



Connections Early Learning Center

STAFF POLICY & TRAINING MANUAL

Website: connectionsearlylearning.org

Email: connectionselc@gmail.com

Phone: 540-828-2200

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Staff Policy and Training Manual

Expectations of Employees	Program Operation
Rules of Conduct (Introduction) Attendance & Punctuality Cell Phone Use Communication Confidentiality Courtesy Dress Health Public Relations Participation Smoking & Use of Alcohol or Tobacco Social Media Responsibility Workplace Violence	Animals in the Classroom Behavioral Guidance & Intervention Consistent Care Plan Curriculum Emergencies Individualized Education Plans Meals & Snacks Proof of Identity Recording Child Attendance Specialized Consultants Transportation Policy Unscheduled Closures Visitors Volunteers
Health and Safety	Employment Policies
Access to Water Diapering & Toileting Procedures Emergency Care Binders Hazardous Substances Injury Prevention-Indoors Injury Prevention-Outdoors Lost or Missing Child Procedure Managing Allergies, Sensitivities, Dietary Restrictions, & Cross Contamination Medication Administration Prevention & Control of Disease Prevention of Abusive Head Trauma Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect Rest Time Safe Sleeping Practices for Infants Safe Sleeping Practices for Toddlers & Preschoolers Supervision & Accountability for Children Treating & Reporting Accidents	Application for Employment Background Checks Employee & Volunteer Rights Evaluation Grievances Orientation Personnel File Documents Professional Development & Training Tuberculosis Screening
Compensation, Leave, & Benefits	Appendices
Introduction Purpose Definitions Employee Classification Work Schedule Timekeeping Overtime Breaks Pay Rates Paid Time Off Holidays Vacation Sick Days Leave Eligibility & Requests Requesting a Leave of Absence Returning from Leave Types of Leave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Leave • Jury Duty • Medical Leave • Personal Leave Tuition Discount	Guidelines for Interaction - Infants Guidelines for Interaction - Preschoolers Guidelines for Interaction - School-Age Children CELC Organizational Structure

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEES

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible childcare and educational environment, CELC expects employees to follow **rules of conduct** that will protect the interests and safety of the employees and children the Center serves. It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of another's property
- Falsification of records
- Working under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or legal drugs taken in excess of a physician's instructions. The sale, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of illegal drugs on the premises of Connections Early Learning Center is prohibited. Additionally, any of the aforementioned behaviors that take place off the Center's premises which adversely affect the reputation of the Center is also prohibited.
- Violation of the Workplace Violence Policy
- Disruptive or unprofessional behavior in the workplace or community
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Center property or injury to a child, fellow employee, or visitor
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Violation of licensing standards
- Inappropriate behavior, including sexual or other unlawful harassment
- Recurring absenteeism or tardiness without notice
- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Each employee must report to work on time and continue to work until the end of their scheduled shift. The attendance record is an important consideration in the employee's annual performance evaluation. An unsatisfactory attendance record, frequent tardiness, and/or extended lunch periods and breaks negatively affect both the Center's operations and the performance of duties by fellow employees. Difficulty in meeting these expectations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Absences must be reported personally by the absent employee to the Director or Assistant Director unless the absent employee (a) is physically unable to speak with these people directly or (b) has previously submitted a doctor's note excusing the employee from work.

In the case of illness or injury when an employee cannot report for work, he/she must notify the Director or Assistant Director at least two hours in advance of the scheduled work report time. An employee who is to report for work early in the morning is urged to call the night before or, in the case of sudden illness, to call as early in the morning as possible. An employee should call daily if an illness extends for more than one day and should call the night before if he/she is able to return to work the next day. Leave without pay may be charged when notification procedures are not followed.

CELL PHONE USE

Cell phones may not be used during work hours for making personal calls or texts, other than during personal breaks. If there is an important reason to make a call or text, staff are asked to coordinate with colleagues to find coverage and step out of the classroom. If an employee is found to be using a cell phone for personal use during work hours, they will receive a verbal warning, a written warning, and then a one-day suspension without pay. Three suspensions will result in immediate termination. Cell phones may be used only for Professional use during clocked in hours.

COMMUNICATION

Team Members are expected to provide an email address to be used to communicate information regarding the center. CELC makes use of email to keep all families and staff informed with information requiring various responses. Administration will be using the following verbiage to help express the level of attention the email information needs.

- *Action Required:* These are emails that need a response ASAP and may require immediate action and/or are concerning events taking place within 24 hours.
- *Important:* These emails have important information and may require staff to take action but can be addressed in the next couple of days.
- *Information:* These emails have information about upcoming events, activities, and opportunities at the center and should be read when time is available.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Child records are maintained confidentially, accessible only to the CELC Administration, the child's Lead Teacher, VDOE licensing representatives, members of the Board of Directors, and the child's parents (unless otherwise ordered by the court). Documents are stored in a secure location in the Director's office except for copies of emergency care and authorization documents that are private, yet accessible in the child's classroom. Employees must treat all personal information pertaining to children and families accordingly. No CELC-related information, including documents, notes, files, records, oral information, computer files, or similar materials may be removed from the Center without the permission of the Director.

Employees must not disclose any confidential information, purposefully or inadvertently through casual conversation, to any unauthorized person inside or outside the Center. Also, it is never permissible to post a picture of a CELC child on social media sites. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.

Employees who are unsure about the confidential nature of specific information must ask the CELC Administration for clarification. Employees will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for knowingly or unknowingly revealing information of a confidential nature.

COURTESY

The center expects each employee to work with others to ensure quality service to the children and families of CELC. Employees represent the center and must extend courtesy and respect to all they come in contact with, whether in person or on the phone. This respect and care also extends to staff. It is expected that staff refrain from participating in or initiating gossip. The spreading of false information or holding conversations which degrade others undermines the positive culture that Connections ELC seeks to cultivate.

DRESS

Connections Early Learning Center aims to establish a professional setting where staff are respected for their knowledge and professional conduct. All employees are expected to express this professionalism by wearing neat and modest attire. If you have any questions about what is appropriate to wear, consult CELC Administration.

Acceptable Clothing:

- CELC logo T-shirts
- Modest casual shirts
- Nice jeans or khaki pants
- Modest shorts, skirts, capris and dresses (hems should fall below the fingertips)
- Leggings and yoga pants if there is no venting or logos and if the shirt worn over them is mid-thigh length.
- Scrub Pants

Unacceptable Clothing:

- Cut offs or clothing with frayed edges
- Jeans with holes or writing
- Sweatpants
- Tops with spaghetti straps or exposed bra straps
- Clothing promoting substance use or lude commentary
- Clothing which exposes undergarments when stretching or squatting on the floor
- Clothing which shows cleavage or midriff when bending or leaning over

HEALTH

Employees who maintain physical and mental well-being are positioned to best serve the Center's children. If their health becomes an interference in daily caregiving and education of children, employees are encouraged to discuss this with Administration. If administrators have a concern related to a staff member's physical or mental health, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the concern and develop a plan to address it.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PARTICIPATION

Press releases, press conferences, or any official statement about the CELC must receive prior approval from an Administrator.

SMOKING AND USE OF ALCOHOL OR TOBACCO

CELC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, staff, and families. Use of alcohol, chew tobacco, **vaping**, and smoking are prohibited throughout the church building and premises for all staff, volunteers, and families. Anyone visibly under the influence will be asked to leave. *Staff are responsible for explaining this policy to visitors or reporting a situation to an administrator when they observe anyone visibly under the influence or using tobacco products.*

SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSIBILITY

Respect for families, children, staff and administrators of CELC is important in all settings, including social media. Volunteers and staff members may "like" or "share" content posted by CELC on social media. Volunteers and staff should never post their own pictures, video, or other content of children at CELC. Personal postings about the center and staff can impact the reputation of the CELC, the overall work environment, and personal relationships among staff. The center encourages all employees and volunteers to resolve personal concerns or frustrations in a professional manner instead of posting negative comments.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

CELC is committed to providing a safe working environment. Therefore, violence in the workplace in any form, by employees or visitors, will not be tolerated. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to, verbal threats, the use of profane language, name calling, and any form of physical assault such as pushing, hitting, spitting, and kicking another person. Workplace violence can also involve access to weapons. Therefore, the following items will not be allowed on any property of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren: all types of firearms (loaded or unloaded), switchblade knives, non-surgical knives, explosives, and any other object carried for the purpose of intimidating or injuring another. All employees and their personal property are subject to search at any time. Refusal to consent to or cooperate with a search will be grounds for termination of employment.

Program Operation

ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

The following criteria must be met when experiences with animals are planned.

- Animals have an appropriate temperament for being around children.
- Animals are in good health and receive appropriate veterinary care.
- Children are taught to handle animals gently and respectfully.
- Animal cages or containers are kept clean.
- Animals, cages, and supplies are kept away from areas used for food preparation, eating, and storage.
- In the event a child is allergic to an animal, the appropriate response is determined through consultation with the family.
- Visiting animals are in good health and always in the control of a responsible adult.
- All persons wash their hands thoroughly **before &** after handling animals and cleaning cages.

BEHAVIORAL GUIDANCE & INTERVENTION

Self-control grows as children are given opportunities to interact with others, make choices, and solve problems. CELC provides a supportive and caring environment that encourages this kind of growth. The classroom is arranged so that negative behavior and conflicts are minimized. Guidelines are stated positively. Guidance techniques are non-punitive and accompanied by an explanation of expectations. Adults help children express their feelings in positive ways and encourage them to recognize and respect the feelings of others. Appendices to this manual include guidelines for interaction with infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-agers. All staff are expected to use these guidelines in their daily interactions.

If a child exhibits persistent behavioral difficulties, the teacher **will meet with administration to** initiate a meeting with the family to discuss the cause of the behavior, a plan for providing positive support, and a procedure for regular communication. Additional professional input may be sought with the permission of the administration and the family. Family members are welcome to request a meeting to discuss behavioral concerns at any time.

Disciplinary actions prohibited by Section 8VAC20-780-410.1-8 of the *Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers* (VA Dept of Education, 2021) are NEVER used. These include physical or forceful punishment, withholding or forcing food or rest, demeaning or threatening remarks, punishments for toileting accidents, forced confinement, separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member, and punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances.

CONSISTENT CARE PLAN

Establishing trusted relationships with teachers within a classroom is critical to children's sense of security and confidence. Each classroom has established teachers who work together to develop curriculum and a classroom culture which supports each child's needs. The team works together to assess children's developmental capabilities and techniques to encourage the child's growth or respond to the children's changing needs. Regular attendance by staff and longevity of staff in the same age group also support the continuity of care.

During the majority of each day, children have the same lead teacher or teachers. At the end of the day, supervision is provided by a consistent team of 2-3 teachers and support staff. Staff greet each child personally upon arrival and oversee departure from the center. Conversations with family members at the end of the day include details of the child's activities and physical well-being. Questions about developmental milestones are referred to the lead teacher.

CURRICULUM

CELC classrooms are dynamic places where children of all ages engage in a variety of activities that promote independence, learning, and growth, while navigating relationships and processing emotions. Teachers support children throughout the day in all areas of social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. All children are natural explorers. A foundation for lifelong learning is established by encouraging children to ask meaningful questions, solve problems creatively, collaborate with peers, and develop a drive to find answers. This process begins in the infant classroom and continues through the school-age program.

Research shows that optimal learning occurs when children are able to explore topics which are of interest to them. CELC teachers build on children's interests by planning related experiences that incorporate language, math, reading, social studies, and science. Opportunities for individual expression are provided, as well as expectations for working collaboratively. Teachers work alongside children of all ages to provide language enrichment and help them expand their ability for creative problem-solving, articulating thoughts clearly, and accommodating the perspectives of others.

Children of all ages learn through play. They create, build and pretend. CELC teachers guide by asking questions that encourage critical thinking, incorporating new vocabulary, and introducing academic concepts into their play. This process requires teachers to identify each child's current knowledge and plan for opportunities to build new understanding. As children work together, teachers observe interactions and provide guidance that supports awareness of the perspective of others, as well as appropriate expression of their own emotions. Adults model appropriate responses for children and help them understand that all actions have consequences. Peaceful resolution of conflict is a priority for children of all ages.

Staff members receive class-specific modeling and training to guide curricular decisions and personal interactions for the age group in their care.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of a general emergency, an on-site administrator will contact authorities by dialing 9-1-1 as soon as possible and designate a staff member(s) to communicate with families regarding the location and procedures for picking up children. Notification will be via text to the phone number(s) on the Registration Form. If alternative shelter is recommended by emergency officials, children and staff will go to the Funkhouser Center on the campus of Bridgewater College (117 College View Drive). This move will be communicated to families and updates will be provided by CELC administrators as frequently as possible as guided by emergency officials.

If an individual medical emergency occurs, 9-1-1 is called. A family member is contacted immediately using numbers on the Emergency Information Form. It is determined if the family member will come to the CELC or meet the child at Sentara-RMH. If the family member cannot reach CELC before emergency medical personnel are ready to transport, an administrator or teacher will accompany the child to Sentara-RMH and stay until a family member arrives. The child's medication, medication administration log, registration form, and all health documents provided by the family are taken with the child to the hospital. Licensing officials shall be informed within two business days of any injury to a child that occurs while the child is under the supervision of the center and requires outside medical attention. The Director shall also inform VDOE officials within one business day of circumstances surrounding the following incidents: death of a child while under the center's supervision; missing child when local authorities have been contacted for help; or the suspension or termination of all childcare services for more than 24 hours as a result of an emergency situation and any plans to resume childcare.

Detailed procedures for responding to potential emergencies are described in the *CELC Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan*.

Emergency drills are practiced regularly according to the schedule directed by VDOE licensing standards: building evacuation drills-monthly, shelter-in-place procedures-twice each year, and lockdown procedures-

annually. Documentation of all drills is maintained by administration using the *VDOE Record of Emergency Response Drills*.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS

It is the family's responsibility to inform the CELC administration if their child has an IEP or is receiving specialized services. Administration will meet with the family and school division officials if necessary prior to the child's attendance to confirm the appropriateness of the placement and specific expectations for the child's progress in the CELC setting. At that time a copy of the IEP is shared with the director. Program staff will cooperate with resource persons and support IEP goals as much as realistically possible.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Families provide lunches for their children daily. Healthy meals include fruit, veggies, protein, and a grain. Families are asked not to provide sugary treats such as desserts or candy. Milk is provided by CELC for lunch. There is no refrigerator space for lunches, nor access to microwaves, so families are asked to bring lunches "ready to serve" in an insulated lunchbox with an ice pack or thermos (for hot foods).

Staff shall adhere closely to the classroom meal and snack schedule. The weekly menu is posted in each classroom by the daily sign-in location. CELC provides an AM snack and PM snack. Snacks are two food groups and water. Store purchased snacks for special events do not replace these components but are in addition. All children must be allowed to eat with the group and have seconds. Food may not be removed as punishment. Meals are important social times when staff sit with the children and children are encouraged to eat as independently as possible. Foods that are choking hazards may not be provided for children under 3 years old or must be chopped into smaller pieces.

Before preparing meals, staff must wash their hands whenever leaving the food preparation process and returning. Anything that falls on the floor must be put in the trash, sink, or laundry bin. Nothing that has been on the floor, or a chair may be put in the sink that is used for washing tables or utensils. Spoons may never be tapped on children's plates/bowls to get off remaining food. Unused portions of opened food or milk shall be discarded by the end of the day or returned to the parent. The center shall have extra food on hand to serve to children so they can have an appropriate meal if they forget to bring one from home or if they bring an inadequate meal.

Contaminated or spoiled food shall not be served to children. Tables and highchair trays shall be washed and sanitized before and after use and cleaned at least once daily. A child diagnosed with a food allergy shall not be served any food identified in his or her allergy care plan.

Feeding Infants

Highchairs, infant carrier seats or feeding tables shall be used for children under 12 months who are not held while being fed. Children using infant seats or highchairs shall be supervised during snacks and meals. When a child is placed in a highchair, the protective belt shall be fastened securely.

Staff are required to hold a bottle for bottle-fed infants who cannot hold the bottle themselves. Bottles shall not be propped or used while the child is in the designated sleeping location. Infants shall be fed on demand or in accordance with parental instructions. Infant formula must be prepared and shall be refrigerated, dated, and labeled with the child's name. Heated formula and baby food shall be stirred or shaken and tested for temperature before serving to children. Milk, formula, and breast milk shall not be heated or warmed directly in a microwave. Note: Water for warming formula or breast milk may be heated in a microwave.

Prepared baby food not consumed by an infant during a feeding may be used by that same infant later the same day if it is dated and stored in the refrigerator, provided that the food is not served out of the baby food jar. Otherwise, it shall be discarded. Breast milk shall not remain unrefrigerated for more than two hours and may not be reheated.

PROOF OF IDENTITY

At registration, families must provide an official birth certificate as proof of the child's identity. The administrator conducting the conference reviews the document and records the required information to verify the child's identity on the registration form. The identity document is immediately returned to the family; it is never copied or photographed.

RECORDING CHILD ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance records are crucial for determining which children are in attendance at any given time throughout the day. This is especially important in case of an emergency. Each day, staff record arrival and families record departure from the program by signing on the electronic communication software. At the end of the day, Staff are responsible for selecting the authorized pick up and ensuring they sign the child out using the electronic communication software.

SPECIALIZED CONSULTANTS

All specialized consultants (independent contractors) who work with individuals or groups of children at CELC must be approved by the Director. Services offered during school hours are limited to specific diagnostic evaluations and professional intervention which support a child's positive experience at the Center. All individualized services and/or interviews require prior written permission of the child's parent or legal guardian.

Although fulfilling an important function, support professionals are guests of CELC and must abide by the following guidelines:

- Adults who work alone with children have completed the background checks required by the Virginia Department of Education (refer to "Background Checks" in *Employment Policies* section).
- The schedule of services is arranged with the Director in advance. If changes are necessary, the CELC is notified as soon as possible by leaving a phone message. Drop-in visits are not appropriate.
- The autonomy of the program and authority of the teacher are respected at all times.
- All interactions with children communicate respect and an understanding of their developmental level.
- Services support the normal routine of the classroom. Voice volume is consistent with that used by the staff.
- Intervention with children other than the one(s) being served is kept to a minimum. If involvement becomes necessary, the language and strategies used are consistent with those modeled by the staff.
- Respect for the confidentiality of information related to children and families is required. Professional dialogue about specific children is conducted privately.
- The CELC is not available as a meeting site for business other than that which directly relates to the program or its children.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

To help achieve academic goals, at times CELC provides an opportunity for off-site field trips for the children. This policy outlines the procedures that are followed to ensure safety and licensing compliance during off-site trips.

Vehicle:

- The vehicle is manufactured for the purpose of transporting people seated in an enclosed area.
- The seats are attached to the floor and a safety belt is provided for every passenger.
- Any child under the age of 8 years are properly secured in a child safety seat or booster seat. Children 8 years or older are properly secured using the vehicle's safety belts.
- The vehicle is insured with the limits established by the Virginia state statutes.
- The vehicle meets safety standards set by the Department of Motor Vehicles and CELC keeps the vehicle in satisfactory condition to assure the safety of all people in the vehicle.
- Volunteers may not supply their personal vehicle for transportation for CELC off-site field trips.
- No child may travel in the front seat.

- The children remain seated and each child's arms, legs, and head remain in the vehicle.
- The doors are closed properly and locked while in motion.
- The vehicle is equipped with a properly stocked first aid kit as well as an up-to-date inspected fire extinguisher.

Supervision:

CELC adheres to licensing requirements for ratio during off-site fieldtrips. 2 adults must attend any field trips requiring transportation.

A staff member remains in the vehicle when children are present.

Drivers:

Any staff member transporting children is 18 years or older and is insured under the vehicle's insurance plan.

Information and Materials:

- The caregiver has a printed list of emergency contact information for every child.
- The caregiver has a printed roster of children enrolled in the class and in attendance of the field trip.
- The caregiver has the name, address, and phone number of CELC.
- The caregiver has a list of emergency phone numbers and contacts.
- Signed permission forms for the trip are kept in the binder with the caregiver. Families must give permission for their child to attend an off-site field trip. Families are notified ahead of time of off-site field trips and given an opportunity to allow their child to attend or decline. For off-site field trips families will be notified of the name and location of the destination as well as the departure and return time and this information is posted at the center.
- Caregivers attending off-site fieldtrips are required to carry a cellular phone with them at all times. This is used to communicate with the center and/or families in case of an emergency. A cellular phone may only be used if outside the vehicle or the vehicle is parked in a safe location.
- Any necessary emergency medications and accompanying information are kept with the caregiver and remained locked. A copy of all Allergy Care plans are included.
- Drinking water is provided and accessible to all children at all times.
- Adequate food is available for trips. Families pack lunch (when necessary) and insulate with ice packs if needed. Additional food is in an emergency bag located in the vehicle.

Entering and Exiting the Vehicle:

- The children are required to enter and exit the vehicle from the curb side of the vehicle or in a protected parking area or driveway.
- Children may only cross streets at corners or crosswalks or at another safe designated crossing point.
- Caregivers verify all children have exited the vehicle by performing a "name to face" with the roster as well as physically checking inside the vehicle at the conclusion of any trip.

UNSCHEDULED CLOSURES

If road conditions are unsafe, CELC will close. Closure may also be necessary due to natural or man-made disasters. All schedule changes are communicated to families, staff, and volunteers via Procure, email, and text to the phone number(s) shared at registration or **on the Staff and Volunteer Emergency Form.**

Delayed opening: Children are received at 6:30 daily unless conditions dictate a delay in CELC opening time. School-aged children remain in CELC care until the bus arrives to take them to school. If, during that time, a RCPS school closure is announced, administration notifies families and staff regarding the status of the Center.

CELC receives children off the bus from school daily. In the event of a RCPS planned early release or weather-related early release, CELC will receive children when the bus arrives. Families are contacted as soon as possible if CELC cannot remain open until the usual 5:30 PM time due to weather conditions.

VISITORS

A child's custodial parent has the right to visit CELC while the child is in the program.

Siblings present during arrival and departure must remain with a parent or accompanying adult. Teachers are responsible for enrolled children only and should not be asked or expected to provide additional supervision.

VOLUNTEERS

It is the responsibility of the lead teacher in each classroom to use volunteers in compliance with licensing regulations.

- Volunteers must be at least 13 years of age.
- Volunteers may NOT be counted in the staff-to-children ratio of a class group.
- When they are in the presence of children, volunteers must be within sight and sound supervision of a staff member.

Health & Safety

ACCESS TO WATER

Safe drinking water is always accessible to children. When portable water coolers are used, they are cleaned daily, kept securely closed, and have a tap or faucet. When the temperature is above 80 degrees, children are encouraged to drink water at regular intervals.

DIAPERING AND TOILETING PROCEDURES

Families are responsible for providing diapers and disposable wipes. If cloth diapers are used, families must also provide a leak-proof or plastic-lined storage system that is foot-operated. Staff regularly check the stock of diapers, wipes, and diaper rash cream and let the family know if these items need to be restocked. This notification is made several days before the child is completely out of stock.

Changing tables are positioned so the staff member changing a child's diaper can maintain sight and sound supervision of other children in the class. They are close to a water source to facilitate hand washing for the teacher and the child. Lead teachers are responsible for making sure soap, sanitizer, disposable towels, and single use gloves are always available in the diapering area. Tables used for children's activities or meals shall not be used for changing diapers.

Diapers are changed at minimum every two hours or every time a child has a bowel movement. Children younger than three years that are not potty training, are changed on a changing table. Used disposable diapers are disposed of in a plastic-lined, hands-free trash can. Soiled clothing is placed in a plastic bag **labeled with the child's name** to be sent home (placed in a child's cubbie). Cloth diapers are put in a plastic foot-operated receptacle which is labeled for use by that child only.

Children's bottoms are wiped with each change. Wiping occurs from front to back, thoroughly and in each crease. Wipes are placed in the diaper before it is wrapped on itself, closed with its own tabs, and placed in the hands-free trash receptacle.

Children can only have cream applied if a current Medication Authorization Form is on file. Staff use cream as directed on the Medication Authorization Form. After the diaper change has been completed, the application is documented in the electronic communication software. Teachers check the Medication Authorization form expiration date at the end of each month to ensure a new form is signed by the parent if it is to expire within the next month.

The diapering surface shall be used only for diapering or cleaning children. The changing table is cleaned with soap and water, wiped with a paper towel, and sanitized with bleach spray and allowed to air dry for 2 minutes. If the table is wet when returning for a new diaper change, it must be wiped with a paper towel until dry.

Toilet-training children will have access to a child-sized toilet and/or toilet chair. Teachers and parents work together to determine child readiness and elements of the toilet training process. There will be no negative response from teachers or punitive measures for accidents or difficulty in toilet training.

When a child is using the toilet, staff shall have sight and sound supervision of children in the classroom for the required staff-to-child ratios to be maintained. Toilet chairs are emptied promptly into the toilet. The toilet chair is washed and sanitized by spraying with bleach solution and allowing it to air dry or waiting 2 minutes to dry with a paper towel. All staff and children must wash hands with warm water and soap following toileting or assisting with toileting.

EMERGENCY CARE BINDERS

Emergency Care Binders are located in all CELC classrooms for easy access if evacuation becomes necessary during an emergency. Binders contain the following documents for each child and staff member in the group:

- Child Information Sheet
- Individual Health Care Plan (if needed)
- Allergy Care Plan (if needed)
- Emergency Procedures Manual
- Emergency Evacuation Plan Routes
- Class Roster
- Blank Incident Reports
- Red & Green Notification Signs

Any time families provide new information to add or be changed to the above forms, a copy of the changes will be kept in the Emergency Care Binder. The Emergency Care Binder will be updated with any additions or changes **as often as they occur**.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

- All hazardous substances must be stored in a locked cabinet that is not accessible to children.
- Cleaning and sanitizing materials should not be located above food, food equipment, utensils, or single-serve articles and must be stored in areas physically away from food.
- Hazardous substances shall be stored in the original container.
- Cosmetics, personal medication, or other harmful agents shall not be stored in areas, purses, or pockets that are accessible to children, and must be in locked area.
- Hazardous art and craft materials shall not be used with children (permanent markers, toxic paints or polyurethane, glitter for children under age 3, and glue guns for children under school age).

INJURY PREVENTION - INDOORS

Safety of children is CELC's top priority. All staff must constantly be alert to ways of protecting children and ensure that the following expectations for indoor injury prevention are consistently implemented. These procedures are updated annually based on documentation of injuries and review of the activities and services of the Center.

- All children must be within sight and sound of a supervising adult. Class teams should develop a plan to ensure supervision and communication as children move between activities (including use of the bathroom).
- Assist children to use words (not physical contact) to work through problems that arise when playing and sharing toys.
- Classroom safety rules should be explained clearly and enforced consistently:
 - Children must be seated when using scissors.
 - Blocks are never thrown, intentionally dropped, or pushed over.
 - The height of block structures does not exceed the child's height.
 - Dress-up clothing and footwear are worn safely.
 - Sensory materials (water, sand, rice, etc.) are used within their container and are never thrown.
 - Clean up spills of sensory materials and food or drink immediately.
 - Children must be seated when eating
- Be alert to the condition of all equipment and materials children are using. Remove broken toys and anything with sharp edges or small parts that may present a choking hazard.
- Be sure all electrical outlets have covers and cords do not create a tripping hazard.
- Personal cell phone use in the classroom is not appropriate (refer to **Cell Phone Use** in the first section of this manual).
- Children are reminded to walk while indoors (unless in the gym)
- Children who have issues with biting will be shadowed by a staff member to help reduce incidents

INJURY PREVENTION-OUTDOORS (Playground Safety Plan)

Safety of children is the CELC's top priority. All staff must constantly be alert to ways of protecting children and ensure that the following expectations for outdoor injury prevention are consistently implemented. These procedures are updated annually based on documentation of injuries and review of the activities and services of the center.

- The lead teacher designates an adult to ensure the gates to the parking lot are closed securely. Another adult is stationed on the opposite side of the play area to prevent children crossing the boundaries that would lead to the driveway and parking area at the front of the building.
- The role of all adults is to ensure the safety of children as they are involved in active play, so staff should be stationed throughout the outdoor learning area (in playground zones) in order to supervise appropriately. Circulate among the children in your designated space and be alert to their activities.
- Having an adult within sight and sound of every child is as critical outdoors as it is indoors. If a child leaves the area you are supervising, be sure to communicate with the person who should take over supervision responsibilities.
- Use of cell phones while supervising outdoors is prohibited, unless it is for use of the electronic communication software.
- Areas and equipment of the Center shall be maintained in a clean, safe, and operable condition. Unsafe conditions include, but are not limited to, splintered, cracked or otherwise deteriorating wood; chipped or peeling paint; visible cracks, bending or warping, rusting or breakage of equipment; head entrapment hazards; and protruding nails, bolts, or other components that could entangle clothing or snag skin.
- Walk to a child and get his or her attention by making eye contact before giving directions.
- Tricycles must be ridden safely—never into equipment, walls, or other people.
- Crates can be stacked higher than a child's height, children can stand on crates up to 2 high.
- Children are allowed opportunities for risk taking with proper supervision.
- Children are allowed to go down the slides on bellies, bottoms, or head first with proper supervision.
- Children can climb as long as there is proper supervision and appropriate fall zones.
- Children may take their shoes off when playing in the sand.
- Adults never swing children around in a circle by hanging onto their hands.
- If a child needs to use the bathroom during outdoor play, check ratio and call an administrator for assistance if necessary
- If a parent arrives to pick up a child during outdoor play, the established checkout procedure is followed. Provide the parent with daily feedback prompt the authorized pick up to sign the child out using the electronic communication software.
- Children are not allowed in the storage shed unless accompanied by an adult.
- Children do not play outdoors if thunder is heard or lightning seen. If either occur while classes are outside, all children and adults must come indoors immediately. Classes wait 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder before returning outside.

Mulch provides a cushioned surface that minimizes injuries. An even depth of mulch must be maintained by frequently raking high traffic areas. **A designated staff member will check the mulch daily and rake it back into place if necessary.**

LOST OR MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE

In the event a CELC child becomes lost or missing, the following procedures are followed (refer to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan):

- Search the building and outdoor property immediately.
- If the child is not found, continue to search beyond church property.
- If the child is not found within ten minutes, contact emergency services by calling 9-1-1.
- Contact a parent of the missing child. Communicate the nature of the emergency, the procedures that have been followed, and the information that emergency personnel have been called.
- Continue to have all available staff search on and beyond the church property. Be sure adequate supervision is available for the remaining children.

- When emergency personnel arrive, follow their instructions and provide as much assistance as possible.
- Notify VDOE licensing officials within one business day of the circumstances surrounding the incident.

MANAGING ALLERGIES, SENSITIVITIES, DIETARY RESTRICTIONS & AVOIDING CROSS CONTAMINATION

The Emergency Care Binder in each classroom has an Allergy Care Plan for children requiring emergency medication. All teachers must read and understand the contents of the Emergency Care Binder on the first day of employment in the classroom. Any classroom with an allergy has notification on the classroom door.

When eating, teachers monitor the food children bring in their lunches or food provided by Center and ensure a child with an allergy is not sitting next to a child who may have a food allergen. In addition, food allergens that cause severe reactions for a particular child are prohibited in his or her classroom.

Within 90 days of employment, all staff must successfully complete the VA Preservice Training for Child Care Staff online course. Content of this training includes information on recognizing the symptoms of an allergic reaction and responding to allergic reactions. Staff with Medication Administration Training are on site to respond to an allergic response and contact emergency services and the family as required.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

The only medication administered by CELC staff is that which is essential in an emergency caused by a child's chronic health condition or topical creams and sprays which include sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream, and lip balm. All procedures mandated by the Virginia Department of Education are followed.

If it is possible a child will need emergency medication, the *VDOE Written Medication Consent* form must be completed and signed by his or her physician, parent, and an administrator prior to the child's attendance. Emergency medication is stored in a locked location in the child's classroom. CELC administrators monitor expiration dates and return outdated medication to the child's family.

When authorization for medication expires, parents are notified that the medication must be picked up within 14 days or authorization must be renewed. Medications that are not picked up by the parent within 14 days are disposed of by either dissolving the medication down the sink or flushing it down the toilet.

A staff member with current Medication Administration Training (as certified by VDOE) is on-site at all times. Only MAT trained staff may administer emergency medications. The staff person who administers medication is responsible for the required documentation and parental notification.

Only staff trained in Medication Administration Training (MAT) give emergency medications. If a child needs emergency medical attention, 9-1-1 is called and a CELC administrator is contacted. VDOE licensing officials are contacted within two business days of any injury to a child that occurs while the child is under the supervision of the CELC and requires outside medical attention.

The active ingredients in sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper cream are considered medications. As such, they may not be stored or administered by CELC staff without completion of a *VDOE Written Medication Consent*. Non-MAT trained staff may apply approved sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream and lip balm. Children age 9 and older may apply their own sunscreen with supervision. These items are kept in their original container labeled with the child's name and are stored where they are inaccessible to children.

If a child requires a non-emergency prescription or over-the-counter medication, an authorized family member may come to the CELC to administer it. Or parents may be encouraged to consider if it is possible to develop a medication schedule that avoids the time a child attends CELC.

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF DISEASE

When a child becomes ill at CELC, a staff member contacts the child's parent or other person authorized to pick up the child. It is expected that the child will be picked up within one hour following notification. Illness is assumed if the condition prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

If it is suspected that a child's condition is contagious and requires exclusion from others, the child is made comfortable in a location where he or she is supervised until an authorized person arrives. A specific area accessible to the Director's office is designed for this purpose. In order to maintain an appropriate supervision ratio for the class, an administrator should be contacted to assist.

Children **and Staff** are not to attend CELC during a contagious period when they have communicable diseases such as roseola, measles, chicken pox, or when they have had any of the following symptoms within the previous 24 hours. Contact an administrator and arrange for a child to go home if you observe one or more of these symptoms.

- A fever of 101 or higher
- Diarrhea (two abnormal stools), vomiting, or an upset stomach
- Discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears, or open sores (conjunctivitis, impetigo)
- Nits or live lice

Children **and Staff** may return to the Center when fever free for at least 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) and symptoms are gone.

When children at CELC have been exposed to a communicable disease listed in the [Department of Health's Communicable Disease Reference Chart for School Personnel](#) (link available on CELC website), parents are notified within 24 hours or the next business day of the Center's having been informed unless forbidden by law, except for life threatening diseases, which must be reported to parents immediately. Administration consults the local Health Department if there is a question about the communicability of a disease. Parents are required to inform the CELC within 24 hours or the next attendance day after their child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease. Life-threatening diseases must be reported immediately.

In order to protect children and staff from exposure to or spread of disease, any surface that has been contaminated with body fluids is immediately cleaned and sanitized. Eating surfaces are always sanitized before use and the following handwashing procedures are followed.

Children and adults should wet hands and then use liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the back of the hands, wrists, and between fingers. Dry hands thoroughly and then use the paper towel to turn off the water to avoid contact with the spigot.

Children should wash their hands, with adult assistance as needed

- Before and after meals or snacks.
- After toileting and any contact with blood, feces, or urine.
- Before and after contact with animals
- Upon coming in from outside
- Upon arrival (to school)
- When hands appear soiled

Staff and volunteers should wash their hands

- Upon arrival for a scheduled shift
- Before and after helping a child use the toilet
- Before and after a diaper change
- After the staff member uses the toilet
- After any contact with body fluids
- Before feeding or helping a child with feeding
- Before preparing or serving food or beverages
- Upon returning in from outside

PREVENTION OF ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA

Abusive Head Trauma (“Shaken Baby Syndrome”) is a traumatic injury inflicted upon the brain of a child age birth through 5 years. It can occur during violent shaking, causing the child’s head to whip back and forth, the brain to move about, and blood vessels in the skull to stretch and tear. It is critical for all CELC staff to understand the danger of abusive head trauma and the prevention of it. Untrained persons sometimes shake babies because of frustration with them crying, but this is NEVER acceptable.

If you are caring for a baby who cries for an extended period of time, ask yourself the following questions and use these strategies:

- Is there a reason for discomfort? Is the child hungry? Does the child need a diaper change? Is there reason to think the child may be too hot or too cold?
- Are there signs of illness? Check for fever, swelling, skin rash.
- Was the child fed recently? Does he or she need to burp?
- Does the child need a diversion? Try singing, walking, swaying, rocking, offering a toy, looking out a window, patting or rubbing the child’s back, offering a pacifier, playing music.
- If you find yourself becoming frustrated, remember that children cry, and it is not a reflection on you. Ask a colleague to take the child for a few minutes.
- If this is not possible, place the child safely in his or her crib for several minutes while you regain your composure. Walk a few feet away, take some deep breaths, and calm yourself before returning to soothe the child.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

CELC employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. Within 90 days of employment, all staff will successfully complete the VA Preservice Training for Child Care Staff online course. All staff will complete *Child Abuse and Neglect: Recognizing, Reporting, and Responding for Educators* within 7 days from their hire date. Content of this training includes information on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.

- Any person suspecting that a child at Connections Early Learning Center is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall notify a lead teacher and/or administrator immediately and, in no event, later than 24 hours after having reason to suspect a reportable offense.
- A teacher or administrator must immediately notify the Virginia Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services, or if the child is in immediate danger, by calling 9-1-1.
- The lead teacher shall keep accurate records of all suspicious incidents, language, or physical markings that may indicate abuse.

Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. Administrators who report concerns on behalf of a staff person are required to inform that staff person when the report was made, the name of the individual receiving the report, and any communication resulting from the report, including actions taken.

Phone numbers for reporting child abuse:

Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline	1-800-552-7096
VA Dept of Social Services, Richmond Office	1-804-646-8800
Harrisonburg/Rockingham Social Services	1-540-574-5100
Bridgewater Police Department	1-540-828-2611

REST TIME

For children ages 16 months through preschool age, during the designated rest period, when children are resting or inactive, the rest period ratios in the following table are permitted if these criteria are met;

- Staff required by rest period ratios shall be within sight and sound at all times in the same space as the resting or sleeping children.
- In addition to the staff required by rest period ratios, an additional staff member shall always be available on-site to offer immediate assistance. The staff required by rest period ratios shall be able to summon the additional staff member without leaving the room or area of the sleeping or resting children.
- One staff member shall not supervise more than one room or area during rest time.

Children 16 through 24 months of age	One staff per 10 children
Children 2 years of age	One staff per 16 children
Children of preschool age	One staff per 20 children

SAFE SLEEPING PRACTICES FOR INFANTS

All VDOE regulations governing the safety, placement, and assignment of cribs are followed by the CELC. It is important for staff who work with infants to understand safe sleeping practices and their importance for reducing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. These regulations are followed at all times.

- Cribs must be identified for use by a specific child and used for children 12 months and younger and those not developmentally ready to sleep on a cot.
- Infants are placed on their back when placed in cribs.
- When an infant is able to easily turn over from the back to the belly position and he is placed in his crib, he shall still be put on his back, but allowed to adopt whatever position he prefers. Once a child can roll, it must be indicated on their crib name tag.
- If the side position is used, caregivers shall bring the dependent arm forward to lessen the likelihood of the infant rolling into a belly position.
- Resting or sleeping infants shall be individually checked every 15-20 minutes.
- An infant who falls asleep anywhere other than their crib, they must be moved to the crib in a reasonable amount of time. Infants may NOT sleep in car seats.
- Crib sides shall be up and the fastenings secured when a child is in the crib, except when a staff member is giving the child immediate attention.
- Use of pillows, filled comforters, blankets, or crib bumper pads is prohibited in cribs.
- Toys or objects hung over an infant in a crib and crib gyms that are strung across the crib may not be used.
- Cribs must be separated by a barrier or a minimum of 30 inches apart.
- Crib Sheets and linens shall be washed daily at CELC.
- Swaddlers are allowed in children under the age of 3 months or until they can roll (whichever comes first). Swaddlers must have a way to secure (such as Velcro, snaps, zipper, etc) and cannot limit the child's mobility. Legs must be able to fully extend without restriction. Swaddlers must be provided by the families and sent home when the child ages out of them.

SAFE SLEEPING PRACTICES FOR TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

Cots are provided for children during the designated rest period and shall not be occupied by more than one child at a time. Each cot is designated to be used by a specific child. There shall be 12 inches of space between occupied cots, unless separated by a barrier or divider as long as one side is open at all times to allow for passage.

Rest time is provided for 2 hours daily. Those children not sleeping may read or have small activity boxes on their cots. Those who need to sleep longer than 2 hours may stay on their cots after rest time has come to an end.

Cot sheets are washed weekly and cots are sprayed with sanitizing solution at that time. The laundry schedule is as follows: 4s - Monday, 3s -Tuesday, 2s - Wednesdays, 1's - Thursdays, Infants - daily.

SUPERVISION & ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CHILDREN

When staff are supervising children, they must ensure their care, protection, and guidance. Children are always within sight and sound of a supervising adult. Multiple staff are scheduled at the beginning and end of each day to provide a safe environment.

The following staff-child ratios and maximum group sizes mandated by VDOE standards are maintained at all times.

Age Group	Maximum Group Size	Staff-to-Children Ratio*
Birth up to 16 months	12	1:4
16 months up to 24 months	15	1:5
2 year olds	24	1:8
3 year olds up to school-age eligible	30	1:10
School-age eligible up to 9 years	30	1:18
9 years through 12 years	30	1:20

**When children are in ongoing mixed age groups, the staff-to-children ratio and group size applicable to the youngest child in the group applies to the entire group.*

At the beginning of each shift, teachers refer to their electronic communication software so they know which children are present. This knowledge is updated as children come and go during the day. When indoors—in the classroom, social hall, or activities room—or in the outdoor learning area, teachers must constantly account for all children in their care. It is the responsibility of all teachers to have the electronic communication software in his or her possession whenever the group leaves the classroom. A task known as a “name to face” must be performed every time a class leaves a space (e.g. goes outside, to the gym, leaving the resource room, etc). In the event of late arrival, a note on the door indicates the location of the class, so a family member can escort the child and complete the check-in process.

If a child will be transported to CELC from another program or agency, a schedule must be given to the Director prior to attendance and the Center notified when the child is absent or the schedule changes. If a child does not arrive when expected, parents are notified immediately. Parents of school-age children are required to inform the Center by 2:30 pm on any day their child will not be transported on the school bus according to the normal schedule. Staff record attendance as children arrive. If an expected child is not present, the bus driver is questioned to determine if the child got on the bus. If the child cannot be accounted for, parents are contacted immediately.

During field trips, teachers will use the electronic communication software to account for all children before leaving the Center, when preparing to leave the field trip site, and upon return to the Center. Field trips will be organized to assure sight and sound supervision of children during all aspects of the experience.

If a child arrives at the Center while his or her class is on a field trip or other off-site experience, the child will be accommodated into another class IF acceptable ratio can be maintained and IF it will be less than 90 minutes before the class is expected to return. The child will not be allowed to stay at CELC if these conditions cannot be met.

TREATING AND REPORTING ACCIDENTS

All staff receive training in first aid and CPR within the first 30 days of employment. This authorizes them to treat minor injuries, as well as to recognize an emergency situation requiring a child to be treated by a staff person who is certified in first aid and CPR. All staff must be Infant and Child CPR and First Aid certified within the first 90 days of employment.

Staff are required to complete incident reports on any child who receives first aid. The report must be signed by the child's parent or guardian and sent through the electronic communication software the same day to indicate they are informed of the treatment. All staff are trained in completing this form at orientation. Signed forms are placed in the box next to the charging station in the lounge for administrative staff to add to the children's files.

Employment Policies

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

CELC's policy is to employ the most qualified applicants for every position. New positions are advertised within the Center and regionally as necessary. Current employees whose qualifications and performance make them eligible for promotion may be employed in lieu of advertising a position. Employment decisions are made by the Director.

People seeking employment must provide all information requested on the application form and contact information for at least two people who can attest to the applicant's character, reputation, and competency for the position. Documentation of job qualifications is required at the time of application. All application documents are maintained confidentially and become part of the employee's personnel file if hired.

Applicants for CELC positions must participate in interviews as requested by administration and/or Board of Directors. People selected for employment are notified, in writing, by the Director. This letter includes the job description, rate of pay, work schedule, beginning date, where to report, training requirements, background check applications, and other pertinent information. Employment decisions are not final until all VDOE background check requirements are completed.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

All CELC employees and volunteers are required to undergo comprehensive background checks at initial application and every five years thereafter. The VA Department of Education and CELC cover the costs of all required in-state background checks.

- Sworn Disclosure (no fee) - This form requires a sworn statement or affirmation disclosing whether applicants have ever been convicted of or are the subject of pending charges for any offense within or outside Virginia, and whether they have been the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect within or outside of Virginia.
- Request for Search of the Central Registry and Release of Information (\$10) - Completion of this form authorizes a Virginia child abuse and neglect search. New employees who have lived in any other state(s) in the past five years must report this to the Director and complete authorization for out-of-state searches for child abuse/neglect, criminal background, and sex offender records.
- Fingerprint-Based Criminal History Search - The fingerprinting vendor Fieldprint collects all identifying information on each applicant, collects fees, takes prints, and electronically submits the information to the VA State Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Office of Background Investigations (OBI). OBI staff screen criminal history results to provide CELC determination of eligibility of each potential employee.

EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

Equal Employment Opportunity

Connections Early Learning Center is an equal opportunity employer committed to a working environment free of discrimination and any type of harassment pursuant to all federal, state and local laws. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, race, color, gender, gender identity, national origin, disability, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, or any other status or condition protected by applicable state or federal law, except where a bona fide occupational qualification applies. Slurs, epithets, and jokes based on these characteristics have no place in the workplace. The Center's commitment also includes providing reasonable accommodations in accordance with federal, state and local laws.

Unfair treatment of anyone is unacceptable. This policy extends to all applicants, employees, and volunteers and to all aspects of the employment relationship including, but not limited to, recruitment, interviewing, training, compensation, hiring promotions, benefits, disciplinary action and termination.

Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Examples of prohibited conduct include unwelcome discussion of sexual activities, touching, display of sexually explicit pictures, use of sexually suggestive gestures, and sexual remarks about physical attributes.

Reporting

Persons with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination or harassment in the workplace should immediately bring these issues to the attention of the CELC Director. If complaints are made against the Director, the concern should be shared with the Chair of the Board of Directors. Employees and volunteers may raise concerns and make reports without fear of retaliation. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination or inappropriate behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

EVALUATION

An annual evaluation is completed on each CELC employee based on job description and compliance with expectations stated in the *Staff Policy and Training Manual*. This evaluation is discussed with the employee and becomes part of his/her personnel file. The evaluation includes observations of strengths, suggestions for professional growth, and notification of unsatisfactory performance, if applicable. The employee signs the evaluation, indicating that it has been discussed with them, and has the opportunity to make a written response which also becomes part of their personnel file.

As appropriate, the administration may add periodic statements to the personal files of staff when an employee's performance merits special positive comments or improvement is deemed necessary to address concerns before the scheduled evaluation. Employees sign the statement, indicating it has been discussed with them, and have the opportunity to make a written response which is included in the file. Any statements in an employee's personal file for the prior year are considered in the employee's next performance evaluation.

Annual reviews of the Director and Assistant Director are conducted by the Board of Directors.

GRIEVANCES

Connections Early Learning Center strives to cultivate a culture of support and respect. When employees deal openly and directly with one another and with administration, the work environment can be excellent, communications can be clear, and attitudes can be positive. If employees have concerns about work conditions or compensation, they are strongly encouraged to voice these concerns openly to administration. Any concerns brought to administration will be kept confidential, and information will be shared with other employees or the Board of Directors on a need-to-know basis. Staff will not be criticized or penalized in any way for filing a grievance. If a staff member has a concern with another employee regarding a personal issue or an issue within the classroom, it is recommended to first try to resolve the issue through conversation with that person. (If an employee has a concern with the care of their own child in another classroom, they shall address these issues directly with an administrator so that complaints can be monitored and recurring issues addressed.)

- If employees are uncomfortable handling the issue on their own or they've been unable to resolve the issue through personal conversations, the concern should be shared with administration.
- If not satisfied with the results of the consultation with administration, the employee can submit a written statement regarding his or her complaint to the Chair of the Board of Directors.
- The Board Chair will review the complaint and report recommendations to the Board of Directors for action.

- Any decision rendered by the Board of Directors must be regarded as final and binding.

In situations regarding termination of employment, the employee may request that the Board of Directors review all matters leading to the termination decision.

ORIENTATION

An administrator provides thorough orientation for each new employee. Copies of the *Staff Policy and Training Manual and Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan* are given to new employees and reviewed in detail. All topics on the VDOE Staff Orientation Documentation form are thoroughly discussed and recorded. New employees are made aware of required training, health screenings, and professional development expectations.

PERSONNEL FILE DOCUMENTS

- Employment Application
- Employment Notification Letter (copy) or Contract
- Letters of Reference or Signed Notes of Reference Conversations
- Documentation of Education, Certification, & Training
- Documentation of Negative Tuberculosis Screening
- CPR/First Aid Certification/Training Record (as required by the employee's position)
- Staff and Volunteer Emergency Contact Information
- Documentation of Staff Orientation
- Documentation of Required Background Checks and Fingerprinting
- Performance Evaluations
- Records of Annual Professional Development Training
- Reason for Termination of Employment

Personnel files are confidential and stored in a secure location in the CELC office. Access is limited to CELC administrators, members of the Board of Directors, and licensing officials. It is the responsibility of each employee to update forms when necessary, and at least annually to maintain accuracy.

Files are maintained and accessible for a minimum of two years following termination of employment unless specified otherwise. At that time they are destroyed securely.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Employees and volunteers are required to successfully complete all required training. In order to have training hours recorded, the employee is responsible for submitting documentation to the Director that includes name, date of training, training topic, delivery method, entity or individual providing the training, and number of training hours or credit hours received. This information is kept in the employee’s personnel file.

Training	Who?	When?	Delivery Method
VDOE Preservice Training for Child Care Staff**	All Staff	Within 90 days of first day of employment	Online
CPR/First Aid Certification**	All Staff	Within 90 days of first day of employment Training must be renewed every 2 years All Staff must be certified	Center-Based
CPR/First Aid Training	All Staff	Within 30 days of first day of employment Conducted annually	Center-Based
Emergency Preparedness Plan	All Staff	Prior to working alone with children & within 7 days of first day of employment Conducted annually (and at each update)	Center-Based
Emergency Preparedness Plan	Volunteers who work more than 6 hrs/wk	Within the first week of volunteering Conducted annually	Center-Based
16 Hours Professional Development Relevant to Job Responsibilities*	All	Prior to employee’s annual evaluation	Varied
Medication Administration Training**	Administrators & Some Teachers	Training must be renewed every 3 years.	Licensed Contractor with VDOE
Daily Health Observation Training**	All Staff	Training must be completed within 7 days from hire and renewed every 3 years.	Online

**Orientation training hours do not count toward the annual training requirement.*

***These trainings may count toward annual training requirements.*

CELC staff who do not work with a group of children are only required to complete annual training on emergency preparedness and response, child abuse and neglect, and mandated reporter requirements.

TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING

(From VDOE Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers, Sections 8VAC20-780-160 and 8VAC20-780-170)

A. Each staff member and individual from an independent contractor must submit documentation of a negative tuberculosis screening. Staff may submit a receipt for TB testing and be reimbursed.

1. Documentation of the screening shall be submitted at the time of employment and prior to coming into contact with children.
2. The documentation shall have been completed within the last 30 calendar days of the date of employment and be signed by a physician, physician's designee, or an official of the local health department.

B. Acceptable forms of documentation of TB screening are:

1. A clearance statement signed by a physician, physician's designee, or an official of the local health department. This statement shall include language that the individual does not have any current symptoms of active TB, does not have either a risk factor for acquiring TB infection or a risk factor for progression to active TB disease as defined by the local health department, or has been treated for these conditions in the past, and is currently free of TB in a communicable form. Individuals who have a risk factor for progression to active TB disease as defined by the VA Department of Health shall submit documentation as stated in subdivision 2 or 3.
2. The results of a negative tuberculin skin test (TST). The documentation shall include the date the test was given and results of the test and be signed by a physician, physician's designee, or official of the local health department.
3. The results of a chest x-ray negative for active tuberculosis disease. The documentation shall include the date of the test and location where the examination was performed.

C. At least every two years from the date of the initial screening or testing, or more frequently if recommended by a licensed physician or the local health department, staff members and individual contractors shall obtain and submit the results of a follow-up TB screening as described above.

D. Any staff member or individual from an independent contractor who develops symptoms compatible with active TB disease, regardless of the date of the last TB screening or assessment, shall obtain and submit within 14 days a determination of non-contagiousness by a physician or local health department.

1. Until such determination is made, that staff member may not be permitted to work at the Center.
2. Any staff member or individual from an independent contractor who comes in contact with a known active case of tuberculosis or who tests positive on a tuberculin skin test, regardless of the date of the last TB screening or assessment, shall submit within 30 days a statement indicating that all needed follow-up for the incident has been completed and that the individual is free of TB in a communicable form. This statement shall be signed by a physician, physician's designee, or an official of the local health department.

CELC covers the cost of TB screening for all staff. Reimbursement may be obtained by submitting a detailed receipt to the Director.

Compensation, Leave, & Benefits

INTRODUCTION

Our fundamental compensation philosophy is to provide compensation and benefit programs needed to attract, retain, and reward team members who contribute to the success of all.

This section contains detailed information about the compensation plan for team member positions at CELC.

PURPOSE

The CELC compensation plan has the following objectives:

- Establish and maintain a legally compliant competitive pay structure that rewards team members; and
- Ensure the consistent and equitable administration and communication of starting pay and subsequent pay changes for exempt and non-exempt team members.

DEFINITIONS

Annual Performance Increase: A base rate of pay adjustment because of a team members performance evaluation rating.

Base Pay Rate: The minimum rate a person would be paid hourly with no work experience or work experience credit.

Calendar: Based on local school/community calendars, including holidays recognized by CELC. It may vary from year to year.

Demotion: Voluntary or involuntary movement to a position lower.

Promotion: Movement to a higher position.

Employee: Team member and staff are used synonymous within these policies.

Administrator refers the Director or the Assistant Director

Exempt: Team members who perform duties under the state or federal wage and hour laws and DO meet the exemption from the payment of overtime for hours worked.

Non-exempt: Team members who perform duties under the state or federal wage and hour laws and DO NOT meet the exemption from the payment of overtime for hours worked.

Work Experience: The performance of any lawful work regardless of the nature of the work or the identity of the employer for which compensation was paid.

Working Time: Hours actually worked and does not include time such as holidays, vacation or sick leave.

PTO: Paid Time off, available for Full Time Team Members Only

UTO: Unpaid Time off

Sick Day: Paid, unscheduled absence from work for Full Time Team Members

Call Out: Unpaid, unscheduled absence from work for Part Time Team Members or if Full Time Staff has used all available sick days.

Student Break: Unpaid time when student staff have indicated they are out of school and unable to work at CELC during the break. This does not count towards the limit of UTO for the semester.

TEAM MEMBER CLASSIFICATION

Your employment will be classified as one of the following upon hire:

- Full-time – Team member hired to work at least 36 hours per week.
- Part-time – Team member hired to work less than 36 hours per week.
- Temporary – Team members are hired for a temporary or seasonal schedule.

WORK SCHEDULE

At CELC the work week starts at 12:00am Sunday and ends at 11:59pm Saturday.

Your working hours are agreed upon with an administrator.

- If you wish to change your assigned working hours for any reason, you must obtain approval from an administrator.
- From time to time you may be asked to work different or additional hours. You are expected to cooperate with such requests when they are made.
- Any questions regarding your work schedule should be discussed with an administrator.

TIMEKEEPING

Any team member categorized as non-exempt is subject to the applicable provision set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act as well as any applicable state wage and hour laws governing our location. As a result, non-exempt team members:

- Must be paid at least the Federal, State, or County, minimum wage whichever is greater, for all hours worked;
- Are eligible for overtime pay.
- Are required to take meals/break periods in accordance with the applicable laws and related CELC policies; and
- Must have all worked hours recorded and paid by CELC.

Non-exempt team members are responsible for:

- An accurate record of the time you work must be maintained, including vacation, sick leave, and similar benefits usage. All team members will record their time worked.
- All changes to your time must be approved by your leader.
- Do not clock in or out for another team member and do not ask someone else to clock for you.
- Any falsification of time records may result in immediate dismissal.

Designated leaders are exempt from having to clock in/out. However, they must still log vacation, sick leave and similar leave benefits usage.

OVERTIME

All team members may occasionally be requested, or approved, to work overtime. Any overtime must be authorized by an administrator. If you are employed in an overtime-eligible job (non-exempt), you will be paid the overtime rate when your total working time exceeds forty (40) hours per work week. Working time means those hours actually worked and does not include time such as holidays, vacation, or sick leave. Overtime work will be compensated at time and a half the team member's regular hourly rate.

BREAKS

During a full shift, hourly team members are released from duty for an unpaid one-hour meal break. An administrator will let team members know the scheduled time for their breaks. Breaks are scheduled so that required services will not be interrupted. Team members may not leave duty early in lieu of taking a break, without administrative permission. In addition, a meal break of one-hour may not be broken down into more frequent, smaller breaks (e.g., you may not take 6-10-minute breaks in lieu of a one-hour meal break).

Team members are to stay on campus during all paid breaks and hourly team members are required to record their in and out times when leaving campus. Hourly team members need to accurately log their unpaid break times.

PAY RATES

Pay rates are determined by the Director to align with federal, state, county, and allow CELC to be competitive in our industry.

Team member start rates will be established based on previous education, credentials, and relevant work experience.

Pay rates are confidential and should be kept private with discussions limited to the individual team member and the Director.

HOLIDAYS

Upon hire, full-time team members will be eligible to be paid when CELC is closed in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Good Friday, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (and the Friday following). CELC will be closed the entire week of Christmas.

Calling off work unexpectedly the shift before or after a paid holiday results in the forfeiture of Holiday pay.

VACATION

Upon hire, full-time team members will be given 10 days of annual vacation time. The first year the hours of PTO will be prorated based on your hire date. After January 1st PTO days renew to 10 for the first year. Each year after, team members will earn 1 additional PTO day each year, with a cap at 15 days. These days can be used (with authorization from an administrator) as single days, multiples, or in full week increments. All time off renews January 1st of each calendar year. Schedule changes and day off requests up to 2 days in a row must be submitted in writing/ using the request form and approved by the Director with two (2) weeks' notice. For requests off of 3 days in a row or more require 6 weeks' notice and must be submitted in writing and approved by the Director. A maximum of 2 staff members may be approved off on any given day. The 2 weeks prior to the Christmas break are considered "blackout dates" and no requests for time off will be considered or approved.

Vacation time may be afforded before accrued, however, if a team member terminates employment and has used more PTO than earned for the year, the unearned PTO time will be deducted from the final paycheck. A maximum of 5 days of unused vacation days can be carried to the following year. When the end of the calendar year approaches and a staff member has more than 5 unused PTO days, they may opt for a "pay out" of those days that exceed 5 days.

SICK PAY

Upon hire, full-time team members will be eligible for five (5) sick days. These days can be used to cover a team member's illness or to care for a family member. CELC requires two hours' notice to cover a shift, the team member is responsible to call an administrator immediately after they realize they are unable to come to work. If a full-time team member calls out sick, they are required to use available sick days. If sick days have been used, Full time staff must use available PTO.

Sick Days will carry over from year to year, maxing out at eighty hours (10) days. Sick days will not be paid out, but can be used together to cover major events (surgery, rehab, etc...)

UTO

Use of Unpaid Time Off is highly discouraged. Excessive use of UTO/Call-Outs will result in necessary action determined by the administration.

LEAVE ELIGIBILITY AND REQUESTS

On occasion, a team member may find that circumstances, such as health or family problems, make it necessary to be absent from work for an extended period of time. A leave of absence – defined as a temporary absence from work – may be granted for a limited time to eligible team members depending on the reasons and circumstances of the request for a leave.

A requested leave of absence may be approved and authorized at the discretion of the Director. An approved leave may be granted with or without pay and/or accrual of benefits as described under the specific leave of absence.

Requesting a Leave of Absence

A request for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the Director for approval. The request should be submitted three weeks before the effective date of the leave. Depending on the nature of the leave, specific documentation may be required prior to and during the leave, and before you return from the leave.

Returning from Leave

You must contact an administrator to plan a return-to-work date which is mutually satisfactory with you and your department. A physician's fitness for duty report may be required for your return to work. Should you fail to contact an administrator on or before the expiration of your leave of absence, we will assume you have abandoned your job and will classify you as *voluntary resigned*.

TYPES OF LEAVE

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

The Bereavement Leave Policy establishes uniform guidelines for providing paid time off to team members of CELC for absences related to the death of immediate family members. All full-time, active team members are eligible for benefits under this policy.

Procedures

- A team member who wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify an administrator as soon as possible.
- In addition to bereavement leave, a team member may, with an administrator's approval, use any available vacation for additional approved time off as necessary.
- Bereavement pay is calculated based on the base pay rate at the time of absence, and it will not include any special forms of compensation, such as overtime.

Bereavement Leave for an Immediate Family Member

When a death occurs in a team member's immediate family, all regular full-time team members may take up to three (3) days off with pay to attend the funeral or make funeral arrangements. Immediate family members are defined as an employee's spouse, domestic partner, parent, stepparent, sibling, child, stepchild, grandparent, mother/father-in-law, brother/sister-in-law, son/daughter-in-law, grandchild, foster child, foster sibling, foster parent, and an adult who stood "in loco parentis" during a team member's childhood.

Bereavement Leave for a Non-family Member

All regular, full-time team members may take up to one (1) day off with pay to attend the funeral of a close, but not immediate, family member and/or friend. This time off will be considered and granted by the team member's leader on a case-by-case basis.

Additional Time Off

CELC understands the deep impact that death can have on an individual or a family. Therefore, additional non-paid time off may be granted in lieu of utilizing vacation leave. Team members may make arrangements with an administrator for an additional four unpaid days off in the instance of the death of an immediate family member. Additional unpaid time off may also be granted depending on circumstances such as

distance, the individual's responsibility for the funeral arrangements, and the team member's responsibility for taking care of the estate of the deceased. Individual team member circumstances may be discussed with an administrator to determine whether additional considerations are needed. It is CELC's intention to support team members during their times of grief and bereavement.

JURY DUTY AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Jury Duty leave of absence pay benefit is available only to full-time team members. If your request is for a leave of absence for jury duty, you must present written evidence requiring you to serve. For those hours you would be regularly scheduled to work, CELC will grant you time off and pay you the difference between your regular wage and the money paid for your services as juror during the approved leave. If you are released from jury duty for any reason, you are expected to report to work in order to receive pay for the day. Accrual of vacation or sick leave benefits will not be adversely affected.

In the event that a team member receives a Subpoena to appear in court in direct relation to working at the center, CELC will pay for time missed from work to attend. Should this occur, administration will meet with the team member to discuss what time off is needed to appear.

MEDICAL LEAVE

CELC may grant, at the discretion of the Department Leader, a medical leave of absence. A medical leave may be granted for a team member's illness, injury, or pregnancy or its related conditions, or for illness in the immediate family which is defined as children, spouse, or parent. A team member's sick leave pay benefit may be used during this leave as described under the sick leave policy.

A physician's written recommendation for a leave for medical reasons, and for return to work, may be required. The actual length of this medical leave will be based on the physician's recommendation but is not to exceed 183 days (six months).

PERSONAL LEAVE

If your request for a leave of absence is not for one of the above reasons, the leave may be granted at the discretion of the team leader. A personal leave, if granted, will be without pay. Compensatory days, vacation and other fringe benefits will not accumulate, and you will not be entitled to any holiday pay which occurs within the leave period.

TUITION DISCOUNT

Full-time team members are eligible for 50% tuition discount for one child OR a sliding scale discount, whichever is most beneficial to the employee, contingent upon available classroom vacancies. An employee's second child or additional children are eligible for a sibling discount rate to be determined by the Director.



APPENDICES

- **Guidelines for Interaction**

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION

Infants

1. Convey an attitude of warmth and acceptance. Smile, smile, smile. Exaggerate your facial expressions and respond to those of the infant.
2. Use a soft voice with slightly higher than normal pitch when talking with infants. This helps to get their attention and maintain it as you interact.
3. Talk, talk, talk. Even when children do not have the ability to verbalize, they are taking in everything around them. Position yourself close to the infant and engage in a pattern of “conversation.” Talk with the child, then wait for a response, and talk some more. If necessary, eye contact can be encouraged by holding a small toy in front of your nose.
4. Use language to name and explain items the child encounters and gradually expand with details such as size, color, texture, etc. **“That’s a truck”** soon becomes **“That’s a blue truck”** and is then expanded to **“The blue truck drives on the bumpy road and goes vroom, vroom.”**
5. You may not approve of your singing voice, but an infant will love it! If you are holding a child as you sing, sway to the music or gently move their arms or legs. Singing can often be very effective in calming or distracting an upset child.
6. Exploring a book as you hold a child on your lap provides a special time of comfort and closeness, in addition to opportunities for language growth. Talk about the pictures, read the words, and interact in ways that make it a satisfying experience for both of you.
7. As infants become more aware of their bodies, encourage them to imitate simple physical actions such as raising their arms, swinging their legs, etc. They should not be encouraged to put weight on their legs until they can sit up by themselves.
8. Do all you can to provide a calm, safe, and supportive environment. Young children will often seek comfort and contact in order to feel secure.
9. When babies are on the carpeted area, close supervision is necessary. Be alert to how toys are being used and the movement of mobile children among those who are immobile.
10. Be alert to ways you can be helpful to the teacher and other staff. Take cues from them and always follow through on tasks they assign.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION

Preschoolers

1. Convey an attitude of warmth and acceptance. Children (AND adults) respond most favorably to someone they know cares for them. Smile a lot!
2. When speaking to individuals or a small group of children, position yourself on their eye level so that a loud voice is unnecessary and eye contact is natural. Even when speaking to a large group, a soft voice is more effective. It is never appropriate for you to raise your voice to speak to children across the classroom. Walk to them and kneel down if necessary to ensure eye contact before you begin talking.
3. Be sensitive to cues from children that your involvement is needed. Be responsive when they ask for assistance, but avoid doing things for children that they can do themselves.
4. State directions positively. Be clear about what you want children to do instead of beginning directions with “don’t” or “no.”
 - Keep your tricycle on the sidewalk.** instead of **Don’t ride in the grass.**
 - Keep the ball inside the fence.** instead of **Don’t throw the ball over the fence.**
5. Give children choices only when they have a choice. Positively, yet firmly state an expectation without using a question when you need them to accomplish a task. Do not end any directions with “OK?”
 - It’s your turn to use the bathroom.** instead of **Do you have to go to the bathroom?**
 - It’s time to put on your coat.** instead of **Do you want to put on your coat?**
6. Ask only twice for rules to be followed. The first time, explain the reason. The second time, state a consequence. If you do not follow through after asking twice, you are teaching children that they do not need to follow directions because nothing will happen if they choose to ignore you. If you are uncomfortable with stating a consequence, you may say to the teacher, “I am saying this again after we’ve already talked about it. What should happen next?” It demonstrates you are going to expect an appropriate response and there will be a consequence which you initiated.
7. Time out is never used as punishment. There are occasions when it may be necessary to direct a child who is upset or out of control to “**choose an activity at the table**” or “**sit down until you can calm yourself enough for us to talk about what happened.**” The focus is always on keeping all children safe and helping them develop acceptable strategies for coping with anger and frustration.
8. Avoid saying “Good Job!” as a habitual response to children. Personalize your responses by commenting specifically on what a child is saying or doing.
 - You are using lots of blue in your picture.**
 - You found your name on the snack list by yourself.**
9. Ask questions that require children to think instead of ones that can be answered with just one word.
 - What would you like to tell me about your picture?**
 - Why do you think that happened?**
 - Can you help me understand...?**
10. Supporting children’s understanding and use of language is critical. When talking with them, use descriptive words and language that will build on their existing vocabulary.
 - Yes, the bead is purple; it is a light shade of purple called lavender.**
 - Yes, it is a big balloon...it is enormous!**

11. A young child's thinking is egocentric; they are not yet able to understand another person's point of view and often don't have the language skills to describe personal feelings and actions. This makes navigating conflicts among preschoolers particularly challenging. As they grow and mature, we want them to be able to communicate their feelings to others and work toward peaceful resolution of conflicts. We work toward this goal during the preschool years by modeling these behaviors and language over..and over...and over.
 - I can see that you are really angry. Tell me what happened that made you feel this way?**
 - Erin feels embarrassed because she bumped the puzzle and the pieces fell on the floor. She didn't mean for it to happen. What can we do to make things right again?**
 - When you knocked down Kent's building, it made him angry and he doesn't feel like playing with you right now. What could you do to help him feel better?**
12. In all types of creative activities for young children, the process, not the product, is of primary importance. For this reason, we insist that you never make models for children to copy or draw pictures for them. When squeezing play dough, when sitting near a child using markers, or when observing children gluing collage materials, you may be tempted to show a child how to make the materials "look like something." It is important for children to use the materials in their own way and make that representational discovery when they are ready.
13. Focus on the process, not the product, in your conversation during a project is also important so that children find pride in their effort and are not looking for external validation .
 - You are using lots of colors.** instead of **I like that.**
 - You are working very hard.** instead of **That's awesome.**
 - You figured it out.** instead of **You're so smart.**
14. For the same reason, avoid asking "What is it?" of a young child who has just completed a drawing or painting. Instead say, "**You worked a long time on your picture. I would love for you to tell me about it.**"
15. In most cases, children are encouraged to put away materials as they finish using them. Usually a reminder or an offer of assistance is all that is necessary. Do not take over clean-up for children, but realize that often they do need help.
16. Be alert to ways you can be helpful to the teacher and other staff. Take your lead from them and always support directions or expectations they express. Follow through on tasks you are asked to do.
17. Do not use nicknames for children without specific permission from the teacher.
18. If you observe an incident in which a child is hurt or hurts others (verbally or physically) or you overhear a child share information that makes you feel uncomfortable, inform the teacher or a director as soon as possible.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION

School-Age Children

1. School-age children need adults who are approachable, listen carefully, provide honest feedback, and ask meaningful and engaging questions. They do not need you to be their friend.
2. When speaking to individuals or a small group of children, position yourself so that a loud voice is unnecessary and eye contact is natural. Even when speaking to a large group, a soft voice is more effective. It is never appropriate for you to raise your voice to speak to children across the classroom; walk to them to ensure eye contact before you begin talking.
3. State directions positively. Be clear about what you want children to do instead of beginning directions with “don’t” or “no.”
 - Keep the ball inside the fence.** instead of **Don’t throw the ball over the fence.**
 - Hang your coat on the hook.** instead of **Don’t leave your coat on the floor.**
4. Give children choices only when they have a choice. Positively, yet firmly state an expectation without using a question when you need them to accomplish a task. Do not end any directions with “OK?”
 - It’s time to put art materials away.** instead of **It’s time to clean up now, OK?**
 - Homework papers belong in your notebook.** instead of **Do you want to put your homework in your notebook?**
5. Avoid saying “Good Job!” as a habitual response to children. Personalize your responses by commenting specifically on what a child is saying or doing.
 - Taking the balls to the shed was very helpful. Thank you for noticing that needed to be done.**
 - Congratulations! Every problem in your math homework is correct.**
6. School-agers often say things in conversation that provide an opportunity for adults to guide their thinking about friendships, communication, school-related situations, or family conflict. Validation for a child’s emotions is important for school-agers as they are working through their responses and relationships. This is a great chance for valued adults to connect and ask non-threatening questions which encourage reflective decision-making.
 - What did you think about that?**
 - What did the other kids say and do?**
 - Wow, that must be hard. How do you feel about that?**
7. School agers are learning about sarcasm and humor. They love playing and being silly. But playful arguing with youth encourages negative communication habits. Instead you can say **Explain that to me** or **Why do you think that happened?** Provide feedback when jokes or sarcasm are inappropriate (**That could be hurtful to someone.** or **That was rude.**)
8. Ask only twice for rules to be followed. The first time, explain the reason. The second time, state a consequence. If adults do not follow through after asking twice, we are teaching children that they do not need to follow directions because nothing will happen if they choose to ignore us. If you are uncomfortable with stating a consequence, you may say to the teacher, **“I am saying this again after we’ve already talked about it. What should happen next?”** It demonstrates you are going to expect an appropriate response and there will be a consequence which you initiated.
9. When tattling occurs, first assess if there is a safety concern you need to address. If not, then say **“So you would like for me to help you talk to ___?”** or **“What have you done to try to solve this problem?”** This returns ownership of the situation to the tattler and encourages him or her to confront the problem if there really is one.

10. School-age children should be active participants in conflict resolution, but you will often need to facilitate this process (especially when emotions are high). Encourage both children to calm down, sometimes even walk away from each other for a few minutes, then share their reasons for being upset or fighting. Focus on resolution rather than punishment and plans for avoiding similar arguments in the future. Seek assistance from a lead teacher if necessary.
11. If you observe or intervene in an incident in which a child is hurt or hurts others (verbally or physically) or you overhear a child share information that makes you feel uncomfortable, inform the teacher or a director as soon as possible.
12. School-age children are expected to put away materials as they finish using them.
13. Be alert to ways you can be helpful to the teacher and other staff. Take your lead from them and always support directions or expectations they express. Follow through on tasks you are asked to do.
14. Do not use nicknames for children without specific permission from the teacher.
15. Do not engage in conversations which glorify substance use, violence, or any other harmful activity. Conversations of this kind, with or in front of school-age children or other adults, will result in disciplinary action.