



**EMBASSY ROW**  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

# FAMILY HANDBOOK

SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

## Embassy Row Child Development Center Parent and Family Handbook

Dear Embassy Row Child Developmental Center Family,

Welcome to **ERCDC**! We're pleased to partner with you in your child's journey of learning and growth. ERCDC provides a safe and nurturing environment to create a developmentally appropriate learning experience for your child. We believe that creative early education makes a positive difference in your child's life, especially during this wonder-filled time when learning begins.

Our staff members are passionate, well-qualified, credentialed, and continuously undergo professional development to ensure we provide high-quality, up-to-date care in a safe environment. ERCDC offers full-time service to children from six weeks to five years old.

### Our Curriculum

Our Center uses the **Creative Curriculum®** as the foundation for effective learning. The curriculum is:

- **Innovative:** Delivers cutting-edge, unique, and effective resources based on the latest research.
- **Responsive:** Includes solutions that address educators' challenges and help create a responsive learning environment.
- **Supportive:** Provides robust guidance to support each educator's professional journey.
- **Comprehensive:** Aligns with all state early learning guidelines and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.
- **Developmentally Appropriate:** Promotes learning experiences designed for each age group and is flexibly tailored to each child's needs using high-quality, research-based resources.

We are committed to creating a safe and fun environment that builds **self-confidence**, encourages **discovery**, and equips your child with the necessary tools for success. Please read this handbook, as it will answer most of your questions regarding the Center's policies and procedures.

We also encourage you to support and participate in our school activities and programs. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your child's teacher or the Center Directors. We can't wait for you to come and be a part of the ERCDC family!

Warm Regards,

ERCDC Administration and Staff

## Philosophy and Contact Information

*“We want to know what the children think, feel, and wonder. We believe that the children will have things to tell each other and us that we have never heard before. We are always listening for surprises and the birth of a new idea. This practice supports a mutual quest for understanding. It is a practice of searching together for new meaning. Together we become a community of seekers.” - Louise Boyd Cadwell*

## Contact Information

**Embassy Row Child Development Center**  
3855 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20016

Contact Type	Details
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Fax	(202) 350-2683
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Web Address	<a href="http://www.EmbassyRowChildren.com">www.EmbassyRowChildren.com</a>
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General Email	<a href="mailto:info@embassyrowchildren.com">info@embassyrowchildren.com</a>
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## Center Days and Hours of Operation

- **Standard Hours:** Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- **Before Care:** 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.
- **After Care:** 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

*(Center hours are subject to change. Before and After Care services incur an additional fee to cover staffing and overhead costs.)*

Please refer to our **calendar for holidays and other closures**. *(These are the dates the Center is officially closed. On half days, pick up is at 12:30 p.m. The calendar is subject to change.)*

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## Administrative Staff and Board of Directors

Name	Title	Email	Phone
<b>Diana Diaz</b>	Director	<a href="mailto:diana@embassyrowchildren.com">diana@embassyrowchildren.com</a>	202-733-4152
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To contact our **Board of Director members**, please email: [board@embassyrowchildren.com](mailto:board@embassyrowchildren.com)

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## Program Overview

### Education & Developmental Philosophy

Embassy Row Child Development Center (ERCDC) provides a stimulating environment that guides children in the discovery of new information, skills, and concepts. ERCDC:

- Provides age and culturally appropriate learning activities aiming to stimulate, enrich, and reinforce learned skills.
- Uses a family-centric approach to deliver early education and supplemental services that meet the learning and safety needs of students with parental involvement.
- Respects each child as an individual possessing a unique personality, intelligence, and creativity.

The ERCDC team has established learning environments that meet the District of Columbia's Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Common Core Early Learning Standards and are clean, fun, creative, and student-centered.

### Program Goals

As a vetted and licensed early education service provider, ERCDC follows the NAEYC code of ethical conduct and uses the Creative Curriculum®, a program based on the children's expressed interests for young learners ages six weeks to five years. The program provides high-quality learning experiences that foster incredible and exponential growth in children through creativity, which keeps children actively engaged through play and learning. It is our goal to meet each child right where they are.

### Core Goals:

- **Creativity:** To create a warm, welcoming, inviting, and comfortable atmosphere with a family feel.
- **Engagement:** To engage students in creative learning through play in an environment that opens the world to children at every level.
- **Provision:** To provide quality childcare for families.

Our program provides the necessary educational foundation by:

- Providing an atmosphere allowing children to freely and safely learn through exploration and experimentation.
- Educating the whole student by promoting the overall development of each child
- Providing a strong foundation for forming attitudes, establishing values, and discovering that they are persons of worth.
- Developing the ability to learn and solve problems (cognitive); interact with others, help themselves, and exhibit self-control (social and emotional).
- Understanding and using language (speech and language); using small (fine motor) and large (gross motor) muscles.
- Developing a sense of independence, self, family, and community.



## **Program Mission**

To provide the highest quality care and education for preschool children in an international and multicultural environment by professional educators who are inspired, guided, and enabled by Christian love. Our mission is achieved by our commitment to create a culture that is marked by our values.

## **Values**

- COMMUNICATION - Ensuring open, honest, and constructive communication between directors, teachers, parents, and children. Constant communication is encouraged to parents regarding the progress and accomplishments of their child. For quality control purposes, parents can express their thoughts on Center improvements. Parents are also encouraged to actively participate in parent/child activities.
- COMPASSION - Compassion for one another is expressed not only through kindness and love but also in celebrations of personal joys and successes, and prayers and support for illnesses and distresses.
- CREATIVITY - Our loving and affirming environment encourages the creative expression of students, parents, and teachers. Freedom of creativity is expressed in lessons, story-telling, artistry, and songs.
- DEVELOPMENT - Through an age-appropriate curriculum and many extra-curricular learning experiences in faith, art, music, language, and recreation, children are provided an early, enjoyable experience of academic and social development.
- DIVERSITY - With a unique international environment here on 'Embassy Row', children are provided exceptional opportunities to learn and interact in diverse nationalities, cultures, faiths, and languages.
- SECURITY - All practical attention is given to maintaining a secure and sanitary environment for the safety and well-being of all children.
- UNITY - Given our diversity, children are provided with the opportunity to enjoy what unites us as human beings.
- SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES - One of our unique features is that children are provided age-appropriate opportunities to enjoy and be inspired by Bible stories, songs, and prayers.

## **Initial Orientation and Professional Development Training**

While ERCDC employs staff who have already demonstrated experience and/or knowledge of child development and curriculum, all staff undergo initial orientation and 'shadow' experienced staff members until they complete their initial orientation training.

This training includes, but is not limited to: health, safety and emergency procedures, acceptable and unacceptable guidance, discipline and classroom management techniques, child abuse and neglect reporting procedures, and a review of pertinent regulatory requirements **before being allowed to work alone with children.**

We also provide ongoing, extensive professional development training. Additionally, staff members receive further training from the **OSSE LMS** and other OSSE-approved training websites and resources. **During this orientation period, no staff member should work alone with children** in a classroom or outdoors.

### **Non-Discrimination**

ERCDC provides care for children and families with various backgrounds and beliefs. ERCDC is open to all students and their families and does not discriminate on the basis of a person's religion, color, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, military status, and other status protected by law.

### **Children with Special Needs**

#### **UPDATED**

The Embassy Row Child Development Center (ERCDC) is committed to the full inclusion of children requiring support, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ERCDC will make all reasonable efforts to implement individualized accommodations and inclusive practices that support every child's participation. Parents must disclose any known special needs during enrollment. If a need is suspected, ERCDC staff will notify parents, provide documentation, and suggest next steps. The center will collaborate with families to assess needs and determine the most effective accommodation strategies.

To facilitate these services, the District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) manages vital programs. The Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program serves as the single point of entry for infants and toddlers (up to age 3) with developmental concerns. For preschool-aged children (ages 3–5), Early Stages provides no-cost screening and evaluation services. ERCDC works in collaboration with these programs, and our teaching staff partners with external therapists who may offer services on-site. Families with concerns are reminded they can contact the Strong Start DC Program at (202) 727-3665 for more information.

### **Communication issues**

ERCDC strives to provide families with clear, concise communication for a number of different purposes throughout the program. We communicate with parents or guardians who do not have a court order barring such communication. We communicate in person, through emails, flyers, newsletter, phone calls (ERCDC authorized phone) and the Procare app. If you should ever have any issues with the nature of our communications or understanding any aspect of something we have communicated, please feel free to contact us and we will address your

concerns in a timely manner. We use the S.T.A.R. method and other professional communication techniques to ensure any problems are resolved quickly to everyone's satisfaction.

### **S.T.A.R method**

Using the STAR method for conflict management can offer a variety of benefits for the people in conflict. It can help improve communication skills by teaching both parties how to articulate their thoughts and feelings in a clear, concise, and respectful way. People in conflict can also learn how to listen actively, ask open-ended questions, and use non-verbal cues to convey messages and understand the other party.

The S.T.A.R method stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

### **If the conflict persists:**

ERCDC takes all comments and suggestions from families into consideration to provide the best service possible. If you have any complaints, disagreements, or differences (e.g., regarding values or practices) that the S.T.A.R. method does not resolve to your satisfaction, please inform the person in conflict that the issue will be escalated to the Program's Director so a solution can be found as soon as possible.

If a solution still cannot be found, the Director will notify the owner of the center, and a discussion with the owner, director, and yourself will be needed to resolve the problems.

### **Confidentiality**

Within ERCDC, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with ERCDC employees who have a "need to know" or with regulatory authorities upon request to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents, and/or children will not be shared with parents, as ERCDC strives to protect everyone's right to privacy.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with ERCDC.

Outside of ERCDC, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of ERCDC, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information. Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on the property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing the property.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may

appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of ERCDC are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

## **Enrollment**

Every child has a right to quality early learning and development. ERCDC does not discriminate and invites children and their families from all ethnicities, races, cultures, religions, national origins, genders, and disabilities to apply.

ERCDC has rolling admissions and accepts full-time applications throughout the year. Enrollment and acceptance into our program is based on classroom availability and the completion of the application and enrollment process. We cannot guarantee that a space will be available at your requested start date and will contact families based on their space on the waitlist. (More information below.)

## **Policy on Using the Child's Legal Name in the Classroom (NEW)**

The Embassy Row Child Development Center (ERCDC) requires the use of the child's full legal name as the Official Record Name for all administrative, safety, and educational documentation. This practice is mandatory to ensure compliance with ITTERS/CLASS assessment guidelines and D.C./OSSE licensing requirements. The Official Record Name is essential for tracking development, managing emergency files, and maintaining official records. While we respect a family's request to use a preferred name for informal daily interactions, the Official Record Name must be used during all formal activities, assessments, and communication with external service providers to maintain legal consistency and safety.

## **Application and Enrollment Process (Updated)**

Pursuant to the District of Columbia's OSSE, Office of Early Education, and Child Care Licensing Unit, ERCDC is required to maintain complete student files. Complete student files are required for all students including those enrolled in the ERCDC summer camp.

Each family is required by OSSE to complete and submit the following forms and return to ERCDC:

- ☐ ERCDC Enrollment Agreement
- ☐ Parent Handbook Authorization (attached to the end of this handbook)
- ☐ COVID-19 Parental Notice & Waiver
- ☐ Travel Activity Authorization
- ☐ Authorization for Child's Emergency Medical Treatment

- ☐ DC HEALTH I Universal Health Certificate (must be signed by a physician)
- ☐ DC Oral Health Exam Certificate (3 years old and up)
  - ☐ Soy Milk Request Notification (By Requirement of the parent)
  - ☐ Infant Formula and Food Notification Forms 0–5 months.
  - ☐ Infant Formula and Food Notification Forms 6–11 months (When start Solid Food)
  - ☐ Medical Substitution Forms - If is needed (must be signed by a physician)
  - ☐ Enrollment Form / Income Eligibility Statement for Children
  - ☐ Medication Authorization Record (This includes topical ointments such as sunscreen, bug spray, diaper ointment, antibiotic ointment, etc. ERCDC staff is **not** authorized to apply any topical ointments or administer any medications without this form signed and in your child's file.)

The underlined forms are due annually and must be updated per OSSE requirements.

Additional Forms required by ERCDC:

- ☐ Parent Fee & Deposit Agreement
- ☐ Start Date & Tuition Agreement
- ☐ Emergency Contact Form
- ☐ ERCDC Holiday Closure Schedule
- ☐ COVID-19 Policy Authorization (attached to the end of this handbook)

Once complete, parents should return all documents to the ERCDC Office. The packet may be returned in person, emailed to administrative staff, or faxed to 202-750-0422. Each packet must include the **non-refundable** \$150 registration fee and the **deposit of an entire month's tuition** which can be either via ACH, money order, or personal check. (Fees are explained further along in this handbook).

The Enrollment Application and Fee Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration. **Enrollment is complete when submission of all forms and fees are accepted and approved by ERCDC administrative staff.**

### Continued Enrollment

Continued ERCDC enrollment is contingent upon the parent's, alternate/emergency contact persons', and student's adherence to the policies and procedures of ERCDC as outlined in this handbook (i.e., timely payment of all fees and tuition). Parents are required to notify ERCDC

immediately if any of the information collected at the time of enrollment changes. Failure to do so may result in the student(s) being dis-enrolled from the program and forfeiture of any registration fees.

### **Waiting List**

ERCDC follows the “First Come, First Served” policy when it comes to our waitlist. The waitlist does not guarantee that you will receive care from us, but it is hopeful that down the road we can serve your child and family. This is so that you do not rely solely on us for care if we can not assure you of a set date. If a slot is available for your child’s age for the start date you requested when you were added to the waitlist, we will contact you for further enrollment steps.

All families have 48 hours to respond to the notification that we have an open space for your child. If we have not heard from you within 48 hours, we will move onto the next family on the list.

### **Free Pre-K Program (PKEEP) Application and Enrollment Policy -Applicable When PKEEP is Offered (NEW)**

This policy outlines the transparent and fair process for promoting available spaces and enrolling children in the PKEEP program, ensuring compliance with D.C. guidelines.

#### **1. Promotion of Available Spaces**

To maximize outreach and ensure all eligible families are informed, we actively promote open enrollment opportunities through several channels:

- Our **official website**, where real-time updates on availability will be posted.
- **Social media platforms** to reach a wider audience.
- **Email notifications** sent to families on our current contact list.
- **Printed flyers** distributed throughout the community.
- **Partnerships with local organizations** and early childhood networks to share information with eligible families.

This comprehensive process ensures all children have a fair opportunity to access our quality preschool education.

#### **2. Enrollment Eligibility and Deadline**

**Age Requirement:** Eligibility is based strictly on the child's age by **September 30th** of the enrollment year:

- **PK3:** Children must be **3 years old** by September 30th.
- **PK4:** Children must be **4 years old** by September 30th.

**Enrollment Deadline:** All applications must be fully completed and submitted by **September 30th**. Per the Free Pre-K Program guidelines, this is the final day to enroll a new child for the current school year.

### 3. Selection and Prioritization Process

The selection process for filling available spots is tiered and transparent:

1. **Internal Lottery:** We first conduct an **internal lottery** among currently enrolled eligible students to assign available PKEEP spots, ensuring a fair opportunity for all existing families.
2. **Official Waiting List:** Any spots remaining after the internal lottery are filled using our official waiting list, compiled exclusively from applications submitted through our website. This system records the date and time of submission, ensuring strict chronological fairness.
3. **Priority for At-Risk Children:** Within our waiting list, we prioritize applicants identified as **"at-risk."** This priority is applied to children from families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), those in foster care, or those experiencing homelessness. This prioritization is maintained as long as spots are available and aligns with D.C. mandates for early childhood programs.
4. **General Consideration:** If spots remain after applying priority for at-risk children, we then consider enrolling other new students based on the **order of their applications** on the waiting list.

### 4. Communication of Final Availability

Once the waiting list process is complete, any final remaining available spots will be published on our digital platforms. These spots will be assigned to the first interested parties who contact us and meet all established requirements, following the order of their application submissions where applicable.

### Tuition and Fees

#### **UPDATED**

ERCDC families are responsible for remitting tuition payments for all months the Center is open. ERCDC will bill each child's account on the 15th of the month for the following month. (For example, February tuition is billed on January 15.) Payments are due on the first of the billing month. A **\$25 late fee** is assessed to accounts when payment is not posted by the first of the billing month. If payment is not received by the last school day of the billing month, the student is terminated from ERCDC enrollment. Tuition payments do not include fees associated with field trips or other enrichment activities.

Once the tuition payment is rendered, and a parent/guardian decides to terminate the student's enrollment (regardless of reason), a refund will not be issued. ERCDC does not prorate tuition

except for the first month based on start date.

You must submit in writing your intentions to terminate enrollment at least 30 days before your student's last day. Your deposit fee will be applied to the final month's tuition.

ERCDC accepts the following methods of payment:

- EFT/ACH transfer
- Certified checks or money orders
- Personal checks (\$35 fee applies when returned by the bank). Returned tuition checks are not redeposited. Parents are responsible for remitting a new check within 24 hours. If the second check is returned, ERCDC will require the family to remit tuition payments using an EFT/ACH transfer, certified check, or money order.

ERCDC **DOES NOT** accept cash payments.

*ERCDC reserves the right to pass along any bank fees incurred due to ACH transfers, including unexpected fees charged to us by your financial institution or bank.*

Any increases in tuition or other fees will be given to parents with at least 30 days written notice.

### **Student Attendance**

There is no tuition credit given for absences from scheduled school days, holidays, or unscheduled school closings. If the Center closes for more than ten consecutive days due to reasons or circumstances beyond normal control, the Center will issue a reduced tuition payment amount for the following month.

ERCDC cannot hold spots for extended absences without payment of tuition. (For example, if you will be on vacation for an entire month, tuition must still be paid for the spot to be held.) We cannot make any exceptions to this rule.

*\*Please note our COVID-19 policy for any testing requirements after travel.*

### **Absences**

If the enrolled student will be absent from the center for any reason, parents are to follow the notification procedures outlined below:

Contact ERCDC administrative office no later than 9:30 am by:

- Phone: (202) 733-4152
- Email: [info@embassyrowchildren.com](mailto:info@embassyrowchildren.com)
- Other: Messaging via Procure



## Late Arrivals, Early Departures, and Absence Notifications

### NEW

To support the daily classroom planning and ensure the safety and well-being of all children, we ask that families consider the following:

1. **Planned Vacations and Absences** If you plan for your child to be absent due to vacation or personal reasons, please notify the teaching team or administration in advance.
2. **Late Arrivals** Please note the following if you plan to arrive after the regular drop-off time:
  - **Outdoor Activity Schedule:** Between 10:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m., classrooms are typically outside engaging in outdoor activities as part of the daily routine.
  - **Schedule your arrivals either before 10:00 a.m. or after 11:15 a.m.**

*It is very important to understand that **children cannot be dropped off during our "outdoor door" time.** During this period, teachers are outside and unavailable to receive children, and we cannot guarantee that staff will be available inside the Facility to welcome and supervise your child.*

This is not only a matter of safety and organization, it is also a compliance issue. As a licensed center, **we are required to follow OSSE regulations regarding teacher-to-child ratios and staffing responsibilities.** Unexpected drop-offs during restricted hours could put us out of compliance during a possible surprise inspection, and may risk our licensing status.

3. **Arrivals During Nap Time** If you plan to bring your child during nap time, please consider the following:
  - This is a quiet, calm time when most children are asleep..
  - Children arriving during this time are expected to adapt quietly to the ongoing routine.
  - **Medication Notification:** If your child has recently received any medication, medical treatment, or vaccinations, you must **notify staff immediately upon arrival.** This is important so we can monitor your child for symptoms, such as fever, that may occur while they sleep.
4. **Early Pick-Ups or Emergencies**  
If you need to pick up your child earlier than the regular time:
  - You may send a direct message to the teachers via the Procare app or call the office directly to coordinate the pick-up.
  - If the group is engaged in an activity outside of the classroom (inside or outside the center), we will take the necessary steps to ensure a safe transition as quickly as possible.

## Registration Fee

### **UPDATED**

There will be an annual registration fee of \$150 assessed to each student account on September 1st. Updated OSSE required enrollment forms, including medical records, for each enrolled child are also due on the same date. This ensures that everyone's required file is up to date.

Students who enroll between June and August will have their registration fee due on September 1 with everyone else. If, in this case, enrollment is terminated before that fee is charged, the registration fee will be due at that time.

Students enrolling only for Summer Sessions will need to pay the registration fee at the time of the deposit.

## Multiple Child Discount

ERCDC provides a ten percent (10%) multiple child discount for enrolled siblings during the same school year. The discount is applied to the child whose tuition is the least. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time.

## Before and After Care

Before and after care are charged at an additional rate to cover the cost of additional staffing and utilities. These will be invoiced through Procure along with monthly tuition charges. You may change or cancel your before or after care enrollment with notice before the 15th of the previous month.

Drop-in care is not available as we must be able to plan for staffing to meet OSSE ratio requirements. If you are not enrolled and are late, late fees outlined below will apply.

## Drop Off

### Late Pick-Up Fees

#### **UPDATED**

For the first instance of the Late-Pick Up Policy, a fee of \$25 will be charged if a child who is not enrolled in the after-school program remains in the Center/Premises between 5:00 p.m. and 5:05 p.m. If the child has not been picked up by 5:06 p.m., the fee increases to \$35. Additionally, an extra \$5 per minute will be charged for every minute past 5:15 p.m. ***This policy also applies to late pick-ups from the after-care program.***

Unless a parent has contacted ERCDC, at 6:00pm Child Protective Services (CPS) is contacted. At this point, a CPS officer will arrive to pick up any children remaining after 6:30pm. At this point, parent(s)/guardian(s) must contact CPS at (202) 442-6100 to follow up.

The guidelines below are followed if a parent/guardian is late:

- Center staff will remain with the student(s) until the parent(s)/guardian(s) arrive(s) or until CPS arrives.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be called using home, work, and mobile phone numbers provided on the child's enrollment forms. In the event parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be reached, all authorized alternate/emergency contact persons will be called.
- In the event no one can be reached by 6:00pm, center staff will contact CPS. CPS will secure the child and the parent(s) must contact CPS for the release of their child/children. ERCDC staff are required to adhere to this policy.
- In the event a child is picked up late three times, the child's enrollment will be terminated for the remainder of the school year and may not:
  - Participate in ERCDC programming
  - Re-enroll until the next school year beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>
- In the event participation is terminated, tuition payments previously made are non-refundable.

### **Non-Payment of Tuition**

Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at ERCDC. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the ERCDC program. However, should a family anticipate difficulty paying on time, an appointment with the Director prior to the end of the grace period should be made.

### **Withdrawal Policy and Termination of Service**

#### **Parent Withdrawal or Termination**

At the parent's discretion, children may be withdrawn, or enrollment terminated from the ERCDC program any time during the academic school year. ERCDC requires parents to provide writing notification 30 days before the child's last day. Your deposit fee will be applied to the final month's tuition. We do not prorate tuition in the child's final month and the deposit fee is nonrefundable.

- Example: If you anticipate leaving on October 17, you need to give written notice by September 17. Your deposit fee will then be applied to the whole month of October.  
Note: We do not prorate the last month of tuition.

This written notice must be submitted to the Center Director via email ([info@embassyrowchildren.com](mailto:info@embassyrowchildren.com)) or by formal letter (in person or by mail). When sufficient notice is provided, the initial deposit paid will be credited to the final month's tuition.

When insufficient notice is provided, ERCDC will continue billing monthly regardless of the student's attendance. ERCDC does not allow a temporary student withdrawal.

Closing or deactivating an online account, does not constitute withdrawal from the center or end of payment obligation. If a parent withdraws a child and wishes to re-enroll, the registration and/or other enrollment fees are applied.

## **Incident Reports**

### **UPDATED**

Incident reports are provided to parents in the event that the child is involved in verbally unacceptable or physically related altercations with other students or teachers. Such reports are followed up with review of whether agreed upon parent and teacher intervention(s) and prevention of future similar behavior has been successful.

## **ERCDC Child Suspension**

A child may be suspended from the program for incident reports documenting repeated identical or similar behaviors negatively affecting or influencing the safety of themselves, other children or their teachers. The length of suspension time, at the discretion of the director, measured in days, is influenced by the severity and/or frequency of the child's unsafe behavior or actions.

## **ERCDC Child Termination/Expulsion/Dismissal**

On rare occasions, a student or family may not adjust to the Center's environment. In these cases, ERCDC teachers and administrators will make reasonable efforts to accommodate and work with each child and their family to correct these behaviors. As a general principle, ERCDC is opposed to the termination/expulsion or dismissal of a student. We have introduced numerous avenues for the exploration of behavioral solutions to reduce the probability of a child's required dismissal. Prior to exclusionary measures, ERCDC will take the following measures:

- Observations by teachers and directors
- Incident reports regarding the challenging or unacceptable behavior
- Offer resources to parents regarding the challenging behavior
- Conference with parents to discuss a collaborative action plan
- Continued observations
- Final decision made based on results

In the event reasonable accommodations cannot be made, ERCDC may terminate the child's enrollment. ERCDC will notify the child's parents and at the director's discretion, provide a reasonable timeframe in which to locate and enroll into another early education program.

A child can be dismissed from the ERCDC program for the following reasons which include but are not limited to:

- Fighting
- Putting other children or staff in danger
- Use of inappropriate language
- Inappropriate touching
- Bullying
- Disrespect of facility, staff, administrators, parents and/or peers

ERCDC does not permit violent play including NERF guns, pretend guns, or other forms of violence. If any child is observed engaging in this kind of play, we will notify the parents with resources to discourage the behavior.

## **Health and Wellness**

### **UPDATED**

Medical examinations and immunization records must be provided upon enrollment and kept current. ERCDC will not permit attendance unless all medical records including immunizations meet the regulations imposed by the District of Columbia, Department of Health and Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Families requesting a religious, personal or medical exemption, must meet with the Center Director prior to enrollment.

To ensure that each Free PKEEP participant child is ready for the start of classes, we require parents or guardians to submit the completed vision and hearing screening results prior to the child's first day of classes. These screenings are mandatory components of our enrollment process for preschool children. Without the results of these screenings, the child will not be able to begin classes. This policy aligns with our commitment to early detection and support for any potential learning barriers, ensuring a successful start to each child's educational journey.

## **DC Healthy Futures Program**

### **NEW**

Embassy Row Child Development Center (ERCDC) proudly participates in the DC Healthy Futures Program, a free mental health consultation service provided by the District of Columbia's Department of Behavioral Health (DBH).

This program supports the social-emotional development of young children through:

- **Classroom observations** to help teachers implement strategies for positive behavior support.
- **Interactive trainings** for educators and families focused on emotional and behavioral development.
- **Short-term individual support** for children and families, always with written parental consent.
- **Referrals to community mental health services** when additional support is needed.
- **Workshops and family events** that promote healthy emotional development.

A licensed mental health consultant visits our center regularly to collaborate with teachers and families. While this is **not a clinical therapy service**, it is a valuable tool for identifying early needs and supporting a child's well-being within the classroom.

Participation in individual consultations requires written parental consent. If support is recommended for your child, you will be contacted to discuss next steps.

## Health Insurance

All children must have healthcare coverage upon enrollment. Children cannot be enrolled if they are not covered under a family health insurance policy.

## Immunization and Health Record Compliance

### UPDATED

### 1. Mandatory Enrollment Requirement

Prior to enrollment, children must have received all age-appropriate immunizations and tests as required by the District of Columbia Department of Health (DC Health). Immunization requirements are determined and enforced by the District of Columbia's Department of Health (DOH). DOH maintains an immunization database of all students enrolled in child development centers. Hence, this policy is strictly enforced.

### 2. Required Documentation and Updates

Parents are responsible for ensuring that the child's health files are continuously updated.

- **Health Certificate:** A completed health certificate must be submitted before your child's first day at the center and renewed annually prior to the start of each subsequent school year.
- **Immunization Records:** Parents must share the child's most recent immunization record with ERCDC every time the child receives a new vaccine.

### 3. Exclusion for Non-Compliance

**ERCDC will not permit attendance** unless all medical records, including immunizations, fully comply with regulations set by DC Health and OSSE. If a child's file is non-compliant, the child will be **excluded from attendance** until all updated health and immunization documentation is provided. This exclusion applies automatically if proper documentation from a physician excusing a required vaccination is missing.

### 4. Exemptions and Center Responsibilities

- **Exemptions:** Families requesting a **Religious, Personal, or Medical Exemption** must formally meet with the Center Director **prior to enrollment** to discuss the required DOH forms and procedures.
- **Center Administration:** Following the requirements of the DC Health Immunization Program, ERCDC is required to administratively **submit and upload** all updated immunization records into the designated DC Health Department platform.

At this time, ERCDC does not require vaccination against COVID-19 for our students. **However, we strongly encourage all families to choose to vaccinate their children** as it remains the

best public health defense against severe illness. This policy is subject to change based on future mandates or official regulations issued by OSSE and DC Health.

### **Sick Policy/Illness**

The purpose of the ERCDC sick policy is to reduce the spread of illness among children and to encourage full recuperation of sick children before returning to school. ERCDC depends on parents to assist in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children.

### **Coronavirus protocol**

#### **UPDATED**

As per Coronavirus protocol, children should remain at home under the following conditions or symptoms associated with coronavirus:

- Fever (100.4°F or 38°C or higher)
- Severe or persistent cough
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Repeated vomiting or diarrhea
- Sore throat, congestion, or runny nose that affects the child's well-being
- Severe fatigue
- Symptoms that prevent eating, drinking, or participating in daily activities

### **Other illnesses**

#### **UPDATED**

ERCDC reserves the right to send any child home demonstrating signs of illness at school. Any student who becomes ill at school will be made comfortable until his/her parents can be notified and the student is picked up from ERCDC. A parent or alternate authorized person must pick up the ill child within an hour after notification. ‘

A sick child must stay home where he/she is most relaxed and comfortable. Children may be sent home if they have any specific symptoms listed below. Children must be free of all specified symptoms for at least 24 hours WITHOUT the assistance of medication before he/she can be returned to school. These symptoms are as follows:

- A fever of 100.4 degrees or more
- Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period
- Diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period (including recurring episodes of diarrhea at school)
- A heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection
- A constant cough or sore throat
- Fussy, cranky behavior and generally not himself/herself
- A skin rash, excluding diaper rash

- Head lice
- Ear Infection related to a contagious viral illness
- Symptoms of a communicable disease

Following an illness, a child may return to school once he/she has either been seen by a clinician or it has been determined that the illness is not contagious. A doctor's clearance will be requested upon return to the center.

Children with siblings who are ill with a contagious illness (COVID-19, streptococcal infection, conjunctivitis, RSV, flu, etc.) should be kept at home to avoid spreading the illness to the center. Some illnesses require a different set or quarantine or isolation rules regarding the period of time they must be sequestered from others.

ERCDC reserves the right to refuse a child's re-entry if the center administrative staff believes the child is too ill to participate in the day's program. Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return until they are fever-free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours unless a physician recognized illness is present that requires longer sequestration/quarantine before the child's return to school. Some illnesses require a different set or quarantine or isolation rules regarding the period of time those infected must be sequestered from others. ERCDC requires physician-issued documentation providing such information to be submitted prior to the child's return to school. A physician's order regarding a required longer time allotment a child must be sequestered or quarantined from others supersedes school policies and must be followed.

### **Communicable Diseases/Illnesses**

In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, ERCDC will notify all families and staff. Student confidentiality will be maintained. Should a communicable outbreak occur, ERCDC will temporarily exclude non-immunized students from the program. A list of communicable diseases requiring health care provider clearance is found in Appendix A.

Our COVID-19 policy can be found in Appendix B.

### **Medications**

ERCDC has staff who are **trained in medication administration** and ensures they maintain their certification at the required renewal interval. Any prescribed medication and its instructions requiring specialized treatment procedures, such as the use of an EpiPen, an asthma inhalation device, or other specialized medicine, must be provided as part of the child's medical records. Should the need for such medication ever occur, a staff member trained in its dispensation will be on site at all times between the child's scheduled arrival and departure time. The following rules apply in order for trained ERCDC staff to administer medications to children:

- A Medication Authorization form signed by the parent/guardian and physician must accompany all medication. The form must specify the dosage, the time to be administered, the length of time the student is expected to be on the medication, and how the medication is to be stored.



- ERCDC will maintain a log, on a form approved by ERCDC. The form shall record the date and time of day, medication name, medication dosage, method of administration, and the name of the person administering the medication, each time any medication is administered to the student.
- Written authorization on the OSSE Medication Authorization Form from the parent or guardian is also required for the application of any topical products (i.e., lotions, diaper ointment, or sunscreen). For prescription medications, this form must include a doctor's signature.
- All medication—prescription or not—must be in the original container with the child's name on it.
- Prescription medication must be clearly labeled with the full pharmacy label, including:
  - The student's first and last name;
  - The date of the prescription;
  - The name of the medication;
  - The medication dosage;
  - The administration schedule;
  - The method of administration;
  - If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food";
  - The duration of the prescription;
  - An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable; and
  - The name and telephone number of the child's licensed health care practitioner.
- Prescription medication shall be used only for the student named on the label
- A list of side effects must accompany medications
- Medication is not allowed in cubbies or book bags and will be kept in a locked container in the office.
- Medication cannot be mixed with food, formula, or juice. ERCDC will not dispense any medication in a bottle or cup
- Over-the-counter medications can be dispensed if a doctor's note detailing reasons and recommended dosage(s) have been included. Parents are required to supply an unopened bottle of the medication clearly labeled with their child's name.
- In the absence of a medical authorization form, ERCDC will not administer medicines or perform procedures requiring specific skills or prior medical training.

ERCDC encourages parents to administer medication prior to or after departure from school.

## Allergies

Parents are required to provide ERCDC a complete and specific list of their child's allergies. This information must be included on the appropriate enrollment forms. Allergies include, but are not limited to, food, medicines, over-the-counter products, animals, and environmental allergens.

ERCDC is a nut-free zone. In efforts to maintain a healthy environment for all children, ERCDC prohibits all foods containing nuts or using nut flavorings. Any parent concerned about their child's exposure to nuts should schedule an appointment with the Center Director for a discussion and plan to ensure that your child is not exposed to nut allergens.

If there is medication prescribed for your child in the event of allergen exposure, the parent is to follow the medication protocol as described previously in the medication section of this handbook.

## Diapering and Toilet Training

### **UPDATED**

ERCDC has implemented a diapering procedure which allows children to feel well cared for, secure and respected. During the changing process, ERCDC adheres to all health and safety guidelines and procedures recommended by the District of Columbia, Department of Health and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The ERCDC diapering procedure is posted near the changing area.

Parents are required to provide ERCDC a two-week supply of disposable diapers and wipes for a child in diapers or in the process of toilet learning. A parent may request that a diaper cream be applied to resolve rash or irritation problems. Parents must follow the medication protocol for the application of diaper cream or other topical ointments. ERCDC requires parents to provide an extra set of underwear, pants/shorts, and a top to replace soiled garments.

*Starting at age two, children must wear pull-up diapers that open on both sides. This is important as we begin preparing them for toilet training around this age. Please ensure that you send pull-ups with side openings starting from your child's second birthday.*

While children are in the toilet training process, ERCDC requires parents to refrain from dressing children in overalls, tights and items with snaps or with belts, as well as pull ups that do not have sides that snap easily. These items can hinder a successful independent bathroom learning experience. ERCDC encourages open dialog about toilet training with teachers to ensure a consistent regime and practice.

While ERCDC will work with parents to help their child reach this milestone, parents must be actively involved in this process. We will be happy to provide you with resources to assist with this milestone. This process is a collaborative effort between parents and ERCDC staff.

## **Discipline and Behavior Management**

### **Classroom Behavior**

ERCDC firmly believes that an active and engaged learning environment decreases the frequency of disruptive classroom behavior. ERCDC staff are trained in the use of positive alternatives to punishment and have attained expertise in the various techniques of prosocial behavior management.

The ERCDC approach to student discipline and behavior management is to solve behavior concerns using modeling, redirection, verbal limit-setting, and positive reinforcement. ERCDC teachers set age-appropriate classroom standards that will foster the students' ability to self-discipline.

ERCDC encourages students to openly communicate about a problem rather than engaging in a physical expression (hitting, biting, grabbing items, etc.). ERCDC provides students opportunities to calm down and time to think about what is frustrating or upsetting them. ERCDC teaching staff helps students discern problems and determine reasonable resolutions using age and developmentally appropriate techniques. ERCDC students receive positive reinforcement for playing and solving problems cooperatively, negotiating with peers (sharing), and respectful communication.

***ERCDC does not use punitive actions to correct behavior or label children.***

### **DISCIPLINE AND CHILD GUIDANCE**

At ERCDC, we believe that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavioral problems in the classroom. Transition activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Employees will use only positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, clear, and understandable limits fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is our ultimate goal. We encourage employees to try to ignore negative behavior as much as possible—as much of it is an effort for attention—and reinforce appropriate behavior. This helps to incorporate the child into the group and avoid the need for frequent discipline.

When these methods do not work, we encourage employees to speak to the child and redirect them as a first step. We feel that too much discipline, or correcting a child for every little thing, can destroy their spirit. By teaching the child that each choice they make has a direct consequence, they will begin to learn to be responsible for their own actions and associate that a negative choice will result in a negative consequence..

ERCDC prohibits corporal punishment of any kind, cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse. Corporal punishment is the infliction of physical pain on a child as a means of controlling behavior, including but not limited to spanking, hitting, shaking, slapping, thumping, or pinching a child

No child will be denied food as a form of punishment, nor will they be punished for soiling or wetting their clothing. If a behavior problem presents itself, every attempt will be made to remedy the situation. However, dismissal of a child for behavior problems will be at the sole discretion of our staff. Children act out and test our limits at all stages of development. The behavior will pass if we are all consistent. Employees should notify a parent of any behavior they feel should be reinforced at home.

## **Biting**

Biting is not uncommon among toddlers. There are situations that may occur that would provoke a toddler to bite. Examples include, but are not limited to, fear, changes or transitions, conflicts over a toy, or retaliation from getting hit or being bitten by another child. ERCDC does not encourage children to use biting as a means of communicating. ERCDC staff make every attempt to support children by helping them to use words instead.

If biting occurs, ERCDC staff will immediately comfort the child who was bitten, clean the area, notify all parents, and submit an incident report to the center administrative staff. The biting child will be immediately redirected to another activity. As is developmentally appropriate, the teacher will speak with the biting child about communicating using words.

ERCDC staff cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other parties. Seeking medical attention is left to the parent's discretion.

Please Note: If excessive biting occurs and the behavior cannot be corrected, the center reserves the right to request early pickup or possible removal from the program.

## **Safety**

### **Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, ERCDC staff are considered mandated reporters. Under this act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate authorities. If a child is suspected of being abused or neglected, it is the responsibility of ERCDC, as required by the District of Columbia Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Act of 1977, to report to the Child Protective Service Division of the Child and Family Services Agency or the Metropolitan Police Department.

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, or season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol

- Not providing appropriate meals including a beverage for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

## **Arrival and Dismissal Security**

### **Safety and Sign In/Out Procedures**

Child safety is a core value, and compliance with D.C. regulations is mandatory. **The daily sign-in and sign-out process is the exclusive responsibility of authorized parents/guardians.**

#### **1. Mandatory Daily Sign-In and Compliance**

All authorized adults must strictly adhere to the daily **Sign In/Out** procedures.

Parents/guardians are permitted to enter the building to drop children off at their classroom door.

- **Parent/Guardian Responsibility:** Parents or guardians must use the **Procare** system or the center's designated method to log their child's entry and exit daily. **ERCDC staff are no longer authorized to perform this sign-in/out function on behalf of parents.**
- **Legal Compliance:** Daily signing children in and out is a **required and essential procedure** to comply with regulations established by the **Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)** and other licensing authorities. It is vital for attendance records and security.
- **Facility Security:** Upon exiting the building, please ensure the exterior door has **closed completely** before moving away.

#### **2. Arrival Protocol and Communication**

Arrival time (drop-off) is not reserved for extended conversations. If you require time to discuss concerns, please use the **Procare app** or request a scheduled meeting time with your child's teacher(s).

#### **3. Child Release and Authorized Pick-Up**

Only **custodial parents** may make written changes or additions to the enrollment application regarding authorized pick-up persons.

- **Verification:** At dismissal, the child will be released only to persons listed on the application. Alternate or emergency contacts must present **government-issued photo**

**identification.**

- **Child Escort:** Teachers or administrators will escort the child from their classroom to the waiting parent/guardian or contact. **ERCDC does not release children to anyone under the age of 18.**

#### **4. Impaired Pick-Up Protocol**

Any authorized person appearing to be **impaired by drugs or alcohol** during pick-up will not be allowed to remove the child from the Center immediately. The Director or Assistant Director will **delay departure** and promptly contact the other parent or emergency contacts. If a sober, authorized adult cannot be reached, the Center will contact the **local police and Child Protective Services.**

#### **Accidents**

Ensuring child safety is an ERCDC core value. While ERCDC staff makes every effort to ensure the child's safety, accidents may occur. In the event of an accident, staff will notify the administrative staff. The administrative staff will notify the parents or direct a teacher to notify parents of the involved children of the accident and remedies taken. ERCDC staff is required to complete and submit an accident/incident form for the child's file.

ERCDC staff members are trained and certified in infant/child CPR and First Aid and emergency procedures and certification is updated every two years. When emergency medical attention is needed, ERCDC will call 911 for assistance and notify parents immediately. If parents cannot be reached, the person(s) listed and designated as emergency contacts will be called.

The child's doctor may also be notified. An ERCDC staff member will accompany the student to the hospital and remain with him/her until parents or emergency contacts arrive.

If parents have any religious beliefs which may affect medical treatment, ERCDC must have instructions in writing at the time of enrollment.

#### **Unusual Incidents**

ERCDC staff witnessing an incident will **complete the Unusual Incidents Form** and report to the Center Director or Assistant Director immediately. All parents of involved children will be notified by the Center Director. Unusual incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Injury to, or illness of, any child that occurs during the hours the child is enrolled in the ERCDC program.
- Injury to, or illness of, any child that requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment.
- Damage to the facility, or to any facility vehicle or equipment, that interferes with the capability of the facility to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the students and adults in the facility.
- The presence of any individual in the facility who has, or is suspected of having, a communicable disease that must be reported to the District of Columbia Department of

Health in accordance with Title 22 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations.

- The elopement of an enrolled child or any circumstances under which a child is deemed missing or unaccounted for.
- A traffic accident involving a vehicle owned, maintained, or contracted for or by the facility and in which children are being transported at the time of the accident.
- Death of a person occurring within the facility.
- Any other occurrence at the facility that involves a response by police, fire, ambulance, or any other emergency service.

### **Rules for Vehicles While at the Center**

Because the safety of our children is of paramount concern, all parents, guardians, and alternate pick-up persons are **required to adhere to the following rules** while on school grounds or campus:

- There is a five (5) miles per hour speed limit at all times while on Center property.
- Park in designated parking spaces only.
- While on school grounds, **pedestrians always have the right of way**
- Vehicle ignitions **MUST be turned off, and the keys removed**, while parked on center grounds
- Children **may NOT be left unattended** in a vehicle at any time or for any reason
- Violations of these rules may result in a **warning**. If a violation is serious, or if violations continue, school personnel are authorized to take a tag number for a report to the local police.

### **Babysitting**

**ERCDC staff are not permitted** to provide babysitting and/or nanny services on their personal time to families enrolled in the ERCDC program.

### **Custodial Orders**

ERCDC requires that parents create or modify parent pick up schedules when family dynamics change. Parents are to make modifications to the official enrollment documents. If custody orders have been issued by the courts, a copy of the order must be shared with ERCDC which will be placed in the child's file. ERCDC will follow the schedule as per the court issued custody order.

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

A copy of the **emergency plan is available upon request**. Building evacuation plans are displayed in each classroom. In case of a real fire, children will be taken to the emergency site, and parents will be contacted immediately, if phone lines are operable.

## **Fire and Other Safety Drills**

As required by law, ERCDC conducts regular fire and safety drills. It is expected that all children at the center at the time of such drills fully participate. At times, these drills may take place in inclement weather. All attempts will be made to assure that children are properly attired at such times. Parents are expected to fully comply with all procedures when on campus during such a drill. ERCDC encourages parents to review and discuss the importance of such drills with children for familiarity with emergency routines. Teachers will not accept nor release students during drills. Parents must stay with their children until re-entry into the school building is granted.

## **Contingency Location**

In the event, ERCDC must evacuate the school building and leave campus, children will be taken to the designated contingency location to await parent pickup. Parents must pick up students from this location. The same procedures apply for signing children out for the day.

Annunciation School  
3825 Klinge Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20016  
202-362-1408

## **Holiday and Center Closures**

ERCDC follows the federal government and DCPS guidance for **inclement weather delays and closures**. If the federal government issues a liberal leave or telework option, the Center will be open, with a **possible delay**.

### **Unscheduled closures**

ERCDC is required to provide a healthy and safe environment for children and staff. If, after opening, the Center must close due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e., loss of utility), the Center will contact parents using **Procure for an early pickup**. If parents cannot be directly contacted, Center staff will communicate with the identified **alternate or emergency persons**. It is expected that parents or alternate/emergency persons arrange for child pickup within a reasonable timeframe.

## **Closing Schedule**

ERCDC has pre-designated closure dates. Refer to the holiday schedule sheet included in the enrollment packet.



## **Professional Development**

ERCDC is required to provide on-going professional development for staff. The Center will be closed to children on professional development days. The specific dates are designated as Staff Development Days and distributed in our calendar at the beginning of the calendar year.

## **Early Education Child Development Center Licensing**

ERCDC has been carefully established and is licensed through the District of Columbia, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Child Care Licensing Unit to provide early education and services to young learners. Governmental standards for licensed child development centers ensures that ERCDC meets Common Core Early Learning Standards, selects and implements an industry proven early education curriculum, correctly supervises children, implements industry acceptable discipline practices, maintains correct child/staff ratios, provides equipment, materials and other supplies that are in good use, provides a suitable indoor and outdoor environment, thoroughly vets all staff, and provides nutritious menus and food.

ERCDC is subject to both scheduled and unscheduled inspections by the District's Child Care Licensing Unit, Fire Marshall, Department of Health and other District offices to ensure compliance. ERCDC must maintain compliance with all regulations to remain licensed as a child development center.

## **Child to Staff Ratios**

Group	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infants (6 weeks- 12 months)	4:1	8
Toddlers (12 months - 24 months)	4:1	8
Twos (24-30 months)	4:1	12
Preschool (30-48 months)	8:1	16
Pre-K (48-60 months)	10:1	20

**The child to staff ratios shall be maintained at all times, in the classroom and other indoor spaces, and during outdoor learning environments.**

In the infant program, we have Guppies A and Guppies B. We prioritize maintaining a consistent and stable environment for the infants. The duration of enrollment for each child is a minimum of twelve months ensuring that infants have the opportunity to develop strong bonds with the same

educator over an extended period. This approach promotes a nurturing and familiar setting, fostering a sense of security and trust for the infants in their early learning experience.

In the toddler program, specifically in classes like Sea turtles, Seahorses, and Starfish, we ensure a minimum enrollment commitment of nine months, allowing toddlers to stay with the same educator for an extended period. The maximum duration extends up to twelve months, providing a consistent and stable learning environment for the children. This approach is designed to foster strong connections, trust, and a sense of security between the toddlers and their dedicated educators, promoting a positive and enriching early childhood experience.

## **Classroom Experience at ERCDC**

### **UPDATED**

#### **Meals**

ERCDC offers two menu options:

1. Regular Meal (including dairy and without any restrictions).
2. Vegetarian Meal.
3. Vegan Meal

Once a choice is made, it will be consistently adhered to, and parents cannot switch between menus daily. Any changes must be requested with a minimum of 5 working days' notice to allow for processing by our food provider.

As a participant in the federally funded **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**, ERCDC provides all meals and snacks, which adhere to strict **USDA nutritional standards**. Therefore, **families are strictly prohibited from bringing food from home**, including snacks and beverages. This policy ensures full compliance with CACFP regulations and prevents the presence of unapproved allergens. For **special dietary needs** due to allergies or medical restrictions, a **CACFP Special Diet Statement form** signed by a **licensed healthcare provider** must be submitted to the administration before any accommodations can be made. More information can be found on **Page 37** of this handbook.

#### **Infants**

ERCDC requires parents to provide food for infants six weeks to six months. Parents may supply bottled breast milk or formula. Bottles must be brought to the center each day previously prepared.

Bottles must include the child's first and last name, current date, and contents (i.e. breast milk or formula). Teachers cannot add cereal, medication, or solids to a bottle.

Food and bottle contents will be discarded if left overnight. ERCDC is required by OSSE to discard formula one (1) hour after feeding. ERCDC will not return leftover breast milk to the

refrigerator once it has been heated up at the risk of reheating the milk. However breast milk will be sent home at the end of the day unless less than one (1) ounce remains.

For the safety of all infants, glass bottles will not be permitted.

### **Toddlers and older**

#### **UPDATED**

ERCDC provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack for infants, toddlers, preschool, and Pre-K children. For infants and toddlers, breakfast is available from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and afternoon snack from 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Applicable to PKEEP-enrolled children:** breakfast is available from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., lunch from 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m., and afternoon snack from 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Meals will be available for each class up to 15 minutes after the scheduled meal time. After the first 15 minutes from the scheduled start time, meals will no longer be available. For example, breakfast will be available until 8:45 a.m. This allows children at least 15 minutes to finish their meal. Following this policy ensures that the class will continue with their planned activities, and teachers will be able to carry out their educational objectives, covering all areas of child development according to their lesson plans while ensuring every child receives the nourishment they need.

ERCDC strictly prohibits foods containing nuts or nut products. If a child has any allergies or special dietary needs, parents must provide this information on the enrollment application and submit the Medical Substitution Forms signed by their child's doctor.

While we strive to accommodate all dietary restrictions and allergies, accommodations will only be made based on the official Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Medical Statement form, completed and signed by the child's doctor. Parents are encouraged to carefully review the menu to ensure it aligns with their child's needs, and when necessary, provide a suitable substitute as indicated on the signed form.

### **CACFP – MEALS**

#### **NEW**

As part of our commitment to providing high-quality early childhood education and nutrition, Embassy Row Child Development Center (ERCDC) is proud to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), administered by the USDA. This participation helps us ensure that all children receive nutritious meals and snacks that support healthy growth and development.

**In compliance with CACFP guidelines, the following policies are in place:**

## Milk and Beverage Policy

In accordance with CACFP meal pattern guidelines:

- Children **12–24 months (1 year old)** will be served **unflavored whole milk only**.
- Children **2–5 years old** will be served **unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk**.
- **Flavored milk is not permitted** for children ages 1–5.
- No milk substitutions are allowed without a completed **CACFP Medical Statement** signed by a licensed medical provider.
- Soy milk, which may be requested by a parent or guardian without a Medical Substitution Form. In this case, a **Soy Milk Request Form** must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian.

**Note:** Milk from home is not allowed unless there is a documented medical need. These requirements ensure compliance with USDA nutritional standards and support healthy development.

You can find the full CACFP meal pattern requirements, including milk guidelines, in the **Appendix C** of this handbook.

## Exceptions for Celebrations and Infant Feeding

### **NEW**

We understand the importance of celebrating special moments like birthdays and supporting each child's developmental needs. While we follow strict CACFP guidelines, the following **exceptions are permitted**:

- **Birthday Celebrations:** Families may bring a small treat (such as muffins, cookies, or fruit) to celebrate their child's birthday. These treats **must be served in addition to** the regular snack—not as a replacement—to ensure all children receive a complete and balanced meal.
- **Introduction to Solids:** For infants who are starting to eat solid foods, parents may bring **store-bought purees** to support this developmental stage. This exception will be handled following safe feeding practices.
- **After-Care Food:** Food brought for after-care is not subject to the CACFP restrictions but must be properly labeled and **must not contain nuts or shellfish**, as these can pose serious allergy risks to children.

**Important Note:** We **do not allow any food that contains nuts or shellfish** due to the high risk of allergic reactions.

## Labeling Food Brought from Home

Any food brought from home—whether it is a puree for an infant, a special item authorized by a medical form or snack for aftercare—**must include**:

- The child's **name**
- The **date**
- The **meal** it is intended for (breakfast, lunch, snack, aftercare's snack)

This helps ensure proper handling, CACFP compliance, and the safety of all children.

## **CACFP Forms Used at ERCDC**

### **NEW**

1. **Soy Milk Request Notification:**  
Used when a parent requests soy milk instead of dairy milk. This form **does not require a medical signature**.
2. **Infant Formula and Food Notification Forms**
  - **0–5 months:** Documents if the infant receives breast milk and/or formula.
  - **6–11 months:** Indicates what formula the infant uses and provides a checklist of solid foods being introduced, first foods, and foods to avoid.
3. **Medical Substitution Forms**  
This is a CACFP Medical Statement for Special Diets, completed by a medical provider. It is important to note that a doctor's note alone is not sufficient—the official CACFP form must be completed to meet the program's requirements.

## **Eligibility for the CACFP Program**

### **NEW**

This form must be completed by all families at the time of enrollment and will be updated annually when the required information for CACFP is resubmitted to renew for the following year. Participation in the CACFP program depends on meeting this requirement.

We appreciate your cooperation in this process, which is necessary to comply with the monthly documentation requirements to maintain our participation in the program.

Please note that you must complete the following sections of the Enrollment Form / Income Eligibility Statement for Children:

- Part 1: Enter the child's name and the requested information.
- Income Part: Mark the option that corresponds according to the federal income eligibility guidelines.
- Parts 2, 3, and 4: Complete only if you receive the listed benefits.

- Part 5: Indicate the total household income. If you do not qualify, write "Does not qualify."
- Part 6: Complete all highlighted fields.
- Part 7: Complete the Civil Rights section.

## **USDA Civil Rights**

### **NEW**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- mail:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## **Drug-Free Policy Statement**

### **UPDATED**

The Embassy Row Child Development Center (ERCDC) is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all children, families, and staff. ERCDC maintains a strict drug-free policy in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol on the premises or during program activities is strictly prohibited.

Parents or guardians who are under the influence or engaging in prohibited behavior while on site may be asked to leave immediately to protect the safety of all children and staff. In cases where a child's health or safety is at risk, ERCDC reserves the right to notify appropriate authorities, including child protective services or law enforcement, to take necessary action.

ERCDC appreciates the cooperation of all families in maintaining a drug-free environment for the well-being of the entire community.

## **Potty Training**

ERCDC works in conjunction with families regarding the **appropriate timing of toilet training** (or potty training). ERCDC uses national best practice methodology established by **ITERS** regarding toilet training and the use of the toilet. ERCDC uses **toilet seat adapters** to train the children on the full-size toilet, **not potty chairs**. As all children are different in their timing and procedure in toilet training, this will be **thoughtfully guided by the teachers at ERCDC**. It may be necessary for children to continue wearing pull-ups during the training process and for a while afterward, both during waking hours and naptime. During their time toilet training and directly after, we ask that you **provide at least three extra changes of clothes in seasonally appropriate attire**. If children have shown some success in training and are wearing underwear but experience **two or more accidents**, the use of pull-ups may be necessary until such time the child is able to tell teachers when they need to go to the toilet consistently.

## **Curriculum**

ERCDC uses the Creative Curriculum®. This curriculum balances both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. This curriculum applies the latest theory and research on best practices in teaching and learning, as well as the content standards developed by states and professional organizations. While keeping the original environmentally-based approach, the Creative Curriculum® clearly defines the teacher's vital role in connecting content, teaching, and learning for children. It features goals and objectives linked directly to our valid and reliable assessment instrument.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool translates new research and theory from the field of early childhood education into a practical, easy-to-understand approach to working with children and their families. It is a comprehensive curriculum with a clear organizational structure and a focus on interest areas.

Activities in all age groups are based on the most up-to-date practices recognized by experts in the field of early childhood education. ERCDC staff have access to publications and conferences on the latest developments available.

## **Assessments**

ERCDC uses a variety of research-proven methods and tools to monitor and support student progress and milestone achievement. ERCDC teachers maintain anecdotal notes and work samples. Evaluation records are kept for each student from infancy to Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K).

Parents are also able to complete Ages and Stages Questionnaires – Social-Emotional version (ASQ-SE) to help teachers get a well-rounded view of the child's development. ASQs are kept in the child's file.

## **Conferences**

Upon enrollment, there will be an intake meeting with the teachers to discuss parent goals, needs, and concerns. Parents are also welcome to schedule a meeting with the Center Director(s) to discuss any additional questions or concerns, as well as go over the Family Handbook.

Quarterly, ERCDC schedules parent/teacher meetings online or in person that allow specified time to discuss children's goals and progress, ask questions, and review portfolios and assessments. During the parent/ teacher meetings the staff will provide a written developmental report to families and an action plan with goals for the children, staff and families.

Transition conferences are conducted when children are transitioning from one class to the next. These conferences are optional as some parents may not deem it necessary for moving the child. All conferences must be scheduled in advance so that the teacher's schedules may be adjusted to accommodate the family.

## **Transitions**

Transitioning a child to a new classroom is an exciting milestone. Transitions are identified in a collaborative process with teachers and admin determined by age, developmental readiness, space availability, and other factors.

Transitions are determined in a three step process:

- 1) Teachers and admin will identify children who are ready to transition
- 2) Teachers, admin, and parents collaborate on a plan for the transition including areas the child might still need to work on
- 3) On the day of the transition, we made the transition milestone exciting for the child and parent

When a student is ready for transition, teachers and parents can discuss the new class in a transition meeting.



A typical transition schedule for a student between classrooms may include:

- Day 1 & 2: Visit new class for the first half of the day
- Day 3 & 4: Visit new class for the second half of the day
- Day 5: Visit new class for an entire day. Parent drop off in new class.

**Note: Transition protocols are subject to change due to COVID-19 policies.**

### **School Day Field Experiences**

Classes may walk to the park or other local venues to explore education and enhance learning experiences. Classes will occasionally take walks around the neighborhood to explore the many educational and engaging activities and events that our community, which can include local businesses, has to offer. Parents are always welcome to join the children on their walks.

There will not be a need for permission slips for neighborhood walks, as the Travel Authorization Form included in the enrollment packet provides Center staff with blanket permission for such activities. Emergency backpacks are brought on every walk. These backpacks contain each child's emergency contact information and a first aid kit.

### **Clothing**

Play is an essential program component. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed comfortably and in seasonally appropriate attire.

ERCDC requires parents to provide appropriate seasonal clothing for their children. Coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. During warmer months, parents are to provide lighter clothing, hats, and other sun-protective garments.

It is not necessary for the child to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change/assist children into their winter boots upon outdoor play.

Children are not permitted to wear open-toe and/or open-backed shoes, or slippers. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled sneakers/tennis shoes.

All children are required to have three (3) complete changes of clothing at the Center that are size-appropriate and accommodate the current season's requirements at all times. Toddlers and preschoolers need outdoor and indoor shoes. A complete change of clothing includes a shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the seasons and weather change. All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots.

Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind as this poses a student safety hazard. ERCDC is not responsible for damage to or loss of any articles of clothing.

For children who are toilet training, parents should refrain from dressing children in overalls, tights, and items with snaps or with belts, as well as pull-ups that do not have sides that snap easily. These items can hinder a successful, independent bathroom learning experience. ERCDC encourages open dialogue about toilet training with teachers to ensure a consistent regime and practice.

## **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is an essential part of the students' daily activities. Outdoor play is scheduled at least twice per day (two hours total). This includes walks and trips to local playgrounds or other activities. During inclement weather, alternate indoor activities will be substituted. **During the summer months, students are required to wear sunscreen.** Refer to the medical authorization form for application instructions..

## **Nap Time**

### **UPDATED**

ERCDC provides a daily **nap schedule** (12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.). ERCDC provides **safety-approved cribs and toddler cots.**

Parents in the **Guppies A class must provide five (5) sheets per week.** All other classes are required to have one (1) sheet per week. Linens for toddlers and older children (including blankets) are **provided by the parent(s).**

At times, there are children who do not nap during school hours. Students who do not nap are encouraged to quietly rest, read a book, play with puzzles, or participate in an activity with the teachers. **They are not required to nap.**

## **Parental Notes (Related to Nap Time)**

- **Infants** will sleep according to their needs and individual plans provided by families.
- Infants will **never be placed on their stomachs to sleep.**
- If your family requires a child to be **swaddled**, a **written authorization is required.**
- Pacifiers are only permitted in the crib if **they are in the child's mouth.**

ERCDC is required to follow **Safe Sleep protocols.** **More detailed information regarding ERCDC Rest/Quiet Time Policies can be found in Appendix D.**

## **Birthdays and Celebrations**

### **UPDATED**

ERCDC allows parents to celebrate their child's birthday in school. All food items brought for celebration must be store-bought, nut-free, and contained in the original sealed packaging with all ingredients clearly listed. ERCDC does not accept homemade food items or products from fresh bakeries, restaurants, or other establishments that do not provide commercial packaging

with ingredient listings. In compliance with CACFP, any small treat (such as muffins, cookies, or fruit) must be served in addition to the regular snack—not as a replacement—to ensure all children receive a complete and balanced meal as scheduled. Parents are required to coordinate the party plan with the child’s teacher(s) and ensure ample food and supplies are included for all students in the class.

## **Parent Involvement, Communication, and Training**

### **Parent Involvement**

ERCDC has varying opportunities for participation, such as donating time or treats for parties, accompanying field trips, etc. ERCDC encourages parent participation and volunteering. Parents are welcomed to visit and observe our classrooms or activities in operation at any time. The visit does not have to be scheduled or announced as ERCDC maintains an open-door policy.

ERCDC may schedule a variety of events which may include Back to School Night, Fall Festival, Spring Flings, etc. Special events and reminders will be publicized by newsletters and other forms of communication ahead of time. Parents will also be asked to participate in parent-teacher conferences throughout the year to discuss student progress. Continued parental support is essential in creating a positive learning atmosphere for students.

### **Parent Communication**

ERCDC encourages open channels of communication with parents or legal guardians. Parents not subject to a restriction (such as a court order) are able to interact with their child’s teacher and other staff members involved with their children on a regular daily basis during normal business hours of operation.

Parents will receive a monthly newsletter from ERCDC with important information about program updates, reminders, resources, and other information. It is important that parents read these newsletters to remain up-to-date on what is happening at ERCDC. These newsletters are sent via the email address used for Procare. If parents would like to receive a hard copy, they can send an email to ERCDC administration with the request.

### **Parent Participation / Volunteering**

Parents are invited to be involved in their child’s school activities. There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read to children, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items.

Each classroom should have a Room Parent who can help to coordinate classroom activities, parties, or celebrations. Parents interested in being their classroom’s Room Parent can notify their child’s teacher. Room Parents are responsible for organizing the parents in that room for celebrations, events, and other activities as needed. Parents who do not wish to have their

contact information shared with their Room Parent should mark as such on the enclosed form.

Teachers will have volunteer opportunities posted in the classrooms. Any parent who volunteers will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, fingerprinting, and physical examinations as required by our licensing regulations.

Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions, and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips. Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements) will be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

### **Parent Trainings**

ERCDC offers six parent training sessions per academic year. These sessions are offered at no additional cost to our parents. Parents will receive a calendar for the year's sessions including the date, subject, and presenter for each session. Parent training sessions topics are about the community needs, potty training, routines, developmental milestones, assessments and observations, etc. These sessions are offered in the evening via Zoom and the link for the session will be shared with parents via Procure prior to the session.

### **Community and Family Services**

ERCDC is committed to help families to find resources that fit their unique family needs. These are some organization within the District of Columbia that are helping families in different ways:

- Child and Family Services Agency (Cfsa): Resources about adoption, foster care, welfare of a child.
- DC Department of Human Services (DHS): Administers the adult protective services, refugee resettlement, case services, Community Services Block Grant, and teen parent assessment programs. Provides oversight of the homeless services program.
- Inner City Family Services: behavioral health and community development leader
- Mary's Center: Mary's Center welcomes all communities and provides high-quality healthcare, education, and social services to build better futures.

### **ERCDC as a Level II Provider and Child Care Subsidy Enrollment Process**

#### **NEW**

Embassy Row Child Development Center (ERCDC) has been recognized as a Level II provider by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). This designation allows us to offer subsidized child care services and facilitates the enrollment of new children applying for child care subsidies for the first time in our center.

As a Level II provider, ERCDC meets the rigorous licensing and quality standards set by OSSE, ensuring a safe and enriching environment for your child's development. Our team is available

to assist families at every step of the application process, ensuring a smooth and hassle-free experience.

### **Child Care Subsidy Application Process for New Applicants:**

#### **1. Submitting the Application:**

- **In Person:** Families can visit ERCDC to complete the child care subsidy application process. We recommend printing and completing the application available on the OSSE website before your visit. Free printing services are available at DC Public Libraries with a library card.
- **Online or at DHS:** Alternatively, families can submit the application online or in person at the District of Columbia Department of Human Services (DHS).

#### **2. Eligibility Determination:**

- Once the application is submitted, OSSE will evaluate eligibility based on factors such as income, family size, and child care needs.

#### **3. Provider Selection:**

- After approval, families can choose ERCDC as their child care provider. It's important to note that once the subsidy application process is completed at a Level II child care facility, the child must be enrolled in that facility.

### **Responsibilities for Subsidy Families**

Families receiving childcare subsidies are responsible for paying their assigned copayment, which is determined by the subsidy system. This copayment is mandatory and is the financial responsibility of the parent or guardian. It will be billed monthly in advance, following the same billing cycle as all other ERCDC families.

Before beginning subsidized childcare services at ERCDC, families will receive a letter outlining our center's subsidy-related policies and must sign an acknowledgment form confirming receipt and understanding of their specific responsibilities.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Symptoms/Illnesses Requiring Health Care Provider Clearance**

- Chicken Pox
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye, discharge from the eyes)
- Ear infection related to a contagious viral illness
- COVID-19
- Diarrhea (Bloody Stool only)
- Diphtheria
- Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Impetigo
- Influenza (Flu)
- Lyme Disease
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Mouth sores
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Whooping Cough
- Rash (pus and blood present)
- Rash (mouth, hands, feet, or genital area)
- Rubella
- Salmonella
- Scabies
- Shigella
- Strep Throat

- Tuberculosis
- Zika Virus

**Symptoms requiring 24 hours' clearance** (Symptom free)

- Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Diarrhea (three times within 24 hours)
- Vomiting (twice within 24 hours)
- Abdominal Pain
- Nose Discharge (green or yellow)

**\*\*Please note: we will require a health clearance for other illnesses at our discretion. Physician's orders regarding illness supersede ERCDC policies**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **ERCDC COVID-19 Policies**

*(Updated September 2025)*

The health and safety of our children and staff remain our highest priority. In line with current public health recommendations, this policy focuses on symptom monitoring and medical guidance to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment. We encourage all families to stay up-to-date with recommended vaccinations as they are the best defense against severe illness.

#### **1. When to Stay Home: Symptom Detection**

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms (based on CDC/DC Health guidelines), they **must not attend school**, and a visit to a medical professional is recommended:

- **Fever** (100.4°F or 38°C or higher)
- **Severe or persistent cough**
- **Difficulty breathing** or shortness of breath
- **Repeated vomiting or diarrhea**
- **Sore throat**, congestion, or runny nose that affects the child's well-being
- **Severe fatigue**
- **Symptoms that prevent eating, drinking, or participating** in daily activities

#### **2. When to Return to School: Confirmed COVID-19 Case (Child Tests Positive) and/or Symptom Development (per Section 1)**

To protect the community, a child who tested positive or developed symptoms can return to the center only when **ALL** of the following conditions are met:

- **Fever-Free:** They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing medication).
- **Symptom Improvement:** Other severe symptoms are clearly improving.
- **Present Medical Note:** The doctor's recommendation for a safe return to class must be followed.

#### **3. Home Exposure: Close Family Contact**

If a family member at home tests positive for COVID-19:

- If the child remains **asymptomatic** (without any of the symptoms in Section 1), they may **return to school** as normal **without the need for testing**. Parents are encouraged to **closely monitor** the child for any symptoms.



- If the child **develops symptoms** (see Section 1), they must stay home. A doctor's visit is recommended, and the center will follow the **doctor's recommendations** to determine the return date.

#### **4. Protocol at School: When Symptoms Are Observed**

If a child exhibits more than one severe symptom during the school day, the following procedure will be followed:

- They will be immediately isolated.
- Parents/guardians will be called to pick up the child as soon as possible.
- Parents must take the child to the doctor, and the center will follow the medical instructions for the child's return.

#### **5. Protocol for Asymptomatic Class Contacts (School Exposure)**

If a child has been identified as a close contact of a positive case within their class but **remains without symptoms**:

- The child will continue their normal routine at the center.
- Testing for COVID-19 will not be required for continued attendance.
- If the child later develops symptoms, we will follow our protocol (see Section 2).

#### **6. Classroom Closure for Multiple Cases and Community Mitigation m**

- If the number of children with a confirmed COVID-19 case in a single classroom reaches three or more, that classroom will be closed for two business days. This period allows the center to conduct a thorough cleaning, sanitization, and disinfection of the classroom and all materials.
- Asymptomatic Return: Following the two business days, the classroom will reopen. Children who have remained asymptomatic (without any symptoms listed in Section 1) may return to class without the need for a COVID-19 test.
- Testing Recommendation: We strongly encourage parents of children who developed symptoms to administer a COVID-19 test before their child returns. However, testing is not strictly mandatory for return if the criteria outlined in Section 2 (Fever-Free for 24 hours, Symptom Improvement, and Medical Note) are fully met.

#### **Additional Facility Responsibilities: Communication, Reporting, and Prevention**

##### **Prevention and Mitigation Practices**

In line with current public health guidance and the goal of maintaining a healthy learning environment, ERCDC implements the following core practices:

- **Hygiene and Cleaning:** We will consistently promote **proper handwashing** and covering techniques when coughing or sneezing. Staff will routinely **clean and sanitize** items and surfaces in the facility, especially those frequently touched.
- **Encouraging Stays Home:** We actively **encourage students showing symptoms to stay home**. We maintain flexible policies that ensure absences are excused and avoid encouraging students to attend school while sick.
- **Protocol for Symptomatic Students:** A student showing symptoms will be immediately isolated until a parent/guardian picks them up. All areas the student contacted will be immediately disinfected.

### **Communication and Reporting Requirements**

ERCDC adheres to all necessary governmental reporting and internal communication mandates:

- **Internal Notification:** When a positive case is identified, ERCDC administration will use **Procare messaging** to notify parents/guardians and staff who may have been exposed. We will focus this communication on exposures that occurred in the last 5 days.
  - *Privacy:* The privacy of the individual who tested positive must be maintained; **we cannot disclose their name.**
- **External Reporting:** We will notify DC Health immediately if the facility reaches the required threshold of confirmed linked cases ( $\geq 25$ ). Additionally, we will report all instances of communicable disease, including COVID-19, to OSSE via the required unusual incident report process.

### **References**

[Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick | Respiratory Illnesses | CDC](#)

[Communicable Disease Reference Guide Schools 2024 Final.pdf](#)

*This policy is subject to change **whenever required by new guidance or mandates** issued by local, state, federal, or emergency health agencies.*

## APPENDIX C

### CACFP Breakfast Meal Pattern | Food and Nutrition Service

Minimum Quantities

Meal components and food items <sup>1</sup>	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <sup>2</sup>	Adult participants
Fluid Milk	4 fluid ounces <sup>3</sup>	6 fluid ounces <sup>4</sup>	8 fluid ounces <sup>5</sup>	8 fluid ounces <sup>5</sup>	8 fluid ounces <sup>6</sup>
Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both <sup>7</sup>	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains <sup>8</sup>	½ ounce equivalent	½ ounce equivalent	1 ounce equivalent	1 ounce equivalent	2 ounce equivalents

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Must serve all three components for a reimbursable meal. Offer versus serve is an option for at-risk afterschool care and adult day care centers.

<sup>2</sup> At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters may need to serve larger portions to children ages 13 through 18 to meet their nutritional needs.

<sup>3</sup> Must be unflavored whole milk for children age 1.

<sup>4</sup> Must serve unflavored milk to children 2 through 5 years old. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

<sup>5</sup> May serve unflavored or flavored milk to children ages 6 and older. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

<sup>6</sup> May serve unflavored or flavored milk to adults. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less. Yogurt may be offered in the place of milk once per day for adults. Yogurt may count as either a fluid milk substitute or as a meat alternate, but not both, in the same meal. Six ounces (by weight) or ¾ cup (by volume) of yogurt is the equivalent of 8 ounces of fluid milk. Through Sept. 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By Oct. 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

<sup>7</sup> Juice must be pasteurized. Full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack, per day.

<sup>8</sup> Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement.

Meats/meat alternates may be offered in place of the entire grains requirement, up to 3 times per week at breakfast. One ounce equivalent of meats/meat alternates credits equal to one ounce equivalent of grains. Through Sept. 30, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugars per dry ounce. By Oct. 1, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Information on crediting grain items and meats/meat alternates may be found in FNS guidance.

APPENDIX D

**ERCDC Rest/Quiet Time Policies**

*(March 2024)*

ERCDC adheres to a respectful approach to the time children need to rest because of its importance and impact on their development. Our practices are aligned with the standards outlined in Caring for Our Children (CFOC), which is a comprehensive collection of national standards based on the best evidence, knowledge, and experience in the field of early care and education. This resource incorporates recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines. In addition, we comply with the regulations set forth by the District of Columbia through the OSSE requirements.

**Aim:** Guarantee a safe and healthy environment for children's sleep in our facilities.

**Nap schedule:** The nap period lasts two hours, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., with a flexibility of 15 minutes before and after. If children have individual needs, please inform us of the strategies you will use to address their specific needs.

Staff must provide a calm, comfortable, and relaxing environment for children who need to sleep or rest. Staff should be attentive to children's sleep cues and allow individual flexibility in nap times

It is important to note that all children should have access to the rest or nap area when a child wants to rest. (3.1.4.5. Caring for our children)

Recommended Sleep duration:

AGE GROUP	YEARS	RECOMMENDED TOTAL SLEEP
Infants	3 to 12 months	12 to 15 hours
Toddlers	1 to 3 years	11 to 14 hours
Preschoolers	3 to 5 years	10 to 13 hours

School-age

6 to 12 years

10 to 11 hours

(Caring for our Children 3.1.4.4)

**Support to start rest and/or nap time:****Start at lunchtime**

Let each child leave the table when finished with lunch instead of having children wait until everyone is finished—waiting is generally not a children's strong suit!

- Guide the children to use the bathroom.
- Remind them to wash their hands and faces.
- Make it easy for children to locate the right cot by labeling them with children's names and pictures.
- Assist children in getting their bedding and placing it on the cot, if they need help.
- Encourage them gently and quietly during this routine.
- Keep in mind that it's not the teacher's job to do tasks that children are capable of doing for themselves. Effective teachers offer support and guidance from the wings while children engage in tasks tailored to their abilities. It's amazing to see the confidence, self-esteem, and independence children develop carrying out familiar routines without adult intervention.

**Help children relax**

Slowing down the nap time routine promotes relaxation and helps children de-stress. Some children may experience anxiety in their home lives. When the lights go out, tensions build—they may hear parents arguing or loud noises from outside or be aware of unsafe neighborhood conditions. Children need to know that in the classroom there are no ghosts, no scary situations, and no upsetting scenarios. Teachers can comfort children by saying, "You can go to sleep now, and I will watch over you." Restful sleep is an act of trust.

Talk softly, dim the lights, and give every child a hug, a pat on the back, or a low five. Show them that you cherish and appreciate them. Make it your priority to develop a warm and caring relationship with each child.

Early childhood educators can give children coping mechanisms to deal with stress or chaos. The following are skills that children can use at nap time on their cots and at bedtime at home.

**Deep breathing**

Concentrating on deep breathing is an effective way to calm the body's natural response to stress. Taking deep breaths slows down the heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and promotes a feeling of being in control. Anyone can use this technique. Coach children to simply breathe in

deeply

( ... two, three) and hold ( ... two, three) and release ( ... two, three). Repeat until relaxation—or sleep—happens.

### **Progressive muscle relaxation**

Progressive muscle relaxation is a wonderful way to relieve stress. Teach children to tense and then relax different muscle groups. Start with the toes; move up to the legs, stomach, arms ... and finally, the face and the scalp—if anyone is still awake!

### **Visualization**

Visualization, also known as visual-guided imagery, is a technique that uses the imagination to slow thoughts down and release worries. Teachers can help create a peaceful image in children's minds: "Let's imagine. It's a warm, sunny day, and we are lying under a tree. We can smell flowers. The grass is soft ..."

### **Music**

Listening to calming music can help a child regain balance. Even very young children can enjoy relaxing to classical music—or the sound of whales communicating or waves breaking on the beach.

### **A comforting story**

*Moon Dreams*, by Ruth Martin, *The Napping House*, by Audrey Wood, and *Time for Bed*, by Mem Fox, are three books that convey a sense of warmth and calmness.

### **A song or poem**

After having a great morning together, share a lullaby or a repetitive poem. Be sure to use a quiet, soothing voice.

*HomeResources / Publications / Teaching Young Children / December/January 2017 / Nap Time Is for Letting Go*

### **Nap Transition Support:**

If you have already woken up 50% of the class by 2:30, you can gradually increase the light in your environment. For example, at 2:15, open the curtains, and at 2:45, turn on all the lights. This will depend on the layout and location of your classroom to ensure a gradual change in the environment. If the majority of the class is still asleep at 2:25, you should begin the transition from dim lighting to turning on all lights no later than 2:45 p.m.

When the children are ready to get up, let them! Help children recognize when their bodies have had enough rest. Guide them in making good personal choices. As children awaken, remind them that others are still relaxing, so they need to whisper. Be sure they know which activities they can do after they nap: “You can come to the table and work on puzzles”, “play with clay” or “draw with markers”—a quiet transition to the afternoon activities and busy explorations. (Caring for our Children 3.1.4.4)

### **Environment transition:**

Lighting levels should be reduced during nap times to promote resting or napping behavior in children. During napping and rest periods, some degree of illumination must be allowed to ensure that staff can continue to observe children. While decreased illumination for sleeping and napping areas is a reasonable standard when all the children are resting, this standard must not prevent (Caring for our Children 5.2.2.1)

The lighting in the room must allow the caregiver/teacher to see each child’s face, view the color of the child’s skin, and check on the child’s breathing and placement of the pacifier (if used). (Caring for our Children 3.1.4.4)

When caregivers/teachers place infants in their crib for sleep, they should check to ensure that the temperature in the room is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult, check the infants to ensure that they are comfortably clothed (not overheated or sweaty), and that bibs, necklaces, and garments with ties or hoods are removed. (Safe clothing sacks or other clothing designed for safe sleep can be used in lieu of blankets.) (Caring for our Children 3.1.4)

### **Infant and Toddler Classes:**

It should be noted that the two classes of babies at ERCDC do

not have a fixed schedule determined by us; It is based on the individual needs of each child. Likewise, when children move into a toddler class, there should be flexibility for those who still need two naps a day. In this case, the ideal would be to place the cot for the walker who has this need in an area with less traffic of its kind. (Caring for our Children 3.1.4.4)

In the young infant, favorable conditions for sleep and rest include being dry, well-fed, and comfortable. Infants may need 1 or 2 (or sometimes more) naps during the time they are in childcare. As infants age, they typically transition to 1 nap per day, and having 1 nap per day is consistent with the schedule that most facilities follow. Different practices, such as rocking, holding a child while swaying, singing, reading, or patting an arm or back, could calm the child. Lighting does not need to be turned off during nap time.

**Cots/Cribs:** Sheets for cots should be placed during and/or after lunch.

Staff should only use cribs for sleep purposes and should ensure that each crib is a safe sleep environment. No child of any age should be placed in a crib for a time-out or disciplinary reasons. When an infant becomes large enough or mobile enough to reach crib latches or potentially climb out of a crib, they should be transitioned to a different sleeping environment (such as a cot or sleeping mat). (Caring for our Children 5.4.5.2)

Staff should inspect each crib before each use to ensure that hardware is tightened and that there are not any safety hazards. Cribs should be placed away from window blinds or draperies. As soon as a child can stand up, the mattress should be adjusted to its lowest position.

Cribs, cots, and mattresses must be cleaned and sanitized every day of the week. Additionally, they should undergo disinfection at the end of each operational week. This process involves sanitizing daily and disinfecting weekly. (Caring for Our Children 3.3.0.5, Appendix K)

### **Managing Challenges in Nap/Rest Schedules: Parent Collaboration and Classroom Adaptations:**

In cases where children experience difficulties with nap/rest schedules, it's crucial to convene a meeting with parents to collaboratively design an action plan tailored to the child's needs. This may involve making adaptations, including adjustments to alternate sleep hours different from the usual classroom routine, to prioritize the child's comfort and well-being. Additionally, teachers should allocate space within their classroom for the child to sleep, ensuring, to the extent possible, some privacy while resting.

### **Sleeping Position:**

- All infants will be placed on their back to sleep unless a written parental exemption is provided with pediatrician approval.
- All children who are asleep and have the ability to roll over, whether on their back or stomach, can sleep according to their preferred position for comfort.
- The child's face should be uncovered while sleeping.

### **Bedding and Crib:**

- Cribs are equipped with firm mattresses and fitted sheets.
- There should be no soft toys, pillows or loose blankets in the crib.
- In the case of cots, they must be placed safely inside the classrooms, avoiding placing any object on them.
- Cribs/cots must be identified with the child's name.
- Sheets and blankets on beds should not be mixed with those of other children.
- If the baby uses a sleeping bag, he/she cannot remain in the crib when it is not in use.



**Regular Supervision:**

- Regular and continuous supervision will be carried out while children sleep to ensure their safety.

**Quiet Sleep Environment:**

- A quiet sleeping environment and lower light change will be provided to facilitate a good rest.

**Respect Individual Sleep Routines:**

- Children's individual sleep routines will be respected as directed by parents.

**Communication with Parents:**

- Open communication will be maintained with parents about sleep routines and any changes in their child's sleep behavior.

**Nap Duration/Silent Time:**

- Babies don't follow a set schedule; Each baby has their own nap/sleep time and sleep according to their individual needs.
- Young children, ages 1 to 3, follow a schedule dedicated to naps and quiet activities, integrated into their daily routines. After completing their nap, children can remain in their beds if they prefer. For those who wish to get up, rest activities will be provided in designated areas, such as tables or cozy corners, which will minimize disruption to those who are still asleep.
- For preschoolers, the teacher should incorporate quiet time activities into their daily routine. The teacher should gather preschoolers who do not wish to lie down on their cots in a designated area of the classroom, allowing them to do these activities without disturbing other sleeping preschoolers. The teacher has to guarantee supervision for those who are awake and asleep.

**References:**

American Public Health Association, American Academy Of Pediatrics, Child, I., & United States. Maternal And Child Health Bureau. (2019). Caring for our children : national health and safety performance standards : guidelines for early care and education programs. Apha Press, Imprint Of American Public Health Association ; Itasca, Il.

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### Parent Acknowledgement of Family Handbook

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

This Family Handbook was created to promote an understanding of the policies and procedures of Embassy Row Child Development Center, Inc.

The information in this Family Handbook applies to all Embassy Row Child Development Center programming and activities. It is important that parents and/or guardians are familiar with the Center's policies and procedures. Your signature means that you have received this Family Handbook and understand the policies and procedures of Embassy Row Child Development Centers, Inc.

I have read and understand the policies and procedures in the **Embassy Row Child Development Center's Family Handbook**. I agree to abide by them as well as my child(ren).

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

This page must be submitted along with your child's Enrollment Agreement form. A new page must be signed for each child enrolled.



### Parent Acknowledgement of ERCDC COVID-19 Policy

Student Name _____ (Please Print)			
Address: _____			
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____	
Your Home Phone: _____	Work: _____	Cell: _____	

This COVID-19 policy was created to promote the health and safety of everyone at Embassy Row Child Development Center, Inc.

The information in this policy applies to all Embassy Row Child Development Center families. It is important that parents and/or guardians are familiar with this policy. Your signature means that you have received this policy and understand the policy of Embassy Row Child Development Centers, Inc.

I have read and understand the policies and procedures in the **Embassy Row Child Development Center's COVID-19 Policy**. I agree to abide by them as well as my child(ren).

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Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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This page must be submitted along with your child's Enrollment Agreement form. A new page must be signed for each child enrolled.



### Parent Consent to Share Contact Information with Room Parent

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

In order to facilitate communication between you and your child's room parent, ERCDC would need to share contact information. This form serves as your consent to share that information.

I consent for ERCDC to share my contact information with my child's room parent, including:

\_\_\_ Phone number

\_\_\_ Email address

\_\_\_ I do not consent for ERCDC to share my contact with my child's room parent. ERCDC will consult with me before sharing this information as it is requested.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

This page must be submitted along with your child's Enrollment Agreement form. A new page must be signed for each child enrolled.