

Parent Handbook



TEENY STEINYS
For every tiny step



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Parent Handbook

MISSION

At ELC, our mission is to enhance the quality of life for children and empower individuals to reach their full potential. Our primary objective is to create a secure and nurturing environment that enables children to explore and discover the world around them. Our aim is to establish a strong educational foundation that will support lifelong learning for each child.

OUR GOALS

- Establish a secure and healthy atmosphere for the children.
- Promote positive self-esteem and independence in each child, and cultivate respect for oneself and others.
- Encourage positive relationships between children and adults.
- Facilitate the development of healthy habits in children.
- Support healthy social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth in age-appropriate ways.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

ELC was created to meet the developmental needs of children ages 0-5. We offer an array of engaging, hands-on experiences in creative art, scientific exploration, motor skill development, sensory activities, and dramatic play. Our aim is to introduce children to a wide range of positive and age-appropriate experiences in order to foster their natural curiosity and growth.

CHILD TO TEACHER RATIO

- 1-2 years of age / 3 children / one teacher
- 2-5 years of age / 8 children / one teacher

HOURS OF OPERATION

ELC hours of operations are Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. ELC will provide care during the hours and days agreed upon in advance. The Parent/Guardian must notify ELC in advance of any changes to the schedule or if the child will not attend on a scheduled day.

To secure your child's place in ELC, you are required to pay a minimum fee of three days.

STANDARD RATES AND PAYMENT POLICIES

- A registration fee of \$200 is required to enroll each new child.
- The childcare fees vary based on the number of days per week your child(ren) attends. Please see your contract for your exact fees.
- Please keep in mind that your fee is based on the days agreed on in this contract, not days attended. If you wish to make any changes, a new contract must be signed, and fees are subject to change. Further, we cannot guarantee care for your child outside of the days and times agreed upon in this contract.
- Payment will be given five days before it is due. Payments are due on the 1st of each month.
- To receive the PrePaid Discount payment must be received by the 25th of the prior month.
- Failure to make timely payments may result in termination of care services.
- A minimum 30-day written notice is required before permanently withdrawing a child from the program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

ECL will ensure that the child is in a safe and healthy environment at all times. The Parent/Guardian must provide a list of any allergies, medical conditions, or other health concerns. The ELC reserves the right to refuse care if the child is sick or has any contagious illnesses.

PAPERWORK AND FORMS

All childcare participants are required to have the following paperwork in their file for licensing purposes.

- Childcare enrollment forms
- Emergency contact information
- Copy of child's updated immunization records
- Authorized pick-up form
- Child's health history report
- Medical treatment form/Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Daycare contract

All forms and documents must be updated yearly. Any changes to the information, including changes to addresses, phone numbers, emergency contact individuals, and/or authorized pick-up individuals, need to be given to the ELC as soon as possible. All forms are available for parental inspection upon request.

COMMUNICATION

ELC will provide regular updates on the child's activities, behavior, and progress. The Parent/Guardian must notify the ELC of any changes in the child's health or behavior that may affect their care.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will provide the following (if applicable to their child(ren)):

- Change of Clothes
- Formula/Breast Milk
- Bottle/Sippy Cup
- Diapers & Wipes
- Sunscreen
- Sun Hat
- Snow gear

TRIAL PERIOD

There is a one-week trial period before your child is guaranteed a permanent place in ELC. This time will be used to determine if your child adapts well to the childcare program and that the program fulfills all of your child's needs.

Potty Training and Diaper Changing

Students in diapers- Diapers are changed every two hours. Parents are responsible for keeping their children stocked with diapers, wipes, and a change of clothes. If we have to use a school diaper, there is a \$5 fee per diaper. We do our last diaper change at 4pm. Once a Parent or approved pick-up is on site, they must change their child's diaper. However, if we have the staff and assistance is needed, we are more than willing to help if requested, ensuring you that your child's needs are our priority.

Potty Training

Children must be in underwear at all times. Children must be able to take their pants and underwear on and off independently. After the age of 3, we will no longer assist with wiping as this is a developmental skill they need to learn. After 4 years old, if a child has an accident, we will instruct them on how to clean themselves up and change clothes, but again, this is a skill they need to learn. We are committed to following whatever reward method and vocabulary you are using at home to help with a cohesive experience. Please be sure to stock the school with extra clothing and any rewards you would like us to use, as your involvement is crucial in your child's development.

RATES FOR HOLIDAYS AND VACATIONS

- **Holidays:** Care will **not** be provided, but payment is due on the following holidays when they occur on a day the child(ren) is/are regularly scheduled:
 - Week of July 4th
 - Thanksgiving Day
 - Black Friday
 - Christmas Break: 23rd of December - 1st of January
- **Teacher Training - school closes at 4 pm on the 3rd Monday of each month.**

OVERTIME AND LATE FEES

All late fees are strictly enforced and are due immediately after each occurrence.

- **Early drop-off / Late pick-up:** If the parent/guardian drops off the child earlier or picks up later than the times specified above, the following overtime rate will be charged: \$5 per minute.
- **Late payment:** a \$50 fee will be charged for every day your payment is late.
- **Administrative Fee:** \$5 fee will be charged each time your child is not signed in or out.

ILLNESS AFTER ARRIVAL

In case a child falls sick during the day, they will be isolated from other children until the parent or authorized individual arrives to pick them up. The parent or authorized person will be promptly informed via phone that the child is unwell and must be picked up from ELC within an hour.

ILLNESS, INJURY, OR EMERGENCIES

If a child becomes ill or injured, including dental issues, at ELC, the staff will follow established guidelines for care, which include the following:

- If the child becomes ill or sustains an injury more serious than a minor cut or scratch, the parent or guardian will be immediately notified.
- The parent or guardian will receive a written report of the illness or injury, including the care that was given.
- Center staff will follow specific instructions from the parent or guardian over the phone regarding the action that needs to be taken.
- If the parent or guardian is unavailable and the illness or injury warrants immediate medical attention, the medical professional or hospital closest to the school will be used, taking into consideration the preferences and extent of the illness/injury and distance involved.
- If the child is ill and requires isolation, they will be separated until the parent or authorized person removes them from ELC.
- In case of a life-threatening emergency, the Emergency Medical System (911) will be used.

LATE ARRIVALS

Parents agree to notify ELC before 8:00 am if the child will be arriving later than 8:30 am. Breakfast is served at 8:30 am if your child is not signed in by 8:00 am, they will not be served.

Non-Smoking Environment

ELC strictly prohibits smoking within its premises. This includes all areas, such as the driveway, yard, and planters. We ask all individuals to refrain from smoking on the premises.

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT PROCEDURE

To ensure the safety and security of the children at ELC, every individual dropping off or picking up a child must sign through Playground. Failure to comply with this requirement will incur a \$5 late fee and may lead to termination from ELC.

It is essential to keep ELC informed of any changes to authorized or unauthorized pick-up persons.

Parents or guardians must escort their child to and from ELC, ensuring their safety while in transit.

AUTHORIZED PERSONS FOR PICK-UP

Children can only be picked up by their parent/guardian or an individual who has previously been authorized by the parent/guardian and registered on the emergency card. ID verification will be required.

If you want to add individuals to the list of people authorized to sign in or pick up your child, we require the following information: the person's full legal name, phone number, and their relationship to the child. To ensure the safety of the children, our staff is mandated to ask for photo identification from any person picking up your child(ren) whom they do not recognize. Therefore, always have your picture identification with you when picking up your child(ren) from ELC. Please note that ELC will only release your child(ren) to individuals listed on the authorized form, and verbal permission over the phone is not sufficient to allow someone not on the pick-up list to take your child.

Unauthorized Persons for Pick-Up

At our site, any person who is not authorized to pick up a child must have a restraining or court order on file. Furthermore, we require all child custody papers and visitation schedules to be on record at ELC. In the absence of a court order stating otherwise, ELC is obligated by law to allow the child(ren) to leave with either parent.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

If a parent is unable to pick up their child on time, they must notify ELC in advance. If the parent fails to do so, they will be charged a late fee (as outlined in the overtime and late fees section), as we have a strict no-exception policy. Parents who have not informed us of their late arrival can expect the following consequences:

- Our first attempt will be to contact all authorized guardians and pick-up persons on the child's medical release.
- In the event that no authorized guardians or pick-up persons can be reached within 30 minutes, the local police and or Child Protective Services will be notified. Your child will be taken into their custody.
- If a child is continually picked up late from the program, actions for dismissal from the program may be necessary. Parents that pick up their child late on-going will receive a "Notice of Late Pick Up," if you receive three late notices, you will be dropped from enrollment.

DRESS CODE

It is important for children to wear clothing appropriate for their environment and activities. During colder weather, it is essential to dress them in warm clothes such as a coat, hat, and socks (even with sandals) to keep them comfortable. As children engage in messy activities like painting, playing on grass, and using chalk, **it is required to label all personal items with their names.** All children out of diapers are required to wear underwear every day. Parents should provide spare clothes for their children and take home any soiled garments. It is recommended to check the child's cubby regularly and ensure there are spare clothes available at all times. Additionally, parents are encouraged to clear their child's cubby of any clutter by taking home their projects daily.

OUTSIDE TOYS AND GAMES

ELC offers toys and games for the children to play with. Bringing personal toys from home can lead to problems such as breakage or loss. To avoid such issues, we kindly request that parents do not allow their children to bring personal items from home unless it is for a special show and tell day at school. In such instances, the teacher will notify the parents in advance and request the child to bring the item to school.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The childcare should be notified in writing as soon as possible for any change of address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, school, or any other important information.

FREE CHOICE

Children will have the opportunity to choose from several activities in the classroom that encourages unstructured learning and allow the child to take the lead.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

We view discipline as an opportunity for growth and learning. Our center employs various techniques to assist children in resolving conflicts. The methods we use depend on the age of the child and the circumstances surrounding the situation. Our teachers prioritize the development of problem-solving skills and an internalized sense of right and wrong in their approach. All parties, including parents, teachers, and ELC director, agree to communicate effectively and attempt to resolve any issues or concerns that may arise. The best interest of the child will always be the primary consideration in decision-making.

Children who exhibit behavior that endangers others will be supervised separately from the other children, with the goal of providing guidance and not punishment. A teacher will help the child verbally process the issue, while another teacher will remain nearby to ensure the child's safety and assist in regaining composure. The discipline approach will be positive, constructive, and prompt, and will not involve humiliation, shame, fear, physical punishment, or verbal abuse by any staff member.

If dangerous behavior continues or significantly disrupts the program, ELC will work with the child's family to find a solution, including referral for outside services or potential dismissal from the program.

BITING POLICY

We understand that biting is a significant concern and take measures to minimize this behavior. Our staff members are trained to identify triggers and prevent and reduce biting incidents. While biting is not an acceptable behavior, we recognize that it is common among young children during their early developmental stages. Children tend to explore through their senses, including orally, and may become frustrated due to communication difficulties, leading to impulsive biting. If your child is bitten or bites another child, an incident report will be provided to you and the other child's parents. Our office staff will discuss the report with you while maintaining confidentiality. We believe that being aware of potential issues and having a plan of action in place can help manage the situation when biting occurs in a group setting.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of families. We will not disclose any confidential information or intrude into family life. The children's records will be kept confidential and will only be accessible to family members, program personnel, and consultants who are obligated to maintain confidentiality. In cases of abuse or neglect, we may need to disclose information without familial consent.

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

The child's teacher conducts a daily health inspection to check for any visible signs of illness. We do not accept sick children into ELC. If a child has been ill, they must wait for at least 24 hours after being symptom-free before returning. A doctor's permission will be necessary for children with communicable diseases, such as chickenpox, impetigo, strep throat, head lice, measles, etc., to return to ELC. Please inform ELC if your child contracts a contagious illness so that we can notify other parents. If a child contracts a disease that must be reported to the Commission for Health Services, ELC Director will inform the local Health Department and take appropriate preventative measures as directed by the Park County Department of Public Health.

BATHROOM POLICY

To ensure the safety of the children, our staff will accompany groups of two or more children to the bathroom. They will maintain visual observation of the children as they enter and exit the restroom while ensuring that they can hear the children. Staff will not be left alone with any child in the bathroom. In case of an accident, we have a changing table available, and we request that children have a change of clothes with them at all times while at ELC.

INSPECTION AUTHORITY

The Montana Child Care Licensing Department has the power to inspect any childcare facility without prior notice. During such inspections, the Department has the authority to interview children and staff, as well as audit and examine any child or Childcare Center records without seeking prior consent.

SIGNS OF NEGLECT

The law requires us to report any sign of neglect or abuse to any child under our care. We will comply with this law in all aspects as they are related to the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

DAMAGES

Parents/guardians will be responsible for any damages (excluding normal wear and tear on toys) caused by their child to the childcare provider's property or belongings during their child's attendance at the childcare services.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

This childcare agreement and its attachments represent the complete agreement between the parties regarding the childcare services to be provided for the child(ren). Any prior agreements, promises, or negotiations not explicitly stated in this agreement are not valid or enforceable.

All modifications to the terms and conditions in this agreement will only be effective if they are in writing and signed by both parties.

WAIVERS AND SEVERABILITY

In the event that a court of competent jurisdiction finds any term of this agreement to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining terms of the agreement will remain valid and enforceable. Waiving a right in one instance does not affect the same right in any other instance. Additionally, a waiver is only considered valid if it is in writing and signed by the party waiving the right.

ACT OF EMERGENCY

In the event that the provider is unable to fulfill their obligations under this agreement due to an emergency or any other circumstance that is beyond their control, they will be released from any further obligation to perform under this agreement.

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION

Our childcare center is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children in our care. We recognize that lead poisoning is a significant threat to children's health and will take all necessary steps to prevent lead exposure in our facility.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Procedures:

1. Regular Inspection of Facilities: Our childcare center will conduct regular inspections of our facilities, including paint, water, and soil, to identify and eliminate any potential sources of lead. We will use a certified inspector to conduct the inspections and take appropriate action based on their recommendations.
2. Education and Awareness: We will provide our staff, parents, and caregivers with information on lead poisoning and how to prevent it. We will ensure that our staff is trained in identifying the symptoms of lead poisoning and the appropriate steps to take if they suspect a child has been exposed to lead.
3. Safe Water and Food Practices: We will test the water in our facility for lead levels and take appropriate measures if lead is detected. We will use lead-free pipes and plumbing fixtures in our facilities, and our staff will be trained to follow safe food practices to prevent contamination from lead.
4. Cleaning and Maintenance: We will implement a regular cleaning and maintenance schedule for our facilities, including dusting and vacuuming, to prevent lead dust buildup. Our staff will use lead-safe cleaning products and follow safe cleaning practices to prevent the spread of lead.
5. Response to Identified Lead Hazards: If a lead hazard is identified in our facility, we will take immediate action to eliminate the hazard and notify all affected parties. We will work with qualified professionals to ensure that the hazard is remediated promptly and effectively.
6. Per the American Red Cross, our center Director will call the Emergency Montana Poison Control Center at 1 (800) 222-1222 when a child is suspected of having ingested any poisonous or toxic substance.

CELL PHONES

When dropping off or picking up your child, kindly refrain from using your cell phone.

FOOD SERVICE

Our center is committed to providing safe and nutritious food to meet the needs of the children. We provide Breakfast at 8:00 am, Lunch at 11:30 am and a snack at 2:00 pm. To ensure this, we have established the following guidelines:

- Meals will be provided by ELC.
- Snacks will be available between meals and will include servings from at least two of the four major food groups.
- Menus will be posted one week in advance and will be in writing.
- Pesticides and other toxic substances will not be stored with food.
- Soaps and cleaning products will be stored in a locked container away from food sources.
- The kitchen and food areas will be kept clean.
- All food will be protected against contamination.
- The food served at the facility meets the nutritional guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Child Care Food Program.
- Meals are served in a family-style setting where both children and staff sit down together.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Children with identified and documented food restrictions for health reasons will be provided with alternate meals. To ensure that the child's specific needs are met, their physician must identify the food restrictions (allergies) on the medical form. Food allergy information will be posted in the classrooms to inform all staff of the restrictions.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR RELOCATING CHILDREN

To ensure the safety of all participants, monthly fire and emergency disaster drills are scheduled at ELC. In case of an actual emergency, parents will be notified about their child's well-being as soon as possible. If the site needs to be evacuated due to an emergency, the children will be taken by foot to the location listed on the "Emergency Care and Disaster Plan," which is posted on the Parent Board and in each classroom. During fire drills or practices, children will gather at the designated location where attendance will be taken, and the time taken to evacuate will be recorded. We will exit through the doors and the front gate, and children will wait with an adult in front of the childcare facility, away from any danger, or cross the street cautiously to the park next to the building.

EARTHQUAKE DRILL

On a monthly basis, children are taught and become aware of the term "Duck and Cover" immediately after their teacher directs them to go under a sturdy table.

REST PERIOD

Our childcare facility understands the importance of rest and quiet time for children and will ensure that they have daily opportunities for it. To provide a comfortable napping experience, each child will be provided with a napping cot or mat. We ensure that napping cots are disinfected daily, and blankets are sent home to be washed weekly. Children will not be forced to stay in the napping area longer than the normal scheduled nap time.

MEDICATIONS

During program hours, any medications that a child needs must meet the following requirements:

- They should be in their original bottle, with a clear label indicating the child's name, the physician's name, the drug name, and the dosage information.
- The dosage amounts and times must be appropriate for the child's age.
- The parent must complete and sign a medication authorization form, which should also be provided.
- Medications must be picked up and taken home by the parent each day and then returned to ELC.
- Over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin and cough medication, will not be administered unless written instructions and dosage information are provided by the child's physician. Medications should not be left in the child's cubby.

Vaccinations

ELC requires Parent/Guardian to keep the child's vaccines updated and provide the daycare with a copy of the child's updated immunization record. Your child cannot be admitted into the daycare until you comply with this requirement. ELC will stay compliant with 37.95.140.

Payment for Absences

In the event that a child is unable to attend our childcare services due to illness, vacation, or any other reason, the full tuition fee will still be charged. This policy ensures that we can maintain our staffing levels and continue to provide high-quality care for all children in our program.

- Notification of Absences: Parents/guardians must notify us of any planned absences 1 week in advance, such as vacations or scheduled appointments. For unplanned absences, such as illness or emergencies, parents/guardians must notify us by telephone as soon as possible.
- Extended Absences: In the event of an extended absence due to illness or other circumstances, please notify us as soon as possible. We will work with the parents/guardians to determine the best course of action for maintaining their child's enrollment in our program.

INHALERS AND EPIPENS

OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL CHILDREN, INCLUDING THOSE WHO REQUIRE MEDICATION FOR ASTHMA OR SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS.

- PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE INHALER OR EPIPEN TO ELC IN ITS ORIGINAL PACKAGING WITH THE CHILD'S NAME AND MEDICATION INSTRUCTIONS CLEARLY LABELED.
- ELC WILL STORE THE MEDICATION IN A SECURE LOCATION THAT IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO STAFF IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.
- PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST COMPLETE AND SIGN A MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM FOR EACH INHALER OR EPIPEN.
- STAFF MEMBERS WILL BE TRAINED TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK OR SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION AND TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION AS NEEDED.
- IF A CHILD EXPERIENCES AN ASTHMA ATTACK OR SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION, A STAFF MEMBER WILL IMMEDIATELY ADMINISTER THE INHALER OR EPIPEN AS DIRECTED BY THE CHILD'S PHYSICIAN.
- THE CHILD'S PARENTS/GUARDIANS WILL BE NOTIFIED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.
- AFTER ADMINISTERING MEDICATION, THE STAFF MEMBER WILL DOCUMENT THE TIME, DOSAGE, AND ANY OBSERVED SIDE EFFECTS.
- ANY UNUSED MEDICATION WILL BE RETURNED TO THE CHILD'S PARENT/GUARDIAN AT THE END OF THE DAY.
- IF A CHILD'S CONDITION REQUIRES THE USE OF AN INHALER OR EPIPEN ON A REGULAR BASIS, THE CHILD'S PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST PROVIDE A NEW, UNEXPIRED MEDICATION WHEN THE CURRENT SUPPLY RUNS OUT.
- STAFF MEMBERS WILL FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM AND WILL NOT ADMINISTER MEDICATION BEYOND THE PRESCRIBED DOSAGE OR FREQUENCY.

FIRST AID KIT

The childcare facility keeps a first aid kit in the office and on the playground. Additionally, each teacher is provided with a simple first aid kit for minor injuries that do not require medical attention. If a child sustains a simple injury, a supervising teacher or the Director will provide simple first aid, complete an incident/injury report, and file it in the child's folder. The parent will receive a copy of this report. All regular staff members have received training in Basic First Aid and CPR.

TERMINATION OF CARE

Either party may terminate this agreement with written notice of 30 days. In lieu of providing the four weeks' notice, the parent (s) may remit three weeks' child care fees. The Childcare Provider reserves the right to terminate care immediately if the Parent/Guardian fails to comply with the terms of this agreement and/or if the child's behavior is not conducive to the safety and well-being of other children enrolled in the childcare program, their own safety, or the safety of our staff.

LIABILITY

The Childcare Provider is not liable for any injuries or damages that may occur while the child is under their care. The Parent/Guardian is responsible for any damages caused by the child while under the care of the Childcare Provider.

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