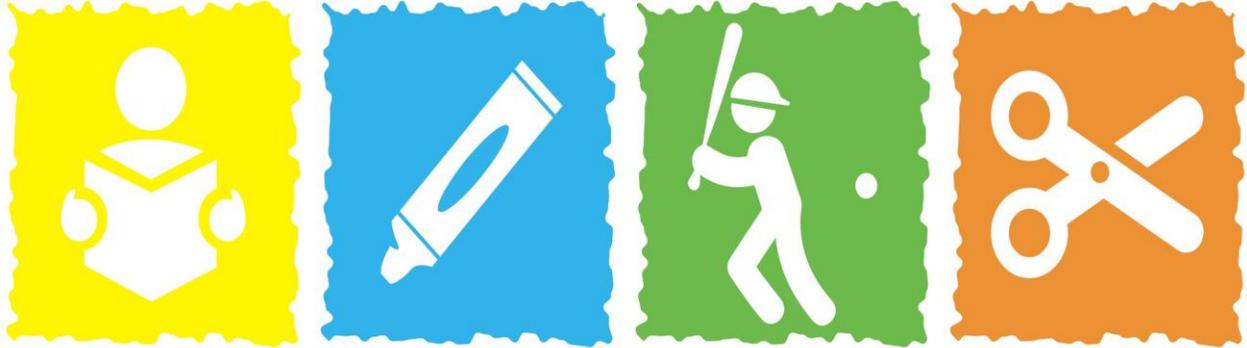


# ***CEDAR LAKE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY***



## ***Family Handbook***

The purpose of this handbook is to provide families with information regarding the services, policies, procedures and regulations of Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy.

Please keep this guide in a convenient, safe place so you can refer to it throughout the program year. After reviewing this information, if you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your child's Teacher, the Office Manager or the Program Directors.

The information contained in this handbook may be modified by changes in state or local regulations. This booklet will be available on the Parent Board at Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy.

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# WELCOME TO CEDAR LAKE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY!

**Owned and operated by Aimee Jewett and Clarissa Regula**

## **Program Description**

This program provides developmentally appropriate activities for children Monday through Friday 6am to 6pm. Weekly lesson plans are written and posted for parents' review. Children are provided time to choose their own activities and work independently in learning centers. Caregivers serve as facilitators to enhance the children's choices.

This handbook will explain our basic mission, purpose, rules, and policies. Parents are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with all of the enclosed materials. Please read through this handbook, and if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, feel free to contact us. We hope your family enjoys their time with us. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care.

Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy is committed to serving families in Northwest Indiana. Our program's key features include:

- Highly qualified staff—a Bachelor's level Lead Teacher, An Associate Teacher, and a part-time Classroom Aide in every classroom
- Small group size—8 infants, 10 toddlers and two year olds and 20-24 preschoolers per class session
- Intentional instruction—based on best practices for teaching and learning
- Continuity of care—children stay with the same teachers and peers for up to Five years to help them develop secure relationships
- Parent-Family and Community Engagement Services—both expected and strongly supported, with well-trained and experienced staff
- Reflective supervision and practice model is implemented
- Emphasis on social-emotional development and self-regulation skills
- Enhanced focus on Language, Literacy and STEM learning to promote school readiness

## ***Mission***

*Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy is committed to understanding, respecting, reflecting and being responsive to the cultures of all people, but particularly to those of our enrolled children, families and staff. Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy promises to succeed in creating a diverse learning environment that respects, accepts, and includes all children, families, visitors and staff members regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs in order to embrace the diversity of our community.*

## PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### My rights as a Parent

- To be welcomed in the classroom.
- To choose whether or not I participate without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program.
- To be informed regularly about my child's progress.
- To always be treated with respect and dignity.
- To expect guidance for my child from the Staff.

### My responsibilities as a parent

- To learn as much as possible about the program.
- To be active in my child's classroom, as an observer or a volunteer and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward the enrichment of the program.
- To work with teachers and staff to discuss ways in which parents can help with their child's development at home in relation to their school experiences.
- To work with teachers, staff, and other parents in a cooperative way.
- To guide my children with firmness, that is both loving and protective.

## GENERAL PROCEDURES

### Equal Opportunity Policy

In accordance with federal law and the United States Department of Health and Human Services policy, this program is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

### Classroom Entry

In order to enter the classroom, children must have an up-to-date record of their immunizations signed by a physical (DO or MD), Physical Assistant (PA), Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), or Certified Medical Assistant (CMA). Provisional certificates of immunization and religious/medical exemptions for immunizations will be accepted according to Indiana's immunization law.

Each child admitted into the program requires a current (within the past 12 months) and comprehensive well-child physical examination. This examination must be signed and dated by a MD, DO, PA or ARNP. Please set up an appointment with your child's health care provider and be ready to provide the appointment date on the first day of class. This well-child examination must be updated every 12 months

### Orientation

Upon enrollment, and prior to the child's first day in the classroom, families are required to participate in an orientation. This Parent Handbook is given to each family as a reference for program policies and procedures and the last page must be signed and kept on file by site staff.

### Authorized Persons List

Parents must provide a list of persons (18 years or older) they authorize to pick up their child from site. All authorized persons must sign the Child sign-in-/Sign-out Sheet when bringing or picking up a child. Authorized persons who are unknown to staff will be asked to show a picture identification before being allowed to pick up a child. **NO unauthorized person is permitted to pick up a child under any circumstances.**

### **Arrival Time**

Children need to arrive on time to class in order to fully benefit from the program which includes a nutritious meal – breakfast/snack for AM classes, lunch/snack for PM classes. If a child will be late, parents are responsible for notifying site staff as soon as possible. If there are circumstances that make arriving on time difficult, please contact the site – together we may be able to find a solution.

***Note:** Children are not allowed in classroom more than five (5) minutes before class start time.*

### **Departure Time**

Children must be picked up no later than 5 minutes after class end time. If a parent is unable to pick up their child on time, it is their responsibility to notify site staff in advance as well as to arrange for someone on the child's "Authorized Persons List" to pick up the child. If there are circumstances that make picking up the child on time difficult, please contact the site – together we may be able to find a solution.

***Note:** If a child is not picked up within 30 minutes past class close time and no arrangements have been made with site staff to have the child picked up by another authorized person, site staff will contact the Department of Child Protective Services.*

We thank you for your cooperation in this matter, and we know you understand that for the safety and well-being of your children, it is essential that children are picked up on time by the appropriate people and that a responsible adult is available to receive the children from the center. **At no time will faculty hold the child responsible for the situation or discuss the issue with the child.**

If you are having a problem picking up your child on time, please speak with the Office Manager or Program Director.

### **Late Pick-up**

It is essential that parents/guardians pick their children up on time from the Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy. If an emergency occurs, parents/guardians should call the center and inform the staff of the emergency, and provide a time when a parent/guardian or person from the 'Authorized Persons List' will be able to pick up the child.

### **Policy about Children Left After Closing Time**

Children are expected to be picked up by closing time. A charge of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed per child to any family picking a child up after 6:00 p.m. (closing time). If any child is not picked up 30 minutes after closing time, Child Protective Services will be contacted to pick up your child.

### **Change in Information**

Whenever there is change in address, phone, emergency contact, health provider, health conditions, work/school schedule, family situation, or other please notify us. You may be asked to update the Emergency contact information on file.

### **Policy on Release of a Child to an Intoxicated or Impaired Person**

If an authorized intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing children from the center, the center shall immediately report the incident to the local police agency.

### **Confidentiality**

All family information and children's files are kept strictly confidential. Only authorized staff have access to these files. On occasion, state and federal licensing representatives may also have access. Parents and legal guardians have the right (at any time) to review and or obtain copies of their child's files upon written request.

**Pets**

Animals will be included in the classroom for observation purposes only. Children will have no physical contact with the animals. Certain pets are allowed if they are in good health, have no evidence of disease and pose no safety threat to children. **Not allowed are: ferrets, reptiles, turtles, or birds of the parrot family.** Visits by pets or other animals will be included on the lesson plan and parents will be notified before the animal's visit.

**Accessing Child Records**

Parents and legal guardians who wish to review or obtain copies of their child's file for any reason should contact the Office Manager to make the request and to complete necessary paperwork. All requests for child folders will be processed within 7 – 14 business days (depending upon request). Please note: We adhere to all HIPPA regulations and no records will be released to an outside agency without the expressed written consent of a child's parent and/or guardian.

**Mandatory Reporter Statement**

All Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy staff are Mandatory Reporters and must immediately notify the Department of Child Protective Services with any concern of child sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental injury, child prostitution, denial of critical care, bestiality in the presence of a child, illegal drug in the child's system, or manufacture of drugs in the child's presence.

**Weather Related Closing Procedures**

Site staff will contact you directly if the program is going to be cancelled/closed due to weather. The following radio stations may also carry information about school closings in your area:

- WJOB 1230 AM
- WZVN 107.1 FM
- WGN 720 AM
- Indiana 105.5 FM

Announcements will be on the area radio stations before 6:00 am

**Policy on Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, Illegal Substances**

The use of tobacco, and use or possession of alcohol, illegal substances and firearms is prohibited. Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not allowed in the building or on any building grounds.

**Fire Drills**

As required by state Child Care Licensing, the centers will hold monthly fire drills and post evacuation plans in all classrooms. During the fire drills, staff will lead children to a safe area outside of the building. Please do not be alarmed if a fire drill occurs while you are in the school building, simply follow the direction of the staff.

**Child Safety: Jewelry**

We ask that you do not send your child to school wearing jewelry—including rings, necklaces, or earrings—as these items can get caught in equipment when children play, increasing the risk of injury. Thank you for your understanding.

## **Bathroom & Toileting**

As a component of our comprehensive early childhood program for children, we work with children who are still in the process of becoming toilet-trained. Classroom Teachers will be available to assist your child at Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy and will support your child in learning to use the toilet.

- Classroom staff will respond promptly when a child requests assistance using the toilet.
- Classroom staff will not show disapproval or punish children for any accidents. *Children who have toileting accidents are NEVER degraded by harsh words or appearances of disgust. A conference between the Teacher(s) and the parent(s) will serve to establish common goals and methods for toilet-training.*
- A child's clothing will be changed immediately following a toileting accident. Soiled clothing is placed in a sealed, labeled, moisture-proof bag and sent home with the child, so that a fresh change of clothes can be sent back to the center.

Faculty members are required to wash their hands with soap and water after each toileting, and to assist children with hand-washing, using soap and water.

The following procedures are implemented in the program to ensure sanitary conditions.

1. Gloves are used whenever staff needs to assist children in the bathroom following universal precautions procedures.
2. Faculty members always respect a child's privacy.
3. If an accident occurs, faculty and parents will not humiliate the child.
4. If a child lacks the necessary self-help skills in the bathroom, the faculty will inform parents.
5. Staff encourages the child to be independent and allow the child to become self-sufficient.
6. Bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected properly after any accident, and regularly on a daily basis.

## ATTENDANCE

Parents need to ensure that their child arrives to the center every day on time. Children who attend our program **daily and on time** experience better outcomes than those children who attend only occasionally. Staff will monitor attendance everyday via the sign in sheet. Please contact the center as early as possible if your child will be absent or late that day.

If there is a planned absence (scheduled vacation or family visit) or even an extended emergency absence (hospitalization, etc.) it is the responsibility of the parent to contact the site to discuss the situation in order to establish an expected return date and maintain the child's enrollment.

## INCLUSION EDUCATION

Children with special needs are always welcome to the program, and Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy is committed to providing classroom settings that include all children. All children who attend the program are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of disability. We strive to meet the individual education needs of every child including those children who enter with an Individual Education Plan /Individual Family Support Plan through their school systems' Special Education Department or Part C organizations, such as First Steps. The Program Director will work closely with staff and families to make sure the program is well prepared to welcome and nurture all children, especially those with disabilities.

### Inclusion Education Support

If you suspect your child may have a developmental, physical, or behavioral issue, please share your concerns with your child's teacher or the Program Director who is available to help families:

- Understand their parental rights
- Learn about available special education services
- Make appropriate referrals
- By attending education evaluations
- By attending Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings
- Know their child is reaching individual goals in the classroom
- By assisting in transition plans for children from one program to another.

## SCHOOL READINESS (ZERO TO FIVE APPROACHES)

Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy activities are designed to build social skills, language development, reinforcement of thinking processes, small and large muscle development and self-help skills. The program believes children learn best by doing. Curriculum planning provides for children to learn by hands-on experimenting, guessing, problem-solving, all of which is aligned with school readiness outcomes and is incorporated into their "play" activities.

### How will my child learn?

Children will be learning the things that they need to know in order to have a positive and successful future elementary school experience. All children will be supported in each of learning areas listed below:

- Cognitive: to help children develop learning skills, prepare to read and write, ask questions, use words to describe their ideas, feelings and what they see
- Social: to help children feel comfortable in school, make friends and solve problems

- Emotional: to help children develop self-control and independence, experience a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction and have a positive attitude toward life, others and themselves
- Physical: to help children increase their large muscle skills through running, jumping and climbing; to help children develop their small muscle skills through building, cutting, stringing and painting

Children will learn math, science, social studies and early reading and writing skills in each of the interest areas. This learning will be “hands-on” learning which research has proven to be the best way for children to learn since it “fits” with how they develop. Another term used to describe this type of learning is developmentally appropriate. Through their play activities, children will learn by exploring, experimenting, problem solving and asking questions.

Children enrolled at Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy will have teaching staff to scaffold them in learning objectives through discovery and purposeful curriculum plans in a classroom setting. Teaching teams will utilize an engaging curriculum as well as an on-going assessment process and supplemental instructional tools, in addition to their individual academic coursework to provide stimulating and language rich classroom environments for all children enrolled.

### **Parent Conferences/Communication Policy**

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled as needed or a parent may request such a conference at any time. In addition, we maintain an open door policy with our families. Our teachers are always available for on-going communication and parents are welcome at any and all times to observe our program.

Throughout the school year parents will be provided 3 opportunities for Parent/Teacher Conferences. During these meetings, teaching staff will provide parents with documentation supporting child growth and development.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

In the event of extracurricular activities, I understand that I will be informed prior to the activities and will sign written permission for my child to participate.

### **Visits, Field Trips and Off Site Excursions**

Field trips are an important part of Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy. Field trips are tied to the classroom curriculum. For example, if the topic of study is community SPECIALISTS, a trip to the fire station to learn about firefighters may be suggested. Parents will work with teaching staff to provide suggestions for classroom field trips keeping in mind CLELA guidelines regarding the cost of the field trip, the distance of the field trip location from the classroom, and the time the children will spend at the location. Parents will provide approval for field trips. A Permission Slip signed by the child’s parent(s) is required for a child to go on a field trip. In addition unless an emergency situation exists, such as the need for medical treatment or the inability of a designated adult to receive the child at the end of the day, children will return to the CLELA site after a field trip. From the site, they will return home.

### **Celebrations**

Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy recognizes that families value the ability to celebrate their child’s achievements, birthdays, and other cultural holidays as part of the classroom community. In an effort to keep the celebration of holidays, birthdays and other milestones developmentally and culturally appropriate, staff must follow guidelines in planning for celebrations in the classroom.

Celebrations must be:

- Developmentally appropriate and allowable state licensing policies;
- Approved by the Program Director.
- Optional and sensitive for children and families who choose not to participate.
- Reflective of and relevant to the ethnic composition, traditions, culture, and interests of participating

children and families

Preschool graduation and developmentally appropriate End-of-Year Celebrations will be organized each year to celebrate children's growth and development. Each programming year, families will be invited to participate fully in end of year activities planned by staff and parents.

### **Preparing for your child's first day in a center-based classroom**

Coming to Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy may be your child's first experience being away from you, or your child may already have experience being in a child care program. If your child has not been in the program before, it will be a new experience. It is normal for many young children to cry when they have to separate from their parents and try a new experience. Our staff will be working to make this transition from home to the classroom a positive and successful experience for both you and your child. Be prepared that this may take some time. Sometimes your child may be fine until other children begin to cry or your child's crying may only last a few minutes. Staff will work with you in helping your child to feel safe and comfortable in his/her new classroom. Orientation and Phase-in activities will be helpful in preparing your child for the first day of classes.

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

Staff is prohibited from using any type of physical discipline (spanking, etc.). The program uses positive discipline, which teaches children what they can do **rather than** what they cannot do. When positive discipline techniques are used in the classroom, children learn what they can do within the limits of the classroom. As children grow, the continued use of positive discipline techniques helps children learn to manage their own behavior. Consistency is the key to positive and successful discipline and the goal is for each child to obtain important problem solving skills that will lead to independent problem solving and self-control.

The consistent use of the following discipline techniques will help children learn what to expect and what they can do

- Clear and positive classroom rules explained to children
- Choices offered
- Logical consequence used. For example, "Sand is for digging and building. You were throwing sand in the faces of your friends, so you will need to get out of the sandbox and find another place on the playground to play."
- Contingencies (when, then statements) used. For example, "**When** you pick up the blocks, **then** you can go to the play dough table." When you zip up your coat, then you can go outside."

### **Behavior Support**

Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy will use consistent behavior guidance and will not exclude a child from program participation unless that child demonstrates an inability to benefit from the services offered by the program due to behavior concern. If such occurs, we will work with the child, family, and community mental health professionals if necessary, to provide alternative services. A child's enrollment in the program may also be terminated because of continual or extreme violation of the parent responsibilities listed in this Parent Handbook.

If behavior concerns are identified during daily behavior guidance practices:

1. Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidence.
2. Parent/guardian will be notified verbally, and may also be given written copies of the incident reports for

challenging behaviors that might lead to exclusion.

3. Parent/guardian will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior
4. Staff will use a variety of strategies to support child in improving behavior, with the goal of preventing exclusion:
  - ✓ Try to redirect child from negative behavior.
  - ✓ Reassess classroom environment, supervision, and appropriateness of activities.
  - ✓ Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
  - ✓ Praise appropriate behaviors.
  - ✓ Consistently apply consequences for rules.
  - ✓ Give verbal reminders.

The Program Director, teaching team, parent/guardian, and possibly other support within our program will have a conference to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. Prior to any decision to exclude a child from Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy, the Program Director will hold a meeting with the child's parent(s) to discuss the issue(s).

### **Decision to Discharge for Behavior and Health Concerns**

The procedure below meets our state Child Care Licensing office requirement for a "discharge" policy\*.

*\*Child Care Center Rules: 47 IAC 3-4.7-17 Admission, discharge, arrival, and departure policies*

**Child actions** that may require exclusion due to behavior concerns include the following:

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time and multiple attempts using different strategies.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

**Parental actions** that may require exclusion of the child for behavior and health concerns include the following:

- Failure to complete required forms or health information including the child's immunization records.
- Failure to cooperate with areas of Action Plan
- Violations of the attendance policy.
- Physical or verbal abuse to staff.

## **HEALTH**

### **Early Childhood Development and Health Services**

Your child's health impacts his or her total development and ability to benefit from the classroom experience. Our program's goal is that each child is in the best possible health, that preventative health measures are taken, and that follow-up treatment and services are obtained for any health condition detected.

### **Requirements for Preventive Care, Screenings and Immunizations**

The following chart shows the health requirements for children before and after their enrollment in Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy. These requirements are based upon the Federal Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Testing (EPSDT) guidelines and our state Child Care Licensing requirements.

**The first day of class the child must have:**

Physical exam

Up to date immunization record

**How do we ensure all children have their health checked?**

All center based programs require that each child has a complete physical exam, an up-to-date immunization record, and a yearly dental exam.

**Notifying & Following Up with Families**

Our staff will communicate and follow up with your family to ensure that their health requirements are met, including the following steps as needed:

- **Letter Explaining Health Requirement.** We notify families one month prior to a health requirement coming due and assist families as needed.
- **Follow-up/Confirm Appointment.** The office Manager will follow up to confirm the date of the required appointment.
- **Temporary Exclusion.** Per state licensing children can be excluded if health requirements are not met. We will notify your family in advance as much as possible.

Parents/guardians must provide copies of health documentation to the Office Manager.

There are times when a child should be kept at home because the child is sick. Keeping a child at home when the child is sick is in the best health interest of the child who is sick and for the staff and other children in the classroom. Our *Exclusion Policy* is included as a part of this handbook to provide an explanation of when children should be kept at home because they are sick.

If a child gets sick at school, the child will be kept away from the other children in a quiet, suitable area where that child can rest. An adult staff member will stay with the child or be within visual and hearing distance of the child. The child's teacher will call the parent(s) or other emergency contact person to inform them of the child's illness and to request them to come and get the child. Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy reserves the right to admit or exclude children with contagious conditions from the program, based on each individual case, for the sole purpose of providing a healthy environment for all children (refer to *Exclusion Policy*).

**Health and Safety Needs**

In order to collect essential information and identify any needs or concerns, during application intake all parents are asked to complete a Health and Nutrition History on child. If your child is on any medications, has any specific allergies, or has any health/safety needs, please inform the center staff before your child starts in the classroom. This includes if your child has any diagnosed conditions, such as asthma. Some health conditions may require a follow-up plan, physician documentation, staff training, or other accommodations that need to be in place to ensure your child's best health and safety in our program.

**Immunizations – Special Cases**

In the case where immunizations are not recommended for a child for medical and or religious reasons, parent/guardian must submit to the Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy:

\*Medical Immunization Exemption Form): Parent/guardian must submit a signed written statement from a health care provider attesting to the reason the immunization is medically contraindicated; and the specific time period that the immunization is medically not recommended.

\*Religion Immunization Exemption Form): Parent/guardian must submit a signed written statement to Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy explaining how the immunization conflicts with the child's exercise of bona fide religious tenets or practices.

### **Daily Health Check**

Upon arrival each day at center-based classrooms, your child will be observed by staff for signs of illness/injury that could affect their ability to participate in the classroom's activities. If present, you will be asked how your child was feeling and acting at home. Staff may also ask about your child's sleep, eating, toileting, medications, and any other health problems or concerns you may have since their previous day of attendance.

### **Head Lice Policy**

Head lice can spread very easily from one person to another and classrooms are easy targets for outbreaks. Please be aware that having head lice is not a reflection on you, your child, or the cleanliness of your household! If your child, ages 2 to 5 years, is found to have head lice or nits, you will be immediately contacted to pick up your child. In order to return to class, the first lice treatment must be completed and all live lice and nits closer than ¼ inch to the scalp must be removed. Our staff will perform lice checks upon a suspected outbreak. The Office Manager will contact the parent of the child with lice for individualized discussion on treatment and future prevention. The Health/Nutrition Coordinator will also send home a Health Alert to all other parents of children enrolled in the classroom(s).

### **Medications**

If possible, medication schedules should be arranged so medication will not need to be given during school hours. If medication is to be given during school hours, you will need to fill out a Medication Authorization Form (please request from). The form must be signed by the prescribing physician and dated, and filled out monthly if medications are long-term or as-needed.

Prescribed medication will only be administered if it has the following:

1. Child's first and last name
2. Name of medicine
3. Directions for use (Schedule of Administration)
4. Name of prescribing physician
5. Amount given per dose
6. Pharmacy's Name
7. Date medication was filled

### **Notable Medications and Health Care Plans**

Please note that before medication is administered to children during classroom hours, we require all medications to have a Medication Authorization Form (please request form) signed by the prescribing physician. Additionally, all diagnosed health cases will require a Health Plan signed by the child's medical provider.

**Sunscreen:** Parent provided sunscreen will be labeled and only used on that child along with written permission from the parent.

## EXCLUSION POLICY OF ILL OR AFFECTED CHILDREN

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The purpose of this Handbook is to help Teachers and Parents determine when a child is not to attend the Center. Whenever a child falls into a category that he/she is to be excluded, contact the Office Manager.

After appropriate measures have been taken, the child will then be able to attend the Center. Upon a child's return to the Center, they must submit documentation from the physician that the child is under treatment and able to return to class.

By following this policy, we are better able to see that all children remain healthy and are not at risk of contracting an illness that could be prevented.

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The parent, legal guardian, or other person(s) authorized by the parent shall be notified immediately when a child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the program as described below.

- A. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- B. The illness results in a greater care need than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children, or
- C. The child has any one of the following conditions:
  1. A diagnosed communicable disease or suspected signs of a communicable disease. (i.e. chicken pox, German measles, measles, mumps.)
  2. Diarrhea: The child may return to center 24 hours after the last episode **if** no other symptoms are present.
  3. Vomiting (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the illness to be non-communicable, and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
  4. Symptoms and Signs of severe illness such as unusual lethargy, listlessness, uncontrolled coughing, continued headaches, irritability, persistent crying, chest discomfort, constant runny nose, difficult breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs until medical evaluation indicated.
  5. Undiagnosed skin rash with or without a fever or behavior change. No attendance at center until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
  6. Earaches and Toothaches - No attendance at center until earache or toothache is taken care of.
  7. Mouth Sores with or without drooling unless a health care provider or health official determines that condition is noninfectious.
  8. Discharge from ears –inflamed tissues around ears or eyes. No attendance at Center until physician gives release.
  9. Pink Eye Symptoms (conjunctivitis) Whites of eyes turn pink or red and feel gritty, then a white or yellow discharge crust forms overnight. Need to be seen by physician. Can return to center 24 hours after treatment is instituted.

10. Ringworm Often appears to begin as a small scaly patch on the edge of the scalp near the hairline. Ringworm can also infect other parts of the body including feet and groin. Need to be seen by physician. Parent/Guardian must provide documentation that the child has been seen by a physician and received treatment before the child can return to the center. Ringworm must be covered with a bandage at all times while the child is at the Center.
11. Meningitis – Symptoms: Severe headache, stiff neck, fever, vomiting, rash, irritability. Very sudden and very severe. Contact doctor immediately. Contact Public Health Authority to find out if other cases have been reported.
12. Hepatitis – Symptoms: fever, nausea, vomiting, headache, jaundice. Contact doctor immediately. No Center attendance for a minimum of 7 days to one month for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis C after onset of jaundice. Doctor will give release.
13. Impetigo – Symptoms: skin lesions, patch of tiny blisters – a strep infection. Need to be seen by family doctor. May return to center 24 hours after oral medications are started.
14. Chicken Pox – Symptoms: skin rash, small red fluid filled spots, after a few days they burst or dry out, then crust over. Itchy, may have a slight fever. May return to Center seven days after onset of rash or until all sores have dried and crusted.
15. Head Lice – Symptoms: Persistent itching of the scalp, sometimes accompanied by infested scratch marks or what appears to be a rash. Nits are usually often found at the back of the head and neck and behind the ears. Treatment includes medicated lice shampoo. May return to Center 24 hours after treatment is completed and the child is found to be nit and lice free. Notice: If pregnant or child is under 1 year of age – contact physician regarding use of medicated shampoo.
16. Mumps – Symptoms: Malaise (generalized weakness), anorexia (loss of appetite), headache, and low-grade fever, followed by an earache that's aggravated by chewing or when drinking sour or acidic liquids. May return to the center nine (9) days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
17. Fifths Disease – Symptoms: red rash on the face, primarily on the cheeks, gives the “slapped face” appearance. Lasts 1-4 days. The rash may appear on upper and lower extremities. Communicability is uncertain. Treatment: None needed, take comfort measures for rash. Limit direct contact.
18. Pin Worm (Enterobiasis) – Symptoms: intense itching around anus, may lead to loss of sleep, irritability, scratching, skin irritation and sometimes vaginitis. To be seen by doctor. Crowded living conditions often enhance its spread to several members of a family. Entire family may need to be treated at the same time. Doctor will determine when child is ready to return to center.
19. Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection – Symptoms: Fever and sore throat. May also present with rash and earache. May return to Center 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started and cessation of fever.
20. Tuberculosis – Symptoms include weight loss, fever, night sweats, cough and chills. May not return to Center, until a health care provider or health official states that the child can attend the program.
21. Scabies or other infestations – Symptoms: Itchy, red, raised eruption of the skin caused by a mite. Can appear anywhere on the body. The most characteristic burrow appears as a gray or white, tortuous, threadlike line. May return to Center after treatment is completed.

- 22. Pertussis (Whooping Cough) – Symptoms: A highly contagious respiratory infection which produces an irritating spasmodic cough and often ends in a high pitched, inspiratory whoop. May return after completing of successful antibiotic treatment and child does not need supportive or respiratory treatment.
- 23. Fever – Most pediatricians consider any thermometer reading above 100.4 degrees a sign of fever. If your child has a fever, it is probably a sign that the body is fighting an infection. The child may return to class if there has been no fever in the preceding 24 hours.
- 24. MRSA – Most MRSA infections appear as boils that are red, swollen, and painful and have pus or other drainage. You may notice blisters, or a wound that looks like a spider bite. A fever and chills are common with MRSA. This skin infection commonly occurs where there has been an open area on the skin such as a cut or abrasion. Contact your health care provider for treatment. May return to the center with consent of health care provider.
- 25. Rotavirus – Symptoms: Diarrhea, low-grade fever, nausea and vomiting lasting 3 to 10 days. May not return to the center without the consent of the health care provider.
- 26. Croup – A respiratory infection involving the throat and lungs. Symptoms are a harsh cough, with breathing difficulties. Child must be kept home until cleared by a doctor.

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If a child becomes ill at school, the child will be isolated from the other children on a cot in a quiet, suitable area. An adult will stay with the child or be within visual and hearing distance of the child.

The child’s teacher will call the parent(s) or other contact person to inform them of the child’s illness and to request them to come and get the child.

If the parent(s) or contact person cannot pick the child up, but is home to receive the child, the teacher is responsible for making arrangements to transport the child home as soon as possible.

The parent must present written documentation from the physician that the child is no longer contagious and is well enough to return to the center.

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Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy reserves the right to admit or exclude children with communicable conditions from the program based on individual cases for the sole purpose of providing a healthy environment for all children.

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## **SAFETY**

To ensure the safety and well-being of each child present in our program, the following guidelines are followed:

- Children are always supervised – children are never left alone.
- Anyone removing a child from our program must be authorized on the Emergency Information Form.
- Staff will check this list and ask to see a picture ID.
- Staff has immediate access at all times to a working telephone.
- Both fire and tornado drills are held once a month.
- Classroom evacuation plans for fire, tornado, and other emergencies are posted on the parent board; a medical and dental emergency plan is also posted in each classroom.
- Equipment maintenance is ongoing. Items that need repair are removed immediately.
- There is always CPR and First Aid trained staff on site.
- All medications are kept in locked containers when on site.
- All unsafe chemicals are stored in locked cabinets.
- An incident report is completed and sent home the same day a child is injured.
- Staff will distribute a communicable disease notice to families within 24 hours of call documented exposures.

### **Significant Occurrences or Problems/Emergency contact**

Parents will be notified of any significant occurrences or problems which affect their child, including the following:

- Exposure to communicable diseases
- Illness, serious bodily injury or death of a provider or a child
- Care instructions in an emergency.
- Emergency evacuation (fire, tornado)

## NUTRITION

**Menu and Meal Time Information** Family style meal service is used in the Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy. Children will serve themselves all menu items from the bowls, platters, baskets, and/or pitchers provided. The children are encouraged to taste all foods, but they are never forced to eat anything they do not want. One goal of the program is to introduce the children to a wide variety of foods. Food experiences allow literacy, math, science, and social skills to be developed. Healthy habits are also established in the classroom with daily tooth brushing and an emphasis on hand washing and other habits that help reduce the spread of illness.

Teachers and guests in the classroom will serve themselves in the same manner. Teachers will sit with the children during meal times, model appropriate eating behavior, and initiate conversations, similar to a home setting. *Teachers* will also use this time for learning so that nutrition education is incorporated into the routine of meals. Parents and other family members are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and participate in meal times!

The menus for the program are approved by a Registered Dietitian who ensures that the meals are nutritious, attractive and tasty at the same time providing 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance for nutrients for preschoolers. Menus will be posted on the parent board in each class and copies will be provided for parents to take home. The menus follow the guidelines for CACFP (Child and Adult Food Program).

Children are served the following meals and snacks based on when they arrive at the center:

**Breakfast, AM Snack, Lunch and PM Snack;**

If a child arrives late to the center, they will still be offered a nutritious breakfast or lunch.

### **Special Dietary Needs**

It is the parent's responsibility to immediately inform staff of any current or new Food Allergies or Intolerances. Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy will not honor individual food preferences **unless for medical or religious reasons**. If the child has a diagnosed food allergy you will need the following:

1. Medical Provider prescription stating very clearly, the allergy, and what needs to be avoided, also must include any substitutions that are allowable. Example: Child has a cow's milk allergy, however can substitute with soy milk. If peanut/nut allergy, please indicate environment and/or ingestion only.
2. If the child requires an Epee-pen, the Medical Provider must complete a written Medication Authorization Form (please request -) in addition to the Medical Provider prescription. Please note we need these required documents in place to accommodate children in the program. If you have any questions regarding food allergies, please see the Office Manager.

### **Religious Beliefs**

Dietary changes due to religious beliefs will be followed when a parent/guardian submits a written request to staff.

### **Bringing home-baked items to school**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations state that home-baked items **cannot be brought** to school. According to the regulations, store-bought, individually wrapped items can be brought to school.

### **Parent Access Volunteers**

For classroom activity volunteers, all parents, guardians, and custodians of enrolled children are considered *Parent Access Volunteers*, and are expressly given permission to have access to the child by the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child. Parent Access Volunteers shall have access limited to the classroom of the child, and office or meeting room areas not frequented by other children. *The Parent Access Volunteer* shall not be permitted to move about in any other classrooms or areas of any facility unaccompanied by staff. Furthermore, *Parent Access Volunteers* must remain visibly and audibly observed while in their child's classroom at all times and may never be alone with any child other than their own child. *Parent Access Volunteers* will be asked to sign a statement that they have received a copy of this Parent Handbook.

### **Certified Volunteers**

Certified Volunteers are parents, or community volunteers, who in the course of their volunteering duties have regular access to areas beyond the classroom of their child; and/or Parent Access Volunteers who wish to be routinely present in the classroom setting an average of (8) eight or more hours per month. In accordance with Indiana licensing standards, Certified Volunteers will be asked to complete at minimum a TB screening and background check.

**Sometimes children experience some difficulty sharing their parents with the other children in the classroom when the parent is in the classroom to volunteer. Parents faced with this type of situation should ask staff for suggestions on how to best manage the situation and allow staff to manage any discipline issues. Parents should also be supportive of the classroom guidelines when they volunteer.**

**NOTE:** Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy does not allow siblings of students in any classroom while parents volunteer in the classroom for the following reasons:

- Insurance and liability purpose
- Indiana Licensing Regulations with regard to Child/Teacher ratio
- Board of Health concerns about the health and safety of the sibling and other enrolled children and staff

## PARENT COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

At Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy we have an open door policy, welcoming parents at any time to visit or classrooms. However, there are times when parents need to express their comments and concerns. The Parent Comment Procedure is how we encourage families to do that at Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy.

Any parent receiving services through Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy may initiate a concern. Such concerns may include but are not limited to the following program management and service areas: communication, disabilities, education, eligibility/enrollment/attendance, facilities, fiscal operations, health, nutrition, parent involvement, personnel, social services and transportation.

While the procedure below refers to “parents” throughout, note that the majority of these steps (one through four) are equally applicable to parents and other visitors to the center.

Attention to the confidentiality of all parties involved will be paid throughout the steps of the following procedure, and resolutions will be reached within a reasonable timeframe.

### **STEP 1 – Meet with appropriate staff person**

The first step in the process for parents is to meet with the appropriate staff person with whom there is an issue or suggestion. For instance, if parents have a concern about something occurring within the classroom, they are encouraged first to meet with the classroom teacher.

### **STEP 2 – Meet with the Office Manager or Program Director**

If meeting with the appropriate staff person does not yield a mutually agreeable outcome – or if it is uncomfortable to speak directly to the relevant staff person – the parent is encouraged to meet with the appropriate site leader (Office Manager/Program Director). We encourage parents to be straightforward in discussing the issue or suggestion with the site leader (Office Manager/Program Director) and to set a date for a follow up check-in.

### **STEP 3– Communication back with the Parent (originator)**

The Program Director will communicate the resolution, follow-up, and/or outcome with the person who originated the comment. This will be done in writing and in person.

### **STEP 4 – Communication back with Staff**

The Program Director will communicate the resolution, follow-up, and/or outcome with the appropriate staff. This will be done in writing and in person.

**\*A sample Comment Form is located on following page.  
Official forms will be available in each classroom.**

# CEDAR LAKE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY COMMENT FORM

In order to better facilitate your concerns or suggestion in a complete and timely manner, please complete the form below.  
You are guaranteed a response within 10 business days.

**PLEASE PRINT FIRMLY**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Site or program enrolled in: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Community Member: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a parent/guardian: **Child Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Best Time to Call:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUGGESTIONS** - Briefly list any suggestions that would benefit children and families.

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**CONCERNS** - Briefly describe your concern *(To ensure accurate follow through include: DATE, TIME, STAFF INVOLVED)*:

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Desired Outcome *(Briefly describe the outcome or resolution you are seeking)*:

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Prior communication *(List who you have previously spoken with)*:

Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

**For Staff Use Only**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Code 1

\_\_\_\_\_ Code 2

\_\_\_\_\_ Code 3

Follow up Action completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply:       Phone Contact       E-mail       Letter       Team Meeting

**Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy**

Enrollment Fees

**All tuition and fees are due before your child can attend classes!**

**Infants** .....220.00 weekly or 50.00 Daily

**Toddlers**.....200.00 weekly or 40.00 Daily

**Pre K (3-5)**.....180.00 weekly or 40.00 Daily

Minimum daily rate is 2 days a week

Max daily rate is 3 days a week

**Multi-Child Discount**

10% off for each additional child

**Accepted Payment Options**

Private Pay (Personal checks, Cash or Credit Card)

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

**Registration/Enrollment Fees**

\$25.00 per child

\$50.00 per family

**The following documents must be on file before the child's first day of class:**

Birth Certificate

Current Physical

Immunization Records

Intake Agreement/Emergency Contact Information

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How often will my child play outdoors?**

Expect that your child will play outdoors on a regular basis, unless the National Weather Service indicates a potential safety or health hazard (i.e. wind advisory, heat advisory).. The following guidelines will be followed regarding outdoor play:

Staff will be responsible to monitor appropriate dress for outdoor weather activities. Programs make effort to have a supply of weather related clothing available to children who may not have appropriate clothes for the weather. In cases of extreme winter weather, children will be allowed outdoors for brief intervals (When appropriate).

In cases of heat and high humidity, children will be allowed outdoors for intervals of no longer than 15 minutes. Drinking water should be readily available for the children.

Supervisory staff reserves the right to stop children from participating in outdoor activities based on individual circumstances for the purpose of providing a safe environment for all children.

Children with special needs will be included in outdoor activities based on information obtained in the child's health records and their Individualized Education Plan.

### **How will the program help my child and I manage being apart from one another?**

The following are additional suggestions to help you and your child with the transition into the program:

- Plan to attend Orientation and Phase-in to help both you and your child feel more comfortable with the classroom and staff.
- Make sure your child knows who will pick him/her up after school).
- Tape record yourself reading one of your child's favorite stories and give the tape to your child's teacher. Your child can then listen to your voice reading a familiar story, which can help your child feel more comfortable.
- Talk about some of the things your child will be doing at school.

It is normal for parents to have a tough time separating, too! Teaching staff and Family Support staff will also be available to help parents feel safe and comfortable as their children enter Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy.

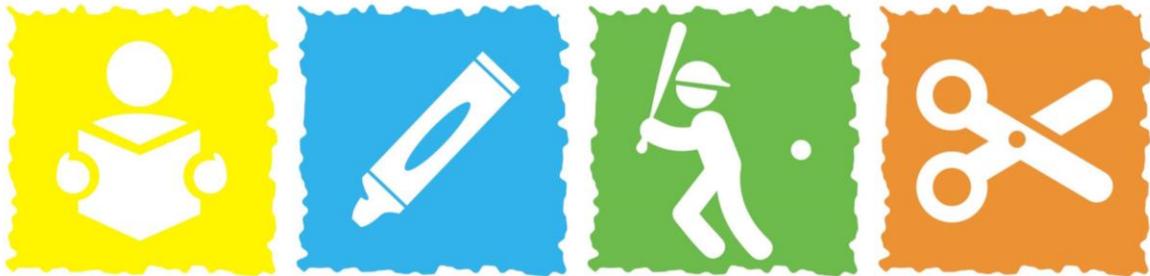
### **How should my child dress for the classroom?**

Children should be dressed comfortably to play both inside and outside. Clothing should be washable and easy for your child to put on and take off (for going to the bathroom). Shoes should be comfortable for running, climbing and jumping. Shoes should also be safe, so we suggest that children not wear flip flop type sandals as children can trip and fall more easily in this type of footwear. The children will play outdoors throughout the year, so dress your child in keeping with the weather. Outdoor clothing (boots, jackets with zippers, hats and mittens) should be easy to put on and take off. All clothing that is left at school and all outdoor clothing should be marked with your child's name. A lost and found box is located at your child's classroom site, just in case your child should lose an unmarked item of clothing.

### **Can my child bring things from home?**

Unless there is a show and tell project approved by the teacher, children are discouraged from bringing toys and other items from home. Classrooms are rich in materials appropriate for children's development, and our program cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged items. The only items needed are a pillow and blanket for rest periods and extra clothing in case of accidents.

# CEDAR LAKE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY



I \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent / Guardian),  
have received the Cedar Lake Early Learning Academy family handbook. I have read and  
reviewed the policies and procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date