

# Family Handbook

Updated September 2025



The Early Learning Center

1633 Route 70, Southampton

[telceducation.com](http://telceducation.com)

(609) 953-3736

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# WELCOME TO THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER!

**This handbook is your guide to our center and our operational procedures.**

**If you have any questions about the policies in this handbook, or if you have any suggestions on something we could be doing better, please contact us at 609-953-3736.**

At TELC, our mission is to provide child care that meets the needs of each child and family in a safe, loving and educational environment. Our focus is to provide an encouraging educational experience, promoting social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Committed to the families we serve, we strive to give parents complete peace of mind while providing quality, reliable and safe child care.

Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information, along with the Enrollment & Tuition Agreements. Before your child's first day, we ask you complete the Acknowledgment of Receipt form. We're looking forward to getting to know you and your child. We are honored you've chosen us for your child's education and care.



# GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION

## Center Management & Contact Information

We're here to answer any questions or discuss concerns you may have at any time.

Owners: Jennifer and Alexander Medvesky | Jenn@telceducation.com

Curriculum Director: Blythe Long | Blythe@telceducation.com

Phone Number: 609-953-3736 | Fax number: 609-953-7082

Facebook: @TELC

## Unexpected Closures

TELC will remain open during most severe weather events. When there are severe weather warnings the Center will close, or hold a delayed opening in accordance with the Lenape Regional High School District. You will be notified via the Brightwheel app by 5:30 a.m. of a closure, or delayed opening. In the event the State closes TELC for any period of time due to quarantine or pandemic concerns, families will be notified as soon as possible.

## Closure Dates

The Center will be closed on the following dates for holidays and teachers in service days:

- August 29th & September 1st
- October 13th
- November 27th & 28th
- December 24, 25 & 26
- December 31 Early Dismissal 3:00 pm
- January 1st
- January 19th Teacher In-Service
- February 16th
- April 3rd
- May 25th
- June 19th Teacher In-Service
- July 3rd

# GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION

## Teaching Staff

We conduct criminal background screenings, including fingerprints, for all of our staff. Every staff member completes a full orientation and training upon hiring, to ensure they are able to meet the needs of the children they are serving.

## Professional Development

Every teacher completes 10 hours of health and safety training and Pediatric CPR/First Aid Training within the first 4 weeks of hire. Additionally, our teaching staff completes 20 hours of professional development annually, meeting the child care licensing guidelines for continuing education.

## Grow NJ Kids

We are a proud participant of New Jersey's Quality Rating Improvement System Grow NJ Kids! Research shows that children who are in quality child care and early learning programs when they are young are better prepared for Kindergarten with better reading skills, more math skills, and larger vocabularies.

## Brightwheel

Brightwheel is a parent communication tool. Quality of early childhood development is dependent on the connection between parents and their child's caregivers. This tool allows teachers to keep parents informed of their child's day, including activity reports, learning activities, special reminders, photos and online billing.

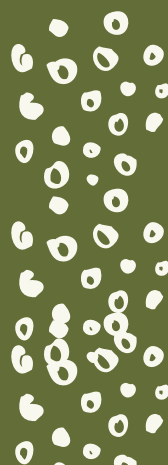
## ABC Mouse

ABCmouse.com is an online based learning tool. The comprehensive curriculum includes Language development, Reading, Math, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and Health. Our Preschool students are given an opportunity to use ABCmouse.com at school.

## Daily Classroom Schedules

Each classroom develops a daily schedule to best serve the children in their group and the activities they need to accomplish. We ask that all children arrive to the center by 10:30. This ensures your child's full participation in the education program. Daily schedules are posted in each classroom.

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



## **Infant**

Infancy is the most important time in the development of a child. Infants gain confidence in themselves and their abilities. From first smiles to first steps, we encourage babies to meet all their milestones in a loving, caring environment.

## **Waddler**

Exploration and discovery is the basis for everything we do in our Waddler Program. We offer the children an opportunity to hold, touch and explore the world around them. They begin to learn letters and numbers through music, books and interactive teaching.

## **Toddler**

Our Toddler Program is all about socialization and conversation. Toddlers learn how to express their wants and needs verbally, explore their many emotions, and learn from each other through play. Potty training, self-feeding, and following multi-step instructions are mastered in this classroom.

## **Preschool**

Our Preschool Program introduces children to the fundamentals of early learning. Through games, reading, and dramatic play, children begin to recognize letters, numbers, shapes, and colors. We provide opportunities for preschoolers to express themselves and learn through direct experience in an interactive and supportive environment.

The Preschool Program is designed with kindergarten readiness as its primary goal. In addition to continuing work with letters and numbers, children practice self-help skills, problem-solving, and social awareness. These experiences strengthen both academic and social foundations, preparing children to enter kindergarten with confidence and independence.

## **Transitioning to a new room**

As children grow and develop, they need new challenges and social interactions with other children in their peer group. Children will make a transition to the next program based on their age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. This transition is a gradual transition over a week's time to ensure that it is an easy, comfortable change for your child.



# CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENTS



## **Creative Curriculum**

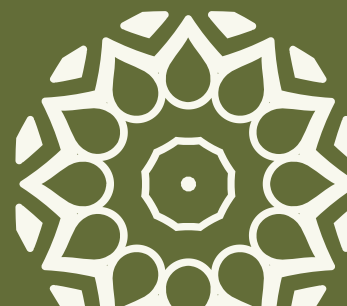
The curriculum of choice at TELC is the state recognized Creative Curriculum. This curriculum is taught in all our classrooms in various degrees. This curriculum is child led to ensure each year of your child's learning is age appropriate, unique and enjoyable.

The Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop their creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. The program is divided into 11 “studies” that are a child lead discovery. Through these “studies” the children will learn social, emotional, fine/gross motor, and problem-solving skills, along with letters, numbers and shapes.

## **Teaching Strategies GOLD**

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an ongoing observational system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten; helping teachers focus on what matters most for school readiness. GOLD helps teachers plan for each child and ensure that every child is making progress. We know how important these early years are to children’s success in school and in life. Like you, we want to do everything we can to give your child a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

# ATTENDANCE POLICIES



## Hours of Operation and Arrival Procedures

The Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. until closing at 6 pm. Children may not enter the building prior to 6:30 a.m. Upon arrival, families are required to use their assigned individual door code to enter the building. For security purposes, please do not hold the door for others. At this time, you may share any daily updates or important information with a staff member to help us care for your child.

To maintain consistent daily routines, the Center has established a 10:30 a.m. arrival deadline. Children arriving after 10:30 a.m. may not be admitted, as late arrivals disrupt classroom activities. Exceptions may be made for doctor's appointments or other unavoidable circumstances, provided that families call ahead to notify the Center of the expected arrival time.

## Departure and Pick-Up Procedures

The Early Learning Center closes promptly at 6:00 pm. Families are expected to pick up their child(ren) on time each day. If you anticipate being late, please call the Center as soon as possible to inform us.

Only individuals listed on the child's authorized pick-up list will be permitted to take a child from the Center. If an authorized pick-up will be picking up your child please contact the Center via Brightwheel or phone to notify administration in advance. Staff will request identification if the person picking up is unfamiliar to them. This policy is in place to ensure the safety of every child.

Late pick-ups will result in a \$3.00 per minute fee per child, beginning immediately after the Center's closing time. These fees will be added to your account balance and must be paid promptly. Repeated late pick-ups may result in further action, up to and including termination of enrollment.

At the end of each day, staff will provide families with any important updates, including information on meals, rest time, and the child's daily activities.



# ATTENDANCE POLICIES

## **Tuition**

Tuition is due by your arrival time for the week of service. Payment can be made via the Brightwheel app, check or cash. All checks should be made out to The Early Learning Center and the week of service dates and week number written in the memo line. Checks are to be placed in the black drop box next to the front door.

If your tuition payment is cash, your payment needs to be in a sealed envelope with your child's name, week of service, and the amount enclosed. The envelope should be placed in the black drop box next to the front door.

Tuition increases will occur annually in September. There is an annual re-enrollment fee for the upcoming school year.

A summer activity fee will be assessed annually and is due in the month of June.

## **Vacation Week**

Each family is provided one unpaid week of tuition for vacation per contract year. Please submit in writing, which week of service you will be taking, at least two weeks prior.

## **Withdrawal of Service**

A MINIMUM OF TWO WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE is required for termination of childcare services. Even if your child does not attend during that two week period, payment is still required. Any fees not paid on time with regards to termination of childcare services will also be subject to daily late fees, until full payment is received. If fees are not paid, the unpaid bill will be placed into collections.

# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION POLICIES

The Early Learning Center understands that communication and involvement between parents and our teaching staff is very important on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to ensure that each child gets all their needs met academically, socially, and physically. We pride ourselves on our “open door” policy by offering many ways for parents, teachers, and office staff to communicate.

## Parent/Family Workshops

Below you will find a list of potential workshops that we offer twice a year.

- Food Allergies
- Parent Resilience
- Parent Bonding
- Toilet Training
- Car Seat Safety Checks
- Positive Parent/Child Interactions
- Communication
- Positive Discipline

On top of these we also host Back to School Night, and one Family Fun Night per year.

## Parent Teacher Conferences

Though our doors are always open to conferences when you request them, at least one time a year we offer to sit down with all preschool parents/guardians to discuss your child's academic achievements. Conferences occur in the Spring where your child's individual portfolio and assessments conducted in the classroom will be shared. Additionally, we ask you bring observations from home and any questions or concerns that you would like to discuss to this meeting.

# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION POLICIES

## Email

We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we can have an open form of communication for any comments, suggestions, or concerns.

## Calendars and Newsletters

Monthly Calendars are a snapshot of what your child's class will be learning each day in conjunction with our Creative Curriculum studies. Monthly Newsletters provide Center news, events, and announcements. Monthly Calendars and Newsletters will be sent via the Brightwheel App.

## Communication Boards

Located throughout the center, communication boards provide center news, upcoming events, reminders of holiday closing dates, announcements, etc. Additional information about The Early Learning Center's "happenings" can be found on our Facebook page @TELC and on Instagram @theearlylearningcenternj.

# HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES



## **Allergies**

Families are expected to notify the Center regarding children's food or environmental allergies. Children with diagnosed allergies, or asthma, are required to provide the Center with an individualized health care plan, signed by the child's physician, detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, care, and all necessary medication. We are not a peanut free Center.

## **Handwashing**

We encourage the importance of handwashing at an early age to help lessen the spread of germs. Children will wash their hands upon arrival to school, before eating, after bathroom visits, when returning from outside, and at any other necessary time. Handwashing is a healthy habit that should also be reinforced at home.

## **Staff Safety Training**

Upon hiring, every staff member completes a 10-hour health and safety training. Additional training includes: CPR, First Aid, and EPI Pen Training.

## **First Aid and Accident Reports**

Bumps and bruises are a part of childhood and when these minor scrapes and scratches occur at our center TELC and First Aid will be given. For small injuries, an accident report will be filled out and shown to the parent(s)/guardian(s) upon pick up with a detailed account of what happened. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will sign the accident report acknowledging they were notified of the accident and the report will be put in the child's permanent file.

For injuries to the head, or any injuries deemed more than a minor injury, the Director, or teacher, will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to make them aware of the accident.

# HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

## Emergency Action Plans

An Emergency Action Plan will be developed for children in the program having long term, chronic health care, or other special health care needs. Such a plan will be developed with information from the child's physician, parents, and health care consultant. Classroom staff will be made aware of the plan to the extent that it impacts the child's daily classroom schedule and any special accommodations that need to be made within the classroom environment.

## Medications

All medications are stored in a locked closet that is inaccessible to children. Children are not given any medication without the written authorization of a medical doctor. Written consent may only be on a "Permission to Administer Medications" form and all medications must be in their original bottles with original labels. Staff must also indicate on the administering form the date, time and dosage of medicine given at each administration and then initial this information. For prescription medication, only the directions on the bottle will be accepted for administering the medication. In all instances, the staff needs to know when the child received his/her last dosage of the medication from the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure medication is given at appropriate times. If the prescription medication is on an "as needed" basis, such as an EpiPen, inhaler etc., an Action Plan must accompany the medication in its original packaging with pharmacy information intact. With any prescription antibiotic, children may not return to care until they have had a full 24 hours of dosage and are no longer contagious to ensure they are well on the road to recovery.

## Immunization Records

Current immunization records are required at the time of enrollment. Families must also provide updated documentation following each well visit where immunizations are administered.

The Early Learning Center is required to maintain complete and accurate health files for all enrolled children. Our records are audited annually by the Burlington County Health Department, and families may be asked to submit additional medical information as required by New Jersey child care licensing regulations.

Failure to provide up-to-date immunization records or other required health information may result in a suspension of services until documentation is received.

# HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES



## Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Vaccine Requirement

In accordance with the New Jersey Department of Health, all children 6 months through 59 months of age are required to receive the current seasonal influenza vaccine each year by December 31st. Families must submit proof of vaccination to the Center.

- **Exclusion Policy:** Children who have not received the influenza vaccination by December 31st must be excluded from attending child care/preschool for the remainder of influenza season (through March 31st), unless they receive at least one dose of the vaccine or reach 60 months of age.
- **Mid-Year Enrollment:** Children enrolling after December 31st must provide documentation of receiving the flu vaccine before attending. Children enrolling after March 31st are not required to receive the vaccine; however, since flu season may extend into May, vaccination is still strongly recommended.
- **Exemptions:** New Jersey law allows valid medical and religious exemptions under the Immunization of Pupils in School regulations (N.J.A.C. 8:57-4). Documentation must be provided for any exemption.

For more information, please review the NJ Immunization Requirements FAQs at:

<http://nj.gov/health/cd/imm.shtml>

## Immunization Exemption

New Jersey law allows valid medical and religious exemptions under the NJ Immunization of Pupils in School Regulations (N.J.A.C. 8:57-4).

- **Medical Exemption:** If an immunization is contraindicated for medical reasons, an Immunization Exemption Form will be provided. This form must be completed by the child's health care provider and will be kept as part of the child's permanent immunization file. The form must clearly state:
  - a. The specific medical reason for the exemption
  - b. The expected length of time the immunization is contraindicated
  - c. The signature of a physician licensed to practice medicine or osteopathy in any U.S. jurisdiction
- **Religious Exemption:** Families requesting a religious exemption must submit a signed, written statement explaining how immunization conflicts with their bona fide religious beliefs.

Failure to provide current immunization documentation or valid exemption paperwork may result in a suspension of services until requirements are met.



# ILLNESS POLICY



The Early Learning Center carefully follows all health guidelines to insure the healthiest environment possible. We hope that you will work with us to limit exposure by keeping your children home when necessary. To stop the spread of communicable diseases, TELC has an illness policy that we request each family strictly follow. Children who exhibit the following signs or symptoms of illness are required to remain home. If a child exhibits any of the symptoms listed below while at the Center a parent/guardian will be contacted, and you will be asked to pick up your child within 60 minutes of contact. It is at the discretion of TELC management to determine if a child needs to be picked up from the Center. ***If a child is sent home from the Center due to symptoms of illness, they will be required to remain at home the following day unless a physician's written statement is provided stating that they may return to school.*** Once the child is symptom and/or fever free for 24 hours or has a physician's written statement stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, the child may return to the center unless contraindicated by the Burlington County Health Department or State of NJ Department of Health.

Signs of Illness include but are not limited to:

- Overall unwell feeling
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting one time
- Skin rash other than a localized diaper rash
- Evidence of head lice
- Any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Excessive coughing that is not their baseline
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Aching
- Chills
- Headache
- Rash
- Sores on hands, feet, or mouth
- Pink or red conjunctiva with eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo
- Strep throat
- Has a physician's written statement that child be separated from other children

# ILLNESS POLICY

## CONT'D



Children who have been ill may return when:

- Child is free of fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other related symptoms of illness for a full 24 hours without the use of symptom reducing medications.
- If an antibiotic treatment is required, the child must have received the antibiotic treatment for 24 hours prior to returning to the center.
- You can provide a physician's written statement releasing the child and verifying that the child is no longer contagious for all communicable diseases or illnesses causing the child to miss 3 or more consecutive days of care.
- For non-contagious infections / illnesses / complaints (such as ear infections, teething etc.) the child may return to care without the 24-hour waiting period only if the child has been diagnosed by a doctor and is accompanied by a physician's written statement deeming the child to be safe and fever free.
- The child is able to fully participate in scheduled childcare activities.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's written statement stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

# ILLNESS POLICY

## CONT'D

### Daily Health Screening

All staff, families, children and their household members must conduct a check before coming into the Center. Should you or any household member have any of the following symptoms during the preceding 72 hours, we ask you to remain out of the Center and notify us of symptoms. These symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Muscle Aches
- Difficulty Breathing
- New Loss of Taste or Smell
- Fever at or above the threshold temperature of 100.4° F (or would have, but for the use of fever-reducers).

**Please note: COVID-19 guidelines and requirements may change, from time to time, based on current conditions. If you have any questions, please contact the Center.**

**For more information on the management of communicable disease please follow the link on the last page of the handbook.**



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POLICIES

## Emergency Preparedness & Management

The Early Learning Center prioritizes the safety of every child and staff member. To ensure readiness, we conduct monthly emergency drills and maintain comprehensive emergency management plans for a variety of situations.

### Emergency Procedures

- In the event of an emergency, the Center will follow established management plans, which may include Lockdown, Shelter in Place, or Evacuation.
- If the Center is placed in Lockdown or Shelter in Place, a notice will be posted on the front window. During this time, no one will be permitted to enter or exit the building until local officials determine the area is safe.

### Evacuation Site

If the Center is evacuated, we will relocate to:

The Evergreen Dairy Bar

1643 Route 70

Southampton, NJ 08088

This site is adjacent to our Center. A command center will be established with local officials, and all children will remain there for care and parent pick-up.

### Family Notification

- During Lockdown, Shelter in Place, or Evacuation, families will receive alerts through Brightwheel and Remind, along with follow-up phone calls.
- If we are unable to reach a parent/guardian directly, we will begin contacting individuals listed as emergency contacts on your child's enrollment form.

### Medical Emergencies

- If a minor accident or injury occurs, staff will administer basic first aid and notify parents/guardians of the incident and any treatment provided.
- If emergency medical treatment is required, staff will first call 911 and then contact the parent(s)/guardian(s).

# POSITIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY

## Positive Discipline Methods

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. Methods of positive discipline shall be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children and lead to the ability to develop and maintain self-control. Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

For more information on our Positive Discipline Policy please click the link on last page.

## Diapering & Toilet Learning

Every child begins toilet learning at their own pace. When your child shows readiness, teachers will partner with you to encourage consistent toilet learning. Until then, staff provide diaper changes every two hours or as needed, following posted state-approved procedures. All changes are logged daily in Brightwheel. Parents are responsible for supplying diapers and wipes.

## Rest Time & Infant Sleep

Nap time is scheduled from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

- Infants (6 weeks–12 months): Nap as needed throughout the day and are always placed on their backs in a crib with only a fitted sheet.
- Waddlers, Toddlers and Preschoolers (13 months–3 years): Rest on Center-provided cots during nap time.

Parents must provide a crib sheet and blanket, which are sent home weekly to be washed and returned. We understand that not all children sleep each day. Those who do not fall asleep during nap time are encouraged to rest quietly on their cot. Quiet activities such as looking at books or holding a soft toy may be provided to help children relax while respecting the rest time of others.

## Biting

Biting is a common stage of development for infants, toddlers, and sometimes preschoolers. When it occurs, staff will:

- Comfort and care for the child who was bitten.
- Respond calmly to the child who bit and guide them toward more appropriate behaviors.
- Focus on prevention by identifying triggers and encouraging positive communication.

Families will be kept informed, and strategies may be developed together to reduce biting.

Confidentiality: For privacy, children's names involved in biting incidents will not be shared with other families. Parents will only be informed of their own child's experience.

# EXPULSION POLICY

## Expulsion Procedure

Unfortunately, there are reasons when we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center.

### IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION:

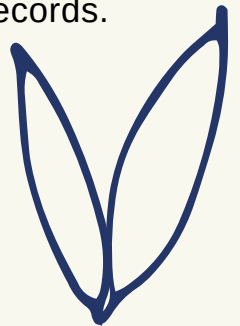
- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

### PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION:

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms, including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse, intimidation, or disrespect to staff members.
- Other

### CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION:

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.
- Other





FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CLICK ON THE  
LINKS BELOW



**Expulsion Policy**

**Release of Children**

**Guidelines for Positive Discipline**

**Breastfeeding Policy**

**Use of Technology & Social Media**

**Management of Communicable Diseases**

**DCF Information to Parents**

In addition to these resources, the Center has a Community Resource binder available in the office that can be used at your convenience. Please feel free to request the informational binder any time you visit the Center.