

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

ELC PROGRAM POLICIES AND PARENT INFORMATION



EARLY LEARNING CENTER (ELC) PHILOSOPHY

ELCs foster a warm “extended” family atmosphere in which children feel secure, comfortable, and important. Children are engaged in a mixture of education and recreational activities that holistically approach education, build confidence, and ensure future success.

We believe:

- Parents are the first and most important teachers in a child’s life.
- Families benefit when parents and adults pursue work and personal responsibilities – which requires a safe, pleasant, and dependable place to entrust children.
- Development is patterned, but each child is unique – growing at their own pace and style.
- Children are innately curious. They constantly gather knowledge of the world through education and other experiences including play.
- Trust, respect, and emotional awareness of self, others, and nature are crucial elements for positive self-growth and productive in our increasingly complex society.

1. HOURS OF OPERATION POLICIES

Unless otherwise posted (see “Program Closure Policies” below) the ELC will be open from 6:30AM-6:00PM, Monday through Friday.

Please note the following information:

- All parents must complete a schedule of hours for each child’s attendance. Changes in scheduled hours, must be communicated to your Program Director.
- Children’s daily attendance may not exceed ten hours
- Children must be signed in and out daily using a parent’s or guardian’s full signatures at the end of the week to verify attendance. Parent/guardians are responsible for coming into the ELC to drop-off and pick-up children.
- Only authorized adults will be permitted to pick up children from the ELC. Parents/Guardians are required to provide written authorization, in advance, for any adult that is not listed on the enrollment form as an authorized pick up person. All adults (including parents/guardians not know by the staff) will be asked to provide a photo ID.
- Parents/guardians should notify ELC staff when drop-off or pick-up times will vary from established schedules.
- Emergency contact information for parents/guardians and alternate contacts should be kept current at all times. If the primary contact will not be available, please notify the classroom teacher/program director before leaving the child and let us know who should be contacted in case of an emergency.

2. LATE PICK-UP POLICIES

ELCs close promptly at 6PM daily. Please contact the program site immediately if you are going to be late. All attempts will be made by staff to contact the parent/ guardian and emergency contacts when a child is not picked up by 6PM.

Please note the following information:

- An automatic fee of \$10 fee will be charged for each child not picked up by 6PM
- An additional fee of \$1/per minute/child will be charged starting at 6:10PM until the child(ren) is/are picked up.
- All late pick-up fees must be paid, in full, before a child(ren) can return to the ELC
- Chronic late pick-up may result in termination of services
- Greater Wichita YMCA policy requires staff to notify their supervisor and law enforcement of children still at the ELC at 7PM.

3. PROGRAM CLOSURE POLICIES

ELCs close in observance of the following holidays:

New Year’s Day	Labor Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Independence Day/July 4th	Christmas Day

- ELCs, to maintain a high quality program, meet Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) requirements, and support the professional development of staff, close four (4) days annually for in-service and training. Written notice of closure will be provided no less than 30-days in advance of each scheduled closure.
- ELCs close when host branches close. While rare and only due to weather, power outages, and other circumstances beyond our control, parents will be notified of closure as soon as possible through email, the Greater Wichita YMCA website and Greater Wichita YMCA social media. Should closures happen during ELC hours, parents and guardians will be notified and are expected to immediately pick up their child(ren) consistent with sign-out policies (see above).
- ELC daily and weekly rates will not be prorated for any closure – planned or unplanned – of sites/services.

4. ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Children can enter the program anytime during the year based on available space in their age group. Each ELC program maintains and independent wait list. Please contact the ELC site directly to determine availability and begin the enrollment process.

Please note the following enrollment considerations:

- ELC enrollment is not available online nor at the front desk of any Greater Wichita YMCA location. It is only available with ELC staff or through the administrative offices of the Greater Wichita YMCA Child Care and Camp branch.
- Applications and all required forms (including KDHE paperwork), a non-refundable enrollment fee (see fee and payment policies below) are due and must be submitted prior to program entrance.
- Non-refundable enrollment fees are required annually for returning children, without exception.

- Income-based financial assistance and reduce rates are available for qualifying children. See staff or visit ymcawichita.org/elc for application and details.

5. SPECIAL NEEDS POLICIES

ELCs strive to meet the individual needs of each child within the structure of our program, while maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all of the children and staff.

- Children with special needs are accepted for participation once the program has been determined to be in the best interest of the child.
- Families with special needs children must schedule an appointment with the Child Care and Camp Branch Director or Senior Program Director prior to consideration of enrollment. The YMCA will make all reasonable accommodations.

6. FEE AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Fees and payment policies for ELC children are designed to ensure clear expectations. They are applied without exception.

Please note the following information:

- Parents must review and sign a payment agreement upon enrollment, and each August, for on-going/continuing children, and any time fees (enrollment or weekly) change while a child is in ELC care.
- A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$85/child is charged before enrollment and each August, without exception.
- Weekly tuition rates, to be indicated in your parent/guardian payment agreement, is based on child class enrollment.
- Weekly fees are due in advance, on the Monday of the week prior. (One full week in advance). Payment for services is due regardless of attendance.
- Payments are not accepted at ELC sites. Parents or guardians may make payments by:
 - AutoDraft** – Direct charge to checking or savings account or credit or debit card
 - Web Payment** – Visit ymcawichita.org/elc.
 - Mail** – Send check, cashier's check, or money order (do NOT send cash) to Greater Wichita YMCA Child Care Accounts, 402 N. Market, Wichita, KS 67202
 - In-Person** – Visit any Greater Wichita YMCA branch location with Cash, check, cashier's check, or money order
- Parents/guardians are responsible for paper receipts for payments made at a branch location and may be required provide proof of payment to ELC staff.
- Families may opt to pay for services on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis but advanced payment is required. Please contact childcare@ymcawichita.org for timing considerations.
- DCF payments must be made through the EBT call-in or online system. DCF payments cannot be processed at our program locations. Verification of DCF funds transfer is required for ELC services. See Program Director or any YMCA Membership associate for an EBT verification form.
 - The Greater Wichita YMCA cannot credit Child Care accounts without proper verification and late fees apply when payment cannot be verified by the due date
 - The parent / guardian is responsible for any fees not covered by DCF

- Families receiving funding from other third parties should carefully review approved plan funding and note that payment agreements and funding are made between the funder and the family and not with the Greater Wichita YMCA. Parents will maintain responsibility for ensuring timely payment of fees.
- A late fee of \$10/child will be assessed for any payment received after due date without exception.
- There is a fee of \$20/returned item plus all applicable bank/financial institution fees for the return of checks or failed AutoDrafts due to non-sufficient funds (NSF).
- We reserve the right to suspend ELC services to families with past due accounts, unpaid late fees, un-notified absences of one week or more.
- Annual Child Care payment records (for taxes or record keeping) are available in the online user account section of ymcawichita.org or by contacting Greater Wichita YMCA Child Care Accounts. Use reference/Tax ID #48055-4440.
- Contact Greater Wichita YMCA Child Care Accounts at 316.776.8842 or childcare@ymcawichita.org for information or support with any of the above fee and payment policies.
- Greater Wichita YMCA will notify parents a minimum of 30 days in advance of any changes to ELC fees (enrollment or weekly).

7. WITHDRAWAL AND DISMISSAL POLICIES

While we anticipate children will be with us for the entirety of their early education, we have the following policies in place for departure through withdrawal or dismissal:

- Two weeks written notice is required to withdrawal without exception. Families are responsible for all fees incurred for two weeks after notice is received even if the child is no longer receiving ELC services.
- While all efforts will be made to resolve issues and ensure understanding of expectations, the Greater Wichita YMCA and ELC staff reserves the right to dismiss a child from the ELC for reasons including, but not limited to:
 - The program is unable to meet the needs of the child
 - The child cannot adapt or adjust to the ELC setting
 - Chronic behavior problems or single acts of aggression
 - Non-payment of fees or chronic late-payment of fees as described in payment policies
 - Lack of regard or compliance with Greater Wichita YMCA and/or KDHE rules, policies, and requirements
 - Absence, without notification, for more than one week

8. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICIES

Scholarships and financial support, through various sources including the Greater Wichita YMCA's Strong Community Fund are available for those who qualify.

Please note the following information:

- Income-based financial assistance for Greater Wichita YMCA Child Care is independent of considerations for Greater Wichita YMCA membership.

- The application for Child Care financial assistance is available at any Greater Wichita YMCA branch location or at ymcawichita.org/elc.
- Only fully completed applications – returned to branch locations or mailed to Greater Wichita YMCA Child Care and Camp, 402 N. Market Street, 2nd Floor, Wichita, KS 67202 – will be considered.
- Child Care Accounts staff will notify you, approximately ten business days after receipt, regarding approval and funding levels.
- Questions regarding applications, status of applications, or funding policies can be directed to childcarescholarships@ymcawichita.org.
- Greater care of an illness is required than the child care setting can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- The child exhibits signs or symptoms of illness including but not limited to:
 - Presence of fever (100°F or higher) and other signs of illness or behavioral change
 - An acute change in behavior including lethargy, irritability and/or persistent crying
 - Uncontrolled coughing, rash, diarrhea, vomiting abdominal pain, mouth sores, pink or red eyes
 - Untreated head lice, scabies, or other infestations
 - Known or suspected contagious diseases while in a communicable stage

9. ATTIRE AND SUPPLY POLICIES

Children will participate in active physical play and fun messy activities each day at the ELC.

- Children should always arrive dressed for play. Daily activities are, typically, held inside and outside and may include messy play. Smocks and/or an oversized t-shirt will be used to minimize paint and other play materials getting on children's clothing.
- For your child's safety shoes must allow children to run and participate in active play, indoors and out. Closed toe shoes or sneakers are recommended daily. Flip flops and any shoe that poses a trip hazard will not be permitted. KDHE regulations dictate each child must have two complete changes of seasonally appropriate clothing available at all times. Parents are responsible for providing additional clothing items that are clearly labeled with the child's first and last names.
- Parents/guardians should provide a sufficient supply of diapers and wipes and/or pull-ups for infants and toddlers. ELC Staff checks and/or changes infants and toddlers hourly, unless they are asleep, the daily requirement is one diaper/pull-up for each hour the child is in ELC care. Wipes, marked with the child's name, should be provided in packaging. Parents / guardians are responsible for ensuring ample supply.
- With the exception of a quiet item for nap time children are not permitted to bring toys or other personal items to school. The Greater Wichita YMCA and/or ELC staff is not responsible for damaged, broken, lost, or stolen items.

10. HEALTH POLICIES

The YMCA follows KDHE guidelines for exclusion of children who are ill and/or show one or more sign or symptom of illness. While fever alone does not always indicate a serious condition, it is unreasonable and inappropriate for child care staff to determine this for participating children. This will be the responsibility of the child's legal guardian, with the help of the child's health care provider. Parents/guardians will be notified anytime a child has a fever with or without additional symptoms.

Children will be excluded from the program when:

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities

Please note the following information:

- Children excluded for illness must be symptom and fever-free, without fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours prior to return.
- Ill children will be monitored and isolated with necessary supervision, until a parent, guardian, or authorized adult can pick up the child.
- Parent/guardians should make arrangements to ensure prompt pick up within an hour of notification
- Parents/guardians are required to notify the program when a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. A doctor's release may be required to return to the program
- All families will be notified if a participant, or staff, has a confirmed communicable disease while maintaining confidentiality and not revealing the individual's name.

11. MEDICATION POLICIES

KDHE licensing regulations do not permit childcare agencies to administer prescription or nonprescription medication to children without the authorization of a physician and/or the written authorization of parent/guardians.

- Administer Medication Request forms are available at the ELC.
- Nonprescription medications such as Tylenol, cough medicine, etc. may be given if guardian completes a medication form. This policy includes all medications, including nonprescription items for diaper rash, etc.
- Aspirin cannot be administered without a physician's written authorization.
- All medication to be administered must be given directly to the ELC staff in its original container and clearly marked with the child's first and last names.
- Prescription medication must contain written instructions as to quantity, time for administering, name and telephone number of the physician and any other pertinent information.
- A doctor's note regarding dosage for prescription and nonprescription medicine is required for children under two years of age.
- Greater Wichita YMCA/ELC personnel will not be responsible for administering injectable medication (except epipens). All medication will be administered according to product instructions/RX label unless other written instructions from the doctor or health care professional are provided.

12. IMMUNIZATION POLICIES

State licensing regulations require child care center's to maintain a copy of all children's immunizations on site. In addition, immunizations must be current for child participation in KDHE-licensed programs, including ELC. Full immunization regulation can be found at www.kdheks.org.

- Unimmunized children will be excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness or until age appropriate immunizations have been completed.
- In accordance with state regulation 28-4-430, exceptions to health assessments and immunizations shall be permitted if one of the following is obtained:
 - Certification from a licensed physician stating that the physical condition of the child is such that immunization would endanger the child's health
 - A written statement signed by a parent or guardian that the parent or guardian is an adherent of a religious denomination whose teachings are opposed to health assessment or immunizations.

13. DAILY OUTDOOR ACTIVITY POLICY

In accordance with KDHE regulations and the YMCA Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards, all children will participate in outdoor play daily.

- KDHE requires a minimum of one hour per day of outdoor activities, which can include both quiet and active play.
- This hour may be one or two longer periods or several short periods, based on weather conditions.
- Children will participate in outdoor play unless "extreme weather" conditions prevail and/or there is an active weather warning in the program area.
- Outdoor time may be limited, moved earlier/later in the day, or-in rare cases-canceled for extreme weather. This is especially true for our young infants. Please see the posted "Weather Chart" for specific guidelines.

Please ensure that your child is dressed for outdoor play daily and understand that if they are not well enough to participate in outdoor play, they are not well enough to attend program for the day.

14. GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES

We believe that the purpose of discipline is to guide children as they develop problem-solving skills, learn to get their needs met in a positive way, and appropriately stand up for their rights and the rights of others. Techniques are selected based on children's age and developmental competencies. The Greater Wichita YMCA follows KDHE suggested guidance techniques.

These techniques include:

INFANT/TODDLER

Teachers will use the distraction technique, otherwise known as redirection. The infant/toddler will be taken away from the activity and given another choice, one that is positive.

- Teachers will use the word "NO" sparingly.
- "NO" should only be used in situations where the child could be harmed.

PRESCHOOL

Preschool children will be allowed to make acceptable choices and let the natural consequence of the decision be the teacher.

- The teachers will help the children to solve problems while offering suggestions to resolve the issue.
- Classroom rules will be the foundation within the preschool curriculum.

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE®

Greater Wichita YMCA ELC staff utilizes the research based approach; Conscious Discipline® to help school staff, teachers, and students create an environment where everyone can develop in a way best for them. Created by Dr. Becky Bailey, an internationally renowned expert in child developmental psychology, Conscious Discipline® is built on the premise of developing discipline within children rather than applying discipline to them. Through this program children learn to turn daily conflict into opportunities to learn critical life skills.

Students learn to:

- Set and achieve goals together despite obstacles, set personal boundaries to encourage mutual respect
- Manage emotions, instead of acting out, and resolve conflict in a way that creates closer relationships

YMCA DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

- Minor behavioral issues will be shared as needed with families verbally and/or in writing.
- When a child's behavior becomes challenging and disruptive and can no longer be maintained through common behavior management techniques or threatens the safety of the child, other children, and/or ELC staff, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child and a conference to discuss the behavior will be scheduled.
- The purpose of a conference is to discuss the specific behavior and share concerns, develop an action plan, and identify behavioral supports/resources that may be accessible to the staff and family.
- Chronic behavioral issues or behaviors that are reoccurring without resolution may result in termination of services.
- It is the goal of the Greater Wichita YMCA to make all reasonable accommodations for children with social and emotional challenges.

15. ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY

As mandated reporters, our staff is required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse and/ or neglect to child protective services. Staff is not permitted to discuss their concerns with family members prior to reporting. All staff receives KDHE approved child abuse and neglect training that includes prevention, reporting, and recognition/signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.

16. FOOD SERVICE POLICIES

ELCs participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsored by the USDA* and complies with its rules and regulations.

- Menus and meal service schedules are posted.
- Breakfast, lunch, and one afternoon snack are served daily to all children. An adequate amount of food will be served to meet nutrition requirements for children.
- Children MUST arrive at the posted time of service to participate in meals.
- Infant bottles and toddler cups must be labeled with the child's name. All bottles are required to have a fitted lid. Bottles and cups will be rinsed and returned to parents daily. Parents are responsible for returning enough clean and sanitized bottles/cups for each day's use
- Meals are planned as relaxed, social experiences, served family style where children develop self-help skills.
- Although never forced to eat, children are encouraged to sample small portions of each item. Teachers are seated at the table with children and model appropriate behavior. They are sensitive to individual eating patterns.
- Outside food and/or drink is not allowed in the ELC. This applies to children, students and parents.

17. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICIES

All family records are confidential. Only authorized ELC staff has access to files. Regulatory agencies such as DCF or KDHE have legal access to class lists and files in the course of duties involving licensing, supervision, or special services.

- NO information will be released to any other person, agency, or organization without parent's/guardian's written permission.
- Each family's name, address, telephone number and child's birth date are included on a class list that may be distributed only to other enrolled families and staff. If you want your address and/or phone number deleted from the list, you must notify the ELC in writing within one week of enrollment.
- Center staff routinely use photographs and videos of the children as part of the curriculum. In addition, children's pictures or videos may be used for marketing. If you object to your child's picture or video being used for marketing, you must notify the ELC within one week of enrollment

18. SEPARATED AND DIVORCED PARENTS

- If divorced or separated parents share custody, every effort will be made to see that both parents receive communications from the ELC.
- If one of the parents has restricted access for custody or visitation and that restriction will effect ELC arrangements, please furnish the center office with a certified copy of the custody/visitation arrangements.
- NOTE - The Greater Wichita YMCA nor ELC (including staff) does not become involved in custody or payment term disputes. Please do not ask staff, or the director, to document and/or discuss any actions or behavior of another parent.

19. PARENTS/GUARDIANS ROLES

Parent/guardians are the first teachers of their children and are an important part of the ELC. Their active role enhances their children's experiences and allows them the opportunity to participate in shaping their child's care and education. Our goal

is to provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere where parents/guardians and staff work together as partners to promote continuity, support, and respect for families and their cultures.

20. COMMUNICATION POLICIES

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook have been developed in order to help define the dynamic relationship that exists between children, parent/guardians, and early childhood professionals as we work together for the benefit of families. Effective communication between parent/ guardians and teachers is the key to a child's comfort and success at the ELC.

- Classroom teachers will schedule a progress conference with each child's family at least two times a year. Other conferences requested by the parent/guardians or teachers may be held at a time mutually agreed to.
- Staff will respond professionally to concerns and questions.
- We ask that you speak to staff at times when they are not responsible for supervising children.
- You're always welcome to spend time with your child at the center.
- If you have any special skill or talent, we invite you to share it with your child's class.
- Please feel free to eat lunch, read stories, join a field trip, or enjoy outdoor activities with your child.
- Informal conversation between parent/guardians and teachers happens daily.

21. HOLIDAYS AND TRADITIONS

Traditional holidays are recognized in a simple, yet meaningful way at the ELC. Holiday observances vary greatly from family to family. If your family has special traditions that you would like to share with the other children, please make arrangements with the classroom teacher. We encourage activities that develop awareness and respect for all cultures and heritages.

*The USDA/CACFP is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap or religion, contact the Wichita Public Schools ADA and Section 504 district coordinator, 201 N. Water, Wichita, KS 67202, 973-4631, or write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**GREATER WICHITA YMCA
CHILD CARE AND CAMP ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
402 N. MARKET STREET, 2ND FLOOR, WICHITA, KS 67202**

Branch Director: Andrea Eliot | 316.776.8241
Senior Program Director: Debbie Ogle | 316.776.8242
Child Care Accounts and Records: 316.776.8842 | childcare@ymcawichita.org

ELC SITES, PROGRAM DIRECTORS, AND CONTACTS

**DR. JIM FARHA ANDOVER YMCA
1115 E. US-54, ANDOVER, KS 67002
316.448.1060**

**EAST YMCA
9333 E. DOUGLAS AVENUE, WICHITA, KS 67207
316.685.2059**

**RICHARD A. DEVORE SOUTH YMCA
3405 S. MERIDIAN AVENUE, BLDG. 1, WICHITA, KS 67217
316.942.9782**

GREATER WICHITA YMCA MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that promote healthy lifestyles, strong families, and positive youth development to build healthy spirit, mind and body for all, regardless of the ability to pay.

Learn more at ymcawichita.org/mission.