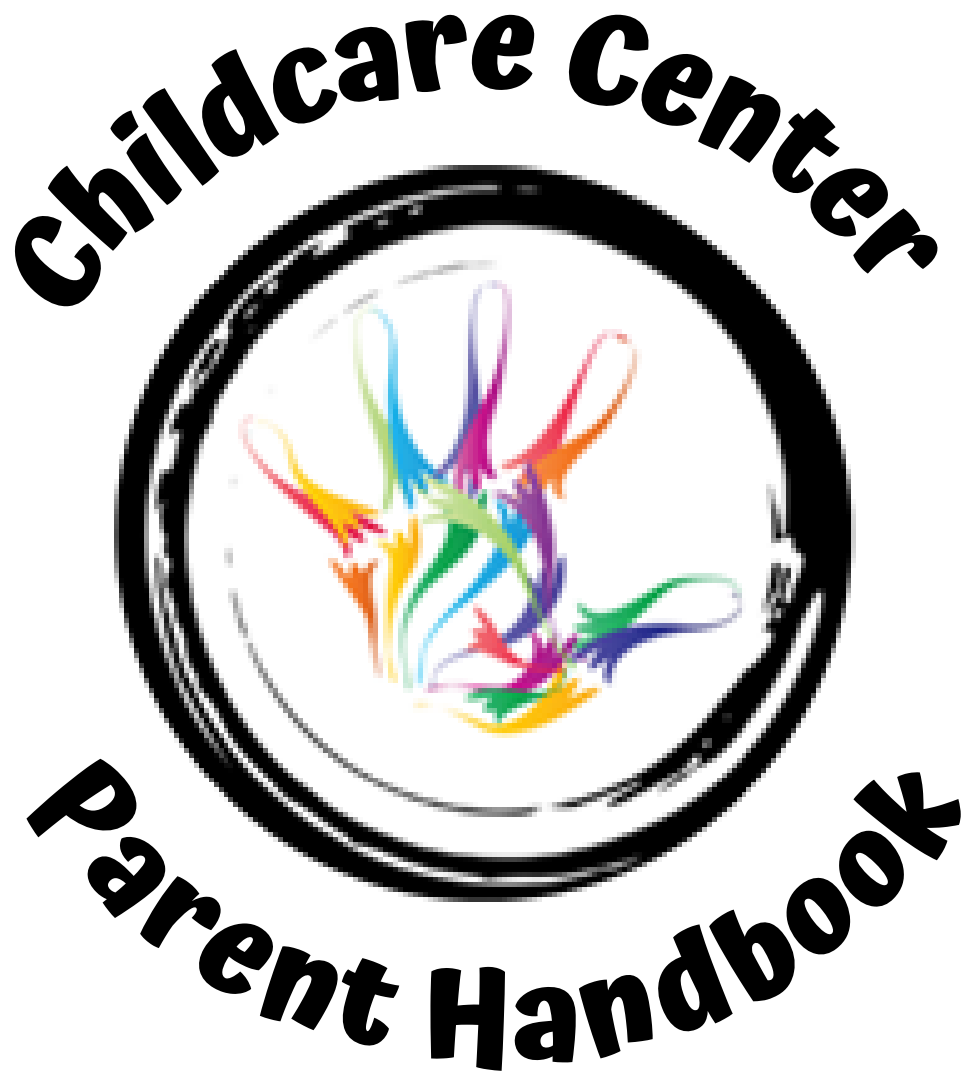


# **Leon County School's Early Childhood Programs**



Updated July 2024

850-922-2099  
500 N. Appleyard Drive Bldg. 1  
[childcarecenter@leonschools.net](mailto:childcarecenter@leonschools.net)  
KeTurah "Keke" Poole, Childcare Director

# **Welcome!**

Welcome to the Childcare Center at Leon County School's Early Childhood Programs, where we aim to provide your child with a safe, caring environment rich with opportunities to grow and learn.

Staff and parent cooperation are the best assurance for your child's educational success. This handbook has been prepared so you can understand the policies and our program better. Please read this handbook and refer to it during the school year. Your child's teacher can help with any questions you may have about the topics in the handbook.

We are looking forward to an exciting and enriching year with your child. On behalf of the entire staff, thank you for the privilege of sharing in your child's early years.

## **Mission Statement**

"Our mission is to provide a comprehensive early childhood education program that meets each child's individual needs and interests, from physical growth to cognitive development."

We believe that by providing a stimulating and happy environment, children will develop the skills needed to be successful. We strive to create a solid foundation of respect, responsibility, and compassion.

## **Meet the Director**

Thank you for choosing the Early Childhood Professional Development Center, ECPDC, for your childcare needs. I am KeTurah Poole, "Ms. Keke," and it is my pleasure to serve as the Director of the Childcare Facility. I am a proud Florida State University graduate with a Family and Child Science degree. I have had the privilege of working in the district with children for over 13 years. I am very excited to be a part of the Early Childhood Family and look forward to a wonderful year. I have an open door policy so please feel free to drop by at anytime. Welcome!

# Meet the Staff

## **Infant Room**

Mrs. Paulette has been teaching for 15 plus years! In the infant room she teaches sign language to help the children better communicate their wants and needs. She believes that it is never too early to start teaching a child.

## **1-Year Old Room**

Marian has been working with children for over ten years. She loves to sing and read to her children. Her excited, animated voice rings through the classroom.

## **2-Year Old Room**

Mrs. Elke. Elke is originally from Germany. Due to her bilingual background, she conducts circle time in English and German. She believes learning through experience is the best way to learn.

## **3-Year Old Room**

Mary Beth is very passionate and committed to working with children. Mary Beth is famous for her energy, patience, and knowledge of insects and plants.

## **Floater**

Ms. Maria is a dedicated member of our team. Her positive and lighthearted demeanor is perfect for working with children!

## **After School**

Ms. Bree has worked with young children in childcare for years. She encourages children through structured and unstructured play.

# Overview of Services

We serve children from 6 weeks to four years of age who are eligible for the following programs:

## **Private Pay**

Limited enrollment is available to children from the community who pay registration and tuition fees at Early Childhood Programs for a full school day Private Pay Program.

## **Teenage Parent Program Services**

Serving students enrolled in Leon County Schools, the Teenage Parent Program comprises of childcare, education services, and supportive services.

# Tuition Agreement

The Childcare Center is a fee-based program with a one-time registration fee and a monthly monetary cost. Fees are due the first Tuesday of every month. Failure to pay by the due date will result in a late fee. Parents who have not paid for services by Friday will be terminated. Children may return once tuition and late fees are paid.

## Withdrawal

If you find that you no longer need the Childcare Center's services please provide a written letter to the director stating your child's name, the reason for leaving, and the child's last date of attendance. This information will be given to the registrar to withdraw your child from our facility.

## Payment Information

Fees can be made online through Efunds, by check, or by money order. Please make sure that your child's first name is on the payment. Payments can also be mailed to the Childcare Center.

Registration Fee: \$150.00

Infant Monthly Fee: \$1,000.00 (\$1050.00-Early Bird)

Toddler Fee: \$800.00 (\$845.00- Early Bird)

Late Fee: \$10.00

LCS employees and ELC parents, please see the director for pricing. ELC Certificates must have the Childcare Center as the Provider.

## Online Payments

ECPDC offers payments through Efunds. Efunds is an online payment site specific to our center. Please scan the QR Code to access our website and and Efunds site. Instructions on how to use EFunds are also located on the website.



Scan for Online Payment

# Attendance

## Early Bird

The Childcare Center offers an Early Bird Drop-Off, a convenient option for parents who need to drop off their children at 7:30. While this service comes with an additional cost and limited space, it provides flexibility for parents with early morning commitments.

## Arrival Time

Our regular hours at the Childcare Center commence at 8:00 a.m. Please sign your child in on the daily sign-in sheet provided. If you anticipate being late, please notify us via the HiMama App or by phone so we can make the necessary arrangements. Children will not be accepted after 10:00 a.m.

## Departure

Timely pick-up is crucial. The Childcare Center closes at 5:00 PM, and children picked up after this time will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in ensuring the smooth operation of our center.

Children's safety is our top priority. They will only be released to custodial parents or legal guardians. If a custodial parent or legal guardian cannot pick up the child for any reason, only individuals on the approved pickup list may do so. These individuals must be 18 or older and provide photo identification, such as a driver's license or ID card.

## TAPP Parents

Children can only attend the Childcare Center when their parent(s) are attending school that day and have a 30 minute window to pick up children once schools is release.

# Morning Drop-off

Drop-off can be very hectic, and we endeavor to make this process as smooth as possible. If students are enrolled in the Early Bird Program, the childcare center can begin to accept them as early as 7:30 a.m. Breakfast is served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

## Drop Off Cut Off Time

Children who arrive after 10:00 a.m. will not be accepted. Punctuality is key to maintaining a consistent routine for your child and the class. It becomes difficult for the class to maintain a consistent routine when teachers are interrupted by late arrivals.

# Early Release Days

May 21-23, 2025, are early release days. On these days, the childcare center will close at 12:30 pm. It's important that all students are picked up by this time. This early closure allows our teachers to clean, prepare, plan, and adequately interchange materials and toys to prepare for the summer session. Our ultimate goal is to provide a clean and educational space for learning to happen. Your cooperation in picking up your child is greatly appreciated.

## Our Curriculum

### **Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos**

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that helps teachers and caregivers understand the developmentally appropriate practice and how to offer nurturing daily routines and meaningful experiences that meet children's strengths, interests, and needs.

### **The Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards**

Early Childhood Programs employs a curriculum that reflects The Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, which are grounded in Florida's conviction that children's early experiences are directly related to later success in school, the workforce, and life. Based on education research findings, sound professional practice, and child development principles, The Standards are based on these essential precepts:

- The first five years of life is a period of rapid growth and development.
- Nurturing and responsive relationships are the foundation of healthy growth and development.
- Developmental milestones occur in a predictable order, but each child develops at a unique pace.
- Children learn in many ways and multiple settings.
- Adults can provide intentional and appropriate experiences that enhance children's learning.

# Discipline Policy

The Childcare Center guides children in making choices and decisions throughout the day. Our staff is trained to give children their undivided attention during interactions. This allows the adult to notice and support problem-solving strategies. By responding supportively, teachers can help the child learn to discuss the problem with others.

Adults use the following steps when problems arise between children:

- Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
- Acknowledge children's feelings
- Gather information
- Restate the problem
- Ask for ideas and solutions and choose one together
- Be prepared to give follow-up support

## Biting

Biting is a common issue for toddlers at childcare center. Up to half of them have been bitten before. It's usually a normal part of development and can have many reasons, including teething, frustration, or a way to communicate. However, it can be a safety concern, and we will take action by meeting with families to come up with a plan if it becomes a repeat problem.

# Health and Medication

The center follows the state and local guidelines for the distribution of medication at the center. A Medication Permission Form must be used for any medication to be administered to your child, and the information you write on the form must match the medication's label. The medication must be in its original container or packaging. The Director will record the amount or count of medication you bring. A separate form is used for each medication.

Parent/guardian must transport prescription or non-prescription medication to and from the center. Children MAY NOT transport medications or empty medication containers.

# Illness

Following state, local, and Department of Children and Families (DCF) regulations, children with the following symptoms will be required to leave: if they display...

- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound or if they have difficult or rapid breathing .
- Temperature of 100°F (armpit or temporal) or 101°F (orally)
- Stiff neck
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting (two or more instances within a 24-hour period)
- Pink eye
- Exposed, open skin lesions or parasites
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or dark stools
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness or contagion

## Return to School Following Illness

A child may return to school following an illness with fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea only when:

- Medication has not been needed or given within the last 48 hours
- Child is free of any and all symptoms for 48 hours
- Child can participate in meals and all other school activities.

# Accidents & Injuries

Accidental injuries sometimes happen while children are playing and involved in activities. In the event of an injury, staff certified in first aid will provide immediate care. We will contact the child's parent or guardian through HiMama or by phone and provide a written accident report documenting the incident. A copy of the accident report will also be kept on file.



# Emergency Procedures

Our center has a site safety plan and follows established procedures in case of fire, tornado, or unauthorized people on or around the campus. Children and staff practice emergency drills during the year so adults and children understand what to do in an emergency.

## **Fire Drill**

Staff ushers children from rooms or playground area to a designated waiting place during a fire drill or following an activated fire alarm. There, teachers will take roll and verify that all children are accounted for while they wait for an all-clear.

## **Tornado Drill**

Children are assisted to a designated safe area and monitored in prescribed safety positions with heads down during a tornado drill or actual weather emergency. If children are outside, they are quickly escorted inside to follow the same procedure.

## **Lockdown Drill**

Staff members immediately lock doors, close window blinds, and turn off lights. Staff monitors children in prescribed safety corners, away from doors and windows, reminding them to stay quiet. If children are outside, they are quickly escorted inside to follow the same procedure.

# HiMama

Parent involvement is essential in the growth and development of children. Therefore, we want our parents to feel connected to their children even while at work. At ECPDC, we use the online app "HiMama" to achieve this goal. HiMama is a cloud-based childcare management solution that helps childcare centers, and professionals interact with parents. HiMama also offers activity and meal trackers, calendar management applications, and real-time photo and video uploading capabilities so that parents can see what a great time their child is having that day!

# Nutrition

The National School Lunch Program is a federally-assisted meal program. It provides nutritious, low-cost, or free breakfast, lunch, and snacks each school day to qualifying students. Menus are posted for parents to view.

Inform your child's teacher in writing and indicate on the Leon County Schools Emergency & Medical Information Form if your child has any food allergies.

# Birthday Party Guidelines

You are invited to join us in creating a fun celebration at the Childcare Center for your child's birthday. Together, we will work to make the day special for everyone. Please check with your child's teacher at least one week in advance. Parties will be held at afternoon snack time, 2:30 p.m. The party will last for approximately one-half hour.

You are welcome to bring in the following:

- Cupcakes
- Muffins
- Another age-appropriate snack

We encourage nutritious snacks and limit the children's intake of sweets. Please consider this when planning your child's in-school party. Invitations to a child's party outside of school will only be passed out if every child in the class receives one.

Other items to remember:

- Please find out from the Childcare Center Director if there are any food allergies.
- Please limit your guests.
- Please clean up any party supplies before leaving.

# Hair Accessories

For our children's safety, EC students may not wear hair beads. Infants, toddlers, and even preschoolers to put things in their mouths - especially pretty or interesting things. Children can choke on small objects, and choking can lead to severe injury or even death.

Parents may use rubber hair bands, plain scrunchies, fabric headbands, and ribbons. Please understand that the safety of all our children is essential here at Early Childhood Programs. Parents will be asked to remove any beads before they can leave their child in our care. Staff members will not be responsible for the removal of beads.

# Closure Dates

The EC Childcare Center follows the Leon County School's Calendar. Below are all the dates the Childcare Center will be closed.

Labor Day.....	September 2, 2024
Fall Holiday.....	October 3, 2024
Teacher's Planning Day.....	October 21, 2024
Veteran's Day.....	November 11, 2024
Thanksgiving Break.....	November 25-29, 2024
Winter Break.....	Dec. 23-Jan.7, 2025
Martin Luther King Jr. Day.....	January 20, 2025
Presidents Day.....	February 17, 2025
Spring Break.....	March 10-14, 2025
Teacher's Planning Day.....	March 17, 2025
Spring Holiday.....	April 18, 2025
Early Release Days .....	May 21-23, 2025

**May 21-23, 2025, are early release days.**

**On these three days, the childcare center will close at 12:30 pm .**