

Elizabethton City Schools

Early Learning Center
Handbook

2011-2012



Early Learning Center
440 Blue Ridge Drive
Elizabethton, TN 37643
(423) 547-8035

Table of Contents

HISTORY	2
MISSION	2
GOALS	3
PHILOSOPHY	3
THINGS YOU WILL SEE AT THE SCHOOL	4
CRITERIA AND PRIORITIES FOR ENROLLMENT	4
TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT	5
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE	6
ASSESSMENTS	6
CLOTHING	7
DISCIPLINE	7
EXTENDED SCHOOL PROGRAM	8
FIELD TRIPS	9
INSURANCE	9
MEAL POLICY, SNACKS, AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS	9
MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE	10
MEDICINES	11
OUTSIDE PLAY POLICY	12
SICK CHILD POLICY	12
VISITORS	13
WEATHER CHANGES / ABBREVIATED DAY	13
FORMS	14
FERPA STATEMENT	14
PUBLIC NOTICE OF POLICY AGAINST	15
PARENTS RIGHT-TO-KNOW	16
TRANSFER OPTION FOR STUDENTS	17
COMPLAINT PROCEDURES	17
TN SUMMARY OF CHILD CARE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS	18
FAMILY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN	23

HISTORY

The Early Childhood Program of Elizabethton City Schools began in 1974 as one of thirteen Title 1 pilot programs across the state of Tennessee. Our program is the only one to survive. Its name was Home-Based Program, and it was housed in the Elizabethton City Schools' Administration Building. The name of the program was changed to "Parents Are Teachers" (P.A.T.) in 1980, and we moved to Harold McCormick School in 1981.

Through the years, there have been many changes; one of the biggest and most exciting changes occurred in 1996, under the leadership of Superintendent, Dr. Jessie Strickland. At this time, Mrs. Peggy Willocks, principal of Harold McCormick, wrote and was awarded a Goals' 2000 grant that has allowed us to receive intensive training in High/Scope (a curriculum) and to add a 4 day a week 4-year-old class with two additional staff members.

To date, the most significant changes to the program occurred in the 2000-2001 school year under the directions of Dr. Dale Lynch, Director of Schools. Carol Whaley, Director of Special Education for our school system, successfully applied for substantial grant funds to expand the Early Childhood Program. This award enabled the program to double in size, adding two additional classrooms, teachers, assistants, a full-time custodian, and bus driver.

This growth created the need for a suitable facility. The expanded Early Childhood Program was housed at the "Cyclone Center" at 404 Bemberg Rd until June 2004. In the fall of that year, the Early Learning Center relocated to the Boys & Girls Club at 104 Hudson Dr. and remained there until May 2007.

This year, the Early Learning Center will be in a new home, located at 440 Blue Ridge Drive. This facility was built by a local citizen, specifically for the Early Learning Center Program. The Early Learning Center is funded through Title 1, Special Education funds, Goals' 2000 funds, local monies, as well as state and federal grant funds. Beginning in 2005-2006, we were awarded a TN Pre-K Lottery Grant.

The program presently serves as a training site for East Tennessee State University, Milligan College, and Northeast State Technical Community College Early Childhood students.

MISSION

The mission of the Elizabethton City Schools Early Learning Center is to continue to visibly provide an exemplary, developmentally appropriate, inclusive learning environment that effectively changes the lives of all four-to-five-year-old children in the City of Elizabethton through meaningful learning activities. It will also be a mentor site for pre-service early childhood educators throughout the region.

GOALS

The goals established by the purposes and philosophy of the Center are:

- * To provide a link between home and school.
- * To develop a supportive as well as challenging learning environment.
- * To respect, accept, and respond to each child's feelings.
- * To acknowledge various cultural and ethnic differences by implementing a curriculum which promotes the acceptance of all people and cultures.
- * To develop independent, responsible, and confident students - ready for success in school.
- * To foster a sense of community in learning.
- * To maintain a small class size to address individual needs.
- * To serve as a training site for early childhood college students, child care providers, and parents.

PHILOSOPHY

It is the belief of the Early Learning Center staff that a high quality program provides a safe and nurturing environment which promotes the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and creative development of young children while responding to the needs of families. We believe that:

- * All children can learn.
- * Each child is unique.
- * Children learn through play, interactions, problem solving, exploration, and discovery.
- * Learning is what children do; it is not something that is done to them.
- * Children grow and develop at unique, individual rates that are *often unrelated to their chronological ages.
- * Children's natural curiosity and eagerness to learn are enhanced if children are allowed to develop their natural interests.
- * Children learn through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas.
- * Education is an on-going process that involves the child, the parents, the teacher, and the community.

THINGS YOU WILL SEE AT THE SCHOOL

- * You will see children choosing materials on their own, deciding how they want to use the materials, or maybe just exploring different ways to use them. You will also hear children talking about what they are doing or what they have just done.

- * You will see adults interacting at the children's physical level: sitting on chairs, sitting or sometimes even lying down on the floor. You will see them observing and listening to the children, talking with them about what they are doing and becoming a partner in the children's play by following their interests and ideas.

- * You will see clearly defined areas with simple names that make sense to the children, like "block area," "house area," "art area," "book area," "toy area," and "computer area." You will also see a variety of materials in each area, and these materials are labeled so the children can easily find them and put them away when they are finished using them.

CRITERIA AND PRIORITIES FOR ENROLLMENT

The following criteria has been established for priority in accepting children into the program:

1. Children must be 4 by September 30, 2011.
2. Children must reside in the city limits of Elizabethton.
3. Children must have a screening prior to enrollment.
4. Parents must complete all enrollment forms (Physical and Immunization forms must be on file).

The following enrollment procedures are defined by the Tennessee State Department of Education, Office of Early Learning. The admittance procedure is as follows:

Student Eligibility

Enrollment in the Voluntary Pre-K program is based upon a child's eligibility as identified in TCA 49-6-101-104. The pre-k state statute specifies that each LEA is authorized to and may enroll any at-risk child who is 4 years old by September 30 and resides in the geographic area served by the LEA, with first priority given to those children who are eligible for the free/reduced lunch program. If a school system accurately identified the number of unserved at-risk children in the school district, every effort should be made to fill these classrooms with this group of children leaving no room for non-at-risk children.

Enrollment Priority Requirements:

- **1st Requirement-** Pursuant to state law 49-6-101: students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.
If an insufficient number of children meeting the above enrollment requirement are enrolled to fill a specific classroom, the LEA may enroll children who meet the following criteria
- **2nd Requirement-**students with disabilities, students identified as ELL, in State custody, or those as educationally at-risk for failure due to circumstances of abuse or neglect.

At the end of the first pre-k student attendance period, if an insufficient number of children meeting the above enrollment requirements are enrolled to fill a specific classroom, an LEA may submit a written request to the Office of Early Learning for approval to enroll children meeting the following criteria:

- **3rd Requirement-**students identified with other at-risk factors as determined by the local school board and the pre-k advisory council such as, children with a parent(s) in the military deployed to active duty, teen parents, or parents with limited education, may be enrolled **after** a written request is submitted and **approved** by the Office of Early Learning.
- **4th Requirement-**students who do not meet any at risk criteria but are considered unserved or underserved may be enrolled **after** a written request is submitted and approved by the Office of Early Learning.

NOTE: AT THIS TIME, COUNTY RESIDENTS CANNOT BE SERVED BY THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Children will no longer be eligible to participate in the program if:

1. ***The family moves out of the city limits.***
2. The parent/guardian fails to notify the center of a move or change of address.
3. The child does not attend school consistently (unexcused absences).

We will make every effort to work with parents to resolve any problems in fulfilling these requirements.

****Absences:** If your child is unable to attend school due to illness/emergency, please notify the Early Learning Center immediately. If no one is available to answer the phone(547-8035), please leave a message.

**Should your child have more than 10 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, he or she will be dropped from the program.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

School hours are from 7:45 am until 1:45 pm. We ask that parents bring their children into the classroom and make sure that a teacher is aware of the child's arrival. You must sign your child in each day. It is very important that your child arrives and departs school on time. Some children experience difficulty when separating from their parents, but once the parent is out of sight and the child gets involved in an activity, he/she calms down and enjoys the day. The teachers will work with you if your child experiences difficult separations.

Occasionally, you may wish for someone else to pick up your child in your place. We will have release forms on hand that you have signed authorizing someone else to pick up your child. **The person who picks up your child must be on the list.** We will ask for a picture ID before we release your child to him/her. This is for the protection of your child and our staff.

ASSESSMENTS

We will be conducting an on-going assessment with each child. Each teacher will monitor the progress of her students. The ongoing assessments allow the teachers to develop individual plans for each child. Also, the assessments help teachers plan activities and lessons for the classroom and home visits.

In addition, the school system will conduct a hearing and vision screening in the latter part of the fall and in the spring. Through these screenings, we will be able to make referrals to our Speech and Language Therapist and to our Vision Specialist. Additional testing will be done if needed.

**Individual teachers may also choose to compile a portfolio of students' work throughout the year. These portfolios show the progress that the students make on a weekly or monthly basis through everyday lessons and activities. If the teacher chooses to use portfolio assessments, the portfolios will be sent home at the end of the year to demonstrate student progress and achievement.

This is a part of me, not all of me. It is a collection of some of my work.

It is not all of my best, nor all of my worst, nor all...

I could not put a song in it, nor my smile or the way I help others
learn in my room.

This will be a window you and I can look through to
see me more clearly as I am right now.

This is my portfolio.

CLOTHING

Please make sure that your child's clothing is:

- * comfortable, washable, and allows for self-dressing
- * marked with your child's name
- * appropriate for messy play

We get involved in messy activities and should not have to be overly concerned if a child's clothing gets dirty during play. Please avoid sending your child in good clothes, and items with difficult belts and fastenings. Please send your child in shoes that are appropriate for playing in the gym or on the playground.

When the weather is cold, please send mittens, hats, and coats. We go outside most days.

Please label all clothing and personal items.

*****EVERY CHILD MUST CARRY AN EXTRA SET OF CLOTHING IN HIS/HER BACKPACK.**

DISCIPLINE

In order to minimize and even prevent some problems from occurring in our classrooms, we use the following strategies:

- * Keep expectations for behavior developmentally appropriate. We respect and plan for children's **differing abilities, interests, and pacing levels.
- * Have many choices for play available. There will be lots of materials, and it should be easy for **children to get them out and put them away.
- * Set clear limits for children's behavior. We are consistent and give reasons why the limits are **important.
- * Establish a consistent daily routine and communicate it clearly, using pictures or drawings to **make the routine concrete.
- * Model respectful ways of interacting with others and using materials. The behaviors we model **are the easiest ones for the children to learn.
- * Plan for transitions between activities. We keep transitions short and/or make them playful.
- * ***BITING IS NOT PERMITTED. YOUR CHILD MAY BE SENT HOME IF HE/SHE BITES ANOTHER CHILD OR AN ADULT.***

These strategies will keep disputes and conflicts to a minimum. Nevertheless, conflict will not disappear. We use the following steps to help children settle disputes whenever they arise:

1. Approach calmly - The adult observes what is happening and prepares for a positive outcome.
2. Acknowledge feelings - The adult puts feelings to the children's actions, such as "Susan, you sound very angry with Tom and Tom you look very sad."
3. Gather information - The adult next asks "Can you tell me what happened?" Each child involved in the conflict gets a turn to say what happened.
4. Re-state the problem - After listening carefully for the details, the adult repeats to the children the information he/she has gathered.
5. Ask for ideas and solutions and choose one together.
6. Be prepared to give follow up support - The adult stations himself/herself near the children to help them follow through with their chosen solution, if necessary.

The safety of the students and staff is our number one goal. Therefore, the principal reserves the right to send any child home for the remainder of the day if misbehavior threatens the health and well-being of other students or staff members. This action will be taken only in severe instances, or as a "last resort."

EXTENDED SCHOOL PROGRAM (ESP)

The Extended School Program is a self-sustaining program designed to assist working parents, while providing educational and physical activities for children. For more information regarding times and fees, contact Carrie Taylor, System-wide Coordinator, at 547-8000, or leave a message for her in the school office. The Extended School Program will be at Harold McCormick Elementary starting immediately after school until 5:45 PM. The Early Learning Center children will be transported by bus to Harold McCormick Elementary each day. ***Any child who is not picked up as a car rider or not picked up by a parent/guardian at their normal bus stop will be sent to ESP at the parent/guardian's expense. The first time a child visits ESP there will be a \$25.00 registration fee and then a \$4.00 fee if child is picked up by 3:30 p.m. or an \$8.00 charge if child is picked up after 3:30 p.m. per day there after. Please do not be late as it can become very expensive for your family.***

FIELD TRIPS

During the year we will be taking the children on several field trips. The field trips are great learning opportunities and are either offered free or at a minimal cost to you. We will notify you in advance as to where and when we are going. You will need to sign a permission slip before every trip. ***Due to insurance regulations, other children (younger siblings and others) are not permitted to go.***

INSURANCE

All students who participate in any school-sponsored activity are covered under a blanket student accident insurance policy through Elizabethton City Schools with Tennessee School Boards Association Risk Management Trust (TSB-RMT). However, there is a \$10,000 maximum limit per accident with various sub-limits for specific treatments or medical procedures. In other words, it is very competitive with other plans but it does not pay 100% of the accident claims. It is secondary to any accident or health coverage carried by parents including Tenn Care. Therefore, primary responsibility for payment in case of injury shall be through the parent/guardian or their insurance company.

MEAL POLICY, SNACKS, AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Breakfast will be provided between 7:45 and 8:25 AM. Students will receive a “breakfast pack” containing cereal or pop-tart, milk and juice.

Lunch is provided from East Side Elementary. Students will have two choices each day. A lunch menu calendar will be sent home with your child each month. ****Elizabethton City Schools does not permit fast food to be brought into the school.** If your child will be late coming to school, you will need to provide a packed lunch for him/her for that day. The meal prices are as follows:

2011 –2012 CAFETERIA PRICES

BREAKFAST

Full price paid student	\$1.25
Reduced price student	\$.30
Staff	\$1.50
Visitor	\$1.60

LUNCH

Full price paid student	\$2.00
Reduced price student	\$.40
Staff	\$2.75
Visitor	\$3.25

A LA CARTE ITEMS

Milk/Juice	\$.50	Cereal	\$.50
------------	--------	--------	--------

Snacks:

Snack time is an important part of our daily routine. It provides an opportunity to try new foods, engage in social interactions, learn table manners, relax and enjoy food as a pleasurable group activity. In addition, snack time allows a time to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions. Your child's teacher will send home a monthly snack calendar.

Birthdays and Special Occasions:

We enjoy celebrating birthdays together. We will celebrate birthdays and other special occasions (such as the birth of a sibling) during snack time. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher for any special activities or events you would like to celebrate at school.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

We hope that we are never faced with a medical emergency; but in the event that we are, the following procedures will be carried out by the staff:

* A staff member will stay with the ill or injured child and administer first aid as appropriate. If the child requires it, a CPR certified staff member will initiate CPR. If there is a possibility that the injury has affected the spinal cord, the child will not be moved. The staff member will remain calm and continuously reassure the child.

* A different staff member will immediately go to the phone and dial 911 and request an ambulance. Every staff member is prepared to give the address, 440 Blue Ridge Drive, and clear directions. They will then use the child's emergency card to get the telephone number of the parent or guardian. The parent will be called and notified of the situation. The same staff member will then go outside to meet the ambulance and direct

them to the child. Another staff member can do this if they have a difficult time reaching the parents on the phone.

* Other staff members will move the other children away from the injured child. They will discuss the situation with the children and be calm and reassuring.

* The school system nurse will be notified as soon as possible.

* If the parents have not arrived, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, taking the child's emergency card and authorization for emergency medical treatment form with them.

* The staff member who witnessed the accident will complete an accident report.

In the event that the injury or illness is minor, a staff member will administer basic first aid where the first aid supplies are located. The parent will be notified by phone if further treatment is needed.

It is extremely important that you update your child's emergency card annually and/or when the information on it changes (i.e. telephone numbers, allergies, address, etc.).

MEDICINES

If a child is required to take oral medication during school hours, and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only one the early childhood teachers will administer the medication with the following regulations:

1. Medications must be labeled with the child's name and specific instructions for administering them.
2. All medications must be placed in the locked medicine box in the classroom.
3. Refrigerated medications must be placed in the locked box in the refrigerator in the classroom.
4. Medicines will not be dispensed without a Permission for Medication form signed by a parent or guardian.

OUTSIDE PLAY POLICY

We truly value outside time, and we will make every effort to go out every day. Our preschool playground is outstanding, and we want to take every advantage of it. We are planning to go outside at least for a few minutes everyday. Please take this into consideration when you dress your child each day. (See Clothing Section)

TRANSPORTATION

The Early Learning Center does provide bus transportation to and from school. ***You will be required to fill out a form requesting bus transportation prior to your child being allowed to ride.*** Arrangements need to be made for someone to be at your designated bus stop. Per school board policy 3.401 (...No student may exit the bus at a destination other than that student's designated bus stop...) and for the safety of your child it is very important that you have one pick-up and drop-off location. **If no one is at home upon arrival, the bus will transport the child to Harold McCormick Elementary School. The child will be left in ESP, and the parent will be responsible for the ESP fee for that day. Transportation may be terminated if this is a recurring problem.**

SICK CHILD POLICY

The following is the policy of the Elizabethton City Schools regarding sick children.

Please do not send your child to school if he/she has the following:

- A fever of 100 degrees or greater.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Rashes.
- Red draining eyes.
- Green nasal (nose) drainage.
- A sore throat.
- Lice or nits. Following treatment of your child, parents/guardians should bring him/her to school with evidence of treatment (empty bottle of NIX, etc.), so the child may be rechecked. Students will only be admitted to class if no nits are present.

Your child needs to be **symptom free without the aid of medication** for 24hrs before he/she can return to school. Many times children are coming to school only to be sent home soon after they arrive. These children are also exposing other children to illness. We cannot allow sick children to be in school. Your understanding in this matter is appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to contact Mrs. April Beam, RN (system-wide nurse) at 895-0830.

VISITORS

STATE LAW REQUIRES THAT ALL VISITORS REGISTER THEIR PRESENCE WITH THE SCHOOL OFFICE. PLEASE SIGN IN AND SECURE A VISITOR'S PASS FROM THE SCHOOL SECRETARY. YOU MUST SIGN IN AND OBTAIN A VISITOR'S PASS ANYTIME YOU VISIT AN ELIZABETHTON CITY SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS. This is vitally important for the safety and security of our students and staff. Additionally, while visiting our schools, should you observe unfamiliar persons or suspicious behavior, please advise the office immediately.

WEATHER CHANGES

As soon as decisions are made concerning the school schedule (delay, cancellation, or early dismissal), information will be given to the following stations for public announcements: **WBEJ-AM, WBET-FM, WXBQ AM/FM, WQUT-AM, WJCW-AM, WKIN, WGOC, WKOS, WKPT-TV, WCYB-TV, WJHL-TV.** Please keep your television or radio tuned to these stations on days of inclement weather. Due to our communication procedures, announcements are often "on air" as soon as, or before, messages get to the school. The Early Learning Center will follow the same closing schedule as the rest of Elizabethton City Schools. When a delay is announced for Elizabethton City Schools, the schedule will be as follows for the Early Learning Center:

ONE HOUR DELAY

Begin: 9:25 AM (The doors will open at 8:45 AM)
End: 1:45 PM

TWO HOUR DELAY

Begin: 10:25 AM (The doors will open at 9:45 AM)
End: 1:45 PM

ABBREVIATED DAY

On December 16, 2011, and May 25, 2012 school will dismiss at 10:30 AM. Please be prepared to pick up children early on these special days.

FORMS

We would appreciate your assistance in completing the following forms before your child enters school:

_____ * Registration form (complete annually)

_____ * Tennessee Certificate of Immunization Record with current Physical Exam portion signed

_____ * Authorization for Child Pick-Up

_____ * Free or Reduced Food Application

_____ * The Parent Connection Agreement

_____ * Civil Rights Act Form

FERPA STATEMENT

It is the intention of the Elizabethton School System to notify parents(s) of students and eligible students* of each student's privacy rights. This statement, which has been placed in the handbooks of each school, serves as that notification. It is imperative that parents read the information below and respond (in writing) within the first three weeks of school (board policy 6.601). For students enrolling after the above period, this information will be given to the student's parent(s) or the eligible student at the time of enrollment (with a similar time frame for completion). The notice will include the right of the student's parent(s) or the eligible student to:

1. Inspect and review the student's education records;
2. Seek correction of items in the record which are believed to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's rights, including the right to a hearing upon request;
3. File a complaint with the appropriate state or federal officials when the school system violates laws and regulations relative to student records;
4. Obtain a copy of this policy and a copy of such educational records;
5. Exercise control over other people's access to the records, except when prior written consent is given, or under circumstances as provided by law or regulations, or where the school system has designated certain information as "directory information." Parent(s) of students or eligible students have two weeks after notification to advise the school system in writing of items they designate not to be used as directory information. The records custodian will mark the appropriate student records for which directory information is to be limited, and this designation will remain in effect until it is modified by the written direction of the student's parent(s) or the eligible student.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

"Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate; full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF POLICY AGAINST HARRASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

**TITLE VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
And Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

It is the policy of the Elizabethton City School system not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, religion, age, marital status, or disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or employee of the school system to harass a student or an employee through conduct or communication in any form as defined by this policy.

PARENTS RIGHT-TO-KNOW

Teacher and Paraprofessional Provisions *NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001*

The *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001*, Pub. L. No. 107-110, has strong provisions that support parents' right-to-know. Two main provisions of NCLB are important for districts to implement immediately.

Annual Notice to Parents

NCLB requires local educational agencies to notify parents at the beginning of each school year, their right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the students' classroom teachers and any paraprofessionals providing support to the child. "This notice must be provided in an understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand." No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No.107-110 § 1111 (h) (6)(C). The district must respond to such requests in a timely manner. Pursuant to § 1111 (h)(6)(A) of NCLB, the information that the district is required to provide, at a minimum, to parents includes:

- (i) Whether or the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- (ii) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- (iii) The baccalaureate degree major the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- (iv) Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Special Notice to Parents When Teacher

DOES NOT MEET QUALIFICATIONS

Schools are responsible for providing “timely notice that the parent’s child has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.” No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No.107-110 § 1111(h)(6)(B). Pursuant to §1111 (h) (6)(C) of NCLB, this notice must also be provided in an understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand.

TRANSFER OPTION FOR STUDENTS VICTIMIZED BY A VIOLENT CRIME AT SCHOOL

Under the Tennessee State Board of Education’s Unsafe Choice Policy, any public school student who is the victim of a violent crime as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 40-38-111(g), or the attempt to commit one of these offenses as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated 39-12-101, shall be provided an opportunity to transfer to another grade level appropriate school within the district. Should you have a concern regarding your child, speak to your building principal. Should you need additional assistance, contact John Hutchins at 423-547-8000.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of harassment or sexual harassment by a student or employee of the school system, or any third person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute harassment or sexual harassment should report the alleged acts immediately to the school principal or the system coordinator. The school system encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the principal of each school or available from the school system central office. Complaint managers are listed below:

DR. COREY GARDENHOUR
SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
Phone: 423-547-8000 ext. 8223

MR. JOHN HUTCHINS
FEDERAL PROJECTS DIR.
Phone: 423-547-8000 ext. 8214

Elizabethton City Schools
804 South Watauga Avenue
Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643
423-547-8000

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
www.ecschools.net

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY OF CHILD CARE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

This is a section by section summary of the State Board of Education School Administered Child Care Rules, Chapter 0520-12-1. Child care centers inspected by the Department of Education must meet the requirements as defined by the rules in Chapter 0520-12-1 to receive a Certificate of Approval. The unabridged School administered Child Care rules are available on the Tennessee Secretary of State website, www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/0520/0520-12/0520-12-01.pdf or by writing the Office of School-based Support Services, Tennessee Department of Education, Andrew Johnson Tower, 710 James Robertson Pkwy, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0375.

1. Organization and Administration, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.06:

- A Child Care Center must have an adequate budget. Records, including health, must be kept on all children.
- There must be a transportation plan, including the names of persons to whom the child may be released for each child.
- Staff records must also be kept on each employee that include educational background, reference checks, TBI check, in-service training, physical exams and performance reviews.
- The center must have their Certificate of Approval posted, provide parents with a copy of the policies and procedures & this summary as well as a pre-placement visit.
- Parents must have access to all areas of the center when their child is present.
- The parents must receive an educational program regarding child abuse detection, reporting and prevention.
- If the center provides transportation, the driver should be appropriately licensed, there must be liability insurance and the children must have adequate space & supervision. Transportation provided by the center or under center authorization shall comply with state law.

2. Staff, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.07:

A. Qualifications:

- The director is responsible for the day to day operations, including staff and program.
- Another person must be left in charge if the director is out.
- Any person with a condition that could be harmful to a child or a person convicted of a crime harmful to or involving a child must not be present.
- Staff must have knowledge of child behavior and development.
- Staff must be physically, mentally and emotionally stable.
- All new employees must have orientation and child abuse prevention training before working with the children.
- The director must have at least a high school diploma and 4 years experience working with children.

- All caregivers must be 18 years of age and one caregiver in each group must have a high school diploma.
- Directors must have 18 hours in-service training each year and caregivers 12 hours.

B. Supervision and Grouping of Children:

- Each group must have adult supervision at all times and adult/child ratios should be followed.
- There must be a second adult available when more than 12 children are present.
- Swimming and field trips require ratios be doubled.
- Each group must have their own space.
- Infants and toddlers must have their own space and not grouped with older children.
- At naptime ratios may be relaxed for groups except infants and toddlers.
- Minimum staffing requirements per groups of children (adult:child ratio) must be maintained.
- *Please refer to ratio charts for specific adult:child ratios for each age group.*

3 Equipment, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.08:

- All equipment must be in good condition and kept clean.
- There must be age appropriate equipment for all groups with variety.
- Children must have a place for their belongings.
- Large pieces of equipment must be secured.
- Infants are to have space to climb, crawl and pull up that isn't in a playpen or crib.
- There must be enough equipment so children have choices.
- There must be an outdoor play area when children are in care for 3 or more daylight hours.
- Children up to 5 years of age must be offered a naptime if in care for 6 or more hours.
- For napping children, cots or 2 inch mats must be provided and each child must have a cover to place under them and another available to place over them.
- Infants must have individual cribs with open tops.

4. Program, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.09:

A. Schedule and Routines:

- Routines such as snacks, meals and naps must occur about the same time of day.
- Children must have time for free play as well as adult-directed activities.
- Children must have choices regarding activities and an opportunity to help plan activities.
- If TV programs, tapes and computers are used, other choices should be available.
- Parents must be informed of shows and movies to be shown.
- Staff must monitor computers.
- Outdoor play must be offered, weather permitting.
- A rest period must be offered for children up to 5 years of age in care 6 or more hours.
- Children should be able to form their own sleep patterns.
- A quiet area must be available for children.

B. Behavior Management and Guidance:

- Caregivers must be knowledgeable of developmentally appropriate behavior.
- Discipline must be appropriate and redirection should be used when possible.
- No corporal punishment is allowed.
- Good behavior must be praised and encouraged.
- Toilet training shall never be started until a child has been in the program long enough to feel comfortable and is able to communicate his/her feelings.

C. Educational Activities:

- Children must have opportunities for learning, self expression, and participation in activities each day.
- Activities that provide for both large and small muscle use must be provided.

- Children must receive child abuse awareness and personal safety information.
- Child care programs shall provide opportunities for learning self expression and participation in a variety of creative activities.

D. Nighttime Care:

- If children receive night care, caretakers must provide a calm nurturing environment and a routine hygiene plan must be in place.

5. Health and Safety, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.10

A. Children Health:

- Children must have immunizations in accordance with current TN law and the center must have documentation for this as well as a physical for each infant/toddler.
- Instructions for any child's special health needs must be documented.
- Parents must be notified if their child is hurt and becomes ill.
- All parents must be notified of any communicable diseases.
- Medications must be labeled with instructions and must be kept under lock.
- Documentation of administration and side effects must be kept.
- There is to be no smoking in the presence of children.
- The diapering area must be appropriate, near handwashing lavatory and cleaned after each changing.

B. Staff Health:

- Staff must have documentation they are physically and mentally able work with children.
- Physicals are required every 3 years.

C. Safety:

- There must be a staff member present at all times who has current CPR and first aid training.
- A first aid kit must be on the premises as well as a first aid chart.
- There must be no firearms on the premises.
- All dangerous utensils and tools must be out of reach of children.
- General emergency telephone numbers must be posted and staff must have availability to children's emergency numbers at all times.

6. Food, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.11

A. Nutritional Needs:

- Children will receive meals and snacks based on the amount of time spent in the program.
- Menus must be posted.
- Consideration must be given to daily food requirements when planning menu.
- Special diets and instructions must be provided in writing.
- When introducing new foods to infants and toddlers, guidelines must be followed.
- Parents and caregivers shall work together when weaning an infant and will not begin weaning when children are new to the program.

B. Meal Service:

- Children are to have appropriate size tables and chairs for meals and adults must sit with them.
- Servings must be adequate.
- Formula must be refrigerated upon receiving and not placed back in the refrigerator once warmed.
- Open baby food jars must not be accepted.
- Infants shall be held while being fed until the child is able to sit in a high chair, infant seat or at the table.

7. Physical Facilities, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.12:

- Centers must be in buildings that are not hazardous or dangerous to children.

- All facilities must have annual fire and health inspections.
 - All centers must have a working telephone.
 - Centers must have 30 square feet of usable space per child, including naptime.
 - Playgrounds must have 50 square feet per child and safeguards must be in place, if warranted.
- 8. Care of Children with Special Needs, Chapter Section 0520-12-1-.13:**
- When a center serves children with special needs, they are to receive the same care and participate in the same activities, as appropriate.
 - Adaptations must be directed towards helping the child become independent and developing self-help skills.
 - Specialized services provided must be documented and information shared with appropriate parties.

To report suspected violations or possible illegal child care operations, call the Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261.

To report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect, call 1-877-54-ABUSE (1-877-542-2873) and 1-877-237-0004.

To report suspected violations or possible illegal child care operations, call the Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261.

To report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect, call 1-877-54-ABUSE (1-877-542-2873) and 1-877-237-0004.

Elizabethton City Schools
Early Learning Center

Family and Community Involvement
Plan
2011-2012

Early Learning Center Family and Community Involvement Plan

The Mission Statement for the Early Learning Center

The mission of the Elizabethton City Schools Early Learning Center is to continue to visibly provide and exemplary, developmentally appropriate, inclusive learning environment that effectively changes the lives of all four to five year-old children in the City of Elizabethton through meaningful learning activities, and to be a mentor site for pre-service early childhood educators throughout the region.

The Philosophy of the Early Learning Center

It is the belief of the Early Learning Center staff that a high quality program provides a safe and nurturing environment which promotes the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and creative development of young children while responding to the needs of families. We believe that:

- All children can learn
- Each child is unique
- Children learn through play, interactions, problem solving, exploration, and discovery.
- Learning is what children do; it is not something that is done to them.
- Children grow and develop at unique, individual rates that are often unrelated to their chronological ages.
- Children's natural curiosity and eagerness to learn are enhanced if children are allowed to develop their natural interests.
- Children learn through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas.

- Education is an on-going process that involves the child, the parents, the teacher, and the community.

The Goals of the Early Learning Center

The goals established by the purposes and philosophy of the Early Learning Center are:

- To provide a link between home and school.
- To develop a supportive as well as challenging learning environment.
- To respect, accept, and respond to each child's feelings.
- To acknowledge various cultural and ethnic differences by implementing a curriculum this promotes the acceptance of all people and cultures.
- To develop independent, responsible, and confident students – ready for success in school.
- To foster a sense of community in learning.
- To maintain a small class size to address individual needs.
- To serve as a training site for early childhood college students, child care providers, and parents.

Family and Community Involvement

Family member's role in educating children within the household is a vital role. Members are expected to have the valuable skills and knowledge to assist these children with their day to day classroom task. Community leaders are involved in educating the children and adults. It is the responsibility of the Early Learning Center to educate family members and educators in providing them with cognitive, social, emotional, and skills necessary to work with children. Through collaboration between community resources, parents, and teacher, children gain a vast knowledge of the tools necessary to adequately prepare them for a smooth transition from prek to kindergarten.

Family Involvement for each child's success:

- 1. The school will provide opportunities and information to aid families in working with their child successfully.**
 - Student handbook – school policies addressing health, discipline and day to day operation of school.
 - School website with link to the State of Tennessee Prek web site
 - Parent Advisory Committee meetings held twice a year, topics dealing with school issues.
 - Monthly Parent Involvement meetings with topics related to educating family members and students.
 - Coordination of activities with elementary schools to provide children with introduction to kindergarten transition
 - Data from Tennessee Department of Education regarding Prek success.
 - Link to Tennessee Imagination Library with opportunity to enroll children under the age of 5 to receive free books monthly.

- 2. The school will provide open communication between family members, students, and teachers.**
 - Handbook for students and parents (updated yearly)
 - Written notes, letters and announcements about daily routine, upcoming events, goals, and objectives.
 - School Web site
(www.ecschools.net/index.php/early_learning_center/)
 - Parent/Teacher conferences (available any time by appointment or scheduled in accordance with academic calendar)
 - Family Engagement surveys
 - School Calendar

- Monthly Home Visits – 3 per child per year
- Orientation meeting – at the beginning of the school year

Family and Community Involvement in the school

1. Family members and community leaders will be encouraged to participate in school functions.
 - Parent Advisory Committee meeting (two times a year)
 - Parents serve as officers (chairperson and secretary) of Advisory Board
 - Classroom volunteer(special functions, Room helper, field trips, center time)
 - Parent Involvement monthly meeting (guest speakers)
 - Local Woman’s Civic Club – representative acts as an active member of Parent Advisory committee, club donates school supplies yearly
 - Book Buddies – members of Woman’s Civic Club read twice per month to children in classroom
 - Private business donations
 - Performing Arts – children attending school dramas and ballet.
 - System Wide School activities- Homecoming activities and kindergarten

Family and Community Resource Guide

The school will be responsible for providing family members with the necessary resources to ensure success in each child.

1. School handbook – outlining all procedures; attendance policies, health regulations, discipline, and transportation policies
2. Local health department – dental, vision, hearing screens administered yearly

3. **Public Library – students tour local library – library membership is encouraged**
4. **Local Fire Department – students are provided with fire safety coloring books and a visit of the fire station**
5. **Elizabethton Housing & Development**

Summary

The Early Learning Center is the first introduction into the world of learning in a school system setting for many of the students served. The faculty and staff are dedicated to providing each child with a strong foundation of academic skills necessary to succeed and the opportunity to open a door to the love of learning. These goals may only be achieved through the positive link between the school, home, and community. It is our goal to work together to ensure each child is viewed as an individual.

**Elizabethton City Schools
School-Parent Compact**

Dear Families:

Elizabethton City Schools believe that education and learning are shared responsibilities of the student, family, and the school system. We value your role in helping your child to achieve high academic standards. The following is an outline of the ways that you and the school staff can build a partnership to share the responsibility for supporting your child's learning.

School Responsibilities:

1. Provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables children to meet the State of Tennessee's academic achievement standards as follows:
 - Maintain high expectations of ourselves and students
 - Make efficient use of academic learning time
 - Use research based strategies to compliment instruction
 - Provide an environment where everyone is respected and valued
 - Provide materials and training to parents regarding topics of concern, their child's course of study, and the curriculum
 - Provide after-school tutoring to students who need extra help
2. Provide the parent with assistance in understanding academic achievement standards and assessments and how to monitor their child's progress
 - Provide assessments of individual student progress through weekly folders, student agendas, phone communications, IEP meetings, mid term and nine week grade reports, and state-mandated achievement testing
 - Invite parental help, support, and opportunities for involvement by communicating through phone calls, newsletters, and emails
 - Provide opportunities for ongoing communication between parents and teachers by:
 - School-parent compact review
 - Phone communications
 - Newsletters
 - Fall Open House
 - Parent Teacher Conferences days (3 per year)
 - Student handbook and assignment books
 - School announcements through school website and newsletters
 - Frequent notes regarding your child's progress
 - Opportunities to meet with school staff, volunteer in class, and observe activities

Parent Responsibilities

We, as parents, will support our child's learning in the following ways:

- Encourage my child to attend school regularly
- Encourage my child to demonstrate appropriate school behavior
- Review my child's homework and monitor his/her progress
- Teach my child social skills to promote positive interactions with their classmates
- Volunteer in my child's school and classroom when and if time and schedule permits
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and participate when appropriate in decisions relating to the education of my child

Student Responsibilities:

- Attend school regularly and arrive to class on time
- Ask for help on assignments as needed at school and at home
- Complete and turn assignments in on time
- Display positive and respectful behaviors
- Always do my best work
- Discuss the school day and share information with my parents

School Signature(s):

Teacher _____ Principal _____

Parent Signature: _____

THE PARENT CONNECTION
Agreement

_____ I have received and read this EARLY LEARNING CENTER HANDBOOK. I am in agreement with its policies and procedures.

_____ I have received a copy of the TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUMMARY OF CHILD CARE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS.

_____ I have received a copy of the Early Learning Center 2011-2012 PARENT & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN.

_____ I have had a PRE-ENROLLMENT VISIT / ORIENTATION to the Early Learning Center.

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____