



**EARLY
CHILDHOOD**

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 12

Early Childhood Family Education Family Handbook 2023-2024

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Find us on Facebook [@Centennial.ECFE](https://www.facebook.com/Centennial.ECFE)

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Centennial School District Mission Statement

Through academic, emotional, and social development, Centennial School District 12 prepares students for life.

Centennial Community Education Mission

Making connections within the community to provide learners of all ages with accessible and enriching opportunities.

Centennial Early Childhood Mission

Our mission is to provide quality learning opportunities to parents and their children from birth to kindergarten entry.

Early Childhood Family Education Staff

All early childhood teachers and parent educators have, at minimum, a bachelor's degree and are licensed by the Minnesota Department of Education. Paraprofessionals assist in the children's classrooms. Continuing education and staff in-service training are provided throughout the year.

Program Coordination

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Welcome

Early Childhood Programs in Centennial School District

Early Childhood in the Centennial School District encompasses Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), and Centennial Preschool (CP). Early Childhood is a division of the Community Education department, which also oversees Early Childhood Screening and Kids Club before/after school care.

Early Childhood Education Philosophy

Early Childhood Education Goals Are For Students To:

- Develop and express imagination and creativity.
- Express feelings and energy in healthy ways.
- Build strength and control of their bodies.
- Increase ability to concentrate.
- Develop a positive attitude toward learning.

Learning Through Play

ECFE weaves a learning through play philosophy into each class. Since students learn by doing, we focus on the process of creating rather than the product created. Learning happens when children are given space, materials, and time to play. Students experience the following play and learning activities in the ECFE classroom:

- Expressive Activities: Students express their creativity with art materials.
- Imaginative Play: Dolls, blocks, puppets, transportation toys, dress-up clothes, and pretend play all help children use their imagination with role-playing activities.
- Large Muscle Activities: Running, jumping, hopping, catching, throwing, etc. are all activities that encourage large muscle coordination.
- Small Muscle Activities: Activities such as cutting, gluing, printing, painting, coloring, lacing, buttoning, zipping, kneading play dough, and fitting puzzles together provide students with practice in developing hand-eye coordination and small muscle development.
- Activities to Encourage Social and Emotional Skills: Students develop their social and emotional skills by playing with other students and learning from adults.
- Thinking Activities: Language, shapes, colors, sizes, letters, and numbers are the basis of cognitive (thinking) activities. Teachers use books, music, stories, educational games, and puzzles to help students develop problem-solving abilities and acquire school readiness skills.

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

Early Childhood Family Education (*ECFE*) is a program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entrance. The program is offered through Minnesota public school districts. ECFE is based on the idea that the family provides a child's first and most significant learning environment and parents are a child's first and most important teachers. ECFE works to strengthen families. ECFE's goal is to enhance the ability of all parents and other family members to provide the best possible environment for their child's learning and growth. ECFE is funded through state aid, local levy, and participant fees.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

While all young children grow and change at their own rate, some children experience delays in their development. If you have concerns about your child's talking, playing, behavior, ability to learn new things, or interaction with other people, we can help. We can observe your child at home in a comfortable setting and answer questions about your child's development. Your child may be eligible for free services from the Early Childhood Special Education program. To start the evaluation process, please visit HelpMeGrowMN.org or call 1-866-693-4769 to make a parent referral.

Centennial Preschool (CP)

Centennial Preschool offers a high-quality preschool experience for children who are three and four years of age. The goal is to help preschoolers enter kindergarten with the skills and behaviors necessary to be successful learners. The concept of "school readiness" includes both academic skills such as literacy, math, science, and art, and social/emotional skills such as listening, following directions, sharing, and problem solving. CP prioritizes parents' involvement in their child's education, as research has shown that programs that involve both parent and child are more effective than those that focus only on the child. All classes are taught by licensed early childhood teachers using play-based curriculum and assessment tools approved by the State of Minnesota. For more information visit the CP website [here](#).

ECFE Class Format

Gathering Time

The teacher welcomes families into the classroom, which is prepared with discrete areas for different types of play. We understand that punctuality is not always possible with young children, so the first minutes of class are free for parent-child play until all families arrive.

Circle Time

Circle time is led by the teacher. Circle time can include a greeting, songs, stories, concepts, or finger play to build communication and listening skills. We realize that sitting and listening may be difficult for some children. If necessary, parents and staff will devise a plan to help a student ease into appropriate circle time behaviors.

Free Play/Learning Centers

Because children learn through play, “learning centers” are a key component of our ECFE classrooms. Learning centers focus on different aspects of your child’s learning and give them the opportunity to explore new concepts, ideas, and experiences. What is available at each center changes throughout the year to provide new experiences for students. Staff encourage children to try out each learning center.

Through their hands-on play at each center, students will learn a variety of academic and social-emotional skills:

Sensory Center: Using fun materials like cotton balls, water, sand, rice, and beans, we experiment, discover, observe, develop fine motor skills, and enjoy hands-on materials.

Literacy Center: Books are always available for an adult and child to read together and practice pre-reading skills such as concepts of print, storytelling, and letter recognition.

Art Center: Using art materials like playdough, paint, glue, paper, collage materials, crayons, stamps, etc. we explore self-expression, creativity, fine motor/gross motor skills, and hand-eye coordination.

Dramatic Play Center: Using materials like dress-up clothing, our play kitchen (including play food and dishes), dolls, and other themed playthings, we learn communication skills, creativity, imagination, role-playing, and socialization skills.

Building Center: Using materials like blocks, magna-tiles, and other manipulatives, we practice fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, cognitive skills, and cooperative skills.

Parent-Child Interaction Guidelines

A parent attends class with their student. The class is divided between parent-child interaction time and parent education time. Parent-child interaction provides parents and children opportunities to try developmentally-appropriate play and learning activities. Language development, literacy-based activities, and math readiness activities are introduced.

Parents are a child's first teachers. Activities during parent-child interaction time promote healthy family relationships and offer parent teaching opportunities. The following guidelines will help you and your child experience a successful interaction time:

- Smile, laugh, relax, and enjoy the experience.
- Follow your child's lead. Visit activities your child is interested in first.
- Follow your child's pace and continue to try other activities, too.
- Include other parents and children in your interactions and activities. This shows your child how to be friendly with others.
- Verbalize. Use simple language to describe what is happening.
- Get down to your child's eye level by stooping or sitting on the floor.
- Reinforce. Stay positive. Establish a firm basis of support and trust.
- If an activity is full, encourage your child to try something else and come back. Waiting is a good skill to learn.
- Avoid using your cell phone during class.

Please keep adult interaction to a minimum during Parent-Child Interaction. There are two good clues to know that it is time to end a conversation with an adult:

1. Your child shows that they want your attention.
2. You become aware you have not noticed your child for the last few minutes.

Parent Education (Weekly)

The goal of parent education is to strengthen the parent-child relationship by providing relevant, effective education and support. Parent education is an opportunity for parents to discuss ideas and concerns ranging from child development to family relationships. A licensed parent educator leads the discussion and provides information based on research and knowledge of child development and family education. Parents are encouraged to share their experiences and observations with the group.

Non-separating classes will have parenting discussion in the classroom. While the parent educator leads discussion, the teacher and paraprofessional encourage the children to explore the learning stations. For separating classes, parents will say a quick goodbye to their child then move to the parent education room for their discussion. Gradual separation classes will move to the parent education room for increasing periods of time until full separation is achieved.

Parent Education Group Guidelines

Parenting is a time for you to share your joys and challenges of being a parent. Please remember:

- There are many good ways to be a parent, so try not to judge others.
- Please silence your cell phones during class time and refrain from using cell phones for non-emergency calls and texts.
- It is all right to share ideas from your discussions outside of the group, but please do not share names.
- This is your group and much of what you get out of it depends on what you put into it.
- Please be respectful when someone is speaking. Side conversations make it difficult for the person talking.
- It is important that all parents return to the classroom at the same time. Children may become frightened if they don't see their parent when other parents arrive.

Playground/Gym

Whenever possible, based on weather conditions, classes will go outside to the Early Childhood playground. Families should provide proper clothing for the season. In inclement weather, classes will go to the gym where indoor activities are provided.

Goodbye

Learning centers will have been put away while the children are out of the room. When families return, the teacher will lead a final song or game to mark the end of class.

ECFE from A to Z

Absences

Please use the Early Childhood Attendance Form to report an absence. The form can be found on our [website](#) or [here](#). When you submit the form an email will be sent to your child's teacher.

We recognize that a family illness or emergency may prevent you from attending an ECFE class on occasion with your child. If this happens, another adult family member or caregiver can accompany your child to class. Please ask them to check in at the front office. If you or your child are absent more than two consecutive class times, your teacher may call or email you to check in.

Arrival

Please be on time for class. It is easier for your child to transition into class and be successful when they can participate in the same things as everyone else. Because teachers are preparing their classrooms, the doors will not be open until five minutes before class time. If you arrive early, please wait inside the double doors.

Bathroom Needs

Diapering your child should only be done on the changing table in the children's bathrooms. If your child is still in diapers you will be called from parenting to change them. If your child is toilet learning, please let your teacher know if staff can take your child to the bathroom or if you should be called.

Behavior

Centennial ECFE believes in positive discipline. When difficulties arise, we encourage you to talk calmly and redirect your child to other choices. We realize it is not always easy to remember this during a difficult situation! That's why we are always available for more ideas, information, and support.

Cell Phones

Cell Phone calls or texting can be disruptive to the classroom and to the flow of the parenting session. Please turn off or silence your phone when you come in.

Class Fees

ECFE charges per class on a sliding scale based on household income. Families can choose to a single annual payment at the time of registration or monthly payments. For monthly payments, a single payment is charged at the time of registration and additional payments occur on the first of each month, for a total of 9 payments. Payments in "Eleyo" may be made by credit card or electronic bank transfer. Payments by cash, check, or credit card may be made at the office.

If your financial circumstances change and paying your class fee becomes difficult, please contact Sarah Holmboe at 793-792-6122. We can work with you to make this program affordable for your family.

Classroom Cleaning Procedures

We clean tables, toys, and equipment with a disinfectant after each class. If you notice your child mouthing a toy, place it in the sink when they are done playing with it, and it will be washed. Our clean-up procedure of bodily fluids follows school district guidelines.

Clothing

Dress your child in washable, comfortable play clothes so they will be free to participate in all activities, including messy ones. Sneakers allow your student to play and climb! Remember to bring shoes in the winter when your child wears boots to school. Bring extra clothes if your child is toilet learning.

Early Childhood Screening

Early childhood screening is a free check of children's height, weight, immunizations, health, vision, and development. State law requires that children are screened before they enter kindergarten or within 90 days of beginning district preschool. Screening identifies health and developmental concerns that can be addressed well before a child enters kindergarten. A child can be screened any time after age 3, but we recommend screening your child between 3-1/2 and 4. To schedule an appointment, please go online to isd12.ce.eleyo.com, email ecscreening@isd12.org or call the office at 763-792-6120.

Eleyo

Eleyo is the online system Early Childhood uses to manage registration and payments for the ECFE and CP programs. The system is also used by Community Education and Early Childhood Screening. Each ECFE family should establish an Eleyo account, even if class fees are made in person. The website for Eleyo is isd12.ce.eleyo.com. Please note that Eleyo is not the same as Campus, the data management system used by the school district. Information provided by families on their enrollment form will be used to create a Campus record for the student (and family). Because the Campus system is used to generate "School Messenger" alerts, it is important that families notify the office if contact information has changed.

Enrollment Forms

In addition to registering for a class in Eleyo, an enrollment form is required for each student in order to record their participation in the program and update information for the "School Messenger" system. Forms will be distributed during parent education time or during class time for non-separating classes. Additional questionnaires are requested by the state of Minnesota; these questionnaires will be available online for download or distributed during parent education time.

Family Resources

Take-home totes with games and learning activities are available in the office for check out. You may keep totes for one week at a time. Please return all borrowed materials to the office.

Guests

Children: Only children who are registered will be allowed to participate in class. Any exception must be approved in advance by the teacher.

Adults: We ask that you notify the teacher in advance before bringing a second adult to class.

Handwashing

Staff, parents, and students are encouraged to wash their hands before they enter the classroom. Students are expected to wash their hands during the day as needed – after using the toilet, after blowing their nose, and after playtime.

Illness

In order to maintain a healthy environment for students, parents, and staff, please follow this Illness Procedure. Children may not attend class or sibling care if they are ill or exhibit symptoms of an ongoing illness. Notify the office at 763-792-6120 as soon as possible if your child has been in school with a contagious illness.

The following information will help guide you as you make your decision on whether or not your child is well enough to go to school. Please keep in mind that we do have some medically fragile children in our building whose well-being relies on those around them being healthy. Please stay home from class if your child:

- Has a fever of 100° degrees or more. Students are required to stay home and may return to school 24 hours after their fever is gone without fever-reducing medication.
- Has vomited or has had diarrhea, the students are required to stay home until 24 hours after the last episode.
- Has a rash that may be disease-related or the cause is unknown. The student must be seen by a health care provider before sending the student to school.
- Has COVID-19 symptoms. It is recommended by the CDC that students who suspect they have Covid-19 stay home, isolate and test for Covid-19. Students who test positive for Covid-19 are required to isolate for 5 days per CDC recommendations and report the positive case to their school via their school's online attendance form. Students can return to school on day 6 if symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Has Influenza like symptoms. It is recommended that students remain home and report their absence via their school's online attendance form. They should be well enough to participate in school before returning.

If you have questions about when your sick child may return to school, district policies can be found [here](#). You may also call your teacher (“Early Childhood Family Education Staff”).

Immunizations

Minnesota law requires children enrolled in childcare, early childhood education, or school to be immunized against certain diseases, unless the child is medically or non-medically exempt. If proper documentation is not provided, students will be unable to attend school after November 1st. What you need to do:

- Contact your health care provider and review your child’s immunization status to make sure they are up to date.
- If you missed a required vaccination, make an appointment with a healthcare provider or local clinic as soon as possible.
- Follow up with your students’ school if they have reached out to you regarding your students immunization status.
- Turn in medical (must be signed by health care provider) and non-medical (must be notarized) exemption forms to your child’s school.

Visit the [MDH website](#) for vaccine schedules, exemption forms and more information including where to get free/low cost immunizations today. Please reach out to your students’ school for any questions.

Mandated Reporting

State law mandates all public school staff to report suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of children to Anoka County Child Protection Services or the county of the child’s residence. It is our intent to support and provide resources to parents who may be experiencing difficulty in raising children.

Parent Advisory Council - PAC

The Parent Advisory Council is a group of Centennial parents who provide input for Early Childhood program development, including class design and family and community events such as Gym Night, Winter Wonderland, and Truck Day. For the 21-22 school year PAC is meeting virtually to plan a smaller number of events. New members are always welcome. Call the office at 763-792-6120 for more information.

Photos

There are occasions when representatives of Early Childhood, ISD12, and/or the media photograph or record students while in school or while attending/participating in school sponsored functions. These photographs/recordings may be used in class newsletters, brochures, website, etc. and are used without identifying information about the students pictured. (Additional permissions are required for any uses in

which students are identified.) Parents/guardians not wanting their student(s) to be photographed or recorded must fill out a Photo Opt-Out form provided by the district in the back-to-school mailing. Copies are available in the office.

School Closings

Early Childhood follows the Centennial School District's procedure for school closings. An overview of school closures and delays can be found [here](#). If the District starts school late due to bad weather, morning classes will be cancelled. For information on closings or late starts, check the district [website](#), call the district office at 763-792-6000 or listen to local television or radio broadcasts. See also "School Messenger" below.

School Messenger

School Messenger alerts families by phone, email, and/or text in the event of an emergency or weather-related closing. Before the start of school, each student's family must complete an enrollment form for the school district. Please be sure to provide accurate information on your enrollment form, as the contact information is used for the School Messenger system. Note that changes to your contact information in Eleyo are not automatically updated in the School Messenger system, so please let the office know if there are changes to your emergency contact information.

SeeSaw

Your classroom teacher may use a smartphone app called SeeSaw to communicate with you. Please see your child's teacher for more information.

Separation

Why do we categorize our classes by separation time?

Sibling Care

Sibling care is available for most ECFE classes. An additional fee for this care is due at registration, and space is limited. The purpose of sibling care is to provide a safe, supervised environment staffed by paraprofessionals for children 3 months to 6 years while parents are attending class. Parents with babies up to 3 months old can keep their babies with them in class. So that you may give your full attention to your student who is registered for class, we ask that you enroll your baby in sibling care after your baby turns 3 months.

Sibling Care Guidelines

These guidelines will make your child's stay in sibling care more enjoyable. If you have any questions, please ask.

- All siblings should arrive toileted and with dry diapers. Parents will be asked to change their own child's diaper if necessary.
- Please feed your child before coming to sibling care. You may provide a bottle or snack, but be sure to label everything with your child's name.
- Please bring along a blanket, pacifier, or any other comfort item your child uses

- at home. Be sure to label all items with your child's name.
- If your child is having a difficult time separating, you may be asked to return to sibling care to comfort your child.
 - Please pick up your child immediately after class. Children may become frightened if they don't see their parent when other parents arrive.
 - The sibling care room will not be staffed until five minutes before the start of class. Please give the child care workers time to prepare the room for your child.
 - Children will not be allowed to stay if they are showing any signs of illness noted in "Illness".

Solicitations

Teachers will monitor soliciting of products or services by parents in the class so that other parents do not feel an obligation to buy. Early Childhood staff are prohibited from selling products or services during class time. Flyers for Scholastic Books may be sent home with families regularly; purchases are not necessary.

Special Events

ECFE and the Parent Advisory Council host a variety of events throughout the year. These include:

Gym Nights	Field trips
Truck Day	Special classes

Look for notice of these and other events in the parent education room, on the bulletin board, on Facebook, and on our [website](#).

Toys

Please keep violent toys such as guns, swords, action figures, etc., at home.

Volunteers

Early Childhood has volunteer opportunities. If you have talents you would like to share, please talk to your teacher, parent educator, or office staff. See also "Parent Advisory Council - PAC". Volunteers working in a classroom must be under the supervision of a member of Early Childhood staff. Volunteers may not use cellphones or take pictures in the course of their work with students. Volunteers will be asked to leave if their behavior does not meet Early Childhood standards for student safety.

Weapons

Weapons are not allowed on school district property.