

Crete-Monee Early Learning Center



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Parent Handbook

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Letter from the Director

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I would like to welcome you and your family to the Crete-Monee Early Learning Center. Our goal is to give your child a vital preschool experience that will go a long way in preparing them for kindergarten and beyond.

We hope that you will take the time to become familiar with our Mission Statement, Core Values, and Vision Statement. Our program is founded upon these ideals and emphasizes an environment that is safe, nurturing, and filled with fun and purposeful educational activities. We are committed to working collaboratively with parents to best serve our students and to continually strive to improve our program.

We encourage you to visit the Early Learning Center web page which can be found at www.cm201u.org. This handbook and the district handbook along with our web page, have been created to provide important and up-to-date information that we feel parents should know about our program, key policies and practices.

We look forward to working with you and your child during the school year and encourage you to visit, volunteer and join our PTO.

Sincerely,
Kelly Chesta
Director

revised 8/23/2022

Mission Statement, Core Values, Vision Statement

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Learning Center will create a foundation for a positive educational experience for young children that is purposeful, engaging, nurturing and safe through communication and collaboration with families and the community.

CORE VALUES

We believe that for optimal learning to occur the following conditions must be present:

- a nurturing environment that is safe, respectful and structured.
- an engaging, purposeful curriculum that is student-driven, culturally sensitive and challenges children to reach their full potential.

We believe that students will:

- develop positive social interactions through exposure to new experiences.
- develop good manners, listening skills, respect, confidence, and self-motivation.
- become problem solvers by increasing knowledge of basic skills.
- develop the ability to apply concepts in everyday experiences.
- increase their social/emotional, motor, and academic skills.
- develop an understanding for responsibility.
- develop independence in all settings.

We believe that for our program to be successful, staff will:

- treat each other with respect and professionalism.
- use open communication and team collaboration.
- set high individual/team expectations through mentoring, self-initiative, and equal work effort.
- maintain positive attitudes and a sense of camaraderie.

VISION STATEMENT

The Crete-Monee Early Learning Center will be a positive and safe learning environment where:

- the needs of each child are met.
- expectations are set so that each child has the opportunity to meet his/her highest potential.
- the child is prepared for kindergarten and beyond in the areas of academic, developmental and social skills.
- children of all ability levels learn and interact with each other in an inclusive setting.
- staff and parents work together in an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual respect.

Program Overview

The Crete-Monee Early Learning Center (ELC) is a comprehensive preschool program for students who reside within District 201-U boundaries and are between the ages of three and five.

Students cannot turn five years-old prior to September 1 and be eligible for preschool; based on state guidelines these students would be eligible for a kindergarten program. The two main funding sources for the ELC Program are the Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All Grant and Early Childhood Special Education funds.

All students who enter our program must qualify based on a screening, diagnostic testing, existing reports from another school district, or those entering from the state's Early Intervention Services.

For the Preschool for All Grant, students need to be identified as being at-risk based on program criteria which follow state guidelines. Students who require special education services need to be evaluated as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Early identification of student needs provides opportunities for services to strengthen student skills that are considered "at risk" or "delayed with development." Our belief is that providing this level of support at an early age allows children to develop their pre-academic and social skills in preparation for kindergarten.

The Early Learning Center is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all students and families. The ELC is focused on providing experiences that promote a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and allow students to develop and learn to reach their full potential.

Program Entry Preschool Screenings

Preschool screenings are typically held during the late summer, fall, winter, and spring of each year. A hearing and vision screening is also required. Parents must sign a Permission to Screen form.

What are they?

The DIAL-4 or ASQ are the screening instruments used to review the areas of fine and gross motor, concepts (cognitive), articulation, and speech and language development. Parents will also be asked to complete a questionnaire that reviews the health and social development of their child, as well as family or home related information, including a history of siblings with school-related problems. A meeting will be scheduled to review the screening results and to address any other parental concerns.

The Early Learning Center teaching staff is involved in the screening process. During months that screenings will be held information can be found on the district website, school newsletters and on fliers located in the community (library, park district, community daycares, etc.). Parents are also encouraged to call our school office at 708-367-2770 for more information or to schedule a screening.

AREAS OF ELIGIBILITY

Overall, the following at-risk areas are also considered for eligibility:

- 4 year olds have preference over 3 year olds when space is an issue
- Potential motor concerns
- Potential concepts concerns
- Potential social-emotional concerns
- Potential speech and language concerns
- Economic status of parent
- Physical or health concerns
- Prenatal or birth concerns
- Family situation
 - abuse/alcohol/drugs/ prison involvement
 - family history of special education / disability
 - divorce / family violence/chronic illness of parent/lived in shelter/COVID exposure or effect on family etc.
- Foster child
- Agency services
- Behavior concerns
- Parent educational history
- English as Second Language
- Sibling in program
- Lack of socialization skills
- Age of parent(s)

The Early Learning Center Curriculum

Teaching and learning in the Early Learning Center takes place in a student-centered, integrated learning environment. Our curriculum supports the Illinois Early Learning Standards. The program currently uses Creative Curriculum, a research-based state approved curriculum that uses teacher directed and child initiated learning to best respond to the student's learning style and to build on strengths and interests. Teachers will guide learning in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology while supporting the child's social/emotional development.

Creative Curriculum: Goals and Objectives

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sense of Self

- Shows ability to adjust to new situations
- Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults
- Recognizes own feelings and manages them appropriately
- Stands up for rights

Responsibility for Self and Others

- Demonstrates self-direction and independence
- Takes responsibility for own well-being
- Respects and cares for classroom environment and materials
- Follows classroom routines
- Follows classroom rules

Prosocial Behavior

- Plays well with other children
- Recognizes the feelings of others and responds appropriately
- Shares and respects the rights of others
- Uses thinking skills to resolve conflicts

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Gross Motor

- Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (running, jumping, hopping, and galloping)
- Shows balance while moving
- Climbs up and down
- Pedals and steers a tricycle (or other wheeled vehicle)

Fine Motor

- Controls small muscles
- Coordinates eye-hand movement
- Uses tools for writing and drawing

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Learning and Problem Solving

- Observes objects and events with curiosity
- Approaches problems flexibly
- Shows persistence in approaching tasks
- Explores cause and effect
- Applies knowledge or experience to a new context

Logical Thinking

- Classifies objects
- Compares/measures
- Arranges objects in a series
- Recognizes patterns and can repeat them
- Shows awareness of time concepts and sequence
- Shows awareness of position in space
- Uses one-to-one correspondence
- Uses numbers and counting

Representation and Symbolic Thinking

- Takes on pretend roles and situations
- Makes believe with objects
- Makes and interprets representations

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Listening and Speaking

- Hears and discriminates the sounds of language
- Expresses self-using words and expanded sentences
- Understands and follows oral directions
- Answers questions
- Asks questions
- Actively participates in conversations

Reading and Writing

- Enjoys and values reading
- Demonstrates understanding of print concepts
- Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
- Uses emerging reading skills to make meaning from print
- Comprehends and interprets meaning from books and other texts
- Understands the purpose of writing
- Writes letters and words

Social-Emotional Learning

Students are given tools and practice strategies to develop an understanding of feelings and work on self-regulation skills. Monthly themes and lessons are utilized to practice these skills to enhance their social-emotional development. Curriculum and supports we use at the Early Learning Center include:

- Kindness Curriculum
- Second Step Lessons
- PBIS school wide supports

Crete-Monee Early Learning Benchmarks

Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards

Pre-Literacy:

- Recognizes name in print
- Asks for books, signs, notes to be read
- Retells familiar stories using books and/or props
- Answers questions about a story that has been read
- Notices environmental print
- Follows print on page in the correct direction, “appears” to read or actually reads a book by pointing to the words and telling the story
- Knows terms such as title, front, back
- Identifies 20 or more uppercase or lowercase letters
- Identifies all letters in own name
- Matches 20 or more pairs of uppercase to lowercase letters
- Recognizes that a word is made of letters
- Copies identifiable letters and words from environment
- Writes own name, other names, words
- Copies shapes and symbols
- Uses scribbles, approximations of letters, or known letters to represent written language
- Dictates stories and experiences
- Uses drawing and writing skills to convey meaning and information
- Demonstrates appropriate grip with writing tool

Language

- Demonstrates understanding of basic concepts, such as location, size, quantity and opposites
- Answers what, who, where, when and why questions
- Speaks in complete sentences
- Uses sentences with two or more ideas with descriptive details
- Follows multi-step directions
- Participates in ordinary classroom conversations

Logical and Mathematics

- Identifies eight colors correctly
- Recognizes basic shapes
- Able to sequence picture cards
- Able to sequence events of a story
- Sorts objects on basis of two or more attributes
- Matches objects to symbol or picture
- Duplicates and creates patterns independently
- Counts from 1-10 correctly
- Identifies 1-10 correctly
- Correctly counts up to 10 objects using 1:1 correspondence
- Able to put together a 8-10 piece puzzle

Social and Self-Help

- Expresses choices, wants and feelings using words
- Engages in social problem solving
- States personal information (first/last name, age)
- Cooperates in school routines
- Manages transitions and adapts to change
- Shows awareness of school safety guidelines

- Observes others in play and joins in
- Understands taking turns and sharing
- Engages in parallel, associative, cooperative, and dramatic play
- Takes care of own toileting needs
- Takes care of clothing needs; unbutton, button, snap, zip, put on and hangs up coat

Motor Skills

- Hops, skips, jumps
- Displays body coordination/balance
- Catch/Throw/Kick
- Use of scissors with control
- Manipulates Play-doh
- Builds tower with 10 blocks

Science

- Use common weather and season related vocabulary
- Use senses to explore and observe environment
- Use scientific tools such as thermometers, balance scales, and magnifying glasses for investigation
- Become familiar with the use of devices incorporating technology
- Investigate and categorize living things in the environment
- Show an awareness of changes that occur in themselves and their environment
- Describe and compare basic needs of living things

Individual Education Program (IEP) Goals & Objectives

Each student who is identified as needing special education services will have a completed Individual Education Program (IEP) at the time of the initial eligibility conference. This will include the type of classroom placement as well as related services received. Specific goals and objectives will be developed for the classroom, as well as in any area of related service (i.e. speech services). Goals will be reviewed and updated when needed, at trimester and at the Annual Review in the spring. New goals will be developed for the following year, as well as recommendations for placement decisions, either within the Early Learning Center, or at the kindergarten level within the district.

Assessment of Progress

Student progress and development are assessed throughout the year. The purpose of assessment is to provide information to better meet the needs of students by identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Assessments include ratings and reports within Creative Curriculum (Teaching Strategies GOLD), ESGI, teacher observations, anecdotal notes, and student work samples. Other more formal assessments such Visual Motor Integration (VMI), and Boehm Concepts, may also be used to gain entry and exit scores to monitor student growth. IEP goals and objectives are also reviewed and updated by the teachers and specialists for students receiving special services. Teachers will review the assessments with parents during Parent/Teacher Conferences as well as at the end-of-year parent conferences or Annual Reviews.

Parent Conferences

The education of your child is a joint venture between you and the school. Together, we can accomplish the goal of providing your child a quality education. An opportunity to share our mutual thoughts is made available through parent-teacher conferences and progress reports.

Your child's teacher will share with you:

- a report of your child's progress in the areas of the curriculum, as well as IEP progress where applicable.
- a review of materials used in the school and specialized services available.

We ask that you provide the teacher with information concerning:

- your child's attitude toward school as reflected by his/her remarks and incidents mentioned at home.
- significant out-of-school experiences.
- interests, hobbies, or activities.

Early Learning Center Information

Entry and Registration Information

All students placed at the Early Learning Center may only enter the program as a result of being screened, an eligibility/IEP conference, or transfer from another school district or program. A child must be **registered** before placement occurs. Currently, registration is completed through the main district and **not** at the Early Learning Center.

Visit the **District Website at www.cm201u.org** to complete Registration.

Call the District Registration Hotline at 708-367-8390 for questions regarding the process.

Documents Needed for Registration with the District:

- Child's Birth Certificate
- State ID

If a child is homeless the registration procedure is modified according to state law.

Your child must be registered before being placed into school programming. Your child will remain on a waiting list until all registration documents are completed.

School and Staff Hours

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Staff Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

AM Session: 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

PM Session: 12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Arrival and Dismissal Information

Important Information for Drop-off and Pick-up

AM Arrival Times (8:20-8:30)

AM Dismissal Times (10:50-11:00)

PM Arrival Times (11:50-12:00)

PM Dismissal Times (2:20-2:30)

We appreciate the cooperation of parents/guardians who drop off and pick up their children. Several reminders to keep our children safe:

All parent drop-off and pick-up takes place in the front drive of the ELC/District Administration Building. Cars are to line up in single file inside the safety cones and follow the directions of staff unloading and loading vehicles. For safety purposes vehicles are not to break out of the single line.

Please follow the direction of staff when entering the parking lot. Typically, when the front driveway lane is filled, drivers are directed to circle around the parking lot to wait on the side of the building in a single file line.

When lining up around the parking lot, please stay to the far left side all the way around. This allows a driving lane on the right for our school buses and other vehicles trying to park or exit the lot. Once you are in the front line, you stay on the right side of the cones.

When picking up your child please display the card in your window that was provided by your child's teacher indicating your child's name and the name of the teacher. This will allow us to quickly communicate with staff inside to have your child brought out to your vehicle. If you do not have the card, you will need to show staff your identification before students are released.

Illinois State Law prohibits use of cellphones in school zones. ELC staff will remind drivers of the law while supervising arrival and dismissal times.

Our goal is SAFETY FIRST, drive very slowly, pay attention, and follow the instructions of staff directing traffic. Put your car in park before your student is placed in or taken out of the car.

Walk-Up Parents:

We are asking all parents to follow the car rider policy and stay in your car in line, however, if you choose to walk-up to the building, you are required to line up in the designated area and you will need to present your student card or identification before your child will be released. This process will begin after buses leave.

Designated Pick-up Person:

If you have an emergency and someone different is picking up your child, you must notify the office and put the person on your emergency contact list. This person can pick up your child in the office. They will need to present a picture identification and sign your child out. This must be indicated to staff by letter from parent or phone call stating the person's name.

Students will not be released to parents/drivers without proper identification.

Parent Responsibilities during Arrival and Dismissal Routines:

- Parents will follow all safety procedures outlined above in this handbook
- Parents will be on time to drop off and pick up their child
- Parents will provide proper identification when picking up their child
- Parents will inform the school office/child's teacher if their child's typical dismissal process changes for the day.
- Parents will drop off their child on time. Students should not be dropped off at the school office prior to school hours. Office staff cannot be responsible for supervision before the start of the school day.
- Parents will pick up their child on time. School office staff shall not be used as after-school childcare.

Transportation Information

Currently bus transportation is available for all ELC students. The bus routing of students is handled by Katie Cooper, the district transportation specialist, in conjunction with First Student. The ELC Office maintains ongoing contact with the bus company and district transportation office. Parents may contact **First Student** with bussing questions or concerns at **708-755-5907**.

Parent Responsibilities for bus transportation:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that a designated adult is present and visible to receive their child at home or at a childcare bus stop.
- Parents will inform the school office/child's teacher if their child's typical dismissal process changes for the day.
- Parents are responsible for being home to greet their child from the bus route home after school. If a parent is not at home to greet their child after school and the student is returned back to school, it is the parent's responsibility to make immediate arrangements for the child to be picked up from the school office. School office staff shall not be used as after-school childcare.

Additional Transportation Information

1. Parents are reminded to make sure that the ELC Office has your child's transportation information. (Bus/car rider, home/daycare stop)
2. The child must be picked up/dropped off at the same address each day.
3. Bus pick-up and drop-off is at the house unless it is not possible to do so due to streets with no outlets, cul-de-sacs, parking lots, etc.
4. Transportation is only available to daycare providers within school district boundaries.
5. Students should be ready for the bus at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time and allow at least 10 minutes after the pickup time in waiting for the bus.
6. Buses are instructed to wait no longer than two minutes for students. Waiting longer for a child will delay the route and arrival to school and impact instruction.
7. Busses generally will not return to a house to pick up a student who was not ready for pick-up unless the bus arrives at the house extremely early, late, or missed the stop entirely. Returning for students creates significant delays for the route.
8. An adult must be present and visible when the child is dropped off at home or daycare provider.
9. Parents are not permitted to board the bus and are asked to be brief in any conversations with bus staff, as this could delay the route.
10. Because each child is a separate stop, bussing changes should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Each change requires reworking the route and may take five to seven days.
11. Parents who decide to drive their child on a particular day are asked to follow the "Car Rider Procedures" as indicated in the handbook. The bus company does not need to be called in this situation or for absences as they typically run the complete routes each day. However, if your child normally rides the bus home and you choose to pick them up

instead, you must notify the school office or your child's teacher. We will not take a verbal request from your child. Bus riders will be placed on a bus home unless we hear directly from the parent.

Bus Rules for Students:

Be Kind

- Students will use kind words and quiet voices.
- Students will keep their hands to themselves.
- Students will follow directions of the bus driver and aide at all times.

Be Safe

- Students will follow directions of the bus driver and aide at all times.
- Students will sit in a seat with a seatbelt at all times.
- Students will keep quiet voices.

Work Together

- Students will follow bus rules to be safe on the bus.
- The bus company will write a referral to the school for students needing help following rules on the bus.
- Teacher/administration will work with the student, bus company, and parent to provide strategies to keep the student safe on the bus.

Important Child Car/Safety Seat Information

In conjunction with the Crete Police Department we are reminding parents that Illinois Law (Senate Bill 52 / Public Act 93-0100 - Effective January 1, 2004) requires children under the age of 8 years old to be secured in an appropriate child restraint system, more commonly called a safety seat. Child safety seats include infant seats, convertible seats (rear-facing for infants and forward-facing for toddlers) and booster seats that are used with the vehicle lap shoulder belt system. The parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of eight years is responsible for providing a child safety seat to anyone who transports his or her child.

Children weighing more than 40 pounds may be transported in the back seat of a motor vehicle while wearing only a lap belt if the back seat is not equipped with a lap and shoulder belt system.

We are all committed to student safety and the Crete Police Department has indicated its intent to increase patrols in the area of our school to monitor compliance with this law.

According to the Illinois Secretary of State's Office, persons in violation of this law will be subject to a \$10-\$500 fine and more for subsequent offenses. The fine will be waived upon proof of possession of an approved safety seat.

Early Learning Center Communication

It is important that parents and staff keep a clear line of communication throughout the school year to enhance student learning opportunities. This will also help with the transition process in and out of ELC programming. Please work with your child's teacher to determine the best mode of communication for you and your family. (ie phone calls, communication platform, emails, etc.)

Communication opportunities:

- During screening conferences, staff will review the program with parents and give them information on placement, registration, and bussing.
- Prior to the start of the school year, parents will be notified by their child's classroom teacher regarding placement and registration. Teachers will contact parents to give specific classroom information for the start of the school year and to introduce themselves.
- During the week before school begins, Parent/Student Orientation will be held with classroom visitation and a teacher presentation.
- Curriculum Night will be held in September or October.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held in November and spring
- Family Days, Family Nights, and Parent Chats will be held monthly. Parents, student, and other family members are invited to attend. Parent Workshops will be held throughout the year.
- Early Learning Center newsletters are sent out monthly and posted on the ELC school webpage.
- Program information, news and pictures are posted regularly on the ELC Web page and on the district website keeping families informed.
- Weekly-Monthly News Briefs are sent home by teachers.
- Teachers write in student journals when necessary to communicate with parents.
- Daily Logs are communicated daily with parents.
- Students interact with other peers in classroom activities, physical education, music, playground, and field trips.

SchoolMessenger Program

Crete-Monee School District 201-U employs a communication tool, called SchoolMessenger, which assists the district in communicating up-to-the-minute announcements and notifications such as the following:

- School cancellations, such as snow days
- Early dismissals

- Bus delays or incidents
- Attendance calls
- Meeting notices, special events, or school reminders

Every student is in the SchoolMessenger database and has student name, phone number, parent name, school, grade, parent email (if available), homeroom, and bus route. The phone number that is connected to each student is the home phone number given at registration.

Parents have the ability to add a cell phone number or e-mail address, as students may have more than one entry in SchoolMessenger. You may have more than one phone number, but keep in mind, these calls are simultaneous and both of your phones could be ringing at the same time with the same announcement. Make sure your emergency number is attached should you be on route when you are being notified that school is officially closed.

SchoolMessenger Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is SchoolMessenger?

A: SchoolMessenger is the district's notification system that communicates announcements and notifications such as snow days, power outages, bus incidents, etc. Also, SchoolMessenger is used as a communication tool. It is used to publicize important events around the district, saving on additional paper copies and mailing. This means of communication is immediate and very cost-effective.

Q: I wasn't home when SchoolMessenger called last night. How can I add my cell phone number?

A: To add a phone number to SchoolMessenger, contact your child's school secretary.

Q: I answered the phone and the message was already playing. How can I hear the whole thing?

A: Listen to the complete message and if you would like to hear it again, wait for the prompt.

Q: I picked up the phone and SchoolMessenger didn't say anything and didn't leave a message. What happened?

A: When SchoolMessenger recognizes a "live answer", it will start the broadcast when you answer 'Hello'. If you do not say anything, it will see it as a "no answer" and hang up.

Q: The message was cut off on my voicemail, how can I make sure I get the whole broadcast?

- A: SchoolMessenger is able to identify different voicemail systems for cell phones; however, when dialing landlines:
- Make sure the answering machine picks up after four rings.
 - If you have AT&T voicemail, change preferences to pick up after four rings.
 - Broadcasts usually begin two seconds after it recognizes a “silence” at the end of your message. If your home message has a silence at the beginning, SchoolMessenger will not wait until the message is complete before starting.

Q: I keep getting these calls and they do not pertain to me or my child...can you take my phone off of the list?

- A: You may “opt out” of the list by calling or emailing your child’s school secretary and requesting to be taken off. Please remember, SchoolMessenger is our immediate notification system, so in the event of an emergency or school closing you will not receive a call.

School Website & Newsletter

The Crete-Monee School District website is located at www.cm201u.org. It provides a wealth of information on District 201-U and all of its schools, as well as numerous helpful links. The ELC Webpage can be found by visiting the district site, clicking on ‘Schools’ and choosing ‘Early Learning Center.’ It contains current events, helpful information, and pictures/videos of ELC events. Parents have the option to purchase a majority of the pictures located on our webpage. Parents also may subscribe to receive our free electronic newsletter called the Key Communicator. Our E-newsletter allows parents to be the first to receive important messages from the superintendent, Board of Education and more! To sign up, visit our website.

A monthly school newsletter containing pertinent information is also sent home with each child. It is also posted on our Webpage each month.

Classroom News

Classroom teachers also communicate regularly with parents via weekly newsletters, folder notes, emails, communication platform, and phone calls when needed.

Emergency School Closings

On inclement weather days, the school district encourages parents to check the District 201-U Web site for up-to-date information on school closings or call: 847-238-1234 (touch-tone phone required), listen to the radio, or watch television for closing information. SchoolMessenger, an automated notification system, will also be initiated. If the possibility exists that a parent or older sibling will not be home, we encourage parents to designate an alternate destination for their children if school is dismissed early due to inclement weather or an unforeseen circumstance.

Attendance

Regularity of attendance and punctuality are essential to each student’s successful progress and are important habits for students to learn in the early years of school. Please call the school

office if your child will be absent on any day. These must be recorded and filed. The school office will attempt to contact the homes of students who are absent and who have not been reported absent by the parent.

Field Trips

Field Trips are a part of the school experience for ELC students. Teachers work to connect each field trip with curriculum goals and objectives as well as to be fun. Typically, the program will provide the funds for the bus transportation and admission fees, when needed. Crete-Monee School District 201-U policies and procedures for field trips are followed. Parents are asked to volunteer as chaperones. Teachers are asked to specify the number of chaperones needed and to accommodate those chaperones on the busses. No siblings or other family members may ride the bus on school field trips. Parents are asked not to chaperone if they plan on bringing younger children on the trip that they must monitor. Parents are strongly encouraged not to transport their ELC student to the field trip. However, if they do so, the child is considered under the full supervision and responsibility of the parent for the day, with no expectation of mileage reimbursement or paid admission fee. In order to qualify as a parent volunteer, parents must fill out a background check and fingerprinting packet prior to the field trip. See the Volunteer section of this pamphlet.

Snack / Lunch

Students are provided a snack each day at no cost to parents. Parents who choose to donate snacks to the classroom in collaboration with the teacher are welcome to do so. Snack centers allow students to learn peer interaction skills, interact with adults and be self-sufficient. The district offers milk to ELC students provided during snack time. Due to ELC efforts to improve child nutrition and reduce sugar intake, we offer only white milk, except for Fridays, when chocolate or strawberry milk are offered as choices.

Health Office

When to Keep Your Child Home from School

- Monitor any symptoms of illness before your child goes to sleep at night. You may not have time to evaluate symptoms in the morning.
- If anyone in the household has a temperature of 100.4 or higher or exhibiting COVID-like symptoms, keep your child home until the person receives a negative test or is evaluated by a physician.
- A child should not come to school with a *fever*. A temperature reading below 99.9 degrees is usually not a cause for concern. If a fever is above this reading, it could indicate a more serious illness. *Keep the child home and do not send him/her back to school until they have been without a fever for 24 hours, unmedicated (meaning no tylenol has been given for 24 hours).*
- Children can attend school with the sniffles as long as they have no other symptoms. *Keep the child at home if there is a new cough and it is accompanied by a steady*

stream of mucus or if the cough is accompanied by breathing that is rapid or labored. Follow CDC guidelines and keep your child home if he/she is exhibiting COVID 19 symptoms.

- If your child has a *rash*, it is important to determine the source. If it is poison ivy, for example, the child can go to school as long as the rash is being treated properly and can be covered for the time they are in school. If the rash is unexplained, note whether it is accompanied by such other symptoms as unusual crying or general feelings of discomfort or tiredness. *If so, keep the child home and describe the symptoms to your doctor.*
- The most common complaint is an *upset stomach*. Several things, including a situation in school that your child may be reluctant to confront, can cause this. If your child is able to play or do other activities, the pain is probably not too serious and the child can come to school.
- Keep your child home if vomiting, diarrhea, or fever accompanies stomach pain. If the child complains of stomach pain for several days, you should call your doctor for advice.
- Any symptoms that indicate *communicable disease* will exclude your child from school. *Keep him/her home if you think they have pink eye, impetigo, or ringworm and consult your doctor.*
- If you think your child has *head lice or scabies*, keep the child home and notify the school. The district nurse can make recommendations for the care of your child and your home.

SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

Parents are asked to supply these items for each child:

- One large backpack (No wheels)
- Complete change of clothing – shirt, pants, socks, underwear (all labeled in Ziploc bag); pull ups/diapers if needed.
- Wishlists will be sent home by your student's teacher.

General Information to remember for school:

- **LABEL ALL MATERIALS:** Anything that comes to school is at risk of getting lost, so please be sure to label all of your child's items and clothing (e.g. lunch box, backpack, gym shoes, etc.). Children are encouraged to keep track of their own possessions.
- **BUS TAGS:** Send your child to school with the "Bus Tag" he/she will receive on the first day of school.

- **PARENT VISITATION:** Parents are welcome to visit and volunteer in the classroom. Please give the office/teacher 24 hours advance notice.
 - Visitation in school may be restricted due to COVID 19. District and State guidelines will be followed.
 - State ID or Driver's License Required Upon Entry
- **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:** Please notify the school office if any of your phone numbers or emergency contacts change.

Parent Involvement

Enhancing parent involvement is a key component to the Early Learning Center Program. We hope to collaborate with staff, students, and parents to form a strong partnership between home and school. Each month we have a Family Night with a different theme, where our students and their families come out to participate in fun activities. We provide workshops for parents to enhance their knowledge on different subjects and gain a better understanding of child/ family development. We will have parent chats which are opportunities to learn and discuss topics related to their child. We have family day to bring families and school together to provide experiences to assist your child's learning within the home setting. We also have a Parent Resource room, specifically designed for parents to have resources available to them at any time. We encourage parents to come and check out the library and utilize its resources.

PTO

ELC has a PTO board, who works collaboratively with our school to help us throughout the year by hosting school events and fundraising to improve our school for the students. The board hosts a monthly meeting to plan, prepare, and discuss upcoming events. Board positions include: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Faculty Representatives. Please join us at these meetings and help volunteer at our school. Information will be sent home when your student begins programming and is also available on our school website.

Volunteers

During the school year, parent volunteers are needed to help with many projects and events. Parents may be asked to help with preparation of curriculum materials, assist in the classroom, or to volunteer for certain fundraising or school wide events hosted by the PTO. Your child's teacher may ask for volunteers after an adjustment period. Please note that the District has instituted a new Volunteer Policy that requires Background Checks / Fingerprinting. This would mainly apply to ELC Volunteers who attend Field Trips as chaperones.

Helpful Tips

As a parent you can:

- Talk about school as a pleasing experience.
- Help your child develop independence by encouraging him/her to do things for him/herself.
- Enrich your child's background of experiences by taking him/her on simple trips to the zoo, farm, railroad station, firehouse, library, etc.
- Stimulate your child's creativity and imagination by supplying him/her with a variety of art materials.
- Attend or participate in ELC activities when opportunities arise. Children enjoy having their parents present on field trips, at parties, and programs.
- Submit to the teacher upon school entrance any information that will help them better understand your child. Having information in advance may help prevent adjustment difficulties.
- Inform the office or classroom teacher of any physical handicap or special health problems prior to the start of school, as well as any health concerns that arise during the course of the school year.
- Recite nursery rhymes, chants, and songs and then have fun changing the words that rhyme.
- Notice street and store signs then talk about what they say and mean.
- Find letters from your child's name on food containers.

Kindergarten Transition

It is important for ELC to assist families with the kindergarten transition process. We want your child's next step in their educational career to be a smooth and positive transition. We will provide families with guidance about the next step and we also provide information to the elementary schools on the best mode of learning for your child. Below are some of the steps the ELC takes to ensure a smooth transition:

- Periodic Articulation meetings between ELC teachers and district kindergarten teachers to bridge the curricular gap between preschool and kindergarten.
- Review district testing data of all district kindergarten students to monitor progress of those students who attended the Early Learning Center program. This allows us to review specific areas of strength or needs of students who exited the program. Instructional adjustments can then be made.
- End-of-year conferences with parents to review progress and discuss kindergarten placement.
- Parents are sent information regarding kindergarten registration for next school year, including requirements for physicals, home school information, and Coretta Scott King Magnet School application.
- ELC will have a Kindergarten Expectation night which is facilitated by kindergarten teachers. This is a presentation for parents on the kindergarten transition.
- Resource teachers from each district elementary school visit the Early Learning Center to observe ELC students with IEP's moving on to kindergarten.
- All students are assessed at the end of the year using ESGI Progress Checklist and Teaching Strategies Gold.

Early Learning Center Title 1 Parent/School Compact

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, each school that receives Title I, Part A funds must develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy that contains information required by section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (parental involvement policy).

School Responsibilities:

The Early Learning Center staff will support learning in the following ways:

1. We will create a foundation for a positive educational experience for young children that is purposeful, engaging, nurturing and safe through communication and collaboration with families and the community.
2. We will provide a high-quality, positive learning environment to meet the individual needs of our students.
3. We will work with families to assist students in getting their needs met and preparing them for their future educational experiences.
4. Staff will communicate regularly with parents/guardians regarding student progress.
5. Teachers will conduct Parent/Teacher Conferences twice a year and provide reports regarding academic progress.
6. We will provide parents with many opportunities throughout the school year to volunteer, observe, and be involved in a variety of school activities.

Parent/Family Responsibilities:

As a Parent/Guardian, I will support my child's learning in the following ways:

1. I will make sure that my child attends school consistently and on time.
2. I will notify the school when my child is absent.
3. I will communicate with my child's teacher to be an active partner in my child's education.
4. I will attend Parent/Teacher Conferences.
5. I will stay informed about school activities and learning by reading all notices from the school or district and respond, as appropriate.
6. I will be involved in my child's school and classroom community to the best of my ability.

