



**ERIE FIRST
EARLY EDUCATION CENTER**

Parent Handbook

2017–2018



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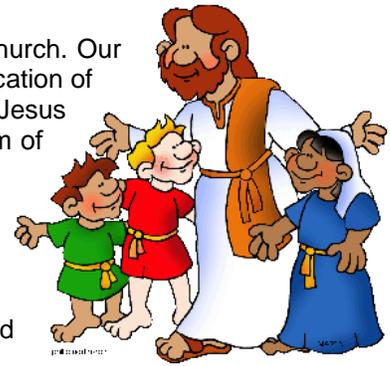
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MISSION, VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

Erie First Early Education Center is a division of Erie First Assembly of God Church. Our mission is to partner with parents in the development, instruction, care, and education of the whole child – spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these,'" Matthew 19:14

Our vision is to introduce children to the knowledge of Jesus and His great love for them. In addition, we want to equip each of them, individually, with the future tools they need to be successful in school, life, and relationships.

Our mission and vision will be accomplished when we believe the following and we **"CARE"**:



- ❖ **C** – We believe God has Created each child individually with unique interests, abilities, and needs.
- ❖ **A** – We believe that as teachers and caregivers, we will show the love of Jesus through our Actions, Attitudes, and Activities.
- ❖ **R** – We will provide safe and nurturing Relationships and an atmosphere that encourages positive attitudes, responsibility, self-discipline, and self-esteem.
- ❖ **E** – We will intentionally Express how special and loved the children are, and that God has a plan for them as they grow.

LICENSING INFORMATION AND STAFF/CHILD RATIOS

The Early Education Center is licensed by the PA Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Erie Chamber of Commerce. The Center is also accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International and has achieved the PA STARS standards for quality early education.

Our philosophy is to maintain staff/child ratios anytime the Center is open. These ratios meet state requirements for staffing:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Maximum Room Enrollment</u>	<u>Staff/Child Ratio</u>
Toddlers (24-36 mos)	10	1:6
3-4 Year Preschool	10	1:10
4-5 Year Preschool	20	1:10

***We schedule our staff to maintain these ratios based on your child's "normal" hours of attendance. If these hours change due to an appt., errand or emergency, please notify the Director 24 hours in advance, if possible, and staff schedules will be adjusted accordingly.**

ADMISSION POLICIES

Step 1: How do I apply?

If space is available, admission is made on a first come, first serve basis. Pre-admission conferences and tours may be scheduled with the Early Education Office at the number listed above. We encourage you to review our Handbook and visit our facility prior to making official application for enrollment. This visit will give you and your child an opportunity to get acquainted with the Center and give us the opportunity to get to know you. Copies of your child's IEP or IFSP should be given to the office at this time. You will then receive a Financial Agreement Form and discuss any special needs of your child. You will be asked to complete an age-appropriate

questionnaire regarding your child's current developmental stage(s), and will be offered a conference to discuss your answers and/or any concerns you have at the present time. This questionnaire and conference will be offered within the first 45 days of your child's enrollment.

If space is not available, please be patient! Space often becomes available throughout the year. If you desire, you can be placed on our waiting list.

Waiting List Policy

- ❖ When there is no available child care space within a certain age group, a waiting list is established.
- ❖ There are 2 ways for your child to be placed on the Erie First waiting list.
 - 1. Call the office at 814-866-0007 and give us your child's info and your contact info, and we will be happy to accommodate you on our waiting list.
 - 2. Fill out and return and EFEEC initial application with a \$35.00 non-refundable registration fee, and your child will be placed on the waiting list – securing a spot over those who have elected not to return the application or pay the registration fee.
- ❖ With either option, there is no guarantee that care will be available on the requested start date.

Child care spaces will be filled in each age group from the waiting list on a first-come, first-serve basis in the following priority order:

1. **Sibling of an enrolled child** – at Erie First, we believe in and promote a family atmosphere. We want to strengthen and protect the “members” of our family, and for this reason, after a family is enrolled that family has priority for new openings. Openings are filled first by currently enrolled children who need to “move up” the next age group. Any remaining openings will be offered to EFEEC families who have a sibling needing care.
2. **Child of an Erie First staff member** - Erie First staff members will be given second priority in any available openings. If there is a situation where more than one staff member needs childcare, the opening (within each separate age group) will be given according to who applied and paid the registration fee on the earliest date.
3. **Child of the Erie Community** – Erie First seeks to be an active part of our community and to impact our Erie/Summit community in a positive way. We invite and look forward to meeting and making new friends, and to welcoming new children and their parents into our EFEEC family. We embrace diversity within our population, seek to meet the special needs of individuals, and accept CCIS for those who are eligible.

When a space becomes available, the next person on the waiting list will be contacted. The parent recorded on the waiting list will then have 48 hours (2 working days) to notify the center of his/her decision.

In the event that the parent does not respond within 2 days and/or they cannot be reached, the next person on the list will be contacted. If a parent chooses not to accept a space when available, the child's name will be placed at the bottom of the waiting list (or removed if we do not hear from the parent within a week).

In order to ensure that the center is able to contact a parent when a space becomes available, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the center of any change in contact information, &/or if the parent will be out of town for an extended period of time.

An official start date cannot be secured until all required paperwork has been processed.

Step 2: Choose a Program **Programs Offered at Erie First**

Full-time Daycare is offered Monday – Friday from 6:30am – 6pm. (year-round)
Older Toddlers (approx. 24 – 36 m)
Daycare 3 (approx. 36 – 48 m)
Daycare 4 (approx. 48 – 60m)

** Erie First does not offer part time daycare programs at this time.*

Part-time Pre-K Programs

Our Pre-K 3 & 4 programs at Erie First are recognized under the PA Dept. of Education. Both programs are offered during the school year from 8:30 – 11:30am.

Pre-K 3 is offered T / TH to students turning 3 by Sept. 1

Pre-K 4 is offered M / W / F to students turning 4 by Sept. 1

Pre-K 4 is also offered M – F to students turning 4 by Sept 1

Pre-K 4 offers an “Extended Day” (until 1:30pm) once a month for an extra fee.

Pre-K Programs should be paid according to one of the following options:

- A one-time payment due on or before July 1.
- Two equal payments due on or before July 1 and December 1.
- Monthly payments made through FACTS Tuition Management System.

** Daycare 3 and 4 are also part of the Dept. of Ed. Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 for no additional cost.*

Step 3: Complete and/or Update All Required Paperwork

*Forms can be downloaded from <http://www.efcaonline.org/home/early-ed/admissions/step-3/>

Step 4: Allow Time for Processing of Paperwork

Once all of the required paperwork has been submitted, the Early Ed. and Finance Offices will need some time to process these forms and get the classroom ready for the addition of your child. This can take up to two weeks, so it in your best interest to fill out all paperwork completely, and return it promptly. Late or incomplete forms could delay the start date of your child. The Early Ed. Office will contact you as soon as possible with a confirmed start date after all paperwork has been processed.

CHANGES OF ENROLLEMENT

Withdrawal by the Parent

If you wish to withdrawal your child from the Center, you will need to communicate this to the Director **in writing with a minimum of two weeks’ notice**. You may be asked to complete a “Withdrawal Form”. Once the Director has received the “Withdrawal Form” she will notify the Financial Office with the last day of attendance and/or charges for your child. At the request of the parents, we will transfer any applicable academic records to another educational setting. However, your financial balance must be up to date before any copies of these records will be released.

Move-up Day/Change of Classroom Program

“Move-up” day to the next class will occur mid to late August. In most cases, your child will need to meet an age requirement by “move-up” day. Exceptions to this age requirement will be made by the Director, with the input of the staff and parents, and based on the best interest of the child. Prior to your child’s “move-up” date, the teachers will work with your child to make the adjustment to a new classroom as smooth and seamless as possible. We would be happy to supply parents with transition literature should you desire us to do so. If necessary, mid-year changes will be made on a space available basis.

Termination by the Center

We realize that not every situation is appropriate for every child. If, for any reason, this program is found to be unsatisfactory for any particular child, we will make every effort to discuss this with the parents in order to determine the cause. Sometimes we can help the child make the adjustment. If this is not possible, the parent and/or Director may choose to terminate the arrangement on a time line that is in the child’s best interest. Other reasons, which may result in termination of a specific care arrangement, are as follows:

1. Non-payment of services
2. Lack of cooperation from parents with the program’s efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child’s needs through parent/staff meetings
3. Parents taking it upon themselves to discipline children other than their own enrolled in the program.
4. Special needs or needs related to serious illnesses that are not possible to meet at the program.
5. Parent failure to provide necessary paperwork by deadlines established (physicals, immunizations, etc.)
6. Continual abusive behavior by a child which threatens the health and safety of the staff and other children.
7. Abusive behavior and/or verbal threats by parents. This results in **immediate** termination.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Even though the Early Education Center is a ministry of Erie First Assembly of God Church, we operate entirely on tuition fees from each child. Therefore, it is essential that your fees be paid promptly and regularly. If your child is absent, the fees are still due in full. Accounts more than 2 weeks in arrears may be subject to dismissal. We cannot refund or credit any fees. **All financial concerns and/or questions are to be directed to our finance secretary at 866-0007 (menu prompt # 3).**

CCIS (Child Care Information Services)

We are a participating provider for subsidized childcare through the Child Care Information Services. If you wish to apply for subsidized childcare call the Children's Services office at 451-6664 or 451-6584 for an appointment. **Please understand that you as the parent may be responsible to pay the CCIS co-pay plus any tuition costs CCIS does not cover.** Please contact the CCIS Office regarding further information and eligibility requirements on financial assistance for daycare.

(CCIS Information Below)

CCIS of Erie County

155 West 8th Street, Suite 316

Erie, PA 16501-1043

Phone: (814) 451-6580 or (814) 451-6683

Toll Free Phone: 1-877-288-2022

Fax: (814) 451-6550

Method of Payment

A non-refundable registration fee of \$35 is due upon application. Childcare fees are due the first day of the week that the child attends the Center. For example, if the child starts on a Monday, the fees are due that Monday. If the child's first day at the Center is a Tuesday, the fee is due on Tuesday. Payments may be placed in the black tuition box located on the left wall as you are exiting the inside code door.

- ❖ Please make your check or money order payable to "Erie First" (no cash, please).
- ❖ Online banking payments should be sent to:

Erie First Early Ed. Center
c/o Finance Office
8150 Oliver Road
Erie, PA 16509

*Please write your child's name in the memo line along with the intended dates of attendance.

NSF Checks

There will be a \$12 service charge for any check returned for insufficient funds. Upon receipt of the second NSF check, all future childcare payments must be paid by cashier's check or money order.

Year-end Tax Statement

Year-end childcare tax statements are furnished only upon request.

Absences

Our program and licensing regulations require us to engage staff based on the number of children enrolled.

Therefore, we cannot refund or credit tuition for any day your child is absent or ill. Any time a child is gone for more than two weeks without payment of the regular weekly fee, the child is dropped from the enrollment list and the vacancy may be filled. In order to be re-enrolled, an opening will have to be available and a new registration fee paid.

Vacation Policy

If your child will not be in attendance due to a vacation, please notify the EFEEC Office in advance. Your child's weekly rate is determined by the number of days in a year that the Center is opened for business. Five days of vacation have already been subtracted from this total annual amount. **Therefore, since we require payment in**

advance, you will still be required to pay the normal weekly fee prior to your time away. No vacation discounts are available.

Late Fee

The Center closes no later than 6:00 p.m. A \$3.00 fee for every part of 5 minutes that you are late will be charged. **Although we appreciate a phone call, notification of late arrival will not relieve this charge.** The staff members will notify the Director when this occurs. This fee will be billed to your account.

If your child is still at the Center after closing and we have not heard from you, we will take the following steps:

1. Attempt to reach you at home, work or school.
2. Call the people listed on your child's emergency contact form
3. Contact the appropriate authorities (Erie County Children and Youth Services).



DAYS AND HOURS OF SERVICE

Days/Hours

We are open Monday through Friday, from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Holidays

As stated in our vacation policy, our tuition rates are **flat rates** based on the number of days in the year our facility is open. **There are also 8 days of holiday time and 3 days of training have been calculated into these flat rates for the year.** The Center will be closed for the following holidays:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| New Year's Day | Thanksgiving Day |
| Memorial Day | The Day After Thanksgiving (Black Friday) |
| 4 th of July | Christmas Day |
| Labor Day | The Day Before or Day After Christmas* |
| | (*depending on calendar) |

Center Closing

In the event of inclement weather, if it is necessary to close the Center, we will contact you with any closings or delays. We are able to provide a service by which an automated phone call will deliver messages and reminders. This is a free service in which a global (simultaneous) call will be made to each participant. If you do not choose to opt into the "Black Board" program you will be responsible to watch the local news for word of closures, delays, etc...Regular tuition will **not** be charged when the Center **does not open** due to bad weather.

If we should have to close early, we will call you or your designee to come pick up your child. We expect these occurrences to be very rare. Our operating expenses do not change **should we be forced to delay our opening or close early due to emergency conditions, so full tuition will still be due.**

PROGRAM OPERATION

Basic program goals have been created to promote the 5 domains of child development. These include: the social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual areas of growth. Each child is a unique individual with a variety of interests, needs and abilities. Using the program goals as the framework to develop the curriculum, and using and the needs of the individual child as the focus for the curriculum, each teacher is responsible for creating and implementing lesson plans to guide their daily activities.

These plans must include:

- a balance of child self-initiated and teacher directed activities
- a variety of activities that motivate children to explore and learn through play
- a regular balance of sensory activities, art, science, music, large motor, math readiness, cooking, group activities, dramatic play, fine motor and language development
- a Bible based spiritual growth and development program

The curriculum guide is reviewed and evaluated by the Director and staff. Our program provides interest centers for the children in attendance. The centers are maintained and supervised by the staff. These centers include:

- creative arts and crafts
- dramatic play, housekeeping
- science
- music
- fine motor activities
- large muscle activities
- sensory stimulation activities



Samples of both daily activity schedules and age-appropriate lesson plans can be found on our Early Ed. website at www.efcaonline.org.

PARENT/CENTER COMMUNICATION

At Erie First Early Education Center we recognize our parents as the most important adults in their child's life. We strive to create a partnership built on mutual respect between parents and teachers. We encourage daily communication between parents and center staff. Conversations that have to do with the direct care and needs of your child are appropriate for drop off and pick up times. We want to caution you, however, not to use this time to *socialize*, so that our teachers can do their #1 job and *supervise*.

Parents are welcome in the program at all times and are encouraged to invite friends and family to monthly sing-alongs and special public programs.

Parent's attitudes and involvement play a big role in your child's education. You are encouraged to communicate with the staff in any way that will enhance the progress of your child. However, we ask you to note the following:

- You are welcome to call the Center to give or receive information about your child, when needed. The Center number is (814) 866-0007, it is our policy that calls go through the office rather than the teacher's personal cell. If you need to speak with the office and it is before or after office hours, please feel free to use the Director's cell number: (814) 449-7854. It is also our policy that the office be included in written communication along with the teacher. This can be accomplished by "cc"-ing or including the Director or her assistant in texts &/or emails.
- We ask our parents to please be sensitive in communicating about any child or family within the hearing of other parents &/or children. We request that this type of communication be addressed through a private conference or written means with the teacher and Director.

Daily Sheets

We are committed to working together with each family, establishing and maintaining two-way communication, building trust and mutual understanding, and ensuring that each child's learning and developmental needs are met. Daycare families will receive a "Daily Sheet" which documents your child's activities and important facts of the day. This is a written report of food intake, elimination, sleeping patterns, general behavior and special happenings during your child's day. If you have questions about anything written on your child's "Daily Sheet", please speak with your child's teacher.

Communication Folders

The "Daily Sheet" (mentioned above) will be sent home in the Communication Folder. This folder will contain a "Keep at Home" and "Return to School" side. When there are papers in the "Return to School" side, they need to be reviewed, completed, and returned to school promptly. The "Keep at Home" side should be **reviewed and emptied daily**. Please use this opportunity to discuss with your child what they have been doing at school and the process involved. Communication Folders are provided by the Center (free of charge) and their daily use is a center policy. We appreciate your adherence to this policy in assisting us to maintain positive, two-way communication. If your child is without their Communication Folder for more than a "week's worth" of days (depending on your child's program), a replacement folder will be issued and a \$5 replacement fee added to your bill. Please encourage your child to keep this folder clean and sticker-free. Upon withdrawal of your child from the Program, please return this Communication Folder to the Office.

Parental/Adult Involvement

Parental/adult involvement is necessary to the continuing success of our program. We encourage our parents to schedule a visit with your child's classroom to discuss any hobbies, occupations, holidays, or cultural backgrounds. Parents are also encouraged to help in the classrooms during special events. However, we understand that not all parents will be able to assist in the classroom. There will be other opportunities to send in special items or perhaps help in creative ways, should you desire to do so. Please see the Director or your child's teacher for ideas.

Classroom volunteers and helpers can make an important contribution to our early ed. program at Erie First. In order that we may make good use of this type of contribution it will be important to follow certain guidelines.

Classroom volunteers/helpers will be individuals who are caring, dependable and effective with children. They should be willing to work cooperatively with a teacher and under a specific teacher's supervision.

Clearances and a Confidentiality Agreement are required before the volunteers are allowed to assist within a classroom. Information regarding requirements can be obtained from the early ed. office.

Special Events

We encourage you to "LIKE" us on Facebook ("Erie First Pre-K") to receive notification of up-coming events. Special notices are occasionally posted on the front entrance door and periodic newsletters &/or memos may also be sent home to keep parents regularly informed of program plans.

Child Service Reports/Parent Conferences

To help individualize our program, we document developmental observations of your child and send home reports approx. every 6 months. We use this information to offer activities to allow each child to grow and progress to meet their full potential. Parent/Teacher conferences are offered at least twice a year and at other times, as needed, to discuss your child's progress, accomplishments, or concerns at home and within the program. The center or a parent may feel free to request a conference any time throughout the year.

Parent Feedback

At EFEEC, we do our best to provide your child with a safe physical environment and an atmosphere where he or she can feel both secure and free to grow at his or her own pace under our love and guidance. You can help us achieve these goals by giving the Director your comments & suggestions. Parent surveys (both fall and spring) will be distributed to obtain information from our parents so we may continually strive to improve the center's program. We value your feedback!

ARRIVALS

For your child's safety, we require that you or another authorized adult bring your child into the program each morning and get him/her settled. **Sign-in your child upon arrival** by documenting the time and initialing in the appropriate day. Please accompany your child into the classroom and greet a teacher to insure they are aware of your child's arrival before you leave. If you are going to be away from your place of work for the day, be sure to leave a phone number where you can be reached in case you are needed for an emergency.

DEPARTURES

When picking up your child, be sure the teacher knows that he/she is leaving. This procedure is for your child's protection. **Be sure to sign-out your child of the program** by documenting the time and initialing in the appropriate day. Although there is value in watching your child interact with peers, we ask that this activity be limited during pick-up (i.e., allowing your child to continue playing at length after your arrival). If you have any question or concerns please feel free to contact the EFEEC Office.

Authorized Releases

At the time of enrollment, parents must provide us with the names of persons authorized to bring/pick up the child. It is the parent or guardians responsibility to notify the program of any changes in this authorization. If someone other than an authorized person (as indicated on the child's emergency contact form or in the child's file) is to pick up your child, please notify the program in writing, if possible. If this is not possible, verbal authorization can be given to the Office and a form will be filled out and given to the teacher. We will release to authorized persons only. When a person is unknown to us, photo ID or other official identification will be requested by the staff before the child is released. Copies of legal documents must be provided to the director before any staff person can actively prevent non-custodial parents from picking up their child.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Door Codes

At Erie First Early Education Center, we take the safety and security of our little ones very seriously. When you arrive at our campus, you will find all of our outside doors locked. Daycare parents receive a unique code to allow them access to the building at door #16. Visitors must be “buzzed” into the building at door #17. The Academy receptionist monitors the flow of traffic and checks in all guests. However, because our facility houses a K-12 Christian Academy and a large church, we have a second layer of protection for our Early Ed. Center. To enter the self-enclosed and locked early ed. center, daycare parents must enter a second coded door.



Each family will be assigned a security code that will need to be entered in order to gain access to the building. The keypad is located to the right of the entrance door. **For the safety and security of your child, please remember the following important policies:**

1. Keep this code in a safe place. You may want to place them in your wallet or phone for access when you need it.
2. Never allow other people to enter the building on your code by holding the door open for them, etc. They **MUST** enter on their own code, use the EFCA receptionist door, or call (814) 866-0007 to be allowed in by Erie First Staff.
3. You may share this code **only** with those you have listed on your child’s emergency contact form as an authorized pick-up.
4. Children’s hands should not touch the keypad. This device is battery-powered and the life of the battery is affected each time a button is pushed. We tell the children these buttons are for “Adult Hands Only”. Thank you for your assistance in this.

Failure to follow these policies may be grounds for dismissal.

Pre-K parents will be buzzed in at door #17 and will walk to their child’s classroom for arrival and departure.

Security Cameras

In addition to our locked and coded doors, we have cameras at each entrance and exit, covering all doors, and within each classroom. These cameras monitor daily activities, and are available for real-time viewing for our parents on a large screen in our Center lobby. The camera feed is also available on continual view in the Director’s office.

Visitors

We have an “open door” visiting policy. Any time parents wish to visit or pick up their child early or bring their child late, they are welcome to do so. If you will be joining us for lunch or snack, please inform your child’s teacher that day so a place can be made for you. If you wish to speak with a teacher in depth, please call the Office so arrangements can be made for her to speak with you without affecting supervision of the children or compromising staff/child ratios.

Visitors (other than enrolled parents who are authorized to be at the program that day) must check in at the Academy or Director’s office immediately upon entering the facility. **These visits must be scheduled with the Office in advance.**

Emergency Drills

Although we hope there is never a safety-related incident at our school, our administration and staff believe that education and training in these areas can only benefit our children. We not only observe the PA state-mandated fire drills every 60 days, we also go above that in practicing “lock-down” drills regularly as well. The children even periodically practice “severe weather” drills. However, with the exception of fire drills, they don’t always realize they are part of a “drill”. We handle these in such a way that the students are moved to the most secure location, but end up having a quiet “story time”, or another non-threatening activity with their friends. We want these drills to become part of their routine.

Community Safety Training

We also facilitate age-appropriate safety training by community professionals such as fire safety “Don’t hide – run outside!” (not being afraid of a fully dressed fire fighter), “Stranger Danger” and “Good Touch / Bad Touch”. Parents, as always, are welcome to these public community presentations as well.

Safety Walk-Throughs and Monitoring Reports

Regular safety walk-throughs are implemented, and monitoring reports are submitted to the Board for approval and verification. Your child's safety and security is of utmost importance to us at EFEEC. Please know we will do everything within our power to ensure their well-being.

Data Privacy

The only person permitted to see your child's record (name address, phone number, health information, emergency information, etc.) will be the parent or legal guardian, the Director, the Pastor of Administration and Education, the office staff, the child's teacher &/or the state licensing examiner.

It is the policy of the program not to disclose the names of children who may have caused injuries to other children while at the Center. This is a safeguard for each family's data privacy. Information with regard to family issues and personal lives will be handled confidentially. In the event of a divorce, separation or joint custody ruling, every effort will be made to treat both parents equally.

CONCERNS, SUSPENSIONS AND DISMISSAL

- EFEEC teachers are responsible for informing the director of any serious concerns (academic, social/emotional, behavioral, etc.) they have for a child in their classroom.
- Once a concern has been shared with the Director, a minimum of three written observations of the child will be recorded and placed on file.
- If it is determined that the concern is valid, the Director will contact the parent to request a conference.
- At the conference, the center's concerns will be clearly identified in writing and a plan of action will be agreed upon between the parents, teacher and Director.
- The plan of action may include suspension if the concern involves the safety and/or well-being of other children.
- Following the conference, if a plan of action cannot be agreed upon, or if the problem does not seem to be resolved in class, the parents will receive a written statement from the center regarding termination.
- Care of a child may be terminated if it is deemed to be in the best interest of that particular child or the other children in the classroom, or if it is determined by that the program of EFEEC is not the right fit for the child.
- Termination of a child's enrollment shall be managed (by both center and parent) in a child-focused manner consistent with a child's ability to understand.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Staff shall provide each child with guidance that helps the child acquire a positive self-concept. Discipline and behavior guidance used by each teacher/caregiver will at all times be constructive, positive and suited to the age of the child. To accomplish this, the following techniques are used:

1. **Prevention** – a well designed and well equipped classroom tailored to the development level of the children prevents frustration, interruption and hazards. It offers privacy, independence and easy adult supervision.
2. **Positive Redirection** – the basic procedure used in all classrooms is positive redirection, which is redirecting unacceptable behavior to an acceptable alternative. This may be enhanced by verbal praise and other reward systems. We praise children for their appropriate behavior and successes by describing what we see and how we feel... "I see that the puzzles are all on the shelf." "It is nice to have such a clean room."
3. **Modeling** – teacher-modeled appropriate behavior and communication, as well as positive peer models, are provided to help the children learn responsibility for their actions. We will use Bible stories as well for positive role modeling. Scripture and Christian songs will reinforce this as well.
4. **Limit-Setting** – we have a few clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children.
5. **Problem-Solving** – we appeal to the growing intellectual and moral reasoning by natural and logical consequences and asking questions to encourage problem solving. We provide cues such as the statement " Please use your words".

6. **Managing Behavior** – when a child has a physical or emotional outburst, we provide comfort and privacy. This allows the child to regain composure and insures the safety of other children and staff. “Time out” will be used only as a last resort, when a child is unable to break a pattern of negative or attention getting behavior. This is not a punishment, but rather a time of renewal for the child. When separated from the group, the child must remain in an area where his/her physical presence can be seen and heard by the program staff. When a child has been removed from the group, he/she may return to the group when the behavior has been brought under control and the child is no longer a threat to him/herself or to classmates. The child shall be returned to the group at the earliest possible opportunity.
7. **Prohibited actions** – children shall not be subjected to any form of corporal punishment, including rough handling, grabbing, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, or spanking.

Children shall not be subject to any form of emotional abuse, including name-calling, ostracism, shaming/belittling, making derogatory remarks about the child or his family or using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.

Physical punishment will not be used in any situation and would be the basis of immediate termination of employment. Only classroom staff can discipline a child. Older children may not be used to discipline younger children. Parents may not discipline children (other than their own) while at the Center.

Punishment shall not be imposed for failure to eat or sleep or for toilet accidents. The withholding of food, clothing, rest, toilet use or medical care will not be used as punishment. No child shall be confined to an enclosed area or locked room. No mechanical restraints may be applied to a child as a discipline method.

TOUCHING AND NURTURING



Physical touching is an important part of the care and nurturing of young children. Children feel loved, accepted, and supported through the sensations of touch by nurturing adults and peers. Physical contact your child may experience during the day at our program can be described in three ways:

Nurturing – this includes hugging, hand holding, gentle tickling, carrying, cuddling, and back rubbing. This type of contact is not solicited and never made against the expressed wishes of the child.

Safety and Guidance – this includes restraining children from harmful situations, separating conflicting children, guiding children by gently leading them and administering first aid to injuries.

Hygiene – this includes face and hand washing, diapering (including cleaning and wiping genitals), assisting with toileting, examining rashes or unusual marks, nose blowing and conducting necessary clothing changes.

ILLNESS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

For the health and well being of both the sick child and all of our children and staff, **sick children will not be permitted to remain in the Center**. The Director and program staff reserve the right to refuse care for any child we determine to be ill at any time. Prearrange alternate childcare arrangements to be used when your child is identified as ill. Please notify the Center of the cause of any illness necessitating your child’s absence. We hope you will appreciate the importance and benefits of the following health procedures and exclusion policies. The following symptoms will require a child to be sent home:

1. Axillary or oral temperature of 100° or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, stiff neck or undiagnosed rash.
2. Diarrhea – more than one loose stool in an 8-hour period.
3. Vomiting
4. Skin problems – skin rashes/patches (undiagnosed or contagious), infected sores or sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage, which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.



5. Evidence of lice infestation or scabies.
6. Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.
7. Complaint of ear pain.
8. Respiratory symptoms- Breathing difficulties or coughing; child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.
9. Conjunctivitis – any discharges from the eye or ‘pink eye’.
10. Unusual color – eyes or skin – yellow (jaundice); urine – dark, tea-colored; stool – grey or white (these symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician).

In addition, the following could be symptoms of an illness in infants and should require a physician’s advice:

1. Poor feeding
2. Persistent crying and irritability
3. Unusual tiredness

Children with any of these symptoms will:

1. Be isolated as much as possible from other children
2. Have parent/guardian contacted
3. Need to be picked up as soon as possible, generally within one hour
4. Remain out of the Center until all symptom are gone, at least the remainder of the day **PLUS** 24 hours; or provide a written statement from a physician that the child is not contagious and may return to the Center.
5. If a child does not feel well and is unable to participate in the usual activities but does not display any of the above symptoms a courtesy call may be made to inform the parent of the child’s condition.

To provide the best infection control, follow the list below for length of exclusion from the Center:

1. Chicken Pox – excluded until all lesions are dry and crusted but at least 6 days.
2. Conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eye) – excluded until after the start of effective treatment, **PLUS** 24 hours.
3. Diarrhea – excluded until symptoms have ceased, **PLUS** 24 hours.
4. Fifth Disease (rose-red rash on face/trunk) – excluded from onset of rash, **PLUS** 24 hours.
5. Impetigo (skin lesions) – excluded until after the start of effective treatment, **PLUS** 48 hours.
6. Lice – excluded until after the start of effective treatment, **PLUS** 24 hours (may take more than one treatment).
7. Strep/scarlet fever/sore throat – excluded until after the start of effective treatment, **PLUS** 24 hours.
8. RSV (respiratory syncytial virus, lower respiratory infections) – can be serious in younger children. Since this illness is extremely prevalent and contagious especially in the winter months, it is important to be excluded until **ALL** symptoms have disappeared and the child is well enough to participate in usual activities. (This may require a written statement from a physician that the child is not contagious and may return to the Center.)
9. Roseola – excluded until the rash has disappeared.
10. Vomiting – excluded until after the last incident, **PLUS** 24 hours.
11. Fever – excluded until the fever has gone, **PLUS** 24 hours or until medical evaluation indicates inclusion.
12. Common Cold (upper respiratory tract infections) – if not accompanied with a fever, persistent cough or sore throat, the child may attend if able to participate in usual activities and the child does not require greater care than the childcare staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
13. Flu (influenza) – excluded until all symptoms are gone, **PLUS** 24 hours.

Other health problems will be evaluated on an individual basis according to standard health and safety guidelines. (Information from “Infection Control in the Childcare Center and Preschool”)

MEDICATIONS



We are permitted to administer prescription medications to your child provided the medication is brought to the program in the original prescription bottle accompanied by an appropriately completed and signed medication permission form. These forms are available from your child's teacher.

The staff person administering the medication will note on the medication form the time, date and their initials. The staff person administering the medication will follow the instructions on the medication container and the parent instructions on the permission sheet for any specific instructions.

If medication is not administered on time, and it is more than an hour past the administration time, the parents will be contacted for further advice. Empty bottles, containers or expired medication will be returned to the parents and need to be replaced.

The state of Pennsylvania treats sunscreen, creams, &/or ointments as medication. Therefore, it must be supplied by the parent, clearly marked with name and expiration date, along with a completed and signed permission slip. PA also considers lip balm and cough drops as "Keep out of Reach of Children" items.

Medication, sunscreen, personal hand sanitizer, lip balm, cough drops, etc. may only be stored in a locked box and in an area that is out of the reach of children. These items **MAY NOT** be kept in your child's backpack or cubby.

ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID

Responsible supervision of the children is of utmost importance. Children are never left alone. They must be in sight and hearing of the staff at all times so that staff can intervene to protect the health and safety of the each child. Active interaction with the children is expected of each staff member. A first aid kit is available in each childcare area.

Minor mishap forms are completed for minor injuries/incidents that occur during the day. Once signed by the parent, the original is given to the Director for review and placement in the child's permanent file. A copy is given to the parent along with the child's "Daily Sheet".

If it appears that an accident may lead to future complications, or if it becomes serious and the child needs to be medically examined, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The caregiver will carry out immediate first aid
2. The parents will be contacted
3. If parents or alternative emergency contact person cannot be reached, the Director will call a previously designated physician &/or transport to a hospital. A staff member or the Director should accompany the injured child to the hospital and stay until the parent arrives.
4. In some emergency situations, the staff should contact the local emergency unit before calling the parent (i.e., cessation of breathing).

All serious incidents, emergencies, accidents and injuries that occur to children, staff or visitors must be reported on an "Incident Report" and staff should follow "Situation Protocol" as stated in the EFEEC Staff Handbook.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

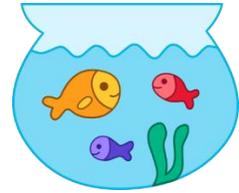
EFEEC will make available to parents upon enrollment a resource booklet entitled "Children Do Come with Directions: A Guide for Parents". This booklet provides information about a child's health, development, and safety. It also provides basic information on community resources here in Erie County that are available to help support the needs of families with children. This booklet is made available by The United Way of Erie County "Success By 6" initiative. Please contact the EFEEC Office if you did not receive this booklet or if you need an additional copy.

CLEAN AIR POLICY

The indoor environment of this program is designated as non-smoking areas. There will be no smoking permitted inside the building or on the church property.

PETS

Pets are seen as an educational resource for children. All pets shall be enclosed in cages except when the children are handling them under supervision. All pets shall be handled only under direct staff supervision. The children will learn to care for and handle pets in an appropriate manner. If you bring in a dog or cat to show the children, a veterinarian's certificate of current rabies immunization must accompany the visit and must be scheduled with care due to allergies.



OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important part of your child's day. The fresh air movement is something that each child needs daily for general well being and healthy development.

It is our policy that children who are well enough to come to the program are well enough to go outdoors. Weather permitting; the children will play outdoors a substantial portion of each day. We will not take the children out in inclement weather (i.e., rain or extremely cold temperatures). If children are dressed properly, weather conditions should not pose any health risk.

You can help your child enjoy this time outdoors by being sure he/she is dressed for existing weather conditions. In winter, this includes boots, warm coats, snow pants, mittens/gloves and hats. During warm weather, sunscreen is required for children spending time outdoors.

Children will not be excused from this portion of the program without a doctor's written statement specifying the reason and length of time outdoor activity is restricted.

NAPS AND REST PERIODS

Naps and rests are appropriate and necessary activities of children. This quiet time enables them to relax and unwind from their busy morning schedule and have a more positive afternoon and be a happier child at home with you at the end of the day.

Naps and quiet time will be held following the clean up of lunch. There may be a short while of quiet play, book reading, or story time before the children actually start their nap.

Children will be quieted through restful music, low lights and rubbing of their backs, if desired. Staff will assist children as they get settled on their sleeping bags. Each child will need to bring a sleeping bag from home. These need to be taken home weekly to be washed.

Children are welcome to have security objects such as stuffed animals; blankets and pacifiers at nap time if they are important to your child. (12 months and older)

The length of our naptime is based on the needs of the children and parental preferences. However, the state of Pennsylvania forbids us to force a child to sleep. However, we will create a soothing environment that is conducive for the children to rest. After an appropriate rest time, if a child awakens early and is ready to get up, he/she is permitted to do so. Children may play quietly so they will not wake up the nappers for the remainder of the rest period.



CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS

All children will have use of a cubby &/or coat hook for their personal belongings. Each child is asked to bring a backpack or duffel back that fits into their cubby. They are also asked to bring a complete set of clothing (more than one for infants and toddlers), including socks and underwear, to school each day in their backpack. Please have each piece clearly marked with your child's name. These clothes will be used if there is a toileting mishap or other wet play or art experience that requires a change. Please check your child's backpack periodically to see that it is complete with clothes appropriate to the season and your child's growth.

Infants/toddlers will need sufficient bottles (NO glass) or a drinking cup with lid, formula/milk, baby food, disposable diapers, wipes, pacifiers, and any desired powders, creams, ointments and sunscreen.

Toys and items of value should remain at home. We cannot assure responsibility for materials brought from home. Should your child's class be observing "Show and Tell", please observe the following:

1. Guns and weapons, superheroes &/or monsters are not allowed; they promote aggressive play that is not suitable in our Center environment.
2. Please do not permit your child to bring gum, candy or money into the Center.



BIRTHDAYS



We will recognize each child's birthday and would love parental involvement! With this in mind, we have asked that the parents bring in (on their child's birthday celebration day) a book wrapped like a present. This book can either be brand new or something you already have at home. The child will open it up and it will be read it to the class. We do ask, however, that there are **NO TREATS OR SNACKS** brought in for their birthday. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

MEALS AND SNACKS

The staff will assist your child with his/her breakfast upon arrival at the Center in the morning. Breakfast must be completed by 8:30am in order for the children to participate in other activities with their friends. Please remember that all meals will be provided by the parent.

Refrigerators are available if your child's lunch needs refrigerated. Please make sure your child's lunch box and all items inside are labeled clearly with your child's name or initials. Children are encouraged to feed themselves as much as possible. All children are encouraged to eat lunch at the same time, thus creating additional opportunities for the children's social and language development.

Snacks are served daily (twice for daycare students). Emphasis is placed on snacks with little or no sugar.

The Center respects religious and dietary restrictions due to health concerns. If a child has any food allergies, the program must be notified in writing. If a child needs a special diet, the program must receive a statement from the child's physician describing the type of diet needed.

HELPFUL LOCAL PHONE NUMBERS AND RESOURCES

www.childcareaware.org – A website dedicated to assisting parents find quality childcare.

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/findfacilsandlocs/childcareinformationservices/> - The Department of Public Welfare allows you to search for CCIS information in your county. CCIS agencies provide you and your family with information on quality child care and personalized child care referrals to child care providers based on your specific needs or preferences. CCIS agencies also administer the [Child Care Works](#) subsidized child care program. For all of your child care questions and needs, contact the CCIS agency for your local area or call the Child Care Works Helpline at 1-877-4-PA-KIDS.

<http://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/actearly/milestones/index.html> - “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” The CDC has developmental milestones and red flags a parent can watch for as a child grows. If your child is not achieving developmental milestones, or if you have a question about their progress, talk to your doctor right away. For more information or for assistance you can also contact:

Early Intervention, Erie County Care Management (children 0 – 3 years)	814-528-0600
Early Intervention, NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit (children 3 years & above)	800-677-5610
Early Intervention, School District of the City of Erie (children 3 years & above)	814-874-6155

http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=career_standards – This website gives access to the 2014 PA Early Learning Standards.

<http://www.unitedwayerie.org/success-6> - Success By 6® supports a “whole child” approach to education, focusing on both cognitive skills and the child’s social and emotional development. Success by 6 offers additional resources to parents.

WIC - Nutrition information for Women, Infants, and Children **814-455-9102**

La Leche League - Breastfeeding information, education, and support **814-774-3598**

Poison Control Center – put this number in your phone! **800-222-1222**

Safe Kids Erie – Keep your home a safe place for baby to explore **814-451-6543**

<http://ecdh.org/> - Erie County Department of Health **800-352-0026**

<http://www.fsnwpa.org/> - Family Services of Northwestern PA **814-866-4500**

<http://www.chipcoverspakids.com/> - Children’s Health Insurance Program **800-543-7105**

<http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org/> - The Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS) give parents and childcare workers resources such as articles and publications.

www.efcaonline.org – A link to the K – 12 Academy at Erie First Christian Academy.

Erie County Assistance Office: **814-461-2000**

Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP): **1-800-986-5437**

Early Intervention Services: Achievement Center: **1-888-821-3110**

Gertrude Barber Center: **814-453-7661**

Domestic Relations: **814-451-6151**

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:
Northwest Regional Key: **1-800-860-2281**

WIC Program: **814-455-9102**

Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit: **814-734-5610**

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AGREEMENT

The parties to this agreement believe that the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian community to conformity with the Biblical injunctions of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-24, and Matthew 18:15-20. Therefore, the parties agree that any claim or dispute arising out of, or related to this agreement or to any aspect of the childcare relationship &/or employment relationship including any claim or statutory claims, shall be settled by Biblically based mediation.

If resolution of the dispute and reconciliation shall not result from such efforts, the matter shall be submitted to a panel of three arbitrators for binding arbitration. The selection of the arbitrator's process shall be conducted to accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation as printed in the Christian Conciliation Handbook [406-256-1583]

The parties agree that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this relationship. The parents and the Early Education Center expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit against one another in any civil court for such disputes, except to enforce a legally binding arbitration decision.

Each party, regardless of the outcome of the matter, agrees to bear the cost of his/her/its own arbitrator and one-half of the fees and costs of the neutral arbitrator and any other arbitration expenses.

PARENT'S PLEDGE OF ACCEPTANCE

I certify that I/we have read the material in this handbook and fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith, educational philosophy, center policies, and the Conflict Resolution Agreement of Erie First Early Education Center. I certify that the information I have provided on all forms submitted to the Early Education Center are correct, to the best of my knowledge. I also pledge that, upon the acceptance of my child, I/we will settle my/our accounts promptly, and will help strengthen the ministry of the Early Education Center through prayer, financial and moral support as God enables me/us to do so.

Signature of Mother _____ Date _____

Signature of Father _____ Date _____

Signature of Guardian _____ Date _____

(If other than natural parent)