



Family Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Auraria Early Learning Center!

We believe success begins early. By working together as partners in education, we can help foster your child's positive attitude towards learning through a successful adjustment to the school environment.

We encourage you to be aware of the goals, objectives, and activities of our program so that your child's school experience can be supported and reinforced at home. In turn, we make an effort to be aware of your expectations for your child's achievement and behavior at the center, your attitudes on education, and your beliefs about child-rearing. In this way, we can work together to provide a program that is responsive to both environments.

The information included in this handbook offers a brief overview of the Auraria Early Learning Center program and policies. Additional information and references on our curriculum, mission, and goals are available from staff members. Please feel free to ask for further information at any time.

We look forward to beginning this special partnership with you and your child.

Sincerely,

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Introduction

The Auraria Early Learning Center (AELC) provides programs for children who are 12 months and walking to 5 years old. The center serves students, faculty, and staff of the Community College of Denver (CCD), Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver), University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver), and the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC). On a space-available basis, the center also serves the Denver community. All of the AELC's programs are fully licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services.

What You Will Discover at the AELC:

- Highly qualified teachers, educational consultants, and support staff who are experts in the field of early childhood education
- Healthy meals and snacks included
- Individualized teaching with an emphasis on cultivating
- children's sense of wonder and discovery
- Small classroom setting with a low child-to-teacher ratio
- Balanced, high-quality curriculum that introduces foundational subjects, including reading, math, science, and social studies
- Social-emotional development with opportunities for self-expression through language, art, and dramatic play

Mission

The AELC's mission is to support children as they learn about and discover their own uniqueness in a rich, caring, and loving environment where relationships between children, families, and staff are nurtured.

Philosophy

The AELC believes children learn through play and discovery.

The AELC instills learning by ensuring the environment is rich in developmentally appropriate materials and activities that nurture exploration and growth in physical abilities, language, literacy, cognitive skills, math, science, social studies, the arts, dramatic play, and social-emotional skills.

The AELC Believes in Empowering the Growth of Each Child by:

- Assigning children to primary caregivers and ensuring continuity of care
- Providing warm, attuned interactions between adults and children
- Furnishing well-planned and thought-out daily schedules, transitions, activities, and environments
- Using careful observation and assessment as the basis for communicating and interacting with children, for planning based on the interests and uniqueness of each child, and for fostering communication and connections with families

The AELC Believes in Building Community With Families

Building relationships provides a strong foundation for community, learning, and personal growth. The AELC nurtures relationships by connecting with children, families, and each other on a personal level, and by taking time for reflective practice. Each child, family, and staff member is unique. The AELC respects that uniqueness by listening carefully, communicating clearly, and encouraging partnership.

The AELC Believes in Anti-Bias Education

Families come in different constellations including single parent families, same-sex families, extended families, blended families, two-parent working families, foster families, and adoptive families with a variety of subgroups including racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic. As a core value, the AELC creates a culture where members seek to acknowledge, share, and nurture diversity in the community. The Auraria Early Learning Center is committed to cultivating an anti-bias community. We believe that each family deserves to feel welcomed and included as a member of our center community. We are committed to the inclusion and belonging of different perspectives and establishing a common ground of mutual respect.

Interpreting Services

The Auraria Early Learning Center provides interpreters upon request. Please see the front desk for the list of available languages. Both written and verbal translations will be provided in the family's native language. If the native language is not available for translation, the center will connect the family with resources.

Curriculum & Assessment

The educational community consistently recognizes the AELC as a high-quality early learning center. The program is based on a developmentally appropriate curriculum that emphasizes discovery-based learning and active involvement by children.

AELC teachers and administration have studied early childhood development for several years. The curriculum is constantly evolving based on the newest, most relevant research available and the needs of the children in our care. Currently, the curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the following practices:

- Activity-Based Environment
- Whole Language Approach
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children (DAP)
- ECE Cares
- Learning in Nurturing Communities (LINC)
- Teaching Strategies Gold (TS-Gold)
- Pyramid Plus
- Creative Curriculum

Activity-Based Environment

Young children learn best by "doing." Classroom activities involve extensive hands-on experimentation. Children gain problem-solving skills by learning through their actions and drawing conclusions from their experiences. The AELC focuses on encouraging, supporting, and extending the children's choices to help them learn about the world around them.

Whole Language Approach

The AELC looks at language as a continuum, beginning with the acquisition of verbal and listening skills and extending into the development of literacy skills, including pre-reading, letter recognition, and letter sound skills. Research and experience show that a child's communication skills develop out of the desire to express needs, insight, and excitement. Staff work to promote positive language opportunities for children at each stage of development.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children (DAP)

DAP provides a framework for preparing learning environments and planning activities according to what is known about young children's stages of development. DAP considers several key factors:

Age Appropriateness — indicates there are universal, predictable stages of growth and change for children in all domains of development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. These stages typically occur within specific age ranges.

Individual Appropriateness — recognizes that each child is a unique person with an individual sequence of growth, and an individual personality, learning style, and family background. Activities in the classroom and child/teacher interactions are responsive to individual differences and developmental stages.

Child-initiated, child-directed, and teacher-supported play are essential components of developmentally appropriate practices.

Pyramid Plus

The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children (Pyramid Model) provides a tiered framework of evidence-based interventions for promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral development of young children.

Creative Curriculum

Creative Curriculum is a researched-based curriculum designed for children from infancy through kindergarten. It balances both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning. It incorporates developmentally appropriate practices that consider the child's developmental level and provides opportunities for teachers to work with children who have various skills and abilities. The curriculum is delivered within a play-based format and integrates all areas of development including social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts within daily classroom routines and structure.

ECE Cares

The AELC works hard to develop caring classroom communities. The center cultivates an environment where all children are safe to express who they are, talk about their ideas, have their own experiences, practice problem solving, and learn to settle disagreements in a peaceful way. The three essential "Safety Rules" are an important ECE Cares strategy:

- 1) We keep ourselves safe.
- 2) We keep each other safe.
- 3) We keep our things safe.

Learning in Nurturing Communities (LINC)

The AELC is dedicated to helping children learn to express their emotions in developmentally and socially appropriate ways. Teachers model behaviors and guide children in developing skills for managing difficult feelings such as frustration, anxiety, and anger. Using LINC as the framework for the social and emotional curriculum, AELC staff help children develop a competent and autonomous sense of self. Children learn positive ways of relating to peers, adults, and themselves.

Teaching Strategies Gold (TS-GOLD)

TS-GOLD is a tool that enables teachers to increase the effectiveness of their assessments. TS-GOLD compiles results generated through a teacher's documentation and offers support with lesson planning and individual goals. In addition, TS-GOLD gives teachers the opportunity to share information more effectively about a child's progress with his/her family.

The AELC curriculum meets and assesses all the domains listed in the Early Childhood Leadership Commission's development guidelines chart.

This graphic illustrates the essential domains of learning within the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines. It represents the progression of these domains across ages, rather than the relative importance of each domain within any one age group. The complex connections within and among domains are more fully explored throughout the guidelines.



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Early Childhood Development

The term “early childhood” refers to the years from birth to approximately age eight. While most research on early childhood only focuses on one specific aspect of development, AELC staff have found that it is most beneficial to incorporate a variety of approaches into the curriculum. Using a combination of approaches stimulates the development of young children in the following areas:

- Intellectual/Cognitive Development
- Language/Communication
- Social and Emotional Development
- Self-Help Skills
- Gross and Fine Motor Skills

Intellectual/Cognitive Development

During early childhood, rapid growth occurs in cognitive and intellectual development. Although each child develops at an individual rate, there is a clearly defined sequence of developmental milestones from infancy to adulthood as set forth by Piaget's theory of childhood development. The AELC creates an enriched environment for children based on knowledge of the needs of children at each milestone; as well, the center understands that each child has an individual rate of progress.

Language/Communication

Vocabulary growth and the ability to communicate needs and wants may be two of the most noticeable advancements for children between the ages of two to seven. When adults create a rich language and literacy environment, with specific responses to a child's communication, it can boost that child's emergent language and literacy development, increasing the likelihood of future academic success. Parents and caregivers have the greatest potential to contribute to a child's language opportunities, and we can work together to consistently cultivate language opportunities at school and at home. This is one of the many reasons the AELC values family connections.

Social and Emotional Development

In the first five years of life, children rapidly develop the social and emotional capacities that prepare them to be self-confident, trusting, empathetic, intellectually inquisitive, competent in using language to communicate, and capable of relating well to others. The AELC uses the Learning in Nurturing Communities (LINC) curriculum to teach children developmentally appropriate ways to handle emotions and to offer tools for first interactions in a social school setting.

The AELC recognizes that social and emotional development occurs in all of the children's interactions, including free play, meal time, and structured group activities. The physical setting of the classroom maximizes possibilities for both small and large group interactions. Teachers utilize anti-bias curriculum activities and materials, and plan lessons that are relevant to the children as members of the AELC's multi-cultural community.

Self-Help Skills

The AELC curriculum guides and encourages young children to become more independent as their skills develop. Staff encourage children to make positive choices and to become more self-directed in their play and interactions. Toddlers learn to take care of themselves by eating with utensils, putting on and taking off their own clothing, and toileting.

Gross and Fine Motor Development

Young children move; they clap, jump, swing, stomp, and sing. They love to be on the go. The AELC curriculum focuses on helping children learn to balance all areas of development with their gross and fine motor skills.

The "Let's Move! Child Care" initiative launched by former First Lady Michelle Obama recognizes the AELC as a participating site. Teachers use creative movement activities and outdoor play to help children's growing bodies.

Puzzles, writing, drawing, and other small motor activities enhance fine motor skills. Handwriting skills are introduced and developed at appropriate age levels. Each classroom's curriculum is designed to be consistent with its children's stages of motor development.

Toddler Programs

The toddler classrooms utilize all AELC curriculum standards and introduce developmentally appropriate programs as determined by the classroom teacher and AELC administration.

Preschool Programs

The preschool classrooms introduce the following programs into their curriculums:

Phonics—Butterfly Park

This phonics program is a fun, active, and multi-sensory introduction to letter sounds, utilizing movement, visual stimulation, and listening activities. The 26 basic letter sounds, long and short vowel sounds, and three vowel teams.

are taught with colorful illustrations, creative dramatics, and cues and chants. The multi-sensory approach increases language retention for all children.

Everyday Math

"Everyday Math" integrates math skills across the school curriculum, rooting learning in real-life contexts and situations. It gives children the opportunity to explore math through long-term projects with an interactive approach to learning. Many of the "Everyday Math" activities maintain a nice balance between teacher-directed instruction and opportunities for open-ended, hands-on exploration.

Preschool programs follow Colorado State Standards and Goals. Visit [Office of Standards and Instructional Support | CDE \(state.co.us\)](https://www.cde.state.co.us) for more information.

Colorado Shines Quality Rating & Improvement System

In an effort to strengthen and improve early childhood education programs, the Colorado Office of Early Childhood administers a statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The QRIS is a method to assess, enhance, and communicate the level of quality of all licensed providers in Colorado. There are five elements of the Colorado Shines QRIS:

QRIS standards are used to assign ratings to programs that participate in the QRIS, providing parents and the public with information about each program's quality.

Accountability and monitoring processes are used to determine how well programs meet the QRIS standards, assign ratings, and verify ongoing compliance.

To promote participation and help programs achieve higher levels of quality, QRIS includes **support for providers**, such as training, mentoring, and technical assistance.

Financial incentives and awards help early care and education programs improve learning environments, attain higher ratings, and sustain long-term quality.

QRIS provides a framework for **educating parents** about the importance of quality in early care and education.

For more information, visit [Colorado Shines | Home \(force.com\)](https://force.com)

AELC Staff

Please visit [Early Learning Center | AHEC](#) for staff bios.

Administrative Staff

The AELC administrative team includes the director, assistant director, program coordinator, and operations coordinator.

Teaching Staff

A supervising teacher, an assistant teacher, and teacher aides staff each classroom. They guide the development of social skills, independence, and a positive self-concept by arranging the classroom environment in ways that encourage children to discover, explore, imagine, express feelings, and most of all...enjoy!

Supervising Teachers

Supervising teachers are responsible for classroom management and instruction. All supervising teachers have earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, or a closely related field, and/or are director qualified through the State of Colorado.

Assistant Teachers

Assistant teachers support the supervising teachers in carrying out the classroom programs. They are Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) or Assistant Early Childhood Teacher (AECT) qualified. The assistant teachers help with instruction, maintaining a positive classroom environment, and guiding children's behavior in a positive manner.

Teacher Aides

Teacher aides assist with classroom operations, supporting the supervising and assistant teachers with instructional activities, administrative duties, and operational tasks.

Most teacher aides and assistant teachers are students on the Auraria Campus. Their schedules may vary from semester-to-semester.

Registration & Enrollment

Registration Packets

Families will receive a registration packet after paying a child's registration fee and filling out the pre-registration form. The registration fee will hold a child's spot for a period of two weeks, during which the family will need to fully complete the registration process. All paperwork must be completed and turned in 48 hours prior to the desired start day. Failure to turn in the completed paperwork within the two-week registration period will result in forfeiture of the child's spot.

All Parents—Required Registration Forms

- 1) Child Emergency Information and Agreement
- 2) Statement of Authorization
- 3) Medical Statement (filled out by the child's physician)
- 4) Immunization Record (filled out by the child's physician)
- 5) USDA Income Eligibility Form (participation and the form are required)
- 6) Child's Current Photo
- 7) Handbook Acknowledgement (last page of this handbook)
- 8) Medical Release Form
- 9) IEP or IFSP Plan, if applicable
- 10) Allergy Forms, if applicable
- 11) Getting to Know You Form
- 12) Sunscreen Form
- 13) Pre-registration Form
- 14) Toilet Training Policy, if applicable
- 15) Copy of Birth Certificate

Student Families—Additional Requirements

- 1) Prior year tax information (determines qualification for category A or B)
- 2) Current detailed class schedule showing name, student ID, term, and courses.

Staff and Faculty Families—Additional Requirements

- 1) Prior year tax information (determines qualification for category A or B)
- 2) Copy of your staff/faculty ID or other proof of employment with CCD, MSU Denver, CU Denver, or AHEC

Up-To-Date Information

Complete and accurate information is very important. Information concerning who is authorized to pick up a child is critical. Families must keep parent contact phone numbers, emergency contact numbers, and parent schedules current. Contact change forms are available at the AELC front desk or via email. **Possible disenrollment can occur if the center is unable to reach a parent or emergency contact while a child is in the center's care.**

All registration information must be updated annually, and physicals are required at 12 months, 15 months, and 18 months for children under two years old and annually after 2 years old along with current copy of immunizations.

The AELC is required to keep all information in a child's file for three years. This information will be kept locked in storage.

Enrollment Process

The AELC operates on the Auraria Campus calendar. The AELC prioritizes enrollment for Auraria Campus students. After the student enrollment period has passed, enrollment is opened to Auraria Campus faculty and staff. Enrollment is opened to the Denver community on a space-available basis.

Student Classification

To be classified as a student, one must be enrolled on the Auraria Campus at CCD, CU Denver, or MSU Denver for at least 6 undergraduate or 3 graduate level credit hours every semester, including the summer semester. Students are required to submit class schedules one month before each semester begins, or the community tuition rate will apply.

Staff Classification

Proof of campus affiliation will be required every January in order to maintain discounted category rates. To be classified as staff, one must be employed on the Auraria Campus by either CCD, MSU Denver, CU Denver or AHEC. Employment at CU Anschutz does not qualify for staff classification. Staff will be required to show a current copy of their staff ID card or a verification letter on letterhead issued by their institution.

If a parent's position is vacated at an institution, AELC requires immediate notification so necessary tuition adjustments can be made.

Transitions to the Next Age Group

A child will be moved to the next age group based on space availability, individual readiness, classroom dynamics, and birth dates. Conferences will be held with the child's teacher before transitions to prepare for moving to the next age group, school, or different center. Information about age groups is shared at the beginning of each school year during a back-to-school information session. Please check with a teacher or an administrator for additional support and resources for transition assistance.

Siblings

Siblings of children currently attending the AELC are given first priority for enrollment. When an additional child is enrolled, the currently enrolled child's tuition will be reduced by 10 percent. Please see the assistant director if interested in enrolling a sibling.

Schedules

- The AELC only offers full-time schedules. Children are expected to be dropped off by 9am, and there is an additional drop off time from 9:45am-10am. Should you choose to send your child on a part-time schedule, you will be billed for the full-time spot.
- Children enrolled in our Older Preschool Program must be dropped off by 9am to ensure that they are receiving the full curriculum. This program also requires full-time attendance in order to adequately prepare students for Kindergarten.

Campus Holidays & In-Service Dates

The Auraria Early Learning Center is closed the following days:

- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Eve through New Year's Day
- Three teacher in-service days per year (typically the day before each semester begins)
- Any days the Governor's Office grants state employees.

No tuition credit is given for holidays or in-service days.

Tuition, Fees, & Billing

Fee Schedule

The AELC current fee schedule can be found at [Tuition & Fees | AHEC](#).

Faculty and staff are charged a bond fee each semester. Please see the director with any questions.

All families are also charged an Annual Registration fee in August.

Late Tuition Payment Policy

Tuition payments that are not made on time will incur a late payment fee of \$50 that will be added to the next month's bill.

In-Service/Professional Development Days

School closures due to in-service/professional development days are valuable aspects of the AELC program. The center closes for three scheduled in-service/professional development days annually. These usually fall on the business day before the beginning of each semester. Professional development builds the foundation for highly qualified and well-trained teaching personnel.

Monthly Statements

Tuition statements are posted on the first business day of each month. The invoice will be visible in the Procure app and sent to your email through the app also. If a family would like to know the child's tuition in advance of receiving the tuition bill, they may inquire at the front desk.

Payment

Cash, check, or credit card are accepted for payment at the front desk. Payment cannot be made through the Procure app.

Payment is due on the first business day of the month. It is considered late after the 10th of the month and a late fee will be charged. If payment is not received by the 15th, the child will be disenrolled from the center.

For children who start after the 10th of the month, payment is due their first day.

Checks

The child's name and room number must be included in the notes section.

If a check is returned, a \$20 returned check fee will be assessed (per State of Colorado fiscal rules). The family must immediately cover the amount of the check and the \$20.

After two returned checks, the AELC will accept payment by cash or credit card only.

Credit Cards

Credit card payments may be made by calling the front desk from 11am to 3pm. We cannot store credit card information. Payments can occasionally be made in person at the front desk at the discretion of the front desk staff.

If a credit card is charged an incorrect amount or if both parents pay by mistake, a credit can be left on the account or a family may request a refund check from the accounting department (refund checks may take up to two weeks to process).

Unpaid Bills

- 1) I authorize AELC and its agents/contractors to contact me at my current/future mailing address, email address, landline phone number, cellular phone number, or other wireless devices, regarding my child's tuition or any other debt I owe to AELC, or to receive general information from AELC I authorize AELC and its agents/contractors to use automated telephone dialing equipment, artificial or pre-recorded voice or text messages, and personal calls and e-mails in their efforts to contact me.
- 2) If I fail to pay my child's tuition, pay any monies due to AELC by the scheduled due date, or fail to make acceptable payment arrangements to bring my account current, AELC may refer my delinquent account to a collection agency. I am responsible for paying all collection agency fees (which may be based on a percentage up to a maximum of 30% of my delinquent account), together with all costs, late fees and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees.
- 3) I understand that my delinquent account including but not limited to my child's tuition may be reported to one or more national credit bureau by AELC or the collection agency it uses. I authorize AELC use my Social Security number for internal/external credit reporting and collection purposes for all charges incurred against this account.
- 4) This Agreement shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Colorado without regard to any conflict of choice of law principles. I hereby submit to personal jurisdiction in the State of Colorado.

Absence and Vacation Credits

The AELC does not give absence credits for any reason including illness or vacation. Families are required to pay for all registered days whether they use them or not.

Other Tuition Credits

The AELC does not give credits for planned center closures due to in-service days, holidays, or winter break. Credits are also not given for unplanned center or classroom closures due to weather, illness, staffing, or other emergencies.

Withdrawals

The AELC must receive written notification of a child's withdrawal from the center. A Total Withdrawal Form is required at least 1 full month before a child's last day at the center; otherwise, the child's account will be charged 1 month's tuition. If a family fails to submit a Total Withdrawal Form, the account will be charged for all unused registered care.

Financial Assistance

If the administration believes your family may qualify for financial assistance, they will contact you via email with the information to sign up.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

CCAP is accepted from the following counties: Jefferson, Adams, Weld, Denver, and Arapahoe. Auraria Campus students registered for at least six credit hours per semester, including summer semester, are eligible to receive CCAP.

The guidelines below must be followed:

- It is the parent's responsibility to have their caseworker send all contract information to the AELC.
- The AELC must receive a Certificate of Authorization from the County Department of Human Services before a child can attend the center.
- It is the parent's responsibility to use the ATS (Attendance Tracking System) every day their child attends the center.

As per the CCAP contract, if a child is absent more than three days in a month the family must contact their caseworker. The family will be charged for any times/days for which CCAP does not pay. All parental fees must be received by the 10th of each month or a late fee applies. Families must pay the parental fee assigned by their caseworker.

Denver Preschool Program (DPP)

Families who live in Denver County and have a preschooler four years of age in their last year before kindergarten may apply to receive funding toward tuition from the DPP.

For more information, visit [Denver Preschool Program \(DPP\) | Denver, Colorado](#)

Colorado Universal Preschool Program (UPK)

Families who live in Colorado and have a preschooler four years of age in their last year before kindergarten may apply to receive funding toward tuition from UPK.

For more information, visit [UPK Colorado | For Families](#)

MSU Denver Grant Subsidy

The MSU Denver Student Affairs Board offers a childcare subsidy program. Student parents enrolled for at least six credit hours at MSU Denver are eligible. Parents enrolled in online classes are not eligible.

The subsidy is generally 5–30 percent of reimbursed AELC tuition each semester. This amount may be adjusted if funds are not available for this level of subsidy.

Meals/Snacks

A full-service kitchen operates on the premises and provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. All meals are homemade, nutritious, and served family style. Daily menus are posted on Procure, in each classroom, on the front desk parent board, and on the kitchen window. Vegetarian options are available.

Allergies

If a child has any food allergies or special needs, the teacher needs to be made aware of the situation upon enrollment. There is additional paperwork required for food allergies or preferences. **Families must provide the center with medication for use in the event of an allergic reaction. Failure to provide medication or required documentation will result in withdrawal from the center.**

Substitutions

Outside food brought in by families is generally not allowed. Food substitutions may only be made if a child is unable to consume center-provided foods because of a disability, medical reason, or religious reason. Substitutions shall be made only when supported by a "special diet" statement from a recognized medical authority that includes recommended alternate foods. Parents will be required to provide the recommended food substitute.

USDA Food Program—Mandatory Participation

The AELC participates in the USDA Food Program, which enables the center to serve nutritious meals while keeping fees as low as possible.

Families are required to fill out an Income Eligibility Form annually regardless of income.

This form is confidential and is necessary so the center may receive reimbursement for the meals it serves. Administrators can answer any family questions about this form.

In the operation of food service programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin. If a family believes their child has been the subject of discrimination, they may write to the Secretary of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Center Policies

Center Anti-Discrimination Policy

The AELC shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations.

Conduct of Adult Community Members Policy

As members of a community, adults at the center should strive to provide children with a model of civil and respectful behavior. Interactions between adults should support a caring and safe environment for everyone. Given that differences in opinions can arise, it is important that adults are aware of the behavior children observe when there is a potential conflict. Regardless of the problem, we expect community members to approach differences in opinion with an open mind and with respect for the other person and program policies. Language and behavior that is disrespectful, discriminatory or abusive to others, including the children is never acceptable and will be subject to disenrollment.

Late Pick-up Policy

The AELC is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Under no circumstances is care provided before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m. If a parent fails to pick up their child by 5 p.m. and has not notified the Center that they are running late, we will make two attempts to call, text, and email each parent at that time. If we are unable to contact a parent, we will then try to reach their emergency contacts.

On the first through third late pick-up offense, parents will be charged a \$10 fee and a \$2 fee for each minute past 5 p.m. the parent is late picking up their child. On the fourth and fifth late pick-up offense, parents will be charged a \$25 fee and a \$5 fee for each minute past 5 p.m. the parent is late picking up their child. After the fifth late pick-up offense, it is up to the discretion of the Director to withdraw or retain the family. All late fees will begin to accrue at 5 p.m., or the Center's closing time, that day.

This payment will be added to the next month's bill and needs to be paid by the 10th. Families are required to call the center ahead of time in case of an emergency. Alternate arrangements should be made if a child will be picked up more than five minutes late.

The Center asks that families be respectful of our employees' time, as they also have family obligations. If a child has not been picked up by 6 p.m. and we are unable to contact a parent, guardian or emergency contact we will then notify the Auraria Campus Police Department (ACPD) for assistance. The ACPD will utilize their resources to try to locate a parent. If they are unable to locate or contact a parent directly, they will notify Denver Human Services.

Early Release/Delayed Open Schedule Policy

In the event that there is an early release from the Center, or we are following a delayed open schedule, communication regarding the situation and process will be sent in several ways:

- Parents will receive a Procare message from an administrator.
- Parents will also receive a text and email from the Auraria Campus' Rave System, if they have previously opted in to receive those notifications.
- The Auraria Campus's closures are listed on local news agencies websites.
- The snow line for Auraria Campus is 1-877-556- EMER (3637)
- Parents can also check the website for the latest information.

On a day that we are following a delayed open schedule, children **MUST** be dropped off within one hour of our opening time if parents plan to have their children attend that day.

If there is an early release from the Center, families are expected to pick up their child by the stated closing time. If families do not pick-up their child by the early release time, the late pick-up policy will take effect.

In the case of an emergency where the center is closed immediately, families are expected to pick up their child within 30 minutes of the closure notification. If families do not pick up their child within 30 minutes of the notification, the late pick-up policy will take effect.

Two-Week Trial Period

All children will be enrolled on a trial basis for the first two weeks. At the end of this period (or anytime thereafter) if there are any concerns about whether or not the program can meet the needs of the child, his or her family will be asked to meet with the teacher, and the classroom team leader. Staff will make every effort to ensure continued enrollment for a child who is having difficulties. Ultimately, however, the center has to take into consideration the best interests of the child, current staffing patterns, and all enrolled children. If the AELC is unable to meet the needs of a child, staff will attempt to help the family find a program that is more suitable for the child's needs.

Center Expectations

- Children must stay with their parents at all times during drop off and pickup.
- Walking and quiet voices are required in the hallways.
- Children are not allowed to run toys along the hallway walls or on the ledge in the building entryway.
- Parents must supervise their children when they are in their presence.
- Parents must watch children carefully in the parking circle; taking care to prevent children from walking in the street.
- Parking is not allowed on the inside of the parking circle.
- Parents and teachers must make contact with each other during drop off and pickup daily.
- Cell phones are not allowed in classrooms. All calls must be completed outside before entering classrooms.
- The AELC respects a parent's right to discipline in the fashion they feel is appropriate, but AELC policies must be followed in the center: no physical punishment, no shaming, and no restriction of food at mealtimes.

Disruptive Behavior

It is not unusual for a child who is having difficulty controlling his/her emotions to also be highly disruptive. When this occurs, teachers often spend considerable time with individual children, while others receive only minimal attention. If a child's behavior management issues reach such a point, the parent will be called to pick up the child for the rest of the day (parents are normally forewarned via Procure message that this may occur).

If children are not ready to accept the limits that are necessary to protect themselves and others, an informal Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) may be completed to determine the function of the challenging behavior. The assessment may include observations by an administrator as well as developmental checklists and/or a functional behavior assessment. Once the function of the behavior has been determined, an informal Behavior Support Plan will be developed.

An administrator will be consulted to provide the classroom with new strategies.

Chronic aggression against other children will not be tolerated. If a child is chronically aggressive, a family conference will be scheduled to discuss possible triggers for the aggression, and to develop techniques to eliminate the behavior. If a behavior problem continues after the implementation of several strategies, parents will need to obtain outside intervention. If outside intervention is refused or does not result in a positive change in the child, the AELC may determine that its resources cannot support the child with being successful at the center. At that time, staff will help the family find other care.

Disenrollment Policy

The AELC reserves the right to cancel enrollment of a child for any of the following reasons:

- Tuition is more than two weeks late.
- A family does not observe the policies, procedures, financial agreement, or payment policies described in this handbook.
- Failure to provide or renew child's medical statement and immunization record or any other necessary paperwork.
- Physical, verbal, or written abuse by a parent or guardian directed at AELC employees or other parents. (If a parent or guardian has a complaint about the AELC's staff or administration, all parties must conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner.)
- Behavior by a parent or guardian that is disruptive in the classroom or within the grounds of the ELC.
- Outside intervention for a behavior problem is refused or does not result in a positive change in a child.
- A child is a danger to himself/herself.
- A child is a danger to classmates.
- A child is a danger to teachers.
- A child is disruptive to the learning of others in the classroom.
- A child is requiring too much one-on-one attention.
- A child is three years old and not toilet trained.
- The AELC cannot meet the needs of a child with current staff and/or staffing patterns.
- The family has been late five times for pickup.
- The family cannot be contacted in case of illness, injury, closure, or emergency.

Admission of Children with Special Needs

The AELC complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA mandates that equal access be given to all children with disabilities in childcare programs, and that children with disabilities be fully integrated into regular activities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines the legal rights of private school students to publicly funded special education services. Specifically, it states that a private institution student DOES NOT have the same legal rights to special education services as a special education student in public school.

Childcare programs are required to make an assessment about whether it can meet the needs of the child without fundamentally changing the program. The AELC incorporates this mandate within its purpose, philosophy, and daily practice. The AELC staff works with families to include their child in programs and activities. Reasonable accommodations are made for all children with documented disabilities. "Reasonable accommodations" is defined as the ability to provide services for a child without fundamentally changing the nature of a program. Meetings will be held with families, AELC staff, and any additional supports in order to determine if AELC can meet a child's individual needs. Enrollment is based on individual assessment of each child and the ability of AELC to meet the child's specific needs. Reasonable accommodations will be also be made to meet the individual

needs of all children with or without an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP). If AELC determines that reasonable accommodations can meet the child's needs, meetings will be held semesterly to create a plan for the child's inclusion and developmental and learning goals.

Classroom Closing Procedures

The closing procedures list is available at the front desk. Each staff member assigned to close a classroom will make sure all children are picked up when the center closes. This will be verified by an administrator.

Disaster Emergency Evacuation Plan

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the building, occupants of the AELC will meet at the Confluence Building and wait for direction from the Auraria Campus Police Department. Supervising teachers (or their delegates) will account for all children by taking role using the Procure app. **It is important that families sign-in/sign-out their child using the Procure app every day.**

The center uses Procure, emergency cards, and/or the RAVE system to contact parents. These emergency contact numbers must be kept updated with the front desk to ensure families receive announcements.

Emergency and Security Procedures

Fire, tornado, and lockdown drills are performed on a monthly basis. Each classroom has a map posted by the door showing the proper exits and emergency destinations. There are emergency buttons located in each classroom and at each end of the building. These buttons immediately alert Auraria Campus Police. Each classroom and playground have an emergency box that directly communicates with the Auraria Campus Police Department. The front desk is staffed during hours of operation with someone who monitors the doors. The front doors are locked between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. All other doors are locked at all times. The intercom outside the double doors will be used to communicate with people we do not recognize. Front doors will be locked at any time we deem necessary for center security.

Licensing Rules and Regulations

All licensing rules and regulations are followed by the center. A copy of the rules can be found at [Home | Colorado Department of Early Childhood](#)

Parking

Parking areas in front of the AELC and along 9th Street are 20-minute loading zones only, meant for dropping off and picking up children. **Parking is not permitted along the island directly in front of the AELC. Children are frequently in this area, so extra caution and slow speeds are required.** Parents and children need to be mindful and careful when leaving vehicles. Families should be patient and courteous with other children and families who are parking and entering the building.

Primary Caregiving and Continuity of Care

Research supports primary caregiving and continuity of care as a strong foundation for optimal development and learning. Primary caregiving assigns a child and family to one supervising teacher who gets acquainted with the child, the child's family, family culture, temperament, cues, and personality to enable the teacher to be responsive to the child's developmental needs.

Primary caregiving, combined with continuity of care, creates strong home-school partnerships, fosters communication between teachers and families, helps develop strong friendships, and paves the way for a responsive, child-centered curriculum. The AELC fosters these relationships by assigning children to one classroom with a supervising teacher for at least one year and longer, when feasible (contingent on enrollment date/age). When children move to a new classroom, parents and children are notified in advance. Introductions to the new teacher are made, and a transition period takes place with frequent visits to the next room. Information regarding the transition is sent home, and a transition meeting is scheduled if deemed necessary.

Transitions

Toddlers (One year old and walking independently until the day before the child's 3rd birthday): There are two toddler rooms for 1-year-olds and three toddler rooms for 2-year-olds. Children moving up from the toddler classroom to young preschool must be three and potty trained. This means that they are out of diapers completely, are able to pull their pants up and down, potty independently, and attempt to change themselves when they have accidents. While this is the main milestone, there are several other factors, including social-emotional readiness and the accomplishment of other developmental milestones. Once children turn three, they are required to move up to the next classroom, according to licensing regulations. Parents or guardians will receive an email stating when the child is eligible to advance.

Young Preschool (Three and potty trained to four or older, dependent on when the child's birthday falls): This program is for children ages three and four. Children will remain in this program until they are selected to progress to older preschool. In order for a child to be eligible to progress, staff look at several factors, including social-emotional readiness and the accomplishment of other developmental milestones. Children will not progress to older preschool based only on reaching age four. Families will receive an email stating when a child is eligible to advance.

Older Preschool (The year before the child enters kindergarten; children must turn four by October 1st of the current school year): The AELC's older preschool program is the year prior to kindergarten. The older preschool program starts in August and runs through a full school year and summer semester. At times, based on social-emotional readiness and other developmental milestones, children may enter the Older Preschool program when they turn four even if they will not be entering Kindergarten in the following school year.

In an effort to keep continuity and structure, children will not be able to move laterally, to another classroom of the same age. Children will remain in the classroom assigned until you are notified that they will be moving to the next age group.

Release of Children

The center will release children only to adult(s) who have written authorization. In an emergency, the child may also be released to an adult for whom the child's parent or guardian has given verbal authorization. If a staff member who releases the child does not know the adult, identification is required and the child may not be released until the adult has provided identification to confirm they are a person on the child's authorized pick-up list.

Unauthorized individuals will not be allowed to pick up a child. If an attempt is made, the individual will be asked to leave the premises. If the individual refuses, the police will be called. The custodial parent will also be notified.

Auraria Early Learning Center respects the rights of parents to access their child. However, if AELC staff feels a parent is in an unsafe condition to drive or leave with their child (such as under the influence of drugs or alcohol), the AELC staff may suggest that the parent call the other parent, a friend or relative, or a cab. Your child's safety is of the utmost importance to us, so if you refuse assistance the AELC staff may also call campus police for assistance or to report the incident.

Divorced/Separated/Guardians

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking the child up from the Early Learning Center. It is not within the AELC's legal right to withhold a child from a parent unless there has been court action that limits one parent's right to the child. The AELC requests that a complete copy of the judge's order establishing custody is on file to prevent a non-custodial parent from accessing the child. AELC will work with parents sharing custody to follow court ordered custody agreements but cannot be held responsible for unofficial agreements between parents.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

At all times, the safety and well-being of the children at the AELC is paramount. Communication is very important. Parents will be kept informed as the situation allows.

It is required by law that any and all incidences of suspected child abuse and/or neglect of a child be reported to the Colorado Department of Human Services for investigation. It is the responsibility of the Department of Human Services/Police to determine what abuse/neglect (if any) has occurred in such a case. These laws apply to both staff and parents, and any staff member under investigation for suspected child abuse or neglect will immediately be put on leave.

Examples of incidents the AELC is required to report include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Marks or bruises on a child that are unexplained or seem unlikely to have occurred as a result of the explanation given
- Marks or bruises on a child caused by disciplining a child
- Reports by the child of abusive/neglectful treatment, or observations by staff members of harsh, abusive, or neglectful treatment of a child
- Failure of the parent to obtain appropriate medical care for a child
- Observations by staff of inappropriate sexual behavior by a child
- Observations by staff of possible neglect of appropriate hygiene and/or provision of appropriate clothing, food, and shelter

Child Abuse Hotline: 720-944-3000

To make a complaint: 303-866-5958

Visitors/Volunteers

Students, early childhood professionals, family members, and others may visit the AELC. A log of visitors/volunteers is kept at the front desk. No visitors/volunteers are admitted without an approved purpose.

All volunteers are required to complete the same staff licensing requirements as permanent staff members.

Foster Grandparent Program

The Volunteers of America Foster Grandparent Program is a fun, cross-generational program where seniors volunteer at the AELC to help care for the children. The program offers seniors the opportunity to use their experience to improve the lives of children.

Because many children do not live close to their biological grandparents, foster grandparents serve as a proxy for the traditional child-grandparent relationship, benefiting all involved.

Auraria Campus Student Use of the Center

The AELC welcomes students on the Auraria Campus to utilize the AELC for course-required observation, research, documentation, internships, and activities. Students in early childhood education courses can complete their lab/field experiences at the AELC. All Auraria Campus students will be supervised by the classroom teacher or an administrator.

Classroom Policies

Identifying Children's Whereabouts

The AELC uses the Procure app for sign-in/sign-out at all times to identify the location of children in the center and classrooms. **It is extremely important that families use the Procure app to sign-in/sign-out.** Full names are required for signatures. These records affect children's safety, emergency situations, attendance records, and reimbursement for the food program. Sign-in/sign-out information will be with the class at all times through their Procure devices. **Families that continually neglect to sign children in or out are subject to disenrollment.**

Birthdays

In-class birthday celebrations are encouraged. Please give the child's supervising teacher a few days' notice for a birthday celebration. The teacher will inform parents about the number of children attending and the best time to visit the class for a celebration. If parents plan on bringing treats, they should check with the classroom teacher regarding allergies. Food with peanuts must be avoided. Homemade food is not allowed due to Human Services regulations.

Blankets and Cuddlies

Children may bring a special blanket or cuddly from home if it fits in the nap box. If it is left at school, it will be washed regularly with the nap bedding. If you would like to take it home nightly, it is up to you to remember to take it with you and wash it regularly.

Clothing

Children should be dressed in sturdy, comfortable clothing that is suitable for play. It is best if the clothing is child manageable. Please mark all clothing with the child's name using a permanent marker or clothing label. Although teachers work hard to keep track of children's clothing, sometimes items are misplaced. The AELC will not be responsible for misplaced items.

Children spend time outdoors each day and should have appropriate outdoor wear. It's important to understand the normal wear and tear that occurs to kids' clothes in an activity-based program. Children may return home with sand, dirt, and occasionally paint on their clothes. The AELC is not responsible for replacing or reimbursing the cost of any ruined clothing. Smocks are used, but active children sometimes get dirty!

Outdoor Play/Extreme Weather

All children in care for more than five hours at the AELC must be provided with at least 60 minutes of daily gross motor activity. This will take place outdoors when the weather permits. When the weather is above 20 degrees and below 90 degrees, children will go outside, unless the weather is determined to be too inclement or there is poor air quality. Therefore, it is important that all children dress appropriately for the predicted weather each day. If children are too ill to participate in outdoor play, they are considered too ill to come to school. The AELC requires sunscreen unless a doctor's note is provided. AELC staff apply sunscreen before each period of outdoor play.

Children's Belongings

Children's personal belongings, including extra clothes, coats, shoes, etc. are kept in cubbies. Parents must check their child's cubby each day and take home any clothes that need to be washed. All children must have a change of clothes at the center that includes a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. No choking hazards, "keep out of reach of children" items, backpacks or bags with straps, plastic bags, money, medicine, or valuables should be left in cubbies.

Remember that all items that are brought to school must fit in a small cubby. This is a requirement to meet Health Department regulations.

Discipline and Guidance

The AELC uses several guidance techniques to help children internalize rules and become self-directed in their behavior. These include the following:

- Giving choices
- Problem solving
- Natural and logical consequences
- Ignoring
- Redirecting
- "Cooling off" periods

Parents may not spank their children in the center. AELC staff work with children to help them find alternatives to responding physically in stressful situations and strive to make the center an environment where hitting is not acceptable. It would be confusing to the children to see that there are exceptions to the rules in school. The staff will not impose restrictions on a child's behavior that are inconsistent with AELC rules.

Additional information on discipline is available from classroom teachers.

Positive Guidance

Positive guidance at the AELC includes:

- Cultivating positive child, staff, and family relationships
- Creating and maintaining a socially and emotionally respectful early learning and care environment
- Implementing teaching strategies supporting positive behavior, pro-social peer interaction, and overall social and emotional competence in young children
- Providing individualized social and emotional intervention support
- Providing access to an early childhood mental health consultant or other specialists as needed

The AELC maintains the above ideals in the following ways:

Staff keep children actively engaged in order to decrease the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Transition activities help children move smoothly from one activity to another. Teachers use only positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, clear, understandable limits and fostering the child's ability to become self-disciplined is

the ultimate goal. Staff try to ignore negative behavior as much as possible (since much of it is an effort for attention) and reinforce appropriate behavior.

Tactics for positive guidance include the following:

- Preparing the environment to avoid unnecessary conflicts for children
- Creating psychological safety through predictable routines, expectations, and schedules
- Helping children to know and understand the classroom rules
- Giving children positive verbal redirection, if necessary
- Helping children express their wants, needs, and feelings
- Helping children to understand the wants, needs, and feelings of others
- Supporting children in learning to resolve conflicts with others and giving opportunities for children to solve problems
- Protecting the safety of others by removing a child from a group, if necessary
- Keeping parents informed of their child's behavior, and collaborating on strategies with parents

AELC staff are careful to model peaceful conflict resolution with each other and to teach children negotiating skills, when appropriate. The staff's role is to help children modulate their extreme emotions and learn alternative ways of expressing emotion without harming others. This process takes time and looks slightly different among age groups.

Field Trips and Transportation of Children

AELC staff often take children on walks around the Auraria Campus. All field trips will require additional signed permission from the family. Parents will be informed of any field trips via Procare. If a family arrives after the child's class has left the center for a field trip or does not provide permission, the child will not be able to attend that day. Parents are invited to participate in outings if allowed. AELC will notify parents if chaperones are needed. The AELC does not use vans or parent vehicles as means of transportation; only walking field trips or public transportation methods are used. In the event of an accident, emergency health care procedures will be followed.

Naps

All children enrolled will have a nap or rest period. The length of the rest time is dependent on the age and needs of a child.

Parent Donations

The AELC welcomes donations of almost any kind! The child's classroom teacher can provide parents with a list of needed materials. Financial donations can be made via Venmo. Fundraising opportunities happen throughout the year and a list of ongoing fundraisers is on the Family Resource board at the front desk.

Toddler Requirements

Toddlers are required to walk without assistance.

Parents must supply children's disposable diapers. Cloth diapers are not allowed unless an allergy exists, and a doctor's note will be required. If a child runs out of diapers, a message will be sent on Procure and there will be a reminder when the parent picks up the child. Parents are expected to bring diapers the next day. Parents who continually forget diapers will be asked to bring diapers to the center immediately or will be expected to pick up the child.

If a child is in the process of toilet training, enough changes of underwear and clothing will need to be available in the cubby. A washable bag for soiled clothes is also required. The AELC approach to toilet learning includes positive reinforcement and encouragement. Children are not pushed or shamed into using the toilet. Most children no longer require diapers and are using the toilet regularly by the age of two and a half to three years old.

To move up to young preschool, toddlers must be potty training and not in diapers or pull-ups. Children must independently recognize when they need to use the restroom and be able to dress themselves. Toddlers are required to move up when they turn three years old.

Absences

If a child is going to be absent, parents must call the AELC front desk or send a Procure message. If the absence is due to illness, parents should tell the AELC staff about the child's symptoms and if the illness is contagious. Absence credit is not given.

Supervision of Children

Children are under the direct supervision of AELC staff at all times. Parents must sign their child in and make sure that the teacher is aware of arrival to the classroom. When parents pick up their child, they must sign the child out and be sure the teacher is aware that the child is leaving for the day. Parents are responsible for supervising their child in the center after the child has been signed out of the classroom. It is extremely important that parents are careful about accompanying children out of the center and into the car, bus, etc.

Television and Video Viewing

The AELC program does not include regular television viewing. Occasionally, a program or video specifically designed for the interest and benefit of children may be shown. Movies will not be shown at the center due to copyright laws.

Toys, Candy, Money, or Food from Home

Parents need to check with a child's supervising teacher before bringing toys to school. Sharing personal toys is difficult for young children. The AELC is not responsible if a toy is lost or broken.

Children are prohibited from bringing candy, money, and food from home. Exceptions may be made when a child has special dietary requirements with parents providing all meals, or when a parent provides birthday or holiday treats for a group.

Cellphone Policy

In the interest of increasing teacher and parent communication we ask families to refrain from using your cellphone at drop off and pick up time.

Health & Safety

Illness

AELC is unable to provide care for sick children. If a child develops signs of illness during the school day, AELC staff will contact the family immediately by Procure message and phone call. If they are unable to reach a parent, they will notify the emergency contact. Sick children must be picked up within 30 minutes of notification.

Children need to remain out of the center until they recover from their symptoms. Children must be able to participate in all aspects of the program, and teachers will use their discretion to determine if a child is well enough to be at the center. AELC policies overrule a physician's recommendations. Children may not return to school until they have been symptom free (without medication) for 24 to 48 hours depending on illness and amount of illness within the center or community.

Illness Policy

It is the family's responsibility to notify the center that their child has a communicable disease, such as measles; mumps; meningitis; T.B.; hepatitis; lice; ring worm; chicken pox; salmonella; hand, foot and mouth disease; flu; Covid-19; etc. Children may be readmitted without a statement from a health practitioner only if they have been absent for a period of time equal to the longest incubation period of the disease as specified by the Children's Hospital School Health Program guidelines.

Deciding whether to keep a child at home or whether AELC staff should send a child home can be difficult. It is important for parents and caregivers to discuss what symptoms they have observed and agree on a plan of action based on consensus about what symptoms require that children stay home.

There are four reasons to keep a child home due to illness:

- 1)** The child is at risk of infecting others with COVID-19 or another contagious illness, either because of symptoms or recent close contact.
- 2)** The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in usual activities.
- 3)** The child requires more care than the staff is able to provide without affecting the health and safety of the other children.
- 4)** The illness is on the following chart of symptoms, for which exclusion is recommended.

Source: [DEHS_ChildCare_How_Sick_Is_Too_Sick_vs2022.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Guidance for COVID-19 Symptoms	Child or staff member must stay home?
<p>COVID-19 symptoms which <i>must be fully resolved</i> before a child or staff member returns to school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling Feverish, having chills or Fever (Temperature of 100.4°F or greater. Babies who are 4 months or younger need to see a doctor right away for a fever of 100°F or higher) • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing • Nausea, Vomiting/Throwing Up • Diarrhea (Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine) • Cough* 	<p>Yes - These symptoms are often present in individuals with COVID-19 and other contagious infectious disease, and a person with any of these symptoms (whether new or worsening from baseline) should first receive a diagnostic test for COVID-19.</p> <p>When to seek emergency medical attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble breathing • Persistent pain or pressure in the chest • New confusion • Inability to wake or stay awake • Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips or nail beds, depending on skin tone <p>These are not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you. Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility. Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.</p> <p>If all symptoms are consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and the child is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.</p> <p>If the test is positive, or the individual has not yet been tested, the individual should follow CDPHE's isolation guidance, https://covid19.colorado.gov/isolation-and-quarantine. Further guidance for the school or child care can be found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance.</p> <p>If the test is negative AND the symptoms are explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If the test is negative and the illness is not explained by a new illness or a known chronic condition, the ill individual should still stay home until symptoms have been resolved for at least 24 hours without medication.</p> <p>*Students and staff may return if the cough is not fully resolved following discussion with a care provider.</p>
<p>COVID-19 symptoms which <i>must be improving</i> before a child or staff member returns to school or child care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sore throat • Runny nose or congestion • Muscle or body aches • Headache • Fatigue • New Loss of Taste or Smell** 	<p>Yes - These symptoms are often present in individuals with COVID-19, and a person with any of these symptoms (whether new or worsening from baseline) should receive a diagnostic test for COVID-19. If all symptoms are consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and</p> <p>the child is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.</p> <p>If the diagnostic COVID test is positive, or the individual has not yet been tested, the individual should follow CDPHE's isolation guidance, https://covid19.colorado.gov/isolation-and-quarantine. Further guidance can be found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance.</p> <p>If the diagnostic test is negative and the symptoms are explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If the COVID test is negative and the illness is not explained by a new illness or a known chronic condition, the ill individual may return to school as long as all symptoms are improving and cough, shortness of breath, fever, diarrhea and vomiting have fully resolved.</p> <p>**Loss of taste or smell can persist for weeks or months. This condition does not need to be resolved or improving before an individual returns to school or care.</p>

Guidance for Symptoms Not Due to a Specific Disease, Following a Negative COVID Test	Child or staff must stay home?
Diarrhea Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine.	<p>Yes - Unless the diarrhea is related to an existing chronic condition, is explained by a diagnosed condition not requiring the person to stay home, or is consistent with the person's baseline.</p> <p>The child or staff member may return to school or child care 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea unless the diarrhea is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the diarrhea is explained by a specific illness, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p>
Fever Fever is a temperature of 100.4°F or greater. Babies who are 4 months or younger need to see a doctor right away for a fever of 100°F or higher.	<p>Yes - The child or staff member may return to school or child care if the fever has been resolved for 24 hours without fever reducing medications unless the fever is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the fever is explained by a specific illness COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p>
Flu-like Symptoms Fever Sore throat Runny nose or congestion	<p>Yes - Children and staff may return to school or child care as long as they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms are improving, unless the symptoms are caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the symptoms can be explained by a specific illness, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>In consultation with a healthcare provider, additional evaluation for flu-like illnesses, sore throat, and upper respiratory symptoms may be appropriate, including evaluation for strep throat.</p>
Vomiting/Throwing Up	<p>Yes - Unless the vomiting is related to an existing chronic condition or is explained by a diagnosed condition not requiring the person to stay home. If the vomiting is unexplained and inconsistent with the person's baseline state of health, the child or staff member may return 24 hours after their last episode of vomiting. If the vomiting can be explained by a specific illness, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If a child with a recent head injury vomits, seek medical attention.</p>

Guidance for Specific Diagnosed Illnesses	Child or staff must stay home?
Chicken Pox	Yes - until the blisters have dried and crusted (usually 6 days), or in immunized people without crusting, until no lesions within 24 hour period.
Conjunctivitis (pink eye) Pink color of eye and thick yellow/green discharge	No - children and adults do not need to stay home unless they have a fever or are not able to participate in usual activities. Call your doctor for advice and possible treatment.
COVID-19 (clinical diagnosis, symptoms without testing, or a positive diagnostic test)	Yes - children and staff who have suspected COVID-19 or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 must be excluded and follow CDPHE's isolation guidance . Guidance for schools and child care settings can be found here: https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools .
Fifth's Disease (parvovirus)	No - the illness is no longer contagious once the rash appears.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie virus)	No - unless the child or adult has mouth sores, has uncontrollable drooling or is not able to take part in usual activities.
Head Lice or Scabies	Yes - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment.
Hepatitis A, Salmonella, Shigella, or Shiga-toxin Producing E. coli	Yes - children and staff may return to school or child care when cleared by the health department.
Herpes	No - unless there are open sores that cannot be covered or there is uncontrollable drooling.
Impetigo	Yes - children and adults need to stay home until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has started.
Ringworm	Yes - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment. Keep the area covered for the first 3 days if participating in activities with person to person contact.
Roseola	No - unless there is a fever or behavior changes.
Influenza	Yes - Children and staff should remain out of school or child care until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have been improving for 24 hours.
Croup, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	No - It is recommended that children and staff remain out of school or child care until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have been improving for 24 hours.
Strep Throat	Yes - for 12 hours after starting antibiotics unless the doctor says that it is okay to return to school sooner.
Other Vaccine Preventable Diseases Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Yes - Children and staff can return to school once they are no longer contagious (see Infectious Disease Guidelines). Public health consultation may be necessary.
Yeast Infections Thrush or Candida diaper rash	No - follow good hand washing and hygiene practices.
Other Symptoms or illnesses not listed	Contact the child care center director or school health staff to see if the child or staff member needs to stay home (see Infectious Disease Guidelines).

Medical Insurance

The AELC strongly encourages all families to maintain medical insurance and a physician for their child. The front desk can offer recommendations on how to obtain insurance or locate a local physician.

Health Check

Upon daily arrival, children will be observed for signs of illness or other evidence of being contagious. Any child with the following symptoms will not be admitted:

- A temperature over 100 degrees
- Discharge from ears
- Discharge from eyes or red eyes
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Any rash or skin lesion
- Signs of cold: tiredness, sore throat, runny nose, sneezes, or coughing

Contagious Diseases

Parents are required to notify the center if their child has contracted a contagious illness. The AELC is required to post notices of all contagious diseases on the classroom door. Children may not return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 to 48 hours based on current health guidelines from state licensing and the Center for Disease Control. Ultimately, the decision to allow a child to return is up to the discretion of administrative staff.

Accidents/Injuries

An accident report will be filled out and sent to parents through the Procure app for all accidents or injuries that occur at the AELC. Parents will be called immediately if an accident or injury is severe. Emergency procedures will be implemented, if needed.

Emergency Procedures

Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency.

Families should keep emergency numbers up-to-date. In case of a serious emergency, 911 will be called and the paramedics will decide where to transport a child. The costs of emergency medical services are the family's responsibility.

All supervising and assisting teachers are required to be certified in CPR and First Aid.

Allergies

Children with various allergies attend the AELC. **It is extremely important that all staff members are aware of the allergies of any child under their care.** A list of all children who have allergies, along with photos of those children, will be posted in the eating area of the child's classroom and on the classroom's lunch cart.

A child's allergies should be provided on the enrollment paperwork. If the allergy involves a substance that the child could come into contact with at the AELC, parents must fill out a Severe Allergy Information Form. The Severe Allergy Information Form outlines the procedures for a child who has an allergic reaction at the center. This form must be signed by a doctor and updated yearly or if allergy status changes.

Cloth Diapers

If children need cloth diapers for a medical reason, the diaper needs to have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering should be able to be changed as a unit. Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing and avoidable handling) and sent home the same day for laundering.

Handwashing

Handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of disease. Children and adults must wash their hands in these scenarios:

- Upon entering the classroom
- After using the toilet or diapering
- After blowing their noses or having contact with any bodily fluids
- Before and after meals and snacks
- Before preparing food, serving food, or eating
- After outside time
- After handling pets
- When hands are noticeably soiled

Health and Immunization Requirements

The AELC maintains updated health information for every child enrolled at the center. Colorado childcare regulations require that a health care form and immunization record, signed by a licensed doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant, must be submitted at the time of admission to the center.

Updated health care and immunization forms must be submitted according to the guidelines. For toddlers and preschoolers, updates are required at 12 months, 15 months, 18 months and 2 years, and then annually thereafter. Additional immunization forms may be required to show Covid-19 immunization or if a child is on an alternative vaccination schedule.

Failure to provide updated health and immunization information will result in suspension and possible disenrollment until the forms are submitted.

Immunizations

The AELC enrolls children who are not immunized due to personal, medical, or religious beliefs. Any child not immunized per Colorado law faces exclusion from the AELC in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

Masking Policy

The AELC supports any children, parents, or staff that choose to wear a mask due to the high-risk environment of the classroom setting. If at any time the CDC Community Covid Level for Denver County reaches High or the Denver Department of Public Health recommends it, masks will be required indoors for all individuals 2 years old and older regardless of vaccination status.

Medication

Due to regulations by the Colorado Department of Human Services, AELC staff are unable to administer any medications, except in the event of an emergency. However, parents may give children any needed medication at the center. Parents should NEVER leave medications in children's bags or in the classroom.

In the case of life-threatening allergies or medical conditions, emergency medication will be given by an administrator or supervising teacher. These medications should be given to the supervising teacher to be kept in a locked cabinet.

Additional paperwork will be required for allergies or medical conditions that require emergency medication. This paperwork is due before enrolling. Individualized Health Care Plans must be updated annually or as changes occur. Medication that has expired must be collected and a new set of medication that matches the Emergency Medication Plan must be provided. If the AELC does not have proper medication and documentation, the child will not be permitted to stay.

Missing/Lost Children

Staff members will notify the administrator in charge immediately when they suspect that a child is missing. Staff will look for the child for five minutes. If the child is not located, 911 will be called. After the police have been notified, the parents will be notified.

Preschool Toileting Policy

Requirements for children to be independently potty trained in AELC preschool classrooms:

- Has two or less accidents per week
- Initiates using the toilet with little or no reminders
- Can pull own clothes up and down
- Can change themselves when they have an accident, including socks and shoes
- Stays dry at naptime
- Has the ability to reach around and wipe themselves after a BM

While it's understood that children may have occasional accidents, there is a possibility of disenrollment if a child is not independently potty trained.

Please note that children enrolled in the young preschool program who are not yet three years of age still need to meet the above requirements.

Preventing Sexual Abuse

The AELC is proactive in preventing sexual abuse of children. All staff at AELC are mandated reporters and must report any suspicions of abuse. Training workshops for parents and staff are provided.

Staff Screening Process

The AELC does an extensive screening for new employees:

- The application has a self-disclosure statement.
- The employment interview includes questions recommended by Feather Berkower of "Parenting Safe Children" (a sexual abuse workshop offered regularly to parents and staff).
- References are called and verified.
- A pre-employment background check is completed by AHEC.
- Central Registry checks if the applicant has ever been investigated for any crime against children.
- Fingerprints are submitted to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to check if the applicant has committed any crimes in Colorado or any other state.
- The AELC receives ongoing updates from all of the above agencies during a person's employment in case any new crimes are committed.

Children's Bodies

The AELC staff uses the anatomically correct names for children's body parts. Children are in charge of their own bodies. They will be asked if it's OK before affection is given. Appropriate discussions regarding children's bodies are part of the curriculum.

The AELC's Body Safety Rules

The curriculum regarding keeping one's body safe is implemented in age-appropriate ways using books, puppets, and hands-on activities. Below are the "Body Safety Rules" for the AELC:

- 1)** No one is allowed to touch your private body parts (including siblings), except to help you clean them or to examine them in a medical office.
- 2)** You are not allowed to touch someone else's private body parts.
- 3)** It is okay to touch your own private body parts as long as you do it in private.
- 4)** No one (adult or teenager) is allowed to take pictures of your private parts or show you pictures of naked people.
- 5)** Play with your clothes on when playing with friends.
- 6)** You and all your family members are allowed to have privacy when bathing, dressing, and using the toilet.
- 7)** You are allowed to choose who you kiss and touch, and when you kiss and touch people.
- 8)** You have permission to say NO and get away if anyone tries to touch your private body parts or breaks any of your body safety rules.
- 9)** If someone tries to or does touch your private body parts, try to get away and go tell an adult.
- 10)** If someone tells you to keep a secret about touching private body parts, tell a trusted adult. Children will be taught that we do not keep secrets.

Parental Involvement

It benefits children when parents and staff communicate regularly. By working together, AELC staff and families can effectively respond to the individual needs of a child. Parents are welcome to observe and participate in classroom activities. Teachers send regular Procure updates and weekly newsletters to keep parents up-to-date. The AELC also has a Facebook page with pictures and posts about daily activities.

Auraria Parent Teacher Group (APTG)

The AELC encourages all parents and staff to participate in the APTG. This group keeps parents and staff informed about the center, plans fundraising and special events, and participate in other ways to support the staff of AELC. Please see the AELC program coordinator if you are interested in participating in APTG.

Back-to-School Night

Back-to-School Night is held at the beginning of the fall semester. It includes activities to help parents become familiar with AELC staff, curriculum, and daily routines. Teachers also address parent questions or concerns. Back-to-School Night is also a great opportunity to get to know other families at the AELC.

Conferences

Although teachers are available to talk with parents informally, time is set aside each semester for formal parent/teacher conferences. Teachers will update parents on the child's progress and development in school.

Additional conference times may also be arranged at a family's request or if the staff deems it necessary. Conferences may be mandatory if deemed necessary by the supervising teacher or administrators.

Family Nights

The AELC makes it a goal to host family nights at least once each semester. Parents, children, and staff have the opportunity to enjoy musicals, plays, and performances during family nights.

Parent Education

The AELC designs workshops to meet families' interests. Topics are presented by a specialist, and may include child development, discipline, communication, sibling rivalry, etc.

Parent Resources

The AELC has many resources available for parents, including but not limited to, the following:

- Take-home packets–available for checkout at the front desk
- Parent library–materials available for checkout
- Parent boards–located in the classroom and in the main lobby
- Parent articles–available at the resource area by the front desk and in classrooms
- Calendar of events posted at the front desk
- AELC Facebook page
- Instagram
- Community resource book

Program Evaluations

The AELC welcomes input, ideas, questions, or concerns at all times. The AELC asks families to evaluate how well the program has met their needs at least once a year through a parent survey. AELC staff are interested in hearing families' perspectives on the effectiveness of the program for both children and parents. The results of the parent survey are shared at the APTG meetings, in the monthly family newsletter, and are used to set center goals.

Quality Improvement Plan

The AELC compiles feedback from family surveys, informal conversations, Colorado Shines Ratings, and staff meetings to create, and then annually update, the Quality Improvement Plan for the center. Please contact the director if you would like to see a copy of the Quality Improvement Plan.

COVID-19 Guidelines and Waiver

Covid-19 Exposure, Quarantine, and Illness Policy

The AELC follows the current recommendations from Denver Department of Public Health and Environment.

Unvaccinated Individuals: All unvaccinated positive individuals (children and staff) must isolate for 10 days from their symptom onset date or test date if asymptomatic. This is due to the high-risk environment and difficulty of young children wearing masks correctly and consistently. Positive individuals may return after the 10-day quarantine is complete, and they are no longer exhibiting any symptoms of Covid-19.

Unvaccinated individuals directly exposed to a positive case must quarantine for 10 days. Upon completion of the 10th day of quarantine the individual must provide negative COVID test results prior to returning to the center. As long as the individual is symptom free, this can be an at-home rapid test. If the exposed individual is exhibiting any symptoms of Covid-19 (cough, runny nose, etc.) they must get a PCR test.

Vaccinated Individuals: Fully vaccinated individuals 2 years old and older who test positive must quarantine for 5 days from their symptom onset date or test date if asymptomatic. They may return on day 6 if they have been fever free without medication for 24 hours and any other symptoms are resolving. They must be able to fully participate in normal activities and wear their mask correctly and consistently for the remaining 5 days. Vaccinated children under 2 years old or in a young toddler room will be required to quarantine for 10 days since they do not wear masks.

Individuals fully vaccinated against Covid-19 are exempt from the exposure quarantine period. However, they must not be exhibiting any symptoms of Covid-19 and provide negative test results before returning after an exposure. Until the AELC has received documentation of the complete Covid-19 vaccination series, individuals are considered to be unvaccinated.

Classroom Exposures: In the case of a classroom exposure, the exposure guidelines for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals will still apply. If at least 50% of the children in the classroom are vaccinated, the classroom will remain open. If less than 50% of the children in the classroom are vaccinated, the classroom will be closed for the 10-day exposure quarantine.

As the Covid-19 pandemic progresses, these policies are subject to change following the recommendations of the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment. Parents will be notified of any changes as they happen.

Covid-19 Vacation Policy

If your family chooses to take a vacation, please note you are subject to the following:

- If your child is not fully vaccinated against Covid-19, they will not be allowed to attend for the 5 days after you return from your trip.
- Your child MUST be tested for Covid-19 5 days after your return, and we must have negative results before your child can return. As long as your child is not exhibiting any symptoms of Covid-19, this may be a rapid test. If they have any symptoms of Covid-19, this must be a PCR test.
- If you choose not to test, then your child will not be allowed to return for 10–14 days after your trip.
- Vaccinated children are exempt from the 5-day quarantine period. However, they are considered to have been exposed to Covid-19 and therefore must still provide a negative test result before returning.

I understand that if I do not disclose my trip and return to the Center without following the above requirements, my child may be subject to dis-enrollment from AELC.

AELC Covid Waiver and Release Of Liability By Parents

On March 10, 2020, Colorado Governor Jared Polis declared a disaster emergency for Colorado relating to the COVID-19 outbreak, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic and on March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national health emergency. Given the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in anticipation of my child's return to the care of the Auraria Early Learning Center, an early learning center. I hereby make the following waiver, release and other representations and covenants set forth herein, on behalf of my child, and in favor of Facility.

Acceptance of Risk; Release; Indemnification. The safety and security of the children in its care remains a top priority of Facility. Although the risk of exposure to COVID-19 across Colorado is reported to be steadily decreasing, I understand that there is still significant risk associated with my child's return to care at Facility, including but not limited to, increased social contact and interaction with Facility employees and other children. To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to protect Facility employees and other children, Facility encourages all children and parents to adhere to all safety and health guidelines for the prevention of COVID-19, including those issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All persons should engage in frequent hand washing using soap and water for at least twenty seconds (or, if soap is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer), sanitize surfaces and objects frequently used, wear personal protective equipment such as face masks and gloves, and follow any and all other preventive measures recommended by applicable authorities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, I understand that the above guidelines do not completely eliminate my child's risk of exposure to COVID-19 and, should my child experience any COVID-19 related symptoms (such as fever, cough, body aches, or shortness of breath), I am advised to keep my child home, not to bring my child to the Facility, and follow the advice of my healthcare provider, clinic, or hospital. In such case, I will immediately alert Facility of such symptoms.

Regardless of any steps taken by Facility to reduce the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, I am fully aware that there are a number of risks associated with my child's care at Facility during the COVID-19 pandemic, including without limitation, being exposed to and contracting COVID-19 from other individuals, surfaces and/or airborne particles. I understand that my child's contracting of COVID-19 could result in serious medical symptoms requiring medical treatment in a hospital or even death. On behalf of myself and my child, and our heirs, successors, and assigns, I knowingly and freely, assume all such risks, both known and unknown, relating to my child's care at Facility arising from or relating to COVID-19, including all illnesses, injuries, damages or death arising therefrom, and I hereby forever release, waive, relinquish, and discharge Facility, along with Facility's shareholders, officers, directors, members, managers, officials, partners, trustees, agents, contractors, employees, affiliates, or other representatives, and their successors and assigns (collectively, the "Facility Representatives"), from any and all claims, demands, liabilities, rights, damages, expenses, and causes of action of whatever kind or nature, and other losses of any kind, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, (collectively, "Damages") arising from or relating to COVID-19 as a result of my child's care at Facility, and including but not limited to claims based on the alleged negligence of any Facility

Representative or any other person. I further promise not to sue Facility or any Facility Representative for any illness, injury, death or other Damages arising out of or related to COVID-19 and agree to indemnify and hold them harmless from any and all Damages resulting therefrom as a result of my child's care at Facility. If any provision of this Waiver and Release of Liability is declared invalid, the remaining provisions remain enforceable. I may seek advice from legal counsel before signing this Waiver and Release of Liability. By signing this Waiver and Release of Liability, I acknowledge that either I have sought the advice of legal counsel or wish to waive the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel before signing.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received, reviewed, and will abide by the policies in the Family Handbook including the COVID-19 Guidelines.

PRINT PARENT NAME

PARENT SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME OF CHILD/CHILDREN


DATE

The Auraria Early Learning Center Family Handbook provides a general overview of the center's policies and procedures. The AELC and its families must comply with health, licensing, accreditation, and other external agencies' rules and regulations that may not be included in the handbook. Administrative staff can provide more extensive information regarding these rules, policies, procedures, etc. At times, or in particular circumstances, it may be necessary to revise and/or add certain policies and/or procedures to the handbook. Families will be notified of any changes.

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