

Como Early Learning Center

PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK

AND

HEALTH POLICIES MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Como Early Learning Center (CELC) is a non-profit childcare center founded in 1975 by University of Minnesota students from Como Student Community Cooperative, a student family housing complex near the University. CELC is licensed to offer childcare services for children ages 16 months to 5 years. It was founded to provide childcare services to the University of Minnesota community, and currently serves the surrounding community as well.

Como Early Learning Center is dedicated to serving a widely diverse clientele. Because of our location and our relationship with the University of Minnesota as a student group, most of our children's parents are students. Within our student/parent population, you will find a wide range of family needs, income levels, religious and ethnic backgrounds, and family dynamics. We warmly welcome this diversity, and believe that it is crucial to the quality of care experienced by all children in the center.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at CELC is to provide high-quality, affordable Early Childhood Education to University of Minnesota student families and the surrounding community. Our approach allows children to learn in their own way, at their own pace, while encompassing whole child development; keeping in mind the balance between child initiated and teacher directed activities.

Child Objectives:

- Children will cultivate their physical, cognitive, language, and social/emotional development.
- Children will foster initiative, independence, and self-worth.
- Children will form genuine relationships with peers, teachers, and the CELC community.

Family Objectives:

- Families will form genuine relationships with CELC staff, other families, and the CELC community.
- Families will feel supported and nurtured in their child rearing efforts.
- Families will feel their culture and belief systems are respected and authentically incorporated into the CELC environment.

Each child is allowed to learn in their own way and at their own pace; thus, the teacher provides activities which fit the needs of each child in their environment. In order to accomplish this, there is continual assessment of each child to determine his/her temperament, the ways in which they learn successfully, any risk factors they may face, and their own ability level in each of the curriculum components.

The role of the teacher is to implement, support, and provide individual and group learning activities. These activities will incorporate each of the curriculum components and provide challenges to each student along with taking into account their age, developmental levels and abilities, interests, and diverse backgrounds. The teacher should assist the students through their learning experiences in a supportive, nurturing way, while monitoring problem areas and providing additional support when needed. It is also the responsibility of the teacher to provide resources to students and families who are in need of support in any arena.

The students also take a central role in their own learning experience. They are involved in the decision making process regarding their personal mode of learning and activities which suit their individual needs. They are allowed to accomplish as many tasks on their own as they are able, and are free to express themselves without fear of reprisal.

CURRICULUM

Como Early Learning Center follows the HighScope curriculum and assessment methodology

All About HighScope — FAQs Ann S. Epstein, PhD, Senior Director, Curriculum Development

HighScope's educational approach emphasizes “active participatory learning.” Active learning means students have direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events, and ideas. Children’s interests and choices are at the heart of HighScope programs. They construct their own knowledge through interactions with the world and the people around them. Children take the first step in the learning process by making choices and following through on their plans and decisions. Teachers, caregivers, and parents offer physical, emotional, and intellectual support. In active learning settings, adults expand children’s thinking with diverse materials and nurturing interactions.

The HighScope educational approach is consistent with the best practices recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Head Start Performance Standards, and other guidelines for developmentally based programs.

Content areas are organized in nine main categories that correspond to state and national learning standards; the categories are (1) approaches to learning; (2) social and emotional development; (3) physical development and health; (4) language, literacy, and communication; (5) mathematics; (6) creative arts; (7) science and technology; (8) social studies; and (9) English language learning (if applicable).

Within these content areas are [288 key developmental indicators \(KDIs\)](#). The KDIs are statements of observable behaviors that define the important learning areas for young children.

HighScope teachers keep these indicators in mind when they set up the environment and plan activities to encourage learning and social interaction. They also form the basis of HighScope's child assessment tool — COR Advantage

HighScope is a comprehensive educational approach that strives to help children develop in all areas. Our goals for young children are:

- To learn through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas
- To become independent, responsible, and confident — ready for school and ready for life
- To learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk with others about what they have done and what they have learned
- To gain knowledge and skills in important academic, social, and physical areas

All About HighScope — FAQs Ann S. Epstein, PhD, Senior Director, Curriculum Development

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

CELC assesses children's development with comprehensive observations using the HighScope Child Observation Record (COR). Observing a broad range of behaviors over several weeks or months gives us a more accurate picture of children's true capabilities than tests administered in one-time sessions. Using the HighScope content areas as a framework, teachers record daily anecdotes describing what children do and say throughout the day in the classroom. Twice a year, they review these anecdotes and rate each child at the highest level he or she has demonstrated so far on 30 items in six areas of development: initiative, social relations, creative representation, movement and music, language and literacy, and logic and mathematics. All CELC teachers are trained to use and interpret the results of the COR.

Annually in November in May, parent teacher conferences will be held to communicate children's developmental assessment results. Parents are given the COR Family Report, including a developmental summary and supporting anecdotal notes in each area of development. During conferences, teachers and parents discuss the assessment reports and parents are asked for their input and observations. Teachers and parents then create development goals for the child and plan for future learning experiences together. In addition to the conferences, teachers will verbally communicate children's developmental progress to parents on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

If developmental concerns are identified through the assessment process, staff will assist parents in obtaining developmental screening or needed services through their local school district (Minneapolis 612-348-8687, St. Paul 651-632-3746), or their pediatrician. All children should receive early childhood screening between ages 3 and 5 through their local school district.

Children's COR scores help teachers design learning opportunities tailored to their interests and level of development. Assessment results are used to improve curriculum, tailor teaching practices and classrooms environments, and assist in identifying needed program improvements.

Children's individual records are kept confidential in their file, in a locked cabinet in the CELC office. CELC staff use children's records for educational and administrative purposes only. The center's regulatory agencies may view children's records for administrative purposes only.

Parents may view the COR tools upon request.

ANTI-BIAS POLICY

Como Early Learning Center demonstrates an ongoing commitment to integrate an anti-bias philosophy into every aspect of its program. Because children live in a diverse and complex world, they interact daily with people different from themselves. Anti-bias curriculum is a process to help children develop and strengthen their self identity and group identities, while interacting respectfully with others in a multi-cultural environment. Anti-bias curriculum is a proactive approach to reduce bias, eliminate

prejudice, and promote inclusiveness. The teaching staff at CELC guide the children enrolled in our program to think critically about unfairness and to stand up for themselves and others in the face of bias. The anti-bias approach is a teaching strategy that values diversity and challenges bias, rather than ignoring and therefore reinforcing children's misunderstandings of differences. The anti-bias philosophy at CELC is a commitment to address societal bias and practice our value for diversity in a developmentally appropriate way. Como Early Learning Center strives to balance its unique culture with the individual cultural interests of each family served. Respect for the center's diverse community is reflected in the curriculum, classroom environments, parent/teacher/child interactions, staff development, hiring plans, and program goals.

HOLIDAY POLICY

Celebrating Holidays offers many opportunities for fun, excitement and connection, and for meaningful learning about similarities and differences, important aspects of CELC's anti-bias approach. We have a rich variety of cultures in our community, and our families celebrate holidays in many different ways. At CELC, we want to deepen, broaden, and enrich children's experiences of holidays. We know that families can be overwhelmed by the excitement and pressure of holidays; therefore, we emphasize calm, understated expressions of celebration. We hope to give the families of CELC some respite from the commercialism which has grown up around some major holidays. Since we start with our families celebrations, each room might emphasize different holidays from another. We know that most cultures celebrate similar milestones at similar times of year; therefore, we focus on balancing dominant and non-dominant celebrations and traditions, which enriches children's awareness of their world. CELC is an inclusive community where every family is welcome to celebrate together. Ask your child's teacher about how they celebrate holidays in their classroom, and how you can contribute your traditions.

BIRTHDAY POLICY

Families are welcome to celebrate the birthdays of their children in a way that is comfortable for them. Please talk to your child's teacher if you have questions about the most appropriate way to celebrate your child's birthday at the center. Any special treats brought must be store bought and peanut free.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

The following techniques shall be used to increase children's social/emotional development as a preventative strategy:

- Staff will facilitate regular discussions with children regarding appropriate behaviors, communication of feelings, and conflict resolution techniques.
- Teachers will consistently model appropriate behaviors.
- Staff shall role-play conflict resolution scenarios with children.

- Books, projects, and activities emphasizing social/emotional growth and conflict resolution skills will consistently be incorporated into the curriculum.
- Children will regularly be given the opportunity to work in pairs and small groups to practice social/emotional and conflict resolution skills.
- Teachers will frequently acknowledge children's appropriate behavior.

When dealing with individual instances of unacceptable behaviors, staff will:

- Engage the child individually, moving to speak to them at their level in a calm assertive voice.
- Redirect the child's attention to appropriate behaviors.
- Stop the behavior using short clear language phrased in a manner which focuses on what children can do, as opposed to what they should not do, giving simple choices.
- Encourage children to use my-time (an individual space located in each classroom) as a place to deescalate.
- In cases where tasks are not optional (hand washing, coming inside from the playground, etc.), children will be given the choice to complete the task on their own, or with help from a staff member.

CELC uses the conflict resolution policy developed in conjunction with the High Scope Curriculum to handle conflicts among children using the following steps:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
 - Place themselves between the children, on their level.
 - Use a calm voice and gentle touch
 - Remain neutral rather than take sides
2. Acknowledge children's feelings.
 - "You look really upset."
 - Let children know that they need to hold any object in question.
3. Gather information.
 - "What's the problem?"
4. Restate the problem.
 - "So the problem is..."
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.
 - "What can we do to solve this problem?"
6. Encourage children to think of a solution.
7. Be prepared to give follow-up support.
 - "You solved the problem!"
8. Stay near the children.

In cases of severe or persistent unacceptable behavior:

- Staff reserve the right to determine whether a child's behavior is severe enough that it may unavoidably result in physical or emotional trauma to the child or others in the classroom. In such cases, the child shall be sent home.

- Behaviors which result in injury, or are deemed severe by staff will be documented and communicated to parents.
- If a child is unable or unwilling to deescalate from severe behaviors, the child will be placed in my-time until they are calm enough to rejoin the group. The separation will be logged and communicated to parents

If a child receives three or more logged separations, or documentations of unacceptable behavior in a one day period, or five or more in a one week period, a behavior plan is required, and the following protocol shall be followed:

- The teachers will log all pattern behaviors until a behavior plan has been written.
- The parents/guardians of the child shall be notified and meeting between the child's teachers and parents/guardians must be scheduled.
- At the meeting the child's teachers and parents/guardians will together develop and sign a written behavior plan on the center's pre-established Behavior Plan Form, which shall set clear goals and strategies for the child at home and at school.
- The child's teachers and parents/guardians will together determine a time period after which to review the behavior plan, at which point it may be adjusted.
- Staff may recommend support from community professional resource agencies such as the child's local school district, Think Small, Washburn Center for Children or Frasier Child and Family Center.

Relevant considerations:

- Classrooms must remain in ratio toddler 5:1, preschool 7:1. Thus staff are unable to provide extensive one-to-one interventions.
- Staff are not allowed to separate a child from the group unless less intrusive methods have been tried, have been ineffective, and the child's behavior threatens the well being of the child or other children in the center, or that intervention is established in the child's behavior plan (MN Rules, Chapter 9503).
- Children cannot be separated from a teacher at any time. If a child is threatening the safety of a teacher, teachers reserve the right to use a hold to maintain their safety as well as the child's (Glasser & Easley, 2003).
- Staff are not allowed to take children into a different area of the school during a behavior issue, unless that intervention is established in the child's behavior plan (MN Rules, Chapter 9503).
- The staff at CELC will not be expected to perform therapeutic interventions unless deemed appropriate by an outside referral source with expertise in child development and clinical interventions.
- The staff at CELC cannot set up early childhood screenings. Screenings are recommended to all children at age 3 within the child's school district, parents are responsible for obtaining those screenings.

- To set up a screening for a child, a parent can call: 612-348-TOTS (for Hennepin County)
- Staff cannot give consequences for lapses in toilet habits (MN Rules, Chapter 9503).
- Staff cannot withhold food as a consequence for behavior (MN Rules, Chapter 9503).
- Staff cannot use corporal punishment techniques or emotional deprivation strategies (MN Rules, Chapter 9503). Please note that all staff at CELC are mandated reporters of abuse and neglect.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors, made up of parents of children enrolled, is the ultimate governing body of the center, with specific responsibilities in the areas of policy making, fundraising, evaluation, and grievance. The Board of Directors meets monthly. All parents are notified in advance of, and are welcome to attend board meetings. The minutes from the meetings are sent to all parents for reference.

Elections for the ten positions on the Board are held annually in September. If you would like to be an officer of the Board of Directors, talk with the Executive Director or other Board members. This is a wonderful way to become involved in the enrichment of your child's education.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Here at CELC, we warmly welcome parent involvement in all aspects of the center. We highly encourage parents to volunteer in their child's classroom, share their unique culture and interests, chaperone field trips, attend Board meetings and other events, and participate in events which will improve the quality of the center, such as building maintenance projects. Contact the CELC office or your child's teacher if you are interested in volunteering!

Como Early Learning Center has an open-door policy. Parents of enrolled children are always welcome to visit Como Early Learning Center at any time of our operating hours. We do, however, encourage that your visit does not interfere with the children's naptime or meal times.

In addition to daily communication sheets and conversations at drop-off and pick-up, we encourage parents to speak to their child's teacher, the Director, or the Assistant Director with any questions, concerns, or ideas.

Contact information:

Phone: 612-331-8340, Fax: 612-331-4886

Director Email: comoccc@umn.edu, Assistant Director Email: lgillis@comoelc.com

Classroom Emails: rooma@comoelc.com, roomb@comoelc.com, roomc@comoelc.com

Como Early Learning Center will provide verbal or written translation upon request.

LICENSING

Como Early Learning Center is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to serve 50 children, ages 16 months to 6 years. The children enrolled in CELC are divided into our three separate classrooms. The Toddler Room A serves children ages 16 months to 31-35 months. The Preschool Rooms B and C serve children ages 31-35 months to 5 years or the first day of Kindergarten.

The phone number for Department of Human Services Licensing Division is 651-431-6500

HOURS AND HOLIDAYS

Como Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 6 PM, year round. Full and part time care is available for toddler and preschool age children. Our enrollment options are as follows: Fulltime (M-F, 7am-6pm), Mornings (7am-12:30pm), Afternoons (12:30pm-6pm), T TH (7am-6pm), M W (7am-6pm), M W F (7am-6pm), F (7am-6pm). CELC is closed for the following Holidays:

New Year's Eve	Independence	Christmas Eve
New Year's Day	Labor Day	Christmas Day
Martin Luther King Day	Thanksgiving Day	
Memorial Day	Friday after Thanksgiving	

In addition to these holidays, CELC will be closed for four days per year for staff in-service. Parents will be notified of these staff in-service dates at least one month in advance.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Classrooms may combine during 7:00-8:30am and 4:30-6:00pm, depending on the number of children present. Please note the sign on your child's classroom door to find out which classroom they are in.

WEATHER RELATED CLOSURES

Como Early Learning Center will close for weather related reasons whenever the Minneapolis Public Schools close, or in extreme cases at the Director's discretion. If the Minneapolis Public Schools list no afternoon activities, then we will close at 4:00 PM, if there is a two hour delay, we will open at 10:00 AM. Please watch the **KSTP (Channel 5) School Watch** program for a complete listing of school closures, including Como Early Learning Center. Parents will also be e-mailed in the event of a weather related closure.

STAFF

The staff at Como Early Learning Center is a team of dedicated and creative professionals, qualified according to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and knowledgeable about the developmental stages of children. Lead Teachers have at least a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Assistant Teachers have at least 12 credits. All staff members are required to continue their education in early childhood development through in-service workshops and relevant courses. Staff members are also required to regularly renew their first aid and CPR training through accredited courses.

A creative, innovative and loving staff is vital to the quality of childcare. In recognition of this fact, Como Early Learning Center strives to create a work environment for staff that is flexible and challenging, supportive and encouraging. We respect each staff person for the unique perspective that they bring to the program. As parents, we encourage you to get to know the staff in your child's room so that you may better work as a team in caring for your child.

FACILITY

Como Early Learning Center is located in the Como Student Community Cooperative of the University of Minnesota. Our facility consists of three classrooms – one for toddlers, and two for preschoolers. These classrooms are carefully designed to be both visually attractive, and to stimulate interest in learning and play. The rooms are divided up into interest areas, offering experiences in everything from art and sensory exploration, to fine motor play with puzzles, peg boards, and blocks. Our classrooms are designed to encourage children to initiate their own activities and make their own choices, with teachers following along to interact and extend learning experiences. Our facility also includes an outdoor playground, one large muscle room, and occasional use of a loft space for large muscle activities.

MEALS AND SNACKS

All food served at Como Early Learning Center is nutritious, well balanced and planned according to USDA requirements. Menus are prepared in advance, and are posted in each classroom. If you would like your child to eat a meal/snack at the center, s/he must be in attendance at the start of the meal. Exceptions will be made for children arriving from other schools and for children with medical and dental appointments. Meals are served in the classrooms at the following times:

BREAKFAST	8:30 – 9:00
LUNCH	11:30 – 12:30
SNACK	3:00 – 3:30

Teachers work hard to assure that meal/snack times are a relaxed and enjoyable part of the day. Routine mealtimes provide nourishment as well as social activity and conversation. Children learn to eat independently; trying new foods, staying at the table, drinking from a cup, and bussing dishes at the end of each meal (optional for younger toddlers).

SPECIAL DIET

Parents of children with special dietary needs must consult with CELC's director as well as the classroom teacher regarding dietary restrictions or menu substitutions.

If your child cannot follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements due to food intolerances or an allergy, a Special Diet Statement (with or without a disability) must be completed and signed by a recognized medical authority or a physician. The Special Diet Statement must be completed and submitted to the center director before CELC can serve your child a menu substitution.

Parental requests for vegetarian or religious/cultural specific substitutions to the planned daily menus may be accommodated, as best as CELC can provide, to meet CACFP meal requirements. Vegetarian alternatives to our planned lunch menus for meat, poultry or fish can be provided.

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) [found online](#) at:

http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

COMO EARLY LEARNING CENTER IS PEANUT AND SHELLFISH FREE

Due to allergies, we request that you do not send your child to school with any food that contains any peanuts or shellfish, or has been produced on the same line as peanuts or shellfish and may contain trace amounts of these allergens. This is a safety issue, and no exceptions will be made.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY AND PENALTY

Como Early Learning Center closes at 6:00 p.m. A per child late fee is charged any time parents or guardians arrive after 6:00 to pick up their child. The definition of “late arrival” is leaving your child’s classroom with your child after 6:00p.m. Since closing teachers are scheduled to work only until 6:00 p.m., teachers must be able to leave at that time. (Part-time children attending the morning only session must be signed out by 12:30 p.m. or the late pick-up penalty will be enforced).

1. The first 2 times that a parent picks their child up late (after 6:00pm) they will be charged \$1.00 per minute for the first 15 minutes and \$10.00 per minute past 6:15pm.
2. The third time that a parent picks their child up late (after 6:00pm) they will be charged \$10 per minute for each minute past 6:00pm. AND they will be required to meet with the Center Director, Katie Johnson, to discuss and decide if Como CCC is the best place for them and their child.

*Parents should note that staff is directed to call the phone numbers listed for the parent(s) and emergency contacts when a child is not picked up by 6:00pm and at 6:30pm they begin emergency procedures of calling 911 to initiate emergency child placement.

UNAVOIDABLE DETENTION – e.g. car malfunction, traffic jam, snowstorm, stuck in elevator, etc. It is expected that under this condition you would be in contact with CELC by 6:30 p.m. In the meantime, we would have tried to reach, by phone, a person listed on your emergency card. If we do not hear from you, an emergency situation will be assumed and the following policy will be implemented.

EMERGENCY SITUATION –

e.g. sudden illness, accident, hospitalization, etc. The parent is unable to contact CELC and cannot pick up their child. If by 6:30 p.m. we have been unable to contact parents or other responsible adults listed on the child's emergency card and no one has contacted us, we will assume an emergency situation exists. We will then contact University of Minnesota police and they will transport the child and a CELC staff person or the director to St. Joseph's Children's Shelter, 12th Avenue South and East 47th Street (1120 E. 47th St., (612) 827-6241). This facility is equipped to deal with children in an emergency situation. CELC's insurance policy does not allow staff to take children home with them.

FEES AND FEE PAYMENT

The Executive Director and the Board of Directors of Como Early Learning Center will review parent fees each year. Fees are based on the actual cost of care, including program supplies and equipment, staff/child ratios, and staff wages and benefits. Fees cover all listed holidays and snow days. We do not reduce rates for sick or unattended days.

REGISTRATION FEES

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 per child. This fee covers the administrative costs of enrollment and holds a child's slot for an agreed upon date. After this date, the slot can no longer be guaranteed if the child has not yet begun attendance. The registration fee must be paid before a slot can be guaranteed, and it cannot be reimbursed if your plans change, and you no longer choose to attend Como Early Learning Center.

PAYMENT POLICIES

CELC is a non-profit organization and relies on parent fees for most of its operating expenses. Therefore, it is essential that fees be paid promptly and regularly.

Fees must be paid in **advance** on a bi-weekly basis. Parents will receive billing statements via email every other Friday. If these Fridays fall on a holiday; parents will receive their billing statements the following Monday, or the first day of business thereafter. The payment due date is indicated on the billing statement. Payment is considered past due if not received by 6 p.m. on the due date, and a \$15.00 late fee will be assigned at such time.

If special circumstances occur and you cannot abide by the fee payment policy, you must discuss this matter with the director immediately.

Any discrepancies or disagreement concerning your billing statement should also be discussed immediately with the director.

Payment by check made payable to **CELC** is preferred. Checks may be deposited in the mailbox located outside the office door. We also accept cash when the director or assistant director is available to give a receipt.

UNRETURNED ITEM POLICY

Occasionally, your children will be sent home with clothes, blankets or other property of CELC. The parent will be responsible for washing and returning these items within one week's time. If the item is not returned to CELC within the one week, you will be charged a \$5 fee per item. Please notify one of the staff members when you have returned the items, and you will not be charged.

LATE PAYMENT POLICY

Our goal is for parents not to get behind in payments for over two weeks of service. Billing statements have a due date printed on them. If payment is not submitted by the end of that business day (6pm) on that due date, a \$15.00 late fee will be assigned.

HENNEPIN AND RAMSEY COUNTY

We have some parents whose children attend CELC and they receive help in paying their tuition from Hennepin County, Ramsey County, or the University of Minnesota. We require a verification of authorization before a child can start. If a child's authorization ends, that child's parent has two weeks to get authorization for Hennepin or Ramsey County help. If CELC does not get any notice of authorization in these two weeks, the child will be suspended from the Center until the parent produces a certificate or letter from Hennepin County that states that they are re-authorized. The Hennepin County Parent fees (co-pay) are due by the end of the business day on the last working day of the month. If this payment is not paid, the two-week plan above applies to them.

NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS (NSF) CHECKS

We will charge a \$25.00 handling fee for the processing of any check returned to CELC due to insufficient funds. Upon receipt of the second NSF check, all future childcare tuition payments must be paid with cash, cashier's check, or money order.

WAITING LIST PREFERENCE

Preference is given first to siblings of children already enrolled, second to children previously enrolled in the center, third to residents of CSCC, fourth to students of the University of Minnesota, and fifth preference is given to everyone else.

VACATIONS

Each child is granted one consecutive week of vacation time at no charge per fiscal year, October 1-September 30. Any time taken off after the one week period must be paid for at the child's regular fee. A two-week written notice prior to vacation is required to utilize vacation time.

WITHDRAWAL OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

PARENTAL NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF CARE--If you wish to discontinue childcare services at CELC, a **written notice** must be submitted to the director at least **two weeks prior** to your child's last enrollment day. **Billing will not stop until this notice is received.** We encourage parents to complete a departure evaluation survey on or before the child's last day. All fees for childcare services must be paid on or before the child's last official enrollment day at CELC. Teachers will make every effort to make sure your child's last day at CELC is very special.

PROGRAM NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF CARE—In the event that any of the following situations occur, childcare services may be terminated at CELC.

1. Non-payment of fees by parent or legal guardian. Please see late payment policy.
2. Failure to provide the required health, immunization and/or emergency information.
3. Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats toward staff, children, other parents, and property.
4. Inability of CELC staff to care adequately for the child's needs such as demonstrating behavior that is harmful to self or other children. (See Child Guidance Discipline Policy).
5. Lack of cooperation from parents or legal guardians with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
6. Chronic lateness in picking up child at end of day (See Late Pick-Up Policy and Penalty).

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

Field trips and supervised walks away from CELC are regular features of the educational plans for each age group.

Examples of trips in wagons or supervised walks for toddlers include walks around the block, visiting other playgrounds on the block, or other neighborhood practical life places.

Field trips include the Como Park Zoo, Bell Museum of Natural History, libraries, and parks.

Methods of transportation include walking or taking the MTC. CELC'S field trip procedures are as follows:

- A sign-up sheet is distributed notifying parents of the date, time, destinations and means of transportation for each field trip at least one week in advance. Written parental permission is required before the child may participate in the field trip.
- A first aid kit is taken on all field trips along with your child's emergency card and the daily attendance sheet.
- If an emergency occurs, the head teacher is responsible for contacting CELC to make necessary arrangements or by making a call directly to city emergency lines (911). Parents are informed of any emergency that involves their child.

Children greatly enjoy their field trip experiences and the opportunity to explore and learn from the resources throughout our community.

Parents are always encouraged to accompany the children on field trips. Please notify the center Director one week in advance if you plan on attending any of the scheduled field trips.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

When weather, air quality, and environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk, children have daily opportunities for outdoor play.

Children who are well enough to attend CELC should be well enough to participate in outdoor activities. If children are dressed appropriately, weather conditions should not pose an illness risk to them. Please keep your child home if you do not want him/her to participate in an outdoor activity. One staff member cannot remain inside with one child, leaving the other children unattended or exceeding our staff to child ratio.

Children should be dressed in clothing that is dry and layered for warmth. During the winter your child will need waterproof snow boots, snow pants, coats, gloves/mittens, and hats.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT POLICY

A staff member will be standing near each piece of climbing equipment whenever it is in use by children, in order to immediately intervene if a child falls.

If a child is injured, it will be logged and all staff members will be notified before working with the child, and in order to prevent pattern injuries. (This is the responsibility of the witness of the injury.)

Children will be evaluated by teachers to determine if they are developmentally ready for each piece of play equipment on the playground (including the small and large equipment, as well as the ladder and twisted climber).

Toddlers are never allowed on the large play equipment.

Children are not allowed on play equipment when it is cold enough to produce visible frost on the equipment.

WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM PARENTS

Since CELC is a student group of the University of Minnesota, we sometimes have students that would like to observe our children for research. If this occurs, written permission from the parents will be taken before each occasion of research, experimental procedure or public relations activity involving a child is conducted. A child's name or picture will not be taken unless we have parental permission beforehand.

NAP POLICY FOR TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

Children are assigned their own cot. Staff help the children to remain quietly on their cots for a minimum 30-minute rest period. If a child has rested quietly for 30 minutes and is almost asleep, the staff may allow the child to continue to lie on the cot to complete his/her nap. If the child does not fall asleep they will be allowed to participate in quiet activities.

If your child does fall asleep, he/she will be allowed to sleep without adult interruption until the end of the group's nap period. When a child falls asleep during our quiet rest period it is because his or her body is tired and needs a nap.

If the child's parents are concerned the child is sleeping too much at CELC, we will help the child wake up gently only after ½ hour of sleep and only if the child awakens to a gentle approach of awakening by the teacher. If the child does not awaken with the first try, another gentle approach will be tried after another ½ hour of sleep. Staff will not forcibly awaken a child because it may look and/or feel abusive, not only to the individual child, but to other children and adults as well.

Children are awakened by the gentle sound of voices, by lights being turned on and off, by music or an activity tape cassette being played, and by gently being awakened by the staff.

Toddler Naptime 12:30 – 3:00

Preschool Naptime 12:45 – 2:45

CLOTHING

Children should wear clothes that are comfortable and easily cared for. Be sure your child has an extra complete change of clothing including underwear and socks.

Please label all clothing (including boots and shoes). Unlabeled clothing can result in losses and mix-ups.

It is absolutely necessary that every child have available at CELC, mittens, boots, shoes, hats and snow pants in the winter and sleeveless or short-sleeved tops, shorts, and shoes in the summer.

Shoes such as thongs, sandals, flip-flops, and crocs are very dangerous for children to wear at CELC. Please do not send your child in these types of footwear.

If your child wears a skirt/dress to school, they must wear shorts under these items.

Please bring sunglasses and brimmed hats for outdoor play.

Your child's teacher will give you a list of other items to be provided by parents (blankets, diapers, etc.)

Como Early Learning Center offers a non-violent, anti-bias environment that is free from all visible and verbal cues that might make violence or dislike for those who are different from one another seem acceptable. To maintain this environment, all children and staff are actively discouraged from wearing clothing that depicts violent, racist, or sexist themes. This includes, but is not limited to: pictures of weapons, sexually suggestive poses, violent or racist sports logos, stereotypical characterization of any particular groups of people, depictions of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances. If a child comes to the center wearing clothing of this nature, teachers will help the child change into some from his/her reserve of clothing. If there is no reserve clothing, the teachers will help the child turn their clothes inside out so that the picture/logo is no longer visible.

TOYS

Toys brought from home present special problems for the children and staff. Personal possessions are often difficult to share or may get broken. Parents are advised not to allow their child to bring toys from home.

If it becomes necessary for a child to bring a toy from home it must be something that can be shared by a group of children (tapes, books, etc.) or else it must be left in the child's cubby. **Toys that resemble weapons are not allowed at CELC.** A security item such as a blanket or plush toy that comforts your child is welcome.

DIAPERS

Disposable or cloth diapers, and wipes will be used and will be supplied by the Parent.

For children who use cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.

DIAPER / WIPE FEE

If your child runs out of diapers or wipes there will be a \$5 per day fee.

CHILD CUSTODY DISPUTES

Sometimes there are families enrolled at Como Early Learning Center who are engaged in child custody disputes. These conflicts within families can cause tremendous stress for both children and parents. The staff of Como Early Learning Center recognizes that we are in a unique position. We must offer support and understanding to parents, security and consistency to children, while all the time remaining strictly neutral on all issues regarding the custody dispute. Because this line we walk is often quite fine, we have developed the following list of expectations for center staff and for parents:

If you are involved in a child custody dispute, you can expect Como Early Learning Center staff to:

1. Focus on the needs of the child(ren) enrolled in the center. It is especially important that the child have a place that is safe, consistent and impartial.
2. Remain strictly neutral in all matters regarding custody dispute. We will insist that parents resolve the conflict independent of the center and staff.
3. Strictly follow the custody arrangements as they are written in the court documents. If there are no court documents regarding custody or restraint of access to a child, we cannot, according to the law, restrict the access to either properly identified parent.
4. Regularly communicate with both parents, any problems regarding the effects of the custody dispute on the child(ren), or problems or concerns with the custody arrangements as they affect the center. When parents are unable to resolve matters and their disputes become disruptive to the center, CELC reserves the right to dis-enroll the family from the center at the discretion of the center director.
5. Offer assistance to both parents in finding outside resources that might be helpful to them or their children.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is the goal of Como Early Learning Center to create a childcare environment that works cooperatively with its consumers to meet their individual needs. It is also our goal to regularly review and evaluate the program so as to ensure that the Board of Directors, administrative staff, teaching staff and support staff are working cooperatively to realize the fullest potential of the center.

Occasionally however, problems with a staff or parent in the center may be difficult to resolve. In all grievance procedures, the person with the grievance is obliged to make an

attempt to discuss and resolve the problem on a one-to-one basis with the other person involved before moving on to the following procedure.

1. Discuss the problem with the executive director of the center. The director will resolve the issue or explain to both parties any limitations (licensing or legal) there might be to resolving the issue.
2. If either party is not satisfied with the director's resolution of the issue, they may file a written grievance with the CELC Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will hear all sides of the issue, and will give a written decision to all parties involved within 4 working days.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES FOR PARENTS

HEALTH RECORD INFORMATION

Two health record forms must be completed:

Immunization Record: This record must give dates (month, day, and year) of immunizations your child has received. It must have a signature of a parent and it must be current and is due on admission. Records must be updated whenever your child receives additional immunizations.

Health Record/Summary: This information must include the date of the child's most recent physical exam (within six months), and be signed by the child's source of licensed health care. This form is due on admission.

Reexamination: A new health record/summary is required for children already admitted to the program. At a minimum, an updated report of physical examination signed by your child's source of health care is required at least annually for children under 24 months of age, and whenever a child 24 months or older advances to an older age category.

Dietary modification because of special dietary needs shall be made under the direction of a licensed health care provider. Written permission from the child's parent/legal guardian and the child's licensed health care provider is required.

Dietary modifications for religious reasons require only written parent/guardian permission.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to inform the center when their child has any **SPECIAL MEDICAL CONDITION, NEEDS or ALLERGIES** so that we can provide appropriate care or support.

If the child has special needs and is (one or more of the following):

- Eligible for case management through the state and has an Individual Service Plan (ISP),
- Receives services through the local school district and has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP),
- Determined by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or consulting psychologist to have a condition related to physical, social, or emotional development,

The parent/guardian is asked share the ISP and/or the IEP with us. In addition, state licensing regulations require us to develop an Individualized Child Care Plan (ICCP) with the parent/guardian that will assist us in meeting the child's needs.

This plan must be signed by the parent/guardian and the child's source of licensed health care as listed above and reviewed annually to assure that necessary changes are made to the plan of care.

If the special need requires that our staff be trained to perform a new skill, the training content, date, and staff names must be documented in the child's record.

The Health Consultant is asked to review the ICCP before it is placed in use, when changes are made and/or every year.

If special needs or developmental concerns are identified through CELC formal or informal child assessment, staff will assist parents in obtaining developmental screening or needed services. Staff will provide parents with written documentation and explanation for concern, suggested next steps, and information about resources for assessment. Families should make the primary decisions about the services their children need; however staff will encourage families to advocate for needed services.

MEDICATIONS

Prescription medications will only be given with **written authorization** from the child's licensed health care provider (i.e. prescription label) and parent/guardian. Please let your child's teacher know about medication your child is taking at home, too. Staff will help you look for side effects from the medication and let you know if any are seen.

Please complete the Medication Permission Form if your child needs a medication while in our care. We suggest keeping a blank copy of this form at home so it can be completed before coming to the center. This will help you have time to speak to your child's teacher about the medication.

Prescription medications will be given only as prescribed by a licensed health care provider (physician, physician assistant, dentist, or certified nurse practitioner). The prescription must be current, in the original container and may be given only to the child whose name appears on the label. This includes over the counter dietary supplements.

Please ask the pharmacy to split the medication into 2 containers-one for home and one for the center.

Bring a copy of the drug information sheet that comes with the medication or write the common side effects on the Medication Permission Form.

Nebulizer medications that are in single dose containers must be brought to the center in the original container with a current, clearly written prescription label on the container. The prescription label must indicate the child's name, prescribing licensed health care provider's name, name of medication, medication strength, amount to be given, how often to give and what it is to be mixed with, if applicable.

Medications which are to be given long term will require us to have an Individual Child Care Plan signed by you and the child's licensed health care provider. This includes as needed (pm) over the counter medication such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Ibuprofen used for a child with a history of febrile seizures. See the previous section on Special Needs.

Over the Counter Medication We will not administer over the counter medications to children without written permission from the child health care provider. The parent may come to CELC to administer over the counter medications to their own child if they so choose. CELC will not store over the counter medications at the center.

Diaper rash products, insect repellents and sunscreens are an exception, and need written parental approval only. Powders and cornstarch preparations will not be used because they may promote or hide infections, and can be inhaled.

Containers must be labeled with child's full first and last name and date.

Outdated medications will not be given.

All medications must have a legible label on the container. Your medication container will be returned to you when it is completed.

EXCLUSION OF ILL CHILD

The Department of Human Services requires that we exclude a child with an illness or condition that the Commissioner of Health determines to be contagious and a licensed health care provider determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others.

We will follow the exclusion guidelines listed below which are taken from *INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS AND SCHOOLS: INFORMATION FOR*

CARE OF ILL OR INJURED CHILDREN

If your child becomes ill or injured while in care, he/she will be isolated away from other children under supervision of a staff person. You or your designated alternate will be contacted to pick up your child immediately. Until you arrive, your child will be monitored and comfort measure provided according to program procedures. If staff thinks it necessary, the child’s health care provider will be contacted.

We must exclude a child with any of the following conditions:

Chicken pox	Until day 6 after rash began or sooner if all blisters have dried into scabs and no new blisters or sores have started within the last 24 hours; usually by day 6 after rash begins
Eye drainage	Until 24 hours after treatment begins when pus drainage and/or fever or eye pain is present, or a medical exam indicates that a child may return.
Diarrhea	Until diarrhea stops or a medical exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a person's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form and or watery, bloody, or mucous containing stools.
Mouth Sores With Drooling	Until a medical exam indicates the child may return or until sores have healed
Fever	<u>Axillary</u> (armpit) temperature: 100 degrees F or Oral temperature: 101 degrees F or higher, before fever reducing medication is given, when accompanied by behavior changes, or other signs or symptoms of illness.
Impetigo	Until child has been treated with antibiotics for at least a full 24 hours and sores are drying or improving
Lice (head)	Until after the first treatment and no live lice are seen
Rash	Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not that of a communicable disease (I.e., chicken pox, fifth disease, measles, roseola, rubella, shingles, strep throat).
Respiratory Infections (Viral)	Until child is without fever for 24 hours and is well enough to participate in normal activities. No exclusion for other mild respiratory infections without fever as long as child can participate comfortably.
Ringworm (skin and scalp)	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started
Scabies	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started
Signs/Symptoms of Possible Severe Illness	Unusually tired, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or wheezing should be evaluated by the child's health care provider to rule out severe illness.
Streptococcal Sore Throat	Until at least a full 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins and child is without fever for 24 hours.
Vomiting	Until vomiting stops. Vomiting is defined as two or more episodes in the previous 24 hours.

- Is not able to participate in childcare program activities with reasonable comfort, including outdoor play.
- Requires more care than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care.

A written notice will be posted on the communication board.

Parents are required by State Laws and our center policies to inform the center within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends/holidays, if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease.

SUSPECTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All childcare staff are required by Minnesota law to report any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities.

FIRST AID

In the event of any injury or illness, appropriate first aid will be administered by trained staff. If staff decides this is an emergency situation, 911 will be contacted to provide emergency first aid. If necessary, the emergency medical service will transport your child to a medical facility as designated by emergency services. A parent or alternate listed on Emergency Card will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's source of health care may also be made. **Staff will not transport children.**

FOOD BROUGHT FROM HOME

If food is brought from home to share with other children (i.e. for special occasions) it must be commercially prepared and packaged.

PETS

Rooms A has freshwater aquarium. Room B has guinea pigs. Please notify the director immediately if your child has allergies to any domestic animals.

SEAT BELTS AND TRANSPORTATION

There is no transportation provided for regular attendance for children while enrolled in our program.

When planned activities at our program (i.e. field trips) require transportation, the methods used will be in accordance with the Department of Human Services regulations and Minnesota Law. Minnesota law requires federally approved age-appropriate car seats and seat belts to be used to transport children.

HEALTH CONSULTATION SERVICES

Our program receives health consultation services from Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency. The phone number is 612-617-4600. All Health Consultants are registered Nurses with certification in Public Health.

**MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY FOR
DHS LICENSED PROGRAMS**

POLICY FOR DHS LICENSED PROGRAMS

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.

- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.

- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency, Hennepin County Child Protection 612-348-3552, Ramsey County Child Protection 651-266-4500 or local law enforcement at University Police 612-624-2677.

- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.

- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care.

The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- (i) related policies and procedures were followed;
- (ii) the policies and procedures were adequate;
- (iii) there is a need for additional staff training;
- (iv) the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- (v) there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

The internal review will be completed by the Executive Director. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Assistant Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of the Internal Review

The facility must document completion of the internal review and provide documentation of the review to the commissioner upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

Staff Training

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

MN Department of Human Services Division of Licensing December 2011
