



Parent Packet

2009-2010

Parent Packet

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Motto:

...where caring and learning shine through

Mission Statement:

To offer preschool children a structured learning program, which consists of a written curriculum, well designed classrooms, careful choice of learning materials, consistent application of rules of behavior and an assessment of each child's development.

To create a classroom environment that encourages the development of independence, self-control and "quiet confidence".

To promote the above through an educational program directed toward parents and the community at large through conferences, committees, projects and programs sponsored by CEL.

Program goals:

Independence

Self-control

Social competence

Self-confidence

Director's Corner

Education is not a one size fits all...

September 7, 2009

Dear Parents,

In your role as a parent, you have many decisions to make on behalf of your children. Choosing a pre-school is one of them. You may or may not know there are many ways to teach, as there are many ways to learn. There can be significant differences in program philosophy and mission statement, leadership, curriculum content, and teacher qualifications, to name a few. By becoming informed about the Center for Early Learning you can feel confident in your decision to be part of the CEL family.

As the director, I would like to share the *essence* of a CEL preschool education with you. As each child is unique, Center for Early Learning presents a program that allows for differences in learning styles, learning pace, interest levels, and ability levels. It is able to do so while respecting and preserving childhood. Explaining the *essence* is like writing a symphony or trying to play all of the instruments at once. I will attempt this in my monthly newsletter. I hope that you find the newsletter informative and helpful throughout the year.

Board of Directors

At no other time in your child's school career will you be invited to play such an integral part in the decision making process. Parents are invited to learn about and/or join the Board of Directors. You may attend a meeting or call Kerry Woodworth, president, at 793-5286. The Board is responsible for the planning of family events, creating policy and approving the financial decisions concerning operations of CEL. Come work with us and forge some new friendships along the way.

Adjusting to School

As you and your family adjust to your new school environment and schedule it may be helpful to remember a few things. You may need to adjust your mealtime and bedtime schedules. Children may not want to talk about school at first. They may tell you that they did "nothing" at school, or "I can't remember". They need down time after school to just relax and reflect. We will try to provide you with lots of information about their experiences at school so that you may ask them more specific questions like "What happened to the little frog in your story today?"

Safety First

In closing, I would like to share a few safety issues. The parking lot is a very busy place so please insist on holding hands. CEL has staggered dismissal times in order to alleviate congestion - both in the parking lot and in the hallway. Never leave children in the car while at drop-off or pick-up. If you have a particular hardship concerning this matter, please bring it to my attention. Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing that they can manage in the bathroom. Experience tells us that belts, buttons and one-piece outfits often cause bathroom accidents. Sneakers or other soft soled, tie-on or buckle-on shoes are a must. Flip-flops, high heels, dress shoes, sandals and clogs should not be worn to school. Long dresses also create a tripping and climbing hazard.

Parent Handbook

A copy of the Parent Packet, which includes the Parent Handbook, will be sent electronically to the email address we have on file for you. If you do not have an email or if you prefer paper, hard copies will be available during the first week of school, and you may pick one up at the Parent Information Table.

As a reminder, the second payment of **tuition** is due now and is considered late after September 10th.

Looking forward to our adventure together!

MaryAnn Cozzens
Director

The Building Blocks Of Learning

Center-Based Curriculum:

Why we do what we do the way we do it!!!

Art Center:

- Designed to allow free choice of open ended, error free materials to allow for self interpretation
- Encourages self help skills and responsibility for cleaning up
- Emphasis is on the process not the product, to encourage experimenting, creativity, imagination and cause and effect
- Children progress through the stages of both writing and drawing, beginning to see the difference between scribbles and symbols
- Provides an opportunity for language development as children describe their feelings and tactile experiences
- Allows opportunities for developing both large and small motor muscles

Writing Center:

- Designed to allow free choice of materials to promote decision-making and responsibility for clean up
- Experiments and explores all types of writing, cutting, measuring and tracing tools
- Promotes exercise of fine motor muscles and eye-hand coordination
- Promotes small group conversation toward language building
- Allows for classifying and matching of colors and shapes
- Materials are shared to promote cooperation and language
- Lends itself to bookmaking and storytelling
- Allows for practice of the different stages of drawing and writing

Reading Center:

- Designed to allow free choice of materials and books to promote decision making and responsibility
- Realizing that books require respect and proper handling and sometimes need repair
- Printed words and pictures have meaning
- Learning about how a book works with a beginning, middle and end
- Encourages listening, patience and consideration
- Encourages imagination, predicting, questions and sequencing
- Promotes verbal and memory development
- Contributes to early literacy
- Exposure to cultural and racial diversity
- Provides validity to differences in children's home lives
- Promotes a development of quiet confidence in a soft comfortable setting

Block Center:

- Designed to allow free choice of materials and blocks to promote decision making and responsibility
- Lends itself to the realization of many mathematical concepts: fractions, spatial relations, measuring, counting and classifying as well as architectural principles
- Lends itself to the realization of many scientific concepts: balance, symmetry, comparisons, classifying and cause and effect.
- Encourages problem solving
- Allows for fantasy play and imagination
- Allows for all the different stages of building and fosters self-control and respect for other people's work
- Promotes the motor control of eye-hand coordination
- Allows for vocabulary building as well as extension of learning to other areas of the classroom

Science Center:

- Designed to allow free choice and hands on exploration to promote decision making and responsibility
- Provides a place to introduce non-fiction books
- Lends itself to the expansion of language concepts and vocabulary building
- Encourages questioning and problem solving
- Allows for independent exploration
- Provides for opportunities to share information and objects from home
- Provides a place for experimenting and hypothesis, cause and effect
- Supports mathematical concepts through the use of measurement and charting of results
- Science concepts can be observed in all areas of the classroom

Manipulatives Center:

- Designed to allow free choice of materials from low open shelving to promote cooperative play and encourage responsibility for cleaning up
- All materials are age appropriate and are rotated for variety
- Materials include puzzles, building and sensory toys
- Area encourages cooperative play and occasions for building social skills
- Develops eye-hand coordination

Dramatic Play/Housekeeping Center:

- Designed to allow free choice of open ended, error free clothing and materials to encourage imaginative social play and responsibility for cleaning up
- Encourages imitation, nurturing, improvising, resourcefulness and problem solving
- Facilitates the development of language and social skills
- Offers a place to expose the children to other cultures, jobs and roles
- Allows for an exchange of ideas as children set the parameters and resolve conflicts

Discovery Center:

- Set up to allow **theme related imaginative play**

DROP OFF Procedure

The Center for Early Learning has a "Drop Off" Procedure in order to alleviate parking lot congestion and for the convenience of parents. All parents are invited to use the system as follows:

- Parents may line up in the driveway that leads from Glen Street to the back lot. **You may only enter the line from Glen Street!**
- Teachers will be at the door from 8:45-8:55 am and 12:45-12:55 pm.
- Parents and children should remain inside of their cars for safety reasons, as the flow of traffic through the one-way drive must continue.
- Teachers will take children from the passenger side (preferably) of the first car in line and walk them in while the next car moves up in line. Cars may pass along your drivers' side door into other lots.
- If you try drop-off and your child is having a difficult time, please proceed to the parking lot.
- Please be respectful of the church parking rules, which restrict parking along the playground fence (church related business only). C.E.L. families may park in the rest of the lot.
- The driveway for drop-off is a no parking zone.
- If you arrive at drop-off and it is storming with lightning, we will not be taking children from cars. You are welcome to park and wait for the weather to let up before coming inside.

Emergency Action Plan

If something happens to this building or any of the buildings in our immediate area, even it is a weather related event, we have been advised by Glens Falls Fire Department to take the children across the street to The Church of The Messiah. If it is unsafe to go outside, we will be in the Movement Room. You and the Fire Department will know where to find us. The children will be safe and entertained to the best of our ability. We will have emergency supplies with us.

If we do evacuate, you will be called and told where and when to pick up your child. Depending on circumstances, you may not be able to get close to our location. Remember that your children are safe with us and take your time making your way to us. We will be in lock down and parents will not be allowed in but children will be dismissed out to you one at a time.

Building Security

The entry door will be locked from 9:00 AM until 10:30 AM and between 1:00 PM and 3:15 PM. If you arrive and the door is locked, ring the bell and one of us will let you in. Please be patient we will get there as quickly as we can.

Anyone picking up your child/ren on your behalf will be asked to show proof identification if we do not already know them.

Thank you for your patience with this matter. Your child's safety is most important!



Protocol

Center for Early Learning always puts safety first. The following is an account of protocols that allow for the maximum safety of all.

ARRIVAL

Our hours of operation are 8:15 AM - 4:00 PM. Classroom doors are open at 8:45 and are closed 15 minutes before dismissal. They are closed at that time so that the teachers may bring the children down from their busy day and dismiss them without confusion. A few weeks into the session we will begin the drop-off system at the doorstep. You will be notified when the drop-off is available to your child's class. Typically it begins sooner for the older groups and later for the younger children who may not settle as quickly. Information about the drop-off system will be distributed as the service becomes available to you.

PARKING LOT

The parking lot is a very busy and congested place at drop-off and pick-up times so please use caution and consideration. Be sure to hold your child's hand in the parking lot to ensure that everyone stays safe.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal times are staggered to allow for the many cars coming and going in the parking lot. For the first few weeks, teachers may need to ask who you are until we are all familiar with each other. If someone we aren't familiar with will be coming to pick up, we must have that information in writing and the person must show identification upon arrival. If you must call in the case of an emergency, you will need to identify yourself as the parent by disclosing your child's birth date in order for us to dismiss to an unfamiliar person. At dismissal your child will be brought out to you. Please do not enter the classroom. In the confusion, a child may skip out. Teachers need to be in control and responsible for the timing and flow of dismissal. Playground dismissal is the same. Teachers will bring your child to you. Please do not enter the playground. Please exit the building when your child is dismissed to you.

COMMUNICATION

All classrooms are equipped with a walkie-talkie to maintain communication with the director. On the wipe off board outside the classroom door, teachers will provide a brief overview of your child's day. Dismissal is not a time for a casual chat. If you would like more information about something in particular please schedule a parent/teacher conference. Teachers are also available by phone (see staff list). Your child's backpack provides further opportunity for communication. Please check it daily. Communication is important to your child's success in school now, and through all levels of education and learning.

Children with Developmental Challenges

The Center for Early Learning is proud to offer our quality program to children without discrimination. We have a wonderfully diverse and gifted staff trained in early childhood education, however, we do not employ any special education personnel nor do we have a therapist or nurse on staff.

In the course of getting to know your child we may see behavioral indicators of a possible developmental concern. Although we are not medical experts we are trained to recognize these indicators. If we see one of these behaviors happening over time, we will refer you to someone qualified to help you make decisions for your child, should it become necessary. Most parents become angry at the suggestion that there may be some concern for their child. We want the best for your child, as we know you do.

It is a fact that the sooner concerns are addressed the more likely they may be corrected. If it becomes clear that your child does require some outside aid, we will support your family to the extent that we are able. Aid may be having a special therapist working with your child several times each week. Therapists are welcome to work here during class with children. Most speech therapists include many children from the class to facilitate meaningful conversation.

Sometimes a child's support needs become too much for our program, or the child would be better served in a more intensive special education program. We are willing to meet with the therapists, and value their expertise. We will be honest with you. Ultimately the decision to keep any child in our program rests with us. Your child's needs always come first.

Respectfully,

MaryAnn Cozzens, Director





Parent Handbook

It is the goal of this school to nurture the child's natural curiosity and propensity for learning by providing a stimulating environment rich with potential for learning. Thus he or she may come to discover many ideas and concepts first hand on his/her own or with the guidance of a teacher, and may reflect these experiences and incorporate them into his/her understanding of the world.



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HISTORY

The Center For Early Learning (CEL) was founded in 1978 by a group of dedicated teachers and parents whose goal was to offer a quality preschool program to area children. The school strives toward this end by providing a developmentally appropriate educational experience for its children. Chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, the Center occupies the Education Wing of the Church of The Messiah Parish House. (June 2001)

PHILOSOPHY

The Center for Early Learning is founded on an understanding of Montessori principles and individualized education concepts. Curriculum is individualized in relation to each child's stage of development, thereby allowing him/her to learn at his/her own rate. It is also seen that children learn through interaction with one another and adults in a skillfully designed learning environment.

Classrooms are arranged to suit the learning needs of young children. Objects are strategically set within reach on low, open shelves. Each learning material is carefully selected to teach the basics of mathematics, reading, language, science and music. Many materials are self-instructional; the teacher may show the child how to work with them, but it is in working with them that the child learns. In addition, a variety of art materials are offered daily, even to the youngest children. A separate room equipped with climbing apparatus and other pieces designed to require the use of large muscles is used daily by the children. Outdoor play and walks to downtown Glens Falls facilities are also scheduled.

Discipline is promoted in several ways with the emphasis on the child's developing sense of inner control and self-confidence. Each student is encouraged to put away the materials he/she has worked with before starting something new. Rules are patiently explained to children as the need arises.

ORGANIZATION

The Center for Early Learning is operated by a Board of Directors, made up of parents and community members interested in early education. Meetings are conducted monthly, on a day that is voted upon each year.

The primary purpose of the Board of Directors shall be to oversee the fiscal stability of CEL. The Board of Directors is also responsible for the hiring and firing of the Executive Director of CEL as well as approving the hiring and firing of

the staff by the Director of CEL. The Board of Directors is responsible for the raising of funds necessary for the continuance of CEL programs. In addition, the board also grants approval to an annual budget that is prepared by the Executive Committee.

Several standing committees are used to assist the Board in the operation of the school. They include the following: Education Committee, Operations Committee, Finance Committee, Fundraising Committee, and the Hospitality Committee. Most recently developed committees include the Personnel Committee, Grant Committee, and Tuition Assistance Committee.

The **Board of Directors** invites any interested person to sit in on a monthly meeting to become acquainted with its procedures and operations before deciding to make a commitment as a board member. A board term runs from August 1 - July 31, with the option of joining at the beginning of a given school year.

All members are voted on to the Board by a majority of a quorum vote. Please feel free to check out a meeting to gain first hand knowledge of the process.

STAFF

The Director of the Center for Early Learning is responsible for carrying out all the policies for the Board of Directors. The Director and the Education Coordinator orchestrate the educational program and oversee the general operation of the school.

The staff members of CEL are carefully selected for their ability to understand and work positively with very young children. They go through a three-part interview process, which includes spending a day in the classroom working with the children and being observed. Most have a background in early education and child development. Many have specific interests in areas such as art, science, or music.

PROGRAMS

Each child at the Center is consistently observed and assessed on his/her learning progress. Parent/teacher conferences are offered twice a year providing a time during which the child's school experiences can be discussed. Three educational programs are offered.

The **Parent/Toddler Program (when available)** is a child's first introduction to our school. Small classes provide a warm, loving atmosphere for the very young

child. Children range in age from 18 months to 2 ½ years and attend one morning per week. Maximum group size is 8 children and adults with one teacher.

Guided Learners range in age from 2 years to 3 years and can attend two mornings per week in groups of 8-10 children with 2 teachers.

Independent Learners range in age from 3 to 4 years and attend 2 or 3 mornings per week. Maximum group size is 15 children with 3 teachers.

The **Pre-K Program** has an age range of 3 years 9 months to 5+ years and children attend class from 3 to 5 afternoons or 5 mornings per week. Maximum group size is 18 students and 3 teachers.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

"Parents are key to our program. We talk to them about our experiences with their children in the classroom, and they keep us informed on changes they've noticed at home. Together we are interested in the whole child as a developing personality; the organization of thought processes, the development of good work habits, initiative, self-discipline, and most importantly, a sense of being comfortable and secure with peers, adults, oneself and the environment."

Liesse Chable, Founder

While parent conferences are held during the school year to discuss the individual child's experiences, the director and staff are available for parent concerns anytime during the year. Parents are encouraged to visit the school to observe their child.

Parents do not assist in the classroom but are encouraged to serve on the various committees. We invite parents to share their special or unique talents in music, art or shared cultural experiences by in-class visits at various times during the year. Parents are also invited to be involved with fundraising efforts during the school year.

SNACK POLICY

It is the policy of the Center for Early Learning to serve healthy and nutritious snacks. Though the nutrition level of many foods can be debated, there are some steadfast rules that we follow. **Juices must be 100% fruit juice.** Many

labels read 100% Vitamin C but they are only 10% fruit juice. We will return juices that contain fructose, sucrose, added sugar or sweeteners. Milk is acceptable but not preferred because at times we have children with allergies or low tolerance to dairy. Bottled water is also acceptable.

The sure bets for snack are **fresh fruits and vegetables, cheese and crackers**. We will also serve homemade fruit breads and muffins (**with the recipe attached**), and small finger sandwiches or bagels. Goldfish crackers and pretzels are among the children's favorites.

We are a "no nuts" school. **We will not serve cakes, cookies, cupcakes, items with frosting, chocolate or peanut butter, Jell-O or pudding**. Some suggestions for making birthday snacks special include pizza, homemade low-sugar muffins topped with cream cheese or party plates and/or cups for serving the snack.

BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

It is the policy of the Center for Early Learning not to celebrate holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, Hanukkah, Valentine's Day and birthdays with parties during school class times since such attention is given to these special occasions in your own homes.

Holidays are celebrated at the Center through special projects and activities. Through storytelling and discussion, the children talk about the holidays their families celebrate and how various customs and family traditions have developed. Often a guest or parent is invited into the classroom to discuss family traditions. Throughout the holiday season, the Center for Early Learning works hard to take a non-sectarian approach to discussions. By relating holidays to each child's family experiences we are able to leave religious teachings in the hands of the parents.

On the children's birthdays, they may receive a birthday crown or card made for them by their classmates. "Happy Birthday" is sung at snack time and the birthday child may bring a special book or an age appropriate music CD to share with the class. **Please DO NOT bring gifts to be dispersed to the children in class. NO GOODY BAGS!!!!!!!**

We invite parents to prepare a special healthy snack to be served on these holidays or birthdays. If parents wish they may contact another parent on the snack list to switch days. Please make the teachers aware of these changes.

FIELD TRIPS

Teachers may take the children on walking trips to downtown Glens Falls businesses and facilities. Field trips involving transportation may also be planned. Although the "blanket" permission slip signed by parents at the beginning of the school year covers all walking trips, special permission slips are issued for each field trip involving driving. Parents may be asked to assist with driving and/or make car seat arrangements. **All children attending a field trip that involves driving must follow Center for Early Learning guidelines, which are in accordance with New York State law. All children in the vehicle must be secured in a proper car seat. A child may never ride in the front seat.**

CLOTHING AND DIAPERS

Dress your child in clothing appropriate for painting, floor play and working with various art or sand materials and water. Smocks are available and encouraged but they don't prevent all accidents. Clothing should be loose enough not to restrict movement. **Sneakers are a must** as children will be experiencing gym type activities each day. We strongly recommend children bring a change of clothing in their bag each day. Accidents can happen even to the most adept at potty training. Because outerwear, hats, mittens etc. are often left at school, we ask parents to label their child's clothing. The same types of boots and coats are always popular and both the teachers and children have a difficult time knowing who belongs to what.

It is necessary for children in diapers to bring one or two each day in their backpack. Please send in wipes as well. Unfortunately our storage space is so limited it does not allow for storage of diapers and wipes, therefore it is necessary to have these brought in each day.

TOTE BAGS, BACKPACKS AND CARRY-ALLS

It is required that each child bring some type of carry-all in which papers and artwork can be sent home and in which diapers, clothing and treasures from home can be stored during class time. Please label the carryall and be sure it is big enough to handle all of the above needs. When looking for a carryall, please keep in mind the ease of opening and closing for your child, as he/she will be packing his/her own mail into the bag each day.

All children have access to their own and each other's backpacks during the class time, specifically during the time they pack their own mail. **Please be sure that there is nothing in the backpacks that can harm children if ingested; for instance, money, coins, small toys, diaper creams, medications, and snack foods that may cause allergic reactions in other children.** If you need to send items to another caregiver that is picking up your child at school, notify the teachers or the office and we will try to accommodate your needs.

OUTDOOR PLAY

It is generally true that we will try to go outside each class time when the temperature is above 32° F and conditions are safe. This may not be the case for our youngest students because of the dressing process. The classroom teachers will make the decisions about going outdoors based on weather, clothing restrictions, and the children's readiness and ability.

ILLNESSES AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Staff members monitor student health. It is important that children who have illness more severe than a runny nose be kept home. **Children with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea should be free from these symptoms for 24 hours before entering school.** Many children with a discolored runny nose are also contagious; therefore we ask that children not return to school until they have been on antibiotics (or acceptable medication) for 24 hours. Please inform the office if your child has a contagious illness such as Chicken Pox, Coxsackie virus, mononucleosis, Pink Eye, Strep Throat, etc.

Children who show symptoms of illness during class will be taken to the office and the parent or emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND MAKE-UP POLICY

Our school calendar with respect to holidays and vacations is consistent with that of local public schools. Snow days are announced on local radio and TV stations. We do not have make-up days for days missed because of weather conditions, illnesses or family vacations.

TUITION

The Center for Early Learning is a not-for-profit organization that subsists mainly on tuition monies, all of which is expended on salaries, instructional supplies, and operating costs. Timely payments are expected on the first of every month. Delinquent accounts are made subject to a late fee unless prior arrangements are made with the accounts receivable treasurer. Please refer to the complete Tuition Policies and Procedures included in this packet.

DISMISSAL POLICY

We must have written permission from the parent or legal guardian of a child for anyone other than the parents or guardian to pick the child up from school. For your convenience a Permission to Discharge form is provided. Only those on this form will be allowed to pick up your child. Therefore, parents should be certain this form has been turned in whenever a child will be riding in a carpool or going with a babysitter. **If you do not give permission to anyone other than yourselves to pick up your child, please sign the form and send it in with no names listed.** You may want to consider putting the name of the person whom you listed as an emergency contact on this form. However, we will release your child to your emergency contact.

If someone arrives to pick up your child without written permission, we will not release your child to him or her. In the case of an emergency, when a written notice cannot be obtained, the Director must speak to the parent, by phone, before releasing the child.

In order to maintain an orderly dismissal from the classroom, the doors are closed for the last 15 minutes of class time. We ask that parents wait outside the doors so that teachers can work with children on self-dressing skills, finishing circle time activities and screening Permission to Discharge forms. Once your child has been dismissed to you please proceed to your car as the hallway and parking lot become very congested. Walking through the parking lot is a teachable moment. Please keep each other safe by holding hands. Doors are open at all other times during class and parents are welcome to stop in anytime.

PARKING

The Church of the Messiah asks only that we **do not park in spaces along the playground fence**. The rest of the lot is open.

We offer a drop off system where parents can drive through the one-way driveway of the church from Glen Street and pull up to the doorway, at which time teachers will be there to take children up to the classroom. For safety reasons, children will only be taken out of the right side of the car. This system begins the second week of school for the oldest classes and at the teachers' discretion for the younger classes. We like to be sure that most of the children are comfortable with separation before offering this service. At this time this system is only in effect for bringing your child into school.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Families of CEL who have a question or problem within the classroom are encouraged to bring concerns to the teachers as soon as possible. Often the problem can be resolved immediately. If the family feels a resolution to the concern cannot be reached, it may bring the concern to the director. If a satisfactory resolution is still not reached, concerns may be brought to the CEL Board of Directors. Contact the President of the Board or ask the Director to do so on your behalf.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

The late pick-up policy has been developed for the benefit of your child. When children are left waiting for their caregiver to pick them up they become nervous, anxious and worried. They see all the other children leave and wonder when their ride will come. Children who are consistently picked up late also have more difficulty settling into class at the beginning of a new day. It is for these reasons that caregivers that are consistently late picking up their child will be charged a late pick-up fee. Charges will accrue on third and any subsequent occasions of a late pick-up. Parents are responsible for late pick-up by babysitters or carpools as well. **The late pick-up fee will be an automatic \$10.00 for any portion of the first ten minutes the child is picked up late, and a \$1.00 per minute charge will be added for each minute beyond the first 10.** Class times are posted outside each classroom, as well as on handouts received by each family in the parent packet. Please become familiar with your child's dismissal time.

SEPARATION

Attending preschool is one of the many "first big steps" in your child's life. Unquestionably your child will need your support and understanding to help make this adjustment. Don't be embarrassed or feel guilty if he/she cries or clings to you when it is time to leave, since this is a typical expression of separation anxiety. What is important at that time is the parent recognizing that this is a reaction to a new experience, and part of the process of adjustment.

There are a few things you and your child can do to help make this adjustment together. Develop a "good-bye routine", as routines are very important cues for children, indicating what to expect next. By developing a routine that you can follow each time you leave your child, he/she will soon learn that you will return just as you always do. The routine can be as simple as give mommy a hug and kiss, then wave good-bye. Whatever routine you choose, stick to it. When it is time to say good-bye, as difficult as it may be, it is important to follow through and then leave.

These early years are when children are developing and fine-tuning their ability to trust adults. By following through on the plans you make together, you teach your child that he/she can trust you. Eventually that translates into trusting that you will come back, because you always do. Until the child has that experience a few times, Mom or Dad leaving and then returning for him/her, of course there will be unsettled nerves. Many children cry for the first two or three days as they are learning what to expect.

Rest assured that while you are gone, the teachers are understanding of the way you and your child are feeling. They are reminding your child of the routines that take place each day until you return to them. Most children will quickly develop a sense of well being with this situation and the crying will end. This is dependent a great deal on how parents handle those first days.

Here are some tips for success.

1. Be prompt at arrival and dismissal times. Children whose parents are consistently late have more difficulty settling into class at the beginning of the day, and often experience a measure of stress when they are late being picked up.
2. Be sure to leave the first time you tell your child you are leaving. By prolonging the exit you lead your child to believe that by being more upset or if he/she says or does the right thing, you will stay. That isn't

fair to your child or to yourself. Children can handle separation, usually better than parents.

3. Show your child you have confidence that he/she is in a safe place, with loving people and that it will be fun. Your child can sense your anxiety and wonders what could be wrong.
4. For the first few days, plan to be busy doing something while your child is at school. If you can keep your mind on something else, you'll find that these few days aren't so bad.

As always, the teacher and director are here to help you through this. Though not every child is ready for an early preschool experience, most handle it quite successfully. The learning that takes place over that first year in preschool is exciting and every child should have a place that is designed for him/her even for just a few hours a week.

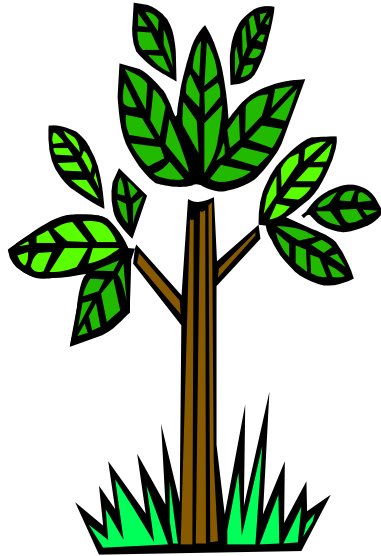
FAMILY EVENTS AT CEL

The Center for Early Learning usually holds family social events throughout the school year. These are in addition to our community fundraising events. These events give families the opportunity to meet some of the friends in their children's classes.

The purpose of these events is to help bring families in the school together to promote an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect between school and family. During these events, children and parents have the opportunity to share a school experience and learn from each other what value school holds for each individual. Your child learns from you that even though these activities are different, an adult can take great pleasure in exploring things in a school setting. Whenever you are with your children, whether at school or any where else, you are setting the example of how to act, what to be open to, what might be a dangerous situation, etc. If you are interested and curious about your child's school experiences, it is more likely that he or she will be too. **Please take these social opportunities as a time to spend with your child**, interacting with him/her as you go around and talk with friends and neighbors.

It is very important that in addition to enjoying the social atmosphere provided, parents keep an eye on their children. Even though some staff may attend the event, they are not there in an official capacity. Their role is to mingle with the children and families. During all of our extracurricular events, parents

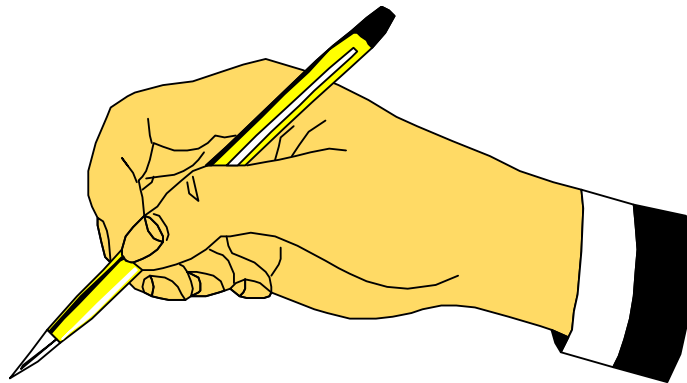
are responsible for their own children. The Center for Early Learning community is like a large family. We wish to promote all the great things that family stands for and to be there whenever anyone needs our help. Please enjoy the social events offered each year.



"play and grow together"

After reading this handbook, please return this page to the office or drop it in the receptacle outside the classroom door.

Thank You.



I have read the handbook and agree to respect the program and policies of the Center for Early Learning as stated in this handbook.

Signature of parents/guardian

Print last name

Email address



The Philosophy

"As parents and teachers, we are interested in the whole child as a developing personality; the organization of mental thought processes, the development of good work habits, initiative, self-discipline and most importantly a sense of being comfortable and secure with oneself, with peers, adults and the environment."

Liesse Chable
Founder of Center for Early Learning



The Philosophy of The Center For Early Learning

"Developing a student into a truly independent learner takes years. This is the basic reason why organized programs exist... to fill these years with learning," (Gagne, 1975,p.120).

The Center for Early Learning (CEL) regards learning as a life long process, beginning before birth and continuing throughout life. Children between the developmental ages of 18 months and 5 years may attend CEL. CEL is concerned with the child's total growth and development encompassing the social, emotional, cognitive and physical aspects of learning. Each child is viewed as a unique individual with his or her own characteristics. CEL prides itself on providing an enriching environment and following an individualized educational approach, which is enhanced by maintaining a low student to teacher ratio. CEL offers itself as an extension of the family and can provide information and resources on child development. The learning process in relation to child development is taken seriously. In order to provide an environment that allows for optimum growth, there are essential childhood developmental principles that are used as guidelines for curriculum and program design. The curriculum at CEL is designed to include social, emotional, cognitive and physical objectives.

The Learner and Learning

The child's social development is evidenced through various characteristics of play. Toddlers involve themselves predominantly in solitary play. As children have more experiences they might play next to each other but not interact. Cooperative play, seen more often in older children, is an organized form of play where roles are assigned and leadership exists.

The emotional development of the children is a concern of the CEL staff. They strive to promote the development of strong self-esteem, feeling of pride in accomplishments and development of self-control. CEL believes that over protection or lack of support of the child's independent effort could lead to children doubting their own ability to control themselves or their environment. CEL avoids unnecessary restrictions on exploration and encourages independent search for answers.

Children develop the greatest amount cognitive growth before the age of five. CEL uses Piaget's stages of cognitive development as guidelines for curriculum design. Many sensory activities are offered, all materials are nontoxic and appropriate sized objects and materials are on the shelves.

The physical needs of the children attending CEL are taken into consideration in curriculum planning. A room designated the Creative Movement Room has been designed to provide an environment in which to experience gross motor activities.

Children have varying learning needs and styles. Teachers are concerned with creating an atmosphere that will allow for each child to learn in their preferred way.

The Physical Environment

Planning the environment with all of the child's needs in mind makes for an atmosphere that is positive and nurturing. The CEL classroom physical environment includes open shelving on which objects can be placed for easy view and access by the students. Classroom materials, "toys" and self-learning tools are selected for their abilities to promote creativity, self-expression, fantasy, and independence in daily living, cooperation and concept formation.

The Open Classroom Philosophy

It is the view of CEL that the open classroom is the best preschool environment in which to foster optimal growth and development. Learning takes place through the use of concrete, sensory materials in an open, though structured, environment that allows for a creative approach for self-exploration, self-teaching and for new experiences.

Many important social and emotional gains are made in the open classroom. Cooperative interactions in the room and relationships between children are encouraged, while dependence on the teacher is de-emphasized. In an open classroom, children may move freely from one activity to another, choosing from carefully selected and varied materials and developmentally appropriate activities all within a stimulating environment. A child in this setting has many choices and thus learns to make decisions, manage time and be responsible for his or her own behavior. As the child progresses through the program, he will become more independent, enthusiastic about learning, self-reliant and ready to take initiative. The outcome of this progression leads to "quiet confidence" in them and in what they can accomplish.

In an open classroom environment, a child is an active participant in learning. The layout of the CEL classroom supports the environment. It is an open orderly space divided into areas or centers rich in learning resources. The environment is easily rearranged and changed to adapt to new activities and to the interest of the students.

In the open classroom, the child interacts directly with the real world through the facilitating action of a teacher or teachers. Respect for and trust in the child's ability to act independently and assume responsibility for those actions are perhaps the most basic principles underlying the open classroom and the role of the teacher.

The goals of the open classroom education are to provide an environment that is free, open, supportive, meaningful and non-threatening. The open classroom provides for happy children who have wholesome attitudes toward life and learning and are independent thinkers who are motivated and continuing learners.

The Role of the CEL Staff

The role of the CEL staff extends to the school at large. Every member is responsible for providing and maintaining a safe environment for the students. They are responsive to all CEL children's needs as they arise. CEL staff members obtain and maintain current working knowledge of child development and its application to the classroom for the purpose of implementing a developmentally appropriate program. Teachers and staff members communicate to parents any specific concerns or needs that arise and inform parents of the progress and experiences of their children within the classroom.

The CEL staff promotes discipline in several ways, recognizing that preschool children have a developing sense of self-esteem, self-discipline and inner control. The knowledge of childhood behaviors and the respect and acceptance of each child as a unique individual assists staff in providing developmentally appropriate guidance through simple communication. This allows for the child to generate solutions to problems and helps the child to value mistakes as learning experiences. The redirection of behaviors that may affect the health and safety of the child and/or classmates will be applied in order to assist the child in gaining inner self-control. Forestalling is also used as an effective method of preventing behavioral difficulties.

The Role of CEL and the Community

Parents are key to our program. They are encouraged to participate on committees and as members of the Board of Directors and to become involved in classroom and school-wide activities.

The child's active involvement with life experiences, adults and community agencies aids in promoting motivated and successful learning. CEL, as part of the community, incorporates into the learning experience our relationship to the community as an organization and as individuals. We invite into the classroom various community helpers and also expose students to talented individuals or groups, often parents, on a cultural level.

Health and Safety

CEL is concerned with the physical health and safety of our students. Helping children learn to maintain their own health and safety extends into the serving of food snacks void of excess sugars, preservatives and additives. Developmentally appropriate activities are included within the curriculum, which introduce the children to safety programs for themselves and their environment.

Safety of the child is of utmost importance; close supervision is maintained by age appropriate, low student to teacher ratio, limited building access, standard dismissal procedures and fire safety programs.

As teachers and parents, we are interested in the whole child as a developing personality; the organization of mental thought processes, the development of good work habits, initiative, self-discipline and most importantly a sense of being comfortable and secure with oneself, with peers, adults and the environment.

Liesse Chable

Founder of the Center for Early Learning

Volunteer Registry

Parents often ask how they can get involved at school. In order to feel more “connected to” and “knowledgeable about” the people and place, we offer various ways for you to become a part of your child’s school experience. Please check as many areas as you would like to be involved in.

_____ **Hospitality:** Providing food, childcare or information at various events throughout the year.

_____ **New Family Mentor:** We need ambassadors who would like to help new families feel welcome.

_____ **Maintenance/Yard work:** Each season, the playground and parking lot need to be cleaned up. Raking, sweeping, small repairs or building new equipment are a few things that need to be done.

_____ **Board of Directors:** Parents who join the Board are committed to an evening meeting once a month. The Board makes decisions concerning policies, hiring and firing, financial stability and the future direction of the school. **Committee Work** is also an option if you are not interested in a Board position.

_____ **Shopping:** We may need a particular item that requires shopping for the best price.

_____ **Office helpers:** answer the phone, copying, errands, computer work, etc. on an as needed basis.

_____ **Gardner:** The hallway and playground flowers and plants need some TLC once a week.

_____ **Book Club:** We need someone to collect orders, submit to Scholastic on-line and prepare the books for delivery to parents. (once every other month)

_____ **Donation:** Company donation, pro bono service, information or skill. Materials, or your time and expertise would be welcome and greatly appreciated.

Family name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

First Name: _____ Cell: _____

First Name: _____ Cell: _____

Comments: