



# **EARLY LEARNING CENTER**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

## **Family Handbook 2018-19**

301 Sparkman Drive  
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Huntsville, Alabama 35899

(256)824-4750



Welcome to the UAH Early Learning Center. Whether you are returning or are new to us, I am so excited you are a part of our family here at the ELC for the 2018-19 school year!

The UAH Early Learning Center is excited about the continued growth and community support we have received as we continue to provide quality services for ALL children in the community. In addition to the RISE School Inclusion Classrooms, we offer Head Start Classrooms for 3-5-year olds, First-Class (4-year olds) state sponsored Classrooms, Early Head Start Classrooms, and a program for Preschool children with Autism (PALS). The UAH Early Learning Center is a service and community outreach unit of the College of Education at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. It is an exciting time for UAH, the College of Education, and the Early Learning Center, as we continue to grow. We are very happy to welcome you to the ELC!

All classrooms at the ELC are inclusive and offer quality early childhood education with developmentally appropriate practice, lower teacher-student ratios, and our RISE & PALS classrooms offer therapy services. At the RISE school, PALS program, and First-Class preschool, in addition to our academic day, we offer both Before School Care (BSC) and After School Care (ASC). For an additional fee of \$80 per month, your child may attend BSC from 7:00-7:45 am. ASC is offered daily from 2:30-5:30pm for \$200 per month. Our ASC program allows children the opportunity to have a snack and participate in both center-based structured activities, story time, and gross motor play with age appropriate peers. If you are interested in enrolling your child in either before school or after school care, or both, please fill out and return an enrollment form for these programs asap.

Our East side doors will open at **7:50 each morning** and we urge you to arrive at a timely manner. The East doors will remain open until 8:10. Breakfast will be served around 8:15. I encourage you to park in the large parking lot on the east side of the building. There is limited number of spaces available (if needed) in the front of the building. However, we would appreciate reserving these for parents of infants and children with disabilities. Please drive cautiously near the ELC, as there are usually small children in the area. Dismissal will occur in the afternoons between 2:15-2:30. Please enter through the lobby door. Parking is the same as for morning drop off. Please make sure to sign your child in/out each day.

In addition to center paperwork, you will need to provide proof of your child's immunizations. You may request this document from your pediatrician's office. It is necessary to have your up to date immunization record on file at the ELC for your child to attend class. If your child has a developmental delay, there is additional paperwork to be completed. A medical form for the OT/PT Evaluations/Services must be signed by a medical provider **yearly**. This is a requirement of the OT/PT licensing board.

I hope this document will assist you in becoming aware of the policies and procedures of the ELC. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions and/or concerns throughout this year.

Again, thank you for sharing your precious children with us each day and welcome to the UAH Early Learning Center.

Deana Aumalis, MA

Director, UAH Early Learning Center

## NAEYC 10.B.08

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the University of Alabama in Huntsville Early Learning Center! The ELC is an integral part of the College of Education. Please review this handbook in order to understand the program's operations, policies, and procedures. The program strives to further UAH's mission to explore, discover, create, and communicate knowledge, while educating individuals in leadership, innovation, critical thinking, and civic responsibility and inspiring a passion for learning. In this respect, the ELC offers a site for:

- Quality educational programming for young children
- Training of student teachers in early childhood education/special education
- Observation and interpretation of human growth and development
- Research designed and implemented by UAH faculty and students to further the knowledge base in such areas as social interaction, language development, cognitive development, and early childhood curriculum
- Community service in the form of early education and care, parenting programs, and in-service teacher education/training

### **UAH Early Learning Center Mission Statement**

The mission of the UAH ELC is to:

- Provide exemplary services based on recommended practices to young children with diverse abilities and to their families
- Offer instructional opportunities through collaboration with various academic units in higher education
- Engage in research that positively influences practices in the field of early childhood education and early childhood special education at the local, state, and national levels
- Interface with the community through outreach activities
- Disseminate information and provide technical assistance to other community-based agencies
- Affect policy and systems change at the local, state, and national levels

## NAEYC 2.A.01, 10.A.01, 10.B.

### **Philosophy & Goals**

The philosophy and goals of the ELC are to (a) provide family-centered services designed to meet the individualized needs of all children and families; (b) provide a blend of educational and therapy services within the context of a developmentally appropriate curriculum; and (c) prepare children for their next educational environment.

The theoretical frameworks of Erikson, Piaget, and Vygotsky provide a guide around the curriculum which is designed to facilitate each child's social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. The program's philosophy is based on the following concepts:

- Children construct their understanding of their world through active involvement and interaction with people and materials
- Play, exploration, and experimentation are the major vehicles for learning
- Children benefit from making choices in a stimulating and age-appropriate planned environment

- Children learn best in an environment which promotes acceptance, trust, initiative, and decision-making

The UAH Early Learning Center adheres to the philosophy and recommended practices of both early childhood education and early childhood special education.

The philosophy of the UAH Early Learning Center is based on the following premises:

1. Services are family-centered with particular emphasis placed on the family as the primary decision-maker for each child.
2. The assessment process is dynamic, ongoing, and linked to instruction. It includes multiple sources and settings.
3. Services are designed around an individualized plan consisting of goals based on the concerns of the family, priorities, and resources as well as the child's strengths, needs, and expectations of their next environment.
4. Services offered vary in intensity and structure based on the individual and group needs of the children as well as the input of their families.
5. Children's development is promoted in all areas including gross and fine motor skills, independence, cognitive skills, social and emotional skills, and communication (both receptive and expressive).
6. Therapy services (physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, music therapy) are provided within the context of the educational environment using an integrated approach. Therapy goals are educationally relevant and are implemented collaboratively by the therapists and teaching staff.
7. The foundation of the learning environment and activities is based on general early childhood guidelines, which are blended with recommended practices from early childhood special education.
8. Specially designed instruction, curricular adaptations, and modifications are embedded into the classroom's daily activities.
9. The curriculum is designed to foster children's cognitive abilities, improve communication skills, and to focus on fostering skills of self-confidence, self-esteem, independence and curiosity.
10. The program and curriculum address functional objectives that support the children in their current environment, in the transition from one classroom to another, and in the promotion to other educational environments.

[NAEYC 10.B.03, 10.F.01, 10.F.02, 10.F.03, 10.F.05](#)

#### **Program Outcomes**

A combination of numerous initiatives and protocols will be implemented to measure the program outcomes and to determine needed procedures for sustaining a high quality program. Evidence will include policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. A report of the annual evaluation findings will be available to families, staff and administration.

**Child and Family Outcomes**

The program strives to further the UAH mission to explore, discover, create, and communicate knowledge, while educating individuals in leadership, innovation, critical thinking, and civic responsibility and inspiring a passion for learning. In this respect, the program offers a site for developing quality education programs for young children, training student teachers in early childhood education/special education, observing and interpreting human growth and development, and providing early childhood programs to the community. Program staff will use a variety of formal and informal strategies to become acquainted with and learn from parents about their family structure, their preferred child-rearing practices, religion, and any additional information families wish to share about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the following initiatives are explored with children and their families:

- Staff understands the characteristics and roles of developmentally appropriate early childhood education practices by identifying diverse needs, interests and abilities of young children and their families
- Reflection and identification of strategies that represent developmentally appropriate practices for the child by learning and applying knowledge in various early childhood settings
- Recognizing and supporting the home-school communication and collaboration as a strategy for building mutual trust and respect
- Use of multiple sources of data collection to assess children's development and learning, and in evaluating the effectiveness of the program
- Active utilization of information about families to adapt the program environment, curriculum, and teaching methods to better serve the families, and UAH students, faculty, and staff
- Staff participates in community and cultural events, concerts, storytelling activities, performances, and other events designed for children and their families to better understand the cultural backgrounds of children, families, and the community. Staff provides support and information to family members who are legally responsible for the care and well-being of a child within the ELC.
- Staff establishes intentional practices and interactions designed to foster strong reciprocal relationships with families and students from the first contact and maintains those practices
- Staff ensures that all families, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious, and cultural background, gender, abilities, or preferred language are included in all aspects of the program, as well as volunteer opportunities; which include and consider families' interests and skills and the needs of the staff
- Staff engages with families to learn from their knowledge of their child's interest, their approaches to learning, the child's developmental needs, and to learn about their concerns and goals for their children. This information is incorporated into ongoing classroom assessment, development and planning curriculum.
- Staff uses a variety of formal and informal methods to communicate with families about the program philosophy and curriculum objectives, including educational goals and effective strategies used by families to promote their children's learning.

- Staff uses a variety of methods such as family orientations, small group meetings, individual conversations, and written questionnaires, to provide staff with input from families about curriculum activities throughout the year.

### **Program Governance**

The UAH Early Learning Center is a model program for the education of young children that is affiliated with the College of Education at The University of Alabama in Huntsville, a state funded institution of higher education. The UAH ELC Programs are led by a director who reports to the Dean of the College of Education. Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA) lease 6 classrooms, 4 for children between the ages of 3-5 and 2 Early Head Start Classrooms for children 6 weeks to 36 months.

The RISE School is a non-profit (501c3) under the University of Alabama in Huntsville's Foundation. Funding is not provided for special education services through the federal or state government. A special education referral can be made at age 2 ½ to the Local Education Agency for determination of any needed services to be provided through the LEA. The RISE School Director is available to assist any family within the ELC who would like assistance in obtaining information about the referral process or in seeking additional private therapy services in the Huntsville area.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville is committed to the Early Learning Center, the RISE School and PALS Program. UAH contributes dollar for dollar what each family contributes for the provision of quality educators, therapy services and the day-to-day operations of the ELC.

### **Supervision of Children**

The UAH ELC maintains the highest level of quality services for young children by maintaining appropriate adult/child ratios. UAH ELC follows the AL state childcare and NAEYC Guidelines for adult/child ratios. Daily classroom staff in the RISE School & PALS Program are assisted by therapists, floater aides, volunteers, and University students who may provide instruction and assistance in the classrooms to ensure that each child receives individual assistance/instruction as needed.

### **Our History**

In August 2013, RISE of Huntsville (2 classrooms & 8 students) found a more permanent place to call home on the campus of The University of Alabama in Huntsville. The UAH RISE School became an official service and outreach unit of the College of Education in October of 2014. Enrollment at the end of the 2014-15 school year was 16 students, most with identified special needs. Under the direction of a new Director and the opening of a before and after school care program, enrollment grew to 38 students at the end of 2015-16, with half identified as traditional learners.

With the vision of the Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Beth Quick, UAH opened the Early Learning Center in August 2016. The first year, the ELC opened to almost 100 children with an age range of 6 months to 6 years. Traditional learners and children with diagnosed disabilities learn alongside each other in all of the classes at the ELC.

In 2017, we served close to 200 children. In 2018, we will have an enrollment over 200 children.

The Early Learning Center has grown to include: Rise Model Inclusion Classrooms (7), Preschool Program for Children with Autism (PALS), Office of School Readiness First Class Pre-K for 4 year

olds (2), Community Action Partnership of North Alabama Head Start classrooms for ages 3-5 years (4), and Early Head Start Classrooms (2).

### **Description of Programs at the ELC**

#### **RISE Model Inclusion Classrooms (RISE School)**

The RISE Program is a nationally recognized model of best practice in the field of early childhood education and inclusive services. This model is dedicated to excellence in service, research, and teaching. RISE began in 1974 at the University of Alabama and is an acronym that stands for "Rural Infant Stimulation Environment." Dr. Loretta Holder-Brown was awarded a federal grant to establish a model for children under the age of 5 with diagnosed disabilities to learn and flourish alongside their more traditional learning peers. The Rise Model is a unique blend of the best practices in child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education, and integrated therapy. Integrated therapy is provided weekly by a licensed Speech, Physical, Occupational and Music therapist contracted by the University. Integrated therapy is included in the tuition. There are 8 RISE model programs across the United States. The purpose of the program is to optimally prepare children for their next educational environment and to support families within the community.

#### **Preschool Program for Children with Autism for Language & Social Skills (PALS)**

##### **First Class Pre-K 4 year old Classrooms**

A random selection is done in the spring each year. Children must be 4 years old by Sept. 1 of the school year and must not be 5 or older by Sept. 1. A lead teacher and auxiliary teacher maintain student teacher ratios at or below NAEYC and AL State Department of Human Resources recommendations. A wait list is maintained for this program. A grant renewal process is completed each year to maintain funding for both classrooms. Tuition is based on state recommendations, and tuition plan for the ELC has been approved through the State Department of Early Childhood Education. Tuition does not include before or after school care. Music Therapy will be provided for children in these classrooms.

The director determines the final selection for all programs. When considering an appropriate school setting for your child, consider your child's needs. The most appropriate placement can be different for each child.

##### **CAPNA Early Head Start and Head Start Classrooms**

Community Action Partnership of North Alabama completes intake interviews and placement in program following federal guidelines. Please contact, Rebecca Bibb or Deborah Cottingham for more information at (256)-355-7843.

##### **Before School & After School Care**

Both BSC and ASC are available for children in the RISE school, PALS Program, and First Class Pre-K Program. BSC and ASC are both housed in the ELC. Please notify the Director if you would like for your child to attend the BSC or ASC Program. There is an enrollment form in the registration packet and can also be found online. Hours for Before school care are 7:00-7:45 and After School

Care is 2:30-5:30. **In the event of inclement weather, ELC Policies described in this handbook will be followed. If for any reason school is dismissed early, ASC will be cancelled.**

BSC is staffed with Teacher Assistants that work in our RISE Classrooms. After School Care is staffed with a Lead After School Care teacher and classroom assistants.

## **Tuition and Fees**

### **RISE SCHOOL TUITION**

Families are required to complete a registration packet and pay a registration or application fee of \$50 dollars per child enrolled. In order to facilitate a smooth operation of the program and to ensure equitable treatment for all families, the following policies and procedures are identified and carefully followed: Children are selected for enrollment in order of the earliest date of received application, and by factors related to the teaching and research mission of the program. The program is open to all children regardless of race, color, creed, need, or religious affiliation. Children are assigned to groups based on the child's developmental needs, teaching and research requirements of the program, and available space. Siblings of children previously enrolled are given first preference in the program. The director determines the final selection for all programs. When considering an appropriate school setting for your child, consider your child's needs. The most appropriate placement can be different for each child.

Tuition is required from families of all children. There is an annual tuition for children based on their age at time of enrollment and classroom placement. The annual tuition is divided into 12 equal installments. Please see the tuition chart for 2018-19 tuition rates. Tuition is not reduced during school breaks, family vacations, summer months, schedule adjustments or absences. Tuition is based on your child's classroom (ratio) and is to be paid on the first of each month. Please refer to the Tuition Chart for 2018-19 tuition rates. **A late fee of \$25 will be charged to your account after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month.**

In the event that tuition is not paid by the last day of the month, termination of enrollment will be enacted unless arrangements have been made with the University. There is no late charge for the month of August. **You are responsible to pay for months of June & July to retain your current enrollment status. IF you withdraw for the summer months, you are subject to be placed on the wait list for the following fall.**

### **PALS Program TUITION**

Families are required to complete a registration packet and pay a registration / application fee of \$50 per child enrolled. In order to facilitate a smooth operation of the program and to ensure equitable treatment for all families, the following policies and procedures are identified and carefully followed: Children are selected for enrollment in order of the earliest date of received application, and by factors related to the teaching and research mission of the program. The program is open to all children regardless of race, color, creed, need, or religious affiliation. Children are assigned to classes based on the child's developmental needs, teaching, and research requirements of the program, and available space. The director determines the final selection for all classrooms and placements within the PALS Program. When considering an appropriate school setting for your child, consider your child's needs. The most appropriate placement can be different for each child.

Tuition is required from families of all children enrolled. Tuition is \$14,400 yearly. **The annual tuition is divided into 12 equal installments.** Tuition is not reduced during school breaks, family vacations, summer months, schedule adjustments or absences. Tuition is based on your child's classroom (ratio), specialized therapies for this program, individualized instruction and is to be paid on the first of each month. Tuition for the PALS Class is \$1200/month. **A late fee of \$25 will be charged to your account after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month.** In the event that tuition is not paid by the last day of the month, termination of enrollment will be enacted unless arrangements have been made with the University. There is no late charge for the month of August. You are responsible to pay for months of June & July to retain your current enrollment status.

### **FIRST CLASS PRE-K PROGRAM**

Tuition is required from families of all children enrolled in the classroom from year 2 of the grant and on. Both of our ELC First Class Classrooms require tuition. The annual tuition is made in 9 equal installments, August - May. Tuition is not reduced during school breaks, family vacations, schedule adjustments or absences. Tuition is based on state recommendations, and tuition plan for the ELC has been approved through the State Department of Early Childhood Education. Tuition does not include before or after school care.

**A late fee of \$25 will be charged to your account after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month.** In the event that tuition is not paid by the last day of the month, termination of enrollment will be enacted unless arrangements have been made with the University. There is no late charge for the month of August. **This program is not available in June & July.** If you wish to enroll in the RISE classrooms for summer months, please notify the director no later than March 1, 2019. We will do our best to accommodate summer placements, but can not guarantee a placement for the months of June and July. Parents who would like a summer placement will be notified of availability by March 30, 2019.

The charge for Before Care is \$80 per month (per student) and After Care is \$200 per month (per student). **Please be on time to pick up your child no later than 5:30 pm.** Late charges may apply if you are not on time for pick up.

### **BEFORE SCHOOL CARE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE TUITION**

Before Care is \$80 per month (per student) and After Care is \$200 per month (per student). **Please be on time to pick up your child no later than 5:30 pm.** Late charges may apply if you are not on time for pick up.

Before School & After School Care payments need to be made separately from tuition. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience, but it is necessary for accounting to maintain accurate records.

### **Online Tuition Payments**

Online payments, through the UAH website, can be made for registration, BSC, ASC, and tuition. There is a 3% charge on credit card online payments. Please see the financial manager for information on how to implement a monthly bank draft without incurring any additional fees.

### **Operating Hours and Services**

The UAH Early Learning Center/PALS Program/Rise School's yearlong schedule is best practice for young children. It is closely aligned with the schedule of local school systems and the University. **All children are expected to attend the program year-round.**

### **Attendance**

The projected days of operation for each year are supplied in advance to allow parents to plan alternative childcare options when needed. Attendance is very important for your child. We do understand that some absences are unavoidable (i.e. illness, doctor appointments, etc.). However, unexcused absences (absences without proper notification) should be limited to **10 or less per calendar year**. Tardies are given for any child that arrives after 8:25 or leaves before 2:15. Three tardies are considered an unexcused absence. Consistent lateness or early check out is not acceptable, your child misses valuable teaching time and you could be subject to disenrollment if lateness, absences or early check out becomes a pattern.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION BY PROGRAM:**

Early Head Start: 8:00-3:00 Monday-Friday

Head Start: 8:00-2:00 Monday-Friday

First Class: 8:00-2:30 Monday-Friday (180 days/year)

PALS Class: 8:00-2:30 Monday-Friday (12 month program)

RISE Classes: 8:00-2:30 Monday-Friday (12 month program)

### **NAEYC 10.B.08, 10.D.06**

### **Parking**

There is limited number of spaces available if needed in the front of the building. Please limit parking in these spaces to parents of infants and children with disabilities. Please drive cautiously, as there are usually small children in the area.

The parking lot on the EAST side of the building is designated for parent parking.

Parking BSC/ASC is on the west side of the building.

### **MORNING ROUTINE:**

Please park in the EAST parking lot in a designated parking space. Please know that there are limited parking spots. IF you have a handicapped tag/sticker, you may park in the front of the ELC. There are designated handicapped parking spots provided in the east parking lot as well. Please limit front parking to infant parents and parents of students with disabilities.

Doors will open daily at 7:50. Teachers begin instruction at 8:00. East hall parent doors will remain open until 8:10. If you arrive after 8:10, you will have to enter the building through the front lobby doors. If you arrive after 8:20/8:30 you will need to sign your child in at the front desk and a staff member will assist your child to their classroom.

### **AFTERNOON ROUTINE:**

For afternoon pick up, please enter the lobby doors. Pick up will begin at 2:15/2:20 and all children must be picked up by 2:30.

Please arrive no later than 2:35 for afternoon pick up. Teachers and Teacher Assistants have additional duties they must attend to after children leave for the day. A parent is considered late

if they arrive for pick up after 2:35.

Please adhere to the specific times of pick up for your child. Federally and State funded programs are specific in the amount of instruction time that must be provided on a daily basis. We have attempted to alleviate some congestion with parking in the afternoon by staggering dismissal times.

Please do not stop to visit other classrooms during pick-up or drop off times at the ELC. Teachers and Staff are busy with preparing for and implementing instructional activities.

### **Late Arrival/Early Check Out**

If you arrive after the east parent doors have closed for the morning, please sign your child in at the front desk and a staff person (if available) will take your child to their classroom. This allows for instructional time to be undisturbed as the teachers and children start their day.

If you must check your child out before the end of the day, please park in the east parking lot and walk to the lobby door entrance. You will need to notify staff at the front desk of your child's name and teacher. The staff person will call down to the room to notify the teacher and either the teacher/assistant or staff person will bring your child to you in the lobby. This allows for seamless transitions for the child and less distractions in the classroom routine and uninterrupted teaching time for the children.

You may be asked to provide a photo id for student check out. This is for safety purposes.

### **Late Pick-up Fees**

The program will assess late fees to families/parents that do not pick up their children before the closing time of 2:35 p.m. (or at 5:30 p.m. for those enrolled in after school care). A fee of \$10.00 will be assessed beginning at five minutes after closing (2:40/5:35) and for every five minutes or portion thereof until the child is picked up. The clock in the classroom (synchronized with the UAH computer network clock) will be the official time for assessing these fees. The family/parent will be notified in writing and the assessed fee will appear on the next statement.

Please honor the pick-up time by arriving 10 minutes early to allow for a conversation with the teacher and gathering your child's belongings before our closing time. Teachers and Teacher Assistants have duties to complete after students leave for the day. Please be mindful of their time.

If a family/parent arrives early for drop off or pick up, they are asked to wait in the lobby until the hall doors are open.

### **PROGRAM ADMISSION**

All registration and health forms, including an updated immunization card must be completed and turned in to the director prior to your child's first day of school.

The contents of the packet include:

- Application for Enrollment
- Developmental History
- ELC Permission to Access Student Records
- Photo/Video Releases

Emergency Release Form  
Child Pickup Form  
Family Handbook form  
Tuition Agreement  
Immunization Record  
Medication Forms (if any medicines are to be administered at school)  
Before & After School Care Form  
Permission to Evaluate for Special Services (if needed)  
Physician Release for OT/PT Evaluation/Services (if needed)

Immunization Cards must be kept current and enrollment can only be maintained if card is current. If immunization records are allowed to expire, your child will be suspended from school until immunizations are updated.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

Children's educational and medical records are confidential and are kept in a locked file cabinet in the ELC Office/Director's Office. Anyone reviewing a file must sign in/out on the *Access to Student Records* form. Records may only be released to outside agencies with written authorization from the parent or legal guardian. Employees will not discuss confidential information about children and/or their families in the presence of other children and/or their families.

### **Directory Information**

Addresses, phone numbers, enrollment, and attendance information cannot be released without written parental consent. This includes releasing contact information to other parents in the classroom.

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

Parents may withdraw their child from the program at any time by giving a 30 day written notice to the Director. Please see form section at the back of the handbook. If a child withdraws after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, the tuition is due for that month before leaving the center.

NAEYC 3.F.03, 7.A.02, 10.F.04 7.A.11-7.A.14, 7.B.01-7.B.04, 7.C.01

### **Family/Parent Information, Involvement, and Committees**

Family/parent information, involvement, and committee sections can be found and communicated to families/parents through the Family/Parent Handbook, PoPPs Group, email, phone conversations or direct contact with teaching staff, administrative secretary, or the director. Staff members use a variety of mechanisms such as family conferences, surveys, and daily written and verbal communication to promote dialogues with families.

Families/parents are invited to an Open House before the start of the school year in August. This year our open house will be August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 4:30-5:30. Parents of Infants and Toddlers will be scheduled to meet with individual teachers that afternoon. During the Open House, parents meet the director, the teachers, and staff. Children and families have an opportunity to explore the

classroom environment together at the Open House, familiarizing both the children and families with the anticipated routine of the day.

Teachers can answer parents' questions about the school day and parents can inform teachers about their child's routines and experiences. The program values family/parent involvement. Communication between families/parents and the program is an essential element to a child's successful participation and development. Staff encourages families/parents to raise concerns and work collaboratively with them to find mutual satisfying solutions that the staff can incorporate into the classroom practices.

### **ORIENTATION**

An orientation is scheduled for new families for August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:00pm in the ELC library. Returning parents who wish to attend may do so as well. An additional orientation is scheduled for 5:30pm also on August 3<sup>rd</sup> in the ELC library.

First Class Pre-K students & parents will have a MANDATORY orientation scheduled for August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:15 in the ELC library with open house to follow.

### **Parents of Present & Past Students (PoPPs)**

Our PoPPs group meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 5:30 in the library. This is a parent driven group and a way to be involved in the Center. This is the group that assists teachers in planning family events (Fall Festival, Dr. Seuss' Birthday Party, etc.) and local restaurant night fundraisers for the Center.

Families have an opportunity to volunteer in the classroom or participate in special activities. The PoPPs Group has committees that provide numerous services to the program (i.e., develop special projects and help maintain accreditation standards), and assist with curriculum development. The PoPPs Group conducts monthly meetings in which staff and families can meet to identify program planning, events, and ongoing program operations/improvements. Family members are included as active participants in making decisions to improve the program. Such collaboration and shared decision making opportunities allow the staff and families to build relationships of trust, support, and enthusiasm for program changes.

### **Commitment to the ELC**

Parents and family members are encouraged to participate as volunteers in the operations and activities of the school. Families will be informed of volunteer opportunities as they arise. Fundraisers, including School Spirit Nights at local restaurants, may occur periodically throughout the school year. Families/parents participate in program evaluation and planning. During parent/teacher conferences, parents are asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in meeting their child's and family's needs, and are invited to join the teachers in setting goals and making plans for activities and services to meet them. Families/parents are welcome any time at the program. Families may visit any area of the facility at any time during the program's regular hours of operation as specified by the procedures of the facility. Families/parents are welcome to observe their child or visit the classroom. Families/parents may spend several minutes doing an activity with their child in the classroom at the beginning of the day before leaving between 8:00 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Departure begins at 2:15/2:30 each day. Families/parents are asked to assist their child in collecting their items and then exiting the classroom and building in a timely manner

due to limited spacing in the parking lot and building. In addition, families/parents are invited to attend classroom parties, fieldtrips, and/or share books, expertise, or interests with the children.

### **PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

The program asks all parents to follow the example the teachers set in how to interact with the children in the classroom. These include following the children's lead in play, responding to their interests, focusing on the children, following the rules, and handling conflicts that arise between children. Parents are asked to let teachers help children resolve conflicts. Parents whose behaviors in the classroom are disrupting the class or threatening the children are asked to leave. Such behaviors could include, but are not limited to, allowing children to disregard class routines and rules, interrupting instruction time during group time, center time, or daily routine, and allowing unsafe situations at the Early Learning Center/RISE School. The program staff uses a variety of techniques to negotiate differences and difficulties that arise in their interactions with family members.

Families/parents are asked to contact the classroom teacher and then the director if they have concerns or questions about a situation. If an agreeable solution is not achieved, then the situation will be taken to the Dean of the College of Education. Staff members will arrange to use techniques in a language the family can understand and comprehend. The program provides many opportunities for parents/families to meet with one another on a formal and informal basis, work together on projects to support the program, and learn from and provide support for each other during the year. Staff works with families to plan events that are educational, informative, and social outings. Any Food items brought to be shared during the program's daily hours or requested by the program must be store bought or prepared in a licensed commercial kitchen. Occasional parent education activities or other social events, related to classroom topic studies, are planned and provided for family involvement, and family availability is a consideration as part of this planning. The program classroom and playground environment is intentionally designed to welcome and stimulate adult interaction at the child's level. The environment is set up to be a children's world, and the important adults in their lives are encouraged to come in and participate. The program avoids creating two worlds, one that is at the adult level with conversations occurring over the heads of children or directed down at them, and the second at the lower level reserved for children interacting with each other and directing conversation up to the adults. Once inside the classroom or on the playground, adult-to-adult conversations are pleasant, but brief. The program's focus is on the children. The program staff delights in friendship that forms among families in the classrooms, but encourages lengthy and lively adult conversation to take place in the hallways.

Families/parents are made aware of the program's system for formal and informal assessment of children's progress and research opportunities through the Family/Parent Handbook. The information provides the purposes of the assessment, procedures used for assessment, procedures for gathering family input and information, timing of assessments, the way assessment results or information will be shared with families, and the way the program will use the information. The teachers are specialized in early childhood education methods and theories. If a staff suspects that a child has a developmental delay or other special needs, the director will be contacted by the staff member and an observation, documentation, and discussion about the child's growth and development will take place with the director and staff member. The teachers are not specialized to diagnose developmental delays or other special needs. Therefore, the director will communicate to families in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner and provide documentation and explanation for the concern, and suggest next steps and information about

program and outside resources to families/parents. We ask that you supervise your children in the hallway so they remember our hallway behavior rules and disruption to other departments sharing the hallway is minimal.

### **Communication**

Communication between the staff and families is very vital in providing and meeting children's needs. Daily communication will assist in providing an environment that accommodates children's desires, abilities, and endeavors. It will offer teachers the opportunity to connect with families while understanding and modifying the daily structure to meet the diverse situations within the classroom and families. Communication can be defined or observed as, but not limited to the following:

- Brightwheel mobile app
- Daily verbal communication.
- Daily written communication logs/journals.
- Flyers, newsletters, phone, or email that addresses issues or concerns.
- Classroom displays, classroom books, or shared photographs.
- Addressing family concerns about a child's differing abilities, temperaments, activity levels, cognitive or social development.
- Parent-teacher conferences or meetings.

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers regularly and check backpacks daily. Families are provided with daily notes. Daily activities such as potty times, nap lengths, and food consumption will be logged into the Brightwheel mobile app for parents to view. Teachers notify parents, in writing, of significant or special events that are happening at the ELC. Parents are encouraged to send notes to school concerning special events at home.

**Telephoning is the least effective method for parents to communicate with teachers during the instructional day.** However, parents can leave messages on the teacher's voice mail, which will be reviewed at nap time and after 2:45 p.m. Calls will be returned after the children leave school each day. If parents have an emergency, the main number **(256-824-4750)** can be used to get messages to the classrooms. The best time to talk with teachers is after 2:45 p.m. when the children have left for the day.

The Director will also send monthly newsletters. The ELC also has a Facebook page for events and happenings to generate public awareness. We have an open door policy for families and you are encouraged to visit often to observe your child in their school setting. Please schedule observations/visits in advance with the Director. We want to avoid scheduling several parents on the same day due to spatial limitations in our classrooms. Parent and teacher communication is highly encouraged.

Families will be provided with a daily schedule. Parents and teachers work together to determine a plan for providing positive behavioral supports, toilet training routines, etc. Parent's beliefs and preferences are respected.

Transition activities are also completed when children move from room to room each year, including a transition notebook when they move on to "big school".

**Grievance Procedures**

It is the program's desire and policies to provide developmentally appropriate requirements and criteria that meet and exceed NAEYC and AL DHR requirements. The program's policy is to collaborate with parents when a difference of opinion, value and/or belief is identified with professional practices and/or strategies. The optimum goal is for the child to participate successfully at the program in all of his/her endeavors. Families/parents are asked to speak with their child's teacher if they have a concern. If the concern cannot or is not met by the teacher, the concern should be taken to the director. The director will set a conference with the parents to discuss their concerns, and will be followed with a conference with the teacher as applicable. The program's goal is to meet the needs of the children and their parents. If the director cannot or does not address the concern to the satisfaction of the parents, then the concerns will be referred to the Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Beth Quick.

**Services Discontinued/Termination**

The program reserves the right to discontinue services immediately to children under the following circumstances:

- The families/parents fail to pay tuition and fees within the designated time periods.
- The families/parents fail to reasonably cooperate with the program in the provision of educational services to their child, such as but not limited to, daily routines, implementation of curriculum, discipline and/or guidance, and maintaining a positive disposition.
- The child is dangerous to self or others due to delays/disabilities, behaviors, medical situations, or any psychological situation.
- After appropriate evaluation by staff, specialists, family/parents, or Director, it is decided that another educational setting would be more appropriate to meet the special needs of the child.
- The families/parents does not adhere to the program's policies and procedures; which include but is not limited to the following: completion and updated records, confidentiality, observations, arrival and departure routines, medical situations, special services, conferencing schedules, participation, usage of appropriate communication devices, supporting classroom routines, or maintaining a positive disposition.
- Any engagement by families/parents involving acts of intimidation (bullying), harassment or abusive behavior, assaults, serious threats, or acts of violence. An act of such behavior includes, but not limited to written or spoken communication creating alarm or concern, fear of immediate bodily harm, retaliation to staff, or when a stress-related situation develops/occurs due to actions of families/parents; whether verbal or written.
- Children who arrive after 8:30 a.m. on a regular basis will be dismissed from the program. Regular basis is defined as more than once a week over a period of at least a month without the consent of a doctor or director.

**Admission for Students with Identified Special Needs**

Upon admission to the school, families are required to complete an admission packet and pay fees as stated above. Additional admission forms and releases must be completed during the first 2

weeks of school for children with identified special needs. These additional forms may include:

- Permission to Evaluate
- PT/OT Permission to Test/Provide Therapy (signed by physician)
- Permission to Provide Services

The ELC offers a number of services to families of children with disabilities that may include special instruction, music therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech/language therapy using an integrated/consultative service delivery model. The teachers and teacher assistants, under the supervision of the therapists, deliver many of these services through a trans-disciplinary approach throughout the school day.

Recommendations are also provided to families for carry-over in the home and other natural environments. Early Intervention services may be provided during the School Day and should be scheduled with the individual teachers based on their class schedule. Based on individual needs of children, families may be provided information about supplemental direct therapies available with our contracted therapists and therapists in the community.

[NAEYC 2.A.01-2.A06, 8.B.01-8.B.05](#)

### **Program Curriculum**

The ELC offers a comprehensive curriculum that supports and enhances all areas of children's development: social-emotional, intellectual, language, and physical. Based on the belief that children learn best through play, the curriculum reflects the guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in its "Developmentally Appropriate Practice Statement." Copies of this statement are available in the director's office and parent resource area.

Additionally, the program curriculum supports children's acquisition of skills and knowledge as outlined in the Alabama State Department of Early Childhood Education's Standards for Preschool Children. The curriculum is individualized for each child through a partnership between families/parents and teachers. Families/parents and teachers use both formal and informal means of gathering information about the children's interests, needs, and assessing each child's skills and knowledge. With this information, families/parents and teachers set goals for each child.

Modifications are made to the curriculum to support all children's learning opportunities, including those who live with a disability or special needs. The program curriculum integrates content, concepts, and activities in all areas of the children's development. Key areas of content include social and self-help skills, social studies, language arts and literacy, science, number and math, creative arts, technology, motor skill development, and health and safety. Early math, reading, and writing activities are introduced as the children gain the developmental readiness necessary to acquire these academic skills.

Every part of the children's day is utilized in curriculum. Routines such as mealtime provide many opportunities for children to learn to organize a task - like setting the table becomes practicing math skills, learning to be a member of a community by taking turns passing dishes of food around the table, contributing to a conversation during lunch, developing a taste for new foods, recalling or telling a story of a morning activity, and more. The classrooms are labeled so that as children

select materials and put them away, they follow directions depicted in symbols/labels on shelves as a precursor to learning to read. These are just a few ways teachers use routines to offer learning experiences. The classroom environment is carefully planned and evolved according to the teachers' knowledge of each child's growth and development. The classrooms are divided into seven or more interest centers, based on the *Creative Curriculum*, in which the teachers select materials that children use individually or in collaboration with peers and adults. This helps them to acquire new skills, gain new knowledge, or practice and extend existing knowledge and skills. Teachers provide a balance of teacher-directed, child-initiated, and collaborative learning activities throughout the day; however, most of the time, children are free to select the activities in which they want to participate. Teachers participate in children's play in order to support the work children are doing. By listening to children, teachers discover the ways in which children make sense of their world. It is the teacher's responsibility to monitor children's choices, to extend and enhance their activities, to support growth, development, and acquisition of skills and knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. The classroom interest centers are the primary instructional tools that teachers use to support children's learning. The seven centers include blocks and construction, dramatic play, science and sensory, math, creative arts, language arts and reading, and fine motor skills and writing. Music and motor development are also a part of the curriculum.

Teachers identify children's prior knowledge of a subject and set up activities that extend their conceptual understanding of the topic. Then through play and interaction with the materials and activities, the children construct ideas about their world. The materials selected for the interest centers are designed to support children's learning and development. Dramatic play supports language development and social skills as children negotiate with peers to develop themes with assigned roles and a story line. In "veterinary clinic," the children bring stories from personal experiences or experiences provided by the teachers that are then translated into a sequence of events to dramatize with their peers. This requires developing the ability to retell events in a sequential and understandable way; selecting or constructing props to support the play theme; working with peers to organize the play and solve problems; and working with the teacher to document the play in pictures, constructions, and written word. A play theme such as this can also be used by the teacher to introduce science concepts about animal care and health, and math concepts as animals are weighed and measured. Teacher facilitation of the children's play and work in the interest centers brings about some of the most significant learning to occur in the classrooms. Learning to read and write, and understand number and math concepts are important goals for all children. The program curriculum reflects the belief that children learn these skills best within the context of meaningful activities (versus isolated drill), and that certain developmental tasks need to be mastered before these academic skills are acquired. Reading to children regularly and conversing with them about books and events helps children build the vocabulary and language skills necessary for reading. As children's fine motor skills develop and their ability to represent their ideas symbolically through drawings and constructions becomes more complex, they are ready to write. Activities are planned within a context that is meaningful to the child (for example - planning a shopping trip to purchase food for a party) and that supports the child's acquisition of the concepts of print, letters, sounds, and such concepts such as weighing and measuring, and counting out money. Teachers provide many activities in which children learn the skills and concepts that they are developmentally ready to learn.

UAH ELC/RISE Classrooms, Head Start Early Head Start use the Creative Curriculum, which is a web-based curriculum program that is matched to the National Association of Educating Young Children Standards. It is suitable for both typically developing students and students who have special needs. The Nationally recognized, High Scope Curriculum is used in the First Class 4 year old rooms. This curriculum is very child centered and uses the "plan-do-review" schema for children to be allowed choices during their learning experience. PALS Class students engage in individualized intervention plans based on the state pre-k standards. PALS Class uses the researched based curriculum STAR, Discrete trial teaching, generalization, modeling to increase skills of children enrolled in this program. All classroom teachers use several ways to authentically assess child progress and use an online portfolio format, Teaching Strategies Gold. The portfolio contains work samples, projects, photographs, therapy notes, and daily or weekly notes, etc. Data is taken for students who have delays in developmental areas. Parent conferences are scheduled each semester (fall & spring) for all students.

[NAEYC 1.A.02, 4.A.01-4.A.03, 4.B.01-4.B.06, 4.D.04, 4.E.02, 4.E.04-4.E.07, 7.A.02](#)

### **Assessment and Evaluation Plan**

Assessment and evaluation are integral parts of a strong early childhood program. The program uses multiple sources of data collection to assess children's development and learning, and to evaluate the program. All assessments, evaluations, and communication with families about their child's growth and development are sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language. The purpose of assessment and evaluation is to:

- Conduct health and developmental screenings of children and make appropriate referrals for further assessment as indicated.
- Identify children's interests and needs.
- Describe children's level of development and scope of knowledge.
- Discover children's approaches to learning.
- Plan curriculum and choose instructional strategies.
- Plan an environment that best supports learning.
- Improve the program and instructional practices.
- Communicate with parents and the community.
- Use language and familiar settings for the children to obtain meaningful and accurate results.
- Progress reports are provided for parents at least on a quarterly basis, written reports at least two times a year, and at any time by parent request.
- Some programs at the ELC conduct home visits prior to the beginning of the school year to collect vital information pertaining to families' ethnicity, religion, home language, culture, and family structure.

All children with special needs are determined eligible for services under state guidelines by a team including the child's parents, center director, teacher, speech therapist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist. Using the arena format - the families provide input to the entire evaluation process as the child is evaluated in a natural environment. Children are evaluated in seven developmental areas: cognition, gross motor, fine motor, social/emotional, adaptive, receptive language, and expressive language.

UAH is not a Local Education Agency (LEA), however, specific therapy needs are determined in the RISE and PALS Programs based on state guidelines.

The children who do not have special needs are administered a criterion-referenced developmental checklist and/or screening instrument after enrollment. For all children ages 3 and up, the ELPP (Early Learning Progress Profile) which is a progress monitoring tool which aligns with the Alabama State Standards for Pre-School aged children, is completed.

A plan (IIP-Individualized Intervention Plan) is developed for a child with special needs. For children ages birth-3 and Individual Family Service Plan is developed. IFSP meetings can include outside service personnel from other Early Intervention State Agencies to ensure a comprehensive and coherent plan is made by all service providers. This plan is reviewed every 6 months and adjusted as needed. The transition of students with special needs from Early Intervention services to School System services that occurs at age 3 is facilitated by a series of meetings to be initiated around the time the child is 30 months of age. This process is meant to facilitate a smooth transition from one system to the next. The Director is available to attend outside service coordination meetings. An Individualized Education Program is developed for those children age 3 and up. IIP meetings are held at least annually, but may be called at any time.

[NAEYC 4.D.04, 4.E.04, 4.E.06](#)

#### **Assessment Philosophy**

Assessment should be embedded in the practices of an early childhood program and should be conducted in partnership with parents and families. An authentic assessment is one that gathers data from natural observations and interactions with the child in familiar settings and with familiar adults. Assessment done at the program strives to be authentic. Assessment should be valid and reliable. The program selects assessment instruments and methods that best achieve the purposes of its assessment practices, using criteria for analyzing assessment data that are standardized or agreed upon by the field. Assessment data is understood to be only one source of knowledge about the child. Multiple sources are gathered and analyzed along with assessment data to determine a child's level/ability or need. Formal and informal sources of information are used before a referral is made for further evaluation. Parents are recognized as the expert of their child's growth and development, and given respect for their right to make decisions about their child's education and care. Families/parents are given information about the data gathered in assessment practices. The staff works closely with families/parents in achieving the best assessment method(s) that meet each individual child's needs. Assessment is on-going and is used to monitor children's progress and to inform practice. There are clear linkages between assessment and curriculum and program development.

[NAEYC 4.E.06, 4.E.07, 7.B.03, 7.C.08](#)

#### **Administration of Assessments and Evaluations**

Staff members will obtain written consent from families/parents before sharing information about a child with other relevant providers, agencies, or other programs. The program staff and other personnel administering instruments will obtain and maintain appropriate training for collecting/gathering data on individual children. The director will be responsible in approving and checking set credentials and/or requirements for in-house and outside agencies that are

administering instruments within the program. Results/reports will only be shared with parents and predetermined individuals for research projects.

#### NAEYC 4.E.02

##### **Assessment Timeline**

Additional intervention and/or resources are documented and followed up with the director and appropriate specialist.

Checklists are monitored continually as teachers assess and plan for learning. Summary checklists for children with special needs are given to parents every nine weeks. Parents receive written reports at least two times a year during parent/teacher conferences.

- Portfolios are on-going assessment tools and regularly used in planning. They are shared twice a year in parent conferences and available to parents and children to review at other times.
- ECERS is done annually in January or February. NAEYC accreditation is done every five years. Results are used to establish program improvement plans and teacher professional development goals.
- In April, assessment activities and instruments are evaluated by families/parents, teaching staff, specialist, and director.
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and NAEYC Accreditation Criteria
- Assessment is done on the environment, instructional practices, administration, and leadership.
- Assessment is conducted by the director; staff; and parents, faculty, and ECE students.
- Data is collected by observation, surveys of parents and staff, and review of documents.
- NAEYC accreditation assessment is done every five years and ECERS is done annually, except in NAEYC years.
- Results are used to develop program improvement plans and shared with parents and other stakeholders.

##### **Child & Family Information Sheets**

- Collect information from parent/guardian about child's developmental level.
- Establish information about child's abilities and interest.
- Establish rapport between teachers and families of children.
- Provides curriculum/program plans to meet children's needs/interest.

#### NAEYC 4.E.06, 4.E.07 10.B.08

##### **Family Education and Rights Privacy Act**

The program will ask for written permission from the parent in order to release any information from a child's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR & 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest.
- Other schools to which a student is transferring.

- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
- Accrediting organizations.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety-emergencies.
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system pursuant to specific state law.

Families/parents have the right to access their children's educational records. Requests to review the records should be made through the administrative office. Suspected violations of confidentiality should be reported promptly to the director.

### **Non-custodial parents and grandparents**

The right to information about a child, by non-custodial parent(s) and grandparent(s), is determined by court order and/or by the custodial parent(s). A copy of any custody papers issued by the court is to be kept on file in the office.

### **NAEYC 10.D.06**

#### **Attendance, Arrival and Exchanging Information**

Between 7:50 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. each day, one teacher per classroom is available to greet children and receive instructions for the care of each child. The other teacher is focused on the other children, helping them select activities and get their day started. The teachers rotate the greeting responsibilities. At 8:00 a.m. the program school day is in full swing, and the teachers need to focus on the children's activities. All children should arrive by 8:00 a.m. each day unless doctor appointments or other irregularly scheduled activities cause them to be late. Parents are asked to notify the program if a tardiness or absence occurs.

The school day begins at 8:00 sharp. All classrooms will start serving breakfast at this time and all students are expected to be present and ready to participate at that time. The arrival "window" is from 7:50-8:00. Arrivals after 8:15 are considered tardy and disruptive to the morning routine. Children who arrive after 8:30 may eat breakfast in the cafeteria under the supervision of a parent.

The teachers are engaged with the children at morning drop off and unavailable to conference with parents, except by appointment. The program's "instruction" may appear to be casual and interruptible from the outside, but classroom teachers and children are involved in complex interactions that require attention and focus. Children who habitually arrive after 8:30 a.m. interrupt and compromise the effectiveness of the other children's learning and the overall effectiveness of the program. Teachers gladly assist children's quick transition into the classroom on those days that a late arrival is unavoidable, but parents are asked to respect the integrity of the program and support it by making sure children arrive by 8:00 a.m. each morning. Additionally, parents who agree to enroll their child in the program make a commitment to join in the preparation of future early childhood educators, which is an important function of UAH. The UAH students in the classroom have course assignments in which they are asked to observe and plan activities for individual children or small groups of children. When a child is frequently absent, then the students have difficulty completing their assignments and children

miss out on individualized instruction. The program is designed for full-time regular enrollment, and frequent absences or tardiness may result in a recommendation that another program would better fit a family's schedule. Children **MUST** be accompanied by a parent or another designated adult to and from the classroom. Children are prohibited from entering the building alone at all times. For safety's sake, all children, including siblings and guests, must walk in the halls and be supervised at all times. Children are to walk in the hallways instead of running.

Parents are required to sign in their child by noting the time of arrival each day, providing any additional directions and naming the individual(s) picking up the child, which is a requirement by AL DHR and NAEYC.

NAEYC 10.B.08, 10.D.06

### **Departure and Exchanging Information**

The time between 2:20 p.m. and 2:35 p.m. is set aside for one of the teachers to be available to greet parents, quickly update parents on events in a child's day, and help children transition out of the classroom. All parents should be out of the classrooms by 2:40 unless a conference is scheduled prior to pick up time. We understand how important it is for parents to learn about their child's day, but classrooms are being used for after school care and teachers have additional duties to close out the school day. Families/parents are asked to arrive and assist the teacher or children in collecting their items and exiting the classroom and building in a timely manner, due to staff responsibilities and limited space within the parking lot and building. Limited time prevents teachers from conferencing with any one parent for more than a minute or two at the end of the day. When necessary, or desired, parents can ask the teacher to set an appointment for an extended conversation. If the teacher senses that the conversation needs to be extended at the end of the day, he/she may suggest scheduling another meeting time. Perhaps a scheduled telephone conversation can provide the opportunity to exchange more information about a child than can be accomplished in the brief period for conversations at the door. Communication between teachers and the parents of children enrolled in morning or after-school care can be addressed by sending a sealed note home, or to school, with the child.

During arrival and departure times, teachers do not initiate or encourage extensive discussions with parents about their concerns or observations of behavioral problems. It is inappropriate to have such conversations in a public place, especially in the presence of a child. Families/parents are encouraged to request a similar appointment for discussing or addressing their concerns. Children are always busy learning about themselves and gaining skills for negotiating social interactions. Many mistakes are made as children increase their skills and these are embraced as a normal sign of their developing social skills, which is part of the curriculum. Minor infractions are not a lasting concern as teachers concentrate on the strengths and accomplishments of each child. Extensive and/or continuous concerns or behavior problems are addressed by teachers contacting parents and setting a separate discussion time without children present. Parents are asked to follow suit and request a separate meeting time for discussing any of their concerns.

Children are released only to parents/guardians or another adult approved by the parent/guardian. Teachers are notified by parents and/or receptionists when another individual, other than the regular designated person, is to pick up a child. Permission to Pick Up forms must be filled out and kept on file in the office. The staff only releases children to those individuals listed on the Permission to Pick Up form after the parent has indicated on the daily sign in/sign out sheet that one of these individuals is picking up their child. The Pick Up Form should be completed by the child's

first day of school. The Authorization to adult picking up the child must present a valid photo ID if asked, and must be at least 18 years of age. Changes can be made the *Permission to Pick Up form* during the year. Please speak to the director or staff assistant for more information. Only parents or legal guardians can give individuals permission to pick up their child.

When parents/guardians notify the program by phone, secure information is requested to verify that the actual parent/guardian is providing the information. Voice mail instructions/directions cannot be followed unless confirmed. When necessary to call during the school day about a change, parents are asked to leave a call-back number so the message can be returned and validated. It is unacceptable for any individual, listed or unlisted, to present a handwritten note with instructions from a parent to pick up the child. Should a legal change of family status occur (divorce, legal separation), it is the responsibility of the divorced or separated parents to provide a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the director. UAH ELC will not be held responsible for failing to honor legal arrangements that are not notified. Families or Individuals should notify staff when they are leaving the building with a child, also signing them out. The information will be verified when the individual arrives to pick up your child from school. Should a need to furnish ELC staff with the person's name, phone number, and driver's license number- This child for the change in plans. For any individual not listed on the authorization form, parents will should phone the school to inform the ELC staff of the change and to allow them to prepare the child.

If emergency changes must be made, parents Families/Guardians and any individuals are to notify the teaching staff (or staff during after school care) anytime they are leaving the program with a child, as well as signing out and indicating the time of departure. All individuals must notify a teacher or afternoon care staff when they leave with a child, and sign out noting the time of departure. Children must be picked up by the designated closing time. Classroom staff has responsibilities which prohibit them from providing adequate supervision of children after program hours. A child's sense of security and trust becomes depleted when arrival times vary. Therefore, parents are asked to please be sure their child is picked up on time each day.

The Instructional day ends at 2:30.  
Please pick up your child promptly between 2:20-2:30.

At that time you must enter through the front lobby door. For security reasons, families must park on the east side of the building in the large parking lot and enter / exit the building through the front hall east doors or front lobby doors only. If you need to check your child out early for an appointment, please enter the lobby door. A staff member will get your child from their classroom and bring him/her to you in the lobby.

[NAEYC 5.A.01- 5.A.05, 10.B.08, 9.C.10, 10.D.01, 10.D.09](#)

### **Children's Health**

Information about children's health helps teaching staff plan activities to support their growth and development. At enrollment, families/parents are asked to submit a doctor's statement and provide information about special health needs that a child might have. A child's health information is kept

confidential. Only the information necessary for a child's care is shared with staff and student teachers who need to know. When families/parents provide the program with information about allergies, diet restrictions, or special health care needs, that information is shared with those individuals who provide care for the child. By regulation, some of it may be posted in the classroom so all adults who care for the child can be informed.

Children who have chronic health conditions or special developmental needs may need additional assistance. Families are asked to provide the program with written medical instructions from their health care provider for handling such conditions as asthma, orthopedic or sensory problems, seizures, and serious known allergies. Physicians or health care providers directions/instructions will be followed, if the child is accepted to the Center. Conditions that require regular medication or technology support will need to complete the appropriate forms, if accepted to the Center. The program works with families to ensure that a child receives the necessary protection and care. There is NOT a nurse on staff. However, all staff are trained in CPR and Basic First Aide.

[NAEYC 5.A.04, 9.A.01, 10.B.08, 10.D.01](#)

### **Illness Illnesses & Medication**

The family will be expected to notify the staff of any illness indicating an absence. Exclusion from school will be based on the needs of the sick child and the other children in the classroom. 26 In case of a communicable disease, and at the discretion of the director, other parents will be notified of the existence of the circumstances. In the event that a child is hospitalized for any reason (including emergency room visits), parents must obtain a release from the physician stating the child is healthy enough to return to school. A copy must be provided to the director before the child may return to school. Please try to manage your children's illnesses promptly and with consideration of the other children in their classroom. We make every attempt to practice good preventive measures such as careful hand washing and cleaning of toys and equipment.

We can give medication at school when necessary and when written permission is obtained and physician's signature (if prescription medication). All medication must be in the original bottle. Please do not send medications that are not properly labeled. All medications must be labeled with the child's first and last names, date filled, name of physician, expiration date or period of usage, manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label (with name and strength of medications), along with instructions regarding the administration and storage of the medicine.

Medications are overseen by our Director and staff members that are trained annually in the administration of medications to children. You must get medication dosages from your physician for an over-the-counter medication for a child under two years old. Over the counter medications must be sent in their original container with manufacturer's labels still attached. If your physician gives your child a sample bottle of medication, get a written dosage, from the physician at the time if it must be given at school. Please remember not to leave medications in your child's school bag as it can be accidentally opened by a child. The administration of all medication is documented. All medicines are kept in a locked container or cabinet in the office.

Parents must sign emergency treatment releases. Emergency procedures include:

- Notification of parents
- Notification of individuals specified by parent if parent cannot be reached

- Notification of emergency treatment services, if indicated.

**Children should not be in school if the following illnesses are present, or have been present for twenty-four hours:**

Strep Throat:	Exclusion until 24 hours after antibiotic initiated and no fever for 24 hours without Tylenol/Motrin
Diarrhea/Vomiting:	Exclusion until stools are formed Exclusion until no vomiting for 24 hours Fever Exclusion until fever free for 24 hours without meds
Rash with Fever:	Exclusion until physician says no communicable disease
Chick Pox :	Exclusion until lesions are dry and crusted; usually 6 or more days
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):	Exclusion until 24 hours after antibiotic drops initiated
Impetigo (Skin Infection):	Exclusion until 24 hours after antibiotic initiated and active lesions are gone

Parents will be notified if children become ill at school and must make arrangements to pick up their child within the hour. The ELC enforces the same standards in preventing employees from working while sick.

[NAEYC 5.A.11, 10.B.08, 10.D.09, 10.D.10](#)

**Administering Medications**

Medication and special medical procedures can be administered to a child in the program only with the written, dated, and signed instructions of a licensed physician, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child. Medication permission forms are available in the office. The program reserves the right to contact the child's physician or pharmacist for clarification of instructions. Certain medical treatments, such as feeding tubes, may require the staff be trained by a licensed health professional.

It is the parents' responsibility to arrange for program staff member(s) to be trained by their child's licensed health provider, instead of the program's health professionals. A child's health care provider or local physicians may be contacted for special instructions/directions/training in administering medications and/or medical staff at Madison County Health Department. The program adheres to Alabama School Systems policies in administering medications.

**Prescription and over the Counter Medications**

Prescription medications must be in their original container bearing the pharmacy label which shows the prescription number, date filled, physician's name, child's first and last name, strength of the medications, and directions for administering and storing, and expiration date. Nonprescription medications such as over-the-counter cold and allergy remedies or pain and fever reducing medicine can only be administered by the staff if these medications are part of a prescribed therapeutic treatment. Written instructions from the child's parent or guardian, which corresponds with the

physician's instructions for administering the medication is required.

ALL medications must be supplied by the parent in the original container with a visible expiration date. Parents must sign a written permission form before any and all medications are administered. Medications must be labeled with the child's full name and the date they were brought to the program. Medication Permission forms must be on file in the office in order for the staff to administer any medications. All medications are kept in a locked container in the office or other designated cool storage area. Any program staff member who administers medication must have specific training and written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional or consultant on the right practices of medication administration. Person giving medication signs documentation for items that and is required to demonstrate competencies 28 in the procedures and use written guidelines in how to perform the procedures by the health care provider, such training includes, but is not limited to, pediatric CPR and First Aid.

#### NAEYC 5.A.07

##### **Sun Block**

The program encourages the use of sun block with a UVA and UVB protection of SPF of 30+ to protect children from the harmful rays of the sun. Families/parents are asked to apply sun block in the morning when dressing their child. Teaching staff applies sun block in the afternoon after naptime. A child friendly SPF30 sun block supplied by parents can only be applied with written permission parents provide on the First Aid and Non-Prescription Authorization enrollment form.

#### NAEYC 10.B.08, 10.D.01

##### **Injury**

If a child becomes injured, or there is a medical emergency, the program staff is expected to respond quickly and calmly, assessing the situation to provide appropriate care. Staff should seek help from other adults so that someone can specifically tend to an injured child. Immediately call 911 if a child has stopped breathing or has difficulty breathing. Staff wears gloves for any injury involving blood or bodily fluids. A container of liquid absorbent pellets is kept in the center and used on spills of bodily fluids such as blood or vomit. An injury report is completed for each accident.

##### **Incident/Accident Reports**

An "Accident Report" must be filled out when an injury occurs to a child. If there is any kind of mark (red, teeth marks, bruise, scratch, etc.), blood is visible, or the child continues to complain, an "Accident Report" must be filled out, no matter how minor the injury. No other child's name should be mentioned on the report. An "Incident Report" may be filled out when the family/parent needs to be notified of the behavior of a child such as biting, seriously hurting others, unusual behavior, etc. If a child was hurt or bitten by another child, do not use that child's name, instead write "another child." A copy with signatures from the teacher, parent and director is given to the family and a copy is placed in the child's file.

#### NAEYC 10.B.08, 10.D.08

##### **Evacuation Emergency Plans**

If the director is not on-site during an emergency, a named Lead Teacher will be specified. The office staff (Budget Analyst and Operations Coordinator) will also follow outlined procedures. Listed below are procedures for the ELC in the even to an emergency situation.

### **Inclement Weather**

In case of snow or severe weather, we will follow the schedule of UAH. If UAH closes due to inclement weather, the ELC will also close. If the threat of inclement weather arises, parents should listen to local radio stations for school closings and times and make arrangements to pick up their child promptly. In the event of an early closing, After School Care will be canceled for that day. Any other unscheduled closings will be reported to parents as soon as possible through email, text or by telephone communication. Please sign up for REMIND 101 for messages from the director.

### **Emergency Lighting**

Classrooms and evacuation bags have flashlights. Batteries are routinely replaced or recharged. Preparedness fire drills are practiced monthly. Tornado drills are practiced every three months. Other evacuation procedures are practiced on a yearly event with the collaboration of Huntsville Fire and UAH Police Departments. Teachers discuss these emergency procedures with children so they are prepared and less likely to get upset.

### **Disaster Evacuation Plan**

The director, staff assistant, classroom teachers and other staff members are familiar with and prepared for all evacuation scenarios.

### **Obtaining Emergency Assistance**

The director or classroom teachers ensure that all children are evacuated from the building or otherwise are in a safe place. After the children are safe and accounted for, someone is named to contact the UAH Police Department if not already done so (by activation of the alarm system). The classroom teachers are responsible for bringing their attendance sheets and classroom backpack containing children's emergency information. All staff with cell phones will carry them when evacuating to the designated location, to use for contacting parents, if necessary. The director and office staff are responsible for checking each of the classrooms and bathrooms for any child or adult that was left or unable to hear/see the alarms.

### **Teacher Supplies for Emergencies**

The classroom backpack contains items necessary for emergencies, including copies of children's emergency and contact information. Teachers carry cell phones with them whenever they leave the classroom. The administrative assistant is responsible for maintaining the emergency center binder. Classroom teachers are responsible to maintain classroom backpacks and up to date emergency binders.

### **Parent Contact Information**

Notice of changes in parents' contact information - cell/work/home phone numbers, addresses, places of business, should be given to the administrative office. Families/parents need to make certain that they or their designated emergency person can be reached at all times. On the daily sign-in and sign-out App, families/parents are expected to leave a phone number where they can be reached if different than their usual/regular routine.

### **Fire Emergency**

The fire alarms are linked to Huntsville Fire Department and UAH Police and Safety Department. If

the alarms sound, Huntsville Fire Department and UAH Police Department are automatically dispatched to the building. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. Fire drills are conducted monthly. In the event of a fire related emergency, teachers gather and count the children, take the daily sign-in book and the classroom backpack and evacuate the building to a designate safe place. Once in a safe designated location, Teachers take attendance and account for all children. Teachers are responsible to verify that all children are accounted for and present. (During fire drills: children practice walking out of the building, taking attendance, and remaining in the safe location/place during the fire drills.) Generally, in the event of a fire, the classrooms go onto the west fenced playground.

The director, and office staff check rooms in the process of leaving the building to ensure no one is left behind.

### **Shoes in an Emergency**

When children remove their shoes for naptime or dramatic play, teachers should encourage them to always place **their shoes in a central basket in the classroom**. That way, if an evacuation is necessary, teachers can grab the basket and put shoes back on children after they are out of the building.

### **Tornado**

If the UAH campus civil defense tornado sirens sound, the children are immediately evacuated to a designated safe area in the building. These hallways/rooms are in the center of the building and have no windows. The teachers are responsible for bringing daily attendance, emergency cards, and emergency backpacks to the evacuation area. The staff assistant is responsible for bringing the office first aid kit with back-up emergency binder to the evacuation room. The director is responsible for checking all rooms to make sure no child or staff is left behind. Teachers check attendance once the children are in the evacuation area. The evacuation area is supplied at all times with a civil defense talking radio and batteries, first aid supplies, bottled water, snacks, flashlights and batteries, quilts, a collection of things to entertain the children, diapers, Kleenex, and wet wipes. Tornado drills are practiced quarterly. Children are kept in the evacuation area during a tornado warning for Madison County. Parents are discouraged from leaving the center with their children during dangerous weather conditions.

### **Shelter-in-Place Procedures**

Shelter-in-Place occurs when a threatening situation is posed and escape from the building is not advisable until instruction has been received from appropriate authorities. In the event of a shelter-in-place situation, before contacting anyone else, teachers or other adults are to immediately contact the police by calling 911. If children are on the playground and teachers become aware of a dangerous situation (strange behavior of an individual outside the fence, entry onto the playground of a strange individual who will not leave or appears dangerous, the sound of gunfire in the area) or staff are notified of a dangerous situation and told to go into shelter-in-place, the children are moved inside immediately. Teachers should close and lock the door and immediately call 911. If children are inside their classroom and the teachers become aware of a dangerous situation either by their own observation or by notification from appropriate 31 authorities, they should immediately lock their hallway and outside doors, move the children away from window/door, and have them sit down on the floor, turn off the light and call 911. ALL classroom doors should remain locked during the school day.

### **Dangerous or Suspicious Persons**

Any unknown person who enters the building or loiters on the property outside of the building should be identified. A person with no legitimate business in the building should be asked to leave. The police are called if such a person refuses to leave. In the event of a hostile or volatile adult entering the building or classroom, teachers should attempt to move the children to another room and contact the front office immediately for assistance. The police will be called if the danger is assessed severe. Avoid behaviors that would increase the likelihood of a violent response from the individual. Keep the children calm until help arrives.

NAEYC 1.B.09, 10.B.08, 10.D.03

### **Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

It is required by state law that any teacher or staff member that suspects child abuse or neglect notify the local Department of Human Resources.

Child Abuse Child abuse in any form is not tolerated. No one, including parents or teachers, is allowed to abuse a child physically or mentally while at the program. Staff members are to never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting, or to engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Program staff is never to use threats, derogatory remarks or withhold food as a form of discipline. All forms of abuse must be reported immediately to the Director. The program is required by Alabama and federal law to report any suspected evidence of physical, mental, or sexual abuse or child neglect to the Alabama Department of Human Resources. AL DHR will determine if a situation warrants investigation. Teachers and staff are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to the Department of Human Resources and director. Verification is not required. Alabama and federal law requires that suspicions be reported in good faith. Protecting a child from an abusive adult, even if it is another staff member who gets stressed and reacts harshly to the children, is the responsibility of all staff. Physical punishment of children in a child care or early education setting is considered child abuse by Child Care Licensing and must be reported. It is a misdemeanor for any person to fail to report. A person making a report in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. The name of the reporter is kept confidential. A report should be made when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or is in danger of being abused. A report of suspected abuse is a request for an investigation. Investigation of child abuse reports is the responsibility of Child Welfare workers and, when a crime may have been committed, law enforcement officials.

NAEYC 3.D.01, 3.D.02, 3.D.03, 3.D.04, 3.D.06, 3.D.08, 3.D.09, 3.D.10, 3.D.11, 3.E.01, 3.E.02, 3.G.09, 3.G.11, 3.G.12, 6.A.02 32

### **Daily Schedules and Routines**

The daily schedule is posted in each classroom. It is designed to allow children adequate time to explore and have a balance of active and quiet activities, indoors and out. The routine allows children to know and prepare for what is coming next and provides a sense of security. Some flexibility is anticipated in response to individual and group needs, special needs, special times such as fieldtrips, visitors, and weather conditions. Children are provided the opportunity to have time for free choice and accessibility to activity learning centers throughout the daily schedule. Teachers provide children the opportunity to acquire certain skills through indirect and direct teaching strategies. They purposefully plan and prepare the environment so children are allowed to have child-initiated

and interest-topics to be discussed, explored, and researched. Each child is supported and provided through planned lessons, special interest centers, and collaborative inquiry to play individually, in pairs, small groups, and whole group. Teaching strategies will also include opportunities for children to be exposed to curriculum content, routines, learning opportunities, task and skills in a holistic approach, and segmented sections as applicable, that are meaningful and suitable for children. Teachers will also provide children the opportunity to engage and be immersed in emerging skills and activities that support and enhance repetitive learning opportunities. The teaching staff assists children's learning by interacting and playing with the children within centers or activities. Teachers use this opportunity to gather documentation of children's learning, reflecting assessing upon children's interaction, learning, and modifying plans or teaching strategies to increase children's learning opportunities. monthly theme for all classrooms. Each child's schedule is individualized so that the day includes as needed), lunch, snack, and rest (children may or may not sleep). The center will have a common group activities, music, gross motor play outdoors (weather permitting), therapeutic services (if typical school day, each child will generally follow a schedule that includes individual activities.

Teaching staff's interactions will be demonstrated or portrayed by:

- Interacting with children without using any form of physical or psychological abuse.
- Recognizing and protecting children from health and safety hazards.
  - Interacting, encouraging and providing children with a variety of learning opportunities and social experiences.
- Adapting and responding to conditions that require changes and demanding responses that support the quality of the program.
- Communicating with families, children (if applicable) and other staff members.

In addition to other planned activities, teachers encourage and help children to become independent and competent in toileting, hand-washing, personal hygiene, dressing, and eating. Children are encouraged, guided, and provided the opportunity to clean up equipment and materials within the classroom and on the playground area.

NAEYC 1.B.09, 1.B.10, 1.E.01, 1.E.02, 3.B.08, 3.B.12, 10.B.08

### **Guidance and Discipline**

The philosophy of the program is that discipline is based on the developmental level of the child. All expectations for children's behavior are developmentally appropriate. Staff members will observe children to determine patterns in a child's behavior to provide planned, reflective, and consistent individualized responses.

### **Positive Behavioral Support/Discipline Procedures**

The teachers and staff members of the ELC provide behavioral support and use discipline measures that demonstrate kindness and compassion, but also firmness and consistency. Every attempt is made to help children gain the confidence and knowledge that is needed to develop their self-control. Children are not allowed to hurt themselves or others, or destroy property. Promoting positive behaviors in children is a primary goal in the classroom setting.

Guidelines for promoting these behaviors follow:

- Classroom rules are simple and geared toward the child's developmental level.

- Teachers and staff serve as models of appropriate behavior.
- Yelling at children and frequent use of the word "no" are not accepted as appropriate staff interactions with children.
- Children will be praised for following the rules and for modeling positive behaviors.
- Children will be reminded of the rules, and the classroom staff will consistently enforce limits.

Unacceptable behaviors will be dealt with using the following guidelines:

- Consistent responses and consequences to unacceptable behavior
- Planned ignoring
- Redirecting

The program staff uses a number of positive guidance techniques, both direct and indirect, to ensure safety and order in the classrooms. These techniques are implemented for children to learn and understand the limits while developing positive self-esteem and a greater sense of self-control. For example, to assist children in understanding and developing a greater sense of self-control, children will be redirected with other options or materials, given a choice between options, or be allowed to gain self-control by thinking about their behavior while sitting in a designated area for a break or cool down time. Teachers will utilize a number of resources to determine a child's inability to display a positive self-esteem and/or self-control. Teachers and staff will document a child's persistent, serious and/or challenging behavior through daily anecdotal notes, accident/incident reports, running records, and/or daily communication logs, as a method to collect and analyze data about a child's reoccurring behavior. The documentation will assist in determining factors that contribute to the child's challenging behavior with events, activities, and/or interactions with others. This information will be collected and kept in the child's file within the director's office. Teachers will notify the director of children who need additional assistance in developing positive self-esteem and self-control. The director will then contact the parents and a meeting will be set to discuss alternative strategies, which supports the child. A team will be developed that consists of the parents, teachers, the director, and other resource specialists (as needed) to focus upon developmentally appropriate practices/strategy plan that can be developed and implemented for the child on an individualized basis that supports the child's inclusion and success within the program. In addition, a behavioral therapy specialist can be contacted to assist with the team decision in regard to screenings and/or assessments to determine the level of support for individual children.

## **Conscious Discipline**

[NAEYC 5.A.09, 9.C.05, 10.B.08, 10.D.01](#)

### **Hand Washing**

Hand washing is the most important means of limiting the spread of diseases. All individuals participating in the program wash their hands before preparing and serving food, after helping a child with the bathroom or changing a diaper, after cleaning a child's face, before and after tending to a child's injuries, after handling pets, and after outside play. Children are encouraged to wash their hands at the same times using soap and rubbing their hands together under running water for several seconds. Staff and children follow proper hand washing procedures in order to eliminate as many germs in the environment as possible. Children who are developmentally ready to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and periodically monitored for assistance to

successfully complete the task. Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed. Hand washing is required for all staff, volunteers and children when entering the room. This reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.

Everyone is required to wash their hands at these times:

- When arriving for the day.
- Before and After:
  - o meals and snacks, preparing, handling, or preparing food o feeding a child
  - o administering medicine o playing in water activities that are used by more than one child
  - o moving from one group to another that involves contact with infants and toddlers/twos
- After:
  - o diapering
  - o using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
  - o handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit) from noses, mouths, eyes, or open sores
  - o handling any raw food that requires cooking (eggs, meat, poultry)
  - o after playing in water that is shared by two or more people
  - o handling pets and other animals
  - o handling garbage or cleaning up items or areas
  - o removing gloves when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood
- Hand washing how-to:
  - o wash hands thoroughly using warm running water to wet hands and wrists
  - use a thumb-nail size dab of liquid soap
  - o rubbing and working soap vigorously into a lather and washing hands between fingers, back and inside of hands up to wrists, and under fingernails for at least 20 seconds or two verses of "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat," making sure that all jewelry area is cleaned under and around the item.
  - o rinsing all areas well
  - o dry hands thoroughly using a clean paper towel
  - o avoid touching faucet by using paper towel to turn off faucet
  - o if in the bathroom, open bathroom door with paper towel and throw paper towel in trash receptacle
- ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUBS ARE NOT USED IN LIEU OF HANDWASHING PRACTICES AND/OR PROCEDURES.

NAEYC 5.A.08, 9.A.01, 9.C.05, 9.C.17, 10.B.08, 10.D.01

### **Diapering and Toileting**

Diapering and toileting is conducted only by staff members that are trained in diapering/toileting procedures. Staff will change your child's diaper regularly throughout the day and periodically check your child in attempt to assure he/she remains dry and clean. For any child requiring diapering, the parent is responsible to provide diapers/pull ups with tabs and wipes. Your child's teacher or other staff member will make every attempt to notify you when the supply of diapers/wipes is getting low. The diapers should be clearly marked with your child's name. Should your child need any special care or attention when diaper changing, please provide written instructions to the director upon enrollment. The staff is able to apply lotions or creams to children only to prevent a rash or dry skin with a signed medication form. All diapers will be changed only on a designated diaper-changing table. Children on a changing table are never left unattended and staff will wear protective gloves and will place the soiled diaper in a plastic bag for disposal. Changing tables are cleaned after each use.

Disposable diapers are required for children who are not toilet trained. Cloth diapers are prohibited. Families/parents that change their child's diapers at the program are asked to follow the required sanitation procedures posted in the diaper changing area. Before beginning to toilet train a child, teachers ask families/parents to meet and plan together for a successful new step in a child's development. Teaching staff wants to work with families/parents and help make this a successful new step in their child's development. Children like to imitate other things and toileting is another area they will explore. Toilet training comes when a child is ready to take responsibility for eliminating in the toilet and handling his or her own clothing. This is generally around two-and-a-half to three years of age, but differs among children.

The following are requirements when implementing toileting practices:

- Commercial disposal diapers or pull-ups are used unless the child has a documented medical reason signed by a health provider.
- Diapers and clothing items that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag without rinsing or avoidable handling and sent home that day for laundering.
- Children are checked every hour when awake and when they awaken from rest/nap times.
- At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child when the child is being changed on an elevated surface.
- Changing procedures must be posted and followed.

[NAEYC 3.D.07, 3.D.12, 10.D.01, 5.A.14, 5.B.15](#)

### **Meals and Snacks**

The University contracts with a food service company which provides employees who prepare nutritional meals and snacks. All snacks and meals follow the USDA/CACFP required Food and Nutrition and Food Service and Sanitation guidelines. Outside food is NOT allowed.. The food service is checked on a regular basis by the State Department of Health. Both agencies use the U.S. Department of Agriculture Guideline for the program's evaluation. In addition, a local dietician works with the program by analyzing the nutritional value of items on the menu by calculating fats, sugar, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, as well as proteins, fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy food groups. Then a meeting is held to review the analysis and suggested changes to meet the national dietary requirements. Children attending the program are provided with breakfast, lunchtime meal, and an afternoon snack. The menu is posted monthly on the family/parent bulletin board in the main hall, each classroom, on the website, and emailed to all families/parents. The menu is planned to include a variety of foods and to meet a child's daily nutritional requirements. Children are encouraged to try each food and develop a liking for a variety of foods. When children require a specific diet, either for medical, religious, or cultural reasons, parents should discuss the dietary needs/restrictions with the director and the classroom teachers. A plan to ensure that a child's nutritional needs are being met can be discussed. A doctor or cleric signature is required for food substitutions. Food substitution forms can be obtained from the director at enrollment or during the year. If the program is unable to provide an adequate substitution for prescribed diets, families/parents are asked to provide additional foods their child can eat. Meals are served in a family style atmosphere. Several children and at least one adult share meals and snacks together at a table and engage in conversation. As they are ready, children serve themselves and pour their own drinks. Developmentally appropriate table manners are taught and encouraged. Families/parents are

invited to eat lunch with their child for a fee of \$4.00 per adult (to be paid at the time of the meal). Families/parents need to give one day notice to the teachers if they wish to join their child for lunch. No outside food is allowed to be brought in to the ELC.

Parents are encouraged to be on time in the mornings. Children are served breakfast soon after arrival. A hot, nutritious lunch is also provided daily at a scheduled time. Children in some classrooms will eat lunch in the cafeteria and younger children will eat in their rooms. Parents of children in the Ladybug room should speak to the teacher concerning introduction of solid foods. An afternoon snack will also be provided. Parents of children with medical needs are encouraged to meet with the director to discuss the child's needs.

#### NAEYC 5.B.02

##### **Food, Drinks, and Candy from Home**

The program Does Not Allow food or drinks to be brought from home. Children should complete snacks or meals before entering the building. The program provides nutritious snacks in the afternoon, and a nutritional breakfast and lunch. This menu provides the children with energy they need to get through the school day.

#### NAEYC 3.C.02, 3.C.03, 5.A.14, 10.D.01

##### **Naptime**

All children enrolled in the program are expected to rest for a minimum of 30 minutes on their assigned cot. Children may bring a small pillow, blanket, and soft sleep toy such as a doll or stuffed animal to sleep/rest with them on their cot/mat. Children who do not sleep are able to complete quiet tasks designated by the classroom teachers after a required 30 minute rest period. Children are taught to play quietly and to not disturb their sleeping classmates. Teaching staff will assist the children with naptime transitions with music, patting backs, and reading stories. The teaching staff will not require, force, or punish children for not sleeping during naptime. Families/parents are requested to retrieve all sleeping items brought from home on Fridays (or other designated day due to holidays or breaks) to wash/sanitize and brought back on the returning day.

#### NAEYC 5.A.06

##### **Outdoor Play**

Children are expected to participate in outdoor play with their class each day, as weather permits. Outdoor play takes place each morning and afternoon unless the weather is determined to be detrimental to health and safety (i.e., electrical storms, temperature above 100 degrees F, or wind chill below 0 degrees F). Children should come to school dressed appropriately for changing weather conditions. Special attention to clothing and footwear protects children from injuries on the playground. Rubber soled shoes and shoes that fit securely on a child's foot help to prevent falls on slippery surfaces when children run and climb. Necklaces, scarves, and strings on hoods of jackets should be avoided as these items can choke if a child falls and the item is entangled in playground equipment. Teaching staff constantly survey the playground and other equipment to discover and correct potential hazards, but parents' attention to these matters adds to each child's safety. Flip-flops are a potential hazard and are prohibited as footwear. Children need to have layered clothing items during the colder temperatures so drastic weather changes can be tolerated by the children during outdoor play.

NAEYC 5.A.10, 5.A.15, 9.C.12, 10.B.08, 10.D.01

### **Water Play**

The classrooms plan water play experiences at specially designed tables that are closely supervised and precautions are taken to prevent infectious disease. Children are prohibited from drinking and/or immersing their bodies in the water and/or other substances. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Water table materials are changed on a daily basis or as needed to prevent the spread of communal disease/germs. Fresh potable water is used and is changed before a new group of children participates in the water play and the water is drained with each group of children when they complete their play. When cleaning the water play table fresh potable water flows freely through the water table and out through a drain in the table. Children are encouraged and reminded to wash their hands before and after playing at the water-play activities. Special attention with supervision is implemented with toddlers/twos during water play activities. Only designated water play equipment will be utilized for water activities. Toddlers/twos will not have access to large buckets that contain liquids of any type.

### **Supplies/Personal Items**

"We play dirty here!" Neat, sturdy, washable play clothes are recommended. Please allow your child to wear comfortable sturdy shoes such as tennis shoes. If your child wears AFOs please make sure they are on each day.

NAEYC 5.A.07

### **Children's Clothing**

Families/parents must maintain THREE complete changes of clean clothing (including underwear, socks, pants, and shirt) and an extra pair of shoes in their child's locker at all times. Please check appropriate seasonal clothing for a complete set of clothes. It is important for children to have a complete change of clean clothes in the event of an accident (toileting, food-related, or curriculum-related). Children may be upset about soiled clothing and, in such cases; it is more comfortable for children to change into their own clothing. All clothing must be marked with the child's name or initials. Clothing should be exchanged to accommodate children's growth and seasonal weather changes. During the course of each day, children are involved in active exploration and play. Many kinds of materials and equipment are available. Children are expected to wear clothing appropriate for active play. Although teaching staff do their best to protect a child's clothing, the program does not guarantee the condition of a child's clothing and accessories after a day of play. The following guidelines help determine suitable clothing for children.

- Wear clothing the child can get messy or dirty.
- Clothing easy for the child to put on and take off when using the toilet.
- Clothing loose enough to allow free movement without being so loose that it becomes entangled in equipment.

### **Parents are responsible for sending the following:**

- Toothbrush, toothbrush cover, and toothpaste
- Brush and comb
- Nap mat, sheet and/or pillow and blanket, snuggle item
- Backpack or book bag marked with his/her name.
- If your child's teacher is using a communication binder, please make sure the backpack is large

enough for the binder to fit.

- Your child may bring an object from home on designated "Share days". This activity helps develop poise, self-concept, and language skills. It is a good idea to print names on all Share Day items. Do NOT let your child bring candy, gum, guns, or knives to school.

All personal belongings and food items should be labeled with the child's name.

[NAEYC 9.C.10, 9.C.14, 9.C.15, 10.B.08, 10.B.12, 10.D.07](#)

### **Fieldtrips/Transportation**

The classroom staff may plan fieldtrips to supplement and extend the curriculum. Teaching staff to child ratio will be maintained at all times during fieldtrips and transportation of children from one location to another. For fieldtrip transportation, the children may use UAH Transportation vehicles (vans) for off campus trips. Announcement of any fieldtrips are made several weeks in advance and posted by the classroom sign-in sheets, giving parents trip details (date, time, destination, and purpose). Parents are invited to accompany the group. Fieldtrip consent forms must be signed by parents for the child to attend.

UAH Transportation vehicles (vans) are held to local and state regulations as a public source of transportation. Maintenance is performed according to recommended manufactures, state, and UAH regulations. Documentation of maintenance can be obtained from the UAH Transportation Department showing date of regular and quarterly inspections and preventative maintenance, such as daily logs, air pressure inspections, and routine checks. Since the program uses the UAH vehicles as its major form of transportation, the staff will implement and use safety-restraint devices that are approved and/or in accordance with the transportation vehicle (vans) the manufactures guidelines. Limited usage of private vehicles for transportation must implement OKDHS regulations. One staff member with current documentation of training in UAH approved child passenger safety course training will be present during the transportation for children younger than six years of age. Proper staff-child ratios are maintained without counting the 41 driver when children younger than four years of age are transported. Child Passenger Safety

#### Requirements:

- A schedule showing accurate route and itinerary is planned and kept at the center to show approximately where the vehicle is at all times. When the vehicle is equipped with a mobile communication system, route information is not required.
- Safe conduct to and from all vehicles and safe off-street loading space is provided to protect children from backing vehicles, being between vehicles, and all traffic hazards.
- Children are not permitted to ride more than 60 minutes one way on regular outings, exceptions for a special field trip may be allowed, with exceptions being infrequent, and allowance is made for rest and stretch stops during the trip.
- Children remain seated while the vehicle is in motion, and no part of a child's body extends from windows.
- Vehicles containing children are never left unattended at any time.
- Booster seats for children more than 40 pounds must be positioned and properly secured with a lap belt on the child's lap and hip bones rather than the abdomen.
- High-back boosters are recommended for positions in vehicles that do not have head rest and backless boosters are sufficient for positions that do have head rest. Both seats achieve the same goal to boost the child high enough so the seat belt fits properly.

- Booster seat, car seat, or infant seat is used according to the manufacturer's instructions and federally approved.
- Ensure the passenger restraint system is used properly with the type of seat belt that is installed in the vehicle and properly maintained.
- Verify that the car seat is appropriate for the specific height, weight, and physical condition of the child being transported.
- Each seat belt is properly anchored to the vehicle and fits snugly across the child's hips or securely anchors the car seat.
- All adult passengers, except those in/on a bus, and the driver are properly secured by individual seat belts unless the driver or passenger has written verification from a doctor licensed in Alabama and that person is unable to use a seat belt for medical reasons.
- Vehicle's maximum seating capacity is not exceeded. Maximum seating capacity is based on the manufacturer's designated seating capacity.
- When transporting children, vehicles, with the exception of public transportation, are visibly marked with the name and number of the facility or sponsoring organization.
- Each vehicle operated for transportation of children has door locks.
- The transporting vehicle is covered by medical and liability insurance required by Alabama laws.
- A first aid kit is available in the vehicle at all times.
- Written documentation is kept of regular maintenance of all vehicles to include quarterly inspections of tire wear and pressure, brakes, lights, and functioning seat belts.

Each classroom has a bag of first-aid kits/supplies (tissues, wet wipes, first aid) to carry to on field trips or during the events that require transportation. Classroom teachers are responsible to make certain these supplies are always well stocked.

### **Toys from Home**

The program requests that no toys from home be brought to school. Bringing toys from home can be an overwhelming problem for both children and teachers in the classroom. Toys from home are usually not as durable as the program toys and may be easily broken. The program is not responsible for toys brought from home. Security items are very important to a child and teaching staff support their use, especially during transition times. Security items often include blankets, stuffed animals, or dolls. These transitional items or self-comforting items are respected by teachers.

Families/parents should clearly label their child's items. As children adjust to the program and their need for a security item lessens, teachers put these items in a child's cubby where it is accessible as needed. Teachers do not force a child to separate from a security item, but help a child find new ways to be comforted and feel safe. The best items to bring from home are found "treasures." The teachers are always eager for a child to share these with the class. Shells or stones, wildflowers, magazine pictures, interesting many more things are valued by the children and the teachers. Children often like to share things from their house. The interest to bring a toy from home can be redirected from toys to treasures.

### **NAEYC 5.B.02**

#### **Celebrations & Holidays**

Children's cultural heritage and celebrations are important parts of their personal-social development. Fostering respect for cultural diversity is an important goal at the program. Emphasis

is always placed on respecting individual differences and beliefs. Families/parents are encouraged to share their cultural heritage with others in the program. Activities related to traditional U.S. holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and July 4th are low-key, age appropriate, and avoid specific religious beliefs. Plans are discussed with families/parents to ensure celebrations are sensitive to cultural diversity. Any family/parent wishing to share their cultural celebrations is asked to contact their child's teacher or the administrative office. Equally, families/parents may ask that their child not participate in these activities. Any foods brought in for parties must be purchased from a facility with a commercial kitchen. Home-made snacks are prohibited. If a family wishes to share a cultural cooking activity with the classroom children, they must arrange with the director to prepare the items at the program following regulated guidelines.

#### NAEYC 5. B02

##### **Birthdays**

Families/parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday at school are welcome, but not required, to provide a special snack for the children in their classroom, remembering that all snacks brought into the program must be purchased from a facility with a commercial kitchen, and home-made snacks are prohibited. Families/parents are asked to notify the classroom teacher at least one week in advance if they plan to provide a birthday snack. Birthdays are important to children and every effort is made to make the day special but not overwhelming to children. Teachers assist in simple observances such as singing "Happy Birthday" and passing out special snacks to friends. Muffins or other lower sugar items are recommended. Balloons are not permitted, as they may be dangerous. If a child's family does not observe birthdays, please let the teacher know so an alternate activity can be planned for that child. Party invitations may not be distributed at school unless all children in the child's classroom are invited. Selected invitations should be delivered outside of school hours.

#### NAEYC 5.C.05, 10.B.08

##### **Animals**

Animals offer exciting additions to the curriculum. The classrooms may have small caged animals which are kept clean and healthy. Animals should only be brought to the center after permission has been granted from the director. There are certain regulations that must be followed when animals are brought to the program. Documentation is required from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show full immunization of the animal, animals must appear to be in good health, and animals must be free of fleas, ticks, and worms before entering the classroom. Staff members and teachers will closely supervise all interactions between children and animal visitation and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Staff members will also make sure children within the classroom have no allergic reaction/symptoms to animals. Insects may be brought into the classroom if they are contained in an insect cage, plastic insect keeper, or plastic jar with a lid. If plastic jars are used, there should be small air holes in the jar's lid. Insects or other small creatures in glass containers are prohibited.

##### **General Information**

###### **AHERA Notice**

All schools have been inspected by an EPA-approved asbestos inspector, and a management plan is maintained in the Center as required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). The file is available for staff and parents inspection.

Most asbestos-containing materials in school facilities is in the form of floor tiles, is non-friable and well maintained. As far as is known, all friable asbestos in the school facility has been removed. Existing floor tiles are well maintained and, when necessary, are being abated as required by law. This notice is being reported to you as required by AHERA.

The UAH Early Learning Center facilities, physical infrastructure, is maintained by UAH and kept in compliance with all local, state and federal guidelines related to fire safety, air and water quality, electrical, plumbing, and meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility 44 requirements. Accessibility includes access to building, sinks, drinking fountains, outdoor play space and all classroom and therapy areas.

### **Breathe Free Campus**

The UAH campus is a BREATHE FREE facility. No tobacco or tobacco products are allowed in or around these facilities and smoking is entirely prohibited. No smoking is permitted at any time.

### **Volunteers**

Approved volunteers may be utilized in your child's class to assist in the preparation and implementation of various daily activities.

### **Termination**

A child may be terminated from the ELC if a pattern of disregard for the established policies and procedures is demonstrated. A written notice will be provided to parents concerning the possibility of termination and if the issue(s) is not resolved a written notice of termination would follow.

Examples of reasons for termination include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) extended absences (an unacceptable percentage of days attended);
- (b) disregard of the school's operating hours, including participation in the year-round schedule;
- (c) failure to complete required forms;
- (d) consistent disregard of the illness policy
- (e) tuition delinquency
- (f) lack of commitment to Programs at the Early Learning Center.

### **Reminders**

Our School day is 8:00-2:30. Please park in the large **EAST** parking lot and enter through the hall door or front lobby door.

Morning drop off is 7:50-8:10. East Hall entry doors will close and lock at 8:10.

Afternoon pick up is 2:15-2:30 for First Class Classrooms, PALS & RISE Classrooms and 3:00 for Early Head Start and 2:00 Head Start Classrooms.

If your child is going to be absent, remember to call the main office or teacher's extension and leave a message. For security reasons, all doors will remain locked from 8:10 on. During this time, Families must enter and exit the building through the lobby entrance only. If families have a change in address, telephone number, employment, emergency number(s), or family situation, that information should be provided promptly to the child's teacher and Director.

### **Summary**

The staff members of the UAH ELC/Rise School hope that families find the information contained in this handbook to be helpful. Everyone is encouraged to ask questions, and seek additional information as needed.









