is responsible for all charges defined by the funding source rules and regulations regarding attendance and time off from care.

Withdrawal from The Program

Two weeks' notice is required to stop billing beyond the designated date of withdrawal. When two weeks' notice of withdrawal from the program is not provided, the family will be responsible for all charges that continue to accumulate. Please notify the enrollment specialist as soon as possible if you plan to withdraw from the program.

ENROLLMENT

Child Care Enrollment begins with Application

The childcare application is available on our website. Applications may be completed and submitted online or at the center. To better understand your family's childcare needs and to assess your family's eligibility for possible funding sources, the Enrollment Specialist will contact each family who has applied to schedule an onsite visit.

During this visit, families may have the opportunity to tour the classroom, meet the childcare staff and together with the enrollment specialist determine if enrollment in the program is a good fit for the family. When the decision to enroll is made and childcare slots are not available, families are put on wait list and notified when an opening becomes available.

Infant Toddler Contacted Slots (ITCS) Enrollment

Early Learning Connections provides Infant and Toddler Child Care through the state funded Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program.

Families who may be eligible for the ITCS program will be directed to the ELRC to determine final eligibility for the program. Eligible children must be between the ages of 6 weeks and 36 months of age at the time of enrollment. Eligible children will be enrolled in the ITCS program within 30 days of eligibility.

Pre-Entry Interview and Required Documentation

The pre-entry interview process is the first step in the ongoing family-child care partnership. This process provides families the opportunity to share information about the child with the Enrollment Specialist and the teachers. It also enables both parties to begin to develop a meaningful relationship and shared expectations.

The following forms must be completed in their entirety or submitted before a child is permitted to attend the program. These forms and documentation are required by the PA Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing Regulations.

- **Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form** - this form indicates parent/guardian consent for emergency medical treatment as well as for

authorization of alternate adults to whom the child may be released or serve as an alternate contact in the case of child illness or emergency.

- **Court Ordered Custody Agreements and PFAs** that legally define the rights of each parent or legal guardian will be followed. Without documentation of court ordered rights, the childcare program is obligated to release a child their natural parent.
- **Medical documentation for:**
 - Up to date well child checks and immunization records are required to be submitted to the enrollment specialist no later than 60 days from their enrollment date. Immunizations follow the on-going schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Failure to provide this documentation by the required due date will result in suspension of a childcare services until the required documentation has been received. Any family that elects to not immunize must have immunization waiver signed.
 - Any existing chronic health condition and an accompanying health care plan.
 - Any existing Allergies and directions for protection from the allergen with clearly defined emergency response procedures and treatment should the child have an allergic reaction.
 - Any existing Dietary restrictions and acceptable substitutes.
- **The Authorization for Medication** form when an existing medical condition requires administration of prescription or over the counter medication while attending childcare.
- **Parent Input Forms** help us to get to know your child. They provide the teacher with information on growth and development. Current information will be used to plan and implement an individualized program of care for your child.
- **Fee Agreement**
- **CACFP Application**
- **Permission for Collaborative Services** - for children who are receiving Early Intervention or Behavioral Health Services or Special Health Care when they are attending childcare, parents are required to sign this form to acknowledge that, during the time the services are provided, as documented in the child's IFSP/IEP or Treatment Plan, Early Learning Connections is exempt from supervision of the child.

GRADUAL ENTRY

The childcare setting itself is often a new experience for the child. The gradual entry procedure helps a child become comfortable in this new environment. The parent visits the Program with the child. The child attends shorter days extending each day during the first week of care. This process is tailored to meet the needs of the child and family.

Sending a child to childcare is often as stressful for the parent as it is for the child. Rather than becoming a substitute for home and family, the childcare experience is intended to enrich and complement each child's overall development. Two-way communication between the parents and the teaching team is the key to developing a successful partnership.

Arrival and Departure

1. Consistency in the time of arrival and departure helps children adjust more easily to the classroom routines. Please call if pick up time is going to be much earlier or later than usual.
2. When your child is going to be absent or very late call the office and leave a message. This information will quickly be given to the teachers. Parents may also call the classroom using the room extension to leave a message.
3. All adults who enter the center must enter through the front door. The door will be locked at all times. All parents and visitors will be required to use the intercom button located on the wall to the right of the door to gain access to the building.
4. Parking is not permitted along the curb in front of the building. Adults dropping off and picking up are to park in designated parking spots. Vehicles must never be left running unattended in the parking lot.
5. For safety sake, parents must bring all children **into** the classroom in the morning, sign them in and make the teacher aware of their presence. If parents have the time, they are most welcome to stay in the classroom until their child becomes involved in play. All children will also be signed out at the end of the day.
6. Children will only be released from the classroom or playground. Children will not be released to parents during hallway transitions.
7. Do Not drop children off with money, gum, toys from home or outside food and drink to the Center. Parents who wish to bring a food treat for the class, on a birthday or for another special occasion are asked to give advance notification to the teacher. Treats must be store bought, not homemade.
8. Notes for parents are placed in the child's folder. Notices are posted on the bulletin boards in the main entry way or next to each classroom. Cubbies of toddlers and preschoolers should also be checked for soiled clothes. Each toddler and preschool child needs an extra set of clean clothes in his/her cubby.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

All admissions and services to the families and children of the Early Learning Connections programs shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible disabled persons through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aids, and use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any employee, family or individual who believes they have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination internally with Butler County Children's Center, Inc. or any of the following:

BUREAU OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE FIELD OFFICE

701 State Office Building

300 Liberty Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

BUREAU OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE HEADQUARTERS

Room 412, Health and Welfare Building

P.O. Box 2675

Harrisburg, PA 17105

PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

101 South Second Street, Suite 300

Harrisburg, PA 17105

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Offices for Civil Rights, Region III

P.O. Box 13716

Philadelphia, PA 19101

IMPORTANT PROGRAM POLICES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

It is the primary responsibility of the staff of Early Learning Connections to ensure the safety of the children in care. In addition to safety procedures, polices regarding the well-being of your family are also in place. Please review these policies and procedures.

Confidentiality is an important part of our program. Staff will not share any information about you or your child with anyone outside the program without your written consent. This also means that we request that parents/guardians cannot share anything discussed within our program, and information about other children and families with anyone outside the program. These principles help to create an atmosphere of safety, trust and openness.

Photographs: Your child's teacher will be providing you with photos from time to time. You are welcome to take photos of your **own child at family events**. We kindly ask that if other children are nearby, that you inform the parents that you will be taking a photo. That way, the parent can decide to have their child be in the photo or not.

- Privacy is important and we do ask that you use your best judgment if placing your photos on the internet.
- Staff of Butler County Children's Center, Inc. will get written permission to post photos on social media and our website.
- Please do not place any photos of non-family children or staff members on the internet.

Protecting Children is important to us. At Early Learning Connections we strongly believe that children should grow up in a community where adults care about them and keep them safe. According to Pennsylvania State law, all staff have a legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Raising children can be both fun and frustrating at times. If you find that you may need some parenting help, consider calling your Teacher. These agencies, can offer ideas, too:

- Children and Youth Agency: 724-284-5156 – Provides assistance to children and families in an abusive situation.
- VOICe: 724-283-8700 – Provides domestic violence assistance
- Warmline: 1-800-641-4546 – A helpline for parents
- Center for Community Resources: 724-431-0095 or 1-800-292-3866 – Provides information about mental health services in the community.

Need HELP? Call 211

DRUG, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND WEAPONS POLICY

All tobacco, vaping products, drugs and alcohol are not permitted at any of the Head Start locations, on or near agency vehicles or at any Head Start function. Weapons, firearms and ammunition are prohibited at all buildings and functions.

POLICY FOR RELEASING CHILDREN TO ADULTS OF DIMINISHED CAPACITY

If an employee determines that the adult responsible for picking up a child from any Early Learning Connections program is showing behavior which indicates diminished capacity, (i.e., slurred speech, unsteady walk, confused thinking, impaired reflexes, erratic behavior, altered moods, or drowsiness) the staff member will contact another authorized adult on the release list. The impaired adult should be calmly encouraged to wait for the alternate release person and not drive.

If problems arise, the teaching staff may contact the office staff for support or request police assistance through 911. Under no circumstances will the staff endanger the other children in care.

CHILD RELEASE POLICY

Prior to the time of entry into Child Care, parents are required to complete an **Emergency Contact/Parent Consent Form** which authorizes other adults to pick up their child(ren). This form will list adults* (Adult is anyone 16 years and older) to be contacted in case of illness or emergency and what adults children may be released to. Any adult on the release form that arrives to pick up a child and is unfamiliar to the staff will be asked to provide photo ID.

1. Parents may change the names or status on the release form by verbally telling the teaching staff of changes or calling and updating the list with the intake specialist. The child will be released to any adult on the release form as long as they have the appropriate identification. (Photo I.D. or two forms if no photo identification is available.)
2. A child will be released to an adult not on the release list if in an emergency the parent calls in a new release person and the parent can be identified over the phone.



ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Child Care

Regular attendance is encouraged for learning and development.

Infant Toddler Contracted Slots

The maximum allowable annual absences for a child funded with Infant Toddler Contracted Slots funding will be 40 days. When children have more than 5 consecutive unexcused absences, the staff will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for the absence and determine ways to support the child's attendance in school.

CURRICULUM

Preschool

Program Standards require each program to implement an Early Childhood Education Curriculum that guides the teaching and practices of its preschool classrooms. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, sixth edition is the Early Childhood Curriculum our program uses to insure we are offering research based, high quality early learning experiences to each and every child.

The Creative Curriculum has 38 learning objectives that provide the road map our teachers use to plan our educational program. The objectives are organized into nine areas of development and learning. The first four major areas include:

1. Social-Emotional
2. Physical
3. Language
4. Cognitive

The remaining five areas are content areas that are often described as outcomes for early learning standards. The content areas include:

5. Literacy
6. Mathematics
7. Science and Technology
8. Social Studies
9. The Arts

The tenth area, English Language Acquisition, provides objectives specific to children who are learning to understand and use the English Language.

PATHS Curriculum

The PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum teaches 4 essential skills which are, emotional therapy, behavioral self-control, problem solving, and social academic climate. It increases self-control in students as well as the ability of getting along with others by improving friendship skills. It enhances the children's self-esteem and self-confidence and the ability to give and receive compliments. The PATHS curriculum helps children increase their understanding and communication of the vocabulary describing one's emotions. The curriculum helps children to recognize and understand how their behavior affects others. The children learn to develop their logical reasoning and problem-solving vocabulary in order to assist them in solving problems effectively.

Heggerty

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Pre-Kindergarten lessons are meant to supplement existing literacy curriculum and are easily integrated into half-day or full-day preschool programs. When lessons are taught consistently each day with explicit teacher modeling and scaffolded support, teachers see improvement in students' reading, spelling, and writing, as the students learn to hear the sounds in words.

Infant and Toddlers

The Creative Curriculum for Infants Toddlers and Two's is implemented in the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program. The research-based curriculum supports the teachers as they create responsive daily routines and meaningful learning experiences for our youngest learners. This curriculum also has the 38 learning and development areas at the curriculum's core.

Program Descriptions

Infant-Toddler Care

The Infant/Toddler Program serves children between the ages of 6 weeks to 3 years. Children under the age of three are cared for in specially designed, very small group, infant toddler environments that provide personalized caregiving with a focus on interactions and activities that promote early brain development. Each child is assigned to one early childhood infant toddler professional who is responsible for all aspects of the baby's care to insure that, in these most vulnerable years, secure attachments are formed. The nutrition program provides formula and baby food for infants. Staff partner with parents of infants to replicate each baby's routine in relation to feeding and napping schedules. Toddlers are provided with a daily, nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack during which they learn self-help skills such as using utensils and drinking from a cup. Toilet learning is an additional self-help skill that is emphasized in the toddler group. The infant toddler playground provides opportunities for children to experience outdoor play in a fenced, safe play space that encourages crawling, climbing, running and riding wheeled toys under the safe supervision of their caregivers.

Parents will provide Diaper Cream, Bottles, Small Blanket and Soft Comfort Toy and extra sets of clothing. The program will provide diapers and wipes. The staff use an electronic app to send families daily information on feeding, sleeping, diaper changes and toileting. It is helpful if parents mark all extra clothing and outerwear with the child's name.

Preschool Care

The center operates one preschool childcare classroom. The room is composed of twenty children who are between the ages of 3 and 5. Personalized care and individualized educational plans are implemented by a team of three professional early childhood educators. In each classroom, the teaching team provides a wide variety of school readiness activities in an environment that is rich in activities and learning materials that promote each child's growth and development. The preschool classrooms emphasize getting children ready for school with a focus on learning in the areas of literacy, math, social studies, science and technology. Outdoor play is scheduled daily on one of the Center's three preschool playgrounds. On the playgrounds, children enjoy safe and supervised activities which include sand boxes, climbers, sliding boards, tricycles, ball play, preschool games and nature activities. Social skill development is emphasized throughout each day as the educators support the development of each child's ability to follow directions and simple rules, make friends, take turns, share and get along with others. Balanced and nutritious meals are served family style at breakfast and lunch during which children learn to try new foods, pour, pass and serve themselves from serving bowls. A snack is offered after the preschool children wake from a restful afternoon nap.

Children will need parents to provide an extra set of clothes including shirt, underwear, pants and socks. For naptime they will need a small cot size blanket and pillow. Blankets are sent home Friday to be laundered and returned on Monday.

It is required that your child wear child safe closed toe shoes that are appropriate for outside play.

SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

Central Domains					
Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Literacy	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development
School Readiness Goals	<p>Children will increasingly demonstrate self-regulation including impulses, maintaining attention, persisting with activities, and using flexible thinking to solve problems.</p> <p>Children will demonstrate initiative independence, interest and curiosity in interactions with others, and exploration of objects and people in their environment.</p>	<p>Children will engage in and maintain positive peer relationships, interactions including cooperating, and resolving conflicts.</p> <p>Children will appropriately express and respond to a broad range of emotions including concerns for others.</p>	<p>Children will express themselves in increasingly long, detailed and sophisticated ways that are clear and understandable.</p> <p>Children will identify and segment the sounds within words as separate from the word itself including rhyming and matching beginning sounds.</p> <p>Children will write for a variety of purposes using increasingly sophisticated marks.</p>	<p>Children will demonstrate understanding of the relationship between numbers, names, and quantities.</p> <p>Children will associate a quantity with written numbers up to 5 and will begin to write numbers.</p> <p>Children will demonstrate understand of mathematical operations including addition and subtraction.</p> <p>Children will analyze and interpret data, draw conclusions and communicate results</p>	<p>Children will demonstrate use of small muscles for the purpose such as self-care, writing, manipulation of tools, and cutting with scissors.</p>
Preschool	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solves problems 3b • Attends and engages 11a • Persists 11b • Takes care of own needs appropriately (4 year old) 1c • Shows curiosity and motivation 11d <p style="text-align: center;">Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>P-ATL 5 P-ATL 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacts with peers 2c • Makes friends 2d • Balances needs and rights of self and others 3a • Solves social problems 3b • Responds to emotional cues 2b <p style="text-align: center;">Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>P-SE 5 P-SE 6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks clearly 9b • Uses conventional grammar 9c • Writes name 19a • Writes to convey meaning 19b <p style="text-align: center;">Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>P-LC 5 P-LIT 1 P-LIT 6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counts 20a • Connects numerals with their quantities 20c • Quantifies 20b • Uses classification skills 13 • Compares and measures 22 <p style="text-align: center;">Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>P-MATH 3 P-MATH 5 P-MATH 6 P-SCI 6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates traveling skills 4 • Demonstrates balancing skills 5 • Uses fingers and hands 7a • Uses writing and drawing tools 7b <p style="text-align: center;">Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>P-PMP 1 P-PMP 3</p>

Central Domains					
Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Literacy	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development
School Readiness Goals	<p>Children will manage feelings, emotions, actions and behaviors with support of familiar adults.</p> <p>Infants and Toddlers will increase their ability to be persistent and attentive.</p>	<p>Children will engage in positive interactions through secure relationships with consistent, responsive adults.</p> <p>Children will recognize and interpret emotions of others, including expressing care and concern for others, with support of familiar adults.</p>	<p>Children will attend to, understand, respond and learn communication and language from others.</p> <p>Children will understand and use an increasing number of words for communication, including expressing wants and needs, and engage in conversations with others.</p> <p>Children will attend to, repeat and use rhymes and refrains from stories and songs.</p>	<p>Children will actively explore their environment to discover what objects and people do, how things work, and how to make things happen.</p> <p>Children will use a variety of strategies to solve problems, including reasoning and planning ahead.</p>	<p>Children will develop and demonstrate use of large muscles for movement, exploration of the environment and self-help.</p> <p>Children will develop and demonstrate control of small muscles for exploration, play and daily routines.</p>
	<p>Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages feelings 1a Follows limits and expectations 1b Attends and engages 11a Persists 11b Shows curiosity and motivation 11c <p>Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>IT-ATL 1 IT-ATL 2 IT-ATL 3 IT-ATL 4</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms relationships with adults 2a Responds to emotional cues 2b Interacts with peers 2c <p>Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>IT-SE 1 IT-SE 2 IT-SE 7 IT-SE 8</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehends language 8a Follows directions 8b Follows directions 8b Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary 9a Speaks clearly 9b Uses conventional grammar Engages in conversations 10a Recognizes and recalls 12a Make connections 12b <p>Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>IT-LC 1 IT-LC 7 IT-LC 8 IT-SE 3 IT-LC 9</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attends and engages 11a Persists 11b Solves problems 11c Shows curiosity and motivation 11d Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking 11e <p>Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>IT-C 1 IT-C 6</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies GOLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates traveling skills 4 Demonstrates balancing skills 5 Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills 6 Uses fingers and hands 7a Uses writing and drawing tools 7b <p>Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework</p> <p>IT-PMP 3 IT-PMP 4 IT-PMP 7</p>
Infant/Toddler					

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND GUIDANCE PROCEDURE POLICY

Early Learning Connection's Positive Behavior Management and Guidance Procedure policy is designed to keep all children and staff safe in the classroom and provide as much support for children as possible. Students, parents, and staff are provided the atmosphere to feel welcome, develop a sense of belonging, and to form respectful friendships and relationships. The policy is designed to support the child, family and staff throughout the multi-tiered process. Prevention, Intervention and Transition procedures are clearly stated for everyone involved. The Positive Behavior Management and Guidance Procedure Policy (ED-03-101) can be found in your Intake Packet.

Early Learning Connection's early learning programs aim to promote children's social-emotional skills to become competent learners. This includes developing empathy, anger management, problem solving, and impulse control skills. A consistent and predictable routine in a safe environment in the classroom helps children to behave in a positive way.

Early Learning Connection staff can help prevent children from behaving in a way that is harmful to themselves, others, or the environment by consistently reviewing the behavioral expectations with parents and children daily. Targeted aggression and unsafe behaviors have a negative impact on the learning environment and teachers will intervene, so children feel supported and safe.

Our program participates in Program Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Our PWPBIS expectations for all children staff and families are be safe, be kind and be respectful. PWPBIS information is provided in your intake packet.



SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Together, staff and parents use the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) to determine each child's current developmental levels in gross and fine motor, speech and language, cognition, and social skills. When screening results identify evidence of developmental concerns, or when children enroll with identified disabilities, our program works closely with parents and the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV Early Intervention Program for 3-5 year olds or CCR for 0-3 year olds, to ensure that children are evaluated and/or receive all necessary services.

Program Standards require screening for each child to determine the need for further, in-depth evaluation. Screening will be done within 45 days of a child's entry into the program and will include developmental, behavioral, and sensory (vision and hearing) screenings. Screenings are administered to determine if there is a need for a formal, in-depth evaluation that would be completed by a specialist.

Ongoing Assessment

Each child's level of development, and progress over time, are observed and documented so that strengths and needs are identified. The Teacher develops individualized goals and objectives. Teachers will discuss this with parents at least three times each year to gain input and jointly plan the child's educational program.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Early Learning Connections embraces a vision of mental wellness for children and families

The Preschool program has a Mental Health Consultant that is available to support the development of children's social emotional skills and behavior in the classroom. The consultant will observe classrooms and work together with the teachers to promote positive classroom environments. The Mental Health Consultant is also available to meet with families about any concerns they may have about their child's behavior and development of social emotional skills.

For Infants and Toddlers, the program may refer to the Infant Early childhood Mental Health Consultation program through the PA Keys. IECMH is a child specific consultative model which addresses the social emotional development of young children within their early childhood program.

DISABILITIES SERVICES

As an inclusive program, all children, including children with disabilities or special health care needs, are welcomed into all programs. Reasonable accommodations are made to ensure that each child has the opportunity to participate in the full range of the program.

Children with an Individual Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) are eligible for additional services to support their development. Butler County Children's Center, Inc. collaborates with the IU IV Preschool Early Intervention Program and Center for Community Resources to provide services for children who are eligible for special education programs.

The staff and parents work together to provide a learning environment that meets the individual needs of all children. Please feel free to talk to your Teacher/Parent Educator about any concerns you may have with your child's development.

TRANSITIONS

Transition to Kindergarten

Kindergarten readiness and social competency are the primary goals of the Agency. When a child is of kindergarten age, the Teacher and Enrollment Specialist will provide parents with registration dates and times from the various school districts, along with other necessary information a parent will need when enrolling their child for school.

Children's educational records will be forwarded to the school district of residence, with parental consent in an effort to help schools plan for future programming. Teachers will review children's Kindergarten Readiness with families and staff will provide support to ensure the transition process goes smoothly.

Transition from ITCS to Preschool

Six months before your child turns 3 years old, you and your Enrollment Specialist will begin planning for your child's transition for preschool.

This includes:

- A review of your family's income eligibility
- Your interest in where your child attends programming- child care, Head Start, Home Based Head Start, Pre-K Counts
- Coordinating Special Services as needed (IFSP/IEP)
- A visit to the classroom

CELEBRATION POLICY

The goal is to offer pleasant and meaningful classroom celebrations. The practices we follow are:

1. Seasonal Celebrations are part of the programs experience for children.
2. Teachers will schedule these events and plan the activities and food for the celebration. Ideas from parents are welcome!
3. Due to the potential for allergies that children/staff might have, we are not able to have families and friends bring food from home for the classroom. We require families to bring nutritional store-bought food items in the original packaging for these activities that are low in sugar, salt and fat. All food served in the classroom must be commercially prepared. It is suggested that teachers develop and offer to parents a nutritious snack list.
4. We always want children to feel safe. For this reason, we do not allow costumes or masks, as these can be scary to young children. Neither adults nor children are permitted to enter the classrooms in costumes.

5. We are fortunate to have families in our program from many different places, cultures, and belief systems. Support the heritage and culture of each child and family as well as responding to the majority culture of the classroom. Invite parents and grandparents to tell stories, show off clothes and artifacts, and teach simple crafts, show children how to prepare some of their foods, and tell how they celebrate their heritage at home.



HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Healthy children are better able to learn. The program requests parents follow the PA-EPSTD and CDC schedule for well child checkups and immunizations. Dental exams one time per year are strongly encouraged.

If a child is unable to eat any of the food that is provided for medical or religious reasons, parents should notify the staff. Parents must present a written statement from their family doctor or clergyman in order for a child to be given a meal different than the planned menu.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

If your child has special health care needs, such as allergies, asthma, medication, etc. we require a written health care plan developed by a medical professional prior to starting the program. We will maintain the plan in the classroom and on the bus. If there is a food allergy, we will need your doctor to verify and provide recommended substitutions in writing.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Injuries or Illness Requiring Medical or Dental Care

- 1) The caregiver who is with the child and who has had pediatric first aid training will provide first aid.
- 2) When immediate medical help is required staff will call 9-1-1. Staff will contact a parent or legal guardian or, if the parent or legal guardian cannot be reached, the alternate emergency contact person. The emergency facility used by the program is the closest medical facility.
- 3) A staff member will accompany the child and remain with the child until the parent or legal guardian assumes responsibility for the child.
- 4) Staff will complete a **Child Injury Report** as soon after the incident as possible. The form will be signed by the parent or legal guardian.
- 5) Dental emergencies: Dental injuries will be given first aid as in #1 above. If emergency dental care is required, a staff member will accompany the child and remain with the child until the parent or legal guardian assumes responsibility for the child.

REPORTING CHILD INJURY

A ***Child Injury Report Form*** will be completed for:

- An incident that results in an injury or a visible mark on a child (bites, cuts, bruises, swollen body parts, etc.).
- A medical emergency due to a child's ongoing health condition (asthma attack, convulsions, seizure, etc.).
- Any incident that involves the child's head even if there are no visible marks or signs of a concussion. The parent will be contacted as soon as possible after the incident.

GUIDELINES FOR ILL CHILDREN

If your child becomes ill with the symptoms listed below, we will notify you to pick up your child. This is to ensure the child's comfort and to prevent the spread of infection. You may need to call your pediatrician for advice and care.

1. **FEVER:** 100.4 degrees F. for all children
2. **UNUSUAL LETHARGY**, irritability, persistent crying, and difficult breathing.
3. **UNCONTROLLED DIARRHEA:** Three episodes with increased stool water that is not contained by the diaper or toilet use.
4. **VOMITING:** two or more times
5. **MOUTH SORES:** with drooling
6. **UNIDENTIFIABLE RASH** accompanied with a fever or change in behavior.

CHILDREN WILL ALSO BE EXCLUDED IF THEY CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN ALL DAILY ACTIVITIES AND EXHIBIT SIGNS OF ILLNESS.

If your child is excluded with; high fever, excessive vomiting, or uncontrollable diarrhea he/she must be symptom free in order to return. If you bring your child and symptoms re-occur your child will be excluded again, and you will be contacted to pick up your child.

WHEN SIGNS OF A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE AND/OR ILLNESS ARE EVIDENT, THE FOLLOWING WILL TAKE PLACE:

1. **For the child's comfort and to prevent spread of infection, the teacher/site staff will call and ask the parent or the emergency contact person to take the child home.**
2. **If signs of a contagious disease are evident, staff may request doctor's written clearance for child to return. If parent does not get clearance, the child can not return until all signs of suspected contagious illness are no longer present.**
3. **If a child is diagnosed with a contagious disease a note will be sent to all other parents informing them that their child has been exposed to a specific disease and a listing of the symptoms that they should look for. (No children's names will be disclosed.)**
4. **When parents see these symptoms, they must keep their children out of school until symptoms are no longer present. If diagnosed with a communicable disease, refer to following communicable list as to when children may return.**

5. Teachers can refuse a child's admittance if a child displays symptoms of the communicable disease or appears to be too sick to attend class.

CHILDREN MUST BE KEPT OUT OF THE PROGRAM WHEN DIAGNOSED WITH A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FOR THE INDICATED PERIOD OF TIME:

Communicable Disease	When the Child Can Return
Chicken Pox	When all blisters have scabbed (usually 6 – 10 days)
Diphtheria	48 hours from the time the child is taking antibiotics, or until there are two negative culture tests.
Fifth Disease	No exclusions unless the child is unable to participate in daily activities.
Flu	Must be fever free without the use of fever reducing medications.
Giardiasis	Once diarrhea has stopped
Hemophilus Influenza Type B (HIB)	Child must have written clearance from a health professional or local health department.
Hand, Foot, and Mouth	When child is able to contain drool, and all draining sores are covered.
Hepatitis A	One week after onset of illness and after immune globulin has been given to all contacts. Documentation of immune globulin must be given to the staff.
Infectious Diarrhea	Until negative stool sample is obtained
Impetigo	24 hours after doctor prescribed treatment has begun and all sores are scabbed over without drainage

Measles	4 days after the rash began
Meningitis	Must have written clearance from a health professional
Mononucleosis	Child will need a doctor's written permission to be re-admitted
MRSA	Child must have a doctor's written clearance to return and sores must not have drainage or pus. Sores must be covered.
Mumps	9 days after the onset of swelling
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	5 days from the time the child begins taking antibiotics
Pink Eye (acute bacterial contagious conjunctivitis)	24 hours after doctor prescribed treatment is begun
Pinworms	24 hours after doctor prescribed treatment has begin
Ringworm	24 hours after beginning medication
Respiratory Streptococcal Infections	(Scarlet Fever, Bronchitis, Strep Throat, etc.) After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment
Roseola	No treatment necessary – child may return after rash is gone.
Rotavirus	When all signs of illness are gone

Rubella	6 days from the time the rash begins
Salmonella	Must have written clearance from a health care professional
Scabies	Twenty-four (24) hours after treatment. Child will need a doctor's written clearance to be re-admitted.
Shigella	After treatment complete and two stool cultures taken 24 hours apart are negative
Tonsillitis	24 hours from the time the child begins taking antibiotics
Tuberculosis (TB)	As soon as effective therapy has been started and adherence to medication is documented
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)	5 days from the time the child begins taking antibiotics

RE-ADMISSION AFTER MEDICAL TREATMENT

If any child has been to a hospital, urgent care, emergency room, or has had any surgeries/treatments, the parent must provide written documentation allowing the child to attend the program, with or without restrictions. Documentation must be provided from a health professional.



ADMINISTERING MEDICATION POLICY

Medication administration is limited to prescription or non-prescription (over the counter) medications ordered by a health care professional for a specific child and accompanied by written consent of the parent/legal guardian.

The Children's Center will provide parents with an **Authorization for Medication Form**. The parent must take this form to the child's physician who completes the top section of the form. (If the parent does not have this form when they go to the physician, a written order from the physician that contains the information listed below will be accepted and stapled to the form.) The written order of the health professional must specify:

- The medical reason for the medication
- Name of the medication
- Dose
- Route
- When (time of the day)
- For how long (number of days)
- Any reactions or side effects that may occur

The documentation is brought to the facility with the required medication. The parent completes the middle section and the staff person completes the bottom section of the form.

Medication must be in the original container (pharmacy or manufacturer supplied) with a label that includes the child's name, date the prescription was issued and when it expires.

The label must also include the prescriber's name, dose instructions, pharmacy name and phone number, and relevant warnings.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

Butler County Children's Center, Inc. participates in the Department of Education Federal Food Program. Parents are provided a copy of the monthly menus.

1. Non-Discrimination Statement: "all meals are served to children under the Child Care Food Program are served at no separate charge regardless of race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. There is no discrimination in admissions policy, meal service or the use of facilities".
2. Complaint Procedures: "Any complaints of discrimination should be submitted in writing within 180 days of the incident to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20050". Civil Rights Complaint Forms are available in the office.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Child Abuse: State Childline 1-800-932-0313
 Children & Youth Agency 724-284-5156
 (Weekends and after 4:30 p.m. – Call 911)

Domestic Violence: VOICe 724-283-8700
 VOICe 24 Hour Hotline 1-800-400-8551

Housing or Food Related: Salvation Army: 724-287-5532
 Catholic Charities: 724-287-4011

Medical: Butler Memorial Hospital: 724-283-6666
 Ambulance: 9-1-1
 Poison Control Center (Pittsburgh): 1-800-222-1222

Center for Community Resources 724-431-0095
 Crisis Intervention, Service and Supports Coordination, Community education and supports

Children and Youth Agency: 724-284-5156

Early Learning Resource Center – Region 3 724-285-9431

Mental Health Crisis: 1-800-292-3866

211 – Human Services 211

Need help? Call 211 for Food, housing, mental health, utilities, etc.

American Red Cross – Disaster assistance 724-283-2810

Butler County Assistance Office – Temporary assistance to needy families (food stamps and medical assistance). Job training and emergency shelter assistance 724-284-8844

Butler Transit Authority – Bus schedules available .. 724-283-0445

Career Track, Inc. – Job training, youth programs, summer jobs for youth and older workers program (54 +)..... 724-431-4046

Community Care Connections – Infant Stimulation Program (0-3 years), recreation programs for disabled children (6-8), adult day care and recreation programs for adults 724-283-5945

Family First Resource Center – Parent education and family support services for pre and post-natal parents.....724-284-4894

Family Services of Butler Memorial Hospital – Outpatient mental health services, grief and loss support groups for children and families, family literacy programs, teen parenting program, parents anonymous and ADHA Programs..... 724-284-4894

Housing Authority – Affordable housing for disabled individuals and elderly families, owner-occupied housing rehabilitation and first-time home buyer services. Public housing and rental assistance for low income families 724-287-6767

Lighthouse – Food bank, furniture and appliances, warehouse, wheels to work program and emergency assistance..... 724-898-4673

Neighborhood Legal Services – Legal services to low-income residents.724-282-3888

WIC – Supplemental food program for women, infants and children. 1-866-942-2778

Department of Human Services Child Care Regulations - View Child Care Centers

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Child-Care/Pages/Child-Care-Regulations.aspx>

THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) LICENSING

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Child Development and Early Learning regulates programs in Pennsylvania to ensure they meet minimum health and safety standards. DHS conducts annual licensing inspections of providers to determine their continuous compliance with Pennsylvania regulation requirements. The Regional DHS office can be contacted at 1-800-222-2149 or 412-565-2138. Butler County Children's Center, Inc. dba Early Learning Connections certificate of compliance and inspection details can be found on the PA COMPASS website at www.compass.pa.us.childcare and use the Provider Search.

PARENT TRAININGS

Parents whose children are enrolled in all programs are invited to participate in Butler County Children's Center, Inc. Parent Trainings. The trainings which are offered locally on regular basis, address a wide variety of topics that are of interest to parents of all children. Your child's teacher will send informational flyers home to you in your child's backpack. The flyers will include dates, times, locations and registration information.

Parent participation in programs

1. Attend Parent Meetings

The Parent Meetings' are held 3 times a year with the Family Events.

2. Health Advisory Committee

Parents, staff and community professionals provide guidance and oversight to the medical, dental, nutrition and mental health components of our program.

This group formulates health policies, develops and approves program work plans, participates in program evaluations, and occasionally sponsors health-related events.

HOME AND SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

- **“Home to School Connection Folder”**. Each day your child will bring home this folder in his/her backpack. Please check the folder daily for valuable information. We will also send home creative artwork that your child has made. You, too, can use this folder to communicate with us. Send us notes and any other information that you want to share with us
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences** are held 2 times a program year. These two meetings are a time to talk about your child’s growth and development, and it is your time to talk about what you would like your child to be learning.
- **Classroom Times for Preschool** is written by your child’s teacher and is sent home weekly. Look over it to find out what books will be read, what special events and study units will be occurring (Pets! Buildings!, Trees!, Recycling!, etc.)
- **ITCS** invites families to use the “Hi Momma App” to send and receive daily communication. The app will send you a daily report at the end of the day including feeding, diapering/toileting and sleeping.