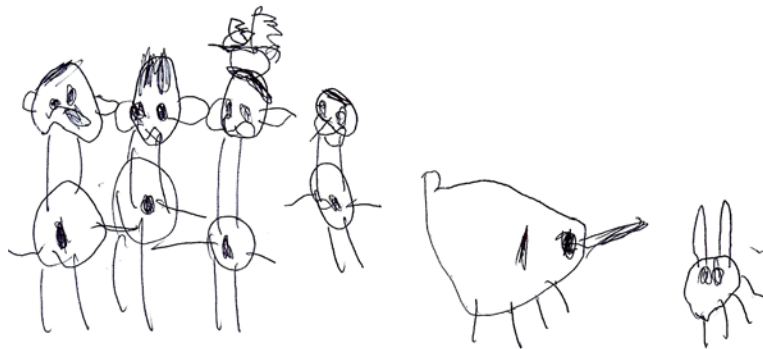


# Warner Pacific University EARLY LEARNING CENTER



## Information Handbook

Compiled by director, master teacher, ELC families and WP Community

Welcome to the Early Learning Center (ELC), Warner Pacific University children's program. The Early Learning Center is licensed in the state of Oregon and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (NAEYC). We are a laboratory preschool for university students and faculty participating in observation research, and practicum activities in Early Childhood Education.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Early Learning Center is to provide an active learning community for children, their families and early childhood teachers. We offer many opportunities for exploration, constructing knowledge, and developing relationships with peers, both for children and student teacher researchers, who are building their understanding of early learning.

## **VISION**

Our vision at the ELC is for this to be a community that embraces all people and their own style of learning. The ELC staff is dedicated to building relationships with children that cultivate a love of life-long learning, as well as future early educators who will enter the field of teaching with rich classroom experiences.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

We believe that all children arrive with the ability to learn. They are capable and competent and our job as teacher-researchers is to support their exploration and promote their curiosity through our physical space and the presentation of materials. At the ELC children will have many opportunities to develop observation, questioning, and listening skills all while engaging with peers. We are a Reggio-inspired, play-based Christ-centered preschool program for children ages 3-5. The ELC does not discriminate based on race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation or gender expression. We believe that the family is the child's primary environment of learning, and therefore offer opportunities for parent participation, education, and support.

## **Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias** **From NAEYC**

The early years are the time to begin helping children form strong, positive self-images and grow up to respect and get along with people who are different from themselves. We know from research that children between 2 and 5 start becoming aware of gender, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. They also begin to absorb both the positive attitudes and negative biases attached to these aspects of identity by family members and other significant adults in their lives. If we want children to like themselves and value diversity, we must learn how to help them resist the biases and prejudices that are still far too prevalent in our society.

Bias based on gender, race, disability, or social class creates serious obstacles to all young children's healthy development. In order to develop healthy self-esteem, they must learn how to interact fairly and productively with different types of people. Naturally, children's curiosity will lead them to ask questions: "Why is her skin so dark?" "Why does he speak funny?" We may hide our own negative feelings, or hope that children simply won't notice, but our avoidance actually teaches children that some differences are not acceptable. We must face our own biased attitudes and change them in order to help foster all children's growth.

### **What families and teachers can do to resist bias:**

- Recognize that because we live in a society where many biases exist, we must counteract them or else we will support them through our silence.
- At home or at school, give children messages that deliberately contrast stereotypes by providing books, dolls, toys, wall decorations, TV programs, and music that show:
  - Men and women in nontraditional roles,
  - People of color in leadership positions,
  - People with disabilities doing activities familiar to children, and
  - Various types of families and family structures
- Show no bias in the friends, doctors, teachers, and other service providers that you choose, nor in the stores where you shop. Remember what you do is as important as what you say.
- Make it a firm rule that a person's appearance is never an acceptable reason for teasing or rejecting them. Immediately step in if you hear or see your child behave in such a way.
- Talk positively about each child's physical characteristics and cultural heritage. Help children learn the differences between feelings of superiority and those of self-esteem and pride in their own heritage.
- Provide opportunities for children to interact with other children who are racially/culturally different from themselves and with people who have various disabilities.
- Respectfully listen to and answer children's questions about themselves and others. Don't ignore, change the subject, or in any way make the child think she is bad for asking such a question.

- Teach children how to challenge biases about who they are. Give them tools to confront those who act biased against them.
- Use accurate and fair images in contrast to stereotypes, and encourage children to talk about the differences. Help them to think critically about what they see in books, movies, greeting cards, comics, and on TV.
- Let children know that unjust things can be changed. Encourage children to challenge bias, and involve children in taking action on issues relevant to their lives.

Building a healthy self-identity is a process that continues all our lives. Help children get a head start by teaching them to resist bias, and to value the differences between people as much as the similarities.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

Behavior management (commonly referred to as discipline) at the Early Learning Center is viewed as a vehicle through which staff help to establish a foundation for positive self-esteem in each child. It is the goal of all staff members at the ELC to help children make good choices, be self-directed and become self-managers.

Discipline is *never* seen as punishment and any practices that would humiliate, threaten or shame a child will *never* be used at the ELC. Rather teachers will gently guide and positively re-direct behaviors of children that would be hurtful either to themselves or other children. Our ultimate goal is to foster greater self-esteem and respect for others. Behavior management is designed to promote the development of self-direction, self-control and socially acceptable behavior. During any intervention, it is imperative that the child is perceiving a positive rather than a negative picture of him/herself as an acceptable person and that only his/her actions are deemed inappropriate. Children will be given an immediate alternative to the inappropriate behavior in order to empower them to control their own behavior.

The following statements represent the behavior management techniques that will be used at the Early Learning Center:

1. Children will be encouraged to resolve conflicts through first identifying and verbally expressing their feelings, wants, needs, and desires. "Use your words" is a phrase commonly heard in our classroom.
2. Children will be reminded of safety and classroom rules in a positive manner. We will tell children what we want them to do – not what we don't want them to do.
3. Children will be given alternatives to their behavior. Logical consequences will be explained and followed through. For instance, if a child intentionally pours paint on the floor, they will be asked to help clean up the mess and reminded that paint needs to stay in the container. At times it may be necessary to remove a child from a situation to help them calm down or because they are not able to self-manage. They will be allowed to return to the activity when they feel they can return with self-control. Corporal punishment or spanking is never to take place. Physical restraint may be used if the child is a danger to himself or others.
4. Only soft, low voice tones will be used in our classrooms. When setting limits we will be in close proximity and at the child's eye level.

We consider all staff at ELC as partners with you, the parents, working together to provide the best possible atmosphere and influence for your children during their time at ELC.

## **It's ALL Important Information!**

Teachers need a stable, consistent group of well-rested children to successfully meet their curriculum goals. Therefore, we request that your child be here by no later than 9:00 a.m. (The ELC opens at 8:00 a.m.) Children who arrive late often have a difficult time adjusting the day or separating from their family. Children need time to greet friends and "settle in" before structured activities begin.

**Changes in pick up and arrival routines:** Most families fall into regular arrival and pick-up routines individual to their schedules. Please let teachers know if there will be a change in your routine. This notice helps teachers to prepare children for schedule changes that can be upsetting to them. Also, most families fall into regular routines regarding who is bringing and picking up the child. Please note: Children may be brought to and picked up from the ELC only by those adults listed on the child's emergency card. We suggest that families designate two other authorized adults in addition to themselves as emergencies do occur making it impossible to bring or pick-up your child. (OAR 414-300-0040) Please report any changes of address or phone number to us immediately. (OAR 414-300-0040).

**Signing in/out:** The guardian, or an adult authorized by the guardian, must take the child into and out of the classroom by sign in or out each day. Adults are the only persons allowed to open doors. Children are not allowed to open doors. The ELC does not become responsible for children until they have been signed in and greeted by a teacher. Do not leave your child in the classroom until a teacher has greeted him/her. Please make sure a teacher is aware that you are taking your child from school.

**Security system:** The ELC's door is locked at all times. If you arrive prior to 8:00 a.m. or are late arriving to pick up your child you will not be able to enter the building until a staff member opens the door for you. Note: There are 2 doorbells one that rings upstairs and is generally not heard downstairs, the other rings downstairs. There is campus security available should there be an emergency. If you need immediate assistance, you may call the general campus number at 503.517.1000.

**Enrollment and Attendance:** Our classroom has a set maximum enrollment determined by the licensing and accreditation guidelines for the particular age group and room size. Enrollment is for the academic year, with a September start date. We will enroll mid-year if there is space available.

Each February families have the opportunity to register their child for the following academic year. Changes in attendance during the academic year can only be made on a space available basis. The director will track requests for changes in attendance and offer schedule options as space becomes available. Completed enrollment forms and a non-refundable registration fee are required before a child is enrolled in the program.

**Holidays, In-service Days, and Breaks:** We would like to thank families for helping us maintain a high quality program for young children by supporting our staff needs. Research shows that high quality programs for children include a strong in-service component. In recognition of the importance of in-service for teachers and administrators, both the state childcare licensing regulations and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) require frequent in-service training.

Please check your calendar in the enrollment packet for a listing of our days open and closures.

**Meals:** Children are provided a healthy morning snack (snack sign up and menus are posted on the message board). All special requirements your child may have are considered in the planning of the menu. Each child is encouraged to bring their own water bottle for water. If they stay for lunch, please pack a lunch for them and include a small snack for the afternoon. (OAR 414-300-0250, 414-300-0270, 414-300-0280). If your child has a special diet, we are not aware of please inform the Director. All staff have current food handlers card and follow health and safety guidelines. (OAR

**Clothing:** It is important that your child's clothing be suitable for the season and weather conditions as we do go outside every day. Your child will better enjoy his/her time if dressed in comfortable, easy to launder clothing. Please send extra clothing in case of messy activities, or accidents and please label all clothing and bags. Tennis shoes, rather than sandals, protect feet during running and climbing on play equipment, and are strongly recommended for our program. During the winter, warm clothing (hats, mittens coats) is needed for outdoor play.

**Teachers and Staff:** Education, as well as continued education, experience, and good role models for children qualify our early learning teachers, staff, and volunteers. All staff members are background checked and hold first aid/CPR certification. (OAR 414-300-0120) Our center staff are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect; this is anything that might endanger the health, well-being, and welfare of children. Please do not leave young children unattended in cars. Preschool children must have car seats to be transported. We will call 911 if a person transports a child while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. (OAR 414-300-0030)

**Severe Weather and Closure:** When Warner Pacific University is closed due to snow, ice or any type of hazardous conditions the ELC is also closed. This information is up to date on the Warner Pacific University website. In the event of a major ice storm or extreme weather conditions please get alerts via radio, and television.

**Absences:** No billing adjustments will be made for illness, weather-related absences, or your vacations. If your child will be absent, we ask that you make a courtesy call.

**Financial Agreement:** A financial agreement is contracted for each family based on the number of days for which you have enrolled your child. It is important that you carefully read the information concerning our financial policy before you initial your agreement. This agreement is your commitment to have your child participate in our program for a specific number of hours per day, and days per week. The contract cannot be altered for the current month. Ongoing changes for future months must be made in writing with a minimum of 5 business days notice prior to the first of the month.

**Tuition payments should be received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. If tuition is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month a \$25 late fee will be charged, which will need to be paid before the next month's tuition is due. An email will be sent notifying you of the \$25 late fee.**

Returned checks are assessed a \$25 fee from the Warner Pacific University Business Office and the ELC. For accounts that are 45 days in arrears (and without an agreement with the Director) children will be excluded from class. Unpaid accounts on withdrawal are sent to collections after a reasonable period of time.

**Family visitation:** The ELC maintains an open school policy. Families are always welcome to visit the center and have access to their child at all times during the school day. Guardians have the right

to view their child's file. However, if siblings will also attend please ask the teacher as per licensing those children will count in the total on site attendance. (OAR 414-300-0030)

**Health:** We are a program for healthy children. Children must be excluded if they need one-on-one care, or, in the last 24 hours, have had a fever of 101°F or more. If your child has symptoms that prevent participation in regular activities, vomiting, diarrhea, untreated lice or nits, or any other contagious illness. If antibiotic treatment is necessary, the child may return 24 hours after starting treatment. (OAR 414-300-0220) We want to stress prevention of disease, so please notify the teacher or director if your child becomes ill (i.e. strep, rashes, pink eye, etc.). Notify the teacher of any allergies or other changes in your child's health as well.

**Medication:** If your child requires medication to be dispensed during school hours, you will need to sign a release and inform the teacher of specific instructions. (OAR 414-300-0230)

**Emergency medical procedure/care:** In case of a medical emergency, we will attempt to contact the family, guardian, or the persons listed on the emergency information form. If the family cannot be contacted, we will do one or more of the following:

1. Call a paramedic (911)
2. In the event that the child needs to be transported to the hospital, we will make every effort to send a staff with the child. Any expenses incurred in this process will be the responsibility of the child's family.

**Natural Emergency Information:** Though we have not experienced a major natural disaster, we want to take precautions should an emergency state occur while your child or children are in our care. We prepare students by teaching them how to react safely through regular fire drills, earthquake drills, and mock emergencies.

In the event of a natural disaster:

1. Please do not call the school. We must have the lines open for emergency calls.
2. Turn your radio to major stations on the AM dial. Information and directions will be given over the radio for general safety instructions. As soon as it is deemed safe to travel, proceed to the school. If you work on the other side of the river, please have a backup available to get your children in case of major bridge or freeway obstruction.
3. When you arrive at the school, please do not block roadways with your car, and remember to maintain a calm and positive attitude in the presence of the children. Children will be released only to authorized persons who will provide their signature on the sign-out sheet.
4. The childcare programs are prepared to care for your child(ren) in times of critical situations if it takes you a while to get here.

In the event the building has been evacuated:

1. We will have emergency personnel on site to direct you to the evacuation site.
2. Again, remember to maintain a calm and positive attitude in the presence of the children. Children will be released only to authorized persons.



## **Final Thoughts**

When you enroll your child at the ELC, we as a staff, assume the responsibility of giving you assistance with your child's unique needs. We will become the "parent for the day" in your absence. We will love and respect your child and help him/her grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, and mentally. Your child will be given our maximum consideration as an individual. We will look after the health of your child while at school, and present multiple opportunities for enriching experiences. Our goal is to provide high quality care in an atmosphere of love and respect that fosters growth in moral and spiritual values.

*Warner Pacific University operates in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and applicable state and local laws. These laws, as amended, include prohibition of discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin or disability. Warner Pacific University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with applicable nondiscrimination law.*