



Connections Early Learning Center

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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**422 College View Drive
Bridgewater, VA 22812**

**Hours of Operation
6:30AM-5:30PM**

Updated April 2025

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Connections Early Learning Center Our Unique Connections

Connection Through Inclusion

All children are welcome in our program regardless of the family's financial resources, race, religious affiliation, or family composition. We aim to provide experiences for all our learners, regardless of ability.

Connections to Social Emotional Growth

We commit to helping children develop age-appropriate strategies for acknowledging, and processing emotions as well as providing opportunities to strengthen and restore relationships with others by practicing healthy interactions.



Connection to Community and Families

We commit to building strong relationships with our families through open communication in a variety of ways. We also commit to fostering relationships within our community and provide meaningful intergenerational opportunities between children and older adults.

Connection to Exploration and Discovery

We commit to helping children develop a connection to the world around them by providing a variety of hands-on opportunities and experiences. Children are encouraged to ask questions and adults will facilitate investigations and encourage learning through discovery.

CONNECTIONS EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Handbook for Families

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Connections Early Learning Center's mission as we care for children is to nurture them to become their best selves through social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth.

The center provides a year-round, multi-age program for children age six weeks through completion of 5th grade. A full-day care and education program is offered for infants and preschoolers. Programming and tutorial support for elementary children is provided before and after school and full days in the summer and on teacher workdays. The center is committed to serving the community by providing fully licensed care to children and families without discrimination. The professional staff and volunteers support children's personal development, school readiness, and educational success through guided exploration, meaningful play, and structured group experiences. We also provide academic support for school-agers. Families and teachers work collaboratively to share knowledge of each child's development at school and at home.

Connections Early Learning Center's curriculum does not promote a specific religion. We are affiliated with the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren and its ideals of working together cooperatively, respectful of individual skills, needs, and family composition. The program seeks to embody the following values in all decisions and interactions.

- We value education which reflects current research and best practices in child development.
- We value an equitable learning environment where all children and families have access to high quality early education and care.
- We value all people and strive to create a diverse and inclusive learning community that promotes healthy and peaceful respect for others.

PROGRAM GOALS

Connections Early Learning Center seeks to provide an environment in which

- Children build independence, confidence, critical thinking, and emotional regulation.
- Children participate in a classroom culture of exploration and discovery, supported by teachers, to achieve higher level thinking skills and learning strategies for success.
- Children develop healthy relationships and communication skills to work collaboratively with people from diverse backgrounds where everyone has a right to be heard and accepted.
- Children engage in meaningful intergenerational experiences and explore the importance of their personal contributions to the greater community.
- Children feel safe to learn at their own pace, explore new ideas, and ask questions without being judged.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

CELC opens at 6:30 am and closes at 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday, year-round. Family and staff parking is on the west side of the church (far side). Before leaving your vehicle, turn the engine off to minimize the risk of accidents. Always use the building entrance with the covered walkway. Upon entry to the building, use your family's personal code to gain access to the appropriate interior program door (this code will be shared at the time of enrollment).

Arrival

An adult family member or authorized person (no older siblings) must accompany their child to the classroom or playground, verbally connect with the child's teacher, to verify the child's arrival. Assist your child with washing hands before you leave. If a child will be transported from another program or agency, a schedule must be given to the CELC Director prior to attendance and the Center notified when the child is absent or the schedule changes.

Dismissal

Adult family members or other authorized adults (no older siblings) must pick up children at dismissal. Come inside through the main program entrance and go to your child's classroom. If the class is outdoors, exit through the classroom door to the playground. Verbally connect with the teacher and sign the attendance tablet to verify release of the child to the family. Families may not enter the outdoor area through the gates.

The CELC closes at 5:30 pm. The following late fees are charged when families arrive after this time.

- 5:31-5:34 \$20
- 5:35-5:39 \$30
- 5:40-5:44 \$40
- 5:45 or later - \$50

If no one has arrived to pick up a child 15 minutes past closing time and CELC staff are unable to reach a parent, the Center will contact persons on the Emergency Contact Information form. If no one can be reached, local authorities will be called. Five late pickups in a year (August 1-July 30) will result in dismissal from CELC.

CELC recognizes that occasional emergency situations arise which interfere with prompt pick up. Families are asked to call the Center (540-828-2200) if they must be late and make every effort to pick up their child as soon as possible.

The maximum number of hours a child may attend CELC daily is 10. Families should indicate their preferred daily schedule on the first page of the Registration Form.

School-Age Program

During the academic year, the school-age program operates before and after school. A bus from John Wayland Elementary picks up CELC children in the morning and delivers them in the afternoon.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance contributes to children's feelings of security and enables them to participate fully in the learning opportunities at the Center. If your child will not be attending on a particular day, notify the CELC office (540-828-2200) by 9:00 am. If a school-age child will not be arriving on the school bus, the family must notify the CELC office no later than 2:00 pm.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays may be celebrated simply at school if the child and parents wish, but without gift bags, balloons, or favors. Birthday snacks should be nutritious and easy to serve. Foods that come from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. In addition to nutritional

requirements established by VDOE licensing standards, CELC is committed to avoiding products with excessive sugar and high fructose corn syrup as much as possible.

Written invitations to special events may be distributed at the Center as long as all children in the class are included. Families are responsible for placing invitations in each child's cubby.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Children are assigned to a class group according to age. The CELC administrative staff may determine, however, that an alternative placement can provide better support for a child's success and safety. This decision is based on thorough assessment of the child and collaboration with the family and lead teachers. Changes in class assignment are dependent on the availability of staff in the alternate class and written consent of the parent.

CHILD RECORDS

Child records include all documents described in the *Registration Forms* section, as well as official assessment records. This information is considered confidential and is stored in a secure location at CELC. Access is limited to those persons who work directly with children or are responsible for program accountability--the child's family, the teaching and administrative staff, and licensing officials. Duplicates of the *Emergency Information Form* are kept in the CELC office and in visible locations in the classrooms for easy access in case of emergency.

It is the responsibility of each family to update registration and health forms as needed during the year in order to maintain accuracy. Unless a legally binding instrument or a court order governing divorce, separation, or custody provides to the contrary, both parents shall be permitted to inspect and review educational records of their children.

Child records are retained in the CELC office for two years after the child's final date of attendance. At that time they are shredded.

CLOTHING

As you and your child make daily clothing choices, it is important to consider washability, independence, safety, and temperature.

Children should dress in comfortable, washable clothing appropriate for active play. They will get dirty as they are involved in classroom experiences and outdoor activities. Even though paints and other art materials are advertised as washable, they often present laundry challenges. When skirts or dresses are worn, shorts should be underneath.

Choosing clothes that are easy for children to manage encourages feelings of independence and self-confidence. For young children, please consider shoes with velcro tabs instead of laces, elastic waist pants instead of snaps, and mittens instead of gloves. Those who are beginning to manage toileting do not need the additional challenge of belts or bib overalls; please avoid them if possible.

Clothing choices also impact children's safety as they work and play. Closed-toe shoes with non-skid soles that are safe for climbing and running are strongly recommended. Flip-flops and stiff boots should not be worn to the center. Remove drawstrings from hoodies to reduce the risk of choking.

Children must have a seasonal change of clothing at the Center (including several pairs of underpants). Put your child's initials on all clothing and send it in a plastic zip-loc bag. As the weather changes, please update this clothing so your child will be comfortable if a change is necessary.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Because CELC views early education as the shared responsibility of home and center, it is critical that we communicate often and well about all aspects of a child's experience. Communication during the year is verbal and written, informal and formal, and may be initiated by family members or CELC personnel. In an effort to promote environmental responsibility, communication is electronic as much as possible. Families are encouraged to contact a teacher or the director if they are unable to receive electronic communication or have difficulty communicating in English.

CELC staff maintain daily communication at drop-off and pick up to include conversations about the daily activities of the child, restocking of personal items, and updates on developmental milestones or challenges. Written or electronic updates are used to maintain regular communication regarding activities and upcoming information.

Families receive written information on their child's development, behavior, adjustment, and needs twice annually. At that time, families are also given opportunities to provide feedback on their children and the program.

When possible, families are encouraged to participate in special classroom projects, program meetings, and fundraising activities that benefit CELC.

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 families 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

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.

Summer Program for School Age Children

During the full day summer program for the elementary group, children participate in planning group activities which reflect their interests and explore learning topics of their choice through the *Project Based Learning (PBL) Approach*. Enrichment activities may include inviting community experts to share skills and hobbies, volunteering in the community garden, or weekly theme-based camps (engineering, cooking, etc.)

EMERGENCIES

In the event of a general emergency, an on-site administrator contacts emergency authorities by dialing 9-1-1 as soon as possible and designates a staff member(s) to communicate with families. Notification is via text to the phone number(s) on the Registration Form. A CELC administrator provides families with updates as frequently as possible and information about picking up children as guided by emergency officials.

If alternative shelter is recommended by emergency officials, children and staff go to the Funkhouser Center on the campus of Bridgewater College (117 College View Drive). This move is communicated to families, along with specific guidelines for dismissing children.

If an individual medical emergency occurs, 9-1-1 is called. A family member is contacted immediately using numbers on the Emergency Authorization 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 the CELC before emergency medical personnel are ready to transport, an administrator or teacher accompanies the child to Sentara-RMH and stays 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.

Detailed procedures for responding to potential emergencies are described in the *CELC Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan*. A copy is available from the Director.

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.

GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

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.

Time out is never used as punishment. There are occasions when a teacher may 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.

If a child exhibits persistent behavioral difficulties, the administration will 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 Director 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.

HANDWASHING

One of the most reliable ways of controlling the spread of germs is proper and consistent handwashing. This is emphasized with the children and modeled by all adults working at the Center. Children are expected to wash their hands with soap and running water before and after eating meals or snacks and at the following times:

- Upon arrival at the center
- After using the toilet or diapering
- After any contact with blood, feces, or urine
- After contact with animals
- Upon coming in from outside
- When hands appear soiled

Adults are also required to wash hands before and after administering medication, before and after changing a diaper, before and after assisting a child with toileting, before and after helping a child with feeding, before preparing or serving food or beverages, after using the toilet, and after any contact with body fluids.

Children and adults should get a paper towel before starting to wash their hands. 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 avoid contact with the faucet when turning off the water. We seek the assistance of all families in helping children develop this important habit.

HOLIDAYS

Rather than celebrating holidays as part of the curriculum, CELC values learning about the variety of holidays celebrated by our families. All children are welcome to share with their classmates about holidays and customs that are part of their family tradition. If special foods are part of your family celebration, consult with your child's teacher in advance to discuss guidelines for these experiences.

ILLNESS

When a child becomes ill at the Center, 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.

Children are not to attend the Center 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:

- A fever of 101 or higher
- Signs of a newly developing cold or persistent cough
- 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
- They may return to the center when fever free for at least 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) and symptoms are no longer present.

The [Communicable Disease Reference Chart for School Personnel](#) provides information about communicable diseases common in young children (a link is available on the CELC website). Families will be notified as soon as possible (within 24 hours or the next attendance day after the program is informed) if their child is exposed to a communicable 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.** In both cases, life-threatening diseases must be reported immediately.

The class will spend some time outdoors daily except in severe weather. If children are not well enough to play outside under normal conditions, attendance at the center is not appropriate.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Documentation that a child is adequately or age-appropriately immunized as defined by the State Board of Health is required before he or she can attend CELC and must be maintained as described below in order for enrollment to continue. The form for recording this information is available from a CELC administrator.

- An additional immunization form must be submitted every six months until a child's 2nd birthday.
- Documentation of additional immunizations once between a child's fourth and sixth birthday is required.

Forms must have the signature of the physician or designee and be dated at the time the form is completed.

Public Health protocols may be subject to change and will be followed strictly by Center staff.

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. The teacher and administrator will meet with the family and school division officials 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 administration.

Program staff will cooperate with resource persons and support IEP goals as much as realistically possible.

INJURIES

Children at CELC are always supervised according to standards established by the VA Department of Education. However, despite efforts to maintain the safest possible environment, injuries can occur. Well-stocked first aid kits are located in the building and accessible on the playground and during field trips. The administrators and lead teachers are certified in first aid and infant/child CPR.

Parents are notified immediately if a child requires emergency medical treatment, sustains a serious injury, or is exposed to an allergen identified in his or her medical care plan. If any injury is unusually upsetting to a child or poses reason for concern, parents are contacted immediately. Notification of minor injuries and the treatment administered are shared when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

An incident report is completed on every incident in which a child receives first aid. Reports must be signed by the parent or guardian on the day of the injury to verify notification. These documents are used to track the kinds of incidents that occur and help CELC staff consider ways to avoid similar injuries in the future.

Detailed procedures for responding to serious injuries or medical conditions are outlined in the *CELC Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan*.

MEALS & SNACKS

CELC will begin a Food program on August 18, 2025 which will include a service of a breakfast, lunch, and a pm Snack. As a licensed facility, we follow all USDA guidelines to ensure the meals provided meet the nutritional needs of the children in our care. The USDA guidelines can be found in Appendix at the end of the Handbook. Our center offers a nutritious and balanced food program to support the health and well-being of all children in our care. These meals are provided to children enrolled in the 1-year-old class through the school-age program.

Families have the option to participate in our food program. You may choose to have all meals provided by the center, or you may opt to provide meals from home. Please note that if you choose to opt into the food program, all meals will be provided for your child. If you prefer to supply meals from home, you must provide all meals and snacks for the day. This decision is all-inclusive.

Children enrolled in the infant room must provide their own formula or breastmilk, as well as any meals and snacks. Our food program is not available to infants, as we recognize the specialized dietary needs at this stage of development.

If your child has any allergies or food intolerances, it is required that you provide a doctor's note, and it must be included on the School Health Entrance form. With the proper documentation, we will provide alternative foods that accommodate your child's specific needs.

Water will be available to children throughout the day.

If a child has a food allergy or sensitivity, it must be recorded on the registration form and an Allergy Care Plan completed. This plan is posted in the child's classroom and specific details are shared with all staff who work with the child. In some situations, the severity of a child's allergy makes it necessary to eliminate exposure to an allergen within the class. The Director will make this decision in collaboration with the child's parent(s) and develop a safe plan. The cooperation of other families in the class is required.

MEDICATION

The ONLY medication that can be 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. A staff member with current Medication Administration Training (as certified by VDOE) is on-site at all times.

If it is possible a child will need emergency medication, the *VDOE Written Medication Consent* (available from CELC administration) must be completed and signed by his or her physician, parent, and an administrator prior to the child's attendance. 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 appropriately by the CELC.

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*.

If your child requires a non-emergency prescription or over-the-counter medication, you are welcome to come to the center to administer it. In some cases it is possible to develop a medication schedule that avoids the time a child attends CELC.

REGISTRATION FORMS

The following forms must be fully completed and submitted to the Director at the time of registration.

- **Registration Form** - This form includes family contact information, an introduction to the child, medical authorizations, and verification that the family will abide by CELC policies. Licensing standards require proof of identity and age of each child attending CELC in the form of a certified birth certificate or other official record. This information is recorded by the Director on the registration form and returned immediately to the parent.
- **Emergency Authorization Form** - This form requires detailed contact information for parents or guardians, as well as two additional individuals, and medical insurance information. The child release authorization names all individuals allowed to pick up the child. Emergency Information Forms are kept in a safe location in all classrooms so teachers have ready access to this important information.
- **Commonwealth of VA School Entrance Health Form:** This form provides verification by a physician that the child has received all necessary immunizations and is in adequate health to attend school.

It must be signed and dated by the physician or physician's designee or local health department official. A completed immunization form is required every six months until the child is two years old. Families must provide documentation of additional immunizations once between their child's fourth and sixth birthdays.

A physical examination prior to attendance must be documented according to the following timeline:

- Children 6 months or less - physical within two months prior to attendance
- Children 7-18 months - physical within three months prior to attendance
- Children 19-24 months - physical within six months prior to attendance
- Children 2-5 years - physical within 12 months prior to attendance
- School-age children - A copy of the physical examination form and immunizations required for public school attendance must be submitted.

Additional forms as needed:

- **Allergy Care Plan for A Child with Diagnosed Food Allergies** – This form must be signed by the child's physician prior to enrollment if the child has allergies or intolerances to food, medication, or other substances. Actions to take in an emergency must be clearly stated. This documentation is kept in the CELC office, as well as in the child's classroom.
- **Individual Health Care Plan** – Chronic physical problems or pertinent developmental information and required accommodations must be documented on this form.
- **Written Medication Consent Form** - CELC staff can only administer medication that is required for emergency medical conditions. Completion of this form is required in order for this to be done.
- **Authorization Form for Non-prescription Over-the-Counter Skin Products** - Completion of this form is necessary in order for CELC staff to administer sunscreen, insect repellent, or diaper rash cream. When brought to the Center, these products must be in their original container and clearly labeled with the child's full name. This form must be updated every 12 months.

(It is the responsibility of each family to update the information on the above forms as needed to maintain their accuracy. This may be done by contacting a CELC administrator or downloading and submitting a revised form.)

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Connections Early Learning Center is responsible for immediately reporting any and all signs or suspicions of abuse or neglect. Information of concern is discussed with an administrator and reported in accordance with state law.

SMOKING, TOBACCO, & ALCOHOL USE

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.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Enrollment of a child in CELC may be terminated for the following reasons:

- The child's parents/guardians fail to submit required documents or abide by program policies or procedures as described in the *Family Handbook*.
- A tuition payment becomes one month past due (outside of arranged payment plan).
- The child's behavior is a threat to the safety of other children, adults, and/or the child himself/herself as determined by the teacher and CELC Director.
- The child's parents/guardians are disruptive at the Center or disrespectful to CELC staff or children in any way (including social media).
- The child is picked up past closing time without reasonable notification 5 times during a year (August 1-July 30).
- Parents disregard CELC policy on the presence of sick children at the center.
- CELC is unable to meet the developmental needs of the child. This decision is made by the CELC Director in consultation with the child's family and teacher.

The CELC Director will communicate with families as soon as a problem is identified. In cases of incomplete paperwork, policy or procedure infractions, or delinquent tuition, a final date and conditions for resolution will be established in writing.

In situations regarding inappropriate behavior of a child, the teacher communicates the concern to a CELC administrator and strategies for understanding and improving behavior are discussed. If it becomes necessary, administration initiates a meeting with the family to discuss the cause of the behavior, a plan for meeting the child's needs, and a procedure for regular communication. A plan for ensuring the safety of other CELC children and staff while working with the child will be developed by administration and Lead Teacher. While a reasonable effort will be made to accommodate each child's individual needs, Connections Early Learning Center reserves the right to immediately terminate the enrollment of any child whose behavior becomes a threat to other children or staff. This decision is made by the administration and approved by the Board Chair.

TOILETING AND DIAPERING PROCEDURES

Clean diapering areas and toileting areas are accessible for all children. Diapers are changed at regular intervals daily. When the child's clothing or diaper becomes wet or soiled, the child is cleaned and changed immediately.

Families are responsible for providing diapers and disposable wipes. If cloth diapers are used, families must also provide a leakproof or plastic-lined storage system that is foot-operated and assume all responsibility for laundry and cleaning.

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.

Appropriate supervision of all children is maintained while a child is being diapered.

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 any Allergy care plans are included.
- Drinking water is provided and accessible to all children at all times.
- Adequate food if 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.

TUITION & FEES

Tuition for the CELC program is scaled to reflect the level of teacher support and ratios within each age group. The same payment is due weekly, regardless of the child's attendance, days missed because of weather emergencies, or scheduled CELC closures. Scheduled closures are listed on the calendar provided at enrollment. Children enrolled for the full year may take one week's vacation unpaid.

| CELC TUITION RATES | |
|--|----------------|
| Age Group | Weekly Tuition |
| Infants (6 weeks up to 16 months) | \$276 |
| Toddlers (16 months up to 24 months) | \$276 |
| 2 Year Olds | \$245 |
| 3 and 4 Year Olds | \$235 |
| 4 and 5 Year Olds | \$235 |
| ELEMENTARY AGE | |
| Before and After School Care (\$20.40/day) | \$102/week |
| Full-time Summer Care | \$215/week |
| Public School Closures | \$43/day |

These are the highest rates per child in each age group. Applications for reduced tuition or a scholarship are available from an administrator. CELC also participates in the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Checks should be written to the *Connections Early Learning Center*. All payments must be received in the drop box by the CELC Director's office each Tuesday for the tuition for that week. Payments may be made for multiple weeks as long as they are paid forward, and the weeks are clearly indicated on the check. Payments may also be made by ACH withdraws or Zelle by searching our email: connectionsclc@gmail.com.

CELC depends on the timely collection of tuition payments in order to meet budget and salary obligations. Enrollment may be terminated if a payment becomes one month overdue (outside of arranged payment plan).

School-Age Program

Costs for attendance on delayed openings and early closures due to weather are factored into the weekly tuition cost for families of school-agers. Full-day attendance during public school weather closures, scheduled teacher workdays, and spring break days incurs an additional fee. Full-day tuition rates for the school-age program total \$43 each day. Payments for weather closures, teacher workdays, or spring break days may be added to the following week's tuition.

Spring Break payment is due on the Monday of spring break week. Full-day attendance during spring break is optional. However, families must submit a **Spring Break Intent Form** in February so an appropriate number of staff can be secured to provide supervision and programming. If a child attends the week of spring break, tuition is \$215. If a child does not attend during the week of spring break, the regular tuition rate of \$102 is charged.

The CELC School-Age Program is full-day in the summer. Families are required to submit a **Summer Intent Form** each spring to verify their child's summer attendance. Enrollment in the full-day summer program guarantees your child's space for the fall of that year. Vacancies are filled with children who have not attended CELC. In spring, current families are required to submit a **Fall Intent Form** so administrators can offer spaces for fall enrollment and plan for staffing needs.

Priority for fall enrollment in the School-Age Program is as follows:

1. School-age children who attended CELC full-time during the summer
2. Children who attended CELC full-time during the summer and are entering kindergarten
3. Children who were enrolled in CELC the previous school year
4. Siblings of children already enrolled in CELC

If vacancies remain, enrollment applications are open to the public.

| ADDITIONAL FEES | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------|
| Fee | How much? | When is it due? | Refundable? |
| Waitlist Fee | \$25 | Must accompany Waitlist Application | No |
| Registration Fee | \$100 | Must accompany Registration Form and other required enrollment paperwork | No |
| Arts & Activities Fee | \$50 | Annually on October 1 | No |
| Late Pickup Fee | \$20-\$50 | Per occurrence, refer to Arrival & Departure section of this handbook | No |
| Returned Check Fee | \$20 | Per occurrence | No |

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 via Procure and email and text to the phone number(s) shared at registration.

Delayed opening: Children are received at 6:30am 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, the Director notifies families 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.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Temporary withdrawals from CELC are not permitted. Tuition payments must be made when children are absent from school due to illness, family travel, or other reasons.

If families choose to permanently withdraw their child from the program, a minimum of two weeks advance notification is required. Full payment is due for that time period.

Some sections of this document were adapted with permission from *Handbook for Families*, James Madison University Young Children's Program, 2012-13, written by S. Hutchinson.



Appendix

- **USDA Guidelines**



CHILD MEAL PATTERN

| Breakfast (Select all three components for a reimbursable meal) | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| Food Components and Food Items ¹ | Ages 1-2 | Ages 3-5 | Ages 6-12 | Ages 13-18 ² <small>(at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)</small> |
| Fluid Milk ³ | 4 fluid ounces | 6 fluid ounces | 8 fluid ounces | 8 fluid ounces |
| Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both ⁴ | ¼ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup |
| Grains (oz eq) ^{5,6,7} | | | | |
| Whole grain-rich or enriched bread | ½ slice | ½ slice | 1 slice | 1 slice |
| Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit, roll or muffin | ½ serving | ½ serving | 1 serving | 1 serving |
| Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ⁸ , cereal grain, and/or pasta | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup |
| Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereal (dry, cold) ^{8,9} | | | | |
| Flakes or rounds | ½ cup | ½ cup | 1 cup | 1 cup |
| Puffed cereal | ¾ cup | ¾ cup | 1 ¼ cup | 1 ¼ cup |
| Granola | ¾ cup | ¾ cup | ¾ cup | ¾ cup |

¹ Must serve all three components for a reimbursable meal. Offer versus serve is an option for at-risk afterschool participants.

² Larger portion sizes than specified may need to be served to children 13 through 18 years old to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must be unflavored whole milk for children age one. Must be unflavored low-fat (1 percent) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk for children two through five years old. Must be unflavored low-fat (1 percent), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free (skim) milk for children six years old and older.

⁴ Pasteurized full-strength juice may only be used to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal, including snack, per day.

⁵ At least one serving per day, across all eating occasions, must be whole grain-rich. Grain-based desserts

do not count towards meeting the grains requirement.

⁶Meat and meat alternates may be used to meet the entire grains requirement a maximum of three times a week. One ounce of meat and meat alternates is equal to one ounce equivalent of grains.

⁷Beginning October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.

⁸Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal).

⁹Beginning October 1, 2019, the minimum serving size specified in this section for ready-to-eat breakfast cereals must be served. Until October 1, 2019, the minimum serving size for any type of ready-to-eat breakfast cereals is ¼ cup for children ages 1-2; 1/3 cup for children ages 3-5; and ¾ cup for children ages 6-12.

| Lunch and Supper | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| (Select all five components for a reimbursable meal) | | | | |
| Food Components and Food Items ¹ | Ages 1-2 | Ages 3-5 | Ages 6-12 | Ages 13-18 ² <small>(at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)</small> |
| Fluid Milk ³ | 4 fluid ounces | 6 fluid ounces | 8 fluid ounces | 8 fluid ounces |
| Meat/meat alternates | | | | |
| Lean meat, poultry, or fish | 1 ounce | 1 ½ ounce | 2 ounces | 2 ounces |
| Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products ⁴ | 1 ounce | 1 ½ ounce | 2 ounces | 2 ounces |
| Cheese | 1 ounce | 1 ½ ounce | 2 ounces | 2 ounces |
| Large egg | ½ | ¾ | 1 | 1 |
| Cooked dry beans or peas | ¼ cup | ¾ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup |
| Peanut butter or soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters | 2 tbsp | 3 tbsp | 4 tbsp | 4 tbsp |
| Yogurt, plain or flavored unsweetened or sweetened ⁵ | 4 ounces or ½ cup | 6 ounces or ¾ cup | 8 ounces or 1 cup | 8 ounces or 1 cup |
| The following may be used to meet no more than 50% of the requirement: Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds, as listed in program guidance, or an equivalent quantity of any combination of the above meat/meat alternates (1 ounces of nuts/seeds = 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish) | ½ ounce = 50% | ¾ ounce = 50% | 1 ounce = 50% | 1 ounce = 50% |

¹Must serve all five components for a reimbursable meal. Offer versus serve is an option for at-risk afterschool participants.

| | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Vegetables ⁶ | ½ cup | ¼ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup |
| Fruits ^{6,7} | ½ cup | ¼ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup |
| Grains (oz eq) ^{8,9} | | | | |
| Whole grain-rich or enriched bread | ½ slice | ½ slice | 1 slice | 1 slice |
| Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit, roll or muffin | ½ serving | ½ serving | 1 serving | 1 serving |
| Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ¹⁰ , cereal grain, and/or pasta | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup |

² Larger portion sizes than specified may need to be served to children 13 through 18 years old to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must be unflavored whole milk for children age one. Must be unflavored low-fat (1 percent) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk for children two through five years old. Must be unflavored low-fat (1 percent), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free (skim) milk for children six years old and older.

⁴ Alternate protein products must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226.

⁵ Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.

⁶ Pasteurized full-strength juice may only be used to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal, including snack, per day.

⁷ A vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.

⁸ At least one serving per day, across all eating occasions, must be whole grain-rich. Grain-based desserts do not count towards the grains requirement.

⁹ Beginning October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of the creditable grain.

¹⁰ Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal).

CHILD MEAL PATTERN

| Snack (Select two of the five components for a reimbursable snack) | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Food Components and Food Items ² | Ages 1-2 | Ages 3-5 | Ages 6-12 | Ages 13-18 ² <small>(at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)</small> |
| Fluid Milk ³ | 4 fluid ounces | 4 fluid ounces | 8 fluid ounces | 8 fluid ounces |
| Meat/meat alternates | | | | |
| Lean meat, poultry, or fish | ½ ounce | ½ ounce | 1 ounce | 1 ounce |
| Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products ⁴ | ½ ounce | ½ ounce | 1 ounce | 1 ounce |
| Cheese | ½ ounce | ½ ounce | 1 ounce | 1 ounce |
| Large egg | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ |
| Cooked dry beans or peas | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup |
| Peanut butter or soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters | 1 tbsp | 1 tbsp | 2 tbsp | 2 tbsp |
| Yogurt, plain or flavored unsweetened or sweetened ⁵ | 2 ounces or ¼ cup | 2 ounces or ¼ cup | 4 ounces or ½ cup | 4 ounces or ½ cup |
| Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds | ½ ounce | ½ ounce | 1 ounce | 1 ounce |
| Vegetables ⁶ | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup |
| Fruits ⁶ | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup |
| Grains (oz eq)^{7,8} | | | | |
| Whole grain-rich or enriched bread | ½ slice | ½ slice | 1 slice | 1 slice |
| Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit, roll or muffin | ½ serving | ½ serving | 1 serving | 1 serving |
| Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal ⁹ , cereal grain, and/or pasta | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup | ¼ cup |

² Select two of the five components for a reimbursable snack. Only one of the two components may be a beverage. ² Larger portion sizes than specified may need to be served to children 13 through 18 years old to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must be unflavored whole milk for children age one. Must be unflavored low-fat (1 percent) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk for children two through five years old. Must be unflavored low-fat (1 percent), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free (skim) milk for children six years old and older.

⁴ Alternate protein products must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226.

| | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereal (dry, cold) ^{9,10} | | | | |
| Flakes or rounds | ½ cup | ½ cup | 1 cup | 1 cup |
| Puffed cereal | ¾ cup | ¾ cup | 1 ¼ cup | 1 ¼ cup |
| Granola | ½ cup | ½ cup | ¾ cup | ¾ cup |

⁵ Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.

⁶ Pasteurized full-strength juice may only be used to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal, including snack, per day.

⁷ At least one serving per day, across all eating occasions, must be whole grain-rich. Grain-based desserts do not count towards meeting the grains requirement.

⁸ Beginning October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents are used to determine the quantity of creditable grains.

⁹ Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal).

¹⁰ Beginning October 1, 2019, the minimum serving sizes specified in this section for ready-to-eat breakfast cereals must be served. Until October 1, 2019, the minimum serving size for any type of ready-to-eat breakfast cereals is ¼ cup for children ages 1-2; 1/3 cup for children ages 3-5; and ½ cup for children ages 6-12.

For additional information on the Child and Adult Care Food Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/CACFP/cacphome.htm>.