



Early Learning Facility

Shickley Public Schools

Preschool Parent Handbook



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Philosophy & Curriculum

The Early Learning Facility (ELF) promotes an environment where children become independent, confident, lifelong learners with a strong sense of self. We proudly offer a positive, child-centered preschool experience that fosters a love of learning in a nurturing community. In each child, we strive to cultivate:

- Autonomy
- A sense of belonging
- Respect for others
- Enthusiasm for exploration

The policies in this handbook support and protect the values that have been implemented by Nebraska's Early Learning Guidelines and Rule 11.

Our Curriculum

Here at The Early Learning Facility (ELF), we offer a child-centered and developmentally appropriate program for three-through five year-old children. ELF has chosen to implement the play-based learning framework of Creative Curriculum® for Preschool. Creative Curriculum® is a comprehensive system of learning based on research and knowledge regarding all areas of child development – social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. The teachers use their own experiences, as well as the children's interests, to adapt the curriculum to be unique to each ELF class. Classroom observations and assessments become important tools for the teachers to communicate with parents. Play allows children to learn about the world and themselves. As children play, they learn new skills, develop coping mechanisms, test new ideas, and master their bodies. Creative Curriculum® for Preschool provides extensive guidance for teachers in the content areas of literacy, math, science, social skills, and the arts. As children make choices about where to play in the classroom, they are learning a variety of skills. For example, building with blocks promotes material exploration, as well as spatial planning, symbolic representation, dramatic play, and social interactions. In the area of art, teachers emphasize the process rather than the finished product. As children use art materials, they are planning and carrying out a task and also using symbols to represent their ideas. Our play-based curriculum offers children many opportunities for positive interactions with other children and adults. We treat each child with respect and reinforce his/her value as an individual and as a unique member of the ELF community.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. ELF takes confidentiality very seriously and makes every effort to protect each family's privacy. Communication among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. ELF recommends that conversations about a child's, behavior, or incident should be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the ELF community. Discussions in the hallways should be kept to a minimum. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest that this parent first contact the teacher via email or in person to arrange a time to discuss.

Communication

Communication between home and school is vital to a successful preschool program.

School-Wide (Nonemergency) Information: The ELF office communicates with parents in a number of ways:

- Emails
- Telephone
- Shickley Public School's website
- Parent orientation
- Back-to-School Night/Open House
- Notices sent home in children's backpacks

Classroom Information: The ELF classroom teachers will use a variety of ways to communicate with the parents:

- Monthly newsletters will be sent out the first week of each month
- Home Visits- An initial home visit will be conducted at the beginning of the year. An additional home visit will take place during the last month of school.
- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Remind- A program that gives parents the option to sign up for text or e-mail reminders about school events or information
- B.E.E- Folders (Bring Everything Everyday) B.E.E folders will be sent home every Thursday evening. Please be sure to check the contents of your child's Folder so that you can find important notes, art projects, and so forth. Information found in left hand pocket- Can be left at home, whereas information found in right hand pocket- should come

right back to school. Other information in this folder will include a list of the daily routine, Breakfast/lunch/Snack menu, and class roster. B.E.E Folders should return back to school every Monday.

Child-Specific Information:

-During arrival and dismissal times, staff members must devote full attention to all of the children. Please keep conversations brief. If you need to communicate specific information, a written note or email is preferred.

-Parent-teacher conferences are held three times per school year (fall, winter, and spring). The fall conference is an informal meeting for parents and teachers to have an opportunity to discuss the child. For the winter and spring conferences, the teacher will prepare an evaluation for the purpose of sharing observations and documenting the development of each child. At the conference, teachers and parents will discuss the evaluation and your child's developmental progress.

- If, at any time, you have special concerns, please feel free to contact your child's teacher – use email, send a note, or call the office to leave a message. During school hours, teachers cannot accept phone calls. If you have a message for a teacher during school hours, please call or email the office, and we will relay the message. The teacher will respond as soon as possible.

- If you wish to talk to the teacher at length, you can email the teacher and, if needed, arrange a time to meet in person or over the phone.

- Please do not discuss problems or concerns in the presence of your child or other parents.

- Please communicate with the teacher about any changes at home or within the family (i.e., parent on a trip, family member in the hospital, sick grandparent). These changes can affect your child's behavior, and it is useful for staff to be aware of these developments. ELF will always respect your privacy.

-If your child is going to be out of school for any reason, please let the office know. For illnesses, this is especially important so that we can inform families of any communicable disease symptoms while maintaining confidentiality. In addition, teachers and children miss a child when they are absent, so they would like to know that the child is okay.

Admissions

ELF admits students of any race, color, and national and ethnic origin. There is no entrance exam. If parents have any major educational, social, or developmental concerns about their child entering ELF, parents need to discuss these concerns with the director before the child's first day of class. It is important that a positive and appropriate learning environment be established for each child. In an effort to create the best fit for your child and family, ELF reserves the right to place children in classes by age, gender, and developmental level. ELF does not discriminate in administration of its educational and admission policies.

Immunization & Medications

Immunization Records

Your child's immunization record must be on file before he or she can attend class. If we do not received a copy of your child's immunization records 30 days after the 1st day of school we will ask your child to stay at home until a copy is obtained.

Summary of the School Immunization Rules and Regulations 2013-2014

Student Age Group	Required Vaccines
Ages 2 through 5 years enrolled in a school based program not licensed as a child care provider	4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine, 3 doses of Polio vaccine, 3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age. *Hib not required after child reaches 5 yrs of age 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine, 1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age, 1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted. 4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age. *Pneumococcal not required after child reaches 5 yrs of age

Medication Authorization Form: There are circumstances that make it necessary for a child to receive medication while attending school. Trained child care providers can give prescription and nonprescription medication under certain circumstances with prior written permission from the child's parent/guardian and doctor. These circumstances can include prescriptions for an illness, severe allergies requiring an EpiPen®, or over the-counter medicine for allergies and pain. You will find this form on the ELF website, or you can request a Medication Authorization Form from the office. This form must be filled out correctly, signed by both the parent, and returned to the office. Prescription medicine must be in the container labeled by the pharmacy with the child's name and dosage, and at least one dose of the medicine must have been given at home prior to coming to school. Nonprescription medications must be in the original container labeled with directions for dosage. A parent must provide a medicine spoon or cup for administering medicine

Illness

Germs spread quickly in a preschool environment. All children and staff stay healthier when sick persons stay at home. Common sense must prevail in the case of colds, which can range from a mild case of sniffles to a full-blown sinus infection or deep cough. We use the EMERGENCY FORM to contact parents or another designated adult if your child develops symptoms of illness while in class. We will isolate your child in a comfortable, supervised place until he/she can be picked up. If one or more of the following symptoms is present in your child, we will call you to pick up your child from preschool:

- temperature higher than 100°F
- nausea or vomiting
- red, pink, or crusted eyes
- stomach ache or earache
- diarrhea
- rash/infection of skin-Impetigo, Ringworm, etc.
- pale or flushed face or headache
- thick or greenish mucus from nose
- Cough

IF YOUR CHILD IS NOT WELL ENOUGH TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE DAILY SCHEDULE, PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME.

24 HOUR RULE: ANY CHILD WHO HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF ILLNESS IN THE PREVIOUS 24 HOURS MAY NOT ATTEND CLASS.

- **Fever free:** A child should be fever free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- **Antibiotic timeline:** A child should be on antibiotics, antifungal, or other medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school
- We strictly observe this health department regulation for children (and staff) to protect the health of everyone at ELF.

Parent must notify the office immediately if a child:

- Is diagnosed with any communicable diseases including strep throat, pink eye, lice, pinworms, or any other of the diseases common to a school environment. The notification is important so that ELF can inform the parents within your child's classroom to be on the lookout for symptoms. Please remember that ELF will not release the name of the child or family involved. We simply post "There has been a case of _____ reported"
- Has any allergies or if you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's health.
- Is taking medication, as medicine may affect your child's behavior.
- If a child is absent for three days or more due to illness, the parent must provide a written statement from the physician stating that the child is well enough to return to school.
- Unless we receive a doctor's note requesting a child to stay indoors, we expect every child to participate in outdoor play.

Head lice sometimes occurs in school because it is contagious and easily passed from child to child. You may want to look online for more information and to find examples of what lice look like in order to check your child's head correctly (www.cdc.gov/lice/head/treatment). Please inform us immediately if your child has lice. We are required by licensing to follow certain procedures regarding the cleaning and removal of materials (dress-ups, etc.) within a classroom with lice. We also reserve the right to implement additional procedures, such as head checks, if a persistent lice problem was to occur. Please get into the habit of routinely checking your child's head. If all parents check heads regularly, we can avoid any outbreaks in the school.

Emergency Drills/ MIST Kits

Regular emergency fire and tornado drills are conducted throughout the year. All students, staff and visitors are expected to take part in the drills. Check the chart inside the door of your child's classroom to see the procedure.

Emergency Care Kit for Each Child

In preparation for the unlikely occurrence of an emergency, please make sure your child's teacher has the necessary components of an ELF Emergency Care Kit for each child, including:

- MIST bag (see below)
- a complete change of seasonal clothes that fit in the child's backpack

Please make sure to turn these items into your child's teacher on or by the first day of school. The change of clothes and MIST will be returned to you in May.

My Important Stuff Bag (MIST) Each child will need to have a MIST bag at school. The MIST bag will be a support during an emergency*, so you can fill it with "important stuff" that will comfort and reassure your child. This bag will be kept in the class MIST backpack. The bag should be a gallon-size Ziploc bag, labeled with the child's name, and should include the following items:

- a family photo
- soft toy like a beanie baby
- seasonal clothing, including a change of underwear and socks that fit in the bag

Please make sure the Ziploc bag is sealed shut with the items inside and your child's name written on the outside.

Positive Discipline Policy

ELF is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all children. The school's behavior policy encourages children to develop social skills that reflect many of ELF's values, including self-control, respect for others, and a positive self-esteem. Teachers model appropriate behavior and guide positive interactions among children and adults. Nurturing these social skills is a central component of Creative Curriculum®, and it helps children grow as successful, lifelong learners. ELF's commitment to an age-appropriate and play-based curriculum ensures that activities are child centered and promote positive social interactions. Teachers carefully craft

the environment, communicate and enforce clear boundaries and expectations for behavior, and use nonverbal cues and/or redirect a child's behavior to foster success. When a problem arises, the teacher relies on modeling appropriate behavior, teaching peacemaking skills, and presenting stories or scenarios that reinforce the desired behavior. Children learn to make suitable choices and develop techniques for regaining self-control when they feel frustrated. Instructive and individually appropriate consequences help to strengthen the child's self-control and self-esteem. When a child experiences a particularly challenging time, the school encourages parents and teachers to work together and develop appropriate strategies. If a specific circumstance needs attention, the teacher will follow these procedures:

1. The teacher will observe and document a child's behavior.
2. The teacher will discuss the child's behavior with a parent and inform him or her of learning-based strategies the teacher will implement. The teacher will discuss options with the director.
3. The teacher will follow up with the parent about how these strategies are influencing the behavior.
4. If concern persists, a conference will be held with teacher, parent, and director to discuss options to help the child further develop appropriate social skills.
5. Staff members will make reasonable effort to work with the child and his/her family to resolve behavioral concerns. At any time, an individual plan of action may need to be implemented, depending on the severity of the concern. If needed, there is opportunity for teachers and the director to seek support from outside resources. The plan may include removal of a child from the classroom and/or calling the parent to take the child home.

Behavior Policy Specific to Biting: Biting can happen in a preschool situation, especially with young children who do not have the verbal skills to express their feelings. Children's feelings can be related to many environmental factors, as well as internal emotions, such as frustration, tiredness, overstimulation, seeking attention, and so forth. In line with ELF's overall behavior policy, teachers try to create a positive, peaceful, and nurturing environment that encourages children to maintain self control.

What to Bring

Please remember to label each item that your child brings to school (lunch box, backpack, coat, sweater, hat, mittens, boots, etc.).

Dress

- Your child should be dressed for active and participatory play. ELF does not want a child's creativity hampered because he/she is wearing clothing that should not get dirty.
- Your child should wear sturdy, protective shoes (no sandals or Crocs®), which will enable him/her to run, climb, and ride bikes with ease.
- Children go outside when the temperature is above 32 degrees Fahrenheit, so please dress your child appropriately.
- In the winter, hat and mittens are needed every day. Snow pants and warm boots are important whenever there is snow on the ground.

Extra Clothes

In school, at all times, each child should have at least one set of seasonal clothes that fit – pants, shirt, underwear, socks — which should remain in the child’s backpack. In addition to the outfit in your child’s My Important Stuff (MIST) bag for emergencies.

Backpack

At ELF we encourage children to be independent. Therefore, we strongly recommend a backpack that is easy for your child to manage when putting away his/her own things. Each day your child needs to bring a backpack, clearly marked with your child’s name, to hold his or her lunch box, extra clothes, art, treasures, and important communication.

Please be sure to check the contents of this bag each night so that you can find important notes, view art projects, and so forth.

Arrival & Departure

Arrival at School

If you are personally bringing your child to school, you and your child are welcome to arrive 10 minutes prior to the start of class 8:10am. To ensure the safety of your child, please personally escort your child into his/her classroom and be sure that the staff is aware your child has arrived. All parents & visitors must check in at the front office.

Departure from School

Please meet your child at the classroom or van/bus to pick them up. If you are late, or nobody is there to pick up your child, we will attempt to reach your emergency contacts.

If all attempts to reach someone fail, your child will be taken/held back to school to wait for someone to pick up your child.

School Closing

There will be times when the school district will have school, but we will not have preschool. Please watch and listen to know if your child will have school. The Preschool will follow the same directions when school is either postponed or cancelled. We use One Call, which is a system that will call your phone to alert you if there is a change on the start of school or if it has been cancelled. It is also on KHAS TV channel 5 and KOLN-KGIN 10/11 as well.

Birthdays

Simple birthday snacks may be provided by parents to recognize children's birthdays. Please set a date with the teacher **one week** in advance. Less notice may result in a date other than your first choice. This time is necessary to assess the safety of all children who use your child's classroom, primarily with regard to life-threatening allergies. Be prepared to tell the teacher the snack that you would like to serve so that other parents can send a safe alternate treat, if needed. Thank you for your attention to these matters. Advance planning is vital to the safety of our children and to smooth daily classroom procedures.

Personal Possessions/Show & Tell

Please do not allow your child to bring personal items (i.e. toys, candy) to school unless requested by the staff. No play guns or weapons are allowed at preschool. The only time personal possession will be allowed is during Show & Tell. Your son or daughter will have a scheduled time for Show & Tell. The teacher will notify you of when it is your child's turn for Show & Tell on the monthly calendar labeled "Show & Tell Dates". Please watch the monthly calendars for you child's turn for show and tell and help select a toy, book, pictures, or items from nature that interest your child. Talk with your child about the show-and-tell item so that he/she feels more comfortable telling the class about it. We ask that children do not bring toy

weapons to school since this is against school policy. There may be times when we invite all the children to bring certain items from home to relate to the monthly unit. Look for this information on the monthly calendar or in a separate note sent home.

Preschool Schedule

The preschool maintains a regular, predictable schedule. The following items below are included in the daily routine but not necessarily in the following order. Classroom schedules may vary from year to year based on the number of students enrolled and their individual needs. A copy of the daily schedule from year to year can be found in the B.E.E folder.

PLANNING/WORK TIME/CLEAN-UP

For a greater portion of the day, students will be provided with the opportunity to participate in free choice center time. The majority of this time involves learning through play and interacting with teachers and peers.

RECALL/SHARING TIME

A portion of the day will be dedicated to discussing what each child did during free choice center time. Students will be asked to share- what was created, what was imagined, and what was learned.

OPENING/CALENDAR/CIRCLE/MUSIC TIME

Students will be asked to participate in a large group time that provides time for show-and-tell, singing songs, and talking about the events for the day.

SNACK TIME

Students will share in the responsibility for setting up for snack, as well as cleaning up after themselves. Students will receive snack towards the end of the day.

STORY TIME

Stories will be picked by the teacher to be read aloud to the class that fit the monthly theme. Stories will be read in a series of different ways that will provide students with the opportunity to bring the story to life through puppets, actions, or plays.

SMALL GROUP TIME

Small groups are a short 15-20 minute teacher-directed activity that is related to the monthly theme. Small groups are based on pre-academic skills, and Teaching Strategies GOLD.

OUTSIDE/GYM TIME

Physical activity is an important aspect of a preschooler's day. Students will be provided with a variety opportunities to release energy and develop their gross motor skills.

Lunch

Students will be expected to pay for school lunch which is at a set fee of \$2.25 per meal, which averages out to be \$9.00 a week. Parents are encouraged to send money at the beginning of each month. A statement will be send home with your child when money is due. Lunch money can be turned in the classroom teacher or Joyce in the office.

Important Numbers to Know

Preschool Classroom

Miss. Taryn Wolfe - 402-627-3375
- 402-627-2065

Shickley Public Schools

Joyce - 402-627-3375

Transportation Services

Dan Hendrickson - 402-759-2710

Parent Handbook

Signature Page

By signing this page of The Early Learning Facility Preschool Handbook, I am stating that I have read and understand the school's policies and rules. That I am committed to helping my child be successful in school and will make sure my child:

- is dressed appropriately for physical and outdoor play
- brings his/her book-bag to school everyday
- check my child's B.E.E Folder for papers
- keep open communication with my child's teacher

Please return this sheet signed to your child's teacher at the home visit or open house. Thank you!

Child's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____