Family Handbook

2026-2027

ECFE

Educating, developing and inspiring our community of young children and their families for lifelong learning.

Welcome

Coming to class on a regular basis provides continuity for your child. When you are unable to attend, we ask that you call or email to report your absence.

Sign in your child every week and make name tags for each family member attending. Please include instructions to help us work successfully with your child (allergies, bathroom reminders, no nap today, etc.).

Always label diaper bags, bottles, pacifiers and security blankets with your child's name.

ECFE is a family program for parents and children. Parents, grandparents or legal guardians must be present the entire time the child is here.

Only those children registered in class may attend.

Cell phones should be turned off or, in emergency situations, turned to the vibrate setting during class time.

For everyone's safety, children require extra attention, support and connection when transitioning in and out of the building. Keep your phone in a pocket or bag at these times.

Parent-Child Interaction Time

For children, this is a time to choose activities and lead you. It is a good time to put away your phone.

For parents, this is a time to relax and connect with your child. For all, this is a time for fun, exploring new things, meeting friends and learning.

Beverages other than water are permitted in the parent room only. We will have messy activities, so dress your child and yourself for play.

Particularly if you have multiple children, let us know how we can support you and help make ECFE a beneficial experience for all family members.

Note the separation guidelines available from your Parent Educator.

Lobby

Thank you for wearing your ECFE student badge at all times when in the building. The interior doors will be locked for most of the day. Show your badge in the window for admittance as a student. Should you forget your badge, stop at the window and you will be asked to complete our Lobby Guard process.

Our lobby was designed to be a welcoming space for families accessing our Adult Basic Education, Early Childhood Family Services and Early Childhood Special Education programs. It is intended to be used as a space to wait for a staff member or program participant, to fill out program forms, and to transition out of the building. Keeping our lobby clean and safe for all is a shared responsibility among all participants. Please be aware that classes and administrative work are ongoing. Your courtesy and respect are appreciated.

Diapering and Toileting

Diapers are changed in the diaper changing areas located in the bathrooms. We ask that you follow any posted diaper changing guidelines.

We do change diapers during class time, but we may need your assistance from time to time. Indicate on the sign-in sheet if you prefer to change your child's diaper or help them with their toileting needs.

Bring a complete change of clothes when your child is practicing toileting habits.

Especially for Babies

Lap babies who are 9 weeks and younger at the start of class will stay with the parent throughout the session. They are not counted in the staff-to-child ratio and are free.

Babies registered for the class and participating in the early childhood program during parent time will be brought to you in the parent room as needed for feeding or comfort.

Photos

Periodically, video and photos are taken of you and your child. We use these for educational purposes and for communication about the program with school staff and the general public (including our website, Facebook page and catalog). If you do not want your child's photo to be used for these purposes, please contact your child's teacher. Community Education has an opt-out policy. You will be asked to let us know your preferences.

Health Information

Stay home if you or your child are sick. Consider these additional guidelines to help determine when children need to remain at home:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Any rash, of which you do not know the cause
- Strep throat (until on medication for 24 hours)

It is preferred that your child remain at home for 24 hours after the above symptoms have subsided. This helps prevent the spread of communicable diseases and allows the opportunity to rest and recovery fully from the illness.

If your child is sick and cannot attend, you may attend alone.

In an effort to reduce the spread of illness, we encourage all family members to wash their hands before and after class.

Toys are regularly sanitized with an approved Minnesota Department of Health bleach solution. Help us by putting "mouthed" toys in the sink to be cleaned.

Safety

Purses/bags might contain "dangerous" items for children, so we ask that you leave purses/bags in the designated area during parent-child interaction.

With the exception of infants, children must wear shoes in the classroom. Remember to bring shoes during "boot" weather. Tennis shoes are recommended for gym use.

Children are curious and quick. Your guidance in common areas of the building is needed. This includes stairs and the elevator. Please do not allow children to use the elevator or climb stairs alone. Always hold your child's hand or carry them in the parking lot.

Automatic doors are for disabled/stroller use only. We discourage children from pushing the automatic door buttons. This helps to prevent children from running out into the parking lot or being unattended in the building. It also extends the mechanical life of the door for those who need assistance entering and exiting the building. Thank you for your diligence in teaching this to children.

District guidelines permit public use of playgrounds only when classes are not present.

Weather

When weather permits, we may take children outside. Teachers will inform you when they will be going outside.

ECFE follows District 196 guidelines regarding school closings. Please watch/listen to local television and radio stations and/or visit our district web page at www.district196.org during inclement weather. There will be no classes when school is canceled for the day. There will be no classes when there is a late start for school. There will be no evening classes when after school programs are canceled.

For You!

Feel free to ask your questions, share your challenges and successes. Information shared during group time or individually is confidential. We ask that all group members respect this confidentiality. ECFE staff members are mandated by state law to report any belief of physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

The ECFS Advisory Council accepts new members each spring. Please consider joining this committed group of parents who are working to strengthen our ECFE programs.

Your feedback is important. Please contact the **ECFS Manager, Zachary Gonsioroski**, with your questions, concerns or ideas. 952-388-1960 or zachary.gonsioroski@district196.org