

2011/2012 PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the La Luz Early Childhood Center (La Luz ECC). Please take the time to familiarize yourself with this handbook as it should answer many of your questions. This handbook will give you more detailed information about La Luz ECC's policies and procedures along with many **important dates** so please keep this in a handy place. We suggest that you calendar all **CLOSURE DATES** as soon as possible so that you are not taken off-guard. All parents will be asked to sign a form stating they have received, read and understood the information contained within these pages so we can be sure all are up-to-date.

In August of 2002, La Luz ECC was opened in response to the lack of high quality childcare in the area. The school was originally formed and continues to be overseen by a board of directors affiliated with Sandia National Laboratory (SNL) and Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union. La Luz ECC is a state licensed, independently owned and operated 501(c)(3) school receiving all of its support from tuition income and from fundraising efforts.

La Luz ECC's mission is to offer a child-centered, learning environment providing developmentally appropriate care and education in a nurturing atmosphere designed to foster your child's, aged 6 weeks through 5 years, social, physical and cognitive growth. La Luz ECC does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, disability, national origin or any other factor protected by law. You can visit our website at: <http://www.laluzeclc.org> for more information.

Our Director is Carol Piskorski and our Assistant Director/Business Manager is Lisa R. Opperman. Please feel free to contact either one of them should you have any concerns, comments or questions either in person or at (505) 237-7237.

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La Luz Early Childhood Center Goals and Educational Philosophy

La Luz ECC is a 501(c)(3) not for profit program that:

- Is licensed by the State of New Mexico.
- Follows all guidelines as established by the NAEYC.
- Practices relationship-based care.
- Welcomes children from ages 6 weeks to 5 years and their families.
- Is responsive to individual differences.
- **Does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, disability, national origin or any other factor protected by law.**
- Encourages healthy peer relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Develops each child's self worth and confidence.
- Employs an anti-bias, multi-cultural curriculum.
- Is safe, clean and healthful.
- Promotes emotional growth.
- Is developmentally appropriate.
- Has a professional staff that has been chosen based upon their education, experience, enthusiasm, love of children, commitment to early childhood education and to the Center's philosophies.

Children learn most thoroughly and joyfully through play. Our philosophy is grounded in the developmental sequence of childhood and tempered by our close observation and delight in individual differences. All areas of a young child's growth (physical, motor, social, language, emotional, cognitive) are interrelated and contribute synergistically to help the child reach his or her potential. A strong emotional foundation is the key to acquiring the building blocks of lifelong learning - curiosity, confidence, cooperativeness, the ability to express oneself and listen, the desire to become involved, and self control. Our program provides a loving, attentive environment in order to give each child this emotional base, while providing a varied, flexible **curriculum** with opportunities for large muscle development, open-ended art exploration, science, puzzles, blocks, dancing and music, pretend play, and lots of books. Children will be able to make choices, solve problems and learn to be responsible for their actions. Field trips for the preschoolers and pre-kindergartners enrich the children's understanding of the world around them. Family participation allows children and parents to learn the power of play together and preserves the role of parents as the child's primary teachers. Continuity of care in our infant/toddler program is a unique feature of La Luz ECC. Children stay with the same team of teachers and mostly the same group of children from babyhood until they are ready for the preschool class. The children change rooms, but not teachers, once each year. Once graduated from the infant/toddler program, the children will enter our preschool for one year then a pre-kindergarten program for another year.

Child to Teacher Ratios

<u>Child's Room</u>	<u>Max. La Luz Child to Teacher Ratio:</u>	<u>Max. State Legal Ratio</u>	<u>Max. La Luz Class/Group Size</u>	<u>Max. State Group Size</u>
Infant/Wee Toddlers	3.5 to 1	6 to 1	7	10
Young Toddlers (ages 12-24 months)	4.5 to 1	6 to 1	9	10
Young Toddlers (ages 24+ months)	4.5 to 1	10 to 1	9	16
Older Toddlers (ages 24 – 36months)	6 to 1	10 to 1	12	16
Older Toddlers (ages 3+)	6 to 1	12 to 1	12	24
Preschool	7 to 1	12 to 1	14	24
Preschool/Pre-K	7.5 to 1	12 to 1	15	24
Pre-K	8 to 1	12 to 1	16	24

Faculty

Our teachers are all required to have college level training in early childhood education. Lead teachers must have, as a minimum, a CDA credential. Some of our teachers have more advanced degrees such as Master's, Bachelor's and Associate's degrees. All were chosen for their ability to relate well with children and for their ability to apply their education in a warm, nurturing manner. They are professionals who are here to be of service to anyone in the lives of their charges. Assistant teachers must have, as a minimum, 45 hours of early childhood education. In addition, all teachers working more than 20 hours per week must complete 24 hours of continuing education per year while those working less than 20 hours per week must complete 12 hours per year. All of our teachers are CPR, First Aid and Blood Bourne Pathogen certified.

Open Door Policy

The relationship between teachers and family members is one of mutual respect and equality. Families are invited to observe and participate at any time. The relationship between directors and family is open door as well. Any questions, concerns or comments are always welcome and encouraged.

Concerns and Compliments

Parents are urged to be candid when they have concerns or compliments. We are committed to providing the **BEST** school experience for each child. If you feel this is not being accomplished, we want this feedback. There are several ways in which to address your feelings. 1) There is an anonymous Comment Box on top of the Parent Mailboxes that is checked frequently. 2) You may approach one of your children's teachers for a discussion and if you feel you have been unable to resolve your concerns with the teacher, please contact the Director or Assistant Director. (Of course, you can always go straight to administration as our door is always open.) 3) Finally, we will provide you with a survey towards the end of our school year to see how you feel that we've done. This will give us insight as to what is working and where we need to work harder.

Hours of Operation

La Luz ECC's hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. **(Please note that La Luz ECC does not open until 7:00 a.m. even though teachers may be arriving to set up their rooms before this time. Because we cannot give your child the attention that they deserve while setting up the classrooms, we will not accept a child before opening.)**

Calling the School

Anyone calling the school should anticipate that the voice mail system might take the message. Our first priority is to attend to the children so please **DO** leave a message. We will endeavor to call you back as soon as we check our messages.

If you are worried about a child who was upset when you left, by all means call and we will return your call as soon as possible. But rest assured, we won't let a seriously upset child cry and cry. If we are unable to comfort a child in a reasonable amount of time, we will call you.

Available Schedules

We offer full and part time schedules. Our part time program consists of either 2 or 3 full days per week. We try to be flexible about our schedules when possible but there are times (when the classes are becoming full) when only certain schedules are offered. Please give us a much notice as possible if you are interested in changing your schedule. If the room is full, this might not always be possible but we will do our best to accommodate your request.

Snow Day or Cancellation

La Luz ECC will close if travel becomes hazardous due to weather conditions. On days when our schedule coincides with the Albuquerque Public School's (APS) system (i.e. both La Luz and APS are in session), we will delay our opening until 10:00am if they call for a delay. If APS cancels school due to snow/weather we will also close. In the event of a cancellation, we will announce it on KOAT-TV (Channel 7) and possibly on KRQE (Channel 13). **Please check for it on their websites as they no longer run daycares, churches or businesses on their news ticker.** We will also have teachers call you at home and will update the message on the phone of our main number to reflect our status (i.e. delayed, closed, etc). If APS closes early, we will move up our closing time to 4:00pm. During APS vacation breaks (while La Luz is open for business), if SNL or Kirtland Air Force Base are closed or delayed, we will be delayed (again, opening at 10:00 am) or you can check the stations listed above or our voicemail message for a closure.

Holidays/Closures

La Luz ECC's staff development, support and retention are extremely important. Our staff is eligible for paid holidays and is required to attend several In-Service days throughout the year. Please understand that **you are responsible** for providing care for your children during these times. Because we do pay our staff even though we are closed, **full tuition is due for months in which these holidays/closures occur and also during any vacation that your family may take during the year.** *Please note that Fall Planning Days may change in accordance w/APS.

HOLIDAYS/CLOSURES FOR 2007-2008

Labor Day	September 5, 2011
Thanksgiving Break	November 24 – 25, 2011
Winter Break	December 26 – 30, 2011
New Year's Day	January 2, 2012
Staff In-Service Day	March 9, 2012
Memorial Day	May 28, 2012
Independence Day	July 4, 2012
Fall Planning/In-Service Days*	August 13 –14, 2012

Finding Alternate Care

La Luz ECC understands that certain teachers are asked from time to time to baby-sit for children. Please understand that if one of our staff members agrees to care for your child (ren), **they are acting on their own behalf and not as an employee of La Luz ECC.** La Luz ECC is in no way responsible for anything that might occur outside of the school and offers no assurances as to the quality of care that you may receive outside of our facility.

Daily Schedule

Because children feel more comfortable with a routine, activities will follow a predictable sequence. The younger the child is, the more flexible the schedule needs to be. Babies' individual rhythms will be respected and accommodated.

Our classroom schedules are set up to allow a balance of active and more quiet times, with blocks of time for exploratory play and for both individual and group activities. A schedule is posted in each room, but will vary from time to time as teachers are sensitive to the needs of the children.

Drop In Procedure

Children enrolled on a part time schedule may attend on their days off, **if** the program is not full, and **only** with **prior** permission from the **front office**. Please **do not arrange drop in days with the teachers** directly as they may not be aware of what is happening in the other classes throughout the school (i.e. if ratio is extremely low in one class, we may "borrow" one of the three teachers in that room to substitute in a class where a teacher is absent). The fee is \$65 per day for pre-kindergartners, preschoolers and older toddlers, and \$75 per day for young toddlers and infants. Please note that because of the complexity of our enrollment, switching days is not always possible for part-time families. If you need a change in your schedule, again, please contact the front desk ahead of time where they maintain a notebook with drop-ins and vacations.

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first day of the month **and is considered late after the 5th of the month**. Please refer to a current fee schedule or to your contract for payment amounts. If your child (ren) cannot attend scheduled days for any reason (including vacations, illnesses, etc), tuition is still due. Additionally, tuition is still due for the last 30 days of enrollment regardless of whether your child attends those days or not. **A late fee of \$15 will be assessed after the 5th of the month** if tuition is not paid.

Fees

At the time of enrollment, there is a non-refundable application fee of \$80.00, a supply/materials fee of \$80.00 for any enrollment beyond 3 days per week or \$50.00 for 2 – 3 day per week enrollees, which is also non-refundable, plus a \$150.00 deposit (which is applied towards your child's last month of tuition with a 30-day written notification) due **per** child. These will secure your child's space in a classroom. Every year thereafter, a non-refundable renewal fee of \$50.00 plus the supply/materials fee will be due. If you are late picking up your child (ren), **a fee of \$1.00 will be assessed for each minute late beginning at 6:01** and will be

added to your monthly bill. Emergencies will be taken into account. **Please call the school if you have an emergency.** If a check is returned on our account, a NSF charge of \$15.00 will be charged.

Admissions Policies

Requirements

The principal criteria for admission are that the child would benefit from joining the school and that family members feel compatible with the school's mission, philosophy and style. A visit to the school and discussions with the teacher, Director and those currently affiliated with La Luz ECC are useful in making this decision.

To begin the program, a child must be at least 6 weeks old and (usually) no older than 4 years old as of September of the current year. Potty training is not a requirement for the preschool class (or any class at La Luz ECC), **however**, all children entering pre-school, must show some progress towards this endeavor. Please begin training at home when your child (ren) shows readiness to avoid the "trauma" of having multiple accidents at school. Once success is shown at home, we will work with your child here to help create a non-pressured transition into potty training.

For parents wanting to secure space for a future date for their infants, all fees must be paid in full at the time the enrollment forms are turned in and tuition will be charged at half of the monthly rate each month until the child is actually in attendance. **Additionally, sibling discounts will not be available until both children are physically in attendance.**

No child will be allowed to attend La Luz ECC until all health forms are completed and returned to the school. Immunizations must be kept up to date and a current copy must be given to the front office each time a new immunization is received. A conscientious objection form must be received prior to admission and must be renewed according to state requirements.

Applications for Admission

Applications will be accepted at any time for current classes.

All fees, health records and application forms must be submitted with each application, which includes each child from the same family.

In-house registration begins in spring for children currently enrolled at the school and their siblings who wish to enroll for the following year. The system for priority of acceptance, provided application is made prior to the closing date for in-house registration, is:

1. Children currently enrolled whose tuition payments are up-to-date.
2. Siblings of children currently at La Luz ECC.

3. Children whose family members were previously enrolled.
4. Applicants who have been on the waiting list for more than 6 months.

After in-house registration, all applications will be considered in the order in which they are received. Once enrollment is full a waiting list will be started.

Disenrollment Procedure

A 30 day written notice is required when you disenroll your child. If a 30 day notice is given, your tuition deposit will be applied towards your last month's tuition; otherwise it will be forfeited to La Luz ECC **and** in addition, you will be responsible for tuition due for the 30 day period following your child's last day or as of the date that notice is actually given. For example, if written notice is given on May 19 (and assuming tuition is paid up through the end of May), you will be billed additionally for June 1 – June 18 less the \$150 deposit. If you decide to withdraw your child with no notice on May 19, tuition will be charged from May 20 – June 19 and your deposit will **NOT** be applied. Please note that we will make every legal effort to collect money due to La Luz ECC.

Dismissal Policy

The School may request the withdrawal of any member of the school who does not meet his or her obligations, financial or otherwise. A parent may be asked to withdraw any child from the school for reasons benefiting the school or the child, at the discretion of the Director.

Severe problems between children and teachers or between parents and teachers that do not improve after the staff, parents, administration and outside professionals have worked together to resolve the problems, may result in dismissal. In the event of a dismissal, tuition will be considered due through the child's last day of enrollment.

Donations and Fundraising

La Luz ECC's ability to provide the highest quality of care and education for your young children is dependent upon the financial support and in-kind donations of current and previously enrolled families, grandparents and local businesses among others. All donations are tax deductible and are essential to our success.

A percentage of La Luz ECC's budget relies upon parent participation in fundraising opportunities such as personal and business giving. **United Way** is one program we participate in. **SSTPS, Inc or SSTPS, Inc dba La Luz Early Childhood Center** is the designation for this campaign. You will be asked to support these programs and we thank you in advance for

your support. Our target goal raised **per child** enrolled per year is \$400. This can be money directly contributed to us or through United Way. In addition, an amount equal to \$1.00 per month per child is built into your monthly tuition amount and will be placed into a scholarship fund for families needing assistance. If you have any questions or concerns about La Luz ECC's fundraising needs, opportunities or volunteering your time for any of them, please contact our Director or the Business Manager.

Daily Routines for Parents

1. Please use only designated parking spaces. Children must be escorted into and out of the classroom with the teacher aware of their attendance. **Never leave other children unattended in your cars.** Only use the front door on the west side of the building to enter/leave La Luz ECC.
2. **Please drive slowly in the parking lot** and hold your child's hand when walking into school.
3. **Please do not allow your children to push the handicap buttons for access into or out of the building.** While we understand that these buttons are fun to use, they are for the use of our parents or members of the Credit Union that truly need them. When the buttons break due to excessive or forced use, some of our patrons are unable to gain access into the building and the Credit Union may be forced to ask you for a replacement.
4. Children must be signed in and out of school at **two** places each day. Per the State of NM Licensing Regulations, when you come into the center, please list the time checked in and out along with your initials in the Daily Sign-In Book at the front desk. Additionally, in each classroom there is a notebook near the doorway with a page for each child. Again, initial each morning and afternoon with the date and time. **If someone else is picking up your child, you must inform the front desk** as well as your child's teacher. Please notify us even if the person picking up your child is on your list and authorized to pick them up. We must have the names of anyone authorized to pick up your child on file (located on the Emergency Contacts and Authorized Pick-Up form-see **FORM A** at the end of this handbook). If someone is unknown to us, we will check and make a copy of their photo I.D. **We will not release a child without your authorization.**
5. Parent mailboxes are located inside the entrance to the kitchen/multipurpose room. Please check them **daily**.
6. Check any notices on the coded entrance door. These are important and relevant to you and your child.

7. Call to inquire whether space is available for a drop in at the front desk. It is very important that the office knows who will be coming as they may be aware of other drop-ins that the teacher may not know about.
8. Call to inform us of absences, late arrivals or early/late pick ups. This will help us make space available for others who may need it.
9. In the event you find an Accident/Incident Report (see **FORM B**) in your mailbox, please sign the top copy and return it to the front desk then keep the bottom copy for your records.
10. Books in the Parent Library can be checked out for a week at a time. The Parent Library is located next to the parent mailboxes.

Appropriate Dress

Sometimes we get a little messy when we play...quite often, actually. We'll be painting, gluing, playing with water and sand and many other messy mediums. **Please dress your child in clothes that can get dirty, and dress for floor time on the days you come to stay.** If you're afraid that the clothes may get ruined or stained, do not clothe your child in them. **Please do not send your child (ren) dressed in dress-up clothes unless it is a special dress day in your child's class.** Also, please make sure your child comes in shoes (closed toe preferable) with back straps. **Please no flip flops or crocs.** This just helps prevent injuries. Additionally, make sure your child has a labeled change of clothing, including underwear and socks, outdoor items such as a coat, gloves, and hat in cooler months and a swimsuit and sun hat during warmer months. They will be kept in his/her cubby. We do have a few extra items of clothing for emergencies. If your child wears diapers, please bring disposable diapers/pull-ups and wipes labeled with the child's name.

Saying Goodbye

Please don't slip away without saying goodbye. It's important that your child has a chance to say goodbye so that his or her sense of trust stays intact. Some helpful pointers are: establishing satisfying arrival and departure routines with your child, being consistent in following your routines, always saying goodbye and preparing your child (ren) for any changes in your daily routine ahead of time. Soon being separated along with the excitement of being together again will become part of you and your child's day. For more pointers, please see the front desk for a copy of "So Many Goodbyes" published by the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

Discipline Statement

Our discipline policy follows the principles of positive discipline. We will not humiliate, berate or belittle a child. We will never strike a child nor withhold food. We use redirection, substitution, active listening and mediation techniques to resolve problems, according to the age and capabilities of the child. Occasionally an older child is removed from the group to regain control. This is not used punitively, but as a chance for the child to have a quiet atmosphere in which to calm down. An empathetic adult will be close by. Further, we will not tolerate the following disciplinary practices according to state licensing regulations (8.16.2.23): “A center will not use the following disciplinary practices: a) physical punishment of any type, including shaking, biting, hitting, pinching or putting anything in the child’s mouth; b) withdrawal of food, rest, bathroom access or outdoor activities; c) abusive or profane language, including yelling; d) any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment, and/or e) unsupervised separation.”

Confidentiality Policy

During the course of employment, La Luz ECC employees will have access to certain types of information, including without limitation to, personal and family information regarding the children enrolled here at the school, as well as internal policies, procedures and reprimands of staff. We take all confidential information very seriously. Our employees all sign a Confidentiality Agreement as condition of their employment and therefore shall not share this information with other employees **or parents**. For example, in the case of a child showing aggression towards another child, it is our policy never to divulge the child who was the aggressor. As your child grows, they may be able to tell you who may have hurt them but please do not ask our teachers. In the instance that a parent makes such an inquiry, our staff has been instructed to refer them to the front office.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

As teachers and caregivers, it is our responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect. If one of our teachers suspects abuse/neglect, it is our policy to have them bring it to the attention of the front office. If after further observation, by the director and the child’s teachers, it remains suspected, we will report our findings to the Statewide Central Intake. Under New Mexico law, if you suspect abuse and/or neglect and do not report your suspicion, you can be charged with a misdemeanor in a court of law.

Parental Involvement Opportunities

1. VISIT YOUR CHILD'S ROOM

La Luz Early Childhood Center is a place for children and the people who love them. We welcome family members at any time and invite you to spend the morning or afternoon in your child's classroom on a regular basis.

2. TAKE ON A TASK

La Luz ECC needs to tap the talent of all its members so we can function well. Just as in any family, not all the tasks are glamorous, but all are greatly needed and very much appreciated. Below are just some of the ways to help:

Classroom Parent: Organizes field trips, classroom functions and/or classroom newsletters.

Classroom Volunteer: This includes organizing art projects, story time, and/or science projects. (Your knowledge is our knowledge!)

Scholastic Book Orders: Handles monthly Scholastic Book Club orders as well as two Book Fairs each year.

Web Site Volunteer: Collecting testimonials and other materials to enhance our website.

Organizer: Help keep shed, First Aid Cabinet or storage shelves organized. (This is a BIG job for more than one parent!!)

Snacks and Meals

La Luz ECC serves breakfast, juice, lunch and an afternoon snack. Breakfast is served from 8:30 – 9:00am. At 9:00am, all food and dishes will be returned to the kitchen. **If you will be dropping off your child at or after 9:00am, please provide them with breakfast at home.** A 4:30 p.m. snack is set out in the kitchen for the children and is optional for parents to take with them as they leave in the evening. Weekly menus are posted on the **Parent Board** and copies are left next to the front desk's sign in book. We encourage variety so that the children are introduced to many different kinds of food. Good nutrition is vital to a child's development and to a lifelong healthy habit. **We kindly ask that you not bring in food for your child if they are a finicky eater.** Often it takes dozens of times of seeing a food before a child will even try it. We also have many children throughout the school with food allergies, some of them severe. Further, it prevents jealousy among the children which could lead to a disagreement. If you have a favorite recipe, we're open to suggestions. We adhere to USDA recommendations and New Mexico state regulations. **Drinks must be 100% fruit juice, or 2% or whole milk (no powdered milk). Children age 2 and under must drink whole milk.**

Infants will never be fed a food at school without first trying it at home. Parents of infants will be asked to circle food items they are allowed to have on a copy of the menu to be left in your child's classroom. Certain foods will not be fed to infants, such as egg whites and citrus fruits, until permission is given by the child's parent.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, **the front desk must be notified** so that these can be posted (it is also a good idea to notify your child's teacher). Along with our kitchen manager, we will work with you to make sure your child stays safe. Please keep us informed, as soon as possible, of any changes to your child's allergy list so that we can make sure we are not withholding or serving a food item inadvertently to your child.

We are a nut free facility, so do not bring nut related products to school, i.e. peanut butter, sweet breads containing nuts, muffins containing nuts, cereals and granolas containing nuts, etc.

If you'd like to bring in special treats for your child's class, please check with teachers and/or administrators first to make sure that each child in the class can enjoy them.

Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating each child's birthday and welcome you and other family members to join in the fun. Please let your child's teacher know at least a week in advance if you are planning a school party and please, **no balloons**. Balloons cause a lot of disruption when they pop, but mainly because they pose a severe choking hazard. Because we have so many children within the classrooms with allergies (some of them very severe), we ask that you **DO NOT BRING: nuts, popcorn, candy (including chocolate candy), fruit drinks containing less than 100% juice or artificially flavored drinks, i.e. sodas.** You can check with your child's teacher to determine exactly what allergies are specific to your child's room.

Please **do** bring healthy snacks and treats such as Jell-O, muffins, fruit, yogurt including yogurt pops, 100% fruit juice, (and of course cupcakes) etc. Healthy eating habits start at a young age so please encourage good nutrition even during celebrations.

If your child is having a birthday party away from the Center and wishes to invite class members, **please use the parent mailboxes to distribute invitations (or the US Postal Service) rather than the children's cubbies.** We don't want hurt feelings if all class mates are not invited.

Toys from home

Since bringing in toys from home often creates friction between your child and others in their class, we ask that you not allow your child to bring toys (other than transitional/nap toys), candy, or food of any kind into the classroom unless it is for a class subject such as the sharing box, letter box, etc.

Holiday Celebrations

Generally, the approach to holidays is low-key. Our goal is to have class observance of holidays reflect different cultures and traditions, particularly as they apply to the families of the students in attendance. During the holiday season, we will celebrate and expose the children to a variety of ways in which different cultures celebrate. If you have a tradition that you'd like to share with your child's class, please discuss the particulars with your child's teacher.

Field Trips/Auto Safety

Field trips will be announced in the class newsletter and on the parent bulletin boards within the classrooms. A field trip permission form must be signed for each field trip your child (ren) attends. Children will be transported in parent vehicles and not with the teachers. We must have a copy of your current insurance and driver's license on file before you can drive children other than your own. Please make sure children are properly strapped in and please lock the doors. Children should ride in a car seat or booster seat according to state law, which at the present time states: *that children under 1 must ride in a rear facing car seat in the back seat if the vehicle has one or in a seat not in front of an airbag; children 6 and under as well as those that weigh less than 60 pounds, regardless of age, must ride in a car or booster seat; and children aged 7 to 12 must be secured by a seat belt or booster seat that fits their height and weight.* You should leave a labeled car seat or booster on the days of field trips if you are unable to drive. Children may not ride in the front seat. Any adult transporting five or more children under age five **must** have a second adult riding with them. If you are not **SURE** your car is safe, please do not volunteer to drive. Smoking is **never** allowed in the cars if you are transporting other children. Each car must have an emergency kit containing a fire extinguisher, first aid kit and manual, water and a blanket when transporting children (other than your own). These will be provided by the school.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences will be conducted at least twice a year. See the current school calendar for dates. Conference time is used to discuss your child's interests and developmental progress and any concerns you or your child's teachers may have. Of course, we are happy to discuss concerns at any time. For extensive conversations, please make an appointment with your child's teacher as their first concern is the safety and well being of the children within the classroom.

Health and Safety

SICK CHILDREN

If you know your child is ill, she or he should not come to school. Parents must inform administrators immediately of any child who contracts an infectious disease so that other families can be notified as required by New Mexico law. There are some diseases which must be reported to the State of New Mexico and you can refer to the notice labeled “Notifiable Diseases and Conditions in New Mexico” on the bulletin board by the main entrance door. A sick child might feel unhappy at school; she or he should remain at home until able to resume normal activities, including outdoor play. **If your child is too sick to play outside, your child is too sick to come to school.** Even a cold can cause a child to tire easily and the busyness of school can exacerbate this. Occasionally symptoms worsen after the child arrives at school. If a child has any of the following conditions or does not appear to be tolerating school for health reasons, the child will be sent home for the day along with a Sick Child Form (see **Form D**). You must pick your child up within one hour of notification. If your child is sent home for illness, please understand that it is a decision aimed only at keeping everyone else healthy. **It’s important to remember that healthy young children get sick an average of ten times per year.** Please try to set up at least two contingency plans for when your child must stay home.

We are not physicians or qualified health practitioners capable of making diagnosis, but we will act on the following as is conventional practice in schools:

1. **Diarrhea or vomiting.** The child may return when free from symptoms for 24 hours. Children will be sent home if they have a watery stool that can not be contained in a diaper or underpants or 3 or more, soft, loose stools in a 4 hour period.
2. **Impetigo.** The child may return to school after antibiotics have been administered for 24 hours, or when sores are very dry with no yellow crust, and no longer oozing (about 7-10 days), with a doctor’s note.
3. **Fever.** Temperatures **above 100.4F (oral) or 99.4F (axillary or under arm).** Your child may return when free from fever for **24 hours without** fever reducing medication.
4. **General Malaise.** A child who does not eat or have the energy to participate in activities does not belong at school.
5. **Earache.** The child should be seen by a physician and in the case of an ear infection, may return to school following a minimum of 24 hours of treatment with antibiotics.
6. **Pediculosis (head lice).** The child may return to school following a minimum of two days of treatment.

7. **Cold.** The child may attend school if he or she is free from fever and general malaise. If a child has a lingering cough (a signal of an upper respiratory infection), he or she should be seen by a physician.
8. **Ringworm or Athlete's Foot.** The child may attend if the infected area is being treated and is covered.
9. **Strep Throat.** The child may return to school after 24 hours of treatment with prescription medication. Restriction concerning no fever for 24 hours also applies.
10. **Conjunctivitis (pink-eye).** The child may return to school following 24 hours of treatment with prescription medication.
11. **Rash.** Out of care until a doctor determines that the rash is not contagious or has a diagnosis.

It is important that children who have been ill not be sent back to school when they are still at risk. A low resistance jeopardizes your child's health.

Children with chronic illnesses (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.) should submit a signed doctor's plan of health care at the time of enrollment.

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION RECORD

No child will be allowed to attend class until all required health forms are completed and returned to the school. We must have a record of up-to-date immunizations or a religious/conscientious objection exemption letter from the State Department of Health on file before school begins. The conscientious objection exemption **must** be renewed every 9 months.

HAND WASHING

Washing our hands is our first line of defense against illness. The children and staff will wash hands routinely after blowing noses, toileting, before and after food preparation and eating and after handling pets. The time needed to wash hands properly (20 seconds) is equivalent to singing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.

COUGHING/SNEEZING

Please help us prevent the spread of germs by helping us teach your child to cough and or sneeze **inside** of their elbow in lieu of using their hands. This will prevent them from spreading germs (including flu germs) into their hands and consequently on everything else before they are able to wash them. This has been recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

MEDICATIONS

We will give medication only with written permission from a parent or guardian, to be administered according to directions from the prescribing physicians, or in the case of non-prescription or homeopathic medication, written instructions from the parent or guardian. **Medications must be labeled with the child's name and the date it was brought to the school.** A Medication Permission Form (see **FORM C**) must be filled out each time your child needs to take a medication. Written instructions on the form must include the name of the medication, the dosage, and the hours and dates the child should receive the medication and must be signed and dated. **All medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be in its original container.** Medications are kept in the front office or in the refrigerator in the Director's Office, if needed. We will keep a record of all medications administered (all medications are administered by the delegated staff member, usually the director and/or assistant director, then administrative assistant in that order) and ask that you sign or initial this record to acknowledge receipt of this information. Medication Permission Forms are kept at the front desk. Remember to take the medicine home each night, if applicable. Some children are taking prescription medication on a long-term basis. Authorizations for long term medications must be filled out monthly. We reserve the right to require additional information on medications, including prescriptions for over the counter and homeopathic drugs.

****IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU DO NOT PUT MEDICINE IN YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK OR CUBBY WHERE EITHER YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN MAY ACCESS IT!****

EMERGENCIES

Emergency information sheets for each child in the Center are kept in a notebook at the front desk as well as the Director's Office. Parent's names and phone numbers, emergency contacts and physician's name and numbers are recorded. In the event of an emergency, illness or accident, first aid will be administered as needed and the family will be notified. With parental permission, the child may be taken to an emergency center. Other emergency numbers (police, fire, poison control) are posted by the telephones.

FIRST AID

A first aid kit and manual are in each classroom, in the kitchen, and in the front reception area. All the teachers have first aid and CPR training. Administering first aid may include, but is not limited to, washing wounds with antibacterial soap and applying hydrogen peroxide, calamine lotion, triple antibiotic ointment or Bactine spray as appropriate. If you do not want your child to have one of these treatments, please let us know so we can make a record of it. Once first aid has been applied, you will receive an Incident/Accident Report (see **FORM B**) with a description of what happened and what remedies were taken.

IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

STAY CALM.

DIAL 911.

PROCEED TO DESIGNATED MEETING PLACE (ALONG GIBSON AT THE NORTH END OF THE BUILDING).

KNOW WHERE THE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ARE LOCATED: IN KITCHEN AREA, NEXT TO THE DOOR TO THE INFANT/YOUNG TODDLER PLAYGROUND, DOWN THE HALLWAY FROM INFANT ROOM, IN THE RECEPTION AREA AND DOWN THE HALLWAY TO THE SHARED BUILDING RESTROOMS.

Three outdoor water faucets are outside the north door of the building (two are on the large playground), and one is on the east side of the building in the baby/ young toddler playground. La Luz ECC is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system. A fire evacuation diagram is posted on the wall of each room.

WE PRACTICE FIRE DRILLS ONCE PER MONTH.

IN CASE OF A MISSING CHILD

After the entire Center has been searched for the missing child (both inside and outside, including the playgrounds); Center personnel will immediately call 911 and then the parents.

Aggression, Incidents and Accidents

Aggression takes many forms. Children sometimes discover undesirable yet effective ways to show anger, get attention, or possess another child's belongings such as hitting, kicking, grabbing, shouting, scratching and biting. They often do not have the social awareness to control this behavior. A young child is still limited in his or her ability to express him or her self through language. They are socially unsophisticated and are not well attuned to the feelings of their peers and to the finer points of social interaction. As they become four years old and gain some skills and language, they can send a former friend to tears with a choice name as quickly as they can with an act of aggression. Five year olds can look like they are playing happily when closer examination reveals a group that has been organized by a child who gets loyalty by bullying.

Biting, as an act of aggression, causes more upset feelings than any other behavior in early childhood programs. Because it seems so primitive, we tend to react differently to biting than we do to hitting, grabbing or other aggressive acts. Our program recognizes that, unfortunately, biting is not unexpected when children are in group care, especially among toddlers. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting is never the right thing for children to do, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons. During the ages of one to three about half of all children will bite.

Our program, then, does not focus on punishment for biting or other aggressive acts, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the aggression. When aggression occurs, we have three main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was the victim.
2. Help the child who committed the act to learn other, more appropriate behavior.
3. Examine our program to stop repeat behavior.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of aggression. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who attacked others to learn different, more appropriate behavior. When there are episodes of ongoing issues, we develop a plan and will not use any response that harms a child or that is known to be ineffective.

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to the hurt child. If the skin is broken, we will clean the wound with antibacterial soap and water and apply antibacterial ointment. If children are injured on the top of the hand and the skin is broken by an act of aggression, we recommend that they be seen by their health care provider.

Whether children are the aggressors or are the victims, the parents of each will be informed personally and privately that same day and are given a copy of our Accident/Incident form (see **FORM B**). When we experience ongoing aggression in a classroom, we will develop a plan with specific strategies, techniques and timelines to work on the problem.

Aggression is always documented on our standard incident report form. It is completed and signed by a teacher and is reviewed by an administrator. It must be signed by the parent after their review. One copy is given to the parents, one copy is kept in the child's file and an unsigned copy is kept in an incident report book in the office.

We always keep the name of the aggressive child to ourselves. Besides confidentiality reasons, this is to avoid labeling and to give our teachers the opportunity to use their time and energy to work on changing the behavior.

Each year, our teachers attend training sessions on various acts of aggression. In addition, we have current resources available for staff and parents. We encourage parents to bring their concerns and frustrations directly to the teachers and director(s).

Grievance Procedure

La Luz ECC's grievance process is a formal, structured outlet that is used to resolve any issue that has not been agreeably resolved by all parties. Any permanent employee, group of employees, or parent or group of parents with a child presently enrolled in the school may

file a grievance. The grievance must be submitted in writing and signed and dated by all who are filing the grievance. It must be specific and include any necessary documentation as well as the steps already taken to resolve the problem. **If a grievance is verbally relayed, an administrator will request that it be submitted in written form.**

After the written grievance is presented to the Director, a reasonable time for resolution must be agreed upon by the Director and complainants. A reasonable timeframe for a written proposal for resolution would be no longer than 15 business days. If no resolution is forthcoming, the grievance may be taken to the Board of Directors to assist in the process.

Thank You

Thank you for entrusting La Luz ECC to care for and to educate your young child (ren). It is our privilege to know each and every one of you.

La Luz Early Childhood Center
Emergency Information and Pickup Authorization Form

1301 Britt Street S.E. • Albuquerque, NM 87123 • 505 237-7237 • fax: 505 237-3723

For: _____ **DOB:** _____

Medical Information (*please print*)

Doctor's name Telephone

Preferred Medical Facility Telephone

Dentist's name Telephone

List any allergies including food allergies

List any medical or behavioral concerns of which the school should be aware (can continue on back of form)

Please list if your child has had and date of first febrile seizure as well as course of action if child has fever

List any medications

FORM A

List any dietary restrictions

Emergency Information (*please print*) **THESE SHOULD BE LOCAL CONTACTS**

Name of 1st emergency contact (other than parent) Telephone

Address City State Zip

Name of 2nd emergency contact (other than parent) Telephone

Address City State Zip

Pick Up Authorization (*please print*)

1st person with whom my child may be released 2nd person with whom my child may be released

3rd person with whom my child may be released 4th person with whom my child may be released



Releases

I hereby assume all responsibility for any and all costs involved in taking _____
(child's name)
to the hospital, clinic, or physician in case of an emergency. I hereby grant permission for any emergency first aid
treatment in the event of sickness or injury. Furthermore, I understand that it is my responsibility to keep all of the
information on this card current.

Parent or Guardian's signature

Date

FORM A

LA LUZ ECC ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT

Child's Full Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location where the accident/incident occurred: _____

Describe in detail what happened: _____

Describe in detail any actions taken/first aid given and by whom: _____

FORM B

List of all who witnessed accident/incident:

Parent(s) notified: YES NO Time: _____

Doctor notified: YES NO Time: _____

Person making report: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Comments: _____

LA LUZ ECC REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

NAME OF CHILD: _____ DOB: _____

CHECK TYPE OF MEDICATION: PRESCRIPTION _____ NON-PRESCRIPTION _____

NAME OF MEDICATION: _____

DOSAGE TO BE ADMINISTERED: _____

MEDICATION EXPIRATION DATE: _____

TIME MEDICATION IS TO BE ADMINISTERED: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

TIME OF LAST DOSE GIVEN: _____

DATES MEDICATION IS TO BE ADMINISTERED: BEGIN: _____ END: _____

IS CHILD TAKING ANY OTHER MEDICATION AT THIS TIME: YES: _____ NO: _____

IF YES, NAME OF MEDICATION(S): _____

I REQUEST THE STAFF OF LA LUZ ECC TO ADMINISTER THE ABOVE MEDICATION ACCORDING TO THE PRESCRIBED INFORMATION.

FORM C

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

MEDICATION LOG

NAME OF MEDICATION	DOSAGE GIVEN	DATE	TIME	ADMINISTERED BY	PARENT INITIAL

***ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS**

LA LUZ ECC SICK CHILD FORM

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

_____ had the following indications of not feeling well today _____

Child's Temperature _____

Time: _____

Person Making Report: _____

Admin Initial _____

A check mark next to a symptom means that the responsible parent/guardian needs to follow instructions:

Diarrhea or vomiting. The child may return when free from symptoms for 24 hours. Child will be sent home if they have a watery stool that can not be contained in a diaper or underpants or 3 or more soft, loose stools in a 4 hour period.

Impetigo. The child may return to school after antibiotics have been administered for 24 hours, or when sores are very dry with no yellow crust, and no longer oozing (about 7-10 days), with a doctor's note.

Fever. Temperatures **above 100.4F (oral) or 99.4F (axillary) under the arm.** Child may return when free from fever for **24 hours** without the aid of fever reducing medicine.

General Malaise. A child who does not eat or have the energy to participate in activities does not belong at school.

Earache. The child should be seen by a physician and return to school following a **minimum of 24 hours** of treatment.

Pediculosis (head lice). The child may return to school following a minimum of two days of treatment.

Cold. The child may attend school if he or she is free from fever and general malaise. If a child has a lingering cough (a signal of an upper respiratory infection), he or she should see a physician.

Ringworm or Athlete's Foot. The child may attend if the infected area is being treated for 24 hours and is covered.

Strep Throat. The child may return to school **after 24 hours of treatment** with medication and child has no fever for 24 hours.

Conjunctivitis (pink-eye). The child may return to school following 24 hours of treatment with medication.

Rash. Out of care if child has fever or until a doctor determines that it is not contagious (**must have a note from the doctor**).

FORM

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