

Concerns/Questions

Please contact us at 301-834-9007 or email educare@educatewithcare.com with any questions relating to your child, our program, or other concerns. Thank you for the opportunity to be co-partners in regard to your child's growth and development.

PARENT/GUARDIAN POLICY HANDBOOK

2538 Jefferson Pike
Jefferson, Maryland 21755
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Website: www.educatewithcare.com



PARENT/GUARDIAN POLICY HANDBOOK



MARYLAND EXCELS
CHECK FOR QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS
Check Level 5—Top Rating



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General Enrollment Policies

Enrollment Fees

All children must submit the following fees (non-refundable) with completed forms (see page 11) before the first day of attendance:

- School Year: \$100 initial registration fee, \$75 re-registration fee and \$50 Curriculum Enhancement Fee
- Summer Program Activity Fees: Chickadees/Goldfinches-\$25, Robins-\$50, Cardinals-\$75 and Herons/School-age-\$150.
- Tuition Deposit: \$150 (to be applied to last tuition payment if one-month withdrawal notice is provided.)
- Tuition Pre-payment (to be assessed if enrolling more than one month prior to attending the program, amount and date of payment to be determined by time period and spaces available.) Tuition pre-payment is forfeited if child does not attend the program.

NOTE: Children are registered from August through the following summer program and must re-register in January of each year for the upcoming Fall. Spaces will be assigned based on the order in which registrations are received. Packets will be provided to current families in January with information specific to the present year's re-registration procedures and schedule.

Withdrawal and Schedule Changes

Families must give a one-month (30 days) notice to withdraw a child. Tuition deposits will be forfeited if less than a month's notice is provided. A two-week notice is required to change a child's schedule.

Waiting List

If no spaces are available, a child may be placed on a waiting list. When a space becomes available, parents/guardians will be notified. If the family chooses not to enroll, the space will be forfeited as will the registration fee and deposit unless the family chooses to stay on the waiting list. Preference is given to currently-enrolled families and new families enrolling children on a full-time basis.

Enrollment Requirements

- Children under the age of 2 are required to be enrolled full or core day, M-F. Children 2 yrs. and older must enroll full or core day, T/Th, M/W/F or M-F.
- School-age children must enroll M-F before and after school during the school-year (for summer program see above). Maximum age for the school-age program is 5th grade.
- Families may choose not to attend during the summer by paying a non-refundable reservation fee of \$250 (\$25 per week), payable in February for the following summer.

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Introduction

Educare Learning Center (formerly Dandelion Child Care) has been an established program serving children and their families since 1989 in the greater Frederick area. The 7,000 square foot facility is nestled on 22 wooded acres just off 340 at the Petersville exit. The modern building has six classrooms that support positive growth and development in children ages 8 weeks through school-age.

Educare is licensed and accredited by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Educare is also an approved non-public Educational Program. Educare participates in the Maryland State Department of Education EXCELS program, a continuous quality improvement initiative, at the highest possible level (Level 5).

Educare serves all children, regardless of ability or special needs conditions and teachers work to meet individual needs of children by accommodating those with special needs. Educare does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the admission of students, the employment of staff, or in the administration of its programs.

Educare Community Mission Statement

We are dedicated to promoting positive development in children by:

- Providing dedicated staff who engage children in the joy and excitement of learning;
- Offering a quality curriculum using innovative and research-based teaching strategies;
- Building caring relationships through positive guidance practices offered in a safe and enriching environment;
- Establishing strong partnerships with parents/guardians; and
- Nourishing spiritual growth through modeling love and respect for each other and the world around us.

Overview of Programs by Classrooms

NOTE: Children aged 8 weeks through 3 years progress to the next classroom according to developmental readiness and available openings. Children are enrolled in preschool classrooms based on their ages by Sept. 1 as per Maryland State Department requirements.

Hummingbirds (Infants/8 wks. -18 mo.)

The Hummingbirds program focuses on meeting the youngest children's individual needs through responsive care and positive interactions. The Hummingbirds have individual schedules in regard to eating, sleeping, and active play needs. Materials are carefully chosen and readily available to encourage manipulation and exploration of the young child's world. Daily communication logs provide parents/guardians insight into each child's individual activities.

Lunch is provided by parent/guardians. If items need refrigeration, children's names need to be written in permanent ink on the item and given to the teacher upon arrival in the morning. Microwaves are available for reheating, not cooking food. Educare monitors meals provided from home, and supplements as necessary to ensure that children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals and snacks. Educare provides milk with all lunches. If a lunch is forgotten, Educare will supply a replacement meal.

Medications

A "Medication Administration Authorization Form" must be completed by parents/guardians in order for child care providers to administer medication. Prescription/Non-Prescription medication must be in the original labeled container complete with dosage instructions and can only be administered with written orders from a physician. At least one dose of the medication must be given to the child prior to administration at Educare. Basic care items such as a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent, authorized and supplied by the child's parent, may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner. All medications are stored in a secured box out of the reach of children.

Parking Lot Safety Guidelines

In order to promote safety for children and families, the following procedures apply when families are in the parking lot:

- Adults must hold children by the hand.
- Children must stay with adults at all times (do not leave unattended in a vehicle or the parking lot).
- It is against the law to leave a car running or unattended in the parking lot.
- All vehicles are to be driven slowly through the parking lot.

Rest Time

Quiet time is important for a child's health and well-being. Such time also allows a child to "re-energize" and develop self-control. To address this need, rest times are provided for children in the afternoon. Children in all early childhood classrooms have rest time. If a child does not require a nap during the day, the child will be asked to do a quiet activity during rest time. Children may bring a special rest time item such as a stuffed animal and/or a blanket to aid in settling into a rest period.

Illness

If a child has a temperature of 99.0 axillary/100.0 oral or higher or exhibits vomiting, diarrhea, or drainage from the eye, he/she may not return until symptom-free for a full 24 hours without medication. Children should not return to the program until ready to participate in the full schedule of activities. Attendance when ill can result in exacerbation of illness symptoms and can adversely affect the health of other children. If parents/guardians have any doubts about children's health, it is important to consult a physician. A child may not be readmitted to care after an absence of 3 days or more due to illness without a written statement from a physician that the child may return to a regular schedule.

If a child becomes ill while at Educare, parents/guardians are promptly notified. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up the child from the center as quickly as possible (within one hour of notification). All parents/guardians need to have alternate emergency arrangements to have another approved adult pick up a child who is ill when a parent/guardian is unable to do so in a timely manner.

Head Lice STRICT POLICY; PLEASE READ FULLY

If a child has head lice, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. Once treatment (specified shampoo that kills head lice) has been administered at home, the child may return as long as NO live lice and no more than 5 dead nits (dark in color) are present on hair shafts. Parents/guardians must check children's hair for live lice or nits after administering the medicated shampoo. Nits must be picked out individually to ensure that no lice may hatch.

If lice is suspected in a classroom, all children will be checked upon arrival to the center and a note will be sent home to parents/guardians notifying them of the incidence of head lice. Head lice are highly contagious although not generally serious to children. Controlling head lice requires full attention and diligence on the part of families and the center.

Nutrition Policy

Snacks are served at 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. An additional snack of whole grain cereal is provided for children daily at 5:00 p.m. ELC provides whole grains, fresh fruits and/or vegetables at least four times a week and limits fat, sugar and salt in food served by the program. Educare provides water or milk with both morning and afternoon snacks. Snacks provided are based on USDA nutrition guidelines which require two food groups to be served at each snack. All food allergies must be noted on children's registration forms, on the back of the emergency cards, and staff are to be informed directly. Additional medical documentation regarding allergies is required to be kept in the children's file at the center.

Chickadees (Toddlers-Twos/18 mo. - 2 yr.)

The Chickadees program works to bridge the gap between the dependence of the infant and the growing independence of the toddler/two. Environments are carefully designed with safety and learning in mind. Focusing on enriching language and promoting self-sufficiency help to prepare children for continued success in learning. Daily communication logs of children's activities are provided to families.

Goldfinches (2 yr. - 3 yr.)

The Goldfinches program focuses on transitioning from twos to the world of a preschooler. Experienced staff carefully guide and support the changes that occur when two's announce their need for independence. Knowledgeable staff are readily available to create a scaffolding of early learning experiences, constantly creating a balance between security and challenge. The self-sufficiency of a three-year old is celebrated and supported.

Robins (3 yr. - 4 yr.)

The Robins program promotes school readiness as the primary goal for children's development and learning. The schedule is planned to help facilitate cognitive growth through a balance of child-initiated play and teacher-directed experiences. Creativity is supported through open-ended exploration of materials. The social-emotional development of children is supported by building confidence, trust, and independence through a multitude of daily experiences.

Cardinals (4 yr. - 5 yr.)

The Cardinals program also promotes school readiness as the primary goal for children's development and learning. Social-emotional development is encouraged through cooperative learning activities and conflict resolution experiences. Children focus on literacy and math skills through hands-on experiences at increasingly complex levels. Children are encouraged to recognize sounds and letters, apply comprehension skills, and use phonics to begin early word recognition. The skills of analyzing, predicting, and classifying aid in scientific discovery.

Blue Jays (9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 3 yr.- 5yr.)

The Blue Jays program is a multi-aged program. Individual and small group lessons address different age level capabilities and children have the benefit of socialization in a broader age group during large group, centers, outdoor play, and lunch experience. This program follows the FCPS calendar.

Hérons (School-age Program/Before - After School/K-5th)

The Herons program includes before and after care and is based on a recreational philosophy tempered by homework needs. Knowing that school-age children spend most of their day in a structured classroom environment, Educare's program provides the opportunity to relax and unwind. The program emphasizes a wide variety of activities including board games, puzzles, arts and crafts, sports, music, cooking, computers, and creative dramatics. These activities combine to create a total program that gives school-age children a sense of belonging in a safe, friendly, and nurturing environment.

Summer Program (Nature-Enriched Learning)

Summer sessions complement the school year program by encouraging in-depth exploration of the natural world and opportunities for creative endeavors. Programs are held in large outdoor play areas and well-equipped air-conditioned classrooms. Preschool-school-age children go on special field trips. Younger children enjoy outside "water play" at water tables and in-house special presentations. A curriculum based on summer activities and children's interests supports learning that is an exciting diversion from the school year focus.

Early Childhood Program Curriculum

Curriculum Focus

The program is guided by an MSDE Approved Curriculum entitled, *The Creative Curriculum*, published by Teaching Strategies. Each classroom is divided into centers called interest areas. Areas devoted to books, art activities, or toys and games provide several choices for quieter activities. Areas set aside for dramatic play, block building, or large muscle activities provide choices for active engagement.

Content areas of literacy, math, science, social studies and the arts are addressed through teacher-directed and child-selected activities. Content areas are supported throughout the daily schedule and materials selected for each interest area. Interest areas include: library, blocks, art, toys and games, discovery/science, sand & water table, dramatic play, and computers (computers or other media devices are used only when directly related to facilitated learning experiences with no screen time for children under the age of 2.)

As an approved non-public educational program, Educare receives funding from MSDE to purchase educational materials and technology. This funding off-sets some of the costs associated with tuition. In order to be considered an education program, all of our lead teachers have degrees from Associates up to Master's Level Education.

Drop-off/Pick-up

When dropping off your child, regardless of age, children must be escorted by parents/guardians into the building and parents/guardians must sign in at the front desk. Parents/guardians are to accompany their children to the classroom. Parents/guardians are to acknowledge a staff member upon the arrival of their child and share any pertinent information about the child with the teacher (medications given, state of health, etc.).

As parents/guardians enter the building at pick up time, each is to sign out and initial at the front desk and inquire about the room location of children. Rooms combine during early mornings and late afternoons; children may be in a different rooms than during their regular daytime schedule. Parents/guardians are asked to speak to the teacher in charge to inform them of the child's departure.

No person other than those who appear on the emergency card will be allowed to pick up a child. If someone other than those listed on the emergency card pick up a child, the parent/guardian must call Educare or notify in writing. The person picking up a child must show proper identification. In the case of a separation/divorce, the parent maintaining custody will be asked to submit in writing when the visiting parent may pick up the child. Copies of court documents regarding custody must be kept on file.

If a school-age child misses the school bus at the end of the day, a Educare staff/administrator (if available) will pick up the child at the school. A \$10 fee per child will be assessed for providing individual transportation.

Late Pick Up Policy

Children who are picked up after closing time (6:30 p.m.) or on designated early closure days are assessed a late pick-up fee of \$20 per child for up to 10 minutes late and \$1.00 per minute per child thereafter. Late pick up infractions will be documented by the front desk staff. Fees will be assessed accordingly to tuition accounts and are required to be paid within 5 days of the billing date. The late fee is assessed as a deterrent to late pick-ups; late pick-up is not an option provided for parents/guardians. Repeated late pick-ups may result in the termination of a child's enrollment at the center.

Emergency Procedures

Educare conducts monthly fire drills as recommended by the State Fire Marshall. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. The meeting area during fire drills is inside the fenced play area located by the employee parking lot. If an emergency arises during inclement weather, children will meet inside the large shed. The emergency evacuation site is Faith Baptist Church on Jefferson Pike, one half mile west of Educare.

General Information

Birthdays

Birthdays are acknowledged within each class. Parents/guardians are invited to bring treats for the classroom on their child's birthday. Suggestions for treats include items that allow for independence in eating such as cookies, donut holes, fruit snacks, or other finger foods. Parents/guardians need to inquire about food allergies prior to providing a treat for children. Please note that some foods are considered choking hazards for younger children such as hard candy, popcorn, carrots, or grapes.

Clothing/Supplies

Children are to be dressed in play clothes suitable for the weather each day. Children need rubber-soled shoes or sneakers for safety year round. Jellies, clogs, flip flops, or sandals are not safe for children engaged in active play. In the winter months, children's attire needs to include gloves or mittens, a warm jacket with a hood or hat, and appropriate footwear.

Children will need a bag or backpack for transporting items to and from home and a lunch box. Educare is not responsible for lost items brought from home. Coats, hats, and backpacks are kept in individually labeled spaces with hooks. All items are to be labeled with children's names.

All parents/guardians provide a bag of seasonably appropriate clothes to be kept in the child's classroom, including underwear and socks, for use if clothing becomes soiled. All belongings must be labeled with the child's name. Extra clothing will be stored in the classroom for use as needed. Periodically, parents/guardians will be asked to update clothing to accommodate the season and children's growth.

Parents/guardians are asked to discourage children from bringing expensive or treasured toys from home. To avoid hurt feelings, breakage, or loss of children's items, parents/guardians are requested to enforce this rule with children.

Children may bring in stuffed animals, books, or other comfort objects for use at naptime. The older children also may bring in a "special" toy from home on designated "Show-and-Tell" Days. These objects will be stored in children's backpacks until it is time to use them. At no time are children permitted to bring toys associated with violence such as toy guns, knives, swords, etc.

Confidentiality

Information relating to families or children is confidential and will not be released unless a parent or guardian provides written authorization. An exception is made in the event of suspected child abuse; authorities will be notified. All staff are mandatory reporters of any suspected abuse.

Curriculum Focus (continued)

Units of Study (see page 8) focus learning for the center's educational program. Planning for each topic targets a particular developmental stage and specific interests of children in each classroom. Subtopics within each monthly theme will vary from room to room.

Lesson planning forms for core-day and late afternoon programs provide the week-at-a-glance for parents/guardians and are posted outside each room. Daily schedules are also posted describing activities in a predictable order of events. Lesson plans include culturally competent, age-appropriate, domain-based activities reflective of children's interests and skills. Plans address the developmental needs of each child and are informed by ongoing assessments, observations, and information gained from families including information from an IFSP/IEP, if provided.

Developmentally Appropriate Materials

Materials are developmentally appropriate, accessible, promote multiple modes of explorations and learning, reflect children's interests/culture/language, and support children of all abilities.

Curriculum Assessment

Prior to attending the program, a parent-teacher conference called a "Meet-and-Greet" is implemented for the purpose of discussing children's individual needs. Parents are asked to share information regarding IFSP's, IEP's, allergies, or other special needs conditions at this conference.

Once children enter the program, each child is assessed using informal observations and research-based checklists based on developmental continuums/guidelines. *Maryland's Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age* is used to monitor and promote positive development in infants and toddlers. *The Work Sampling System (WSS)*, as recommended by MSDE, is used to assess growth and development in children aged three to five. WSS includes gathering children's work samples in student portfolios, enacting on-going observations and documentation of children's activities, as well as the completion of developmental checklists. A conference is held with families based on results of these evaluations in the Fall and Spring. As deemed necessary, families are referred to local agencies for further assessment as appropriate.

Content/Units of Study

Descriptions provided are examples of content that may be covered in each unit of study. Teachers may select other subtopics based on interest and age levels of children.

- September: **All About Me:** feelings, interests, the five senses, self-awareness, school happenings, apples (special event: Grandparent's Day)
- October: **Fall Fun:** leaves, pumpkins, weather changes, community helpers, fire safety, dress-up fun (special event: Fall Festival)
- November: **Food & Families:** families, harvest, special foods, nutrition (special event: Thanksgiving)
- December: **Celebrate!:** holiday celebrations, sending cards, gift giving (special events: Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa)
- January: **Winter Wonders:** winter science activities, cold weather animals, winter sports and activities (special events: New Year's Day, MLK Jr. Birthday)
- February: **Friends Forever:** character counts, sharing and caring (special events: Valentine's Day, President's Day)
- March: **Going Places:** transportation, travel, geography (mountains, rivers)
- April: **Plant Power:** flowers, gardens, trees (special events: Easter, Arbor Day, Earth Day)
- May: **Amazing Animals:** animals on the farm, animals from Africa, animals from Australia, birds, ocean life (special events: Mother's Day, Memorial Day)

The Summer Curriculum includes Nature-al Learning and Fitness-Focused Experiences. Information is distributed in January regarding summer curriculum.

Curriculum Enhancements

Note: Curriculum Enhancement Fees are due in September of each year and help cover some of the following special activities and events.

- Music is an integral part of the weekly curriculum throughout the school year for infants-preschool.
- Second Step, a pro-social skills program, is enacted in twos through preschool-age classrooms. Mini-lessons focusing on empathy, anger management, and problem-solving are provided.
- Food Groupies, a nutrition awareness program, provide toddlers through preschool with information and experiences with Choose My Plate which promotes healthy choices for snacks and meals. A series of videos and mini-discussions support healthy development.
- Fitness Focus (Let's Move Initiative for Child Care Providers) encourages children to stay fit doing monthly exercises.
- STEM provides monthly presentations that focus on science, technology, engineering, and math. STEM is facilitated for twos through preschool-age classrooms.
- Cooking Fun is an opportunity for children to participate in preparing a monthly recipe related to the unit of study.
- Discovery Walks are facilitated once a month on designated days for each classroom. Children explore Educare's nature-enriched grounds through this experience.
- Off-site Field Trips are provided for children three years of age and up. Educare uses a licensed bus service for all transportation.
- On-site Field Trips are educational experiences open to all ages (i.e. Fun Bus, Magician Shows, DJ Dance Parties, Live Theatre Performances).

Inclement Weather Policy

Delayed Opening

When FCPS announce an unplanned closure due to inclement weather, Educare will delay opening until at least 7:30 a.m. Information regarding the delayed opening will be stated by 6:00 a.m. on the answering machine at Educare (301-834-9007) and on the website www.educatewithcare.com. Families who generally arrive between 6:30 – 7:30 a.m. are encouraged to call the center or check the website whenever the weather poses possible unsafe travel conditions.

Early Closures

To ensure the safety of families and teachers, the decision may be made to close early due to deteriorating weather conditions during the day. ELC will contact families via email, text message, or make direct phone calls as necessary to ensure families are able to pick up their children in a timely manner.

Modes of Communication for Operation Changes

ELC will use the following to communicate unplanned changes to operating hours:

- Email-- Families who are not currently on the Educare email list will need to contact the front desk or email educare@educatewithcare.com to be added. This email list is also used to communicate general program reminders.
- Text Messages-- Families are encouraged to sign up to receive text message alerts directly from ELC by texting the keyword "Educare" to 84483. This text message option will only be used to communicate planned/unplanned disruptions to normal operation.
- Website—www.educatewithcare.com. Information will be posted on the main page, parent information page and the holidays/school closings page.
- Voice Mail Message—The voice mail message on the main line 301-834-9007.

Blue Jays (Preschool-Hours-Only Program)

The Blue Jays Program (9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.) follows the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) calendar regarding inclement weather days. If FCPS are closed, the Blue Jays Program will also be closed. In the event of a FCPS school delay, the Blue Jays Program will also delay. For example, if FCPS are on a 2 hour delay then preschool will be held from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Hérons (School-Age Program)

The school-age program is open to families whenever FCPS are delayed or closed due to inclement weather. Extra charges are assessed to families based on the hours children attend (\$7.00/hour or \$21.50/day). These charges will be reflected on the next tuition statement.

Schedule of Operation

General Hours

Educare is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m.—6:30 p.m. year-round except for holidays, in-service days and emergency closings (see below).

Holidays

Educare will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

If the holiday falls on Saturday, Educare will be closed on the prior Friday. If the holiday falls on Sunday, Educare will be closed on the following Monday. Educare will close two hours early (4:30 p.m.) on Thanksgiving Eve, Christmas Eve, and New Year’s Eve, as applicable.

In-service Days

In order to ensure quality programs for children, staff are required to attend in-service days to complete required training and update the classroom. On the following days, Educare will be closed to children:

- School-Year Preparation (August): The Friday before Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) begin the school-year
- Fall In-service (October): TBA based on FCPS calendar
- Winter In-service (January): Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Spring In-service (March/April): TBA
- Summer Preparation (June): The day after FCPS close for summer break

Note: Specific dates are subject to changes made to the FCPS schedule.

Emergency Closings

Educare makes every effort to stay open for scheduled program hours. There may be times when it is necessary to close the center completely for the entire day due to extreme weather conditions and/or declared state of emergencies by local government officials (i.e. hurricanes, blizzards, multiple road closures, etc.).

School-age Program Curriculum

The school-age curriculum follows the Center-wide Units of Study (see page 8). The schedule provides daily quiet time to complete homework assignments and outdoor time to re-energize after a long day in the classroom. Weekly lesson plans are posted describing daily projects and special events school-age children experience at Educare. Summer programs provide full-day care and learning at a pace that gives school-age children the feel of “summer break” while participating in planned, exciting summer activities (includes multiple off-site field trips).

Guidance Practices

CSEFEL (Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning)

Educare teachers are trained on CSEFEL concepts that promote social competence in children. Skills include emotional literacy, problem solving, anger management, and visuals/activities that support each concept.

Positive Guidance Practices

The goal of all guidance at Educare is teaching and supporting appropriate behavior. This is accomplished through setting clearly defined limits in a non-threatening manner. Rules/guidelines for children’s behavior are posted in each classroom and supported each day by teacher reminders to children. Working with parents/guardians as partners, challenging behaviors are addressed through establishing similar behavior guidelines.

Another goal reached through positive guidance practices is helping children develop a positive self-image. We encourage children to be self-directed and exhibit self-control appropriate for each age. A sense of order is established throughout the day through close supervision focusing on redirection and logical consequences.

Aggressive Acts Policy

Children who exhibit continuous aggressive behavior that is not developmentally appropriate will be addressed in the following manner:

1. Parents/guardians will be contacted regarding aggressive behavior and a plan for addressing the behavior will be developed which may include intervention services by a specialist with the permission/support of parents/guardians.
2. Staff, specialists, and parents/guardians will enact the plan for a period of one month ending in a progress report. If progress is made, behavior will be monitored and periodic staff-parent/guardian conferences may be held.
3. If the aggressive behavior continues, weekly conferences will be held to continually assess the situation. If progress is unacceptable or injury of a serious nature occurs, termination from the program may result.

Parents/guardians who exhibit aggressive behavior toward program personnel, children, or family members will no longer be allowed on the property. Other family members will be allowed to continue to participate in all program activities.

Parent/Guardian Participation

Educare is committed to working with families. Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in every aspect of their child's program. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the center at any time. Parents/guardians are invited to share personal interests including hobbies, talents, and cultural backgrounds.

Parent/guardian and teacher communications are promoted through daily conversations, phone calls, Educare e-mail, or written information. Parents/guardians are asked to share any information regarding children's development or experiences from home that may affect a child's experience at Educare.

A Parent/Guardian Bulletin Board, located by the front desk, contains information of interest to families. Brochures regarding community agencies and programs are available in the foyer.

Parent/guardian workshops are provided periodically for families on promoting positive development in children. Childcare is provided for a fee of \$5 per child and pre-registration is required.

The Educare Family Association (EFA) has the expressed purpose of supporting Educare Learning Center children and families through program offerings and activities in an effort to build community and enhance program offerings for children. All families are members of the EFA upon enrollment of a child in the center. The EFA requires no fees for participation in monthly meetings and planning of activities/events. The EFA meets monthly to plan special events for children and families. All parents/guardians are invited to participate in the EFA. Special events planned throughout the year include family festivals, fund-raising activities, Parent's Nights Out, and picnics (see EFA Board in the main hallway). EFA has created an Educare Family Association Group (closed group) on Facebook. Parents/guardians are invited to join to stay up-to-date on family events.

Each classroom at ELC has a designated parent/guardian who will send periodic emails to families reminding them of upcoming EFA events and opportunities for involvement in EFA. Photos of EFA Room Parents/Guardians are posted on the EFA bulletin board by the front desk.

Educare's website, www.educatewithcare.com, provides families with continual updates and information about the program. Families may sign up to receive updates and announcements via email by contacting educare@educatewithcare.com or by indicating an email address on the enrollment form.

Required Enrollment Information

The following completed forms can be obtained from the Educare website or from the front desk. These must be submitted before a child attends the program:

- Enrollment Agreement
- Registration Form
- Parent Photo Release Form
- Healthy Inventory (Immunization Records)
- Emergency Card
- "All About My Child" form
- Signature Page of the Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care
- Registration Fee (non-refundable) and Deposit (only refundable with a one-month withdrawal notice)
- Pre-Payment (if applicable)

NOTE: A Parent/Guardian Orientation with Educare administration is provided within the first 90 days of enrollment.

Tuition Policy (A fee schedule is available upon request.)

Tuition is paid on a year-round basis:

- Bi-weekly tuition is due the first Monday of the two-week schedule.
- Monthly and preschool tuition is due on the first day of the month.
- Monthly early bird tuition is due the 15th prior to the month.
- Quarterly tuition is due the 15th prior to the quarter.

A two-week written notice is required to change a child's schedule. A 30-day written notice is required to withdraw. Families receive a \$50 credit for referring a child who enrolls (paid 30 days after start date).

Payments can be made via cash (request receipt from front desk), check (deposit in the tuition box at front desk) or online (3% charge for credit card payments, or no charge for EFT bank payments). Payment is due on time regardless of vacation, illness, or holidays. A \$25 late fee is assessed for any bi-weekly tuition payment not received by Wednesday of the week payment is due. Monthly, early bird monthly or quarterly payments received after the due date are not eligible to receive the additional discounts. The returned check fee is \$35. Termination of enrollment may result when an account is over 30 days past due. Exceptions to the tuition policy will be made only if payment arrangements are secured with the Executive Director. Note: Preschool tuition is paid in 9 equal monthly payments (September-May) and is assessed a \$10 late fee for payments received after the 5th of the month due.

Families receiving Purchase of Care Vouchers are required to make payments as designated at the time of registration. When vouchers expire, parents/guardians have 5 days to provide the new vouchers or they become responsible for paying the full tuition.