

ECYC PARENT HANDBOOK



ECYC PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Welcome to ECYC, Inc. Education with Care for Young Children

Dear ECYC Parents,

I am so pleased to welcome you all as members of our very special and magical school community. ECYC is a special place where parents and their children form strong bonds with their community as they take their first steps into the world of education. Our school is devoted to the personal care and consideration of each child and each family. In addition to offering a top-quality educational program for the children, we hope to offer our parents a supportive environment, which nourishes them on a social, emotional, and cognitive level.

The following parent handbook will help guide you through the policies and procedures which help the school run smoothly. The mutual respect of these guidelines ensures the safety of your children, clarity of communication, and a deeper understanding of the nuances of our program.

Each year we update and prepare this handbook to help you become acquainted with our policies and to provide you with information about the daily workings of the school. In addition, this handbook provides a description of some of the opportunities available, for you as parents, to actively participate in your child's education.

Please be sure to read this handbook carefully so you and your family are prepared to follow the appropriate protocol and help us keep our community safe.

Sincerely,

Jackie Klein
Executive Director
ECYC, Inc.

Dear ECYC Families,

Welcome to another school year at ECYC!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to say how happy we are to have you and your family as part of the ECYC community. Whether this is your first year here or your family has been at ECYC for years, we hope you feel welcomed, supported, and confident in the care your child receives each day.

ECYC has a really unique history. It began more than forty years ago as a childcare center for Merck employees and later became the independent nonprofit organization that it is today. While ECYC has grown and changed tremendously over the years, its commitment to providing high-quality care and education for children has remained at the center of everything we do.

One of the things I have always loved about ECYC is that it really is a community. Our Board is made up of volunteers who care deeply about ECYC and its future. Our role is to focus on the bigger picture, making sure ECYC remains financially strong, stays true to its mission, and continues to be a place where children can learn and thrive and where great teachers want to work. We work closely with our Executive Director and administrative team, who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Center.

There are so many ways to be part of ECYC beyond drop-off and pick-up, and I really encourage families to get involved in whatever way works for them. Come to an event, volunteer for something that interests you, get to know the other families in your child's classroom, or just stop and say hello. Those relationships are a big part of what makes ECYC special.

This handbook has a lot of information in it, but more than anything, it's meant to make sure families understand what they can expect from ECYC and what we ask of our families in return. Good communication and mutual respect go a long way, and when questions or concerns come up, we want families to feel comfortable talking with their child's teachers and our administrative team.

I also want to thank our teachers and staff. They are truly the heart of ECYC, and the work they do every day matters tremendously. I'm equally grateful to Jackie and the administrative team, my fellow Board members who volunteer so much of their time, and all of our families who make ECYC the community that it is.

I hope you and your children have a wonderful year, and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone around ECYC!

Warmly,

Hannah Hergenhan

**President, Board of Trustees
ECYC, Inc.**

We have designed this handbook to provide families with comprehensive information about our programs, policies, and procedures. As policies and procedures may be updated during the school year, the Administration Team will communicate those changes to families in a timely manner. If you have a question or need information that is not addressed in this handbook, please contact the Executive Director. We are committed to partnering with your family and working together to provide the best possible experience and care for your child.

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ABOUT ECYC

OUR HISTORY

“ECYC, Inc.”, Education with Care for Young Children or "the Center", is a not-for-profit corporation (501c), formed by a group of Merck and Co., Inc., employees who were parents of young children. Their purpose was to establish a program to provide high-quality childcare for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners, with maximum parent involvement. It was organized as a not-for-profit corporation in February of 1980, and a full-time director was hired shortly thereafter to set up and manage the program. The committee of Merck employees that started the project became the first Board of Trustees of ECYC. With a one-time grant from Merck for the start-up phase of the childcare program, ECYC was planned, organized, and set up over the summer of 1980. ECYC opened its doors to the surrounding community including Merck Employees in the First Presbyterian Church in Rahway on September 20, 1980 as Employees' Center for Young Children.

Because of the success of the childcare center and its continuing growth, the ECYC Board of Trustees approached Merck to discuss expansion and Merck then made a further commitment to childcare by agreeing to build a state-of-the-art childcare center at the Merck, Rahway site. ECYC moved into this new building on April 1, 1993. In January 1995, direct subsidies to the ECYC budget were established by Merck and enrollment became exclusive to Merck families.

In 1996, Merck provided funding to expand the childcare center to accommodate 175 children; this expansion was completed in 1997. In September of 2001, Merck requested that ECYC double its size to meet the needs of the company's growth. Construction began in the summer of 2002, and the addition to the existing Center opened in March of 2003. With this expansion, ECYC would be able to accommodate up to 300 children at full enrollment. In 2014, the ECYC Board approached Merck to request that the Center again be able to offer our Child Care programs to the public. This was approved, and we opened our doors to the surrounding communities in January 2015.

The ECYC Board of Trustee, a group of community volunteers, continues to partner with the ECYC administration team to oversee the quality of care provided for all children enrolled in ECYC programs.

OUR MISSION

Education with Care for Young Children (ECYC) is committed to providing an individualized, developmentally appropriate program of quality care for the infants, toddlers, and young children from it's surrounding communities.

To accomplish this, we strive to:

Provide a discovery-based curriculum designed to promote the growth and development of cognition, motor skills, and the social and emotional abilities of all children through the child's natural desire to play.

Evaluate the ongoing development of each child, ensuring the best means of meeting their needs and addressing any weaknesses in collaboration with each child's family.

Promote ongoing open communication among all staff and families to ensure a partnership between the parents/guardians and the childcare staff in planning for the care and development of the children.

Create an atmosphere that promotes a sense of care, concern and acceptance towards all cultures and religions

represented by its families and staff throughout all aspects of the program.

Provide ongoing training for all staff encouraging professionalism, growth and diversity as a critical component in a well-designed learning environment for all children.

Promote best practice in the field of Early Childhood by encouraging both staff and families to participate in various community programs and activities that support all children.

Provide opportunities for families and staff to become involved in ECYC committees and programs as a means of encouraging many points of view and ideas in support of the growth and development of the Center.

Sustain the operation of ECYC through appropriate fiscal management and ongoing collaboration with our sponsoring company, Merck.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At ECYC, we believe all children...

Grow and develop in their own individual ways.

In the first five years of life, children are growing and changing at a very rapid rate. They are growing physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively, and creatively. No two children develop in exactly the same manner or sequence, or at the same rate. Every child's development proceeds in an individual fashion. To provide challenging and supportive experiences for each child, the staff must be familiar with all aspects of each child's specific developmental pattern.

Are accepted and valued for themselves.

As children develop in their unique fashions, they each gain a sense of themselves. A positive self-image is essential if children are to feel confident, allowing them to reach out to the world and to others. To develop a positive self-image, children must feel that the important people in their lives (family, teachers, and peers) accept them and value their feelings and perceptions. Therefore, it is important to create an atmosphere where each individual is considered important and where individual differences are viewed as unique contributions to the richness of life.

Need to develop trusting and loving relationships with the people around them.

As children grow from infancy to early childhood, they depend on adults to meet their needs. The need for loving attention is one of the strongest needs of young children. In order to meet this need, it is necessary to have a high ratio of teachers and caregivers to children. It is also necessary for these teachers and caregivers to be sensitive, caring, and consistent in how they react to each child's behavior. Thus, children can develop the ability to give and receive affection and understanding as they learn to trust themselves and others. The caring relationships that develop between teachers and children do not hamper the strong, Lead bond between parents and children, but rather, reinforce each child's developing capacity to trust and be involved with others.

Can learn to understand and express their feelings in an appropriate manner.

Children have many powerful emotions that they do not understand and cannot always control. Sensitive, responsive adults can help children to recognize, label, express, and deal with these emotions in appropriate ways. In order to feel secure, children must know that their fear will be understood and acknowledged, their joy will be shared, their sadness will be respected, and their anger will be accepted while their violence is gently but firmly restrained.

Should develop a sense of independence and personal responsibility.

When children feel comfortable with themselves, their caregivers, and their surroundings, they are able to act independently, following their own interests. Provided with a secure environment and reasonable limits, children learn that their actions and behaviors have consequences for themselves and for those around them. Thus, a sense of personal

responsibility begins to develop.

Should have ample opportunities to explore and manipulate their environment while developing language skills to express their thoughts in order to learn about the world and how to solve problems.

Children learn as they play. They use all of their senses to discover the world around them and their developing language to express their needs, joys and creative ideas. As they play, they discover and constantly revise their understanding of the world. A variety of experiences must be made available so they can choose activities that are interesting, challenging, safe, and satisfying. Teachers and caregivers must know each child well so that they can offer appropriate materials and challenges, support and expand on their questions and comments, and encourage them to try new tasks in order to help each child in his/her unique discovery and learning process. Given the freedom to interact, children also learn much from each other. Learning should be a joyful and exciting part of growing up.

ECYC will not discriminate against enrollees or their families or ECYC staff due to any legally-recognized basis including, but not limited to: veteran status, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age and physical or mental disability. Further, ECYC admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. ECYC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

ACCREDITATION - NAEYC and NJ QRIS SCALE

ECYC has maintained accreditation standards with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) since 1997. These standards exceed all state standards and are focused on the highest quality care. This is a voluntary system not required by State Regulations. Our commitment to the highest quality care is what we continue to strive for on an ongoing basis

Quality Rating and Improvement Scale (QRIS)

Federal and State departments have invested in improving the quality of early childhood care and education programs through structured rating systems. The Grow NJ Kids program is the Quality Rating and Improvement System in New Jersey. Most states across the nation have implemented Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS).

- **QUALITY:** Evidence-based quality efforts, activities, and support to help programs continuously advance from good, to better, then BEST!
- **RATING:** Easy to understand visual symbol that indicates high-quality programs
- **IMPROVEMENT:** Activities, efforts, supports, resources, and assessments working together to yield positive child outcomes
- **SYSTEM:** Process and framework of interrelated parts working together to support healthy development and school readiness.

ECYC also uses the Environmental rating scale to evaluate and maintain high quality of care and program in every classroom.

CURRICULUM

“Play is the highest form of research.” (-Albert Einstein)

Philosophy

ECYC believes that children learn through their natural instinct to play. Their desire to figure out who they are in this

world and how the world can work for them is the basis by which they continually explore their environment. Discovery through play comes naturally to every child.

The following is a statement from NAEYC, (National Association for the Education of Young Children) describing curriculum as it meets the High-Quality criteria for accreditation with the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs.

“The curriculum is not just the goals of the program and the planned activities but also the daily schedule, the availability and use of materials, transitions between activities, and the way in which routine tasks of living are implemented. Criteria for curriculum implementation reflect the knowledge that young children learn through active manipulation of the environment and concrete experiences that contribute to concept development.

Implementation

Young children at play are developing a solid base of learning for the concepts and tasks that lie ahead in the formal school setting. We focus our curriculum on the children’s play. The written curriculum we use in the Infant, Toddler, Intermediate, Preschool and Pre-K programs is the “Creative Curriculum,” which was developed by Diane Trister Dodge, a leading early childhood specialist. Through this curriculum guide, we are able to give children choices, encourage independence, and help them to develop high self-esteem while gaining knowledge and skills to be successful as they move on to formal schooling. Activities are developmentally appropriate for each age group, and each individual child is encouraged and recognized for his or her particular abilities and personality. We observe how each child manipulates the materials we provide for him/her, and we encourage this exploration.

In addition to this Curriculum ECYC uses the “Gold Assessment” which is a tool for our staff to track and document the overall development of each child, enabling them to identify individual learning needs and abilities on an ongoing basis.

In all our age groups, we also focus on the social and emotional development of each child. We bring into our curriculum opportunities for children to learn to interact in positive ways with others. We encourage compassion, respect, fairness, compromise, and an understanding of differences. We help to develop coping skills for those disappointing times, which are also a part of our social learning experience. Through careful attention to the implementation of our chosen curriculum, we believe ECYC children will grow and develop as intelligent, well-rounded, happy individuals with a desire to continually learn as they go through life.

ECYC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ECYC is a private, nonprofit corporation governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees. The Board is comprised of members of the community who bring professional experience, knowledge, and perspectives that support ECYC's mission.

ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance and long-term oversight of ECYC. Its responsibilities include supporting ECYC's mission, establishing and reviewing organizational policies, providing financial oversight, engaging in long-term and strategic planning, and hiring, supporting, and evaluating the Executive Director.

The Board works closely with the Executive Director while maintaining a clear distinction between governance and day-to-day operations. The Executive Director and administrative team are responsible for the daily management of ECYC, including staffing, classroom operations, implementation of policies, and administration of ECYC's programs.

Families with questions or concerns regarding their child's classroom, teachers, programming, or other day-to-day matters should follow the communication and grievance procedures outlined in this handbook and address those matters with the appropriate teacher, Administrator, or Executive Director.

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

As part of its fiduciary responsibilities, the Board provides oversight of ECYC's finances and works with the Executive Director and administrative team to support the organization's long-term financial health and sustainability.

Financial information regarding ECYC is made available in accordance with applicable requirements. Families seeking additional information may contact the Executive Director.

BOARD MEETINGS AND FAMILY PARTICIPATION

The Board meets regularly throughout the year to conduct the business of the organization. Parents who are interested in attending a Board meeting may contact the Board at boardofecyc@gmail.com for information about upcoming meetings.

ECYC also holds an **Annual Meeting of the Members** and a **Fall Town Hall Meeting**. These meetings provide opportunities for families to hear updates about ECYC, learn more about the work of the Board and administration, ask questions, and share feedback. Information regarding the dates and times of these meetings will be communicated to families in advance.

The Board values feedback from ECYC families and recognizes the importance of staying connected to the needs of the community it serves. Families have opportunities throughout the year to provide feedback through surveys, parent groups, the Annual Meeting of the Members, the Fall Town Hall Meeting, and other forums.

Questions and feedback regarding ECYC's day-to-day operations should generally be directed to the Executive Director or appropriate member of the administrative team. Matters specifically related to Board governance or the responsibilities of the Board may be directed to boardofecyc@gmail.com.

SERVING ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ECYC welcomes interest from parents and other individuals who would like to contribute their time, experience, and expertise through Board service.

Anyone interested in learning more about serving on the Board may contact boardofecyc@gmail.com. Prospective Trustees may be invited to meet with current Board members to learn more about the role, responsibilities, and time commitment involved in Board service and to discuss the experience and perspective they may bring to the Board.

Trustees are selected in accordance with ECYC's By-Laws.

ORGANIZATION AND BY-LAWS

The ECYC By-Laws establish the framework for the governance of the organization, including the composition and responsibilities of the Board, election of Trustees and Officers, meetings, and other corporate matters.

Copies of the ECYC By-Laws are available upon request.

ECYC STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION TEAM

ADMINISTRATION

Senior Administrative team supports the families and staff of ECYC ensuring the highest quality care for the children and a collaborative supportive working environment for all staff. It is comprised of the following positions:

- **Executive Director:** responsible for the overall running of the day to day operations of the Center and for keeping the Board apprised of overall center operations.
- **Assistant Director:** manages payroll/staffing, enrollment, benefits, and building needs.
- **Educational Administrators:** monitors curriculum implementation, professional development and operations of specific programs.
- **Operations and Finance Administrator:** manages enrollment, tuition collection, book keeping, and hiring.
- **Operations and Communications Administrator:** manages compliance, children and staff files, marketing and communications.

PROGRAM STAFF

Our program staff is made up of Lead Teachers, Primary Teachers, Floating Teachers and Part Time Assistant Teachers. The educational background and experience of everyone is reviewed as part of the hiring process. ECYC maintains the National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation credentialing requirements. Staff in the position of Lead or Primary Teachers will have completed the minimum requirement of a Child Development Associate certificate (CDA, a nationally recognized certificate requiring one year of in-service training and 120 clocked classroom hours of instruction in child development) or be in the process of obtaining/renewing the credential. Staff in the position of Lead Teachers must have a minimum of a CDA and be working towards or have an Associate or BA in Early Childhood Education or recommended related field. The classroom staff creates a learning environment that is safe, healthy, and nurturing reflecting the high-quality standards of ECYC.

- **Lead and Primary Teachers**
Lead and Primary teachers are assigned to a number of individual families according to the child staff ratio of their age group. They track each child assigned to them on a daily basis and conduct ongoing assessments of each child. They observe and evaluate their assigned children for developmental milestones, meet with parents about any concerns and hold parent conferences to discuss the children's progress. Our Lead and Primary Teachers develop special bonds with each family and each child under their care.
- **Part-Time Assistant Teachers**
Part-Time Assistant Teachers usually work a two to five-hour part-time day. They are instrumental in assisting the full-time staff in the transitions that take place in the morning and at the end of the day. They help to maintain low ratios during peak times of activity and/or take responsibility for the end of the day and the closing procedures.
- **Floating Teachers**
Floating Teachers are full-time staff members who are each assigned to a particular age group as a "home base." The Floating Assistant Teachers are typically assigned to substitute in this age group when a regular staff member is out for any reason. Floating Assistant Teachers are also used in other programs to assist with staffing needs as necessary. These Floaters become familiar with the children in all of the programs. Thus, when regular caregivers are out, ECYC has available full-time substitute staff that is already familiar with the children and routines of ECYC.

- **Substitutes**

Substitutes are also a part of our staff. Substitutes are on call when we need coverage after our Floating Assistant Teachers have already been assigned. Substitutes go through the same screening and hiring process as all other staff.

- **Volunteers**

Volunteers are welcome at ECYC. These people go through the same screening, interview process and orientation training as all of the paid positions.

Kitchen Staff

ECYC employs a full-time Kitchen Manager, and a Kitchen Assistant. This staff works together to plan and deliver a nutritionally balanced breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack to all of our children on a daily basis. The Kitchen staff prepare all the foods and make sure items are fresh, fruits and vegetables are washed, and expiration dates are monitored. Special needs for individual children are charted and kept in the kitchen for daily reference. This insures that those meals will be included in the meal count of the day. ECYC has the ability to consult with Registered Dietitians when reviewing our menus as a support to our Kitchen staff.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE CENTER

A main goal of our center is to maintain close communication among children, parents, caregivers, and the staff. Communication should be sent home to parents on a frequent basis both by the administration and the teachers. We believe in building bridges of communication between each child's home and the school. Greeting parents and caregivers at pick up and drop off and communicating in a friendly way is a daily expectation.

UP-TO-DATE FAMILY INFORMATION POLICY

Day-to-day safety depends on real time accounting of all on campus, up-to-date emergency contacts, student medical information, and verification of approved caregivers at dismissal. Please notify your teachers and the administration staff promptly if there are any changes to:

- Address
- Telephone numbers
- Emails
- Emergency Contacts
- Authorized pick-up persons
- Medical Information
- Allergies
- Family circumstance that may affect your child's care

PROCARE APP

The Procare app is one of the primary ways ECYC communicates with families. Parents can receive important updates and announcements from the administration, messages and updates from their child's teachers and classroom. Procare may also be used to share information about your child's day, classroom activities, events, photos, and other important reminders. We encourage all parents and guardians to download the Procare app and enable notifications to receive timely communications and updates from ECYC. Please ensure your contact information in the app is up to date.

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

The Administration Team sends emails home to parents providing general school updates and any pertinent information about the program or your children. Any updated calendar of information will be included in these notes and should be considered the most updated information regarding scheduling.

It is our hope that email communications from the office and the classrooms will give parents ample notification of all school events and holidays in order for families to make necessary arrangements to participate. Please make sure that we have a current email address for all parents/guardians.

FRONT DESK COMMUNICATIONS

The busiest hours at the front desk are between 7:30am – 9:15am and then again between 5:15pm and 6:00pm. During these windows of time administrators are responsible for answering phone calls, answering questions, accepting or providing paperwork, and greeting children and families. It is reasonable for whoever is working at the front desk to be able to engage in brief informational or friendly conversations. Parents looking to have longer conversations, or who have questions that might require privacy and explicit attention, should be sure to schedule meetings or phone calls with administrators to assure they get the proper attention and follow up they deserve.

ECYC CONTACT INFORMATION

The phone number to the mainline at ECYC is (732) 594-3292

The following is a list of appropriate staff email addresses that you can use to communicate:

- Executive Director: jacqueline.klein@merck.com
- Assistant Director: Jennifer_sola@merck.com
- Educational Administrator (Infant, Toddler, Intermediate): Kebrina_blaine@merck.com
- Educational Administrator (Preschool, Pre-k, Kindergarten, Camp Discovery): Mariyah.Dortch@merck.com
- Operations and Communications Administrator: Ashley.rolon@merck.com
- Operations and Finance Administrator: brianne.howarth1@merck.com

Classroom emails:

Ducklings	ecycducklings@gmail.com
Butterflies	butterfliesecyc@gmail.com
Honeybees	honeybeesecyc@gmail.com
Bunnies	bunniesecyc@gmail.com
Turtles	ecycturtles@gmail.com
Otters	ecycotters@gmail.com
Frogs	ecycfrogs@gmail.com
Goldfish	ecycgoldfish@gmail.com
Fireflies	ecycfireflies@gmail.com
Inchworms	ecycinchworms@gmail.com
Ladybugs	ecycladybugs@gmail.com
Grasshoppers	ecycgrasshoppers@gmail.com
Robins	ecycrobins@gmail.com
Hummingbirds	ecychummingbirds@gmail.com
Cardinals	ecyccardinals@gmail.com
Bluejays	ecycbluejays@gmail.com
Seals	sealsecyc@gmail.com
Dolphins	ecycdolphins@gmail.com
Starfish	prekecyc@gmail.com
Kindergarten 1	kindergartenecyc@icloud.com
Kindergarten 2	kindergarten2ecyc@icloud.com

Class Lists

We supply complete class lists to establish a communication chain within each class. If your contact information

changes and you would like an updated class list distributed, it is the parents' responsibility to make this request. We ask that parents refrain from using the class list for any purpose not related to ECYC or their children, as this information has been prepared for parents only and is shared in confidence.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

A child is registered when the parent/guardian has signed an enrollment agreement and paid the non-refundable enrollment fee. The parent must also complete all enrollment forms and complete intake interviews with the administrative and program staff. During the interviews, the child's development and ECYC's policies will be discussed.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

- A separate application to ECYC must be filed for each child a family wishes to enroll.
- Filing this application does not obligate parents to enroll their children in ECYC
- Filing this application does not guarantee a space in ECYC
- A non-refundable application processing fee must be paid (per application) at the time of filing
- Each application must indicate a desired entry date. ECYC does not enroll children younger than three months of age.
- When an opening in a program becomes available, the age-eligible (or nearly age-eligible) children currently enrolled in younger ECYC programs will be considered first.
- Siblings of children enrolled in ECYC programs (excluding Summer Fun Club and Back-Up Care) at the time of the offer.

ENROLLMENT FEES

These fees are one-time fees that cover the administrative costs of enrolling a child. These fees are not applied to your first month's tuition

- **Application Processing Fee:** (non-refundable) \$75.00 to place a child on our enrollment waitlist.
- **Enrollment Administrative Fee:** (non-refundable) \$175.00, payable upon the acceptance of a space in our programs.

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT POLICY

The ECYC Kindergarten program will enroll a maximum of 21 children in a room. Children who are age-eligible for kindergarten in the school district where they reside will be eligible for the ECYC Kindergarten. An introductory meeting for the Kindergarten program is held every winter for the ECYC Pre-K parents who are given priority for Kindergarten enrollment. After this meeting, Pre-K parents will be given a final deadline to make their enrollment decisions, and a deposit will be due at that time.

If spaces are available after all the Pre-K parents have made their enrollment decisions, children will be enrolled on an ongoing basis. To secure a space in the ECYC Kindergarten, parents must submit a non-refundable deposit equal to one month of the current Kindergarten tuition. This deposit will be counted towards the September Kindergarten tuition payment. ECYC requires 60 days' notice prior to the first day of Kindergarten for a full refund of said deposit. Any notice of less than 60 days will be refunded 50% of said deposit. Enrollment of a child in the ECYC Infant through the Pre-K programs does not guarantee that the child will have a reserved spot in the ECYC Kindergarten program.

CAMP DISCOVERY ENROLLMENT POLICY

The maximum capacity of three ECYC classrooms determines the maximum number of children to be enrolled in the ECYC Summer Camp. To be age-eligible for the Summer Camp: Camp Discovery, children must have completed Kindergarten through Third Grade.

Enrollment priority for Camp Discovery is as follows:

Priority goes to any children enrolled in the ECYC Kindergarten program. All other children are based on a first come first serve basis. For each Camp Discovery weekly session in which a child enrolls, a non-refundable deposit is required. Full remaining tuition for each weekly session registered will be due prior to the start of Camp. A waiting list will be maintained for families who were not able to enroll during the initial registration period. Should a slot become available, applicants will be called in the order in which their applications are received. A non-refundable deposit will be required within five working days to secure the slot.

If a child withdraws from ECYC prior to the beginning of a Camp session, a refund for that week's camp tuition, minus the non-refundable deposit, will be granted only if ECYC is able to fill the vacant slot prior to the first day of the session. Refunds will not be granted to families who withdraw their children from Camp Discovery during an ongoing weekly session. Families with two or more children concurrently enrolled in ECYC's Camp program for 5 weeks or more are eligible for a 10% discount. Families with at least one child enrolled in ECYC's camp program for 5 weeks or more and at least one child concurrently enrolled full-time in ECYC's childcare programs are eligible for a 10% discount.

PART-TIME ENROLLMENT POLICY

A Part-Time schedule shall be offered in all programs except Kindergarten which is scheduled in conjunction with the Public Schools.

- Part-Time enrollment for Pre-k will be limited to no less than 3 days per week. This is to ensure that the program is able to consistently provide all children the necessary educational needs for entering Kindergarten.
- In Preschool families may choose a three, or four day a week Part Time schedule. ECYC will make every effort to accommodate requests for specific days based on room capacity and ratio requirements.

CHANGES TO ENROLLMENT

Changes to Schedules

Notice of a need to amend a schedule must be given two weeks prior to the amendment. The days of enrollment for a part-time schedule must remain consistent from week to week within a month. The exception to this will be for days when a program is involved in a special activity or trip

Temporary Withdrawal from Enrollment

If a parent wishes to withdraw a child temporarily from ECYC, they must provide at least two weeks' notice, in writing. Such writing shall include departure date and date of re-enrollment. The withdrawn child may not re-enter ECYC for no less than two months from the date of withdrawal.

General Withdrawal from Enrollment

If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from ECYC, they must provide at least two weeks' notice, in writing. Such writing shall include departure date.

MERCK SITE MOVEMENT POLICY

For any Merck employee who moves from another Merck site to Rahway, the following policy for placement of that employee's child/children on the ECYC waiting list will apply:

If a transferred employee has a child already enrolled in a Merck Child Care Center, that child will take priority on the

waiting list over all other children except staff children and siblings of Merck employee children. If a transferred employee's child is on the waiting list at a Merck Child Care Center, that child will be transferred to ECYC's waiting list according to the most recent desired entry date.

If a transferred employee's child is not on a Merck Child Care Center waiting list, that child will be entered on the waiting list according to the priority for children of Merck employees.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY

A non-refundable enrollment fee is due upon acceptance of a space and is payable within one week of the acceptance in order to guarantee the space. Upon acceptance of the space, the first month's tuition will be due following the earlier of receipt of an invoice or two weeks prior to your child's scheduled start date. The first month's tuition will be required in order to guarantee the space. This also applies to families returning from an extended leave, i.e., continuous absence of two or more months.

Once enrolled, tuition will be due on the first business day of the month. If tuition comes in past the tenth day of the month, a fine of \$30.00 will be incurred. If tuition is not paid by the 15th of the month, ECYC has the right to terminate enrollment.

If a monthly schedule change is needed you must notify administration, no less than two weeks prior to the change and this will not go into effect before the first of the following month. If a child comes an additional day beyond the predetermined schedule, the parent will owe the daily rate for that day.

No refunds will be given for schedule changes made by the family without this two-week written notice. Any refund given will be provided on a pro rata basis, excluding the days that are part of the two-week notice period.

Tuition is due monthly regardless of a child's absence, holidays, inclement weather, or vacation. If an extended leave is planned by a family, they may choose to pay the equivalent of a two-day tuition for their child's program for the length of the leave to hold the space or they may withdraw; provided, however, if the child is withdrawn, there is a two-month waiting period beginning at the time the child is withdrawn before the child is eligible to re-enroll. There will be no guarantee of a space upon return from the two-month waiting period, a two-week written notice of a requested date to return must be filed, and the current enrollment fee will be due at re-enrollment.

If the Center or your child's classroom closes for a period of (1) two or more consecutive weeks or (2) more than an aggregate of ten (10) school days in a calendar month due to circumstances that would make it inadvisable, commercially impracticable, illegal, or impossible to keep the classroom open, you will be reimbursed the pro rata amount of the monthly tuition for the periods of the closure that exceed two calendar weeks or an aggregate of ten (10) days in a calendar month. If a closure is necessary for longer than a month, a holding fee equivalent to the two-day tuition of the child's program for each month closed will be necessary to hold a space for when the Center re-opens. (See tuition schedule.) Should the Center/classroom reopen in the middle of a month, the tuition for that month will be the pro rata portion of the regular tuition minus the holding fee paid for that month. For the sake of clarity, the holding fee(s) paid for any previously closed month(s) is non-refundable. Alternatively, families can choose to withdraw their child from the Center. Should a child be withdrawn from the Center, there will be no guaranteed enrollment once the Center reopens, a two-week written notice of a desired date to re-enroll would be required, and the current enrollment fee will be owed.

ANCILLARY FEE

The \$250 ancillary fee is billed to parents whose children are in Preschool through Kindergarten on a yearly basis prior to the beginning of summer programming. Parents are charged the fee in the Spring, and it is used throughout the summer to pay for admission fees and transportation costs of field trips as well as access to the swimming pool in summer months.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

A 10% sibling discount is available for families with two or more children concurrently enrolled at the Center on a full-time basis. The discounted rate will be applied to each of the lower tuitions. ECYC reserves the right to change or discontinue this policy at any time.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CALENDAR AND HOURS OF OPERATION

ECYC will be closed a designated number of days each year. ECYC's calendar of closings will be distributed to Parents at the beginning of each new calendar year and upon enrollment, with reminders of these scheduled closings well in advance through e-mail.

ECYC is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY AND FEE

ECYC is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Parents must arrange for their children to be picked up at ECYC by 6:00 p.m. every day. Any child who is not picked up by 6:00 p.m. will be brought to the front desk area and signed in with a senior staff member. Two members of the Administrative Staff will care for the child/children until the parents arrive. Parents arriving after 6:00 p.m. will sign out their children at the front desk.

A \$10.00 fine will be charged for the first ten minutes past 6:00pm and \$5.00 for every five minutes after that. This fine applies to any part of the five-minute unit.

In an emergency situation requiring late pick-up, parents should contact ECYC at 732-594-3292 as soon as possible to make us aware of the situation. This call will also help us to prepare the child/children so they will not be worried about their parent's picking them up.

INCLIMATE WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSURES

In the event ECYC has to close or delay an opening due to snow or any other condition, parents will be notified through a text message and e-mail at least an hour in advance when possible. Please be sure your cell phone number and carrier is given to Administration at the front desk so that we can be sure your information is included in this text/e-mail blast. Please also remember to update us with any changes to your contact number.

ECYC will not open until sufficient staff is available to maintain the appropriate child-to-staff ratios. Parents who arrive early must remain with their children until these ratios are achieved.

ABSENTEE POLICY

Please notify ECYC if your child will be out for any length of time due to illness or any other circumstances by calling 732-594-3292. This will allow us to accommodate and particular staffing needs. If we have not heard from a family within three days of an absence ECYC will contact the family. Tuition will be due during any absence.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY - FEVER POLICY

For the health and safety of all students and staff, the following Fever Policy is strictly enforced:

Any child who exhibits a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be dismissed from school.

Children who are sent home with a fever must remain home for the remainder of that day and the entirety of the subsequent school day. In addition, the child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to ECYC.

Please be advised that the required 24-hour period does not permit a return at the same time on the following day. For

example, if a child is dismissed at 1:00 PM on Monday due to a fever, they are not eligible to return to school at 1:00 PM on Tuesday. **The child must remain out of school for the entirety of the subsequent school day and may return on the following school day, provided they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.**

A complete list of symptoms/illnesses requiring exclusion as per Office of Licensing Health Requirements 3A:52-7.1, along with the corresponding length of time the child will be required to remain home with each of the symptoms can be found in the Health, Wellness, and Safety Policies portion of this handbook.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN STAFF AND FAMILIES

We value the strong connections that develop between our teachers and families. To maintain a professional, safe, and equitable environment for all members of our school community, families may not employ currently employed ECYC staff for babysitting, tutoring, transportation, or other private childcare services.

This policy is designed to protect children, families, and employees by maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, avoiding conflicts of interest, and ensuring that all interactions remain within the scope of the educational relationship. By keeping school and personal childcare arrangements separate, we help preserve the trust, objectivity, and professionalism that are essential to high-quality care and education.

We appreciate families' understanding and cooperation in supporting this important policy.

PARKING

Parking in the ECYC lot is for childcare drop-off and pick-up only. Your Merck ID badge will provide access to the ECYC lot throughout the day. Families are allowed two ID badges that will provide access to the ECYC lot and building. The badges should be given to those members of the family who will be regularly picking up and dropping off your child. All other visitors to ECYC must press the button at the gate and identify themselves to gain entry. Any parents/guardians/family members who come to visit, chaperone a trip, or attend an activity at ECYC may leave their cars in the ECYC lot for the duration of the trip or activity. Parents using the Merck Shuttle to go to other Merck sites may also leave their cars in the ECYC lot. No other all-day parking is permitted in the Child Care Center lot without permission from the Executive Director for special circumstances.

ECYC PROGRAM INFORMATION

ECYC cares for and educates children ranging in age from infants of three months old up to and including Kindergarteners. In addition, supplemental Back-Up Care and Summer Camp programs serve first- through 3rd grade. The program for each age group is designed to meet the needs of the youngest child in the room as well as the oldest. A variety of materials and activities are made available to stimulate learning and social experiences that challenge each child to progress to the next level of development. Each of our suites of rooms accommodates children of a particular age range.

PROGRAMS AND AGE GROUPINGS

The youngest children are broken into three groups: Infants, Toddlers, and Intermediate.

- In the Infant program, the minimum age of enrollment is three months. "Infants" is a mixed-age group which may include children up to 15 months of age.
- In our Toddler program, the minimum age of enrollment is 15 months. This is another mixed-age group of children, which may include children up to 28 months of age.
- In the "Intermediate" program, the minimum age of enrollment is approximately 21-24 months, and the group may range in age up to 36 months.

Infants:

Each Room capacity is 8 children ECYC ratio is 4:1 (children:staff) State ratio is 4:1

Toddlers:

Each Room capacity is 8 children ECYC ratio is 4:1 (children:staff) State ratio is 6:1

Intermediate:

Each Room capacity is 12 children ECYC ratio is 6:1 (children:staff) State ratio is 10:1

The older age groups include our Preschool, Pre-K, and Kindergarten programs. Age ranges in the Preschool and Pre-K programs are based on the school district requirements for Kindergarten in the individual family's home town. We only accept children into our Kindergarten program who meet the age requirement for their school district's kindergarten. With this in mind, our Pre-K group includes children who are turning five and will be able to attend the Kindergarten program in the next school year. Preschool children would be age-eligible to attend Kindergarten in two years. Preschool and Pre-K children are at a developmental stage for creating friendships, and this age-grouping allows them to stay with their friends during this stage.

Preschool:

Each Room capacity is 18 children

ECYC ratio is 9:1 (children: staff) State ratio is 10:1

Pre-K:

Each Room capacity is 20 children ECYC ratio is 10:1 (children: staff) State ratio is 12:1

Kindergarten:

Room capacity is 21 children ECYC ratio is 12:1

State ratio is 15:1

The Kindergarten program begins in September and ends in June. The program follows the same hours as the rest of ECYC. It is a full-day program, taught by certified teachers. The Kindergarten curriculum fully prepares the children for entrance to first grade. Our Kindergarten Staff examines the core curricula from the various school districts

represented by ECYC Kindergarteners to ensure that our program meets all requirements. Children attending our ECYC Kindergarten must demonstrate readiness for kindergarten and meet the age requirements for kindergarten in their home school districts.

Our Kindergarten curriculum complements the Creative Curriculum, following the same precept of hands-on experiences. Our Kindergarten children continue the process of learning through exploration. The academics that are brought into curriculum at this level are still presented in a discovery-based manner, encouraging the children's interests and developing a desire to learn. Formal academics occur in our phonics and reading programs. Math, science, social studies and language arts are hands-on programs. Ongoing assessment of abilities is also a part of kindergarten. Through work sample portfolios the Kindergarten Teacher keeps parents abreast of their child's growth and development. Upon signed request ECYC documents showing a child's growth and accomplishments are provided to the school in which they will attend First Grade.

MOVEMENT THROUGH AGE GROUPS

Movement from one age group to another is based on the age of each child and is carefully planned to consider each child's developmental abilities and the friendships he or she has made. Program capacity and operational needs will also be considered when appropriate. Should an age group need to be adjusted in any way due to staffing or budgetary concerns, parents will be notified.

Our Infant and Toddler children move from one program to the next gradually, one at a time or in very small groups. Their move is determined by discussion of their readiness for the next age group with the parent and Lead Teacher. Each child is expected to stay with a Lead Teacher for no less than nine to twelve months in each program depending on the age at which they began. Children continue to move according to age, ability, and available space as they move on to each new age group. The moves of these younger children are planned this way in order to meet their particular developmental needs, allowing them the appropriate time to adjust to their new environment.

In the older age groups, *Intermediate Preschool, and Pre-K*, the children move to the next program in September, as long as they meet the age requirement for that program. Again, they remain in these programs for up to one year before moving on unless special circumstances call for an earlier or later move. Children may move into another age group at other times during the year if spaces become available and the children are recognized as being ready and age-eligible for the new program.

Each move is planned and discussed with the parents. The children are prepared for the change by visiting the older age group on a regular basis in the weeks leading up to the move. This process helps the children become familiar with the new rooms and the new staff, helping to smooth the transition.

Before the move, ECYC staff arranges a meeting with the parents to provide detailed information on the new program. This is done individually with parents in the Infant and Toddler rooms. In the Intermediate through Preschool the teachers hold group "bridge meetings" to introduce parents to the next program.

The Pre-K families are invited to a Kindergarten Presentation held at the Center in January to enable them to compare the ECYC program with public and private schools in their area. At this meeting questions regarding enrollment in the public and private settings are addressed.

OTHER PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Emergency Back-Up Care at ECYC

This program is designed for children ages three months through Kindergarten. ECYC also provides backup care for school-age children attending Kindergarten through Third Grade. The school age program is subject to staffing availability and program capacity. It is intended for use when a parent's childcare arrangements are unexpectedly

disrupted.

All registration forms, including a medical form with physician's signature, must be on file prior to the child's entry. Medical/immunization and emergency records must be kept up to date. Only registered children with up-to-date files will be allowed to attend the program.

A 48-hour notice is requested. For emergency same-day care, ECYC must be notified by 7:30 a.m. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Parents/Guardians must allow at least 15-20 minutes for drop-off on their child's first day to share pertinent information with the caregiver and help the child to acclimate to the surroundings.

When enrolling for a back-up day through ECYC, payment in full is due the first day of care needed, whether it is for one day or a series of consecutive days. For parents who are Merck employees, 10 days per calendar year may be covered through the company Back Up Care benefit program. Please contact Merck HR/Benefits Center for more information.

Back-Up Care for Established Part-Time Schedule Families

Part-Time enrolled families may add days to their established schedule to a maximum of 10 days in the calendar year. All requests will be considered based on enrollment capacities and staffing needs. This will be at a cost equal to the pro-rata daily rate of the program in which the child is enrolled.

For Employees of Merck these 10 days may be scheduled through the Wealthy program at the rate. After a family has used the 10 days any requests for additional days will be considered Back Up Care and charged at the Back Up Care rate.

Camp Discovery

During July and August, ECYC offers a summer program for children who have completed Kindergarten through Third Grade. This program, Camp Discovery can accommodate up to 70 children. The program is centered on themes such as Sea Life, Space, and The Environment. Field trips are planned according to the themes. Arts and crafts, and sports, round out this program, providing the children with many exciting summer activities. Children swim twice a week at a local Community Swimming Pool. They are bused to the pool by a certified bus company with seat belts. ECYC provides certified lifeguards for each group additional to those Lifeguards provided by the Pool. A 12:1 ratio of children to staff is maintained for this age group. Field trip ratios are generally lower, depending on the trip and the number of chaperones that are available. ECYC Camp Discovery is run in one-week sessions. Please see Administration for Camp Discovery enrollment policies and procedures.

PREPARING FOR CHILDCARE

Children should come to the child care center dressed in comfortable play clothes. Children learn by playing and this often involves messy activities. Please do not send your child to ECYC in clothes that are special to you. Even with the use of smocks and paint shirts, we cannot guarantee that clothes will stay clean.

ECYC requires that the children wear shoes with rubber soles and a closed toe and back. Sandals, "Crocs", clogs and shoes with hard soles are not to be worn at ECYC for safety reasons. Climbing on outdoor equipment and playing on equipment that is placed on Fibar® pieces is most safe when children are wearing rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes.

For our ancillary programs, and for field trips, parents will be notified as to any particular clothing the children might need.

DRESSING FOR THE WEATHER

Children need to be dressed appropriately for the current weather conditions to play outdoors:

- Extra clothes to change into when coming back inside
- Footwear should provide support for running and climbing.
- **Snow:** heavy coat, waterproof boots, hat, and mittens/gloves
- **Rain:** raincoat and waterproof boots
- **Different temperature throughout the day:** layers of clothing
- **Sunny days:** lightweight clothing that is sun protective, including long-sleeved shirts, hats, sunscreen, bug spray
- **Waterplay and Pool days:** Appropriate swimwear and gear, watershoes (no clogs or flip-flops), towel, dry change of clothing and shoes.

Examples of appropriate footwear include sneakers, gym shoes, and other shoes with rubber soles that enclose the feet and will not come off easily. Examples of inappropriate clothing and footwear include:

- Footwear that can come off while running, or that does not provide support for climbing (examples: flip-flops and clogs)
- Clothing that can catch on playground equipment (examples: clothes with drawstrings or loops)
- Clothing that does not protect children from the current weather conditions

WHAT TO BRING FROM HOME

A cubby (a small unit with shelves for storage and hooks for hanging jackets and other clothing) will be provided for the storage of your child's individual belongings. The staff will show you these cubbies on your first day in each program. Please refrain from bringing too much from home, as the cubbies have limited storage space. The cubby will also be used to keep your child's special creations of the day for you to pick up each night.

In general, please provide the following items for your child/children:

- For Infants, all bottles **MUST BE LABELED WITH THE CHILD'S FIRST and LAST NAME** and the current DATE. Formula and breastmilk need to be appropriately labeled.
- For Infants, two portable-crib-size sheets to be left at ECYC, one in the crib, and an extra stored in the cubby.
- For Toddlers through Kindergarteners, a regular crib-size sheet, or a sleep mat. ECYC sells quilted sleep mats that lay on our cots; parents who wish to purchase these mats should inquire at the front desk. Sheets and sleep mats are to be taken home on Fridays to be washed and returned on Mondays.
- If you would like your child to have bottled water, please provide a labeled water bottle each day with your

child's name clearly marked.

- A small, washable blanket to be left at ECYC during the week for older children. (No sleeping bags, please.)
- A stuffed toy (if desired) for naptime for Toddlers through Kindergarteners. ECYC has stuffed animals available for children who forget their sleeping friends or decide they want one. Sleep toys will not be allowed in cribs of children under the age of 12 months.
- Naptime pillows are not allowed in the Toddler programs. For older age groups, if used, pillows must be crib-sized pillows that fit in the cubbies. No pillows or loose bedding, (e.g., bumpers) will be allowed in the infant cribs as per health and safety guidelines for SIDS.
- At least one complete change of clothing appropriate for the season. (including socks and underwear). For Infants and Toddlers, we suggest more than one complete change of clothing. For children in the toilet-training process, several extra changes of clothing are recommended. Each evening, parents should take any dirty clothing home, and a fresh change of clothes should be returned in the next morning if necessary. Parents should clear out their children's cubbies every Friday. This way, parents will be able to keep up with clothing needs as the seasons change and as their children grow. Parents of part-time children should clear out their children's cubbies on the last day of the week that the children are scheduled to attend.
- Parents of Infants and Toddlers who use disposable diapers must bring in their own disposable diapers. Please bring just enough to fit in your children's diaper cubbies. If you are using pull-ups, please provide pull-ups with Velcro closures at the sides.
- If you are using cloth diapers, you must provide these diapers and a diaper pail. The cloth diapers must be absorbent and used with an outer covering to prevent leakage. At the end of each day, soiled cloth diapers must be removed by the parent and the diaper pail must go home on weekends to be thoroughly cleaned.
- If a parent wishes to have a cream or powder used on a child at diapering, these items must be provided by the parent, and should be clearly labeled with the child's name.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent will be used only with written parental permission. Sunscreen must be provided by the parent and clearly labeled with the child's name.

At times memos, notices, and information for the parents from ECYC staff and administration will be sent home. In general, we will contact parents by e-mail with this information; however, when it is necessary for us to provide you with hard copies, this information will be put with your child's tracking sheet.

Clothing and personal belongings are easily misplaced in a group of young children. **Please permanently label all clothing, baby bottles and personal belongings with your child's name.** If an unlabeled item is found, it will be put in the Lost and Found Box located at the front of the building. Please keep any special, valuable, or sentimental items at home. **ECYC is not responsible for any lost items.**

Toys from Home

ECYC discourages bringing any toys from home. However, we recognize that a child may have a special toy that s/he may insist on bringing to ECYC. In these cases, please explain to the child that other children may want to play with the special toy and it could get broken or lost. Bringing the special toy in the car and leaving it there for pick-up time is one way to help your child's transition in the morning. If a child is having extreme difficulty with this transition, the parent should speak with the staff that may be able to help with the morning routine and make other suggestions.

On "Sharing Days" in the older age groups, children are encouraged to bring something from home to show the group. This is an activity that encourages language development. Please check your classroom handbook or ask the staff how "Sharing Day" is planned for your child's program. When planning a sharing toy, please direct your child away from anything that represents a weapon. Toy swords, toy guns, water pistols, etc., are not allowed in ECYC.

We ask parents not to bring in videos or video games from home. The ECYC curriculum does not encourage the use of videos except in conjunction with a particular theme or activity such as Fire Safety Week. When videos are used, they will be reviewed by the staff first and limited to no more than 30 minutes viewing time.

DAILY ROUTINE AND CLASSROOM POLICIES

ARRIVAL AND SIGN-IN

ECYC opens at 7:30 a.m. We want to provide the best learning experience for your child and every child in the class, so it is very important that you arrive on time each day. Children are strongly encouraged to arrive to their classrooms no later than 9:30 a.m. to provide for a smooth transition into the day with their friends.

This ensures that your child doesn't miss out on important morning routines and greetings, feels settled and included, and doesn't miss out on the chance to complete the full work period by progressing from more familiar to more challenging work. It also ensures that other children in the class are not distracted from their concentrated work when you arrive.

Each adult who brings a child to ECYC is asked to:

- Log your child in at the iPad stations in the lobby.
- Accompany the child to his/her rooms and have your child wash their hands.
- Help him/her take off outer garments (if help is necessary).
- Speak to a program staff member to be sure staff is aware that the child is present and has noted their arrival on their attendance board.
- Sign the child into the program on the designated sign-in sheet.
- Let a staff member know when you are leaving.

Your signature is required every day. After logging your child in on the iPad in the lobby you can walk your child to their classroom. Please be sure to make eye contact with a staff member before leaving the room. Even though staff may be busy during this transition time, they will always take time to greet each parent.

LATE DROP-OFFS AND EARLY PICK-UPS

We understand that on occasion things come up and families run late. We also recognize that your children may need to attend doctor's appointments occasionally.

To minimize disruptions to the daily routines of the children and teachers, Children will not be permitted to attend school if they arrive after 10:00 am, unless prior arrangements have been made with Administration or circumstances warrant an exception.

If you are dropping off your child after 10:00am, please sign your child in at the front office. A staff member will walk your child to his or her classroom to minimize disruption to the classroom.

If your child needs to attend a doctor's appointment or other activity during the school day but you plan to have them rejoin the class afterwards, please give us 24 hour notice of the scheduled partial-day absence and the approximate times you and your child will leave and return. Because the safety of you and your child is important to us, we may give you and/or your emergency contacts a call if you and your child have not arrived back within 30 minutes of the anticipated return time

BREAKFAST POLICY

Breakfast is served at specific times in each age group, beginning at 8:15 a.m. and continuing in some rooms up to 9:30 a.m. Breakfast will not be offered to, or saved for, children who arrive after 9:30am. Please ask your child's teacher when breakfast will be served until and the schedule for their particular classroom. If parents plan to arrive past the time that breakfast is served in a child's room, the child should have breakfast before leaving home.

MORNING GOODBYES

Separation can be a difficult experience. The morning goodbye routine can be sad for both parent and child. Our staff is aware of the parent's feelings and will be there with suggestions and support to make goodbyes as easy as possible for the parent while helping to soothe and comfort the child. By reading the child's cues, staff will nurture and support the child as s/he experiences separation and will help the child deal with these feelings.

Although you may feel deeply conflicted about leaving in the morning it is important that your child knows that it is time for you to go. Sneaking out can only lead to mistrust. It is best to tell your child that you will return. Their trust will build as you say goodbye and return every day. Depending on the age of your child, it is sometimes beneficial to help him or her understand when you will return by connecting it with something familiar in the day's routine, e.g., after snack.

A consistent ritual in the morning may be helpful for your child if s/he is hesitant to let you leave. Some parents plan to read one short story before leaving or agree on three kisses and one hug. This same routine every morning prepares the child for your departure. The child understands that, after the ritual is complete, it is definitely time for Mom and/or Dad to leave. **Parents who linger and give repeated indecisive good-byes signal mixed messages to their children.** You are free to call your child's room as soon as you get to work so you can ease your mind and be able to concentrate on your day. Staff will often call parents themselves to reassure them that their children are doing fine.

Saying goodbye is an experience that both parent and child will go through over and over in their lifetimes. Learning to cope with fear and anxiety and seeing that life will be right again is a major developmental step which we all experience in both parenthood and childhood.

When a relative, friend, or any other adult has been asked to drop off your child at ECYC, that person, too, should follow the routines you and your child have established in order to maintain consistency for your child. Share your daily routines with the friend or relative, and be sure that person also knows about signing your child in for the day on the daily sign-in sheet.

PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF CONVERSATIONS

Parents and teachers are expected to briefly exchange important information at drop off and pick up times. However, conversations should be kept brief as the teachers need to be devoting all their attention to the children. Please call or email your child's teacher to schedule a convenient time to speak if a longer conversation is necessary.

DEPARTURE AND SIGN-OUT

ECYC is open until 6:00 p.m. Toward the end of the day, children will be involved in quieter, less structured activities, hopefully making departure from the program easier for anyone picking up the child. However, parents should be aware that children may want to take a moment longer to finish what they are involved in, or to share something at ECYC with the parent. Please plan your time to allow for this interaction so that you will be able to leave on time when ECYC closes at 6:00 p.m. and feel free to enlist the aid of a staff member if the child is not willing to go.

If the child is to be picked up earlier or later than normal, please be sure the teacher is aware of this in advance and can prepare the child if necessary. If a change in plans is necessary, please call your child's room or leave a message at the

front desk (732-594-3292).

- Always sign out your child on the designated sign out sheet in the room.
- Always tell a staff member when you are leaving with your child.
- Have your child wash their hands before leaving for the day.
- Always log out your child at the iPads in the lobby.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY AND FEE

ECYC is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Parents must arrange for their children to be picked up at ECYC by 6:00 p.m. every day. Any child who is not picked up by 6:00 p.m. will be brought to the front desk area and signed in with a senior staff member. Two members of the Administrative Staff will care for the child/children until the parents arrive. Parents arriving after 6:00 p.m. will sign out their children at the front desk.

A \$10.00 fine will be charged for the first ten minutes past 6:00pm and \$5.00 for every five minutes after that. This fine applies to any part of the five-minute unit.

In an emergency situation requiring late pick-up, parents should contact ECYC at 732-594-3292 as soon as possible to make us aware of the situation. This call will also help us to prepare the child/children so they will not be worried about their parent's picking them up.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children shall only be released to parent or adult authorized by parent. ECYC will never release a child to anyone who is not authorized (in writing) by the parent to pick up the child. Nor will ECYC release a child to an adult who appears unable to safely drive the child home. Parents must fill out emergency forms with the names of those people other than themselves who have permission to pick up their children as specified in N.J.A.C. 10:122-6.8 (a)3, to take the child from the Center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached. Anyone unknown to ECYC must stop at the front desk to be identified via a picture ID/ driver's license.

ECYC will then check to see if the person is designated on the child's emergency form. This person may also be asked to show identification by program staff.

If someone not already authorized by the parent on the emergency sheet is to pick up a child, the parent must inform ECYC in writing. Otherwise, the child will not be allowed to leave until ECYC can verify the person's identity and parental authorization. In the case of a last-minute change, parents can call ECYC's main number to let us know who will pick up that evening. In this case, we must have a description of the person picking up the child, and that person must show identification at the front desk when they arrive. Anyone picking up a child must sign that child out in the classroom book or if arriving after 6:00pm, at the front desk before leaving.

We are committed to the safety and well-being of every child. In accordance with the Office of Licensing policy, as taken from the Office of Licensing Manual of Standards, the following rules apply:

A center shall maintain on file and follow a written policy on the release of children, which shall include:

The provision that each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), as specified in N.J.A.C. 3A:526.8 (a)3, to take the child from

the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached. The provision that, if a particular non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to the child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to this effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

Written procedures to be followed by staff member(s)

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), as specified in (a) above, fails to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, staff members are required to ensure that:

- 1) The child is supervised at all times;
- 2) Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parents; and
- 3) an hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his or her parent(s) or authorized person(s) have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the State Central Registry Hotline (1-877-NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick up the child.

Written procedures to be followed by a staff member(s)

if the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), as specified in above, appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual:

- 1) The child shall not be released to such an impaired individual;
- 2) Staff members must attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- 3) If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, as noted in (a) 3ii above a staff member shall call the Department's State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/ 1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

The center shall distribute a copy of the release policy to the parent of each enrolled child and each staff member and secure and maintain on file a record of each parent's and staff member's signature attesting to receipt of the policy.

For school-age child care programs, the following shall apply:

- 1) No child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent.

NAPTIME POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each child's need for sleep varies. In the Infant program, one child may nap while others play or eat. These individual needs for sleep will be met. Changes in the sleeping patterns of infants will be noted for the parents, and accommodations for these changes will be made. Individual cribs assigned to only one child will be provided in our Infant rooms. As a child gets older and is preparing to move to the Toddler program, a small cot will be introduced to the child so s/he becomes used to this new arrangement before moving on. Rest is as important in the older child's busy day as active play. ECYC provides rest cots for children from about 15 months of age up through kindergarten. Recognizing that all children do not have the same need for sleep, especially as they get older, a rest time after lunch will be scheduled accordingly in the Toddler through Pre-K programs.

Children will be encouraged to close their eyes and sleep. Soft music will be played to provide a soothing atmosphere and the rooms will remain illuminated with at least five foot-candles of light, to be measured three feet above the floor at the farthest point from the light source (a foot candle is a measure of how bright a light is-at no time will flame candles be used during nap time). If a child cannot fall asleep after a period of approximately forty-five minutes, s/he will be given a book to read or a quiet activity to do. Naptime will generally last until 3:00 p.m. During naptime, our child staff ratios change as our staff takes their scheduled daily breaks. There are fewer staff in the rooms during naptime, but at no time do we exceed state ratios. During naptime, at least one staff member shall be physically present in the room in which children are napping and shall be able to summon other staff members without leaving the room or area. In the Infant rooms, two staff members will always be present during staff break time. In addition, a sufficient number of staff members shall be in the Center and readily accessible to ensure compliance with state-mandated staff/child

ratio's during regular hours. Once naptime preparations have been completed and all children are asleep or resting, child-staff ratios during rest time shall primarily follow National Accreditation recommendations but will never exceed the following state requirements:

Age	Staff/Child Nap Time Ratio
Under 2 ½ years	1:10
2 ½ years and above	1:20

INFANT SLEEP POLICY

ECYC is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all children, as such, we have adopted a policy intended to create a safe sleep environment for your infant. We comply with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Consumer Product Safety Commission for safe sleep environments to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is the “sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation.”

Our infant sleep policy is as follows:

- All infants will be placed on their backs in safety-approved cribs unless an alternative sleep position is needed for a medical reason and a written note from the infant's health professional is provided.
- Infants will not sleep on water beds, sofas, soft mattresses, or other soft surfaces.
- Infants will sleep in a crib that is equipped with a firm, waterproof, snugly fitting mattress and a clean, snugly fitting sheet and the crib will comply with the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Federal Safety Standards.
- Soft materials such as pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and loose bedding will not be placed in an infant's sleep environment.
- Infants will not share a safety-approved crib with other children.
- Infants will remain lightly clothed and comfortable while sleeping.
- Supervised “tummy time” will be observed while infants are awake.
- Our child care center is smoke-free. No smoking is allowed anywhere in the building.

TOILETING PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

BATHROOM AND DIAPER POLICY

General Practices for Teachers

Only CARI-cleared educators will support children with going to the bathroom.

Potty Training Children & Independent Potty Users

- Always make sure the stall door is open when accompanying a child to the bathroom. If there is no stall: leave door ajar
- If a potty-trained child asks for privacy, teachers will respect their wishes by giving them personal space but will never leave them unattended. (You can say “The door needs to stay open a bit so I can make sure you stay safe” but then you can move away, out of the child's eye line.)
- Always use verbal prompts first with children to encourage children to bathroom independently, before assisting them.
- When assisting them with a hands-on approach, teachers will narrate how they are assisting the child. (I am going to take off your diaper tab. Now I am going to pull up your underwear first and then your pants.)
- When children are potty training, the children will wipe themselves, but the teachers will give them the appropriate amount of toilet paper.

- When potty training: If a child pees, they should be encouraged to wipe themselves. When a child poops, teachers should ensure the child has done a sufficient job trying to clean themselves and also help ensure their bodies are clean before returning to play.

Diaper Changing

- A firm, easily cleanable, counter height surface directly adjacent to a sink with running hot and cold water shall be provided in or adjacent to the classroom for diaper changing when needed.
- A disposable covering shall be provided on diaper changing counters and shall be changed after each use. The counter surface shall be disinfected after each use.
- A readily accessible receptacle with secure lid and removable plastic liner shall be provided for the disposal of diapers.
- Staff changing diapers shall wear disposable rubber or other barrier gloves and change gloves and wash hands in between each diaper change.
- For children who are in diapers, frequent checks for wet and soiled diapers must be scheduled throughout the day. All children in diapers should be changed after waking from their naps.

POTTY TRAINING AND ACCIDENTS

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports your child. Children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

At ECYC, we do not promote a particular age for toilet training. We work with the parents as their children go through this stage. Our goal is to have each child be successful and maintain his/her self-esteem through the process. Children are afforded toilet facilities that are for exclusive use by children and are afforded privacy, appropriate to their age and development when toileting. A staff member is always available to help a child with toileting, e.g., pulling up pants, wiping bottoms, washing hands, etc. Parents are encouraged to help develop independence in this area at home as well.

Children of all ages have "accidents" and are usually very embarrassed by the incidents. The staff tries to minimize this uncomfortable feeling by being very matter-of-fact about the "accident" and encouraging the child to take care of changing him/herself with as much independence as the child can manage. For sanitary purposes, fecal material is not completely washed out of clothing, but rather, the soiled clothes are wrapped in a plastic bag and sent home with the parent.

INDOOR/OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY

ECYC believes that our children should be outside as much as possible. Health experts tell us of the importance of fresh air. Outside play also enables children to release some of their energy and develop large muscle coordination.

In the winter months, we will play outside unless the temperature is below 20°F, including the wind chill factor. Our staff will check the weather station any time there is a question about the outdoor temperature. Staff will also use good judgment as to the length of time the children will be outside in cold weather.

In the summer months, children will play outside in the morning before lunch, and after naptime. In extreme temperatures, the children will remain inside. During outside play in the summer, staff makes sure there is water freely available for the children, and they observe the children to be sure they do not get overheated. Water play is prevalent in the summer. We provide sprinklers as a fun way for the children to stay cool. For health reasons, we do not use wading pools. During the summer, ECYC highly recommends the use of sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, and water shoes

with closed toe and heel. Sunscreen must be supplied by the parent and written permission to apply this must be given.

In the case of an ozone alert, or heat advisory the staff will remain inside with the children. The staff will check each day with the front office to be sure no ozone alert or heat advisory has been designated and follows the guidelines recommended by the weather station and health officials. (Often, the guidelines are to remain inside later in the afternoon.) When we need to stay inside, an ozone alert notice will be posted at our time clock so all staff is notified as they arrive for work.

Infants (birth to 12 months)

- Babies who are not yet crawling spend 3 to 5 minutes (and more as the infant enjoys the activity) on their tummies interacting with their teachers/caregivers each half day while awake.
- Infants are not placed in restricted equipment for more than 15 minutes at a time, except during meals and napping.
- All infants play outdoors 2 to 3 times daily. Riding in a carriage or stroller may account for no more than 1 of the outdoor play periods for infants.

Toddlers (12 months to 3 years old) and Preschoolers (3 to 6 years old)

- Toddlers shall participate in 60-90 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, (prorated for children who attend the program for only part of the day-30 minutes of active play per 2 to 3 hours in the program).
- Preschoolers shall participate in 90-120 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- Children have outdoor play for 60 to 90 minutes per day except in adverse weather conditions that require shorter periods outdoors.

Children attending ECYC shall engage in active play according to the following recommendations:

- Staff will promote developmentally-appropriate physical activity to help children (and themselves) prevent overweight/obesity and practice lifetime healthful habits.
- Teachers shall lead teacher-directed activities or games that promote moderate to vigorous physical activity over the course of the day, indoors or outdoors.
- Staff will participate in active play or stand near the children during active playtime, instead of sitting on the sidelines.
- Active play will not be withheld from children as a punishment.
- Children will play outdoors except when weather or air quality poses a significant health risk.
- Children will have access to water during outdoor play.
- Staff and parents will be provided with education and professional development regarding physical activity at least twice per year.

FIELD TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF ECYC

Local Adventures/ Walking Trips

Neighborhood walks and visits to local stores provide wonderful language experiences for the children. These local walks are taken only by our Preschool, Pre-K, and Kindergarten children. Intermediate children may occasionally go out in the six passenger wagons for a walk around the block, but they do not walk outside of the Center grounds. Infants and Toddlers do not leave ECYC grounds during the day at any time.

Whenever we take the children outside of ECYC, they are carefully supervised. Children are taught to hold hands and walk with staff. Staff members walk in front, behind, and alongside the children.

At all times during any such walks or field trips, Administration is available at the Center in order to greet and respond to parents who visit or call.

Summer Field Trips by Bus

Field trips to zoos, museums, farms, etc. may be scheduled during the summer for children in preschool through Kindergarten programs. Buses or vans with seat belts are hired from a private bus company. A separate permission form for each trip must be signed by the parents to allow children to participate. Parents are also asked to come along as chaperones, in order to keep our adult-to-child ratio high. For safety, staff carries cell phones on trips along with first aid kits and EpiPen®'s as needed. The bus company has direct contact with each bus and would supply a backup bus if necessary for mechanical problems. Any additional field trips scheduled throughout the school year will be billed separately.

Families are encouraged to allow their children to participate in special events and field trips for the life experience these trips offer, but no one is required to do so. **Parents who do not want their children to participate in a particular field trip should keep them home on the day of a trip.**

Trips for Part-time Children

If a trip or event falls on a day the child normally does not attend, the parent may volunteer to chaperone the event and then take the child home when the event has ended. Any such changes to the child's schedule must be agreed upon with staff in advance of the day of the trip.

Permission Slips for Walking Trips/Field Trips

Parents are asked to sign permission slips for our walking trips that take place within the Center's neighborhood, as well as for field trips that require use of vehicles. Permission slips include a description of the walking or field trips, including the date, time, location, method of transportation, persons who will be in attendance, including the person who will provide the transportation, and/or events that will be occurring during the trip or at the destination.

For spontaneous walking trips within the neighborhood, the parent's signature at arrival serves as permission for the child to participate in a community walk. These walks may include destinations such as the Rahway Fire House, Police Station, or around the block observing buildings.

If a parent does not wish for a child to attend a particular trip, other arrangements should be made by the parent for the child on the day at issue.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

In compliance with state regulations "the use of television, computers, and other video equipment shall be limited to educational and instructional use, shall be age and developmentally appropriate and shall not be used as a substitute for planned activities or for passive viewing". This will pertain to all children 2 years or older.

Any videos, audio stories or music used will be reviewed by Education Administrators for appropriate content and length. All videos must be relevant, developmentally appropriate and played in conjunction with a planned curriculum activity. In the case of special needs where computer or video is appropriate for the special need condition, the material being viewed will be educational and developmentally appropriate.

Screen time in these circumstances will never exceed more than 30 minutes a day. No videos or digital media will be allowed at all for children under 2 years. Unless you participate in an active music and movement class, music should only be played softly, in the background, and should contribute to creating a soothing and calming environment.

TRACKING CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Every program maintains a/an iPad/clipboard/attendance board on which every child is checked in each morning. This clipboard is used throughout the day to track children moving from one activity to another when leaving the room. Staff calls each child by their name as they leave or return to the room when going to the yard or any other areas in which they play during the day. Only when staff knows each child has answered and the teacher has made eye contact does the group move to the next activity.

When staff from outside ancillary programs are here at ECYC they are not responsible for going to classrooms to get children who are participating in a particular session. The ancillary staff is assigned to a specific room and ECYC staff accompanies children to and from the ancillary activity. The ECYC staff use the same procedure as stated above so that each child is accounted for before entering the ancillary program and leaving the ancillary program to return to their room. The ECYC staff member remains with the children while they participate in the ancillary program.

FOOD, NUTRITION, AND MEALTIMES

ECYC IS A NUT SAFE ENVIRONMENT

FOOD PREPERATION AT ECYC

All children are welcome to bring their own food from home; however, ECYC also provides meals. To ensure the safety of all children, all food brought into ECYC must follow these guidelines:

- Nuts and nut products are banned from ECYC.
- No gum or candy of any kind is ever served to the children.
- All food must be in sealed packages with the ingredient labels intact.
- No home-baked goods are permitted.

ECYC employs a Kitchen manager and a Kitchen Aid who are required to maintain the Serve Safe Certification. Together they maintain proper food preparation procedures. All food purchased for ECYC is carefully chosen by our Kitchen manager for ingredient content to plan for food allergies. Expiration dates on all food are monitored by the kitchen staff in order to ensure that no expired food product is served to classrooms. Documentation of children with allergies or other special dietary considerations is kept in the kitchen for daily review. This information is updated by the classroom staff as necessary. A Food Inspection is held yearly by the Rahway Health Department and the compliance certificate is posted outside the kitchen door.

MEAL SCHEDULES

Meals are served at different times for different age groups. Generally, breakfast will be served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Lunch starts around 11:30 a.m. and ends around 1:00 p.m., and snack is taken to the rooms after nap time. Please check with your child's program for the exact time of meals in their rooms. In our infant rooms scheduled meal times only pertain to babies on table foods. All other babies are fed according to schedules discussed with the parents.

OUR DAILY MENU

Each day, our kitchen staff freshly prepares breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. These meals are well-balanced, and nutritious. Meals are also planned to be mindful of types of foods appropriate for the various age groups. For example, items like grapes, hot dogs and popcorn are not served to children under four years old. Staff also takes care in the younger age groups to cut food into small manageable bites. (¼ inch for infants and ½ inch for toddlers). At breakfast and lunch, we serve whole milk to children less than two years of age, and 2% milk to the older children. With snack, the children are served water. The Menus are planned on a seasonal basis and are provided to parents monthly. In keeping with current nutritional guidelines, ECYC does not serve juice of any kind to the children in any of our age groups.

Breakfast and Snack are planned to complete the daily nutritional needs of the children. Breakfast can be cereal, French toast sticks, scrambled eggs, etc. Fruit is served at every breakfast. Snack can be oatmeal cookies, cheese and crackers, fruit, yogurt, hummus etc. These two meals are planned to complement the lunch menu. Our Infant and Toddler menus are modified to meet the needs of younger children. Our Chef Manager meets with the staff monthly to discuss how the menus are working for every age group and make adjustments as necessary.

ECYC PARENT HANDBOOK

Our staff will talk with parents about their children's eating habits, and if there is something on the menu that a staff member knows a child cannot or will not eat, that staff member will call for a substitute meal. The variety of substitute meals is limited due to the size of ECYC, but we accommodate special needs whenever possible.

Children with special dietary needs: Parents should discuss these needs with ECYC staff so that, if possible, necessary accommodations can be made. All special needs are posted in the kitchen so kitchen staff can plan for these meals.

MEALTIME PROCEDURES

In all age groups, we see our meal times as part of our curriculum. Our staff sits with the children and encourages pleasant conversation. They also encourage the children to try everything on their plates but they do not force children to eat. If a staff member feels a child is not eating properly, this issue will be discussed with the parent so a solution can be found. Our goal is to see that the children get a proper amount of nutritionally balanced food every day.
Feeding plans for infants

The Infant staff is guided by the parents. Children in the Infant rooms will be fed according to the parents instructions, which shall include the feeding schedule, specific formula or expressed breast milk to be used, nutritional needs and introduction of new food for each child. Such feeding plans will be documented in writing, maintained on file and made available to each staff member responsible for feeding each child. All food served to a child shall be appropriate to his or her developmental eating ability. A child, who is too young to use a feeding chair, shall be held when fed. A child who no longer needs to be held for feeding because of age or developmental readiness shall be provided an infant seat or high chair with safety strap that meets the standards of a recognized safety organization. When a child is feeding, the bottle shall not be propped up at any time and if the child is bottle-fed while resting, the bottle shall be removed when a child falls asleep. The staff will keep the parents informed of the child's eating habits at the Center so that foods can be adjusted as necessary with recommendations from the child's pediatrician.

INFANT FOOD AND FORMULA

ECYC provides baby food and cereal which is purchased from an outside vendor. No solid food will be served to an infant from the bottle. Parents must supply formula when needed. If formula is provided pre-mixed in bottles, these bottles must have the child's first and last name and the date clearly marked on each bottle. Formula will never be heated in a microwave oven.

BREASTMILK POLICY

Mothers, who are pumping breast milk, are welcome to bring in the breast milk in an insulated bag with the bottles clearly and securely labeled with the child's first and last name and the current day's date. Past dates are not acceptable. Staff will place the labeled bottles in the room refrigerator. Breast milk that is previously frozen will be maintained in our refrigerators for no more than 24 hours. We are able to maintain breast milk that has not been frozen for up to 48 hours in our refrigerators. Because we are aware of the infection fighting component in human milk, staff is instructed to gently mix the breast milk, not shake it. Breast milk will never be heated in a microwave oven.

Moms who prefer to come to the Center to Breastfeed may do so at any time. Moms should work with staff in determining how to work out the timing of the breastfeeding. We have a private area for a mom to breastfeed or they may do so in the child's room.

FOOD NOT PREPARED AT ECYC

All food brought into ECYC must comply with the guidelines outlined in the “Food Preparation at ECYC” section of this handbook. This includes breakfast items. If your child insists on having something in the car, or you have a routine of stopping for a bagel or donut on the way in, please be sure your child finishes this food in the car. You may also suggest that the food be left in the car for the ride home later that evening. Parents are also asked to leave their own food and beverages in the car.

Occasionally, programs will have special family breakfasts or other celebrations. When these are planned, parents are usually asked to contribute to the food. In this case, please follow the guidelines outlined in the “Food Preparation at ECYC” section of this handbook.

FOOD ALLERGIES

ECYC will work with parents whose children have food allergies to the best of our ability. Please be sure to keep us informed of any symptoms your child may exhibit and list the foods that create the problem for your child on our Allergy form. This form will also give us permission to share this information with those you designate. However for your child's safety, we will give this information to our Kitchen staff updating the names on a regular basis. We also do keep a list of children with food allergies in each room for all program staff to be familiar with particular needs. This list is not made public however, unless a parent specifically requests their child's name to be visible in the room. All children with allergies will also have the details of their allergy kept in their medical file. Parents must keep us updated of any changes to these details including allergic reactions.

We require yearly updates to medical files, but if anything changes during the year, including new allergic reactions, these changes should be brought to the attention of a member of our Administration and your child's Lead Teacher, who will then pass on the information to the appropriate staff as approved by you.

WATER

The company that provides drinking water to ECYC is Veolia water, formerly SUEZ water, formerly United Water, formerly the Rahway Water Department at 1045 Westfield Ave Rahway NJ 07065. This water is tested on a regular basis, and the annual Consumer Confidence Reports for the city of Rahway are posted at ECYC. If a parent wishes their child to have bottled water, we ask that they provide this for the child on a daily basis in an individual water bottle labeled with the child's name. We do not have room to keep gallon jugs or to keep water in the refrigerator.

CULTURAL DIETARY NEEDS

Whenever possible, ECYC will work with parents to meet the cultural dietary needs for their child/children. Please speak with ECYC Administration prior to enrolling about any special circumstances so that we are able to discuss with you what, if any, accommodation can be made.

CELEBRATIONS AND HOLIDAYS AT ECYC

ECYC hosts several annual festive celebrations including the annual family Picnic, the Fall Festival and Winter fest. These are wonderful opportunities for the community to come together as a whole. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help make the events extra special.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are recognized differently in different cultures. At ECYC, each child's birthday can be celebrated as a special day. Parents who celebrate birthdays are welcome to provide a special snack (please follow the guidelines below). Birthday celebrations are only to be held at your child's regularly scheduled snack time. The snack provided by parents will serve as a replacement snack for the children that day. Please read the ingredient labels of any birthday snack you bring to be sure it is not made with nuts/nut products or in an environment where nuts/nut products are made.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthday parties can be a delicate issue for young children and families. Children who are not invited to a birthday party celebration are aware of and sensitive to being excluded from such an event. Therefore, the school has a firm policy regarding birthday parties. **If it is not possible or desirable for the entire class to be invited to the party, then the invitations to the party must be distributed to the individual children and not distributed at or through the school channels.** In addition, parties should convene off the school premises; this means children attending a party should not leave in a group from school.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY SNACK GUIDELINES

If parents choose to celebrate their child's birthday at school, they may bring in a special healthy birthday snack, and a favorite book to read aloud with the class. **Decorative napkins and plates are acceptable; however, we do not allow the distribution of party favors, goodie bags, party hats, prizes, balloons, etc.**

Due to allergies, please check with teachers to make certain that the special snack provided is **appropriate for all of the children.** In keeping with our philosophy of providing nutritious meals and snacks for the children, some suggestions for birthday snacks include: fruit, 100% fruit popsicles, yogurt, muffins, apple sauce, veggies and dip, etc.

- All food must be in sealed packages with the ingredient labels intact.
- Please read the ingredient labels of any birthday or holiday food that you bring to ECYC to be sure it is not made with or in an environment with nuts or nut products.
- No home-baked goods may be brought into ECYC.

BIRTHDAY BOOK DONATION

Families are encouraged to donate a book to the school lending library in honor of their child's birthday. A special name-plate will be put in the book noting the child's name and birth date or date of gift.

HOLIDAYS

ECYC is a non-sectarian childcare center that promotes respect and understanding of different cultural traditions.

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At ECYC our goal is for the celebration of holidays to be meaningful celebrations that reflect the diversity of our families and community. Because of our diverse histories, faiths, and cultures, the same holiday can have various meanings to people. We celebrate the holidays by including as many different cultures as possible and we strongly encourage families to share their traditions with us. Each September your family will be asked to fill out a **Family Questionnaire** to help teachers gain a deeper understanding of individual family cultures, languages, values, and traditions. Holidays celebrated in the classrooms should be a direct reflection of the population of teachers and students in each room.

It is so beneficial for children to hear about the ways the people in their lives are alike and different from one another. We want them to find joy in human differences as well as to see connections between themselves and others. Holiday discussions and activities are one way for children to feel validated for who they are.

By having families come in and share information about their special celebrations, their children learn that who they are and what is important to their family is valued by the teachers and others in the school community.

HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY POLICIES

ECYC is a well-child center. We do not provide sick childcare. ECYC follows the health policies of the American Academy of Pediatrics National Health and Safety Performance Standards and the Office of Licensing regulations.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH FORMS

When a parent accepts a space at ECYC, that parent will receive the Universal Child Health Record required by the State of New Jersey to be completed by the child's health care provider. This form includes the child's immunization record. A completed Universal Child Health Record, up-to-date immunization record, and any applicable special care plans must be maintained on file at ECYC.

Health and immunization documentation must be on file at ECYC on or before the child's first day of attendance at the childcare center. However, a 30-day grace period may be permitted for children transferring from another state or country as permitted by Office of Licensing regulations.

Parents are responsible for updating their child's health records annually as per Office of Licensing regulations. Forms may be obtained at the front desk and should be completed during the child's annual health examination and returned to ECYC promptly.

All children must maintain up-to-date immunizations. The immunization records are checked yearly by the Rahway Health Department. If there are any deficiencies in the immunization records at that time, parents will be notified. If the immunizations are not brought up to date, the children whose records are deficient will not be admitted to ECYC. State regulations mandate that parents comply with these requirements in order for their child to attend our programs. All children's health records will be kept confidential in a locked file cabinet in our Feel Better Room. Access to these records is limited to authorized ECYC staff with a legitimate need for the information and individuals authorized by the parent on the Universal Health Record and Family Profile. These files may include, but are not limited to, special needs documentation, such as IEPs and IFSPs.

As per Office of Licensing 3A:52-7.3, if immunizations are contraindicated for medical reasons, the center may choose to admit the child provided that the parent submits to the center a written statement from a health care provider attesting to the following: i. The reason the immunization is medically contraindicated and ii. The specific time period that the immunization is medically contraindicated.

A child shall be exempted from a physical examination, immunization or medical treatment if the parent objects thereto in a written statement submitted to the center, signed by the parent, explaining how the examination, immunization or medical treatment conflicts with the child's exercise of bona fide religious tenets or practices.

GENERAL HEALTH POLICIES

Precautions

In order to safeguard the health of all children, all parents should cooperate by keeping their children home when they are displaying symptoms of illness that render them listless. Many contagious diseases begin with the symptoms of a cold. That being said, we will not require a child to be out of the center for a cold, an unrealistic expectation. However, if a child is unable to participate fully in all aspects of the program, they will be sent home. It may be helpful for parents to arrange a back-up plan for childcare, to be used in the event of illness. Please report any cases of communicable disease to the ECYC Administration. We are required to keep records of illness that occur at the Center. Parents will be notified if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

If a child is undergoing testing, including a culture, for an illness that may require exclusion as outlined below, ECYC may require the child to remain home until a health care provider determines that the child does not pose a health risk to others and may safely return to group care. Documentation from the child's health care provider may be required prior to the child's return.

Children Who Become Ill While At ECYC

If your child becomes ill while at ECYC, you will be called to take him/her home promptly. Children who become ill at ECYC will be taken out of their rooms and brought to the "Feel Better Room". They will be cared for by an Administrator or staff member with whom they are familiar. In some cases when staffing allows, a child's Teacher or Assistant Teacher from their room may stay with them. Taking children out of their room when they are ill decreases the exposure of other children to the contagious child. Parents are asked to make every effort to pick up their children as soon as they are called. If parents are unable to pick up their children, a backup person (someone named on the child's emergency sheet or otherwise specified by the parent) must be called by the parent. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, ECYC will call someone designated on the child's emergency sheet to help locate the parent or make arrangements for the child to be picked up. The child will always be kept comfortable while waiting for the parent.

Fever Policy Notice

For the health and safety of all students and staff, the following Fever Policy is strictly enforced:

Any child who exhibits a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be dismissed from school.

Children who are sent home with a fever must remain home for the remainder of that day and the entirety of the subsequent school day. In addition, the child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to ECYC.

Please be advised that the required 24-hour period does not permit a return at the same time on the following day. For example, if a child is dismissed at 1:00 PM on Monday due to a fever, they are not eligible to return to school at 1:00 PM on Tuesday. **The child must remain out of school for the entirety of the subsequent school day and may return on the following school day, provided they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.**

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Children Who Are Kept Home Due to Illness

If you decide to keep your child home due to illness you must notify ECYC. If we have not heard from a family within three days of an absence ECYC will contact the family. The Office of Licensing requires us to maintain an illness log. By reporting any illness to us, you can help us to keep track of patterns or trends of illness in ECYC, and thereby keep all parents better informed and children healthier. Please contact administration by calling the front desk, 732-594-3292. For the purpose of state regulations on tracking illness, we ask that you do not call your child's room. Administration will notify the staff in your child's room.

Symptoms Requiring Exclusion as per Office of Licensing Health Requirements 3A:52-7.1

The following is a list of symptoms of illness for which your child will be sent home, along with the corresponding length of time the child will be required to remain home with each of the symptoms. *These guidelines for return to ECYC should be followed if your child exhibits any of these symptoms over a weekend.*

Fever of 100.4 F (axial temperature) or over. The child must remain home for the remainder of the day they are sent home and the entirety of the subsequent school day. In addition, the child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to ECYC. ECYC only takes axial (under the arm) or forehead

scan temperatures. When an axillary temperature is taken, 1°F is added to the measured temperature. Please be advised that the required 24-hour period does not permit a return at the same time on the following day. For example, if a child is dismissed at 1:00 PM on Monday due to a fever, they are not eligible to return to school at 1:00 PM on Tuesday. The child must remain out of school for the entirety of the subsequent school day and may return on the following school day, provided they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

Severe upper respiratory infection with difficulty in breathing, persistent cough, and lethargy. The child may return when symptoms have subsided, or with a doctor's note stating s/he may return to group care, including a date for return. In order to return to ECYC, children must be able to participate in activities including outdoor play.

Diarrhea, as indicated by an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased stool water and/or decreased form that cannot be contained by the child's diaper. For the toilet-trained child, as indicated by urgency the child cannot control long enough to get to the toilet. The child must remain home for the remainder of the day they are sent home and the entirety of the subsequent school day. In addition, the child must be diarrhea-free for 24 hours and be able to retain solid foods before returning to ECYC. Please be advised that the required 24-hour period does not permit a return at the same time on the following day. For example, if a child is dismissed at 1:00 PM on Monday due to diarrhea, they are not eligible to return to school at 1:00 PM on Tuesday. The child must remain out of school for the entirety of the subsequent school day and may return on the following school day, provided they have remained diarrhea-free for 24 hours.

Bloody Diarrhea, the child may return following a Doctor's recommendation.

Vomiting, as indicated by two or more episodes of vomiting in a short amount of time. The child must remain home for the remainder of the day they are sent home and the entirety of the subsequent school day. In addition, the child must be vomit-free for 24 hours and be able to retain solid foods before returning to ECYC. Please be advised that the required 24-hour period does not permit a return at the same time on the following day. For example, if a child is dismissed at 1:00 PM on Monday due to vomiting, they are not eligible to return to school at 1:00 PM on Tuesday. The child must remain out of school for the entirety of the subsequent school day and may return on the following school day, provided they have remained vomit-free for 24 hours.

Conjunctivitis, as indicated by pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge from the eye(s), often with matted eyes after sleep. Conjunctivitis may also include itchiness or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye. The child may return with a doctor's note after 24 hours of being given effective treatment, as judged by lack of discharge from the eyes.

Rash/Skin inflammation. The child may return when treated by a doctor and provided with a note stating that the condition is not contagious, as well as the date the child may return to group care.

Severe Persistent Pain or Discomfort. The child may return with Doctor's note

Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin. The child may return with Doctor's note

Chicken Pox, an extremely contagious illness characterized by red, blister-like eruptions that may spread over the entire body. Symptoms may include fever and rash. The child may return to ECYC when all the lesions are scabbed over and no new eruptions are occurring.

HEAD LICE POLICY

All parents must inform ECYC if their child, a sibling or anyone living in the home has been diagnosed with head

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lice. If lice or nits are identified in a child's hair at school, they need to be sent home until treatment has been sought and the child is lice and nit free. Children may not return to school until they are treated and lice/nit free. Head Lice is contagious and is best controlled by treatment. Teachers will perform morning head lice checks for a couple of weeks after a case of lice has been identified.

- Parents are encouraged to launder their child's rest blankets daily until the problem subsides.
- Children with long hair are encouraged to wear their hair up in a high bun or ponytail.

ECYC will inform all parents and teachers, maintaining strict confidentiality of the affected student, that there has been a case of head lice detected so that they can check their children or have them checked professionally. Designated ECYC staff will determine if a child is "nit free". Upon return the parent must wait with the child until the determination is made.

All of the above listed conditions, with the exception of Head Lice and Chicken Pox, will be judged on the basis of the individual child's daily behavior pattern. The staff is well informed of each child's particular background. This background information along with daily contact with the child and daily communication with the parents enables the staff to make sound judgments on behalf of each individual child's welfare and the welfare of the rest of the group. Input from the staff will be given to the ECYC Administrator, who will make the final decision as to whether a child must go home. Parents will be notified to pick up their children by an administrative staff member.

NOTIFICATION OF ILLNESS

A Health Alert Poster is hanging outside of each room in ECYC. When an illness occurs in a particular room, an alert will be placed on this poster with symptoms and any other pertinent information and an e-mail and or Procure notification will be sent to the parents of children in that program. If there is an illness that must be brought to the attention of the entire Center, parents will be notified by e-mail from Administration

An example of a general health alert would be the discovery of a case of chicken pox. E-mail will also be used by Administration to notify parents of any general health issues in the Center.

DHS OFFICE OF LICENSING POLICY ON ILLNESS

In accordance with the Office of Licensing, the following shall apply. Please note that ECYC's illness exclusion policies may be more conservative than the minimum exclusion thresholds outlined in the Office of Licensing regulations below and may require a child to remain home in additional circumstances.

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, s/he should not attend school. If such symptoms occur at school, the child will be removed from the classroom, and you will be called to take him/her home. These guidelines are in compliance with the Office of Licensing Health Requirements Subchapter 7-3A:52-7.1

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Two episodes of acute vomiting
- Severe coughing
- Red eyes with discharge
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
- Skin lesions that weep or bleed
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Acute or bloody diarrhea

- Elevated axial temperature of 100.5°F and over
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck
- Infected, untreated skin patches

Once the child is symptom-free or has a physician's note stating that s/he no longer poses a serious health risk to him/herself or others, s/he may return to the childcare center.

Excludable Communicable Diseases as per Office of Licensing Health Requirements 3A:52-7.1 (d)

The center shall not permit a child or staff member with an excludable communicable disease, as set forth in the Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work-Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, revised July 2011, and available at

http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf

Admittance is only permissible:

If a note from the child's healthcare provider indicates that the child has been diagnosed and poses no risk to themselves or others; if the center has reached out to the Communicable Disease Program within the State Department of Health or consulted with the local health department's pediatric health consultant, who confirms that the child does not pose a health risk to others; or if the child has chickenpox, the center obtains a doctor's note confirming that all sores have dried and crusted over.

MEDICATIONS POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Accommodation for Children with Special Needs

The Center will provide reasonable accommodations for the administration of medication or health care procedures to a child with special needs, if failure to provide the medication or health care procedure would jeopardize the health of the child or prevent the child from attending the Center.

Administration of Medications and Health Care Procedures in General:

The Center shall maintain on file a record of the following:

- the child's name and parental authorization for the Center to administer the medication or health care procedure;
- the name of the medication or health care procedure;
- the condition for which the medication or health care procedure is being used;
- the instructions for administration, including dosage, route and frequency;
- the date and time medication or health care procedure was administered to a child and the name or initials of the designated, trained staff by whom it was administered.
- any adverse effect the medication can have or has had on the child.

Prescription Medications/Health Care Procedures

The Center will administer prescription medications and health care procedures in accordance with the following guidelines. ECYC has designated Administrative Staff and/or adequately trained staff to administer any medications or health care procedures. A child who is put on medication must have a note with a physician's signature on the physician's letterhead or prescription pad. All medication to be administered at ECYC must be brought to ECYC in its original container with the original label, which shall include the child's name, the name and expiration date of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated and directions for its administration. Any medication left at ECYC

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that has expired will be returned to parents for proper disposal in accordance with safety and environment guidelines. If a child has recovered from an illness but must still take medication, the medication may be administered by the designated ECYC Staff members when, and only when, ECYC is presented with two forms:

A note from the doctor naming the medication, the dosage, who the medication is for, and the duration of the treatment or the Pharmacist label on the medication with the proper identification of the child and dosage directions

The ECYC Parent Medication Permission Form, with the date, dosage and time medication is to be given, duration of the need for medication and the parent's signature. Please take note of the specific times (listed on this form) that medication is given at ECYC.

When medication or a health care procedure must be administered at ECYC, the parent must take it to the front desk so that the designated ECYC Administrative Staff members may be informed of the need for the administration of the medication or health care procedure. Medication that must be kept cold will be stored in the "Feel Better Room" refrigerator across from the front desk. Medication that does not need refrigeration will be locked in the designated room basket in the cabinet above the sink in this same room. No medication is to be left in a child's room, with staff or in a backpack in a cubby. EpiPen®'s with the individual child's name and date of expiration will be kept in the classroom in a red emergency bag.

Nebulizer Treatment

Parents whose children must use Nebulizers at ECYC must supply their own machines. In most cases, the Nebulizer treatment will be done by an ECYC Administrative Staff member trained in Medication Administration. In some cases, with permission from the parent, a child's Teacher who has been trained will administer the treatment to the child.

Non-prescription Medications/Health Care Procedures

The Center will administer non-prescription medications or health care procedures in accordance with the following guidelines. Over-the-counter medications, such as antihistamines, pain relief medication and gas relief agents, will be given to a child with, and only with, a letter from the child's doctor naming the specific medication, the dosage, who it is for, and under what circumstances it should be administered. This letter will be kept on file for reference and must be updated yearly for older children, and more frequently for children under the age of one. With this letter on file, parents must also fill out the ECYC Medication Permission Form (as for prescription medication, see above) each time a child is to be administered one of the over-the-counter medications. This medication must also be kept in the designated cabinet in the Feel Better Room, not in the child's classroom.

Use of Pain Relief Agents such as Tylenol® is permitted under the following guidelines:

Pain relief agents will be given only for pain management, as recommended by a doctor, for sprain, post-immunization pain, ear infection, broken bone, etc.

The child's temperature will be taken before the medicine is given. If there is evidence of a fever of 100.4°F (axillary) or more, the pain relief agent will not be given, and the child will be sent home as per our exclusion policy.

Specific permission forms for pain relief agents must be filled out before ECYC will administer the medication, as described above.

Insect repellents, diaper creams and lotions, sunscreen

Insect repellents, diaper creams and lotion and other topicals will be administered to a child only if a permission form is filled out by the parent. This form and the accompanying lotion will be kept in the child's room in the teacher area out of reach of the children.

SANITARY PROCEDURES AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

ECYC is committed to maintaining a clean, safe, and healthy environment for children and staff. The Center is cleaned and sanitized daily by a cleaning service provided by Merck, and ECYC staff follow additional cleaning and sanitizing procedures throughout the day in accordance with applicable health, safety, and licensing requirements.

Classrooms, toys, equipment, restrooms, and commonly touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly. Items mouthed by infants and toddlers are removed from use and sanitized before being returned to circulation. Crib mattresses, cots, sleep mats, and other classroom equipment are routinely cleaned and disinfected.

Each child is assigned their own crib, cot, or sleep mat, which is not shared with other children. Parents are responsible for providing sheets and blankets, which should be taken home regularly for laundering. If bedding becomes soiled during the day, it will be changed promptly and the cot, crib, or mat will be cleaned and disinfected before further use.

All cleaning and disinfecting products used at ECYC are approved for use in childcare settings and are used in accordance with manufacturer instructions and applicable safety regulations.

HAND WASHING

ECYC promotes proper hand hygiene as recommended by the National Health and Safety Performance Standards. Children are encouraged and assisted, as appropriate for their age, to wash their hands throughout the day, including before meals, after toileting, after outdoor play, and after coughing or sneezing. Parents are encouraged to help their children wash their hands upon arrival and before departure each day.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP MAINTAIN A WELL CHILD CENTER

- Be sure your child gets enough sleep each night and weekend.
- Read Health Alert Posters outside your child's room.
- Keep your child home when symptoms of illness are apparent.
- Avoid bringing your child back to group care too soon after an illness.
- Keep up with immunizations.
- Call the front desk to report any illness.
- Keep your phone numbers regularly updated at ECYC.
- Keep staff informed of allergy conditions, symptoms and changes.
- Wash hands with your child when arriving and leaving each day.

ECO-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

ECYC maintains an eco-friendly environment by using products that are safe around children and having procedures that support recycling. The detergent used to wash bibs, dress up clothes, sheets, and blankets is biodegradable and perfume free.

Three ways to help ECYC maintain a healthy environment are:

1. Refrain from smoking anywhere on the property. Signage is at the front door.
2. Please note the use of a recycle bin and a trash bin when disposing of anything.
3. Please do not leave your car engine running in the parking lot when dropping off or picking up children.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Executive Director is responsible for handling the events of an emergency. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Administrator present at the time of the event would direct the staff. When more than one Administrator is available, they will collaborate and give direction. In all cases, the designated Administrator is in direct contact with Merck security for support. First aid kits and any additional first aid supplies are maintained in red emergency backpacks that each teacher will carry with them during any evacuation. In the event of an emergency in which medical attention is necessary, children will be taken to one of the following medical facilities:

- 1) Saint Peter's University Hospital, 254 Easton Ave, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 | (732) 745-8600
- 2) JFK Medical Center Foundation, 70 James St, Edison, NJ 08820 | (732) 632-1540
- 3) Overlook Medical Center, 99 Beauvoir Ave, Summit, NJ 07901 | (908) 522-2100

Contact with the parents regarding emergencies is made by staff. In the event that a parent cannot be reached by the phone numbers provided, ECYC will contact those listed on the child's emergency sheet. Parent phone numbers are kept within each classroom's iPad which is taken by staff when moving the group from one place to another at any time during the day. These numbers will be used to contact parents as soon as possible. Please keep all numbers, cell, home, and work up to date at all times. An emergency contact system of text messages and e-mail will be used to notify parents of closures, evacuations or any type of situation deemed necessary by administration.

ECYC is completely surrounded by a security fence. There is badge access only to the parking lots as well as the building itself. If you do not have your badge you must press the intercom button at the main gate or when in the lobby without a badge, you must pick up the designated phone to gain access.

In the case of an interior threat, ECYC has a direct connection with Merck Security to alert them of a need for help to which they immediately respond.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

In the case of a medical or dental emergency, the parent will be called immediately. If circumstances require, the Merck Rescue Squad will be called simultaneously. The ECYC staff will respond as necessary until the Merck Rescue Squad arrives. Should hospitalization be needed, EMS will decide on the local hospital destination based on the situation, choosing from one of three nearby hospitals equipped for pediatric emergencies. A staff member will go with the child and stay until the parent arrives. ECYC would then continue to try and make contact with a parent or family member to let them know to which hospital the child was taken to. ECYC carries a student accident Insurance policy. Parents should obtain the proper forms from the ECYC Administration for reporting any claim to our insurance carrier for services not covered under their own Insurance carrier.

FIRE EMERGENCY

ECYC conducts fire drills once a month. The Merck Fire Department oversees and documents each drill. Every age group has a door that goes directly outside to the play yards. Our staff learns both a primary exit route as well as a secondary exit route for these drills. The Primary Muster point is in the large Discovery Yard. The secondary muster point is towards the front of the building.

SECURITY DRILLS

Security drills are practiced as-needed. Only Fire Drills and Lock Down Drills are required by the Office of Licensing.

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ECYC performs two lock down drills per school year, and one fire drill each month.

Shelter-In-Place

A Shelter in Place could be the result of severe weather, environmental condition, or community alert. Children playing outside would be brought in. Staff are trained to shut windows and check to be sure exterior doors are locked. Staff with children in playrooms would return to their classrooms. Staff and children would remain in their rooms playing safely away from windows and doors. Everyone would remain in place until further instructions were given. Parents are asked not to try to reach their children during a Shelter in Place. It is crucial that our building remain closed until we are notified that everything is safe.

Lock Down

In this type of emergency, staff gather the children and hide away from windows and doors where they cannot be seen. Doors are locked and windows are closed. Staff and children remain in hiding until notified otherwise. Staff members that are playing in playrooms with children have designated places to take the children to keep them safe and out of site.

Bomb Threat

In this case Merck Security immediately responds to assess the threat. After an investigation, if it is warranted children would be immediately evacuated and moved away from the building to the back play yard where Merck vans would be readied to transport away from the area. The evacuation procedure would be handled just as a fire evacuation would be handled.

Evacuation Off-Site

In the event we could not return to our building after an evacuation, Merck and ECYC have plans in place to transport the children on Merck vans with their Teachers to the Merck Cafeteria. Here the children would be gathered by age group. Once the situation is stabilized, parents would be notified as to where to pick up their children. In any evacuation, staff carries their enrollment clipboards with parent contact numbers along with a black duffel bag of supplies to help entertain the children and keep them comfortable. The duffel bags contain snacks, diapers, first aid supplies, age appropriate games, water, flashlight, blanket etc. Medications are gathered by Administrative staff and made available when everyone is in place. ECYC also has the use of identity tags for health conditions if this were warranted.

Community Emergency

In the event of a community emergency, ECYC would be instructed by local authorities in conjunction with Merck Security, Fire and Safety as to the procedure to follow. Parents would in turn be notified by an emergency notification system.

Parents' Role in an Emergency

If any parents happen to be in the ECYC building or on the grounds during any of our drills, they must follow the procedures that our staff and children have been trained to follow.

Parents are not to pick up their child during any type of drill being conducted at the Center. You must wait until there is an all clear notice given.

Periodically check to be sure all your contact numbers are correct. We ask every family to update this yearly. If things change mid-year, be sure to let us know.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

Maintaining consistent touch points and developing trusting relationships between parents and teachers will be the responsibility of both the Lead and Primary Teachers. However, we also want to encourage parents to communicate openly with teachers on a regular basis. Parents should notify the teachers regarding any changes to the normal routine at home, as unexpected changes in routine may affect the child's behavior at school. A new babysitter, a parental trip, an illness or death in the family may affect a child at school and the content of play. We can support each child much more successfully if we are aware of such events. Parents should be advised that there is a reasonable expectation that information shared with the teachers may be shared with appropriate administrative staff when necessary to support the child or address school matters. We respect the family's rights to privacy, and all information shared remains confidential.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM LEAD AND PRIMARY TEACHERS

Parents have a reasonable expectation to be kept aware of their child's school experience. It is our responsibility to provide information that allows parents to address opportunities and issues in a timely way, as well as participate in their child's education. In addition to regular open dialogue between the parents and the school through Procure communications, emails, in person conversations, and check-in phone calls, parents should be communicated with in the following ways:

- Communicate on ProCare to inform parents of classroom activities and learning objectives, and daily occurrences.
- Inform parents of any significant changes observed in their child at school via phone call or email.
- Inform parents of any accident or illness their child has had at school via phone call, ProCare, or email.
- Make phone calls home to check-in with parents a couple times per year about how they feel things are going.
- Hold parent/teacher conferences twice a year (November and March) once check points have been completed.
- Fill out forms prior to conferences and kept in the child's file.

DAILY AND WEEKLY/MONTHLY UPDATES

The classroom teachers post weekly notes and photos via Procure so that parents have insight into classroom life. These notes provide information about activities the children are doing in the classroom and highlight important upcoming events. We encourage families to give teachers feedback on these communications, which can be used as a springboard for conversations, and working together with your child's teachers.

CHECK POINTS AND CONFERENCES:

A back-to-school evening is scheduled at the beginning of the school year for preschool, pre-k and kindergarten families. This is an opportunity for teachers and parents to spend time building trust and connecting.

Any parent unable to make back to school night should be offered a check in phone call within the first 2-3 weeks of school (or in the appropriate cases, first 2-3 weeks of the child's program start)

- Featured activities will be highlighted outside of the classroom each day.
- A monthly newsletter will be sent home via email

Parents and staff will meet formally 2 or 3 times a year (depending on the program age group) to discuss the child's transition to a new program, their progress, and their learning goals. A brief review of what is to be discussed at each conference should be reported to the program education administrator or a director prior to the conferences. These forms are kept confidential and are to be kept on school premises.

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- In early November, the lead and primary teachers will schedule a conference to discuss each child's progress with the transition, initial observations, and to set goals for the year.
- In early March, the lead and primary teachers will schedule a conference to discuss your child's growth, development, and suggestions for continued success.
- Infant, toddler and intermediate programs will have an optional 3rd conference in June.

Teachers will engage in ongoing assessment using the Teaching Strategies Check Points screening tool. A report will be generated for each child using the GOLD Assessment Tool which can be used to help facilitate conversation during the November and March parent teacher conferences.

Schedule of other parent/teacher touch points

- Back to school night (Early September)
- Bridge meetings (as needed when a child transitions from infants to toddlers, toddlers to intermediate)
- Check-in phone calls (as needed in the beginning and middle of a child's time within a new program)
- Weekly (preschool – kindergarten) and Daily (infants – Intermediate) group or individual posts on ProCare
- Monthly Classroom Newsletters
- Fall Conference: Early November
- Spring Conference: Early March
- Optional Summer Conference: July

In the event that staff members have concerns about developmental delays, the staff will:

- Observe the child.
- Speak privately with the parent regarding the concern and discuss first steps.
- Set up a plan for observation to be shared with the parent.
- Meet with the parent to discuss the observations and decide on plan of action.
- Provide parents with information on specialists if necessary
- Keep all discussions confidential and maintain results of Assessments/Observations locked in the child's file

Child's Individual Portfolio:

The staff should keep an individual portfolio for each child throughout their entire time at ECYC. This enables teachers to keep track of each child's progress from program to program during their time at the center. The portfolio may include family information, documentation, and work samples. Portfolios can be shared with parents at conferences and are passed on from program to program each year. When the child's time at ECYC ends, the family will take the portfolio home. All information is kept confidential.

If you should have specific concerns about your child, it is always best to first talk to your child's teachers as they are aware of your child's day-to-day routine and activities. We would also encourage you to notify the teachers regarding any changes to your normal routine at home as unexpected changes in routine may impact the child's behavior at school. A new babysitter, a parental trip, an illness or death in the family may affect your child at school and the content of play. We can support your child much more successfully if we are aware of such events. Please be advised that there is a reasonable expectation that information shared with the teachers will be regularly communicated to the director and/or associate director of the school. We respect family's rights to privacy, and all information shared remains confidential. General information about your child may be communicated to your child's teachers at drop-off or pick-up time. If a teacher feels that a more in-depth conversation is required, she/he will request a meeting. If you wish to speak to the Executive Director or Assistant Director, please find them when you are at School or leave a message for them either in person or by phone. Email is encouraged for matters that do not require an immediate response.

Except in the case of emergencies, teachers cannot be interrupted during class to receive telephone calls. Teachers will be given messages and will return calls during breaks or after school, or you can send an email. Teachers are not expected to check email communication over the weekend or evenings.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

The screening and assessment tools used by ECYC were chosen because of their validity and accuracy of results. We also take into consideration the family backgrounds and languages represented at ECYC to ensure the assessments and screenings are appropriate for everyone. If necessary, we will provide assistance with translation.

Parents should feel confident that all information gathered from both the screening and assessment tools will be kept in a locked area in the child's room and will only be shared with the parents/guardians of the child and appropriate staff and/or those designated by the parent. If a parent wishes to have any part of their child's portfolio shared with another person or agency we must have written permission from the parent letting us know exactly what they approve for release.

Parents may request further information regarding our Screening and Assessment tools by speaking to the Executive Director.

ECYC Screening Method

Each time a child starts a new program at ECYC, parents will receive a screening tool called AGES AND STAGES, ASQ-3 written by Squires and Bricker and Published by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. This tool allows us to screen infants and young children effectively and systematically for developmental delays prior to entering a program. This also allows us to get information regarding a parent's view of their child's development and over time includes the parents in the ongoing assessment of their child.

Staff Therapist Interactions

When therapy of any kind is determined to be necessary for a child, ECYC invites the parents to allow the therapy if appropriate to occur here at the Center. This arrangement will be made between the parents and ECYC administration. Confidentiality of these arrangements will be maintained and shared only with staff directly responsible for the child. The arrangements are initially made by the parent in conjunction with the Executive Director and the child's Lead Teacher. Although Therapists are not employees of ECYC, they will be required to follow our policies and procedures found in the ECYC Support Staff Handbook, which they are given when they are first introduced to the Center. This document gives them information about the ECYC Discipline policy, how ECYC staff escorts children to and from ancillary programs and health policies.

ECYC Assessment Plan/Procedure

ECYC strives to provide children with the best possible learning environment across the wide spectrum of abilities presented in each program. Ongoing assessment of each child's progress is key to this goal as well as evaluating program needs overall. ECYC Lead Teachers begin this process of assessment by formal and informal observation of a child's individual developmental milestones. This is done throughout the child's day to observe them as individuals in a familiar setting as well as within the group dynamics of the room.

The Gold Assessment Tool is used to collect and record this information. Teachers will assess the developmental level of each child through observation, documentation and sharing of information in all areas of development:

- Social and Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognition

The next step is to take these observations and evaluate the information. This is done by using tools, designed for teachers from the Creative Curriculum, as well as through the collection of work samples kept in each child's portfolio. Teachers refer to curriculum goals and developmental expectations when interpreting assessment data.

The Creative Curriculum includes the Developmental Continuum, a tool designed to guide teachers in their observations

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of how children typically develop and learn. This tool also helps guide teachers in determining if a child has reached a particular developmental goal or is showing a delay. If a concern arises that does not seem to be remediated by an environmental change, or a dialogue with

Administration and parents, ECYC will provide information for seeking advice from outside professionals whenever necessary or if a developmental delay seems apparent.

ECYC Staff Training on Assessment

Teaching staff receive on-going training at staff meetings to help with the implementation of the Creative Curriculum, and The Gold Assessment Tool. This includes taking anecdotal notes from observations and developing individual portfolios. Team Coordinators are available to assist teaching staff with the implementation of the Assessment.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our philosophy of discipline is based on the fact that children learn through their experiences in their different environments. Sometimes these experiences include negative interactions with their friends. It is our role to teach children positive methods by which they can resolve difficult situations. At no time will staff of ECYC use physical punishment, derogatory or demeaning language, or withhold food as punishment. Staff members will not discipline children for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves. The main goal in a disciplinary situation is to maintain the children's self-esteem, allow them the opportunity to gain their independence in a safe and non-threatening environment, and teach the children ways to problem-solve on their own and develop an ability to develop and maintain self-control.

In the very beginning, while the youngest children are going through their egocentric stage, we speak to them about not hurting others and sharing space and toys. As their own language begins to blossom, we encourage them to use the words we have been teaching them, e.g., please, or stop, instead of using physical force. At the same time, other children are asked to listen to what their friend is saying to them. We want children who are shy to learn to speak up and those who are more confident to listen and not act out. By the time children move through our Preschool, Pre-K, and Kindergarten programs, we encourage them to discuss their problems and then find solutions. Conflict resolution through positive communication, negotiation and compromise as well as a sense of compassion and respect for others is the final goal.

Methods we use to help the children learn this sense of compassion and get to that negotiating stage include:

Discussion

Talking directly to the child at his/her eye level when there is a problem, as opposed to calling him/her from across the room, enables the staff to get each child's undivided attention. Conveying to the child that it is the inappropriate behavior that we disapprove of, not the child, helps to maintain the child's self-esteem. Humiliation and making an "example" of the child are never used. Explaining why a behavior is inappropriate, e.g., because it is disturbing the other children or it hurts, or it is dangerous, helps the child understand consequences and learn reasoning. Acknowledging the child's feelings, e.g., "I see that you are angry because you are hitting," helps the child identify the emotion s/he is feeling. Staff then continues the discussion to help the child find other ways to deal with his/her anger.

Distraction

Finding another activity to interest the child can often take his/her mind off the problem and help him/her move on. This method is most often used with the very young child.

Problem Solving

Whenever possible, we help the child find ways to solve the problem and come up with solutions on his or her own. When necessary, a staff member will provide guidance to help children overcome a problem, e.g., let them use a timer for turns, help them talk and "hear" what the others are saying, give them words to describe their feelings, etc.

Choices

Stating a child's feelings helps the child to understand and learn to verbalize what is bothering him/her, e.g., "I know you are feeling angry now," or "I know you don't want to do this now." These statements are then followed by one which tells the child what needs to happen next. In some cases choices will be suggested, e.g., "I know you are feeling angry now and you want this toy, but it is not your turn." "You may play with this toy after John. Why don't you play over here for now until it is your turn?"

Reflection

If the methods above have not been successful and a child is persistent in an inappropriate behavior and will not listen to reason, s/he is asked to sit quietly nearby but away from the other children. Staff will sit with the child and discuss acceptable alternative behavior. They will then invite the child to rejoin the group activities if s/he is ready to behave appropriately.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT METHODS BY AGE GROUPS

A few general guidelines are used in all age groups at ECYC:

- No form of physical punishment or derogatory or demeaning language will ever be used.
- All children are seen as individuals with different personalities and temperaments.
- Not all tactics will work with every child.
- At all times the self-esteem of all children is to be maintained.
- Parents are partners in resolving behavior issues.

Proactive Actions That May Be Taken To Address Behaviors:

- Try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, supervision.
- Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Praise appropriate behaviors.
- Consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Give the child verbal warnings.
- Give the child time to regain control.

GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

A challenging behavior is any behavior that is harmful to the child, harmful to other children, disruptive to the program or may signify a developmental concern for the child. Every child is unique, and behavioral challenges are seldom consistent from one child to the next. The following are general guidelines that address a variety of challenging behaviors including, but not limited to, hitting, hair pulling, biting, or abusive language, lack of communication and/or interaction skills. Each individual case will be addressed by the staff to define a time frame for application of the guidelines and will work collaboratively with the family to provide support.

Examine the program to determine whether or not it is meeting the needs of the child. Some questions to ask are: Is the behavior repetitive? Is the behavior occurring at specific times? Does the environment need to be changed in any way? Are there enough appropriate materials in the room for the age group to keep them happily engaged? Determine if the behavior is developmentally appropriate. Use the expertise of the Executive Director and staff, as well as other outside professionals. Observe and document the behavior to determine patterns and to be able to clearly state concerns to the parents.

Apply consistent positive guidance techniques to communicate to the child that the behavior is unacceptable. Provide examples of appropriate behavior as well as positive reinforcement. When warranted, shadowing a child who is demonstrating persistent, undesired behavior will be put into place by the staff. This shadowing procedure consists of a staff member being assigned to follow the child throughout the day to prevent undesired behavior as well as model and reinforce desired behavior without isolating the child or preventing them from appropriate interactions. Meet with the parents to discuss the challenging behavior pattern observed. Discuss options and outline a plan of action with the participation and approval of the parents. Establish appropriate goals to be met including any recommendations for professional evaluations and set a date for the next conference to follow up on progress toward these goals. Failure to

participate in or follow an agreed-upon behavior support plan may be considered during the evaluation process described in the Expulsion Policy.

BITING POLICY

Although biting is unacceptable behavior, it is most common among the 15-month-old to 3-year-old child. When it occurs, it is traumatic not only to the child who has been bitten, but also to the child who did the biting, and to the parents of both children. Children bite for various reasons, including a need for autonomy and control, anxiety, teething, exploring cause and effect, and frustration. As they develop, young children need to explore the environment around them and determine how they can make it work to their advantage. The very young child can use biting as a means of this exploration.

Because children learn through repetition and consequences, a biting behavior is not always brought under control quickly. ECYC is committed to helping young children learn the appropriate responses to their needs.

Procedures for Handling a Biting Behavior

The bitten child will be immediately attended to. Staff will wash the area that was bitten using soap and water. Ice will be applied to help reduce any swelling. The child will be comforted and encouraged to continue playing.

The child who has bitten will be spoken to in a firm but calm voice. Little attention will be drawn to this child to avoid reinforcing the biting behavior. Even negative attention can cause a child to continue the behavior. Words like “You bit your friend with your teeth. That hurts your friend and she is crying. I will not let you bite anyone and I will not let anyone bite you.” will be used to help the child who bites understand what s/he has done.

The child who has done the biting will be redirected to another area to play and a staff member will be nearby to observe and prevent another incident.

In the case of multiple biting incidents, staff will follow the Guidelines for Identifying a Challenging Behavior.

How Parents Will Be Kept Informed

Documentation from the very first time a child bites will be kept by the ECYC staff using designated forms.

The parents of the child who is bitten will be called immediately and given a written accident report by the end of the next operating day.

The names of the children who bite will be kept confidential. Sharing the names serves no useful purpose and can only create more difficulty in an emotionally charged situation.

The parents of the child who does the biting will be notified both in writing and by phone or face-to-face when picking up. Information about biting and how ECYC handles it will be given to the parent to read over and become familiar with so they will be prepared should the biting behavior continue.

If the biting becomes a pattern, the parents of the biting child will be asked to sit with the staff for a conference to discuss methods to help the child change the behavior.

A family may be asked to remove a child if the biting continues and all reasonable methods of stopping the behavior have not been successful.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS

CONFIDENTIALITY AT ECYC

It is the goal of ECYC to be responsive to the needs of the families it serves. Open communication is promoted among all families, Board Members and employees of ECYC. All communication will be maintained as confidential when deemed necessary. All communication, written or verbal, is expected to show due respect for all individuals involved. Any documented information requiring confidentiality will be maintained in a confidential file and accessed only by individuals with a legitimate need to know, including the Executive Director and Board Members when deemed necessary.

Confidentiality is an important aspect of good communication among the parents and staff of ECYC. ECYC strives to maintain the privacy of parents and staff at all times. Staff members will only discuss your child with you. No mention of other children in the program or their family members will be brought up by staff. Parents should respect this and not expect staff to discuss anything pertaining to a child or family other than their own. Staff members will also keep confidential any personal matters of other staff in the program. The confidentiality of special needs for individuals will also be respected. Access to this information is limited to authorized ECYC staff on a need-to-know basis. Information will be shared only as necessary to support the child's care, health, safety, and participation in the program, and will otherwise remain confidential except as authorized by the parent/guardian or required by law.

Staff members may share information about a child with other authorized ECYC staff on a need-to-know basis when necessary to support the child's care, health, safety, development, or participation in the program.

- Staff members are not to discuss a child with any parent/guardian except that child's parent/guardian.
- Staff members are not to discuss enrolled children outside of the Center. Information regarding a child's special needs or medical conditions will be shared only with authorized ECYC staff on a need-to-know basis and will otherwise remain confidential, except as authorized by the parent/guardian or required by law.
- All children's medical files will be kept confidential in locked file cabinets in the Feel Better Room (Room 104B). All general intake files on each child will be kept in the child's classroom. Access to these files is limited to parents/guardians and authorized ECYC staff whose responsibilities require access to the information. No information will be released outside of ECYC without written parent permission. Children's portfolios and ongoing developmental continuum and assessment files will be kept secure and accessed only by authorized ECYC staff on a need-to-know basis and the child's parent(s)/guardian(s).

PARENTS WHO ARE DIVORCED OR SEPERATED

ECYC will work with parents involved in divorce or separation, maintaining confidentiality and support of the children. If there are arrangements for visitation, or pick-up and drop-off, with which we can help, please feel free to discuss this with us. ECYC will consider that both parents have equal rights unless a copy of a legal document determining otherwise is on file.

POLICY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

In accordance with applicable law, the Center prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sex, race, color, national

origin, ancestry, religion, physical or mental disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic characteristics, age, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law. The Center will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or retaliation of staff by parents, or parents by staff.

HARRASMENT

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the types of conduct that are prohibited as harassment if based on a protected classification:

- Verbal conduct such as threats, epithets, derogatory comments, slurs or denigrating jokes;
- Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, or gestures;
- Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, or blocking normal movement; or
- Retaliation for reporting harassment or threatening to report harassment.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the types of prohibited sexual harassment:

- Unwanted sexual advances;
- Offering benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
- Visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, or posters;
Conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, jokes, or comments about anyone's body or dress;
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- Physical conduct such as touching, assault, or impeding or blocking movements;
- Retaliation for reporting harassment or threatening to report harassment.

DISCRIMINATION OR HARRASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Center requires that all incidents of discrimination or harassment be reported to the Executive Director, regardless of the offender's identity or position. If you believe you have been harassed or if you are aware of the harassment or discrimination of others, you must immediately provide a written or verbal complaint to the Executive Director. Your complaint should be as detailed as possible, including the names of individuals involved, the names of any witnesses, direct quotations when language is relevant, and any documentary evidence (notes, pictures, cartoons, et cetera).

All incidents of prohibited discrimination or harassment that are properly reported to the Executive Director will be investigated. The Center will immediately undertake or direct a thorough and objective investigation of the allegations. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process where necessary to protect witnesses, evidence or the integrity of the process and to the extent practicable. The investigation will be completed and a determination regarding the reported discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation will be made and communicated to the person who complained and to the accused.

In response to any complaint of discrimination and/or harassment, the Center will take effective remedial action, as warranted by the circumstances. All complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible and in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

ECYC is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive community for children, families, and staff. The expectations outlined below apply to conduct while on ECYC premises, attending ECYC-sponsored events and, when applicable, to interactions with members of the ECYC community outside of the Center, including through electronic communications and social media. These standards are intended to promote respectful communications and protect the safety and well-being of our entire community.

The following expectations apply to all members of the ECYC community:

- **Respectful Conduct**
 - **Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation:** Threatening, bullying, harassing, intimidating, discriminatory, humiliating, or otherwise harmful behavior toward children, families, staff, or other members of the ECYC community is not permitted, whether in person or through electronic or social media platforms.
 - **Aggressive, Hostile, and Retaliatory Behavior:** Aggressive, hostile, retaliatory, disrespectful, or abusive behavior is not permitted, including retaliation against staff for enforcing policies, raising concerns, or making a report.
 - **Inappropriate Language and Disruptive Conduct:** Profane, abusive, or inappropriate language or conduct that disrupts ECYC operations or ECYC-sponsored events is not permitted.
- **Respect For Center Operations**
 - **Interference with Center Operations:** No one shall engage in conduct that disrupts the operation of ECYC, interferes with staff responsibilities, or diverts Center resources in a manner that interferes with the Center's ability to provide a safe and supportive environment.
 - **Professional Boundaries and Staff Interactions:** Interactions with ECYC staff must remain professional and may not compromise professional boundaries, create conflicts of interest, or interfere with staff responsibilities.
 - **Discipline:** No one shall discipline children other than their own at ECYC, except ECYC staff trained in positive discipline in accordance with Office of Licensing requirements.
- **Maintaining a Safe Environment**
 - **Alcohol and Substances:** The use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, controlled or illegal substances is prohibited on ECYC property and at ECYC-sponsored events. Note, ECYC is a smoke free environment.
 - **Weapons and Explosives:** Weapons and explosives are prohibited on or near ECYC premises, except as permitted for on-duty law enforcement officers.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** The privacy and confidentiality of ECYC children, families, and staff must be respected in accordance with ECYC policy.

ENFORCEMENT

In order to maintain a safe environment, ECYC takes violations of this Code of Conduct seriously. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in a review of the incident by the ECYC Executive Director and/or Board of Trustees. Repeated or serious violations may result in additional action, up to and including termination of a family's enrollment, consistent with applicable ECYC policies and procedures.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Parents are welcomed at ECYC and encouraged to visit and participate in our activities. Any parent wishing to be involved in the program in any way should make this known to his/her child's Lead Teacher. For example, parents may wish to help out during a trip or event, or share a special talent.

PARENT/GUARDIAN LUNCH AND CLASSROOM VISITS

Parents are welcome to have lunch with their children or take them out to lunch. Any child leaving the Center with a parent or authorized adult during the day must be signed out and signed back in upon return. Parents are also welcome to visit with their children in the classroom during the day but should consider the individual child's ability to accept a short visit and subsequent departure of the parent.

Visiting ECYC can enable working parents to share special times with their children. This also opens another avenue of communication between parent and child as they share a part of a day. Additionally, communication between staff and parents is enhanced.

To help ensure a successful visit and to help children see that parents and staff think alike about the "childcare" day, please follow the guidelines below:

- Please remember to follow all ECYC rules and procedures when spending time with your child at ECYC. It is important for children to see that we are in partnership in their care and follow routines accordingly.
- The responsibility for other children rests totally with ECYC's staff. Please maintain your role as a welcomed guest rather than a caregiver to children other than your own. In a relaxed atmosphere, conversation with staff will occur. Staff and parents should keep these conversations short so as not to detract from the care of the children.
- If your child is having difficulty with a routine while you are with him/her, please feel free to ask for assistance from the staff. This will help the child see that parents and staff agree with what is important for the child.

PARENT/GUARDIAN VOLUNTEER ROLES AND COMMITTEES

Parent committees and volunteer roles are essential to cultivating a thriving community. Your participation in Center events, working on committees, or our Board is important to the growth of ECYC. We encourage you to participate so that your input is included in the decisions being made to enhance the programs for your children.

Parent volunteers are expected to support ECYC's mission and foster a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful community. Volunteer roles are intended to strengthen community connections and do not replace established channels for addressing concerns regarding individual children, staff members, school policies, or administrative matters. Volunteers should respect the privacy of ECYC children, families, and staff and should direct sensitive concerns to the appropriate ECYC administrator.

Please read through some of the following opportunities and consider volunteering throughout the school year. Let us know if you have a particular interest in one or more of the opportunities below. We look forward to working with you!

Classroom Parent/Guardian Representative (Class Reps)

Classroom Representatives directly impact the children and families' experiences at ECYC. Together with the teachers, they help build classroom community and facilitate a supportive and collaborative classroom culture. Class reps are

responsible for working with the teachers in coordinating class-wide events and serving as a link between the families in your class and the school personnel.

Classroom Representatives support the teachers and the other parents in various ways throughout the school year including, circulating sign-up sheets, organizing classroom parties, and being a welcoming resource to the families in your class. Class parents also serve as primary communicators to the other parents in the class. They typically begin the year with a welcome email to the other parents in the classroom.

Class Reps help facilitate communication related to classroom community activities and events. Questions or concerns regarding individual children, teachers, classroom practices, school policies, or administrative matters should always be directed to the appropriate teacher or ECYC administrator.

Some of the primary responsibilities of a class rep include:

- Welcoming the families in your class at the beginning of the year via email. It's a nice idea to send an email to all of the families in your class at the beginning of the year, welcoming them to the school and letting them know who you are. Class reps can also use this communication channel to send out occasional emails with updates about upcoming class events and keep the lines of communication open.
- Help Make School Events Successful. There are many different events that take place at the school: Fall Festival, Winter Festival, Program Breakfasts, etc. Class Reps should try to get involved in as many events as possible and should encourage members of their classes to do so, as well.
- Organize Teacher Appreciation Week. During the second half of the year, Teacher Appreciation week takes place. Class reps typically help facilitate thoughtful ways of making the teachers feel appreciated through homemade gifts made by the children, flowers, baked goods, or even breakfast or lunch delivered to the school.
- Plan Additional Social Activities. Class Reps are encouraged to organize and schedule occasional class events outside of school hours to facilitate informal parental interaction. These events would be strictly parent-organized and aren't official ECYC events unless ECYC specifically sponsors them.

Parent/Guardian Ambassadors

This year we are looking for four individuals to serve as Parent/Guardian Ambassadors. To be a Parent Ambassador, you must also serve as a Classroom Representative for your child's class. Parent Ambassadors are selected annually by the administration from a list of Classroom Reps who are interested. An effort is made to include individuals representing different programs/age groups.

Parent/Guardian Ambassador Responsibilities:

- Encourage and promote a culture of open, honest, and productive feedback amongst parents, educators and administrators by assisting ECYC administration in gathering constructive parent feedback through school-approved surveys and other feedback initiatives.
- In partnership with Education Administrators, implement the "Welcome Buddy Program"
- In partnership with the ECYC Administrators and the Classroom Representatives, facilitate Teacher Appreciation Week and other important school-wide initiatives.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

- **Community Service Committee**

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ECYC organizes a number of activities which engage our parents, children, and staff in service work. Through this work, we hope to instill a commitment to service and compassion as a life-long practice for the children. The Community Service Committee helps organize these service efforts throughout the year.

- **Library Committee**

The Library committee is responsible for organizing library books, reshelving books, and general maintenance of the library space. Our Library committee also helps host an annual book fair and occasional special guest speakers/authors.

- **Other Potential Areas for Volunteer Support**

Throughout the year we may need parent help with **events, fundraising, admissions tours, photography, marketing, community projects, etc.** We encourage everyone to reach out if there are any ways at all in which you would like to support the school through volunteering your time.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT POLICY

(This policy complies with State and Federal Civil Rights Laws)

ECYC serves children who are able to participate successfully in a group setting. If the Executive Director and staff determine that the program is not able to meet the needs of the child after having followed the steps in the student behavior management policy, and persistent behavior has been deemed to be a safety concern in the program, the family will be asked to withdraw the child pending an evaluation by outside professional sources. ECYC will assist in finding appropriate resources for the family.

A child may return to the ECYC programs following the completion of an evaluation if it is determined that ECYC is an appropriate setting and the staff is capable of following through on the written recommendations from the evaluation team. Every effort will be made to assist the family in finding appropriate alternative care if necessary.

If after the remedial actions have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS TO PREVENT EXPLUSION

Before enrollment termination, the Center may use progressive steps such as:

1. **Communicating with the family**
2. **Written notice** (Document the child's disruptive behavior, maintaining confidentiality)
3. **Development of an action/support plan** (i.e. Provide the family with literature/resources regarding methods of improving behavior, recommend an evaluation by professional consultation on premises, recommend an evaluation by local school district study team.)
4. **Administrative Review** (Schedule a conference including the director, classroom staff, and parent/guardian to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.)
5. **Termination of Enrollment**

The Center may terminate enrollment when necessary to protect the safety and well-being of children, families, and staff, or when continued enrollment is inconsistent with Center policies or program requirements. In circumstances involving serious or immediate concerns, the Center may act without completing each step noted above.

An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period and the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's safety). We will work with the family of the child/children in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from the Center:

Immediate Causes for Expulsion:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.

Other Student's Actions for Expulsion:

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.

- Excessive biting.

The Center also reserves the right to take action up to and including termination of enrollment when a parent, guardian, or family member engages in conduct that comprises the safety, wellbeing, or respectful operations of the Center.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONDUCT THAT MAY RESULT IN EXPLUSION

Grounds for Immediate Expulsion

- Parent/guardian/family member threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent/guardian/family member verbally or physically assaults, or threatening to assault, a staff member, child, or other adult on ECYC premises.
- Parent/guardian/family member engaging in harassment, bullying, or other conduct that poses a threat to the safety or well-being of children, staff, families, or other members of the ECYC community.

Other Parental Actions That May Result in Expulsion

The following ongoing or repeated actions may result in termination of enrollment:

- Failure to pay tuition or habitual lateness in payments.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Failure to complete required forms, including the child's immunization records.
- Verbal or physical abuse or harassment towards staff or other families.
- Aggressive behavior towards children, staff members other parents while on premises.
- Violations of the ECYC Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct, Discrimination and Harassment Policy, or other ECYC policies.
- Repeated conduct that disrupts the operation of ECYC or interferes with the Center's ability to provide a safe and supportive environment.
- Failure to comply with reasonable requests from ECYC administration related to the safety, security, or well-being of children and the ECYC community.

A child will not be expelled if a parent/guardian solely:

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.

Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY

The Grievance Policy establishes a procedure for parents to raise any concerns they may have with ECYC. Following this policy will help to maintain open and respectful communication among the parents, staff, and administrators of ECYC. It is an integral part of the partnership established with every parent that enrolls in the ECYC programs. It is also an integral part of our ability to provide quality care for all our children.

Concerns have been divided into four categories, listed below, along with the process defined for the resolution of each type of concern.

- **Childcare Concern Resolution Process.** Childcare concerns should be addressed by first consulting with your child's Lead Teacher. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, then the issue should be raised with the Educational Administrator of your child's age group. If the concern cannot be resolved by the Educational Administrator, the Educational Administrator will document the issue using a standard form, and then present this form to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will contact the parents and staff member(s) to discuss the issue. Resolution will be communicated to all appropriate parties.
- **Policy Concern Resolution Process.** Policy concerns should be addressed by consultation with the Executive Director. The Executive Director will document the issue if necessary and will contact the appropriate parties to discuss or clarify the policy and resolve any issues. Copies of any documentation will be made for all concerned parties. Resolution will be communicated to all appropriate parties (including the Board of Trustees). An example of a policy concern might be about part time arrangements.
- **Personnel Concern Resolution Process.** Personnel concerns should first be raised directly with the Educational Administrator. If a satisfactory response is not received, the concern may then be brought to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will document the issue if necessary, and will contact the appropriate parties to discuss and resolve the issue. Resolution will be communicated to all appropriate parties.
- **Facility Concern Resolution Process.** Facility concerns should be raised with a member of ECYC Administration. The Administrator will document the concern as necessary and provide this documentation to the appropriate parties for discussion. If it cannot be resolved, the issue will be presented to our Merck Liaison. Resolution will be communicated to all appropriate parties. An example of a facility concern would be building or play yard repairs.

Timing and Appeals

All grievances should be raised immediately. Policy Concerns must be raised with the Executive Director as soon as the Policy Concern is discovered. Should the Policy Concern be presented to the Board, this must be done in writing. Once the Board renders a decision on the Policy Concern, any appeal of the original Policy Concern Decision must be submitted to the Board, in writing, within 90 days of receiving the Board's Decision of the original Policy Concern.

NEW JERSEY STATE OFFICE OF LICENSING DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Information to Parents Document

In accordance with DHS Office of Licensing Policy 3A:52-3.6, the center shall give to the parent(s) of every enrolled child, a written Information to Parents document designated by the Office of Licensing and indicating that the center is required to:

1. Be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Department of Children and Families;
2. Comply with all applicable provisions of this chapter;
3. Post its license in a prominent location within the center;
4. Retain a current copy of this chapter and make it available for parents' review;
5. Indicate how parents can secure a copy of this chapter and obtain information about the licensing process from the Office of Licensing;
6. Make available to parents, upon request, the Office of Licensing's Life/Safety and Program Inspection/Violation and Complaint Investigation Summary report(s) on the center, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the center's current licensing period;
7. Post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas that have been approved by the Office of Licensing for children's use;
8. Comply with the inspection and investigation functions of the Department, including the interviewing of staff members and children;
9. Afford parents the opportunity and time to review and discuss with the center director, sponsor, or sponsor representative any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the center or whether the center is in compliance with all applicable provisions of this chapter;
10. Advise parents that if they believe or suspect that the center is violating any requirement of this chapter, they may report such alleged violations to the center sponsor, sponsor representative, or director or to the Office of Licensing;
11. Afford parents of enrolled children an opportunity to participate in the center's operation and activities and to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements;
12. Afford parents of enrolled children the opportunity to visit the center at any time during the center's hours of operation to observe its operation and program activities without having to secure prior approval;
13. Provide parents with advance notice of any field trip, outing or special event involving the transportation of children away from the center, and, for each event, secure the written consent of the parent(s) before taking a child on such a field trip, outing or special event;
14. Post a copy of the center's written statement of policy on the disciplining of children by staff members in a prominent location within the center, and make a copy of it available to parents upon request;
15. Indicate, through this document, that any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or is being subjected to child abuse or neglect is required by N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10 to report such allegations to the State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) immediately, and indicate that such reports may be made anonymously;
16. Indicate through this document how parents and staff members may secure information about child abuse and neglect from the Department;
17. Inform parents of the center's policy on the release of children;
18. Inform parents of the center's policy on administering medication and health care procedures;
19. Provide parents with a copy of the center's policy on management of communicable diseases;
20. Provide parents with a copy of the center's policy on the expulsion of children from enrollment;
21. Inform parents that the center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. §§12101 et seq.), and

indicate that anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 or (800) 514-0383 (TTY); and

22. Inform parents that the center is required to maintain and update, at least annually, a list from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding unsafe products and make the list available to staff and parents or provide parents with the CPSC website at www.cpsc.gov/Recalls.

The center shall distribute a copy of the Information to Parents document to each child's parent(s) upon enrollment and to every person upon becoming a staff member and secure and maintain on file a record of each parent's and staff member's signature attesting to receipt of the document.

1. The center shall maintain on file a copy of the Information to Parents document.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect 3A:52-4.9

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh humiliating, frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect or exploitation by any adult, is required by state law to report such allegations verbally to the State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT 3A:52-4.9

(as set forth in the Office of Licensing Manual)

The sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or any staff member shall verbally notify the State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) immediately whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect by a staff member, or any other adult, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.9, 8.10, 8.13 and 8.14.

In addition to the reporting requirements specified in (a) above, the sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or any staff member shall advise the parent(s) of the occurrence of any unusual incident(s) that occurred at the center and that might indicate possible abuse or neglect involving the child. Such notification shall be made on the same day on which the incident occurred. Such incidents may include, but are not limited to, unusual sexual activity; violent or destructive behavior; withdrawal or passivity; or significant change(s) in the child's personality, behavior or habits. The center shall maintain on file a record of such incidents and documentation that parents have been informed of them.

The Department, during the course of investigating an allegation of child abuse or neglect, may determine that corrective action is necessary to protect the children whenever:

1. The sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or staff member has been found by the Department's Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU) to pose a risk of harm to children;
2. The sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or staff member has committed an act of child abuse or neglect, as substantiated by the IAIU; or
3. The sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or staff member has been convicted of such acts.

Whenever the Department makes a determination that corrective action is necessary to protect the children, the sponsor or sponsor representative shall carry out the Department's recommendation for corrective action. Such corrective action may include, but not be limited to:

1. Removal or suspension of the affected sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or staff member(s) from the center or reassignment to other duties that do not involve contact with the children; or

ECYC PARENT HANDBOOK

2. When the sponsor, sponsor representative, director, or staff member resides at the facility where the center is located, removal of the affected employee from the premises for a period of time extending from one hour prior to the arrival of the children until one hour after the children have left.

Such suspension, removal, or reassignment, as specified in (d)1 and 2 above, shall remain in effect until the results of the Department's investigation have been determined and a final decision in the matter has been rendered by the Office of Licensing.

If an allegation of child abuse or neglect is substantiated against a staff member, the sponsor or sponsor representative shall immediately terminate the staff member's employment at the center. If an allegation of child abuse or neglect is substantiated against the sponsor or sponsor representative, the Department shall revoke or refuse to renew the license or Certificate of Life/Safety Approval, as applicable.

Law Against Discrimination

ECYC complies with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. §§12101 et seq.) as is stated in the Department of Children and Families Manual of Requirements.

ECYC is committed to affording every child the same opportunities to grow and learn in a nurturing developmentally appropriate environment.