

Auburn University Harris Early Learning Center Family Handbook

FEBRUARY 21ST, 2025



THE ELMER AND GLENDA HARRIS
EARLY LEARNING CENTER

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Welcome to the Harris Early Learning Center

Welcome to the Harris Early Learning Center

We welcome you to Harris Early Learning Center (hereinafter referred to as ‘Harris Early Learning Center’, ‘HELC’, ‘the Center’). This handbook has been prepared to welcome you and help you understand our policies, procedures, and benefits. The policies set forth in this handbook are intended as guidelines only and are subject to change at the sole discretion of HELC. For additional employee guidelines, please see the Auburn University Handbook. This employee handbook addresses information specific to Harris Early Learning Center.

The Harris Early Learning Center (HELC) originated in 1995 as a project of the Birmingham Urban Revitalization Partnership, Inc. in cooperation with Auburn University’s College of Human Sciences. Effective, June 1, 2012, Auburn University assumed ownership of the facility. The Center has four principle missions. The first is to provide education and care for young children, which meets standards of best practice in the field. A second mission is to support the training and education of college and university students preparing to work with young children and families. Third, the Center will provide an environment for research into areas related to the growth and development of young children and families. Finally, the Center will serve the Birmingham area, the state and the region with outreach programs for families and childcare professionals.

ACCREDITATION

The Center is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation’s largest organization of early childhood educators. This accreditation was first awarded in August of 1997 and again re-accredited August 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 after a process of internal self-study followed by external professional review to verify compliance with the Academy’s criteria for high quality early childhood programs. The next accreditation validation visit will be scheduled during the 2021-2022 school year. Many of the procedures and standards outlined in this Handbook support the high standards required for accreditation. Further, the HELC is in compliance with the Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and Nighttime Centers as prescribed by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources. Minimum Standards and Accreditation Criteria and Procedures are available for review at: <https://dhr.alabama.gov/childcare/licensing-overview/> or www.naeyc.org

PHILOSOPHY OF CARE AND EDUCATION

The staff at Harris Early Learning Center (HELC) is committed to providing a high-quality program for young children and their families. The program is designed to promote the development of the total individual by helping each child develop skills in the emotional, social, creative, cognitive and physical areas. This goal is accomplished by providing a balanced program that includes both teacher-directed and self-selected activities, quiet as well as active experiences, and the recognition that learning occurs in both formal and informal ways.

Young children are integrally connected to their homes and families, and it is understood that families are and should be the principal influence in their children's lives. The HELC seeks to be appropriately responsive to families. Families and staff work together toward the goal of nurturing children in an environment where all are respected for their individual differences and provided with the building blocks for a lifelong love of learning.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The HELC curriculum is based on the knowledge that young children learn through active explorations of their environment. This occurs optimally when their physical needs are well met and they feel emotionally secure. Instilling in children a sense of security and trust is of utmost importance. Staff create classroom learning environments appropriate to the developmental needs of the various age groups and provide for the needs of individual children as appropriate.

Infants and toddlers have the opportunity to use a variety of materials and participate in activities designed to stimulate cognitive, social, emotional, physical and creative development. Activities are planned according to their developmental levels and needs. All children are assigned two primary teachers who take responsibility for each child for the greater part of the day. Primary care allows for better continuity and bonding between the child, the classroom teachers, and family members. The primary teachers are responsible for the majority of the routine care, lesson implementation, daily reporting, and serve as principle point of contact regarding information concerning your child. We make every effort for other teachers who may be in the classroom to also be involved with your child and familiar with your child's needs.

Classes for preschoolers are planned on a flexible thematic basis and include hands-on activities and projects integrating traditional disciplines such as math, science, social studies, music, art, and language arts. Emphasis is placed on the process and the actual experience of an activity, rather than the final product. Weekly curriculum plans are available to families.

CURRICULUM GOALS AT HELC:

- 1) Support the child in the development of his or her full linguistic repertoire, including the development of expressive and receptive capabilities in the child's home language(s) and English
- 2) Prepare the child to engage in meaningful literacy practices by developing the child's comprehension, meaning-making systems, concepts of print, and the ability to process graphic symbols and language in its written forms
- 3) Facilitate the development of agency by promoting the child's intellectual curiosity, observational skills, problem solving, and learning through his or her own efforts;
- 4) Help the child become an independent and critical thinker who is able to make choices and decisions;
- 5) Promote student autonomy by supporting the child to move from the need for outer authority or extrinsic motivation to the ability to regulate his or her own actions and demonstrate intrinsic motivation;
- 6) Help the child develop confidence in his or her ability to achieve goals through independent effort;
- 7) Help the child develop an understanding of feelings and how feelings motivate behavior; help the child gain control over how feelings are expressed and learn acceptable ways of dealing with, and expressing strong feelings;
- 8) Help the child develop the social skills needed to be successful in interpersonal relations, to function successfully in the peer group and to learn from peers;
- 9) Support the child to develop a respect and celebration of diversity including, but not limited to, differing abilities, gender, race, ethnicity, language, and culture.
- 10) Provide information on, and experience with, the social and physical world in which the child needs to function adequately;
- 11) Develop the child's aesthetic sensibilities and horizons through artistic, academic, and intellectual experiences;
- 12) Facilitate the child's physical skills through provisions of large and fine-motor activities;
- 13) Provide learning opportunities that are fun and engaging for children and encourage a passion for life-long learning

RESEARCH PROGRAMS & INSTRUCTION FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

One of the missions of the Harris Early Learning Center is to support scientific research in the areas of child development and family relations. Scientific research contributes to the body of knowledge describing how children grow and develop and, also provides valuable information for the development of effective preschool education programs.

Before any research project is conducted in the Center, all investigations must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Auburn University and that of any other participating university. This procedure ensures that only studies that do not compromise the safety and integrity of children and family members are conducted in the Center. Due to our strong commitment to Auburn University and the higher education community, family members are highly encouraged to participate in research projects if asked, but participation is not required. Families will be informed if their child participated on a given day. Any questions or concerns families might have about the research program should be discussed with the Executive Director

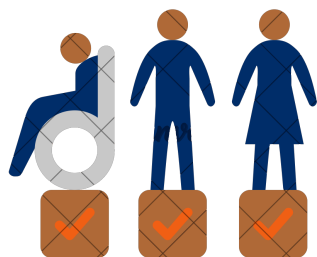
Research projects may involve interviewing, observing, videotaping families or children or asking family members or teachers to complete questionnaires. If needed, an orientation program to familiarize the child with the experimenters, the rooms, and the procedures will precede each investigation. No child, family member, or staff member shall be compelled to participate, and a family or staff member's relationship with the HELC will not be compromised by a decision not to participate.

Data from research are strictly confidential. Code numbers rather than names of children or families are used. Although data from individual children and families cannot be released, a summary of the results of each study can be sent to participating families at its completion, if requested.

College students can learn about development and the education of young children by observing and interacting with children at the Harris Early Learning Center. Students who plan careers in which they will work directly with families or children have the opportunity to translate knowledge obtained in the classroom into planning, implementing and evaluating programs for Center children. It is the role of the HELC staff to provide students with a model program and guidance in their interactions with children and families. Staff at the Center also serve as professional models for students by being involved in professional development, such as participating in professional organizations, attending local, regional and national meetings, and staying abreast of current literature in the area of Child Development and Early Childhood Education.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY- NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Center strongly believes children and employees are entitled to equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, or veteran status. Children and employees are entitled to work and play in an environment that is non-discriminatory and free of any harassment that interferes with an individual's work/play performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work/play atmosphere.



TRANSITION & ORIENTATION

Harris Early Learning Center



We are looking forward to another wonderful year of learning at HELC. Please see the information below concerning the upcoming school year's transition and orientation schedule.

Transition

Transition is an opportunity for students and their families to get the feel for their new classroom. All students enrolled for the 2025- 2026 school year are invited to join. To participate, students must have all necessary registration documents and an updated immunization form. Classroom assignments will be released prior to transition days.

Transition Schedule	
Monday, August 4th, 2025	9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, August 5th, 2025	9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Orientation

Orientation takes place on August 6th. As this is an opportunity for adult family members to learn about the specifics of the classroom and center policies and procedures, we highly encourage that only adult family members attend orientation. We ask that families report to your child's classroom at the assigned time to meet classroom teachers and receive classroom information. Administrative staff and our community partners will be in the Chicka Room to answer any questions.

Orientation Schedule for August 6th, 2025		
Time	Age Group	Classroom Numbers
8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	Infants, Toddlers, & Twos	Infants: 101, 103, 104 Toddlers: 102, 105, 106 Twos: 114, 115, 116
9:15 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Threes & Pre-K	Transitional Threes: 113 Threes: 110, 111, 112 Pre-K: 107, 108, 109

A reminder that HELC is closed August 6th, 7th, & 8th for orientation and staff development. Classes will resume Monday, August 11th for the first day of school!
Only adults may participate in orientation.

IMPORTANT CENTER DATES

Harris Early Learning Center

2025



Date	Event	Closing Status
August 4th - 5th, 2025	Transition days	Open
August 6th, 2025	Orientation/ Staff Development	Open for Orientation Only
August 7th - 8th, 2025	Fall Staff Development	Center is closed to families
August 11th, 2025	First Day of School	Open
September 1st, 2025	Labor Day	Closed
October 28th - 30th, 2025	State Pre-K Conference	Rooms 107, 108, 109 closed
November 11th, 2025	Staff Development Day	Center Closed to Families
November 26th - 28th, 2025	Thanksgiving Break	Closed
December 22nd, 2025 - Jan 2nd, 2026	Winter Break	Closed

Dates are subject to change and will be announced in advance if changes are necessary.

IMPORTANT CENTER DATES

Harris Early Learning Center

2026



Date	Event	Closing Status
January 5th, 2026	First Day Back!	Open
January 19th, 2026	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Closed
March 13th, 2026	Staff Development Day	Center is closed to families
May 25th, 2026	Memorial Day	Closed
June 19th, 2026	Juneteenth	Closed
July 3rd, 2026	Independence Day Holiday Observed	Closed
July 31st, 2026	Last Day for Pre-K Students (Rooms 107, 108, 109)	Open
August 3rd & August 4th, 2026	Transition Days	Open
August 5th, 2026	Orientation/ Staff Development	Open only for Orientation Class is not in session
August 6th & 7th, 2026	Fall Staff Development	Center is closed to families
August 10th, 2026	First Day of School	Open

Dates are subject to change and will be announced in advance if changes are necessary.

Enrollment



Enrollment

APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT

Applications are accepted for the Harris Early Learning Center throughout the year.

Children are admitted to the Center according to the number of spaces available for a particular sponsor and/or the number of spaces available for an age group. The child population includes children from different racial, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds; differing abilities; and a balance of boys and girls whenever possible. Because of the special eligibility requirements, it is impossible to compile a prioritized waiting list. A waiting pool is maintained. When an opening occurs, an attempt is made to find a child from a corporate sponsor and of the same age as the child who left the program. Sponsoring employers have agreed to work cooperatively to best serve everyone's needs.

Due to the multifaceted decisions that must be made to compose a number of individual classes within an age group, teacher requests will not be accepted. When creating classes, the center aims to balance gender, race, ethnicity, differing abilities, and home language(s). In addition, the personality dynamics of both teachers and children must be taken into consideration when making up class rolls.

It is typical that children remain enrolled in the classroom in which they begin the school year or where placed, in the case of enrolling after the start of the school year. There is, however, a possibility that a child could be moved to another class in his or her age group if withdrawal of children in the age group occurs. Adjustments, by moving children, might be made so that children in a classroom will be closer in development and/or birth months (predominately infant, toddler and two-year classrooms only.) In the case that not all spaces in a given age group are utilized by employees of corporate sponsors, non-sponsored families may be admitted.

Beginning February 1st, 2025, a \$57.12 non-refundable waitlist fee will be charged per family. This fee includes a 2% credit card fee. Applicants will not be added to the waitlist until we have received the waitlist fee. Your application can stay on the waitlist for two years from your original application date. Waitlist fees will not apply to families currently enrolled. Waitlist fees are charged once per family.



Enrollment

ENROLLMENT PRIORITY

Because the HELC is a corporate sponsored facility, families from our sponsoring companies receive priority to spaces due to the contributions made by their corporation. We are only able to give corporate preference to those on the waiting list for the allotted number of spaces that their corporation sponsors.

The following order of priority for enrollment of new children from our waitlist is set as follows:

- Siblings of currently enrolled families
- Children of corporate sponsors
- Children of community families.

A note that sibling priority is enacted the year after a child enrolls. It is not guaranteed that all siblings will be offered a space at the same time due to availability.

For current expecting families-- Please make sure that you fill out an application for your newest addition if you would like your child to attend. We can only hold spaces for applications we receive.



Enrollment

REQUIRED FORMS

All families are required to provide the following documents:

- Certificate of Immunization Record
- Home language Survey
- Family Handbook Acknowledgement
- Family Code of Conduct Acknowledgement
- Preadmission Form

Other Documentation may include:

- Documentation that may include medical or development diagnoses (IEPS etc.)
- Students with significant allergies must submit an allergy plan approved by their medical provider
- Students with dietary restrictions must submit medical or religious documentation
- Birth Certificate (Pre-K4 Only)

Your child will not be allowed to start school without all forms on file. If files are not updated, students may not attend until all forms are on file.

All forms must be updated yearly (and throughout the year should your emergency contact information change.) Families are required to keep the immunizations record up to date, as the health department has the authority to send children home if immunizations are not current. In addition, families are asked to complete other forms and surveys that provide information on their child and his or her relationship with the family. This information will assist Center staff in providing the best care and education possible for your child.

CHILDREN'S FILES

Files are kept on each child. These files are confidential and contain the application, information forms, emergency forms, signed consent forms, certificate of immunization, assessment forms, anecdotal reports, and other records that may assist the teacher in working effectively with the family. A child's file is retained for at least three years from the date of last enrollment. Families are welcome to review the file with the Center staff.



Enrollment

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is due, in full, on the first day of each month. You may opt to divide payments into ½ due on the 1st and ½ due on the 15th of each month. A late fee will be assessed to accounts for payments made after the 15th. Tuition is charged on a year-round basis taking holidays into account. Therefore, no deductions are made for absence or holidays. Because staffing and other operational costs are incurred on the basis of enrollment, this cost must be assessed even when a child is absent. Online payments should be made through our website www.harriselc.org

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS/COLLECTIONS

Accounts are considered delinquent after the 15th of each month and a late charge of \$50 will be assessed after a 2-day grace period. If the tuition is not paid per this agreement, your child's enrollment will be discontinued. Payments should be made online at www.harriselc.org. Families with delinquent accounts will be notified by message or mail concerning their outstanding balance. Should accounts not be satisfied immediately, enrollment is relinquished, and the account will be sent to collections.

LATE PICK UP FEE

The Center is not budgeted for after-hour staffing; therefore, any family member whose child remains after this time will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$10 for the first 5 minutes. After the first five minutes, the late pick-up fee increases to \$5 per minute. For example, if you are 25 minutes late, you would incur a charge of \$110 [(\$10 for the first 5 minutes) + (20 min x \$5) = \$110]. If you are going to be detained, please notify the school immediately so that your child can be prepared for this change in scheduling and staff arrangements can be made. Late fees will be charged regardless of notification.

ENROLLMENT/ SUPPLY FEES

An annual non-refundable enrollment fee and annual supply fee for each child is due one week after your child's placement in the Center is offered. If these fees are not received in this time frame, the slot will be offered to another child. A minimum of half of the first month tuition must be received in the office on or before the first day your child attends school. Updated tuition costs and fees are available via the front desk or our website.

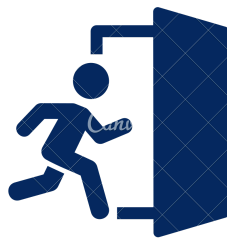
Note: Based upon the First-Class Pre-K Grant, the annual supply fee and enrollment fee are waived for students enrolled in the Pre-K 4 classrooms.



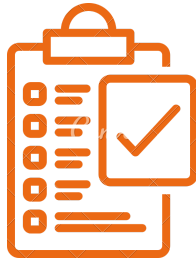
Enrollment

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Family members withdrawing their child for any reason during the year should provide a 30-day written notice. Tuition will continue to be assessed throughout this period. A full month's tuition will be due for any portion of a month enrolled before withdrawal. Tuition is not pro-rated.



Center Procedures



Center Procedures

LAWS, RULES, REGULATIONS, AND ACCREDITATION

Families must cooperate with the Center in carrying out all governmental laws, rules and regulations affecting operation. Any questions regarding the Center's policies and procedures should be directed toward one of the Directors. Although exempted from state licensure, the Center pledges to be in compliance with the Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers of the state of Alabama and family members are expected to also follow these standards as they are required by law. A copy of these state regulations may be viewed at:

<https://dhr.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/No-Highlighted-MS-for-CENTERS-revised.pdf>

The Center, as a nationally accredited program, also commits to meet accreditation standards of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (a division of NAEYC.) Generally, these standards relate to training of care givers, group size, adult/child ratios, quality of interactions, and describe developmentally appropriate practice. For further information regarding NAEYC, you may go to www.naeyc.org for information related to quality early care and education practices.



Center Procedures

SIGNING-IN & SIGNING-OUT

Family members are required by law to sign their children in upon arrival, and out prior to departure. (DHR state requirement). Families are required to sign their children in and out of Procure. Legal guardians may sign their child in and out by either scanning the QR codes around the building, using the tablet at the front desk, or by using their phone (you must have location services enabled). Non-legal guardians must use the tablets located at the front desk.

Family members, or anyone picking up your child will be required to be added to the Procure database and will be assigned their own unique 4-digit log-in code. You should not share this code with anyone.

The only people other than a child's legal guardians who are authorized to take the child from the Center are those people designated in writing on the Child's Preadmission Record Form. We also request that families inform the front office and the classroom teachers when someone other than primary caregiver will be picking up or delivering their child. New families as well as adults authorized on the form will be asked to furnish picture ID upon request. Please inform those authorized to pick up your child that they should expect to have their ID checked upon arrival at the Center.

The Harris Early Learning Center staff will not release children to a person who is visibly impaired due to a medical condition, alcohol consumption, substance abuse, prescription drugs or other causes. In the event the primary care giver or legal guardian is impaired, a director will call someone designated on the release form.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

As of August 12, 2024, HELC's Operating Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

It is recommended that no child spend beyond 9 hours within a group care setting on a daily basis.

In addition, the classroom schedules are set up in such a way that educational activities will be well underway by 9am (after arrival and breakfast is served.) Due to the educational nature of the program, unless your child will be arriving late due to an appointment, please refrain from bringing your child in after 9am as late arrivals are disruptive to the on-going activities in the classroom. Please inform the classroom teachers if you know your child will be arriving later than 9am and unless arranged with the teachers, no child will be accepted at or after lunch or naptime.

Center Procedures

CENTER COMMUNICATION

Communication to teachers should be done through either the staff member's Auburn email, Procure, or room telephones:

CLASS IPAD/ PROCARE



AUBURN UNIVERSITY EMAIL



CLASSROOM TELEPHONES



205-252-5060
Extension = Classroom Number

HELC uses the SchoolCast notification system to notify families of important information and closures. Family contact information is entered into the system and can be notified by phone at home, work and cell, by e-mail and /or text messages. Please make sure your contact number and e-mail address are kept current in the SchoolCast system, with the front office and classroom.

Center Procedures

CENTER PARKING & DRIVING

Families may utilize the front and side drive for parking, street parking, or our parking lot to drop-off and pick-up children. There is no parking allowed on curbs with red paint as these are reserved for emergency vehicles.

Children may not be left in any vehicle.

Vehicles should not exceed the speed of 10 miles per hour. We ask for families to proceed with extreme caution as they pull through our HELC parking lot to protect our teachers, students, and families.

It is the expectation that students remain close to their adult while moving through the parking lot by either holding their adult's hand, being carried, or walking directly next to them. **Continuous violation of this policy poses a safety risk and is considered a violation of the code of conduct and grounds for dismissal.**



Center Procedures

BUILDING EXPECTATIONS

Older siblings should be dropped off first, this is to prevent older siblings from entering younger siblings classrooms.

Families are expected to keep their children in close proximity during periods of drop-off and pick-up. Students should not be free to run ahead or move throughout the building without an adult. **Unattended children pose a significant safety risk and continuous violation of this policy is considered a violation of our code of conduct and grounds for dismissal.**



Center Procedures

BABYSITTING POLICY

The HELC hires employees based on their education and expertise within a supervised and managed environment. Center management, therefore, cannot be responsible or held liable if families hire Center employees for privately arranged childcare outside the scope of its employment. Center staff are allowed to transport children enrolled in the Center to or from the Center only after completing a liability release form and receiving written authorization from the legal guardians.



Center Procedures

CAR SEATS/STROLLERS

HELC is not able to store car seats or strollers due to fire-safety codes.



Center Procedures

NUTRITION, FOOD, AND FOOD ALLERGIES

Children should not bring food, for example, fast food breakfast items, to the Center except by prior arrangement with the child's teacher. Food items brought should be limited to special snacks or celebrations such as birthdays (please refer to the HELC Celebration Policy) and according to NAEYC accreditation standards may only be individual packaged items or bakery prepared so that specific ingredients are available in case of food allergy concerns.

Children will be served breakfast, a nutritious mid-day meal, and an afternoon snack, meeting guidelines of USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Our menus are written and approved by Natalie Pugh Stephens RD LD, Registered Dietitian and Nutritionist of Family First, LLC.

Teachers are directed not to hold breakfast for late arrivers due to health violations so please do not call and make this request. In addition, teachers cannot be expected to serve children an afternoon/evening meal, even if it is provided by the family member, with the exception of a late afternoon bottle for infants.

Food or drink substitutions cannot be made for individual children except for documented medical/religious reasons. The center does not give cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months, serves only whole milk to children ages 12-24 months and 2% to 2 and older.

Food allergies often occur. Therefore, a notice from the doctor will be expected when a child should not eat/drink a certain food and this information is made available to the kitchen staff and will be posted in the classroom. Items such as peanut butter are offered to our older children and younger children as their developing eating habits will allow. However, family members of older infants and toddlers may be wary of their child being exposed to some food items before they are ready to serve them. Weekly menus are placed at the front desk and families should review the menu to make teachers aware of items you would prefer a younger child not being served. Reasonable efforts are made to serve an alternate item.

Please see our health and safety section concerning allergies.



Center Procedures

ITEMS PROVIDED BY FAMILIES



DIAPERING SUPPLIES

Disposable Diapers, pull-ups,
diaper cream, wipes



PACIFIERS

For infant and toddler classes



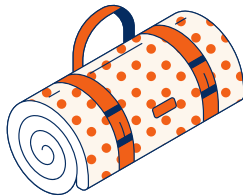
BIKE HELMET

2+ & Appropriately sized



CLOTHING

Weather and size appropriate



NAP MATS

12 Months+
Must be laundered each week

The center will provide crib/cot
sheets for infants



WATERBOTTLE

12 Months+
Must be taken home and washed
each night

Families will be notified via Procure if any supplies (diapers, wipes,
clothes etc) are needed.

Center Procedures

ITEMS PROVIDED BY FAMILIES- CLOTHING

Clothing should be:

- Weather appropriate
- Comfortable and easy for children to manage (especially during the critical stages of toilet learning/potty training).
- Play clothes that can withstand use and easily laundered
- labeled with the child's initials or name to prevent loss

Families are asked to understand that reasonable efforts will be made to protect clothing but that occasional stains from paint or food may occur.

Children should wear sturdy shoes with non-slip soles to help prevent falling from climbing equipment. Open toe shoes/sandals, flip-flops and hard heeled boots are strongly discouraged as these pose tripping and falling hazards.

Families are asked to provide a seasonal and size appropriate change of clothes that can be used in case of emergencies and to check carefully at the end of the day for items to be laundered and returned.

Additional clothing and accessory items discouraged from being worn at the Center including child jewelry (particularly valuable items), hair beads and barrettes. Each of these pose dangerous choking hazards should a child put them in their mouth.

Children should be adequately dressed for the season and weather for outdoor play on each day of attendance. Children generally go outside, even on cold days for a brief time, if it is not raining. A warm jacket with a hood, or hat and mittens are needed on cold days. Physical development experiences that include both teacher-directed and free play activities are offered daily. Indoor and/or outdoor play activities are an important part of our program. Children will be expected to participate in play activities unless a written statement from the child's physician is provided.



Center Procedures

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Students should not be bringing personal belongings into the center such as food, toys, or other valuables.

We ask that toys or other “prized” possessions remain at home unless a special occasion is planned by teachers.

It is understood, however, that many young children do have an object of special attachment, such as a blanket or stuffed toy, which helps to ease the transition from home to school and that they might not be ready to share. Teachers will help other children to understand and respect such feelings and once a child is settled the item will be placed in their cubby. Teachers will do their best to keep up with children’s belongings but cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of personal possessions.

Labeling of all personal belongings helps to avoid loss.



Center Procedures

CELEBRATION GUIDELINES

Families should always partner with classroom teachers when planning any party or classroom activity. Family members who attend are expected to help set up, if needed, and clean up the party or activity. In addition, the class expectations should be followed at all times. Family members are responsible in making sure their child follows class expectations during a celebration or fieldtrip event. If a celebration is planned for off-site, it will need to take place after school hours and all children present will need to be accompanied by a supervising adult or family member. HELC cannot be held responsible for the health, well-being or behavior of children during after hour activities.

Families may send party food and favors (appropriate for the age) for the entire class. The child's immediate family members may attend or have the teacher serve the snacks during the afternoon snack time. If the family sends party favors and attend the party, the family members will be expected to help clean up after the party. This will allow the teachers to focus their attention on the supervision of the children and to continue with the regularly scheduled afternoon activities and not be burdened with an unusual amount of clean up. Families should refrain from bringing additional family members and friends to school parties.

According to NAEYC standards, such items must be individually wrapped or provided by a bakery in which ingredients are available due to food allergy concerns.

Latex balloons are prohibited as they are a serious choking hazard to young children.

It is important that you communicate with your classroom teachers and find an appropriate time. We ask that most celebrations are hosted during our afternoon snack time.

Party invitations for personal parties to be held outside of the school day may be distributed at school ONLY if each child in the room is invited. If you wish to invite children from other classes to a family planned party outside of school, it is recommended that you mail these rather than use the classroom cubbies for distribution purposes. When the heartache and rejection experienced by a child who does not receive an invitation is considered, the importance of this policy is very clear.



Center Procedures

QUALITY ASSURANCE- HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

The Harris Early Learning Center is committed to providing a high-quality program that meets to the greatest extent possible children's and family's needs. In case of concerns, first discuss the situation with your child's teachers. While viewpoints on specific situations do vary, all staff are expected to be responsive to family concerns and willing to consider various ways to meet the needs of children and families. Because communication is sometimes not easy, a family member may need to try again to let a teacher know what he/she would like to happen.

Please listen to the teacher's suggestions and respect his or her professional judgment too. While teachers will try to be responsive to individual expectations, they must also consider the needs of all the children in the classroom as well. If a problem is not resolved, please discuss the situation with a director. For further guidance, please see the Family Code of Conduct.



Center Procedures

DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICES

If a problem or concern occurs with a child's behavior or development, the family, teachers, and directors will work together to develop a plan of intervention. Plans will vary according to the age, developmental level and needs of the particular child. It is expected that all parties involved will work as a team to modify and improve the child's behavior and ability to fully participate in the regular classroom activities. If additional services are needed, it is expected that families will allow professionals to be included in an intervention plan. If services are required beyond the scope of the center, these services may incur additional costs to families.

It is advised that children who are exhibiting difficult behaviors spend more one-on-one time with adult family members or significant adults in their lives and less time in group care (less than 9 hours a day).

The goal of any child engagement and guidance policy is to promote the full participation of the child within his or her classroom. This is a solutions-oriented effort to accommodate all children within the program. **However, if in the sole opinion of the Harris Early Learning Center, a child's developmental needs are beyond the scope of what the Harris ELC is able to offer OR if a child continues to exhibit unacceptable or inappropriate behavior, the Harris Early Learning Center reserves the right to suspend or discontinue services for that child.** Such termination of services will be effective immediately upon the determination by the Harris Early Learning Center that such action is warranted and in compliance with federal and state civil rights laws. The Center will, to the extent possible, help families receive appropriate accommodations for placement of their child. While it is our goal to meet the individual and varied needs of each child in the Center, to the best of our ability, we cannot allow one child to continually disrupt the care and education for the other children in a class. In addition, while working with children to develop appropriate academic and social behaviors is a goal of the center (See, Curriculum pg-5) we cannot allow a child to continually behave disrespectfully or exhibit physical force towards teachers or others.

Additionally, Harris Early Learning Center reserves the right to discontinue services for a violation of the family handbook or the family code of conduct.



The Role of the Family



The Role of the Family

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families valued as an essential part of the educational process. Family members are welcomed into the classroom as observers or participants. Harris Early Learning Center aims to engage families often and intentionally, encouraging families to partner with classroom teachers to facilitate learning within in the classroom environment or engaging in activities. Family engagement is characterized by being actively partnering with the school and learning alongside your child. As family engagement is often cited as a critical factor to students' success within schools, AUHELCL recognizes the importance of family partnership. We strive to honor the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our students and foster strong collaborative relationships with families to bridge the home and school learning experience.

Staff are expected to develop positive and reciprocal partnerships that enhance the learning within the classrooms. Families should be viewed as a valuable resource and critical part of our learning. Staff should begin by learning about the child's family, their culture, and languages. Children should feel represented within the classroom. Families are an excellent resource to help promote an inclusive and welcome environment for all learners.

Families are encouraged to visit the program at any time and may eat lunch with their student. Reservations should be made by 9 a.m. and the cost is \$5.00.

Pre-K families are required to participate in 12 family engagement hours- which can include a variety of seminars, attending orientation, family conferences, center programs, fieldtrips and volunteering in or on behalf of the class.



The Role of the Family

FAMILY-STAFF COMMUNICATION

Staff members seek opportunities to communicate frequently with families concerning child rearing practices and to share specific ideas for promoting children's healthy development and learning. Within each classroom the Procure will be used for sharing day-to-day happenings. Family members will be further informed about issues concerning children and families through a periodic newsletter, bulletin boards, and family meetings. Additional materials will also be available from teachers, the Directors, in the Center lobby and website. Please let us know of your needs so that we can do our best to assist you.

Teachers communicate verbally with family members daily at drop-off and pick-up times. These discussions must be brief because the teacher's primary responsibility must be the care and education of the children. If a greater length of time is needed than is allowed in the morning or at the end of the day, please feel free to call the Center and leave a message for the teacher to schedule a conference. Conferences will be offered to families at least twice during the year to discuss their child's developmental progress. Conferences may also be called by teachers or families as the need arises. During formal family conferences, family members express goals for their child and give input into what they see in the child's progressing development.



The Role of the Family

FAMILY SEMINARS

Brown Bag Family Seminars are offered presenting topics of interest to family members of young children. Unless otherwise noted, the seminars are typically from 12:30-1:30 pm and are advertised with flyers, in the newsletter and on the center website. Families are encouraged to spend their lunch hour with us as they learn about growth and development of young children. In addition, the center will provide additional opportunities and experiences for families to further their understanding of how to support their children in their development. Families are encouraged to participate in all family events, as we know this correlates with best outcomes for children. Pre-K4 families are required to complete 12 hours of family engagement for the school year.



The Role of the Family

PARENT REPRESENTATIVE GROUP (PRG)

A group of family members will serve as representatives for each class. Family members desiring to be members of the Family Representative Group should sign up during the fall family orientation period or should inform a director. Monthly meetings are typically held from 12-1 the third Wednesday of each month. All HELC families are encouraged to attend the meetings and participate whenever possible. The purpose of this group is to stimulate and organize family engagement in the Center, to facilitate sharing of information with staff and families, and to assist with the implementation of special activities and projects.



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PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING

PLAY-BASED

The primary vehicle for learning is play. Students spend most of their time participating in meaningful and uninterrupted play.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

The learning activities and materials are developmentally suited to the child's age and developmental needs.

SAFE, RESPECTFUL, & INCLUSIVE
All children have the opportunity to learn in a safe and loving environment.

AUTONOMY & AGENCY

Children are encouraged to develop independence and confidence in their decision making. Students have opportunities to make choices. Children are responsible members of their learning community.



STUDENT-CENTERED & STUDENT-LED

Learning is driven by student interests and focuses on the learner. The educator acts as guide or facilitator.

JOYFUL

Learning is filled with joy and wonder!

THEMATIC, PROJECT-BASED, & PROBLEM-BASED

Play and learning is embedded in thematic units centered upon culminating projects or solving real-world problems. Students drive learning through interests.

AUTHENTIC & CONTEXTUALIZED

All learning is purposeful and in context. Children will use skills and understanding with purpose.

HOLISTIC

Multiple skills are embedded within learning activities. All areas of development are considered.

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PROHIBITED PRACTICES

The following practices are prohibited as they do not align with HELC's approach and model for education:

Avoid

Instead Try

Time out or sitting out from an activity



Redirection, utilizing tools such as the calming corner, or having one on one conversations.

Flashcards or any exercise in which content is drilled repetitively.



Embed high quality content into thematic learning experiences.

Tracing or repeated writings



Use writing for real and authentic purposes

Worksheets or coloring sheets



Instead offer blank paper or provide the learning objectives through play

Crafts

(every child's looks the same)



Process Art

Focuses on process over product. Provides sensory experiences and develops aesthetic sensibilities

Teacher- Centered Classrooms



Child Centered Classrooms

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OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a regular part of our HELC curriculum as we know play relates to the many areas of development not limited to gross motor development and social development. It is the expectation that toddler classes and older utilize playground spaces once in the morning and once in the afternoon, unless weather permitting.

Infant classes (101, 103, 104) are expected to either utilize their playground space once a day or go on an outdoor buggy ride, weather permitting.

Outdoor play should be adapted and changed by bringing out varying interactive materials that promote the holistic development of the child. This may include bringing out a sensory or water table, having days for tricycle riding, or changing out varying toys such as trucks, balls, or hula hoops. Utilizing chalk or outdoor art materials are also important opportunities for developing fine motor skills and promoting emergent literacy.

Please ensure that students have the proper shoes on for activities such as tricycle riding.

Water Play takes place between Memorial day and the first day of school and is required twice a week for each class. For more information, please see the section on water play.

For information on weather and outdoor safety, please see health and safety.



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TECHNOLOGY POLICY

As HELC values the importance of play-based education, our use of technology for students is limited. Priority is placed on interactive media over passive or non-interactive media. **Videos should be rarely leveraged as an academic tool and should be approved by a center director. Videos should be reserved for special occasions.**

Media Type	NAEYC Definition
Interactive Media	refers to digital and analog materials, including software programs, applications (apps), broadcast and streaming media, some children's television programming, e-books, the Internet, and other forms of content designed to facilitate active and creative use by young children and to encourage social engagement with other children and adults.
Non-Interactive Media	include certain television programs, videos, DVDs, and streaming media now available on a variety of screens. Noninteractive technology tools and media are not included in the definition and description of effective and appropriate use in this statement unless they are used in ways that promote active engagement and interactions. Noninteractive media can lead to passive viewing and overexposure to screen time for young children and are not substitutes for interactive and engaging uses of digital media or for interactions with adults and other children.

Age	Allowable Technologies	Prohibited Uses
Birth - 2 years	Music played over speakers, toys that make noise etc.	Any screen time including the watching of videos or interaction with devices such as ipads.
3 years +	In addition to those listed above: listening centers for audiobooks, use of projectors to view photos/images, use of smart board for interactive learning activities	Regular use of video for entertainment/music.

Please see [NAEYC's Position Statement](#) for more information and guidance.

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RELIGIOUS MATERIALS

The following is an excerpt from the Auburn University Policy against Discrimination and Harassment:

“Auburn University is committed to providing a work and educational environment free of discrimination and harassment. Auburn University is equally committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination or harassment against individuals on the basis of sex, (sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression), race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or protected veteran status (collectively, “Protected Status”) in its employment, admissions, and/or educational programs and activities.”

The Harris Early Learning Center serves diverse students who may come from a variety of religious or non-religious backgrounds. To cultivate an environment that ensures equal opportunity in education, the Harris Early Learning Center cannot promote or endorse any religious beliefs. Teachers should avoid engaging students in prayer or discussion of religion, posting religious statements and materials, reading religious stories, and similar use of religious symbolism. Certain practices have become accepted secularly (e.g., Christmas stockings, playing dreidel, decorating Easter eggs, etc.) and can be continued. If you are not certain if an activity or educational material is appropriate please contact your Executive Director.

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CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING



CULTIVATES
INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY



REPRESENTS ALL
CHILDREN



FOLLOWS HELC
CULTURAL TEACHING
CALENDAR



INCORPORATES
CHILD'S
LANGUAGE(S)

DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS ARE REPRESENTED THROUGH:



TOYS



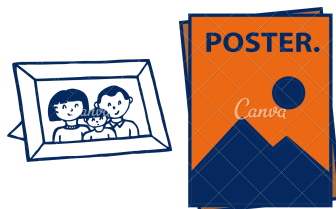
MUSIC



BOOKS



LABELS



VISUALS



CLASSROOM
GREETINGS

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FAMILY STYLE MEALS AND SELF-SERVICE

Family-style meals and self-service are important parts of developing independence in our students. Students should be afforded developmentally appropriate opportunities to pour and serve their meals. It is the expectation that all 3s and 4s classes participate in family-style meals and self service.

In doing so, we understand that there will be some waste as students navigate spills. The kitchen is asked to increase quantities to account for these accidents. The kitchen will also provide serving utensils that will enable students to participate.

All children should be provided some of each food item on their plate unless there are allergies or religious exemptions.

Children should never be required or compelled to eat or try any food.



Curriculum & Pedagogy

GUIDANCE & CHILD ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement is the primary vehicle in reducing behavioral issues within the classroom. The classroom environment, along with the curriculum and instructional practices, are designed to increase student engagement. An engaged and excited learner reduces opportunities to deviate from positive behavioral choices. Teachers will use positive strategies to guide children in developing self-control, agency, and autonomy to promote the child's ability to positively engage with peers and adults, as well as navigate conflict in healthy and positive ways.

Teachers are expected to develop meaningful relationships with students and to include students in conversations about how to positively interact with peers, adults, and the environment. Priority is placed on developing students' capacities for autonomy as well as the ability to problem-solve and self-regulate. Educators are expected to facilitate conversations, when possible, with students surrounding feelings, choices, and future actions, including alternative choices. Conflict is a necessary and important part of students' opportunities to learn compassion, understanding, and self-regulation.

Teachers will work with children to help them identify the problem, discuss feelings, and possible alternative behaviors. The goal in the resolution of all conflicts is to help the child see how choices may affect himself and others, as well as create a joint plan for alternative behaviors moving forward. If challenging behavior persists, teachers will include family members and professionals, as needed, in order to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior and promote the child's success within the classroom.



Curriculum & Pedagogy

PERMISSIBLE METHODS OF GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

WHAT?

vs

WHY?

At HELC, our goal is to focus on the “why” behind the behavior so that we are better able to equip children to make positive decisions independently. Correcting the “what” without addressing the “why” will not help the child to make independent positive choices, but will create a cycle of regulating a child’s behavior.



CULTIVATE
COMMUNITY



OBSERVE & TAKE
PREVENTATIVE
MEASURES



DEVELOP
RELATIONSHIPS



GET ON THE
CHILD'S LEVEL



EXPLAIN
CONCISELY



PROMOTE PROBLEM-
SOLVING



REDIRECT



PROVIDE
CHOICES



EQUIP STUDENTS
WITH STRATEGIES



USE NATURAL
CONSEQUENCES
WHEN SAFE

Curriculum & Pedagogy

PERMISSIBLE METHODS OF GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

At HELC our primary goal in the moral development of children is to provide guidance and support for students to develop moral autonomy and positive behavioral choices. Staff members are encouraged to utilize guidance, conversations, and tools such as feelings charts, calm-down-corners, and age-appropriate literature to help facilitate the development of moral autonomy in the child. Children should be provided space to develop intrinsic motivation to show compassion and empathy for others. Guidance should be a collaborative conversation rather than punitive measures: the goal being that the child is better able to understand how a behavior affects others or themselves and providing safe and healthy alternatives to that behavior.

For example, if a child consistently stands on a chair or table, the educator can say, “We keep our feet on the floor because that keeps our body safe. We don’t want to fall and get hurt.” Instead of drawing attention and focusing on the unwanted or dangerous behavior, the focus is on reasoning and expectations of the appropriate behavior. Other examples may include, “We use walking feet in the classroom.” Or “That sounds like an outside voice, we don’t want to interrupt other classes learning.”

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, hitting, etc.):

1. Separation of the children involved;
2. Immediate comfort to the individual who was injured;
3. Care of injury resulting from the incident;
4. Notification of the families of children involved in the incident (ensuring confidentiality);
5. Review of the adequacy of teacher supervision and appropriateness of facility activities.



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PERMISSIBLE METHODS OF GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE CONTINUED

Physical restraint will not be used except as necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and then only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation. Teachers will utilize redirection, positive reinforcement, and other appropriate behavior management techniques. If these techniques are not effective, removal of a child from the immediate area where the problem occurred may be used. This period of "rest" will be used to enable the child to regain control of him or herself.

These times of rest and thinking are to help facilitate a conversation with the child. Staff may draw attention to the experiences and feelings of the child and the other children involved such as, "You hit Martha. Can you tell me how you were feeling when you hit her? What face did you make? How did that make Martha feel? What face did she make when you hit her?" Allowing students time to process how they felt, as well as how the other student felt, provides deeper understanding and the ability to self-regulate. Teachers are then encouraged to come up with an actionable plan with the child. "I can see that you were mad because Martha had the toy you wanted and you felt frustrated so you used your hands to express that. What are some other ways you could have solved that problem without using our hands?"



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PROHIBITED METHODS OF GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

The following punitive measures are **prohibited** at HELC:

- Using any sort of physical punishment including hitting, spanking, swatting, pinching, or shaking
- Any coercion/forcing a child to perform an action
- Psychological abuse including verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks
- Withholding or forcing meals, snacks, naps
- Punishment for lapses in toilet training/learning
- Isolating a child in any restricted area or restraining a child unless necessary to protect the child and others from harm.

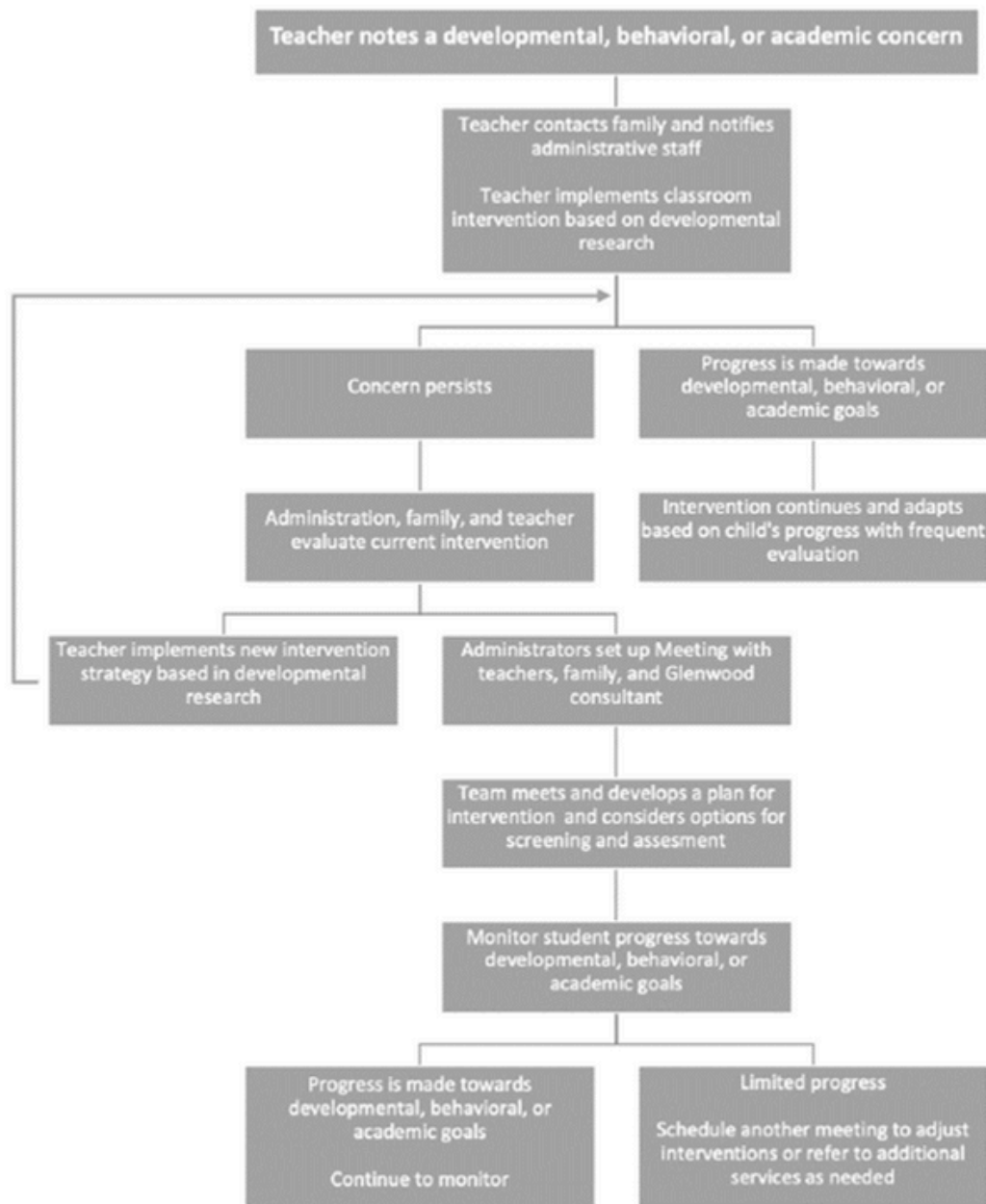
While it is acknowledged that families may use a variety of guidance techniques within the home, they are expected to respect these prohibitions with regard to all persons (including their own child) while within the Center. Teachers and Directors are eager to discuss issues of guidance and will help families to extend accepted practices to other settings.



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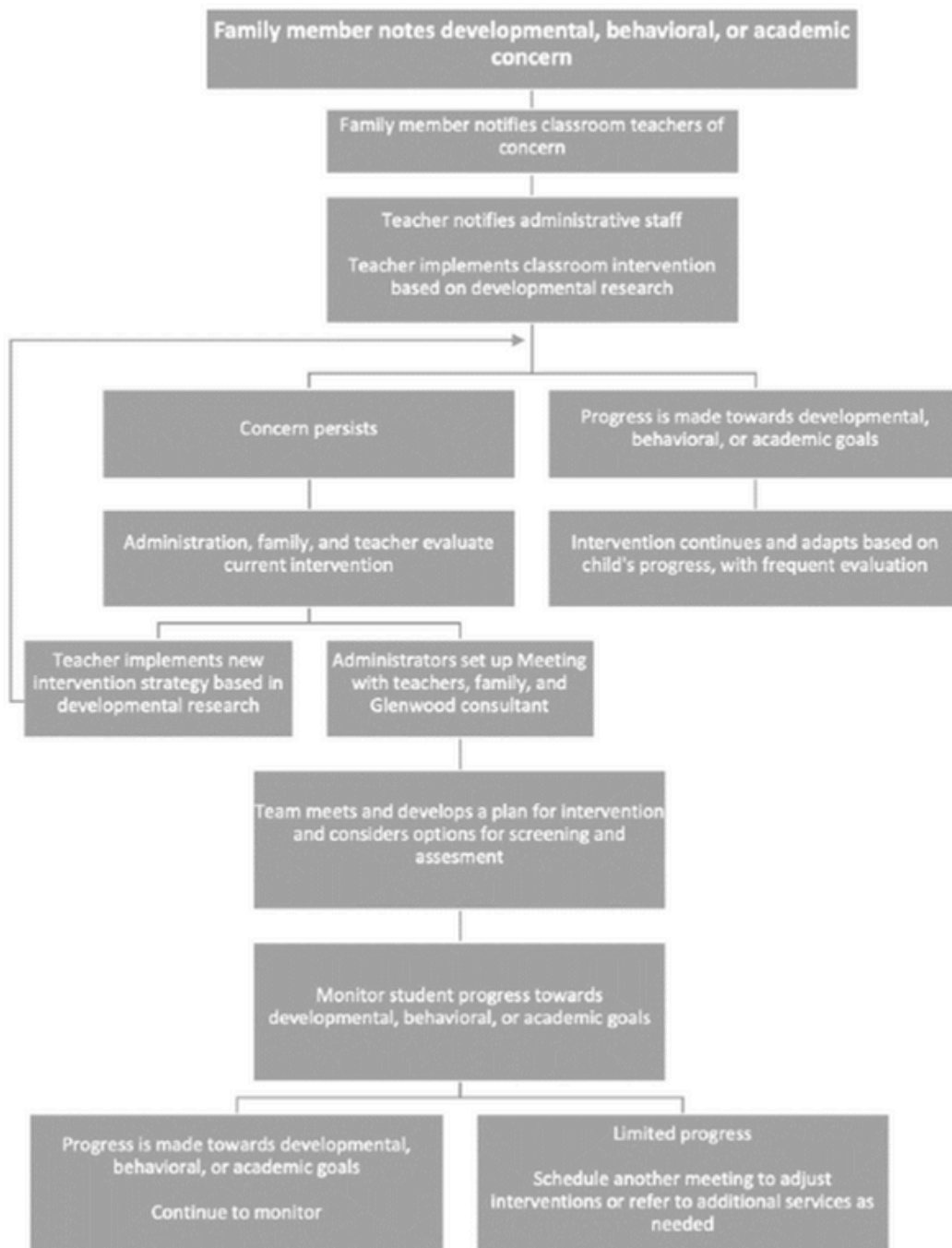
DEVELOPMENTAL, BEHAVIORAL, OR ACADEMIC CONCERNS

There are times in which developmental, behavioral, or academic concerns may arise. The following charts provide a framework for plans of intervention.



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DEVELOPMENTAL, BEHAVIORAL, OR ACADEMIC CONCERNS



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BELIEFS ON EARLY LITERACY

Students must be provided rich and authentic opportunities to engage in emergent stages of literacy. Both writing and reading are complementary skills and are interrelated in their development.

Our job is to build the identities of our readers and writers. It is important that we build positive identities and recognize emergent literacy and students' developmental stages of literacy. By identifying our students as writers and readers and acknowledging their emergent literacy skills, students will build positive identities that will lay the foundation for their future successes.

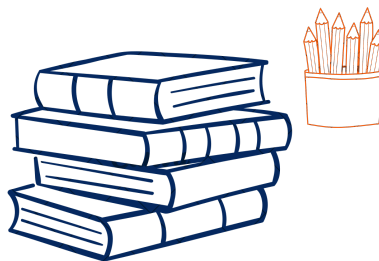
Example: William, Age 2

William points at a stop sign and says, "Stop!"
The teacher replies, "Yes! That is a stop sign! Look at you reading!"

Example: Sanjay, Age 5

Sanjay writes a string of letters and brings it to his teacher.
His teacher says, "Wow, tell me about your writing."
Sanjay replies, "I wrote a story about an elephant."
"You did!? Can you add some illustrations for your readers? That way you are an author AND an illustrator!"

** Please note that it is important that if you are to scribe or label anything for a child, that you do it a small notecard or a paper. You can add it to the back or display it below. Please do not write on students' works as it devalues and undermines their own work.



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BELIEFS ON READING

Our students should have rich and bountiful opportunities to read and be read to at Harris Early Learning Center. Not only does frequent and developmentally appropriate reading lay the foundation for later stages of literacy, but also provides meaningful opportunities for students to develop content knowledge and understanding. As Gloria Ladson-Billings said, books can be windows, mirrors, or sliding glass doors for our students. Allowing them to view new people and cultures, allow them to see themselves, or allow them to step into new worlds and experiences. Developmentally appropriate books should be readily accessible to students at all times. These books should be rotated out frequently to mirror the classroom's learning themes and units of study.

We believe reading is a meaning making process that involves multiple processes. There are multiple cueing systems: graphophonic (visual information), semantics (meaning/context), and syntactical (grammar).



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BELIEFS ON READING

Below are facets of reading and early literacy that may be appropriate for some age groups.

Read Alouds

Read-alouds should also be leveraged regularly. Effective read-alouds are strengthened through book selection and careful planning for stopping points to promote varying strategies such as predictions, connections, questions, and comprehension questions.



Shared Reading

Shared reading opportunities are an important part of developing students understanding of one-to-one correspondence, directionality, and other concepts of print. It is important for shared readings that the print is easily visible to all students. This may include the use of big books or songs, poems, or chants written on a large poster. A pointer should be used to track as the reading takes place and students are encouraged to participate. The three Rs should be considered in shared reading selections: Rhyme, Rhythm, and Repetition.



Independent Reading

Students should be provided bountiful opportunities to read books independently. Encourage students to retell the story, read the picture, or conventionally read if they are ready.



Partner Reading

Children can engage in meaningful conversations about books through partner reading activities. Students can retell, read the pictures, or conventionally read. Students may alternate pages or alternate each book.



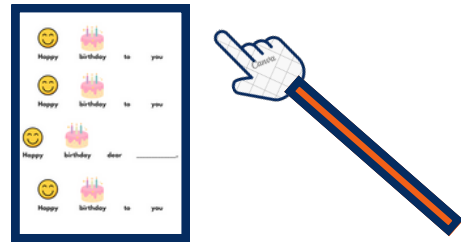
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BELIEFS ON READING

Other play centers throughout the classroom are important to the development of literacy. The following centers can compliment and enhance the previously mentioned reading practices. Note that many of these may not be developmentally appropriate for younger ages.

Chart Center

Can be a fun and engaging way to extend whole group shared reading experiences. Students can utilize created charts to revisit familiar songs, chants or poems. Charts may be supported with visuals and may even have Velcro to change it out the words.



Big Book Center

Fill this center with books that have been repeated readings with the class. Provide varying fun pointers to get students to work on retelling and concepts of print.



Listening Center

Fill this center with audio books and the paper copy of the book. This helps to develop students understanding of concepts of print.



Retelling Center

Students may utilize props, puppets, felt boards, or other items in correlation with the hard copy of the book to retell the story. Students are encouraged to utilize expression and even work with a partner.



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REQUIRED MATERIALS-BOOKS

The following books should be accessible to students at all times:



BOOKS RELATED TO
LEARNING THEMES



BOOKS THAT ARE OF
INTEREST TO
STUDENTS



BOOKS THAT ARE
CULTURALLY AND
LINGUISTICALLY
DIVERSE



BOOKS THAT ARE
DEVELOPMENTALLY
APPROPRIATE



FOR INFANTS: BOOKS
WITH HIGH
CONTRAST



INCLUDE BOOKS
WITH PHOTOS AND
BOOKS WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS.



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BELIEFS ON WRITING

Harris Early Learning Center supports NAEYC's stance on emergent writing. HELC's mission is to provide frequent opportunities for students to engage in rich and authentic writing opportunities.





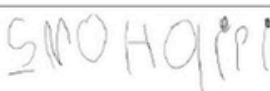


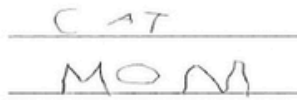

Beliefs on Writing		
Expectation	Try	Avoid
Developmentally Appropriate	Students should be able to write at whatever stage they are at and validate ALL stages of writing. We must allow them to construct understanding. Encouraging them to skip stages can be detrimental to development. Most of our students at HELC will be at anywhere from drawing to potentially invented spelling.	Forcing writing prior to readiness. Expecting students to write conventionally.
Purposeful and Authentic	Writing should be purposeful and embedded in real or life-like activities. Purposeful writing has an audience and is used to communicate. Children can sign-in, write messages, make books, and create signs, etc.	Avoid drill writing, tracing, or writing without purpose.
Provide rich models and Print Rich Environment	Model writing often and with purpose. Utilize morning messages or shared writing experiences to help model stretching words for sounds. Provide a print rich environment that is culturally and linguistically responsive. Include environmental items such as logos and signs meaningful to students.	Utilizing only one type of print in the classroom.
Empower Autonomy and Reduce Dependency	Validate and honor all stages of writing. Encourage resourcefulness by providing tools such as word rings, picture dictionaries, and word walls (co-created with students) to provide meaningful resources.	Giving the correct spelling or being the only guide for their writing. This increases dependency.



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BELIEFS ON WRITING

Please see NAEYC's Stages of Emergent Writing



Stages of Emergent Writing		
Stage	Description	Example
Drawing	Drawings that represent writing	
Scribbling	Marks or scribbles the child intends to be writing	
Wavy scribbles or mock handwriting	Wavy scribbles that imitate cursive writing and have a left-to-right progression; child pretends to write words	
Letter-like forms or mock letters	Letters and marks that resemble letter-like shapes	
Letter strings	Strings of letters that do not create words, written left to right, including uppercase and lowercase letters	
Transitional writing	Letters with spaces in between to resemble words; letters/words copied from environmental print; letters often reversed	
Invented or phonetic spelling	Different ways to represent the sounds in words; the first letter of the word or beginning and ending sounds represent the entire word	
Beginning word and phrase writing	Words with beginning, middle, and ending letter sounds; short phrases	
Conventional spelling and sentence writing	Correct spelling of words, generally the child's name and words such as mom and dad; sentences with punctuation and correct use of uppercase and lowercase letters	



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BELIEFS ON WRITING

Ways to add writing to learning centers from NAEYC.

Learning Centers: Adding Meaningful Writing Materials and Literacy Props	
Center	Emergent writing materials and literacy props
Discovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide clipboards with paper and pencils to record observations and collect data ■ Add paper and craft sticks for children to create seed packet labels for growing plants ■ Turn the area into a national weather station or scientific research center, and have the children paint signs labeling the center and record their observations in a scientific journal or observation log
Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add a graph paper notebook labeled "Blueprints," and provide real blueprints ■ Attach Velcro to clipboards and rulers for drawing blueprints or designs for building structures, and secure them to the back of shelves in the block area for easy access ■ Provide craft sticks, index cards, and tape to create road signs ■ Include receipt books and pads of paper to create work orders ■ Add house plan magazines, pictures of buildings, and nonfiction books about construction to spark building ideas 
Dramatic play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add notepads and pencils to encourage children to write prescriptions, take food orders, create grocery lists, or compose phone messages ■ Add restaurant menus and cookbooks ■ Place a large piece of paper or chalkboard on the wall for children to write signs and announcements ■ Encourage children to turn the dramatic play area into a post office, dentist office, beauty salon, airport, police station, fire station, or doctor's office by decorating the area with pictures and writing words to describe their community center ■ Create a veterinary pet clinic, and provide children with office file folders to record information on a pet's health and small notebooks to record instructions about the pet's future care
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote interest in your writing center by changing its function: one month, create an insect and arachnid research station and add books, pictures, and words about insects and spiders; another month, add props and turn the writing center into an office, beauty parlor, post office, or newsroom ■ Add different types of tools, such as stencils, hole punches, and stamps ■ Add sandpaper letters, magnetic letters, and other types of letters to promote alphabet knowledge 
Outdoor play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Put writing materials in baskets, and place the baskets around the playground ■ Give children index cards to write "speeding tickets"; have children write in sand trays ■ Provide children with magnifying glasses and small notebooks to write observations about discoveries, such as an insect crawling on a plant or a butterfly landing on a flower ■ Allow the children to use sidewalk chalk or to paint letters with water on the cement ■ Provide writing materials for labeling sandbox creations, drawing maps, or establishing and recording the rules for a new outdoor game ■ Use clipboards for a walk around the neighborhood; have the children write letters, words, or numbers they see



Curriculum & Pedagogy

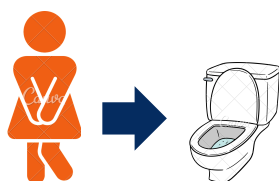
TOILET LEARNING



Demonstrates an understanding of being wet and dry



Keeps diapers dry for 2 hours or more



Is able to connect using the potty with the urge to pee or poop



Ability to pull down diapers/pull-ups/pants

Signs of Readiness for Toilet Learning



Shows interest in using the potty or wearing underpants



Demonstrates understanding of language surrounding potty usage



Ability to follow simple instructions

Sourced from kidshealth.org

Curriculum & Pedagogy

TOILET LEARNING

At HELC, we strive to provide a positive environment for toilet learning. No child should ever be forced to sit on the toilet or be shamed or punished for toilet related activity

Avoid

Instead Try

Forcing children to sit on the potty



Offering opportunities, modeling, and respecting students' feelings

Shaming children for accidents or delays in potty training



Celebrate success & provide encouragement when accidents occur

Lack of routine or structure



Collaborate with other caregivers to establish routines

Routines without responsiveness



Learn cues and habits of children to support them in their routine

Using ambiguous or non-specific language



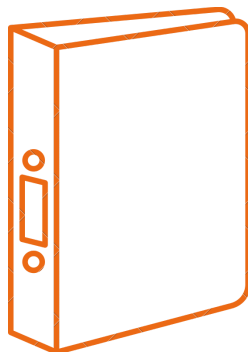
Use language that helps children understand using the toilet, such as: potty, pee, poop, wet & dry.

Expect children to develop awareness and understanding unsupported



Identify behaviors and narrate actions such as, "Are you going poop?" to help students recognize the urge to go potty

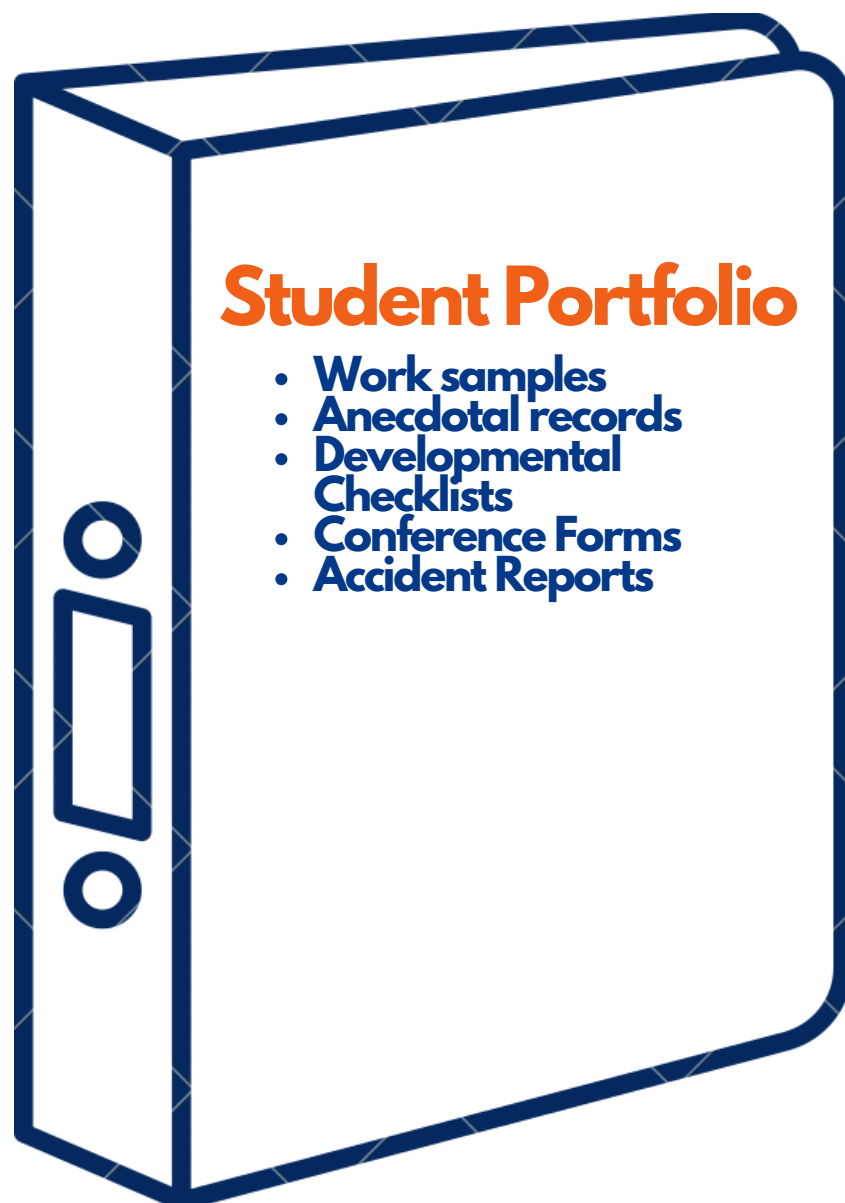
Documentation



Documentation

STUDENT PORTFOLIOS

Classroom teachers will maintain a student portfolio for each child. This portfolio will follow your child from classroom to classroom. It will show work that demonstrates the child's development, and growth throughout their education.



Documentation

CHILD ASSESSMENT PLAN

Assessment of young children is the means by which teachers know what to plan and implement as part of their classroom teaching. The Center uses the Creative Curriculum which provides a framework for all ages enrolled in the Center as well as age/stage appropriate goals and objectives to guide teaching plans. Children are assessed on a daily basis by informal observations by the classroom teachers which can occur within both large and small group settings in addition to individually. Periodically, planned assessments such as ASQ (Ages and Stages), use of the Creative Curriculum Observational tool or skill checklists are used for a more formal verbal/written assessment by the regular classroom teachers. The results of the child assessment tools are used during semi-annual family-teacher conferences (or more, as needed), in which family members and teachers review the Creative Curriculum Family Conference Form. Families and teachers retain a signed copy of the assessment summary following each meeting.

Assessments guide both instructional planning and inform our offered family seminars. Relevant publications and information will also be available in the Center newsletters and on family information tables throughout the center. Family-teacher conferences occur twice a year (or more, as needed).

When it is discerned that a more in-depth assessment of a child is necessary, varied contracted groups (noted below) are utilized for this purpose. Consent from a legal guardian is received for such assessments and screenings and follow-up therapy sessions are conducted at the Center and typically include toys and playful scenarios so that children are comfortable participating. No child will be coerced to participate if they are exhibiting resistance or stressful behaviors during the screening.

- Focus First vision screening offered each fall (all ages allowed/ targeted for 2's and up)
- Child's Play Therapy for speech, hearing, occupational therapy (ages 2-4)
- Glenwood, Inc. psychologist for assessment of varied developmental and learning needs (all ages)
- Early Intervention as necessary for varied developmental concerns (ages birth-age 3)

Documentation

INCIDENT REPORTS

Incident reports are a necessary and important part of documentation. Student injury or incidents among students should be documented. This may include instances of biting or hitting.

Injury involving one student.

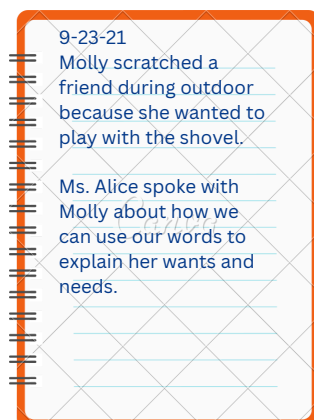
Injuries should be documented on the incident report detailing the injury and the location of the injury on the body and the care that took place. The report should include the date, time, and location. Injuries beyond the basic soap and water and band-aid should be accompanied by a phone call to families. Especially in instances of head injuries, however minor, it is important for teachers to contact families.

Injury involving multiple students.

For incidents involving multiple students, each child should receive an incident report. No identifying information of other students should be included within the incident report.

For example, if Molly scratched Sarah during outdoor the following incident reports would be sent home:

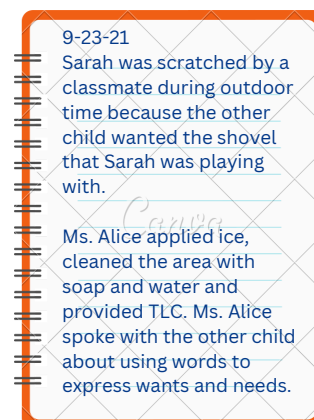
GIVEN TO MOLLY'S FAMILY



9-23-21
Molly scratched a friend during outdoor because she wanted to play with the shovel.

Ms. Alice spoke with Molly about how we can use our words to explain her wants and needs.

GIVEN TO SARAH'S FAMILY



9-23-21
Sarah was scratched by a classmate during outdoor time because the other child wanted the shovel that Sarah was playing with.

Ms. Alice applied ice, cleaned the area with soap and water and provided TLC. Ms. Alice spoke with the other child about using words to express wants and needs.

Documentation

CONFERENCES

Each classroom is required to conduct conferences twice a year. The first conference should be done prior to winter break and the second should take place no later than the end of June. While families are highly encouraged to participate, they are not required to do so.

Conferences should include an overview of the child's development and focusing on the child's areas of strengths and opportunities for growth.

Families are involved in the assessment of their children by providing written and verbal information to teachers throughout the year regarding their child's interests and progress seen away from the school setting. Staff observations are made daily, and several developmental checklists will be completed during a school year. Information about each child will be kept confidential and families will be informed of development and learning. At times, developmental screenings may suggest referral for further diagnostic assessment with consent from the primary caregiver, conducted by a child psychologist contracted with the Center.

Children will be assessed on the premises of the Center and will not be coerced to participate. Information from such assessments provides valuable information for teachers as they prepare learning experiences to meet individual children's developmental or behavioral needs.

Birth to five is "the window of opportunity" for providing intervention and developmental support for young children. Thus, family members are highly encouraged to work with the Center in accessing varied support provided through the Center. Under circumstances where the primary caregiver(s) decline intervention, the Center has the right to discontinue services if developmental concerns or behavior is beyond the scope of a regular classroom (See, Discontinuation of Services)



Documentation

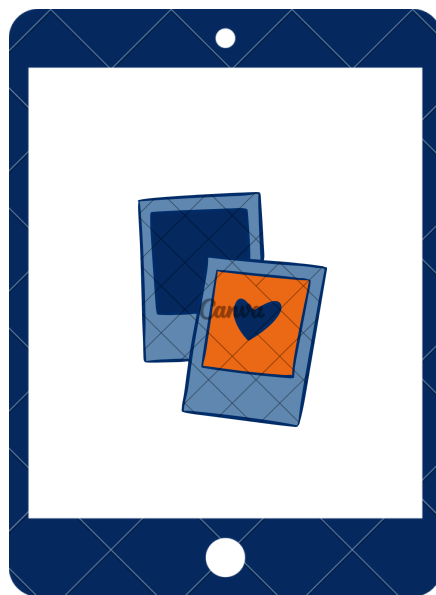
PROCARE

Procare should be regularly utilized throughout the day to update families on their child's learning and day.

Updates should include, but are not limited to:

- Diapering/potty
- Bottles/Food consumption
- Naptimes
- Learning activities
- Special events
- Announcements/Reminders

Families should receive at least 2 photos per day of their child.



Health & Safety



Health & Safety

RATIOS & MONITORING

As part of our NAEYC accreditation and our commitment to safety and high quality learning for students, student to teacher ratios and monitoring are paramount.

We abide by NAEYC's student to teacher ratios:

	Ratio	Maximum Class Size
Infants (Birth - 15 Months)	1:4	8
Toddler/Two (12 - 36 Months)	1:6	12
Preschool (30 Months - 5 years)	1:10	20

NAEYC Standard 3C.1:

All infants, toddlers, and young twos can be easily heard and seen (if not in the direct line of sight, then by looking up or turning in place) at all times—including when children are sleeping—by at least one member of the teaching staff. Staff does not need to be directly looking at each child at all times to meet the requirement for sight supervision.

NAEYC Standard 3C.4

If any infant, toddler, or young 2-year-old is sleeping, staff position themselves so someone can always hear and see them.

NAEYC Standard 3C.5

Teachers of preschoolers keep these children in sight most of the time, with the exception of brief periods (up to five minutes, in a safe environment—such as child's use of the toilet) when a child cannot be seen but can still be heard.

NAEYC Standard 3C.6

If a preschooler is out of the direct sight **and** sound supervision of all teaching staff, it is for no more than one minute, **and** the child is in a safe environment.

NAEYC Standard 3C.7

If a preschooler is out of direct sight **or** sound supervision of all teaching staff, it is for no more than 10 minutes and the child is in a safe environment.

Health & Safety

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

The safety of our children is our primary concern. We are taking positive steps to prevent child abuse from occurring by seeking quality faculty, conducting thorough background checks of all employees, inviting the parents or other authorized persons into our building, and using a classroom concept that allows for clear visibility. The placement of two employees in each room and the use of the Center monitoring system are additional means for keeping staff safe from false accusations as well as children safe from abuse. In addition, we have a legal obligation to report suspected child abuse.

As a result of these measures, we believe that child abuse will be rare. However, if allegations of child abuse occur without immediate substantiated proof, the following steps may be initiated without delay:

- The accused employee may be placed on leave while the incident is being investigated.
- Upon completion of the investigation, the employee will be reinstated or terminated.

In the event of a substantiated child abuse incident witnessed by a third party, (e.g., witnessed by several employees or parents, video, etc.), the employee may be terminated immediately.

If any employee has reason to believe that a child under his/her supervision has been subject to abuse, this must be reported immediately to the Center Directors. Failure to report suspected child abuse may result in termination.

The Center cannot and will not attempt to override the employee's duty as a mandated reporter to report suspected abuse/neglect. Each staff member is required to participate in mandated reporter training. Staff members should follow required procedures as mandated reporters of suspected abuse or neglect.

Health & Safety

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

PURPOSE: It is the purpose and intent of the Harris Early Learning Center (the "Center") to provide safe, secure environment to teach and care for the infants, toddlers and preschoolers ("children") in its program.

GOAL: Our goal is to protect children from abuse, molestation, or any type of inappropriate behavior by employees, outside researchers and educational participants and also to protect employees, outside researchers and educational participants from false accusations.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: According to the Code of Alabama 1975, Section 26-14-1, abuse is defined as harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare. Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare can occur through nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse or sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation. "Sexual abuse" includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in any 8 Effective September 30, 2019 sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children as those acts are defined by Alabama law. "Sexual exploitation" includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes. Neglect is defined as negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, supervision, clothing, or shelter.

The policy and procedure set forth below will apply to all people who provide supervision or have contact with children in Center facilities or Center sponsored activities.

This policy will address areas that are critical for the protection of the children, our employees and our Center: selection process, protection policy, responses, to allegations and reporting procedures.

Health & Safety

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

I. SELECTION PROCESS

A. Employee—anyone who is paid by the Center (either directly or through sponsoring Institutional funds) on a full-time or part-time basis, whether they work directly with children.

New employee screening steps:

1. Complete a confidential application form
 2. Complete a consent to release confidential information
 3. Formal interview by a Director
 4. Record check authorization form
 5. References checked and verified
 6. Letter from State of Alabama stating “meets suitability” criteria under State statute
- All records, forms, and reports will become a part of the employee’s confidential personnel file.

B. Outside Researchers and Educational Participants- anyone (i.e. student observer, intern, researcher, working with a sponsoring institution who has been assigned to the Center to conduct research on children is required to have the following:
Certification available from sponsoring institution that all background checks have been completed and the researcher or educational participant has been found to meet the suitability criteria for working with children at the center.

II. PROTECTION POLICY

A. Two Adults

Reasonable effort will be made to have two (2) adult workers present, or nearby, with children during Center activities. Reasonable effort will be made to assure that one adult is not left alone with a child. The video camera observation system may be utilized to serve as the second worker under certain limited circumstances.

B. View Windows/Open Doors

Reasonable effort will be made to place children in rooms with unobstructed view windows or open doors for all teaching/learning activities.

C. Security Policies

The Center has detailed, working security procedures and that should be consistently followed. All employees shall abide by the security procedures as well as any other applicable age-specific guidelines. Questions about these security procedures should be directed to a Center director.

Health & Safety

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

III. RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Abuse will not be tolerated and will be grounds for discipline. All reports will be taken seriously and appropriate action taken. Observed, suspected or reported child abuse, child molestation, or any type of inappropriate behavior should be reported immediately to a Center director. All Center employees will be trained on recognizing signs of child sexual and physical abuse.

Reporting abuse is mandatory and failing to do so may result in disciplinary action. It should be understood that neglecting the obligation to report abuse could have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore anyone having reasonable cause to suspect abuse should talk with a Center director to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child. However, reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes.

The following punitive measures are prohibited at HELC:

- Using any sort of physical punishment including hitting, spanking, swatting, pinching, or shaking
- Any coercion/forcing a child to perform an action
- Psychological abuse including verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks
- Withholding or forcing meals, snacks, naps
- Punishment for lapses in toilet training/learning
- Isolating a child in any restricted area or restraining a child unless necessary to protect the child and others from harm.

While it is acknowledged that families may use a variety of guidance techniques within the home, they are expected to respect these prohibitions with regard to all persons (including their own child) while within the Center. Teachers and Directors are eager to discuss issues of guidance and will help families to extend accepted practices to other settings.

Health & Safety

HEALTH REGULATIONS

The Certificate of Health and Immunization Record must be on file for each child. The HELC requires that a medical examination be completed no more than six months prior to the date the child enters the Center. It is strongly recommended that a medical examination occur within one month of school entry to provide maximum protection for all children. The Certificate of Health and Immunization Record must be updated each year. This form indicates the child has had a check-up and is able to participate in the Center's program.

The Alabama Department of Public Health requires that all children have a record of immunization on file at the Center. All enrollees must have a Certificate of Immunization on file before the first day the child attends school. The HELC will monitor expiration dates of immunizations and will remind parents to have children receive necessary boosters. The Health Department monitors compliance and has the discretion to send children home if their immunization records are expired.

Exposure to many contagious diseases is a normal part of childhood. The most common illnesses are associated with the upper respiratory system, including ear infections and the gastrointestinal system. Infants and toddlers are particularly vulnerable to some diseases because certain components of their general immune system are not fully developed.

In an effort to manage and prevent disease spread, families are expected to stay current with their child's immunizations and to strictly observe the health policy outlined in the Family Handbook.

Staff are expected to continually screen children for symptoms of illness while at the Center so that any ill child can be isolated in the sick room until he/she can be taken home.



Health & Safety

HEALTH REGULATIONS

HELC will follow the policy of The American Academy of Pediatrics, which recommends that children be excluded from childcare for the following reasons:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- The illness results in greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- The child has any of the following conditions:
 - Fever at or above 101 degrees orally or 100 degrees axillary
 - Lethargy
 - Irritability
 - Persistent crying
 - Difficulty breathing or
 - Other signs of severe illness
- Diarrhea that is not contained by diapers or toilet use or stools that contain blood and/or mucus. The Center acknowledges that this is a difficult standard to apply but adheres to the definition of diarrhea as two loose movements within an hour. Children should not return if symptoms persist or unless a stool sample has been cultured and found negative. The presence of fever with diarrhea requires exclusion until the child is free of fever and symptoms.
- Vomiting in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by an incommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores associated with the inability of the child to control his or her saliva, unless the child's physician states the child is noninfectious.
- Rash with fever and behavior change, until the physician has determined it is an incommunicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctivitis with white or yellow discharge until checked by a physician and cleared for readmission.
- Infectious tuberculosis until the physician states the child can be readmitted.
- Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment is initiated.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Head lice until the morning after the first treatment.
- Scabies until after final treatment.
- Pertussis, until after five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment.
- Chicken pox, until sixth day after onset of rash or when lesions have dried and crusted.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after illness or jaundice, or until immune globulin has been administered to appropriate children and staff in the program as directed by the responsible health department.

Health & Safety

ILLNESS

Families are asked to notify the Center by calling the classroom if their child is to be absent for any reason. If a child develops a contagious illness, family members of children directly exposed to the illness, will be alerted. A child who has a contagious illness should not return to school without a physician return note and is able to participate in the total program.

A child showing symptoms of illness while at the Center will be separated from the other children in their class and cared for in the Sick Room until he or she can be taken home. Per health department recommendations, a legal guardian or their designees are expected to pick up the child within 30 minutes of the time they are contacted.

If the child is sent home from the Center ill, a physician's note authorizing the child's return to group care may be requested depending on specific situations. This measure is necessary in order to comply with state law and curtail the spread of infection. The Center reserves the right to refuse care due to illness. Staff is expected to know and implement the above policy and confer with the Directors to make decisions about the exclusion of a child or about giving medical information to others with a need to know.

A child should remain at home if he or she is infectious and until he or she is free of fever for 24 hours without medication after an illness unless they can provide written documentation of permission by a physician. This would mean that a child leaving school during the day with a fever of 101 degrees (oral) or 100 degrees (auxiliary) temperature or higher would not be able to return the next morning without written permission from a physician.

If your child is having surgery, they may not return to the center for at least 24-48 hours post-operation, without a release from the doctor and are able to fully participate in the program.

Families with more than one child at the center are encouraged to drop their oldest child off first and pick them up last. This will eliminate older children from entering our infant and toddler classrooms and possibly cross contamination across age groups.

Health & Safety

MEDICAL FORMS

The following items can only be used if accompanied by HELC's medical form and a doctor's note:



MEDICINE



DIAPER CREAM



LOTION



SLEEPSACKS



CHAPSTICK

OTHER
PRODUCTS AS
DETERMINED

The following items can only be used if accompanied by HELC's sunscreen/insect repellent form:



INSECT
REPELLANT



SUNSCREEN

No aerosols are permitted due to NAEYC accreditation standards.

Health & Safety

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

If a child should require medication while in our care, staff is to administer prescription or over-the-counter medication if the following conditions are met:

- The physician provides a written order authorizing the use of the medication for a specified length of time.
- The medication is in its original container and is labeled with the child's name, name of the drug, and directions for administration,
- Medications will only be administered according to the directions on the label. Any variance will require written authorization from a physician. If specific instructions are not provided, the parent must provide written authorization from the physician detailing the amount and length of medication administration,
- Unless physician's instructions indicate otherwise, medication cannot be given for a period exceeding one week.

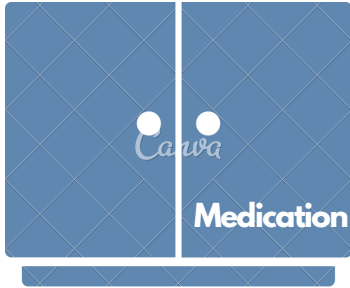
Medication will be stored in a locked, childproof container or in a refrigerator inaccessible to children. Staff is to record the administration of all medications on the Administration of Medication Form. Medication must be given by staff member trained in medication administration.



Health & Safety

DIETARY RESTRICTION/ALLERGIES

All HELC staff members should be confident and familiar with the dietary restrictions and allergies of their students. To ensure the safety of all students the following measures should be in place by each classroom:



MEDICINE CABINET

MEDICINE

- Stored in a locked cabinet
- Cabinet is clearly marked
- Each medicine is clearly labeled, in its original container, and is not expired
- Medication should be accompanied by an allergy plan to be completed by the child's pediatrician (forms available at the front desk)



WALL SIGN

ALLERGIES/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS POSTED ON WALL

Includes:

- The child's first name
- The child's picture
- The child's dietary restriction/ allergy



TABLE LABEL

ALLERGIES/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS POSTED ON CHILD'S TABLE SPOT

Includes:

- The child's first name
- The child's picture
- The child's dietary restriction/ allergy

All staff should be trained in CPR and First Aid, which includes the administration of an EpiPen.

NO CHILD WITH AN ALLERGY MAY START AT HELC WITHOUT AN ALLERGY PLAN, ALL DOCUMENTATION, AND MEDICINE IN PLACE. IF NOT UPDATED, CHILDREN MAY NOT ATTEND.

Health & Safety

CLEANING AND SANITATION PROCEDURES

HELC abides by the NAEYC *Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfection Frequency Table*. It is required that all employees have the NAEYC *Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfection Frequency Table* posted in their classroom space. It is required that all HELC employees follow the recommended procedures and policies outlined within the document.

For more information, please see the following document:

[NAEYC's Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfection Frequency Table](#)



Health & Safety

HANDWASHING

HELC employees are expected to thoroughly adhere to the center handwashing policy that is written in accordance with the CDC and NAEYC. This is for the protection of all children, families, and staff.

NAEYC'S HANDWASHING POLICY

"The program follows consistent practices regarding hand hygiene. Staff members and children who are developmentally able to learn about personal hygiene are taught handwashing and hand sanitizing procedures and are periodically monitored.

For children over 24 months and for adults, hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer with 60% to 95% alcohol is an alternative to traditional hand-washing with soap and water when visible soiling is not present.

Proper hand-washing technique is followed by adults and children and includes using liquid soap and running water; rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just washed hands (e.g., using a paper towel to turn off water).

Hand hygiene is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when it would reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others, as described in the next paragraph. Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands upon arrival for the day; after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants); after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood, or vomit); before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, and after handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry); after playing in water that is shared by two or more people; after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals; and when moving from one group to another (e.g., visiting) when it involves contact with infants, toddlers, and twos. Adults must also wash or sanitize their hands before and after feeding a child, before and after administering medication, after assisting a child with toileting, and after handling garbage or cleaning.

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement to, but not a substitute for, handwashing in any required hand-washing situation listed above. Staff wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur. Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or for removing smeared fecal material. In situations in which sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food."

Health & Safety

WHEN TO WASH YOUR HANDS



After coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or assisting a child with those activities



Before and after the administration of medication



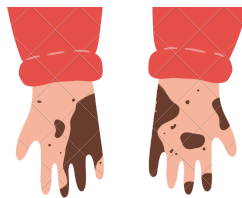
Upon arrival to the classroom or visiting another classroom



Before changing a diaper or assisting with toileting and after using the restroom, changing a diaper or assisting with toileting.



After handling trash or waste



When your hands appear dirty



Before and after sensory activities, such as water tables, sensory tables, play-doh.



Before and after eating, feeding, or preparing food



Before and after handling animals or being near their cages

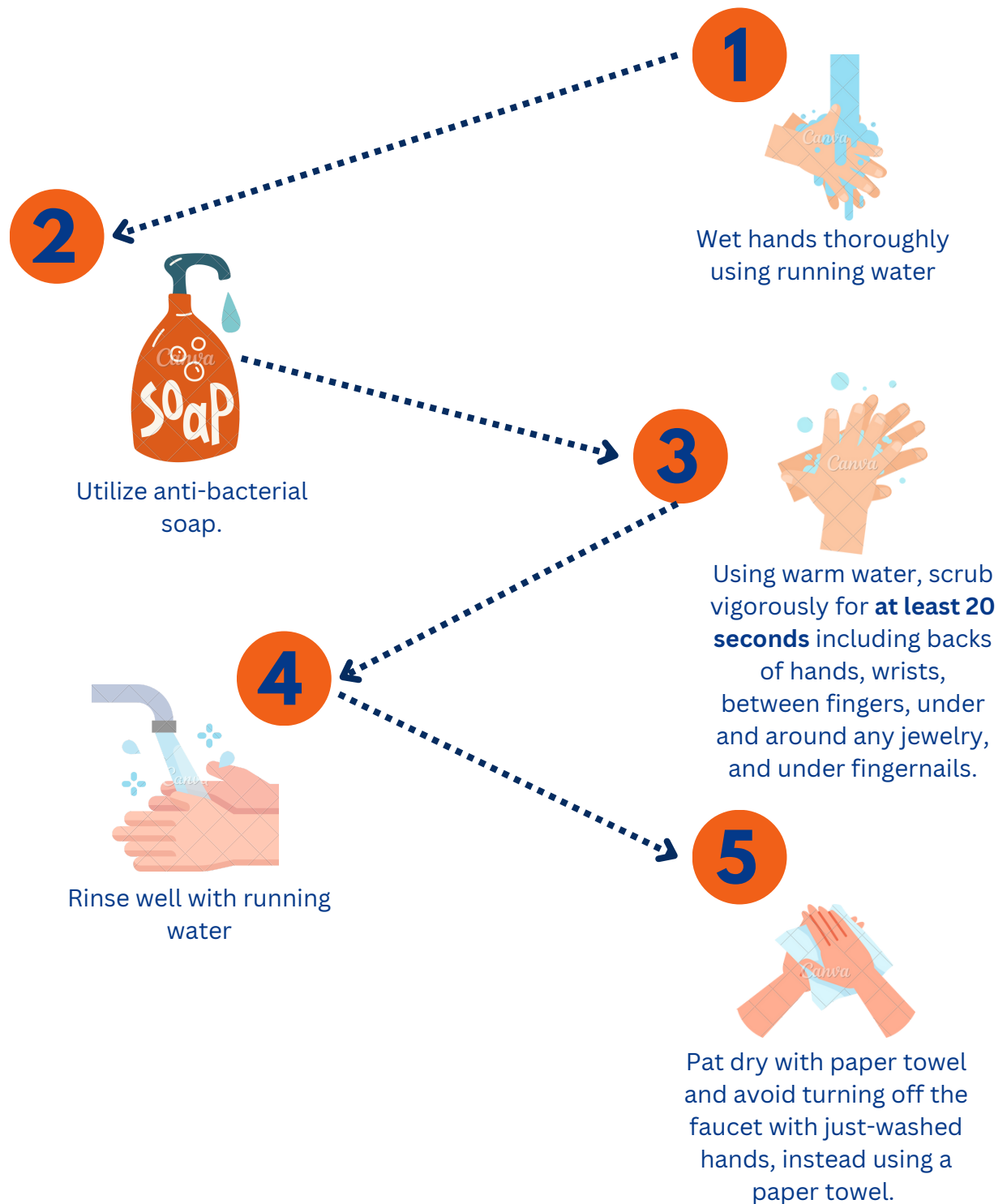


After playing outside

SOURCED FROM NAEYC AND THE CDC

Health & Safety

HANDWASHING STEPS

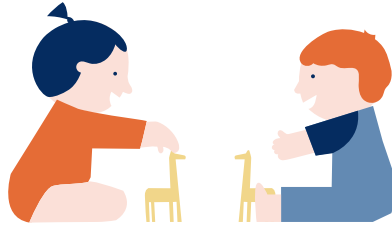


SOURCED FROM NAEYC AND THE CDC

Health & Safety

GERM BUCKETS

Because infants and toddlers approach the world orally, caregivers must be very conscious of removing a toy after a child has had it in their mouth. A "germ bucket" should be available in every infant and toddler classroom for sanitizing used toys.



TOOTHBRUSHING

NAEYC Standard 5A.23

If your program serves two or more meals a day, show that your policies and procedures provide children with the opportunity to brush their teeth at least once daily. (Toothpaste is not necessary)

Families are encouraged to bring a labeled toothbrush, toothpaste, and a toothbrush holder. These toothbrushes should be replaced every month and after the child has been sick.



Health & Safety

DEMAND SCHEDULE

The Center is required by law to feed any child who is hungry and to allow a tired child to sleep. Center staff will cooperate with families in efforts to establish regular schedules for eating and sleeping.

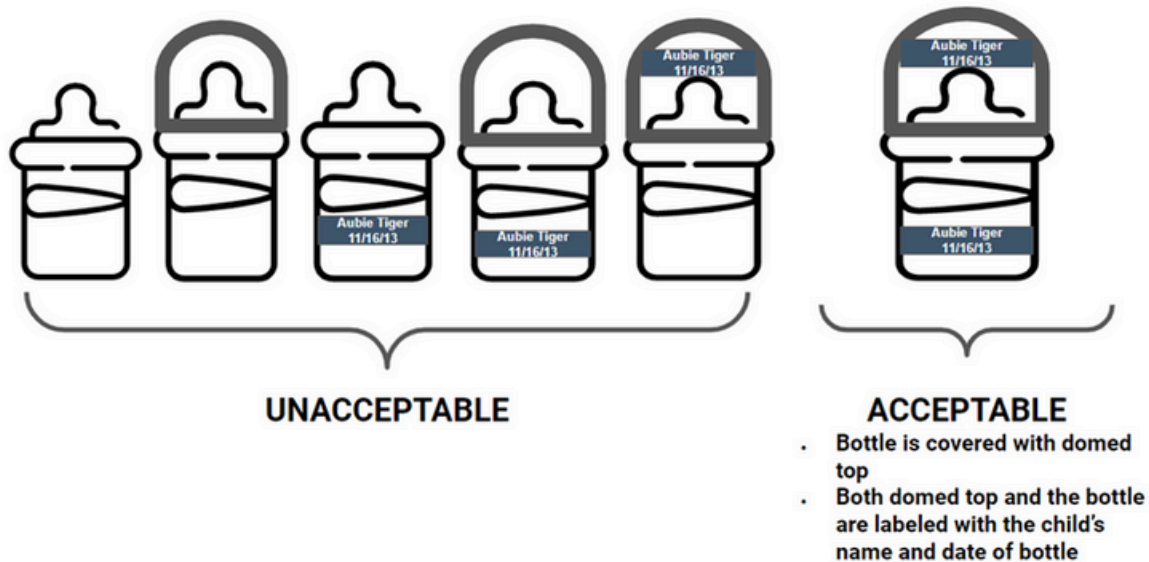
Quiet/rest time will be a part of the daily routine. Staff will, at a family member's request, attempt to gently wake a sleeping child at a prescribed time, but will permit the child to continue sleeping if needed.



Health & Safety

BOTTLES

Bottles should be properly labeled:



As formula or breast milk is the primary source of nutrition for children under 12 months. Children must be provided with formula or breastmilk until they turn 12 months.

Glass bottles are not permitted due to the ability to break or shatter.

Health & Safety

STARTING SOLIDS

Solids should be started only when all the following conditions are met:



AGE

The child is around 6 months of age



SITTING

The child can sit up with minimal support. The child does not slide or tip when seated in a feeding chair for 15 minutes (the duration of a typical infant meal)



HEAD CONTROL

Baby is able to hold head upright and steady while seated for 15 minutes (the typical duration of an infant meal)



REACH AND GRAB

The child is able to pick up objects while seated and easily bring them to the mouth.



INTEREST

Baby intently watches others eat, mouths for food, or leans forward for it.

The following guidelines are used in sending and storing solid food for students in infant classrooms:

- The family must send an unopened container of baby food with its original seal.
 - We may partition out the unopened jar for multiple feedings if so desired throughout the day, but the jar must be returned to you or thrown away.
- If the baby food is homemade, it must come in a sealed container and be labeled with the contents and amount.
- If there are any allergies in the classroom, that food may not be sent.
- We ask that families not send new food types that the child has not tried previously under your care. This is to limit the possibility of an allergic reaction at school.
- Food cannot be sent in glass jars. This is a safety hazard if one were to break.

Health & Safety

SAFE SLEEP

The following should be followed to ensure safe sleep:

Keep loose blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, bumpers, and other soft items out of the sleep space.

Children that fall asleep in a non-crib area (i.e. bouncer chair) should be moved to a crib immediately.

Cribs should be marked with if the child can roll.

Place infants on their backs alone



A crib or bassinet should be used with a firm, flat mattress, and a fitted sheet.

Bibs should be removed prior to sleeping.

Once a child can pull-up on the side of the crib, mobiles should be removed as they can pose a strangulation hazard.

Sleep sacks may be used if the proper documentation is on file. Arms must be free to move. Weighted sleep sack, swaddles and Merlin Suits are not permitted.

As required by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources and our accrediting agency, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, all infants younger than 12 months will be required to be placed on their back for sleeping. The only way an infant can be placed in any other position for sleeping will be by physician instructions ONLY.

If infants arrive to the program asleep (ex: car seat), or fall asleep, in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep (ex: bouncer), the infant will be removed and placed in their crib. Soft items (ex: blankets, “loveys”, “wubbanub”, etc.) will not be allowed in cribs or any sleep equipment for infants under 12 months.

For students that transition to toddler classrooms under the age of 12 months, they will be placed on cot with a tight-fitting cot sheet. Students will transition to the use of cot mats and a blanket once they reach 12 months of age.

Health & Safety

KEY CARDS & ACCESS CONTROL

Adult guardians have access to the front door and the door from the lobby to the Chicka room via the HID mobile application. All other individuals must ring the bell and be buzzed through the double set of doors.

Each adult guardian is provided one free HID Mobile credential, but will have to pay a \$30 fee if they require another. Families getting a new device should de-register their device to avoid the \$30 charge.

The safety of your children is a major objective of HELC. As reminders, please make note of the important points listed below:

- Families will receive invitation to utilize our access control system via cell phone. It is important that you properly register your device as it will be the only means of accessing the building.
- Families will have access from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30p.m. on the front door.
- Families are prohibited to use the side doors by 112 and 114 for entrance or exit.
- For security purposes, our access control system tracks who enters the building and notifies administration.
- Only let yourself in the door. Be careful to keep out people who try to “piggyback”.
- When someone other than a primary caregiver will pick up children, leave a note at the front desk AND tell the teachers. If people picking up have not been to the Center, ask them to bring in a photo ID.
- While we realize that emergencies occur, if you allow someone to pick up your child and have not left a note at the front desk, please call and inform someone at the front desk before their arrival. Children will not be released to individuals who are not listed in your check out approval information or you have not informed us accordingly.



Health & Safety

AUTHORIZED PICK-UP

Each child's adult guardians and additional authorized pick-ups are listed within the Procare Application.

Children should only be released to individuals listed within the procare app unless otherwise indicated by the front office. There are times in which a family may call or fill out a pick-up card at the front office, which the front office will notify classes that the individual is coming to the classroom to pick up.

The Harris Early Learning Center staff will not release children to a person who is visibly impaired due to a medical condition, alcohol consumption, substance abuse, prescription drugs or other causes. In the event the primary care giver or legal guardian is impaired, a Director will call someone designated on the release form.



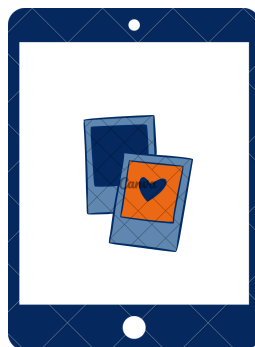
Health & Safety

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

SIGNING-IN AND OUT ON PROCARE

As we have strict student to teacher ratios, it is important that children are clocked-in and clocked-out appropriately in Procare. Our numbers in procare also alert us to how many children are present in case of emergency.

A child should be clocked-in by their adult caregiver upon arrival, and clocked-out by their adult caregiver upon leaving. Adult guardians may use the QR code or their cellphones to clock their children in and out. The front desk Kiosk is also available to adult guardians and other caregivers. Each adult has their own 4-digit code.



Health & Safety

PHOTO AND STUDENT WORK POLICIES

Student photos or work samples should not be shared or utilized beyond the center. This means that no photos should be shared or posted to personal social media accounts or distributed by any means.

Student work samples, such as art, may be shared if there is no identifying information (i.e. name has been redacted).



Health & Safety

EMERGENCY PLAN

In case of loss of water, power, heat in cold weather, or air conditioning in hot weather, families will be notified by SchoolCast that will provide a call, text, and/or email to notify families that the Center will be closed and that they must pick up their children.

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from the immediate area of the Center, the Directors will organize necessary action.

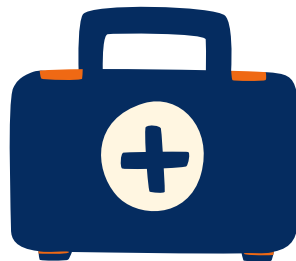


Health & Safety

INJURY AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Informed by CPR and First-Aid training, staff will treat any minor injuries. If necessary, they will contact emergency services and notify administration of any severe injuries.

An adequate supply of first aid materials will be stored at the Center. When an accident occurs, the staff member will complete an Incident Report Form and have it signed by one of the Directors. The staff member will notify the parent by telephone and will give the form to the parent at the conclusion of the school day. All teachers in each classroom will have first aid and CPR training. This training is completed every two years.



Health & Safety

FIRE SAFETY

A fire evacuation plan has been developed in cooperation with the City of Birmingham Fire Marshal and Auburn University. In case of fire, teachers will remove children from the building as quickly as possible. Each restroom and play area will be checked to ensure total clearing of the building. Emergency telephone numbers are posted near each telephone and a call will be made to report a fire as quickly as possible.

Fire extinguishers are strategically located in the hallways outside the classroom doors. The building is equipped with a fire alarm system and smoke detectors. Sprinkler systems are installed in each classroom.

Regular fire drills are conducted to prepare staff and children for an emergency situation.



Health & Safety

SEVERE WEATHER PLAN

The HELC staff in cooperation with the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency and Auburn University has developed a plan for use in emergency weather conditions. The HELC will continue usual indoor activities during "watch" and "severe thunderstorm warning" conditions. Should a "tornado warning" go into effect, all people will go to the cubby and storage areas inside the classrooms and remain there until the warning is lifted. Staff should be familiar with the locations and procedures for each classroom. Drills will be implemented by the Center to ensure that all staff are familiar and confident with procedures.

Families are advised to remain at work until the warning is lifted. If families arrive at the Center during a warning, they must stay in the shelter areas as we will be unable to release children during this time.

Decisions regarding open and closing due to inclement weather conditions will rely heavily upon the Jefferson County and Birmingham City School System due to the fact that both HELC staff and families live throughout the metro area and beyond.

In the event that the weather becomes severe after children have been dropped off at the Center, families will be notified (by phone, e-mail and/or text) using the SchoolCast notification system. Please make sure your contact number and e-mail address are kept current in the SchoolCast system. Your child will be cared for in the event the weather has prohibited you from an immediate pick-up.



Health & Safety

WEATHER

Outdoor play should not occur if there is excessive heat or cold, or there is an air quality index within dangerous levels. Students should not be outside if there is thunder, lightning, or raining (unless all students have rain gear).

AIR QUALITY INDEX

	Acceptable	Limited Time	Unacceptable
Air Quality	0-100 Green - Yellow	101- 150 Orange	150+ Red+

TEMPERATURE

The temperatures are based on NAEYC, DHR, and CDC recommendations. Due to our youngest learners limited movement, it is recommended that they have less extreme temperatures. Please ensure that all students have the appropriate weather gear for the temperatures and their additional changes of clothes are appropriate for the season. All amounts listed below take into account windchill and the heat index.

	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Infants & Toddlers (Non-mobile)	50°F - 90°F	Below 50°F or above 90°F
Infants & Toddlers (Mobile)	40°F - 97°F	Below 40°F or above 97°F
Twos, Threes, & Pre-K	32°F - 97°F	Below 32°F or above 97°F

Waterplay may affect these temperatures. Please see
waterplay guidelines for more information

Health & Safety

WATER PLAY

Water play is a fun and interactive way to promote development and especially promote logicomathematical knowledge. Water play provides a opportunities for students to construct understanding in the areas of mathematics, physics, and helps to develop conversation and understanding of quantity.

It is the expectation that all classes participate in waterplay 2 times each week during after memorial day up until the start of the new school year.

Children should come dressed in their swimsuits and bring water shoes and a towel. Any children not potty trained should wear a diaper or pull-up underneath their swim diaper. Swim diapers are required for all children that are not fully potty trained. The pull-up or diaper can be removed prior to water play.

It is recommended that students come to school with sunscreen already applied. If sunscreen needs to be applied, all documentation must be on file. No aerosol sunscreen may be used as it increases the risk of inhalation in young children.

Waterplay should provide varying materials to promote development during water play such as buckets, scoops, or water tables. Materials should be regularly rotated.

Waterplay may not occur if there is excessive heat, cold, or dangerous weather. Please see weather guidelines for further information.

	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Infants & Toddlers (Non-mobile)	80°F - 95°F	Below 80°F or Above 95°F
Infants & Toddlers (Mobile)	75°F - 97°F	Below 75°F or Above 97°F
Twos, Threes, & Pre-K	75°F - 97°F	Below 75°F or Above 97°F

Health & Safety

FIELD TRIPS

Children three years of age and older who are enrolled in the Center may participate in planned field trips and other organized activities within walking distance. Such trips are expected to be educational in nature and plans must first be approved by a Center director. A written authorization form signed by a legal guardian is required for a child to participate in field trips. This form informs families of the destination, date and time of the trip.

A child's family member is required to attend if the child is not potty trained.

Staff may **NOT** take children off school property without a permission form. This includes short walks. Forms can be found in the front office.

