



## **Parent Handbook**

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to The Early Learning Center at Crossroads, which was founded by Crossroads Covenant Church. Children and their families do not need to be of any religious affiliation or attend Crossroads to attend ELCC. All are welcome.

In this handbook you will find all of the information you need to get your child started. Our Early Learning Center is run preschool style rather than daycare style. The difference? A preschool has a written curriculum that is designed to meet your child's development level. Research has shown that children learn best through play, which is included throughout their day. All elements of education from music and art to science and math and even reading and writing will be presented in the form of a game, free play, and exploration. This educational plan applies to all ages. Infants are given a specialized curriculum that is a simplified version of the toddler/preschool curriculum. For example, while toddler students learn about colors by mixing paint, infants are offered brightly colored toys of a single color. All ages will enjoy songs, meals, and outdoor time.

A board of directors composed of church and community members with a variety of experience and skill is entrusted to form policies necessary for the day-to-day operation of the ELCC.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

We are an Early Learning Center that is known for providing high quality educational programming and for empowering children with the message that they are gifts of God.

## **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

*Teach the children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will never part from it. Proverbs 22:6*

The Early Learning Center at Crossroads (ELCC) provides Christian based preschool and childcare for children 4 weeks to 6 years. Our faculty and staff believe all children are a gift from God and should be acknowledged and cared for by providing a Christian based environment.

- To learn and grow
- To problem solve and develop self discipline
- To prepare children to apply these skills in the real world
- To help children have a profound knowledge of God
- To develop a positive self-image
- To know the value of human life as shown in God's love through Christ Jesus our Savior
- To minister to all children with fairness and understanding

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Early Learning Center at Crossroads seeks to carry out the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to *feed my lambs* by providing quality childcare in a Christian setting by using loving, creative, and purposeful means to train and nurture each child in our care. Our concern is for the total personality of the child – physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Early Learning Center at Crossroads does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or policies. The rights, privileges, programs, and activities are extended to all children and families.

## **FAITH-BASED POLICY STATEMENT**

In keeping with Christ's command to *feed my lambs*, ELCC offers faith-based experiences to the children at their level of understanding. A Bible time with lessons, prayers, and songs will be incorporated into the classroom curriculum and weekly chapel service. Snack and meals will begin with a prayer of thanks. Teachers will speak lovingly and naturally with children about their own faith and love for the Lord in both formal and informal teaching times.

## **HOURS**

Full time (Monday – Friday)

6:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Early drop-off and late pickup are not available. There is a \$1 per child per minute fee for picking up after 6:00.

## **SCHEDULES**

We offer full time childcare (5 full days per week) and part time schedules of 4 full days or 5 half days per week. Part time schedules must be consistent each week, and less frequent schedules are not available. Extra days may be added with prior approval and will be added to the next statement.

## **HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES**

The Early Learning Center at Crossroads will be closed on the following days:

- Labor Day and the Tuesday after  
for staff training
- Thanksgiving Day & Friday after
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

Additional closure dates will be announced at least 1 month in advance.

## TUITION AND FEES

A non-refundable registration fee will be charged for every family at the ELCC. If you are reserving your child's spot 1 month or more in advance, a non-refundable \$100 holding fee will also be charged.

Private pay tuition rates for all schedules and age groups are available at the office. DSHS copayments will be charged according to the rate set by DSHS. All families with a toddler and/or preschool child will be charged a \$10 monthly snack fee.

Monthly billing statements are attached to your child's sign in sheet at least 1 week before the end of the month. Payments may be placed in the locked box located near the director's desk. Cash should be placed in an envelope with your name and the amount written on the front. Receipts will be printed for cash payments and upon request for check payments.

All tuition payments and copayments are **due and payable on the first of each month**. If the first falls on a weekend, payment is due the following school day. Payments five or more days late will be charged a \$25.00 late fee. A check returned from the bank will result in a \$25.00 return check fee. All outstanding fees will be paid before applying funds to current tuition. If you are in need of a bi-monthly or weekly payment schedule or an alternate due date please contact the director.

Accounts 30 days past due will result in loss of child care services. To re-enroll, families must pay their balance in full and will be charged another registration fee. Please talk to the director or program director before allowing your account to become this late – we can work with you to set up a payment plan!

Tuition refunds are available for remaining childcare days when a family withdraws mid-month after providing two week's notice, or if a family is dismissed from the ELCC. We are unable to refund or prorate DSHS copayments.

There is no credit, refund, or switching days for absences even in the case of a parent having the day off work, vacations, illnesses, or holidays. After the first full year of service we will offer one consecutive week (5 business days) of credit for vacation. You must let us know in advance of your vacation.

## HOLDING CHILD CARE SPOTS DURING LEAVE OF ABSENCES

If for some reason (ie: summer vacation, loss of employment) a family needs to temporarily withdraw their child/ren a \$100 per child holding fee will be assessed for a maximum of two months. After the two months we will review the situation and establish whether or not the spot can continue to be held.

## ENROLLMENT

The Early Learning Center at Crossroads is open to all children from the community. For private pay families, a \$50.00 non-refundable registration fee reserves your child's spot. DSHS will cover the registration fee for families receiving subsidy. If you are registering your child a month or more in advance, a \$100 holding fee will also be charged.

Upon enrollment, the ELCC requires that an information packet be completed for our files (contact information, authorized pick-up list, medical consent forms, health and allergy information, immunization records, child development information, CACFP food program eligibility, copy of custody arrangement if needed, etc) These **forms must be complete and on file before the child can be left at the Early Learning Center at Crossroads**. Please speak with the director if you need to update or change the information on your child's forms.

## PICK UP AND DROP OFF

Children must be signed into the ELCC by an adult upon arrival and taken to the child's classroom. Children must be signed out by a custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s) before the child is picked up. Only those persons approved by the child's parent(s) may take a child from the ELCC. Identification will be required.

If a staff member suspects that a parent or other adult is intoxicated or does not have an appropriate carseat for the child, you will be asked to leave the child at the center until you make safe transportation arrangements. Late pickup fees may apply. Police will be notified immediately if this request is disregarded.

If a court-mandated custody arrangement is in place, we must have a copy of it in your child's file so that we can enforce it. Both parents will be allowed to pick up the child at any time unless we have legal documentation stating otherwise. Parents may add or remove other persons from their child's pick up list at any time and for any reason.

Children must be under visual supervision of a parent or designated adult at all times unless they are signed in and under the care of an ELCC staff member. Children who do not attend the ELC may also not be left unattended, including in the car.

Parents are asked to notify the center in advance when a child will be dropped off or picked up at a different time than normal. Parents who come during rest time are asked to take special care not to awaken other children. We appreciate your help!

If you anticipate arriving late for pickup (after 6:00 P.M.), please call. There is a \$1.00 charge per child for every minute late. If we have not heard from you by 6:00 we will call you and those on your child's approved pickup list until we reach someone to pick up

your child. If for whatever reason your child is still at the center at 7pm, the Burlington police will be contacted.

### **WITHDRAWAL OR DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM**

**Fourteen (14) days written notice must be given for withdrawing a child from the ELCC.** When a child is withdrawn less than 14 days notice, an additional charge of two weeks of childcare, beyond the notified withdrawal date, will be added to your account. Families are encouraged but not required to communicate the reason for withdrawal with the director.

The ELCC reserves the right to dismiss any child or family from our program at the discretion of the director or for the following reasons: non-payment or excessive late payments, failure to observe the rules and policies in the parent handbook, child has special needs that our center and staff are unable to adequately meet, or if child's behavior repeatedly results in an unsafe environment for children and/or staff. Efforts will be made to resolve the situation prior to dismissal. See our expulsion policy for more detailed information.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURES**

In the event of severe weather and/or snow, the ELCC will follow the Burlington School District for closure or late start. Announcements of school closure can be seen on our website at [www.elccrossroads.com](http://www.elccrossroads.com), or Facebook Page by 6am.

If snow begins falling during the school day with accumulation on sidewalks and streets, the ELCC will close early for the safety of children, families, and staff. Parents will be notified by email and/or phone of our closure time and are requested to pick up their child(ren) as soon as possible.

In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, loss of power/water parents will be notified as soon as possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive. Please refer to our disaster plan for more information.

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS**

The Early Learning Center at Crossroads staff are **required** by Washington State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation by a parent, staff member, or other person. The staff may *not* notify parents when the police or CPS are called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or if children or staff are interviewed as part of an ongoing investigation, except on the recommendation of CPS or the police.

## ILLNESSES

**Parents must make other arrangements for the care of their children when they show symptoms of illness.** If a child becomes ill at the ELCC the program supervisor, director, or teacher will immediately notify the parents. **Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of a call.**

Children will not be permitted at the ELCC with any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 degrees under arm (auxiliary) or higher, and if they also have one or more of the following: diarrhea, vomiting, earache, show signs of irritability or confusion, sore throat, rash. **Children must be fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication to return.**
- Vomiting on two or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea - three or more watery stools in a 24 hour period or if the child's loose stool is not able to be contained in the diaper or toilet on more than one occasion.
- Draining rash or undiagnosed rash lasting over a 24 hour period
- Eye discharge or pink eye. Children can be readmitted after medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial or viral infection or 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
- Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
- Open sores or scabies, unless properly covered and 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
- Head lice – until 12 hours after treatment and a follow-up check has been made by school personnel.
- Communicable diseases such as chicken pox or hand/foot/mouth disease, until the child is free of the above symptoms and a doctor states in writing that the child is no longer contagious. We always notify parents when children have been exposed to a communicable disease.
- When a doctor recommends that a child return earlier than our illness policy permits, the director will decide on a case-by-case basis whether the child can return early.
- Even if symptoms such as fever and diarrhea are due to non-illnesses such as teething or dietary changes, parents may be asked to keep your child home for the child's comfort and/or to help maintain a clean, safe, and sanitary environment for all children and staff at the ELCC.



## MEDICATIONS

If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met as per WAC 388-150-230:

- **All medication will be accepted only if it is in the original container.**
- Medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's or prescribing physician's recommendation on the label, including dosage, age, and weight. Some over the counter medications must be accompanied by a doctor's note.
- Before any prescription or nonprescription medication can be administered, including sunscreen and diaper ointment, we must have permission in writing by the child's parent or guardian. Please fill out all medication forms. Please bring a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- Medication will be stored securely and sent home after the last date that the medication is to be administered.

## INJURIES AND ACCIDENTS

All injuries will be documented on an incident report for the parent to sign when the child is picked up at the end of the day. Original incident reports must be kept on file at the ELCC and copies are available for parents upon request.

When one child hurts another child, both families will receive an incident report describing the cause, the injury, and the response of our staff. The identity of the other child involved is confidential and will not be disclosed to the parent.

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid and you will be notified at pickup. Moderate injuries not requiring emergency care will be communicated to parents as soon as possible so that parents can arrange appropriate medical care.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.** ELCC staff cannot transport children to a hospital or doctor's office. Injured children shall be transported for medical aid by parents or by calling 911 for an ambulance. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital if a parent has not yet arrived.

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance, the staff will contact the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. Parents will be notified immediately.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Understanding that each child is loved by God, ELCC staff view discipline as a process of developing appropriate behaviors. Discipline has its goal: education and redirecting children. It emphasizes cooperation. In contrast, punishment has its goal: hurting, shaming, or scaring children. Punishment is an inappropriate form of discipline and has no place in our school.

Positive reinforcements for good choices in a loving supportive environment promote the child's self confidence and leads to increased desirable behaviors. A challenging environment that allows experimenting, learning, physical activity, and quiet times prevents boredom and promotes good behavior.

The Early Learning Center at Crossroads uses indirect guidance techniques:

- We give previous warnings: "You have five more minutes to play before it's time to clean up."
- We give choices: "You may paint with the other children or you may read a book in the quiet corner."
- We have regular routine: "We always wash our hands before lunch. After lunch is rest time."
- We avoid nagging: We tell the child what we expect just once, follow it by asking the child if he/she remember what we asked, then offer to help the child do what we have asked.
- We're consistent: We do things the same way each day so the children know what to expect and learn to trust and feel safe in their environment.
- We use affirmative speech: "We use walking feet indoors" rather than "Don't run!" or "Use your words to tell us you're angry," rather than "Don't hit!"
- We get the child's attention by crouching down to his/her level, making eye contact, speaking quietly, and asking the child to repeat directions.
- We try very hard to be fair. We examine our expectations to make sure they are age appropriate, and we don't make rules just because an activity is noisy or messy.
- We avoid arguments by following through with solutions that address the problem, but also offer the child a way to exit gracefully from the problem: "you can choose a quiet place to calm down or I can help you choose one"

We as a staff, pray for the children and families in our program. We use prayer with the children, asking God for His guidance in all of our daily activities. One-on- one prayer is used with children during difficult times, asking God to help us.

If a child is unable to demonstrate self-controlling behavior, a brief time-out results for the child to regain control. Time-out occurs only when other measures fail, and is used as an opportunity for the child to re-group, not as a punishment.

By law and program philosophy, the following forms of discipline are forbidden: all forms of corporal punishment, hitting, spanking, shaking, scolding, shaming, isolating, labeling (calling the child bad, naughty, etc) or any other negative reaction to the child' behavior. **Parents are also required to adhere to this policy while at the ELCC.**

Some negative behavior is best ignored since its goal is often to get attention. This technique is effective for some of the disruptive behaviors children do and minimizes mimicking by other children.

If a child is unable to gain control and requires more individual attention that can be given within child to staff ratios, we may need to contact a parent. A child requiring one-to-one attention may have to leave the center temporarily for safety's sake. Repeated uncontrollable behavior can lead to dismissal from the ELCC.

### **BITING**

Biting is a common behavior among toddlers, but it can be concerning for the parents of the children involved. Biting can be triggered by many situations – teething pain, hunger, curiosity and exploration, overstimulation, conflict, frustration, and to get a reaction. In our toddler classes, we have books and conversations about biting and what teeth should be used for. Teachers are proactive as much as possible, anticipating who may try to bite and when so that the bite can be prevented. Children are encouraged and praised for positive social interactions and managing emotions safely. When a bite occurs, our first concern is for the injured child. With the child who bit, our staff are trained to be firm but to not give too much attention to the situation. Typically the teacher will move the child to another area of the room and say a short phrase such as “no biting, biting hurts”, then return the attention to the injured child. Parents are encouraged to use these techniques with children who bite at home.

When a child bites frequently, the teacher will write a behavior plan which will be shared with the parent, which will include specific strategies and responses that are effective for the child and suggestions for the parent to implement at home. Parents may be called to pick up their child for the day if he or she bites multiple times.

## TRANSITIONS

Children experience many transitions at the ELC: the transition into the program from home or previous childcare, transitions to a new class or teacher, and transitioning into kindergarten and/or another childcare arrangement. Our goal with each of these transitions is to prepare the child and family ahead of time so that the new situation is manageable and everyone knows what to expect.

Parents and children are encouraged to take a tour of the center upon enrollment, to meet the child's teacher, get a sense of the routine and daily schedule, and familiarize themselves with the child's classroom. If a child is anxious about coming to the ELC, the parent is welcome to schedule a time to come in for the child to play with the class before his or her official start date. On your child's first day, you are encouraged to help him or her get settled before leaving, but we have found that it is easiest on the child if the parent does not linger. Our teachers are trained in comforting and reassuring upset children, and usually a child will be ready to play soon after you leave. You are welcome to check in throughout the day by phone or email if you are concerned, and we will always notify parents if a child is upset for an extended period of time.

Children move between classes at the ELC according to age, developmental readiness, and space availability. The director or your child's teacher will let you know when your child is nearing a transition, give you some information about what is similar and different in the older classroom, and let you know what you can do at home to help your child be ready. The two teachers will communicate about your child so that the new teacher is familiar with your child's developmental progress, strengths, and challenges. When possible, we plan for a transition period, where the child spends a partial day in the new class. Some children do best if they are able to return to their old classroom for the rest of the day, then try again the next day for a longer time period. When a child is comfortable and successful in the new class, he or she will remain there.

The Stars class is our pre-K class and is designed to prepare children for kindergarten. The teacher is aware of what children need to know and be able to do at the start of kindergarten, and these learning goals will be incorporated into the curriculum throughout the year. The teacher or director will communicate with you about your child's progress and kindergarten readiness, so that you are aware of what your child is capable of and is learning. In the spring, children who are ready will graduate from pre-K (though they are welcome at the ELC until the end of August) and the class will have many conversations about what to expect in kindergarten.

In the event that your family withdraws your child from our center, you may request that our teachers communicate in writing with you or your child's new childcare provider(s) about his or her experience at our center, developmental progress, and any

recommendations that the teacher has to aid in the transition and help your child be successful in the new environment.

You are encouraged to communicate any questions or concerns that you may have about any of these transitions with your child's teacher or the director. Our goal is to make every transition as smooth as possible for each child and family!

### **MEALS & SNACKS**

Breakfast, lunch, and two snacks will be served to all children present at the time of service. Meals and afternoon snack will be provided by the USDA Child and Adult Food Program and will meet national nutritional standards. Menus are available upon request.

All toddler and preschool families will be charged a \$10 monthly snack fee to help cover the cost of morning snack. Please bring a water bottle or sippy cup to help your child stay hydrated throughout the day.

Parents are asked to obtain prior approval if you wish to provide alternate food for your child's meals or snacks. Please discuss any food allergies or dietary preferences with the director upon enrollment.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine for toddlers and preschoolers; children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Children too sick to go outside should not be at school.

### **NAP/REST TIME**

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children, with quiet play options for older preschoolers. Please bring a small blanket and crib sized fitted sheet for naptime and take them home weekly for washing. Infant sheets are provided by the ELCC.

### **BATHROOM POLICY**

The following is the procedure used by staff:

- Children shall be accompanied by an adult when they need to use the restroom
- The teacher will assist the child if needed, but will encourage the child to learn to be independent.
- Staff will teach and assist the children to wash their hands according to the directions on the bathroom wall.
- When a child has had an accident wetting or soiling their clothes, the teacher shall assist the child in changing their clothes in the bathroom.
- The soiled clothing shall be put in a plastic bag and stored with the child's belongings for the parent to take home that day.

- The teacher/assistant will teach the children how to wash their hands according to the direction on the bathroom wall.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

On your child's birthday, or a day close to his/her birthday, you may bring a special snack (store bought, in original container) to share with the class. Please make prior arrangements with your child's teacher.

### **CLOTHING**

All children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left at the ELCC. Hats, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Children need to be dressed for the weather. Please be aware that children will get dirty, especially during outdoor playtime and art. Do not send children in clothes that cannot be played in and washed. Please be sure all items of clothing are marked with the child's name.

Parents of children in diapers must provide at least 8 per day. If a parent forgets to bring diapers after being reminded by the teacher, the fee will be \$2.00 per diaper provided by the ELCC.

### **ITEMS FROM HOME**

In order to not confuse the ELCC toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home. ELCC staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. An exception to this will be show-and-tell scheduled by the teacher or a stuffed animal for use during nap/rest time.

Please do not allow your child to bring any gum, candy, or snacks to the ELCC. Outside food may be brought for your child with staff permission. Nutritious meals and snacks will be served to the children.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents will have free access to all areas of the ELCC facilities used by the children. Cameras are present in toddler and preschool classrooms, and parents are able to view their child's class from the front desk if they wish.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom and behind the scenes. Regular classroom volunteers will be asked to pass a background check and TB test.

### **BABYSITTING**

Parents are welcome to make arrangements with a staff member for babysitting their child outside of the teacher's scheduled work hours. Staff are not permitted to pick up or transport children unless they are listed on the pickup form. The ELCC assumes no responsibility for such arrangements.

## PLEASE HELP US

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate to us your concerns regarding our program or your child.
- Let us know of changes in your child's routine or home life which may affect his or her behavior at school.
- Pick up and *read* the notices and information left for you at the sign in desk.
- Pick up your child's papers and projects *daily*. Their work is very important to them and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing, diapers, formula, etc. and bring any items requested by your child's teacher.
- Please take home soiled clothing promptly and return any items that belong to the ELCC.
- *No smoking* on the premises, either indoors, outdoors, or in your car. This is mandated by state law.
- Be appropriate and respectful in your interactions with all children, staff, and other parents while on ELCC premises. Derogatory comments, threats, or physical harm from an adult to another member of the ELCC community will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal of your family from the program and legal action if warranted.

## WE WISH TO HELP YOU

When you enroll your child at ELCC, we assume the responsibility of giving you assistance with your child's unique needs. We will become the "parent for the day" in your absence. We will love and respect your child and help him/her grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, and mentally. Your child will be given our maximum consideration as an individual. We will look after the health of your child while at the ELCC and present a planned program to provide a beneficial and educational experience. Our goal is to provide high quality care and education in an atmosphere of love and respect that fosters growth in moral and spiritual values.



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When differences occur within our Christian family, God expects us to act and react in a manner that is pleasing to Him. **Many problems can be avoided by going directly to the person(s) involved when questions arise.** The school has adopted the directions of the Bible as outlined in Matthew 18 as the method for dealing with our differences:

“If your brother or sister sins against you, go and correct them when you are alone together. If they listen to you, then you’ve won over your brother or sister. But if they won’t listen, take with you one or two others so that *every word may be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses*. But if they still won’t pay attention, report it to the church. If they won’t pay attention even to the church, treat them as you would a Gentile and tax collector. - Matthew 18:15-17, CEB

**First**, one should go directly to the person with whom he/she has a difference, whether it is a teacher, the administrator, another parent, board member, or pastor. The issue should be clarified in a non-accusatory manner and an attempt made to teach a resolution. It is not proper or acceptable to discuss the issue with persons not directly involved, as Matthew 18 directs.

**Second**, if conversation with the person directly does not bring resolution, the concern should be discussed with the program supervisor or director.

**Third**, if conversation with the program supervisor or director does not bring the resolution, the concern should be discussed with the board of directors, who may arrange a meeting of all persons involved to discuss the issue.

**Fourth**, if conversation with the steering team does not bring a resolve, the board of directors will arrange a meeting with the licenser, who will pursue the matter, as they deem appropriate.