

# Family Handbook



Riverview Christian Early Learning Center



2025-2026

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## **WELCOME TO RIVERVIEW CHRISTIAN EARLY LEARNING CENTER (Pre-K Counts Edition)**

We are grateful that you have entrusted your child to our care. We look forward to being a part of your child's growth, development, and early education. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of this wonderful process! We are a non-profit, non-discriminatory, service organization established in 1987. We are licensed and certified by the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) and comply with all standards set forth by that department. We are also a participant in the PA Keystone STARS program. (More information on Keystone STARS may be obtained at <http://papromiseforchildren.com/choose-a-quality-program/keystone-stars>.) The following policies and procedures have been thoroughly thought out to provide a quality program for your children.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide quality, childcare in a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment that promotes social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. We desire to encourage and support families through the educational process and growth of their child.

### **Goals**

1. To develop a safe and creative atmosphere for children/families and staff to thrive.
2. To communicate the educational excellence of RCELC to every family in the local community.
3. To provide students and families with health and wellness programs

### **Hours of Operation**

**RCELC- 6:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday**

**(Hours of operation subject to change)**

**Pre-K Counts Hours- 8:00am - 2:00pm**

**Pre-K Counts students who attend the FREE program must adhere to the program's attendance expectations of 8am to 2pm Monday through Friday.**

**Children must be checked into their classroom no later than 8:15 a.m. for care unless prior arrangements have been made with the office and your child's teacher. Your child is to be picked up by 2:00 p.m. A wrap around fee will be charged after 2:10 pm. Families who are frequently late pick-ups (2 late pickups within a school year) may be dismissed from the participation in the Pre-K Counts program. Families will be asked to commit to a more reliable designated pick-up person or may be requested to seek an alternate program which meets their family's scheduling needs as our staff also have families and engagements outside of their scheduled shifts.** Please notify the office if you must pick up late due to an unexpected circumstance. **(Should you need to reach someone in the event of an emergency, past office hours, please use extension 213 to reach someone in the Infant 1 Room.)** Due to lower attendance in the early morning and late evening hours, certain age groups are combined at these times. Please see your child's classroom teacher for current room hours.

**All families must complete (truthfully and in entirety) Drop-Off Notes and Health Screening questions through the Playground App each day, prior to the child's arrival in the classroom.** The information should consist of the pick-up person and time of expected departure, information pertaining to medications, and social/emotional responses to sleep and morning routines.

Late arrivals, early departures, and or absences should also be documented through the Playground App. Not completing this information may result in refusal of care for the day or a phone call to attain the mandatory information.

If your drop off times are inconsistent, please notify the classroom or the ELC office at least 1 day in advance where possible. We understand that circumstances may arise where drop off times may differ from day to day but giving us advance notice allows the teachers to plan their day better, based on the number of children they will have. We also must follow DHS ratio mandates, and a student's fluctuating schedule may conflict with classroom staffing. It is essential to maintain the pick-up times specified on your student's Tuition Agreement Form.

### **Children with Special Needs**

Children with special needs will be accepted at Riverview Christian Early Learning Center, provided we have acceptable accommodations. **We are not staffed to provide one-on-one care.** We **require** that the child's parents provide us with necessary information about his/her needs, physician, and specialists. The parents should complete an IEP/IFSP sign-off sheet stating that we have been given a copy of the report. **A current IEP/IFSP must be provided to the ELC office prior to the child's first day.** It is strongly recommended that the child's teacher be included in all IEP/IFSP meetings following enrollment.

Prior to their first day, a meeting or phone conversation between the child's family and teacher may prove to be beneficial, to best meet the needs of the child's first days of transition. The RCELC staff will work with the parents and specialists to facilitate the adjustment for the needs of the child. RCELC employs an Educational Advocate who will assist families in collaboration with the attainment and partnerships with outside services.

Children whose teachers and/or families are concerned with possible developmental delays, through the usage of Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ and ASQ: Social/Emotional), may be referred for supplemental support and given additional resources (which are always available from our office). It is the family's responsibility and liability to follow through on obtaining these additional services.

RCELC does not employ a full-time nurse onsite for extensive medical needs (i.e., feeding tubes, I.V. necessities, etc.).

Children who cannot maintain active large group care for an extended amount of time will be sent home early. We do not provide 1:1 care for children. Refunds on tuition will not be issued. Referrals will be provided as alternate options in the event we are unable to meet the child's needs without reasonable accommodation. RCELC is not liable for services received from any outside agencies.

### **Students who attend PreK Counts may not participate in external educational programs due to governmental funding conflicts. (ie. Early Intervention, etc.)**

We will not be obligated to maintain enrollment for children whose families do not wish to work with our program in supporting the health, safety, and developmental progress of all children within the program. This may be in the form of providing documentation within a specified amount of time, attainment or provision of supportive services specific to the needs of their child, missed appointments, etc. (Behaviors which jeopardize the health and safety of our students and staff; including but not limited to elopement and aggressive behaviors; and/or significantly hampers the development of our student body will not be permitted and may necessitate an early pick up or other alternate plan of action.)

Children who attempt elopement in a calendar year will not be permitted to attend camp or other program reinstatement due to the severity and danger it poses to the eloping child, staff who must retrieve the child, and peers within their learning community. Proof/Documentation of behavior improvements will be required prior to reconsideration by the Leadership Board. A second forced withdrawal will result in total denial of all future services.

Families who demonstrate threatening behaviors (including verbal) towards any RCELC stakeholder may be subject to immediate dismissal from the program without prior notice. Refunds or reimbursements for tuition paid will not be provided in the event of dismissal/forced withdrawal.

### **Enrollment Policy and Procedures**

Children are granted enrollment on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to sex, race, color, religion, creed, political belief or national origin.

Enrollment is open to all children, provided the center can meet the needs of the child.

A child should be enrolled no less than 1 full business day prior to his or her first day of attendance. As part of the initial enrollment process, the following forms **must** be completed and submitted to the office prior to the first day of attendance (unless otherwise noted below):

1. Registration Form
2. Emergency Contact Form (updated every 6 months or less)
3. Agreement Form (updated every 6 months or less)
4. Permission to Photograph Form
5. Toileting Assistance Form (all children under age 5)
6. Child Health Assessment Form (this is required no later than 30 days after enrollment date. Additional updates will be requested from the ELC office)
7. Sunscreen Permission Form (May-September)
8. Custody Orders/Court Documents, including PFA's (if applicable)
9. IEP/ISP permission form & IEP/ISP hard copy (if applicable)
10. ELN (Early Learning Network) Child & Family Information Form (Infant through Pre- K students only)
11. Registration for the Playground App/Communications

**As part of the initial enrollment process, the following payments must be submitted to the office prior to the first day of attendance (wrap-around families only):**

1. Non-refundable Registration Fee
2. One Week Tuition on Deposit - (the deposit is held until the child is completely withdrawn from RCELC - it will not be considered payment for the first or any other week of attendance but will be refunded after withdrawal paperwork is completed)
3. Subsidy caseworker confirmation prior to enrollment (If applicable – subsidized families with a co-pay of less than \$50.00 will be required to make an initial deposit of \$50.00)

**The annual/ongoing enrollment process requires the following forms and payments be submitted to the office prior to their required due date, set forth by ELC Administration:**

1. Completed Registration Form accompanied by the annual non- refundable registration fee/s. (including subsidized families)
2. Completed Emergency Contact Form (updated every 6 mos. or less)
3. Agreement Form (updated every 6 months or less)

4. Permission to Photograph Form
5. Toileting Assistance Form (All Children Under Age 5)
6. Custody Orders/Court Documents (if applicable)
7. IEP/ISP permission form & IEP/ISP hard copy (if applicable)

### **Pre-K Counts (PKC) Enrollments & Pre-K Counts Wrap Around Care**

PreK Counts is a free program for children ages 3-5 years, which runs on a 180-day schedule of M-F 8:00 a.m. - 2 p.m., unless otherwise communicated. PKC participation requirements include daily attendance during this timeframe. Promptness is essential for the structure of the educational program. Absences and tardiness must be reported via the Playground App. Wrap Around Care is available on a limited basis, which also requires financial obligations. Wrap around care eligibility is contingent upon prior enrollment and is charged a weekly flat rate (regardless of attendance.) Wrap-Around care requires prior enrollment for participation. A flat rate will be charged, regardless of attendance. Children who are in care past the 15 minute grace period and not enrolled in the wrap-around program are still subject to being charged the flat rate and will also be in jeopardy of losing their child's placement in the PKC Program if tardiness exceeds 2 incidents within a school year. We are not staffed to provide 1:1 care for children. **If RCELC is closed for holidays, inclement weather, etc.- PreK Counts is also closed.**

**Please refer to the Hours of Operation section on page 2 for information pertaining to attendance expectations to avoid disruptions to your child's enrollment status.**

Families must apply for PreK Counts by completing an application and providing necessary documentation to determine eligibility. Documentation includes proof of age, medical records, 2 proofs of residency, and proof of income. Specific/permissible documents are listed on the PreK Counts application cover sheet. Families who qualify for PreK Counts will be considered qualified for consecutive years; however, a new application and an updated physical will still be required for enrollment into the program. Applications are handled on a first come, first serve basis regardless of previous enrollment.

Breakfast, lunch, and a snack are provided for children within the PreK Counts program. Families are still responsible for additional student needs, especially for those enrolled in Wrap-Around Care.

### **Family Handbook**

All families will be able to access the Family Handbook on our website. Those parents without computer access may ask for a hard copy. There are also hard copies located in the office and within each classroom for on-site reference. It is the responsibility of all families to become familiar with and adhere to all policies contained within, and to stay informed on changes made, as necessary.

### **Payment Policy**

**Tuition is due each week on Monday by 9:00 a.m., regardless of your child's attendance.  
(Wrap- around families only)**

**Riverview Christian Early Learning Center is a non-profit service organization. Therefore, your commitment to your financial agreement is vital to our daily operations. To maintain a stable and consistent program, we must offer our staff the security of knowing that their employment here is secure and stable. Your tuition is the only financial resource we must compensate our staff. Paying tuition only when your child is in attendance would not allow us to provide our staff**

**with a financial guarantee.**

Weekly rates have been calculated with consideration given to holidays, in-service days, and emergency closings. The only exception is the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, which we are closed with no charge. (Exact days will be communicated each year and will vary depending on when the holidays fall.)

Billing is completed every Friday for the following week of care. Printed invoices (bills) **will not** be automatically given for every account. If a printed invoice is needed, please provide 24 hours' written notice in email or writing to the Financial Director.

Families with more than one child will be eligible for a discount on their tuition. A 10% (for PT students) / 20% (for FT students) discount will be applied for a second child and the discount will be applied to the youngest child's tuition rate. A 15% (for PT students) / 30% (for FT students) discount for a third child, etc., will be applied to the youngest child's tuition rate. (Multiple child discounts do not apply to School-Age students, except for full-time summer camp students). Discounts may not apply to families receiving subsidized funding.

Invoices (bills) and occasional account statements or notices will be sent via email to the address on file with the ELC office or placed in your child's mailbox, located in your child's classroom.

Timely tuition payments are required and necessary. Payment is due each week on Monday for *that* week of care/education. **Late fees will be assessed if payment is not made by 9:00 a.m. Monday.** In the event of an absence or holiday on a Monday, accounts should be pre-paid to avoid late fees.

Families who utilize the Playground App self-payment option should make their payment no later than 4:00 p.m. Sunday to allow time for processing. (See Payment Procedures for more information.)

**If a family falls two weeks behind in their tuition the family will be asked not to attend RCELC until arrangements are made. Your spot will not be held and may be taken. If a family is facing a financial hardship, they need to speak to the Financial Director (ext. 205). Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments via checking or credit card accounts. If a payment plan is needed, auto payments will also be required. Accounts will be reviewed for eligibility for continued care in December and June for the next fiscal term, requiring accounts to be in good standing.**

Subsidy is accepted and RCELC does not charge any overage or difference in balance from assigned co-pays. The exceptions are if children are picked up after 5:30pm, are here more than the contracted hours (in this case, the families will be billed the appropriate fees or the normal hourly rate), or upon initial enrollment if a co-pay is less than \$50 (a minimum \$50 deposit is required) and annual registration fees. Families may apply for tuition assistance (subsidy) through ELRC, United Way (gap funding), or Childcare Aware (military families)

Our contract with ELRC mandates us to report both non-payments of subsidy co-payments and attendance fluctuations to the ELRC office. Should your child incur absences, please notify both RCELC and your subsidy caseworker.

1. Additional fees will apply to all families for the following reasons:
2. Picking up a child after the close of the center
3. Paying after 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning for the current week of care
4. Non-Sufficient Fund Charge (checks returned, or electric payment returns)

5. Care provided beyond the original contracted hours Please see the current [Tuition Rate Sheet for fees.](#)

### **Payment Procedures**

Parents who choose to make electronic payments and have total access to their invoicing and accounts will go to the Playground App, our preferred method of billing/payments which enables families to pay via a debit or credit card online. Families wishing to utilize a EFT Debit or EFT Credit account must obtain specific forms- please contact the ELC office.

RCELC also accepts checks and money orders. If paying via these methods, please ensure that your child's name is written on the memo line so that we can efficiently apply payments to the appropriate account. Checks and money orders can be placed in the drop box located in the ELC office at any time. Please sign the clipboard on the counter, just above the drop box, to verify you have made a payment to the account.

Families may opt to pre-pay for multiple weeks of care based upon their payroll needs. If you would like more information on this option, please contact our Financial Director for details.

### **Attendance and Absence Policy**

To ensure quality in our early educational programs and to decrease interruptions during classroom routines, children must arrive no later than 8:15 a.m. This is to ensure that your child is receiving consistency to routines and proper developmental instruction within our learning program. This also reduces/eliminates disruptions to the classroom routines and program dynamics. It is imperative that you communicate fluctuations in schedules with your classroom or the ELC office (including both early and late arrivals due to appointments, personal routines, schedule changes, etc.)

**Families must communicate late arrivals or absences through the Playground App by 8:00 a.m. if their child will be late or absent for the day.**

Our classroom teachers are required to keep an illness and injury log. They will need to include your child's symptoms in this log. (Please be sure to enter your child's symptoms into the Playground App for any absences (i.e., fever, cough, rash, etc.) to assist in staff keeping accurate records and documentation.) Also, our staffing is based directly on attendance and the staff to child ratios mandated by the DHS; therefore, a lack of proper communication may result in being denied care due to scheduling ratios and morning schedule adjustments.

### **Absence Due to Illness**

If a child is absent one or more **full weeks** and is under a doctor's care, an 80% tuition discount will be given for the week(s) not attended if a doctor's note is provided covering the entire absence. A "**full week**" is defined as Monday through Friday of a particular week or 5 consecutive school days, even if a weekend occurs in that period. Parents/guardians must communicate lengthy absences with the ELC to prevent a forced withdrawal from occurring. Families must communicate with ELC office staff or document information pertaining to illnesses and symptoms into the Playground App. In addition, families receiving subsidy funding should also communicate absences directly to their caseworker.

Families under mandatory quarantine due to Covid will be credited 80% of tuition costs for the duration of their quarantine dates, when the ELC is provided with medical documentation of the quarantine and medical release.



**Children returning to care following an illness must be symptom free for a business day and accompanied by a written clearance from a medical care provider, documenting the permitted date of return, prior to classroom arrival.**

### **Tuition Free (Vacation) Week**

Every family actively enrolled in RCELC's **Full-Time** care programs for one full year will be eligible for one FREE WEEK. "Actively enrolled" is defined as uninterrupted attendance for one full year. "One full year" is calculated as 365 days from the child's first day of attendance.

FREE WEEKS are not applicable to children in the school age program or subsidy families. Children enrolled in the School-Age summer program will only pay for the weeks in attendance.

To utilize a FREE WEEK, parents must obtain the *Vacation Week Form* from the office or from our website. Your child should not attend RCELC during any portion of that week. This form must be completed and submitted to the Financial Director **two weeks prior to utilizing the FREE (VACATION) WEEK**. If this form is not completed and submitted to the Financial Director, it will be deemed that proper notice was not given, and full payment will be required. Families receiving subsidies are responsible to communicate vacations and extended absences to their caseworker.

### **Leave of Absence**

A LEAVE OF ABSENCE is 3 or more consecutive weeks, up to a maximum of 3 months, in which the child is not in attendance (for reasons such as maternity leave). A *Leave of Absence Form* must be obtained from the office, completed with your anticipated date of return, and submitted no less than **two weeks prior** to your planned leave time to qualify.

Taking a LEAVE OF ABSENCE forfeits use of the FREE WEEK. Families receiving subsidized funding do not qualify for Leave of Absences without prior authorization from their caseworkers.

Families who exceed the 3-month maximum will be considered withdrawn from the program, and any tuition deposits will be considered forfeited. Should the family wish to return to care, they will be required to complete the enrollment process again, as well as being placed at the bottom of any waitlists which may be in place.

Families who withdrawal their child/ren during a Leave of Absence will forfeit any deposits made at initial enrollment and must still submit a completed Withdrawal form to the ELC office.

### **Withdrawal Policy**

If withdrawal from RCELC is necessary, a *Student Withdrawal Form* must be obtained from the office or from our website, completed, and returned to the ELC office at least two-weeks before your last day in attendance. **This advanced submission of withdrawal form is required for full refund of tuition on deposit. If less than two-week notice is given to the office, the tuition deposit will be forfeited.** The family will still be responsible for paying for all dates in which care was provided. Lack of submitting a withdrawal form/notifying the ELC office in writing of your child's last day of attendance will result in an additional billing cycle being applied to your account. Families receiving subsidized funding must notify their caseworker of withdrawal from the program.

Families who do not communicate child absences, due to illness or other reasons, within a 2-week time, will be considered withdrawn at the end of business on Friday of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week. They will be responsible for any accrued tuition costs during this 2-week period, and forfeiture of

any deposits to cover the costs of the accrued balance. Families who have been withdrawn due to non-communication will be required to reenroll their child/ren by navigating through the steps of initial enrollment (and payment of any outstanding balances, if applicable). Should there be a waiting list, they will be placed in queue of their time of reenrollment submission.

### **Arrival and Departure Policy**

**All children must be supervised at all times. This also applies when children are with their parents. Under no circumstances should children be permitted to wander the building and/or grounds unescorted or be left alone in parked cars. Please help us provide consistent guidelines. All traffic must adhere to proper direction in lots & use designated parking areas/spots, which do not interfere with traffic patterns. Please do not have loud music blaring out of vehicles as it is a disruption to classrooms and may scare little ears.**

- **Parking Lot**

Parents and designated adults should park in one of the spaces in the front parking lot. If all the spaces are taken, you can park directly in front of the building. However, this is a fire zone, so parking is restricted to five minutes. Always turn your car off and never leave children unattended in your vehicle or in the parking lot. **Please be advised, the speed limit in our parking lot is 5 MPH. Always use extreme caution when backing out of your space and while driving in the lot. The parking lot is closed when the bus is dropping off or picking up children. You must abide by the PA school bus laws.**

- **Drop Off**

**PKC and School-Age families should use the back entrance while Infants through PreK Classes should use the main entrance for dropping off and picking up children.** Children must be escorted by their family in the parking lot and along the sidewalk leading to the ELC. Please ring the bell and someone from the office will open the door. Children should be taken directly to their classroom, by the family who is required to write the arrival time on the daily sign-in sheet.

Direct family/teacher contact must be made before you depart, in order for your child to become our responsibility until you return.

Drop-Off Notes MUST be completed in the Playground App, each day, for every student. Please relay any important information to the teacher relating to the child's physical/emotional state, change in pick up procedures or any other pertinent information that may assist the teacher in the daily care of your child.

There is a marked increase in behavior problems during times of transition, that is, when parents are dropping off and picking up their children. The staff must be free to monitor behavior and ease children through these stressful periods. We understand that some exchange of information may be necessary; however, we ask that you keep your interactions with the staff to a minimum during these times. For more involved conversations, please set up an appointment, this includes visits with previous staff/classrooms.

- **Pick Up**

A child shall only be released to the child's parent/legal guardian, or to an individual designated in writing by the enrolling parent. A child shall be released to either parent unless a court order (on file at the facility) states otherwise. If someone other than yourself (or the regular pick-up individual) will not be picking up your child, please notify your child's teacher in advance. The following procedure is applicable to anyone picking up children.

You must have a photo ID ready to show the classroom teacher/assistant. Once the classroom staff get to know you, you may not be required to show your ID. **Individuals may have their photo taken (or a photo of their ID) to upload into the Playground App. This will eliminate the need to present your photo ID in the future.** (Children will NOT be released to individuals without proper identification.)

Ring the bell and office staff will open the door. Please come directly to the office so office personnel can write down your arrival time on the master attendance sheet, then proceed to your child's classroom. You will also need to write the time of departure and sign the daily attendance sheet.

In an emergency, a child may be released to an individual upon the oral designation of the parent, if the identity of the individual can be verified by a staff person.

If a child is released upon the oral designation of the parent, the following information shall be logged in the child's record.

1. Name of parent making request
2. Date and time of request
3. Name of individual to whom the child is to be released
4. Name of staff person taking the call and recording the information
5. Confirmation of identification provided by the pick-up person (i.e., Driver's License Number)
6. Name of the staff person releasing the child

For the safety and well-being of all our students and staff, information on a child's attendance and/or whereabouts (i.e., field trips) will not be disclosed over the phone. Verification of parental identity must be made prior to disclosure of this information. While we value and appreciate courteous behaviors, opening/holding doors for others poses a breach in security, including the safety of your own child. You may not be aware of custody, PFA's or other court proceedings which may be in effect.

### **Parent Conduct**

**We expect all adults entering the building to conduct themselves in the same mature and moral manner expected and exemplified by the staff (including, but not limited to, language and tone of voice/digital correspondence). We may not allow any individuals who have been convicted or are awaiting trial on charges involving a crime of child abuse, child neglect, physical violence, or moral corruptness to enter this facility. This is a PA Department of Human Services mandate. Parents/family members who display behaviors on ELC property such as: verbal, written/digital or physical intimidation, inappropriate language, implied threats, smoking/drinking/drug usage, will receive a verbal or written warning, which will be included in the child's file. The second offense will result in being banned from ELC property.**

**If someone attempts to pick up a child and is believed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, a verbal request will be made for alternate pick up to be made and/or authorities may be contacted.**

**RCELC is not a mediator of domestic disputes. If a family places RCELC in the middle of domestic disputes which pose a threat to the health, safety, education, or other operations of our programs, they may be subjected to forced withdraw/expulsion from the program.**

### **Dismissal Policy**

We reserve the right to terminate care at any time by giving 5 days' notice to the parent/guardian and refunding any unused tuition that was paid in advance. Our agreement form does not constitute a contract but provides an **at will** agreement for child-care between the parent/guardian and RCELC. However, if extreme, uncontrollable behavior occurs which poses a safety concern; a parent may be called to pick up their child immediately.

#### **The following are reasons for dismissal:**

1. Delinquent tuition after two weeks.
2. Failure to update immunization or physicals in accordance with state regulations.
3. Prolonged absence without notification (greater than 1 week).
4. Leave of Absences exceeding 3 months.
5. Disruptive behavior that is a detriment to the social or educational well-being of the
6. children. (Adults and Children)
7. Physical danger to self or other children (including, but not limited to, elopement & biting) (Adults and Children)
8. Failure to abide by established policies (including frequent late non-emergency related pick-ups).
9. Incompatibility between the program of the center and the needs of the child. We
10. are not staffed to provide one-on-one care of children.
11. Non-compliance with attendance expectations as required for program participation (ie. PreK Counts.)

A child who has been dismissed may be reinstated to RCELC if the reason for dismissal is corrected and an opening is available. A Records Transfer Fee may be incurred if families request for file copies to be made.

**Immediate dismissal may be necessary in the event of extreme cases which pose a threat to the health and safety of others, or deliberate destruction of ELC property and resources, and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.**

### **Discipline Policy**

Our staff will treat all children equally and will **never** use physically or verbally abusive behavior to correct a discipline problem.

We love your children and we consider safety one of our top goals. Each room follows a curriculum and a daily schedule. We feel it is important to teach the children to clean up classroom centers and help to keep the room neat. At RCELC, we emphasize art, music, exploring nature, and the use of high- quality resources to develop each child's creativity and imagination.

As teachers, we partner with parents and therefore also play a role in accomplishing this job. The main tools we use in our classrooms are re-direction and in some cases a time-out. When is time-out used? Time-out is used in the classrooms of children 3 years old and up, when a child's negative behavior continues despite warnings, loving guidance, moving a child to a different location in the classroom, and/or separating a child from others. We DO NOT use time-out for normal childish behaviors that are part of learning and growing. Time-out will also be used when a child is physically aggressive and therefore threatens the safety of others in the classroom, including himself/herself. A child will sit in time-out one minute for each year of age. A notice of

the time-out will be sent home explaining the reason for the time-out.

All teachers will deal with each child individually and will inform the parents regarding behavior in the classroom. Extreme, challenging behaviors may necessitate an early pick up for the day, an action plan to be developed and implemented between the family and program, or a need for additional supportive services prior to returning into the program, as we are not staffed to provide one on one care for children.

Families who fail to communicate a child's behavior (ie. eloping, biting, etc.) may be subject to immediate forced withdrawal for willful omission and deliberate withholding of information which equips RCELC to provide safe, excellent, educational experiences and quality care for the health and safety of all involved.

**Should a family be requested to seek supportive services and do not take the necessary steps/efforts in initiating the process, we may not be able to guarantee care after 2 weeks. Challenging behaviors which jeopardize the health and safety of self, peers, and/or staff will not be tolerated.**

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for all children. Bullying in all forms is prohibited. We have a NO TOLERANCE policy toward any deliberate physical, emotional, verbal or cyber bullying. Any child found bullying will be confronted, and parents will be notified. Appropriate action will be taken, which may necessitate family meetings, action plan development, early dismissal, or withdrawal of the student.

Adherence to this policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis with consideration for the age and development of the child/ren in question, family partnership/ accountability, support placement, and monitoring of progress.

We have the right to expel any student/family who continues to pose a deliberate threat to self, other students, and or staff (including but not limited to- hitting, biting, and verbal harassment.)

### **Health Policy**

Every child enrolled at RCELC must always have a current and age-appropriate physical on record (the *Child Health Assessment* form). The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services requires that we follow the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation for up-to-date physical examinations. We will do our best to send home reminders a month before the physical is due, however this does not negate parents' responsibility to submit updated forms per the schedule below. Failure to submit and update records could result in dismissal.

Families must also provide updated immunization records to the RCELC office. A written statement of objection must be provided for any immunization not given to a student, including but not limited to Influenza and Covid vaccines. The written statement from the parent/guardian must read as follows:

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, have chosen against the \_\_\_\_ vaccine due to \_\_\_\_." (choose one of the following: medical exemption/ religious beliefs/ or strong moral objection)

The document should then be signed and dated by the parent/guardian and will be kept in the child's file. This document must be updated for every vaccine which is denied, at the time of denial.

**Initial Health Reports Must Be Dated According to the Following Schedule:**

- **Infant (6 wks-12 mos.):** no more than 3 mos. prior to first day of enrollment
- **Young Toddler (12-24 mos.):** no more than 6 mos. prior to first day of enrollment
- **Older Toddler or Preschooler (2 years-entry to Kindergarten):** no more than 1 year prior to first day of enrollment
- **School-Age:** Entry into Kindergarten and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

**After Initial Examinations,  
the Following Schedule Should Be Followed:**

Infants	Quarterly
Young Toddlers	Every 6 Months
Older Toddlers & Preschool	Every 12 Months
School-Age	Entrance into Kindergarten and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade

**RCELC will make every effort to protect the health of each child. Parent cooperation is necessary in helping prevent the spread of communicable diseases!! (A communicable disease is an illness that can be spread from one person to another person.)**

**Children with Allergies or Other Medical Needs**

If your child has an allergy, asthma or other health care need that requires special attention, please make sure to convey this information, (in writing), to the office and the teacher. A doctor's note, with essential emergency instructions may be necessary for some allergy cases. A medical care plan must be filled out and kept on file for each child with medical needs. This plan must be reviewed and updated annually. We will want to post a picture of your child and the allergy information within the classroom, to notify staff of the child's allergy. We will ask for emergency response information along with your signature on the back of this sign, permitting us to post this information. Rescue medications, prescribed by a health care provider, will be kept in the classroom's emergency bag which is stored out of the reach of children.

**When to Keep Your Child at Home**

Parents should be on alert to detect symptoms in their own child such as sore throat, nausea/vomiting, runny nose, coughing, diarrhea, and colds. We strongly recommend that every family finds someone who can provide childcare in case of an unexpected illness.

**Please keep your child at home if he or she:**

- **has a fever (100°F or higher- without medication, as per CDC recommendation)**
- **Excessive coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath (without a Dr's note indicating a chronic condition such as asthma or allergies)**
- **is vomiting**
- **has a sore throat that impairs swallowing or verbal communication**
- **has uncontained diarrhea (pre-toddlers and up)**
- **has diarrhea (infants)**
- **has a rash accompanied by a fever, the rash is spreading, and/or it is unable to be covered**
- **has lice/nits**
- **has been diagnosed with Covid-19, flu, pneumonia, hand-foot-mouth, or other**

**communicable diseases.**

- **Is awaiting results from a Covid test**

This will protect your child as well as others within the school.

**If a child is well enough to come to school, we will expect him/her to participate in all classroom routines, including going outdoors with the rest of the class (weather permitting). We are not staffed to provide one-on-one care for children who cannot go outdoors.**

If a child develops an elevated temperature (99.6°F - 100°F) while at RCELC, parents will be notified so they can begin to prepare for the possibility of an early pick up. If the temperature goes above 100°F, the family will be contacted for pick up.

If a child develops episodes of vomiting or diarrhea while at school, we will conduct a general assessment that includes tolerance to activity, body temperature, appetite, etc. before contacting parents for early pick-up. If we determine that early pick-up is necessary, we ask that you or someone designated by you come as quickly as possible (preferably within the hour, for the comfort of your child). We will isolate your child and provide a place where your child can rest until you arrive.

**Diarrhea – A child will be excluded from group setting if:** stool is not contained in the diaper for diapered children/diarrhea is causing “accidents” for toilet-trained children, and/or stool frequency exceeds 2 or more stools above normal for that child, or blood or mucus is found in stool.

**A child can be readmitted to group setting:** (1) After a health professional clears the child for readmission for all cases of diarrhea, (2) once diapered children have their stool contained by the diaper, and when toilet- trained children do not have toileting accidents, or (3) once stool frequency has reduced to fewer than 2 stools above normal for that child, even if the stools remain loose.

If a child develops a rash during the day, parents will be notified. A rash accompanied by a fever, an oozing rash, or a spreading rash will require early pick-up and may require a written release from a medical care provider for readmission into the classroom.

Any family who fails to openly communicate/ refuse/or deliberately neglects to share information pertaining to communicable illnesses, symptoms, and/or medications taken within the last 24 hours, etc. may become subject to removal from the program and/or be required to be immediately picked up.

Absences must be reported through the Playground app, including any symptoms/reasons for the child's absence in school. This assists our program in tracking illnesses and preventing further spreading. Some illnesses will be posted to notify families of its presence in the program so that they too may watch for signs in their own children. Posted information will always remain anonymous and never will be indicative of the ill child.

A child who has any symptoms of illness which require exclusion from classroom routines must be accompanied by a written release from a medical care provider prior to returning to school.

Once a student has been readmitted to group care and symptoms resurface, it will be considered a new illness, and the exclusion process will be reinitiated, and an additional medical release will be required (as communicated by our external medical consultant.)

### **Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusions**

**If a child has been ill for more than two days, or has contracted a communicable disease, a doctor's note must be provided to the ELC office for readmission, prior to classroom arrival.**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>A child may return when:</b>
Temperature above 100°F	They have a normal temperature for 24 hrs., without fever reducing medication and a written release from a medical care provider.
Shortness of Breath and/or excessive coughing	They have ceased symptoms and/or are accompanied by a written release from a medical care provider.
Diarrhea/ Vomiting	There are no episodes for 24 hrs. without medication, in which 1-2 solid meals have been consumed. In all cases of diarrhea, a health care professional must provide written clearance.
Sore throat impairing swallowing or verbal communication	Child can resume normal swallowing and/or verbal communication free of pain and be accompanied by a written release from a medical care provider.
Bacterial Infection	They have been on medication for 24 hours or have been given 3 doses of an antibiotic and be accompanied by a written release from a medical care provider.
Rash	A doctor's note indicates that the rash is not bacterial & not contagious; if the child is on medication for 24 hours or there is no oozing or fever.
Conjunctivitis	They have been on medication for 24 hours, and with a note from a medical care provider.
Lice/Nits	Treatment has been administered and all lice and nits are completely removed through combing. (Screening must be conducted in the ELC Office prior to returning to class.)
Covid diagnosis	Must be cleared and accompanied by a written release from a medical care provider. Policies subject to change as per guidance from government entities.
Hand, Foot, & Mouth	Child is symptom free (without blisters, fever, etc.) for 24 hours without the use of medication and accompanied by a written release from a medical care provider.



## Medication Policy

**Whenever possible, all medication should be given to your child before or after school.** If this is not possible, please follow these guidelines:

**All information pertaining to medications (given at home and/or to be received at RCELC) are to be reported via the child's drop off notes in the Playground app.** Playground drop off notes must reflect if children have/not been given medication within 24 hours prior to arrival and/or will be given medication while at RCELC.

All medication must be received in the ELC office, in the original labeled container along with written instructions from the prescribing physician.

Instructions contained on a prescription label are acceptable. To protect our students, the instructions on the medication must coincide with your doctor's written instructions or we will not be able to administer the medication. Prescription medication will be administered only to the child whose name appears on the container. Medication will be administered by a staff person in the office, where all medications will remain. The office staff will be responsible for making sure the child receives the medication at the correct time.

We will not administer over-the-counter medications to children unless a doctor's note is provided. (This includes but is not limited to pain reliever medications, nose sprays, eye drops, vitamin products, lotions/creams, etc.)

A *Medication Log* will need to be completed by the parent each time a medication must be administered. At the time of drop off, **parents must verbally notify ELC personnel of any medication which needs to be administered, add it to the child's Playground notes** and complete a *Medication Log*. Medication should be marked with the child's name and placed in a zip lock bag (available in the office) along with the completed log and set in the medication container in the office. In the event that medication needs refrigeration and office staff is not present when dropping off medication, please take it to your child's classroom and his or her teacher will refrigerate until office staff is available.

Office staff will administer the medication and complete the lower portion of the *Medication Log*. These completed logs will be kept in each student's file. A copy of the completed log will be placed in the student's classroom bin, and information of the provided dose into the child's Playground daily report.

### **Medication Log Example:**

I give permission to administer medication to my child:	
<b>as stated below:</b>	
Parent Signature	
Name of medication	<input type="checkbox"/> Prescription <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Prescription
Amount/Dosage	Refrigerate? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Time(s) to be given
<b>The following part is to be filled out by staff member</b>	
Staff Initials	Comments/Reactions
Time Given	
Amount/Dosage	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

We **cannot** store prophylactic medications (Children's Tylenol, Advil, etc.) on site to be given "as needed" as per compliance with state regulations. Specific details of the time to administer and dosage amounts must be communicated through the accompanying doctor's note. We are not medical care professionals and cannot determine "as needed" based upon personal opinion.

**Children who are taking new medications should be given 24 hours' worth of dosages prior to readmission due to the possibility of allergic reactions, and information pertaining to the medication entered into the child's Playground drop off notes or absence report.**

### **Mealtimes**

RCELC Pre-K Counts program provides breakfast and lunch, along with 1% milk for all students. RCELC also provides a P.M. snack for all wrap-around students.

**We are a NO NUT facility, prohibiting the presence of peanut butter, and other foods containing nuts- this includes items such as Nutella and nut-based milk products.**

If you wish to provide food for your child, all items should be labeled with the child's name. Reusable containers will be rinsed with water, then sent home for proper washing. For the safety of our children, please refrain from sending glass containers and bottles. We strongly encourage families to assist us in supporting children's healthy development by refraining from sending foods and drinks which are significantly high in sugar content such as sodas and candy because of the effects they may have on children's behaviors; therefore, these extra-sugary treats may be returned to enjoy at home.

If a meal is forgotten, parents may contact a local delivery establishment, place an order and pay over the phone. They must then notify the ELC office or child's classroom with the approximate time of expected delivery and delivery establishment. Tips for delivery professionals are to be included at the time of order placement with the delivery establishment.

Breakfast will be served from 8:45-9:15 a.m. depending on each classroom's schedule. **Breakfast will NOT be served after 9:15a.m., as this is a conflict with maintaining classroom schedules and structure.** Lunch is served at approximately 11:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. If your child is out of the classroom during this time, you are required to provide your own lunch. Snack is served approximately between 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Items which require time in the microwave must not exceed 90 seconds reheat time. This allows teachers to maintain classroom schedules, proper class supervision, and allow for multiple meals to be heated in the allotted time frame.

**PreK Counts students** will be provided with breakfast and lunch through The Hispanic Center. Menus will be posted on Parent/Family boards for reference. Families who send in food substitutes are strongly encouraged to demonstrate the importance of healthy choices and align with program values pertaining to nutrition by not sending in snacks/drinks with high sugars and/or high in fat contents.

### **Safety**

Safety is a priority at RCELC. Conditions at our facility are regularly inspected using the Department of Health and Family Services' Safety Checklist. We assume responsibility for all children until picked up by a parent or approved contact person. Once this person has contacted the student's teacher, our responsibility ceases.

**1. Injuries:** Parents will be responsible for all medical expenses for bodily injury of a child enrolled at RCELC while the child is attending our programs.

If a child is injured while at school, staff will assess and treat the child accordingly. An incident form will be completed detailing the nature of the accident and injury as well as what treatment was given. Parents will be asked to sign this report and will be given the original for their records.

In the event of a serious/life-threatening injury, an ambulance will be accessed, and parents will be contacted immediately. If parents are not able to get to the RCELC, the director or a teacher will accompany the child to the hospital and stay with them until the parent or guardian arrives.

**2. Supervision:** RCELC requires that parents bring their child to his/her classroom each day, not just to the front entrance to the school. No child should be unsupervised onsite including within the building, on the playground, in classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, or in the parking lot. Children should walk, not run, within the building to prevent collisions or falls. The daily sign-in sheet must be completed by the parent entering at time of arrival and verbal contact with the teacher should be made before leaving, to ensure the child is accurately inputted into the Tadpoles system and accounted for in ratio counts.

**3. Pick-Up:** If a family would like their child to be picked up by ANYONE other than himself/herself, we recommend that the classroom teacher be notified. The authorized person picking up the child must be listed on the child's emergency contact form. Verbal consent may be given over the phone, as specified under the section titled Arrival & Departure Policy. All people, other than the parents, will be asked to show a photo ID at the time of pick-up. No child will leave the ELC with anyone who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, parent or otherwise. An alternate person will be contacted from the emergency contact list for student pick-up (refer to Parent Conduct on page 11 for more information). "In Loco Parentis" can sign certain documents, discuss accident & behavior reports. It is then the parent's responsibility to obtain this information from these individuals.

**Contact must be made with classroom staff at pick up prior to exiting with your child/ren to ensure the child/ren are accurately checked out of the Playground App.**

**4. Parking Lot:** Children should never be left alone/unsupervised in parked/idling cars. **Teachers are required to supervise children at all times, and we expect that parents/guardians follow the same guidelines.** The speed limit in our parking lot is 5 MPH. Always use caution when backing in and out of parking spaces.

**If the school bus is on the main street and the stop sign is out and the red lights are on, you must not exit or enter the parking lot.** Additional parking spaces are found in the upper parking lot.

**75 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 3345. (PA Department of Transportation)**

**Meeting or overtaking school bus. Duty of approaching driver when red signals are flashing --**

Except as provided in subsection (g), the driver of a vehicle meeting or overtaking any school bus stopped on a highway or traffic way shall stop at least ten feet before reaching the school bus when the red signal lights on the school bus are flashing and the side stop signal arms are activated under section 4552(b.1) (relating to general requirements for school buses). The driver shall not proceed until the flashing red signal lights are no longer actuated. In no event shall a driver of a vehicle resume motion of the vehicle until the school children who may have alighted from the school bus have reached a place of safety. The driver of a vehicle approaching an intersection at which a school bus is stopped shall stop his vehicle at that intersection until the flashing red signal lights are no longer actuated.

Those who do not adhere to this policy may be reported to local authorities and may be mandated to park in a different parking lot and walk their child/ren to/from the ELC's front door. Our children and families are too precious to allow careless/reckless driving practices in and around our parking lots. If cones are placed at the entrance/exit of the parking lot- do not drive in between them to enter the lot- but instead utilize another one of our available parking lots.

**5. Dress:** Children should be dressed appropriately for active, messy play. We want to ensure that your child is safe at all times while they are here with us. Therefore, we are asking for your compliance with the following policies:

All children must have a change of clothing, to be kept in the classroom, at all times. Please make sure to update clothing according to size and season and parents must **label everything!!** RCELC staff cannot be held responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced items which have not been properly labeled. Items in "Lost & Found" will be subject to donation to outside organizations if not retrieved within two weeks.

Sturdy shoes and socks are necessary for climbing and jumping. Please refrain from putting sandals, clogs, flip-flops, and other footwear without a back strap on your child. This helps to prevent injuries in active children.

Children who have pierced ears in Infant through Pre-School classrooms must have earrings with screw on/locking backs or not wear earrings to school because they may pose a choking and/or puncture hazard. Earrings which have become dislocated from a child's ears will not be reinserted in the ear and instead will be sent home taped to a paper bearing the child's name. We are not responsible for lost/broken jewelry for any age group. Children will not be permitted to nap with necklaces of any kind. Beaded jewelry will be kept in the child's basket during school hours for Infants through Toddler classrooms to prevent choking hazards should the jewelry break.

Our teachers try to keep your child as neat as possible during mealtimes and art activities. However, young children are messy and that is appropriate for their age, especially during outdoor play times. Please do not dress your child in their best clothing for school. As we strongly encourage modesty in all our students and seek to provide a sanitary environment, we ask that should little girls arrive in play dresses or skirts that they also wear shorts or diaper covers underneath over top of underwear and boys should have underwear beneath their pants. This also assists in containing any accident leakage. We are not staffed to provide unnecessary (non-emergency) attire changes, including shoes. If your child's outfit is not suitable for possible messy play, please do not send your child in that attire. This includes non-emergency changes for picture days.

If the snow is falling, children may still go outside to explore. Please provide suitable apparel for outdoor winter play (boots, waterproof snowsuit, mittens, and warm hat) whenever the forecast calls for snow.

When it is time for fun in the sun, you will need to provide sunscreen for your child in addition to a signed permission form approving its administration. No swimming or wading is allowed on the premises. We have water play which consists of sprinklers, spray bottles and water tables. You will need to send swimwear for these occasions. Since modesty is strongly encouraged- one-piece swimsuits or lengthy "tankinis" are enforced for our female students. Girls with immodest swimwear may be asked to wear a covering (i.e., T-shirt) or may be required to forego water play/ special activities.

To prevent injury during physical gross motor play, non-prescription sunglasses will not be worn outside during gross motor play.

Please provide sweaters in the fall and spring when transitional weather produces cold mornings and warm afternoons. Layers are encouraged for comfort throughout the winter months as well.

### **Emergency Operations**

This policy is in place to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending Riverview Christian Early Learning Center. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies.

Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

**Immediate Evacuation** - Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.

**In-Place Sheltering** – Sudden, unexpected occurrences (weather or hazardous materials related), may dictate that taking cover in other areas of the building.

**Relocation** - Total evacuation of the facility and the premises may become necessary if there is a danger in the area or the building is unsafe for return. In this case, children will be taken to a re-location facility at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, (4201 Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Rd., Reading, 19605) Spring Valley Church of God (2127 Pricetown Rd., Temple, 19560). This information will be posted on the front door of the Early Learning Center.

**Modified Operation** - May include cancellation, postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations. Please understand that these situations may occur anytime during the year, even in the summer.

**Lockout/ Lockdown** – Intruder in the area or in the building. All classrooms are to close and lock all doors and windows, close blinds, draw curtains to cover door and sink windows. All children and staff must stay in the classroom until the "All is Safe" signal is given. **In the event of a Lockout/Lockdown, no one will be permitted to enter or exit the ELC until the situation is resolved, this includes families, students, and staff.**

Please listen to *Y102 or WFMZ TV channel 69 or visit their websites* for announcements relating to any of the emergency actions listed above. You may also sign up to receive informative texts through their websites.

**We ask that you not call during the emergency.** This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay pertinent information to first responders and maintain safety, organization, and order for all involved. **\*\*Even phone calls to cell phones may prove to be a large distraction during the situation and prevent urgent directions from being heard or followed or may notify intruders to the whereabouts of the carrier's location during a Lockout/Lockdown.**

The facility Directors may provide an alternate phone number (i.e., cell phone number, etc.) to call in an emergency event.

**It is strongly recommended that families attend our annual Emergency Preparedness Training. This assists in maintaining organization and teamwork should an emergency ever arise. Date and time will be announced to families and placed on our website calendar prior to the event.**

The information you have provided on the *Emergency Contact Form* (designating people to

pick up your child) will be used to contact you if needed. This form is to be updated every 6 months or more often if a situation and/or information is altered. It is the responsibility of the family to make necessary updates in the ELC office within 24 hours of a change of information.

**Not promptly updating Emergency Contact forms may delay notification in the event of emergencies, sickness, or injury.**

Please do not attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties. To ensure the safety of your children and our staff, we ask for your understanding and cooperation.

### **Inclement Weather**

**Plan for the unexpected! Emergencies vary and may occur at any time. For that reason, we urge all families to have a back-up childcare source ready, in case we are not available.**

Delays and closings are rare, but both do happen occasionally. Consideration must be made in regard to the safety of our families and their young children as well as our staff. If the need arises for a weather-related delay, closing, or early dismissal (due to weather emergencies or power outages), **All families will receive a message via their preferred method (text or email) through our Playground App, so please be sure to have your current information on file with the office at all times.** In addition, you may turn on, or listen to one of the following:

- **TV CHANNEL 69-WFMZ (or [www.WFMZ.com](http://www.WFMZ.com) 24 hrs. a day) This web site can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with closing information delivered directly to e-mail addresses and cell phones.**
- **102.5 FM-WRFY RADIO posts information to their website <https://y102reading.iheart.com/> "StormCenter" and during on-air broadcasts.**
- **RCELC's Facebook Page**

**Please do not call the ELC office to obtain open/delay status as modified staffing and classroom schedules may necessitate additional assistance from office personnel. Multiple office calls create a disruption to the routines and modifications in place. This will also keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay pertinent information to notify all families and staff in the event of additional schedule modifications.**

Please know that it is our desire to provide you with quality care and early education. We understand the importance of dependability. However, if local police and transportation officials feel that conditions are extremely hazardous, we may decide to delay our opening until the road conditions improve. We will try to make our decision by 5:30 AM. If the snowflakes keep falling or the ice is not melting, please check your email and texts, turn on the radio or TV, visit our Facebook page to stay well informed!

### **PreK Counts Families**

The PreK Counts program will follow RCELC's schedule. Should RCELC be closed, RCELC's PreK Counts will also be closed. Any alterations to RCELC's normal schedule of operations will also alter PreK Counts scheduling. Additional PKC Program closures will be communicated through Tadpoles and/or signs posted on classroom boards.

**Remember that if weather conditions worsen, we may also need to close early. So please pay close attention to local updates!! Text messages may also be sent through our Playground App; therefore, it is imperative to ensure that we always have your most up to date information on file.**

## **Parent – Staff Communication**

We strongly encourage communication between parents and teachers. Our teachers are happy to answer any questions about your child's behavior, daily routines, etc. However, questions regarding RCELC policy and procedures, as well as financial concerns, MUST be directed to the office. Parents are asked not to discuss such issues with teachers.

Complaints and frustrations should be directed to RCELC office personnel. Airing grievances pertaining to policies, student or family behaviors, etc. is not acceptable in the students' learning environment. Classroom staff have a responsibility and priority to supervise students to provide them with a safe and excellent educational experience. Complaints and concerns must be taken to the office for proper and appropriate handling.

**The following are all methods used to encourage open and consistent communication between parents and staff regarding programs and events.**

**Playground:** In an effort of "being green", classrooms will be in communication with families through the Playground App. This app provides instant communication and information/photo sharing with families. Parents are responsible for setting up the program/s on their phone or through email. If hard copies of daily routines are required, they may be requested through your child's teacher.

**Phone:** Each classroom has its own direct extension, and we welcome calls from our parents during our operating hours. Please limit phone calls during nap times to emergencies only. If there is no answer, please leave a voicemail message and staff will return your call at a more convenient time.

**Parent Board:** Every classroom has a parent board located in the hallway right outside the door. Teachers will post important reminders and sign-up sheets. Please remember to check this board frequently.

**Mailbox/Cubby:** Every child will have their own private space to store artistic treasures, as well as important teacher/administrative information papers.

Please check this spot daily.

**White Board:** Every classroom has a white board outside their room. This will be used to communicate daily highlights as well as important reminders.

**Parent Board (located in the office to the right of the drop box) and Main Lobby Brochure Shelf:** Many educational and community related pamphlets are located here. We also post important information on the easel by the front door. Please take time to occasionally browse through these areas. Additional community resources are available upon request, from the ELC office.

**Administrative Communication:** Communication will be sent home as seen fit by the office staff via email, text, Playground App, or printed media. Please verify that your most current email address and cell phone numbers are on file with the ELC office. Please verify you can receive ELC emails, so as not to miss important information which may be sent to a "spam" folder. Concerns and comments may be communicated verbally, emailed or written and placed in the Directors' mailboxes.

## **Early Education**

Our desire is to provide a quality early learning program for all the children attending RCELC. We want to emphasize the basic skills of learning, while complying with the directives from our regulating agencies. Our Teaching Team brings a wealth of education, experience, knowledge, and love to our ELC. These individuals are dedicated and committed to providing a quality early learning environment for the children. Our teachers, assistants, aides, and volunteers must comply with the PA Department of Human Services' Regulations regarding:

1. Educational Requirements

2. Annual Fire Safety Training
3. Annual Emergency Preparedness Training
4. Bi-Annual Pediatric First Aid and Blocked Airway Training
5. Criminal and Child Abuse Background Checks
6. FBI Clearance (Fingerprint Check)
7. NSOR Clearance (National Sex Offender Registry)
8. Thorough Interviewing Process
9. New Staff Orientation (15 hours of video training, testing completion, and classroom observation)
10. Mandated Reporter Training
11. Twenty- Four hours of additional training annually (Most of this training is provided by local colleges and professional organizations). Our teaching and assisting staff participate in additional training, as required for our current STAR level. More info. may be obtained at: <http://papromiseforchildren.com/choose-a-quality-program/keystone-stars>

### **Curriculum Statement**

RCELC developed the following statement to inform families about our philosophy regarding how children learn, materials and methods we will use to teach young children, what children need to learn, the teacher's role, assessment and the role of the family.

### **How Young Children Learn**

Play is the primary vehicle that children use to explore their world. "Play facilitates the growth of children's reasoning abilities." (David Elkind, Ph.D.) This exploration needs to be offered in an intentionally planned environment that is developmentally and culturally appropriate. Children learn most when they are provided with hands-on learning activities and materials that stimulate exploration using many senses.

Characteristics of learning readiness are developed rather than taught. Only through numerous, concrete interactions with the natural world, can a young child prepare to benefit from formal instruction later in the elementary years.

Learning will take place when a young child builds on prior knowledge; this is referred to as scaffolding. In other words, the young child must have the opportunity to combine new knowledge with earlier experiences. If these early experiences are not taught using authentic/concrete materials with which the child can relate, the child will not have the acquired knowledge and experience with which to build on. Children also need repetitive activities for many reasons, but especially, to begin to feel successful.

Children learn best in a setting where loving, experienced and educated adults model appropriate behavior and language. Children feel secure when there is a safe and predictable environment in which to play and grow. When children feel loved and accepted, they will begin to acquire knowledge, develop a love for learning, and begin to gain independence.

### **Materials and Methods**

RCELC utilizes a wide variety of materials to develop educational plans and appropriate learning environments for the children we serve. The following lists are divided into categories according to age.

While books, guides and learning standards are powerful resources to help teachers plan for



children, curriculum decisions primarily come from the children, their families and the teachers/adults with whom they interact.

Curriculum may change from program to program and year to year, (even within the same classroom). On the other hand, the curriculum statement (the framework for classroom practice) will remain the same.

### **Pre-K Counts**

- The Creative Curriculum
- Teaching Strategies
- Pennsylvania Learning Standards
- Miscellaneous Teacher Resources

Attention will be given to the specific needs of each child. At the same time, every child will be encouraged to become a part of the classroom community. If it becomes evident that a child has a special emotional, behavioral or physical need, we have the responsibility to recommend professional assistance to the family. We are willing to work with the child, the family and the community agency to provide the best help possible. However, if the needs of the child are beyond our ability or scope of practice, we will help you find an alternative agency to provide you and your child with a more comprehensive program.

### **What Young Children Need to Learn**

(According to the PA Early Learning Standards)

**Preschool/Pre-K** Approaches to Learning Creative Arts  
Language and Literacy Logical Mathematical  
Personal/Social Physical/Health  
Program Partnerships/Family Involvement Science/Social Studies

The above list of standards is an abbreviated version of what children need to learn in the early years. If you would like to view a copy of the PA Early Learning Standards, please stop by the school office.

*The Creative Curriculum* offers support for teachers to help them teach content in ways that respect the developmental stages of children. The goal is to offer appropriate activities in content areas that are connected to the standards. This will hopefully allow children to meet criteria for school readiness, get excited about learning, academically succeed for years to come and become a person of character and integrity.

### **The Teacher's Role**

At RCELC, teachers are committed to providing care and early education in a loving and nurturing way. The following list contains only a few of the many responsibilities that our teachers and assistants have regarding the educational portion of our program.

Teachers observe, guide children's learning, and assess children's learning in order to plan for the individual needs of the children and to promote the acquisition of knowledge.

In order to guide learning, teachers, with the assistance of their classroom support staff...

- Design, set up, and maintain a safe, developmentally, and culturally appropriate environment.
- Plan challenging learning activities that include the rotation of manipulative resources, learning materials, equipment, and natural materials.

- Set up seven interest areas
- Develop written plans on a weekly basis. The plans must reflect the PA Early Learning Standards.
- Use a wide range of teaching approaches.
- Develop an appropriate schedule that meets the needs of the age group they are assigned.
- Plan for large and small group instruction as well as teacher and child directed learning times.
- Develop age-appropriate guidelines that are consistently enforced.
- Have a variety of transitional activities ready to use throughout the day. In the course of a day, young children change from one activity to another rather frequently. Some young children have trouble in this area. So, Teachers need to know how to provide prompts, cues, warnings, and other activities to assist with these transitions.

Children learn by the adult role models in their lives. Teacher/Child interaction is also an important component to the learning program. Literacy skills are developed throughout the entire day, not just at story time. Teachers must be ready to ask open-ended questions and provide conversation starters whenever they see an open window.

- Create ways to interact and communicate with families.
- Manage the learning environment. Create a system to record and maintain files and portfolios for every child.
- Observe and document progress using the Creative Curriculum Assessment Forms.
- Arrange for environmental accommodations for children with special needs.

In conclusion, our teachers and support staff provide ongoing observation and assessment. Along with the information they receive from you and your child, they develop a plan to provide learning opportunities to meet the needs of every child.

### **Family Connection**

Families are the child's first and most important teacher. For our program to benefit the children, it is imperative that we connect with every family. We offer a "Get to Know You" survey at enrollment and we encourage our families to complete the survey and return it immediately, preferably prior to the child's first official day. Scheduled visits in the classroom prior to the child's first day may also assist with initial transitions and will begin building a reciprocal rapport between the program and enrolling family.

Families are strongly encouraged to participate in feedback surveys, events, and through multiple opportunities during the year as communicated by both classroom and administrative staff. Through these opportunities we look forward to developing team focused partnerships which provide stable foundations for our students' future success.

RCELC employs an *Educational Advocate* who assists the student to be successful, the teaching staff to be effectively equipped to assist students in the learning environment, and families to become strong advocates for their child's future. We strive to develop relationships between agencies and networks to empower all parties to the best of our ability. In the event a student's needs exceed our program capacity, we will provide resources to assist the family in attaining additional external services. (RCELC is not responsible for any interactions or experiences associated with these outside agencies.)

In closing, we look forward to partnering with the families of the children entrusted to us. The

administration and staff of RCELC take our work very seriously. Although we cannot guarantee a perfect environment, we can assure you that we will do our absolute best and continue to pursue excellence. If you ever have a need or concern, we ask that you talk with your child's teacher or wing manager (for classroom concerns), and the office, (for program concerns). We value and welcome your comments, concerns, and ideas.

### **Methods Used to Relay Children's Progress to Families**

**Playground/ Daily Progress Sheets:** The Playground App (printed forms, upon request) are provided daily to parents and relay information about your child's day. Items covered include, but are not limited to, meals, toileting, behavior, and activity level.

**Weekly Lesson Plans:** Each teacher is required to complete lesson plans for their classroom, including classroom and individual student goals. These plans are posted on the classroom's parent board and reflect the PA Early Learning Standards. Please see the curriculum section or speak with your child's teacher for more detailed information.

**Classroom Newsletter/Highlight Sheet:** Every teacher will have their own form of communication with families to help you stay well informed. Information may be posted on classroom Parent Boards, on whiteboards just outside of classroom doors, etc. Please speak with the classroom teacher for classroom specific information.

**Conferences:** Parents will receive a conference form twice a year, Fall and Spring. You will then have the option to meet with your child's teacher or decline the meeting. Please complete and return the form to your child's teacher to be included in your child's files. If you feel that a conference is needed at any other time, just ask your child's teacher and arrangements will be made.

**Ages & Stages Questionnaire:** This screening will be sent home to be completed for every child within the first week of entrance into the Pre-K Counts classroom. It should be returned promptly to your child's teacher, no later than October 1st. The results of this will provide insight into your child's individual developmental needs.

**Observations:** All teachers are required to complete periodic written observations for every child in attendance at RCELC. These observations are used to help teachers focus on individual needs of children, develop lesson plans, and complete end of the year assessments.

**Mid-Year and End of the Year Assessments:** Staff will complete the Teaching Strategies Gold assessment as this will help you to see your child's developmental progress and accomplishments as well as any areas that need strengthening.

### **Transitions**

We strive to make transitions for your child as smooth as possible. In January, packets will be sent home to those moving on to Kindergarten. These packets will provide all of the local school districts contact information and how to enroll your child in Kindergarten (in English and Spanish). We will also send home OPTIONAL summer work packets that will bridge the summer learning gap. As always, your child's classroom teacher is available to assist in the process and with any questions you may have.

### **State Mandated Reporting**

We are a mandated reporting center. The State of PA defines this as follows: A person who, in the course of employment, occupation or practice of a profession, has reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of medical professional or other training and experience, that a child under the care, supervision, guidance or training of that person or of an agency, institution, organization or other entity with which that person is affiliated is a victim of child abuse, including child abuse by an individual who is not a perpetrator.

Child abuse is defined as serious recent physical injury which is non- accidental, mental injury,

sexual abuse or serious physical neglect of children under the age of 18, caused by the acts or omissions of a perpetrator.

Staff is mandated to follow a specific protocol of reporting suspected child abuse, endangerment, and/or neglect to the appropriate departments under the requirements set forth in Pennsylvania's Act 31 pertaining to suspected child abuse. The employees of RCELC cannot be held liable for reports determined to be "unfounded" if the report was made in "good faith."

### **Miscellaneous Information**

**Free Health Screenings** RCELC partners with preferred agencies such as The Vision Resource Center of Berks County, Tower Health, and other community resources to provide your child/ren (some limitations may apply) with free health screenings. These screenings do not replace routine medical care but are meant to assist in identifying potential risks and suggesting referrals for follow-up. We also have access to a Health Care Consultant available for referrals. You may inquire in the ELC office for more information.

**Family Engagement** RCELC would like to encourage family engagement, while also upholding our values of Safe, Excellent, Education. Therefore, any family member who wishes to volunteer, be a classroom guest, must have all up to date clearances on file in the school office. This ensures that individuals who are interacting with our students are safe individuals.

**Fundraisers** Because we are a non-profit center, we will occasionally provide our families with the opportunity to participate in a variety of fundraisers. Fundraisers provide our center with essential resources and help to offset costs. Please understand that your participation (time and/or monetary) is very much appreciated, but optional.

**School Photos** Once a year, usually during the fall, RCELC invites a school photographer to capture the smiling faces of our children. Spring portraits may also be taken, based upon family interest. Families are not under any obligation to purchase school photographs.

**Referral Rewards!** Any family who contributes to the enrollment of a new family to RCELC will be eligible for a *Referral Reward*, consisting of a monetary check. Credits will be awarded after the new family maintains a current account for 90 days. The new family must indicate referral on their *Registration Form* at initial enrollment. There is **no limit** to the number of referral incentive rewards which can be gained within a given calendar year. Reward increments and stipulations are subject to change.

**Birthdays** are special events in the life of a young child. Teachers are very willing to work with you if you choose to celebrate your child's birthday here at school. We have found that prepackaged healthy snacks (cheese cubes, individual yogurt cups, fruit slices, etc.), cookies, and Rice Krispie treats work best. Please speak with your child's teacher in advance to confirm your plans prior to bringing treats to verify if any allergies are existent within the classroom. Please remember we are a **no nut facility**. Items should be prepackaged/factory or store sealed and have an affixed list of ingredients. Any products supplied with nuts, including but not limited to peanut butter, will be sent home. **PLEASE NOTE:** Birthday parties for individual students will not be conducted on site as they are disruptive to classroom routines and learning experiences. Parties for individual children must be conducted outside schools hours. RCELC classrooms must maintain educational routines which are hindered by larger scale celebrations which are not part of the curriculum.

**File Transfers** RCELC maintains a central file for each child in our center. Important documents are kept in this file including registration forms, agreements, medical information, observations, and assessments. RCELC can transfer these documents to another center or school, at the written request of the parent/guardian. Forms are available in the office. Fees may be incurred for file transfers. Please refer to the "Tuition Rates" sheet (received at initial enrollment) or speak with someone in the ELC office for more information.

**Calendar** RCELC generates a yearly calendar which is available on our website (riverviewchristianelc.com). This calendar contains all special events and closures for the entire year. If we ever need to deviate from established dates, you will be notified in writing and/or in Playground App. RCELC will be closed on the following days (subject to change).

- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Good Friday & Easter Monday
- Summer Transition Day (Friday following graduation)
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July
- RC Company Picnic (TBD Annually)
- Memorial Day
- August In-service Days (2)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving & "Black Friday"
- Christmas Eve through New Year's Day
- **Pre-K Counts also has President's Day In-Service and Spring Break-Please check the school calendar for specific dates (subject to change)**

**Items from Home** Electronics (i.e., handheld game systems, iPads, iPods, etc.) should not be brought to school. Toys from home should be sent only upon agreement of the classroom staff for events such as "show and tell". Please label all items with your child's name. RCELC is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items. Student cell phones are expected to be turned off and kept in a backpack or purse for safety reasons. Purses, backpacks, and personal belongings must be kept in a cubby or locker.

**Medications or items which are to be kept out of children's reach (including but not limited to lighters, sanitizers, creams, batteries, cosmetics, etc...) should never be stored on or in backpacks, diaper bags, purses, totes, coat pockets, etc... Such items should be kept at home or turned immediately into the ELC office to be picked up at the end of the day.**

**Babysitting Outside of RCELC** Occasionally families develop rapports with RCELC staff and wish for them to provide babysitting services outside of RCELC. These arrangements are not contracted by RCELC and the organization will not be held responsible for any incidents or injuries that may occur outside of the RCELC contracted hours.

### **RCELC Contact Information**

**Address: 3301 Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Rd. Reading, PA 19605 Phone: 610-921-0285**

**Office Extension: 203**

**Email: [sara.moreno@rcelc.com](mailto:sara.moreno@rcelc.com)**

**Website: [www.rcelc.com](http://www.rcelc.com)**

**Handbook Revised 8.2025**

**SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination in Services to:  
Families/Clients FROM:**

**Dr. John C. Letterman, Jr. (Director of Oversight)  
Sara R. Moreno Alicea (Director)  
Christine Wesner (Assistant Director)**

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

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

Any family, who believes their child has been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following offices:

Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
223, Health & Welfare Building  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

PA Human Relations Commission  
Philadelphia Regional Office Room  
110 N. 8th Street, Suite 501  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services  
Civil Rights  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.  
South Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office for  
DHS Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Southeast Regional Office 150  
801 Marker Street Suite 5034  
Philadelphia, PA 19107



Riverview Christian Early Learning Center

**Revised 8.2025**