UCP Early Learning Center
Parent Handbook

UCP Early Learning Center
General Center Information

The Early Learning Center provides child care services for special needs and typical children from the age of six weeks through five years. The center offers full time care for infants and full and part time care for those children one-year-old through five-year-old.

Enrollment:

Enrollment in the Early Learning Center (ELC) is offered on a space available basis. If space is not available, your child may be put on a wait list. Scheduled tours of the ELC are provided to families interested in enrollment.

The Early Learning Center is committed to welcoming new families. Prior to child's first day, the Early Learning Center (ELC) Director and Lead Teacher will meet with the parent(s) to discuss program policies, procedures and required documentation as well as a child's culture, family structure, abilities, behaviors, expectations, and overall aspects of the child and family.

Enrollment Documentation:

Our program works collaboratively with parent(s) to promote the health of children. When a child enrolls in our facility, we ask for information regarding your child's health.

At enrollment the Emergency, Information and Immunization Record (EIIRC) card is completed, dated and signed by the parent. This card is often referred to as the "blue card." The Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card (EIIRC) includes basic information regarding the child's legal name, address, telephone numbers, birth date and parental custody status, as well as current information regarding the child's general health, emergency contact names and phone numbers, names of health care provider(s), and a copy of the child's immunization record. Every copy of the Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card (EIIRC) must have a copy of the child's immunization record(s) included.

We ask parents to review and update the Emergency, Information and Immunization Record Cards annually in order to capture changes in phone numbers, family information and updated immunizations. If you

have had a change in information, please see your child's lead teacher to update your blue card.

Other documents required at enrollment include:

- Attendance Contract
- Media Release
- Child information Sheet
- Permission Forms
- Current and up to date immunization record (see enclosed list for required shots)

All forms must be fully completed, including all required signatures, and turned into the Early Learning Center **before** the first day of attendance.

Please note that a **two week written notice** is required for disenrollment. Payment by parent/guardian is due for the notice period, whether or not the child is brought to the center for care.

Children with Special Needs

Our Early Learning Center welcomes enrollment of children with special needs. The ELC Director will collaborate with teachers (internal) and other personnel (external), such as DES/DDD support coordinators, and AZIEP to identify and assess children with special needs. Screening tools, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaires or full developmental assessments, and Teaching Strategies Gold, will be utilized to determine present levels of development and special care needs. Placement shall be based on the child's developmental delay or disability.

In the interest of maintaining quality care for all of the children enrolled in our program, our goal is to maintain a ratio of 30% children with special needs in each classroom. This goal allows the teachers to meet the individual needs of each child in the most comprehensive way possible.

Before a child with special needs receives child care services the lead teacher and director will meet with the family to review the child's existing individualized service plan (IFSP) and discuss specific needs. The lead teacher and Director will review the information, and determine if the center is able to fully meet the needs of the child in our classroom setting. Once enrolled, the existing IFSP will be adopted and implemented. When determining if we are able to meet the needs of each child, important information to review may include the following:

- Medication schedule
- Nutrition and feeding instructions
- Qualifications required of a staff member who feeds the enrolled child
- Medical equipment or adaptive devices
- Medical emergency instructions
- Toileting and personal hygiene instructions
- Information for health care providers, including the frequency and length of any prescribed medical treatment or therapy
- Participation in fire and emergency evacuation drills

If a child with special needs does not have an existing individualized service plan, the parent must submit written instructions for providing services to the child until an individualized plan is developed and written by a team consisting of ELC staff members, the child's parents, and health care providers. This plan must be completed within 30 days of enrollment in the ELC. This plan must be updated every 12 months after the date of the initial plan or as changes occur.

Confidentiality

All information regarding enrolled children is maintained in a secure, locked location only accessible to the Center Director, Lead Teachers, and governing agencies as requested. Parents may request access to the information contained in the files.

Tuition cost:

Annual tuition costs are posted in the front lobby check in area.

Tuition costs are based upon classroom, number of days, and hours attended.

Half day rates are available. A half day is up to six hours per day.

Employee discounts and Sibling discounts may be available (one discount per family).

Monthly and semi-monthly fees are also available on select rates. Please consult with the ELC Director for details.

Hours of operation:

6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday

Holiday Closings:

UCP closes for 10 holidays annually. Please see center director for a yearly calendar of closures.

Checking in and out:

Parents must sign their child in and out each time the child enters or leaves the center using the "in and out book" at the front counter. The sign in and out sheet is a legal document, and as such, Full legal signatures are required. Parents must keep their children with them at all times while on campus. Please do not let them wander through the front lobby or behind desks. Upon arrival in the child's classroom or playground, if class is outside, the parent must obtain staff acknowledgement of the child's presence prior to leaving. Parents are responsible for the child once they are removed from the classroom. Parents must designate, in writing, who is allowed to pick up their child in their absence. A photo ID

will be required of anyone other than the parent or guardian in order to verify the correct "pick up" person. Please note that all emergency contacts, and persons approved to pick up your child must be at least 18 years of age.

Child Absence and Vacation Days:

For all absences, please call us as soon as you know your child will not be coming to the center. Full tuition is required for all absences.

Guidance and Discipline:

The ELC employs positive guidance techniques, focusing on desired behaviors versus undesired behaviors. This philosophy incorporates the following guidelines:

- Each staff member is required to maintain a consistent and reasonable limit on a child's behavior.
- They will teach, model and encourage children to act in an orderly and age appropriate manner.
- They will explain and help a child to understand why a particular behavior is not allowed, assist them in choosing an alternative, and assist them in engaging in the new activity.
- If it is determined the child will cause harm to him/herself or to others, the child will be removed from the area and held until the child regains control and composure to rejoin the group. Time away should be no longer than three minutes.
- Children will be encouraged to solve their problems or issues that arise between the children themselves or will be redirected when no alternative exists to another activity by the staff members.
- As staff member is not allowed to use any method of discipline that could cause harm to the health, safety or welfare of a child, including corporal punishment or abusive language.
- Discipline cannot be associated with eating, sleeping, toileting, medication, or any type or restraint.
- Other children may not discipline another child.

Clothing:

Young children learn through the use of their 5 senses. As such, our program incorporates frequent opportunities for the children to participate in sensory activities that are messy. These activities may include, but are not limited to: painting, using washable markers, chalk, shaving cream, play dough, corn starch, flour, noodles, beans, rice, etc. The children also engage in outdoor activities and water play (during the

summer months). We strongly recommend your child comes to school with washable and durable clothing so that they may move about comfortably and not worry about getting dirty. Children's soiled clothing will be placed in plastic bags and kept in secure location until parent pick up.

Shoes need to be closed toe and with heel straps to secure them properly to their feet so that they may safely participate in physical activities such as running, climbing, and riding activities throughout the day.

Every child must have at least one complete extra set of clothing kept here at the center in case a change is needed during the day. Please label all clothing with your child's first and last name. Bathing suits, water shoes, and towels will be needed for water play scheduled during the warmer summer months.

Parents of children in the younger classes and those with disabilities not toilet trained, who are still in diapers, must provide their own diapers, wipes and at least two extra sets of clothes. Cloth diapers are acceptable, but must have absorbent inner lining and an outer covering made of waterproof material. The child must be provided an outer cover for each diaper change. Cloth diapers are then placed in their own separate container and are sent home with child each day.

Communication:

We are committed to providing open and ongoing communication with parents and families. All communication is provided in English unless otherwise requested. In the case that staff is unable to interpret for the parent, an outside translator will be provided at no cost to the family. All classrooms communicate daily with parents upon arrival and departure of child/children. Written daily communication logs are provided to parents with infants, toddlers and 2-yr. old(s). Periodic assessments are conducted throughout the year based on child's classroom enrollment.

As an early learning center, we strive to fully engage all families in their child's learning experience. All parents are welcome to call at any time to during the day to speak with the teachers or administrative staff. Based on the Lead Teacher's judgment, a parent may be contacted during the day to discuss any issues or concerns that may occur. All communication between families and staff is expected to adhere to UCP's core values which include accountability, commitment, love, compassion, teamwork, trust and respect. If difficulties or differences should arise, parents have immediate access to the Classroom Lead Teacher. If further intervention is necessary, the ELC Director and Director of Programs are available.

Curriculum and Assessments:

The Early Learning Center utilizes emergent curriculum to implement the programs philosophy. Emergent curriculum encourages learning experiences to arise out of the children's interests, experiences and actions. The framework revolves around the following:

- Developmentally appropriate curricular experiences are planned to meet the children's needs for cognitive, physical, language and social emotional growth. Curricular experiences include large group activities, small group activities and individual activities.

- Curriculum includes time and space to meet children's need for play. Play is a valued learning time, as it provides children the opportunity to be creative and study the world around them.

- Curriculum involves experiences as well as the environment. Teachers plan the environment to reflect the current topic/theme and incorporate the interests of the children in the program. Materials are available and organized to support independent use.

- Daily schedules are implemented to provide a predictable yet flexible environment. Daily schedules include children's need for support through transitions, rest time and outdoor play.

- Curriculum is responsive to the individual needs of the children, and provides opportunities for all children to participate at their developmental level through the use of adaptations and modifications.

- Family input and participation is integrated into the curriculum and environment. Individual family preferences, culture, holidays and traditions are welcomed into the curriculum and routines.

- Curriculum is planned weekly based upon the children's current interests, but is ever changing and expanding in response to the children's changing interests. Topics/themes may last a few days, or may span weeks.

- The teachers consistently observe, analyze and evaluate the children's interests, needs and ideas. Information gained through observation and formal evaluation is used to plan future curricular experiences.

- Children are formally assessed through the use of Teaching Strategies Gold in the spring and fall to further inform teachers and families of their developmental progress. In the infant and toddler classrooms, ASQ assessments are utilized as supplements. Every child is screened within the first 90 days of enrollment using ASQ assessments. Conferences are offered to families with the completion of each assessment period.

Early Learning staff will continuously assess and monitor each child's development and will seek the guidance of UCP program staff (such as occupational, speech, or physical therapists), if they have questions regarding a particular child's development. This will be done after gaining the permission of the child's parent and a meeting has taken place between the parent and ELC staff to discuss the issue.

All assessments are kept in each child's file located in secure location, available to ELC director and lead teachers only.

The ELC is accredited by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and participates in Arizona's First Things First, Quality First Program.

Transitions

Enrolled children are transitioned to their next classroom based on age and developmental levels. All classrooms have a lead teacher and several teachers assigned to their particular classroom. As we strive to maintain the lower ratios of NAEYC, interaction is limited to those few staff. When it is time for your child to move to their next class, the lead teacher will coordinate a meeting with the family to discuss the transition, your child's readiness and classroom routines.

ELC Equipment:

All equipment and toys are carefully chosen by ELC staff. Materials are selected on the basis of curriculum, age and developmental appropriateness for each classroom and the playground. We have had the advantage of further assistance in choosing particular items through our participation in Arizona's Quality First Program. All materials, toys, and equipment are carefully monitored for safety and are replaced as needed.

Nutrition:

The UCP Early Learning Center provides breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. We have a 4 week rotating menu that is posted in each classroom and in the front lobby by the sign in/out books. Please check daily for any changes or updates on the menu.

Breakfast is served daily between 7:30am and 8:30am. Lunch for the toddler and two-year-old classrooms is served at 11:00am. The preschool class is served between 11:00am and 12:00pm. Snacks are provided in the afternoon for all classes between 2:00pm and 3:30pm.

If your child has any food allergies or special dietary requirements, please inform the ELC Director. Lists of food allergies and special instructions are posted in kitchen and food service areas of classrooms. If you do not wish for this information to be posted, please inform the ELC Director.

Infant formula and bottles need to be premixed and labeled with first and last name and dated.

Any child with a special diet requiring food brought in by parents must be accompanied with instructions from the child's physician.

All children in the two's and preschool classes are given the opportunity to brush their teeth after lunch each day. Toothbrushes are provided by the Early Learning Center and toothpaste must be provided by parent(s) for their individual child.

Birthday celebrations:

We celebrate birthdays during afternoon snack time. Please remember only commercially prepared food and peanut/nut free items. Please feel welcome to come in and celebrate with your child during this special time.

Medication:

Prescription and non-prescription medications may be administered to children with specific health conditions and under the following provisions:

- The Early Learning Center must have written authorization signed by the child's parent/guardian <u>and</u> child's physician.
- Authorization must include first and last name of the child, the name of the medication, the prescription number, if any, and instructions for administering the dosage.

- The center will only administer prescription medication that is in the original pharmacy container or non-prescription medication in original packaged container, labeled with the child's name.
- Only the ELC Director or designee will administer medications.
- Over the counter (OTC) medications will only be given with written instructions from the child's physician.

Children's Health:

The following criteria will be used to determine if your child needs to be excluded and sent home from the center:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate in the activities of the center
- Staff cannot care for a sick child without compromising the needs of the rest of the children
- The child has signs of a possible contagious illness

Signs that your child is too ill to attend the learning center and needs to be excluded:

- Fever of 101 degrees or more (fever over 100 degrees, parent will be called to be informed of a possible further pick up situation)
- Inflammation of the eyes, ears
- Two or more incidences of diarrhea
- Constant cough, congestion
- Headaches, earaches, body aches
- Sore throat, difficulty swallowing
- Unexplained rashes, skin irritations
- Vomiting
- Unusual behavior, crankiness, or crying
- Contagious illness, including but not limited to, chicken pox, impetigo, lice, scabies, ringworm, scarlet fever, or strep throat

Children who may have a contagious illness will be removed from their classroom and isolated to stop the spread of further contact with others until parent picks up child. Parent will be notified immediately.

If in the opinion of the Early Learning Center Director or Lead Teacher, your child is too ill to remain in the center, we will call for you to pick up your child within one hour. Your child must be kept home for the following day and may return the next day if symptom free. This allows time for your child to rest and recover from their illness and to stop the spread to other children. Please notify the center for all absences.

Communicable disease statements will be posted in classroom of occurrence and at the front sign in area for parent information.

In the case of an immediate medical emergency, 911 will be called first, then the child's first emergency contact. All staff is trained in first aid and CPR and will remain with the child until emergency medical personnel direct otherwise. Any child transported off site by emergency medical personnel will be accompanied by a member of the ELC Staff unless a parent or guardian is present. In the case of a non emergency injury or illness, parents will be notified by child's teachers.

We monitor high pollution advisories in the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County; therefore, there will be days when the children will be kept inside to limit their contact with the unhealthy air. All available steps will be taken to offer your child opportunities for gross motor play within our indoor facilities.

During the months of more exposure to our desert sun, we require that you apply sunscreen to your child before coming to the center (if arrival after 8am). On water play days (June through August), ELC staff will help to reapply before engaging in water play. Parents will need to provide sunscreen at that time, labeled with child's first and last name, which will be stored in a locked cabinet.

Transportation and field trips:

We do not offer any type of transportation or field trips to our students.

Scholastic Book Orders:

We participate with Scholastic Books in their online and take home flyers in ordering of books. Through the years, we have had the opportunity of adding to our classroom collections as we earn points for each dollar spent on book orders.

What parents need to bring:

<u>Infants/Toddlers</u>

Parents will need to supply bottles, formula/breast milk, diapers, wipes, baby food, pacifier, if needed, and at least two changes of clothing. Your child may bring a special sleep sac for use during rest time. All items must be clearly labeled with child's first and last name.

Because each infant formula requirement varies, you will need to provide your child's daily bottles with the formula mixed and poured in each bottle. All bottles, containers and cups must be dated and labeled with the child's full name. All mothers are welcome to breastfeed their child at the center. We do have rockers available for your use if you would like to come in during the day to breastfeed your baby.

Each infant will have a container at the diaper changing station, labeled with their name, especially for their own belongings. Please label all personal items, including diapers and wipes.

Twos and preschool

Parents will need to supply a complete change of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, and socks) appropriate to the season, labeled with your child's full name. Please remember to replenish these seasonally and as your child grows. Your child's favorite "napping buddy" may be brought for rest time. We also ask that you provide your child with their own personal small blanket for rest time.

If your child is in the process of toilet training, please bring at least three sets of clothes. Each child will have a cubby labeled with their name especially for their own belongings. Please label all personal items as the center will not be responsible for items not clearly marked.

Parent Participation:

Parents are always welcome to drop by and visit the center and their child at any time during business hours. Opportunities for our parents to volunteer in the classroom or for special events will come up from time to time. We welcome your assistance and thank you for your time.

Licensure:

The UCP of Central Arizona, Early Learning Center, is regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Child Care Licensure, 150 North 18th Avenue, #400, Phoenix, Arizona, 85007, 602-364-2539.

Facility inspection reports are available for viewing upon request in the Early Learning Center office.

The UCP of Central Arizona Early Learning Center is a NAEYC accredited facility, providing high quality childcare. For more information, visit http://www.naeyc.org/

Liability insurance is carried by UCP of Central Arizona for the Early Learning Center, as required by R9-5-308.

Pesticide application:

Each month a pesticide is applied within all buildings and outside areas. Notices are placed for parent inspection one week prior. Parents are welcome to speak with maintenance technician regarding more specific procedures.

NOTES:_____

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the UCP Early Learning Center regarding payment and fees, attendance, health, disenrollment procedures and other items specified in the parent handbook issued by the center. It also indicates that I received a copy of the parent handbook, had this material explained to me and that all my questions have been satisfactorily answered.

_____ Date_____
(Parent signature)