



Early  
Learning  
Center

# Family Handbook

## **Lena Pope's Mission**

To help create hope, happiness and success for children and families.

## **Our Philosophy**

### **All Children Deserve the Opportunity to be Successful**

At the Lena Pope Early Learning Centers we believe that all children have dignity and deserve the chance to meet their potential regardless of their race, gender or family income. That is why we are committed to creating an early learning environment where all families have equal access and where all children feel safe, supported, and inspired. In doing so, we provide the best chance for them to learn and thrive.

### **Resiliency = Long Term Success**

We understand that children and families today face many challenges that put their future success at risk. While we may not be able to make all of those risk factors disappear, we do believe in building protective factors that will help them become more resilient, better problem solvers, and ultimately lead to success. Some of these powerful protective factors include:

- ***Setting the Bar High***
- ***Building Positive Relationships with Peers and Adults***
- ***Involving Families in the Learning Experience***

### **Children Learn Through Play**

Before the age of 5 years, play provides the most powerful means by which a child learns. Play allows a child to explore, experiment and practice making meaning of their environment. In fact, researchers have found that the intellectual and cognitive benefits a child gains from a play-based learning environment include long term academic success. Furthermore, children who engage in purposeful play are more likely to have stronger memory skills, language development, and problem solving skills, leading to long term social and academic achievement (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).

### **Being Family Centered is Key**

By “family-centered” we mean that our approach to serving children includes both the child AND the family. We know that strong, healthy, productive families result in strong, healthy and productive kids! We want your whole family to feel welcomed, respected and cared for at our center. We focus on creating partnerships between staff, parents/caregivers, children and other family members that not only enhance the child's growth and development, but also promote relationships within and between families. This requires us to get to know you, your family strengths, your values, and your traditions.

## **Our Goals...**

### **1. Build Strong, Lasting Relationships and Supports**

This begins with building in your child a love for learning that includes promoting positive peer, teacher, and parent/caregiver connections. It expands to a sincere desire to engage each family in a way that promotes their values, provides support and resources, and creates an environment where relationships between families are built and strengthened.

### **2. Ensure Long-Term Positive Impact**

At Lena Pope, we are committed to doing what works best for families and children. That is why we only use research-based practices and interventions that have been proven to produce positive outcomes. This means implementing an

evidence-based curriculum and behavior model that develops the academic and social-emotional skills a child needs to be successful in elementary school and beyond. In addition, we continue to track the progress of our students through the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, providing support as needed. This is how we ensure your child's future. It's like we say, "Once a Lena Pope kid, Always a Lena Pope kid".

### **Inclusiveness Statement**

Lena Pope Early Learning Center (ELC) realizes the dignity and worth of all individuals and seeks to eliminate any barriers based on prejudice and/or prejudice. To that end, parents must inform ELC staff of any special needs and/or disability their child may have and provide documentation regarding the need/disability to allow for reasonable accommodations. Parents may be asked to sign a release of information form allowing for information to be shared between ELC staff and other professionals and/or agencies providing services to their child. Parents are expected to work cooperatively and follow through with recommendations made by ELC staff and other professionals that work with their child. Regular conferences will be scheduled to discuss their child's needs and progress as well as any results of referrals, assessments, evaluations, and/or follow through on recommendations.

### **Admission**

Lena Pope Early Learning Center is open to all children. In keeping with the mission of Lena Pope Home Inc., the ELC will serve private pay, sliding scale and state subsidized/tuition assisted families. Separate waiting lists will be maintained for both on a first-come, first-serve basis. Admission to the ELC will be determined relative to the child's position on the list and availability of a developmentally appropriate classroom.

### **Hours of Operation**

The Lena Pope Early Learning Center is operated year around, Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:00pm.

### **Enrollment**

Parents must complete the following sections of the enrollment form to be admitted into the ELC program:

- Child Information
- Primary Contact and Release Persons (signature required)
- Emergency Contact and Release Persons (signature required)
- Emergency Medical Information (signature required)
- Physicians Statement (physician signature required)
- Authorization for Photo Release (signature required)
- Parent Enrollment Agreement (initials required)
- Daily Procedures (initials required)
- Holidays and Closures (initials required)
- Policies and Regulations (initials required)
- A Little About Me form
- Immunization Records
- Vision and Hearing Screening (when applicable)
- Fees:
  - Registration Fee (non-refundable):      \$100
  - Supply Fee (annual):                      \$75
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Week's Tuition                              Individual rates vary

Once admitted into the ELC program, it will be the parents' responsibility to notify the ELC staff in writing of any changes in enrollment information including home address, contact phone numbers, e-mail addresses, emergency contact or release information, and/or any other authorizations. Written notice should be given within 7 days of the change occurring. Parents will be asked to re-submit pertinent information once a year (usually each Fall) to ensure all crucial

information remains up-to-date. Families will be notified of any changes to ELC policies or procedures that affect the care of their children. Notifications will be provided in writing.

### **Immunizations**

**Child Requirements:** A current immunization record along with a signed statement of good health (documentation of annual check-up) is required before a child may participate in our program. Texas state law requires that children enrolled in a child care have received the following immunizations and boosters:

- DtaP
- IPV
- HIB
- HepA
- HepB
- PCV7
- MMR
- Rotavirus
- Varicella

A written statement that includes the dates these immunizations have taken place, must be on file at the ELC prior to your child's first day of attendance. Each time your child receives an immunization, an updated shot record needs to be turned into the administrative office. As a licensed facility, the state conducts unannounced inspections in which they review child files. Without a record of current immunizations, the ELC would be considered non-compliant with the State of Texas Minimum Standards.

**Staff Requirements:** Effective January 1, 2015, The Lena Pope Early Learning Center will implement the following immunization policy for employees in compliance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards Rule #746.3611, which requires a policy for protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases be in place. While the safety of our employees and the children in our care is paramount, we elect to make immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases optional to the employee.

The only exception to this policy includes a Tuberculosis testing required by the City of Fort Worth and by Lena Pope prior to being employed with the agency.

While vaccines will not be mandated for staff, it is recommended that each staff receive the following to prevent the spread of disease:

- Influenza (annually)
- Pertussis (Tdap)

### **Vision/Hearing Screenings**

The state of Texas requires vision/hearing screenings for all four-year olds. Documentation of this screening is a requirement of all four-year olds enrolled in the ELC and must be received prior to admission into the program.

### **Arrival**

Parents must have their children in the classroom by 9:00am each day. This will allow your child to engage in the activities of the day and allow for optimal growth by participating in all planned learning activities.

### **Late Arrival**

We realize that there are occasions when it may not be possible to have your child at the ELC by 9:00am. In such cases, we ask that you contact the center to let them know your child will be in late and what time we can be expecting them. Please note that we will not allow children to be dropped off between 12:00 and 2:30 unless prior approval is obtained by the ELC Director.

### **Release of Children (Check-In/Out Procedures)**

There are **two steps** required to check your child in/out each day:

1. **Procare Check in/out:** To check your child in or out of the ELC, you will need to access our Procare system located at the entrance of the facility. To ensure the safety of the children in our care, entrances to the secured areas of the center remain locked throughout the day. The Procare system allows for your child to be checked in/out electronically and opens the doors so you can enter the secured area. Each primary contact will be given their own individual code. For safety purposes, we ask that you not share your code with anyone. If there are persons on your emergency contact sheet that drop off or pick up frequently, they can be assigned a code with written permission from you as a primary contact.  
**Note:** If you are a CCMS family, you will also be required to check your child in/out of the CCMS system each day. You must do this every day. Failure to check in/out of the CCMS system properly will result in possible loss of benefits and/or additional charges from the center for days not recorded in the system.
2. **Classroom Check in/out:** You are required to check your child in/out of their individual classroom each day. Each classroom has a daily sheet used to ensure caregivers know which children are present and who they are accountable for during activities throughout the day. This tracking sheet is extremely important! When you drop off or pick up your child each day, you will sign their name, the time, and your initials on the daily tracking sheet. Please make certain you always verbally notify the caregiver in charge that you are checking in/out your child in addition to recording it on the daily tracking sheet. If someone other than yourself is dropping off or picking up your child, it is your responsibility to inform them of the check in/out procedures.

There must be at least two back-up people listed on the Emergency Contact and Release Form with accurate phone numbers in the event you are unable to pick-up your child. We will not release your child to any persons not identified on your Primary/Emergency Contact and Release Form without prior written authorization from you! Also note that any individual picking up your child, other than a primary contact, will be required to present a valid, government issued identification (driver's license or other picture ID) before your child is released to them. A picture of their identification card will be copied and filed reflecting the date and time your child was released to them.

When a primary contact is unable to pick up your child due to unforeseen circumstances, verbal authorization for release of the child may be taken over the phone **ONLY** by verifying the parent's identity. This verification is in the form of a code word, determined by you and documented on the child's enrollment form. Do not share your code word with anyone. Any verbally authorized individual will be required to present valid, government issued identification before your child is released to them. A picture of their identification card will be copied and filed reflecting the date and time your child was released to them.

In cases where one or both parents have court ordered restrictions or access to a child, a copy of the court documents must be submitted to the ELC Director and placed in your child's file.

Under no circumstances will your child be released to a person who appears intoxicated, under the influence of drugs, or exhibiting behaviors which may pose a risk to the safety of your child. Such behavior will be immediately reported to the ELC Director so that appropriate measures can be taken, including calling other designated emergency contacts to come pick-up your child.

### **Late Pick-Up**

The ELC closes at 6:00pm Monday-Friday. If your child has not been picked up by 6:00pm on any given day, you will be charged a late fee of \$20 per every 15 minutes or portion of a fifteen-minute period until you arrive to pick-up your child. Late fees will be added on to the next week's bill. Failure to pay late fees may result in your child having to be withdrawn from the program. If your child has not been picked up by closing and multiple attempts have been made to contact all phone numbers provided in your child's file, Child Protective Services will be called to pick up your child and take them into protective custody. The ELC staff encourages families to call if they are going to be late so that staff can be prepared and informed.

### **Farewells**

Children may need parents to take a few extra minutes to stay with them in their new environment. Parents should allow time for this in their schedule for the first few days of their child's attendance. Whether the child is new to the center or is just having a difficult morning, when parents decide to leave, it is important to make goodbye's brief, positive and cheerful. This will make that transition time easier for your little one.

### **Assessment**

The Lena Pope ELC program conducts assessments on each child in the center using the ***Ages and Stages Questionnaire*** and Social-Emotional Development Scale. This assessment will be conducted upon enrollment in the program and then once a year thereafter. Results from this assessment will be used to determine the focus of learning and development for each child. Results and progress will be shared with parents during regular parent-teacher conferences and/or scheduled meeting times. The ongoing assessment tool used by the ELC is Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG). This is a progress monitoring tool that includes assessment in the areas of: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science/Technology, Social Studies, the Arts and English Language Acquisition. Results from this ongoing monitoring tool will be shared with the parents a minimum of twice a year.

### **Curriculum**

The ***HighScope*** curriculum is used in all classrooms at the ELC. This evidence-based curriculum meets all kindergarten readiness guidelines and has been proven effective in working across age ranges, genders, ethnicities and income levels. The curriculum supports a child-initiated, hands-on learning environment in which the teacher is responsible for promoting each child's interests and choices. Children gain knowledge and skills in the areas of social-emotional development and health, language and literacy, math, science, creative arts, technology and social studies. Additional detailed information regarding the HighScope curriculum is available on-line at [www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org). Lesson plans will be prepared by each teacher, each week outlining the learning activities for that week. A copy of the weekly lesson plan will be posted in each classroom for review by parents.

### **Guidance and Discipline**

A crucial part of any child's healthy development includes learning how to manage stressful, disappointing, and frustrating situations. Gaining knowledge and skill in the areas of self-regulation, conflict resolution and problem solving promotes resiliency in children and ensures their future success. To accomplish this requires two things. First, a child must feel physically, socially, and emotionally safe in their learning environment and connected and trusting of their caregivers. Second, we understand that many preschoolers may use misguided behavior because they have not yet learned what is acceptable behavior. In such case, caregivers must see each conflict or upset a child experiences as an opportunity to teach them skills for getting needs met appropriately and getting along with others.

To teach these skills, all ELC staff will be trained in the use of ***Conscious Discipline***. Conscious Discipline is an evidence based, comprehensive social-emotional learning and classroom management model based on current brain research. It utilizes everyday events and interactions to teach children self-control, assertion skills, problem solving and compassion

towards others. It also empowers caregivers to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children. By using the Conscious Discipline model ELC staff are able to:

- Create a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, and inspiring
- Assist children in calming and regulating their emotions
- Identify and intervene early in interactions that could result in conflict
- Teach and reinforce assertive language to express emotions
- Set clear and reasonable limits that protect child safety as well as the safety and welfare of others
- Promote kindness, care and compassion for others

We will not allow any physical punishment, humiliation, threats, intimidation, harshness, cruelty, or withholding of food as part of the ELC's guidance process. Parents are asked to act in accordance with this policy while at the ELC.

In very rare cases, where de-escalation interventions have been exhausted and behavior persists, posing imminent danger to the child or others, it may be necessary for staff to implement non-threatening restraint techniques. "Handle With Care" is a crisis prevention and behavior de-escalation approach that teaches age appropriate prevention and verbal de-escalation techniques and ONLY recommends hands-on intervention as an absolute LAST RESORT in calming behavior. Following any incident where a child's behavior has resulted in assessed risk to others, the ELC Director will immediately contact parents/caregivers and all staff involved (directly or indirectly) will be required to complete an incident report. Parents will need to give written verification that they have received a copy of this report.

#### **Serious Behaviors/Endangerment to Self or Others**

In cases where a child's behavior continually disrupts the learning environment and/or is an endangerment to themselves or others, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. The parent will be contacted and a parent-teacher conference scheduled to discuss the behavior and establish a plan of action. If the behavior continues.....
2. The parent will be contacted and another conference scheduled with the teacher(s) and the ELC Director to discuss what might be causing the problem as well as some possible solutions. Referrals for additional services may be suggested.

#### **Dismissal/Withdrawal from Enrollment**

The Early Learning Center reserves the right to terminate any child's enrollment if further incidents occur, or if we feel that any of following conditions exists:

- The school cannot meet the child's needs.
- Lack of cooperation by the parents with the program's efforts to resolve differences, attend parent/staff meetings or conferences, and/or follow through with agreed upon interventions or services.
- Abusive behavior and/or verbal threats by parents toward program staff.
- The continuing behavior endangers the well-being of other children, and/or the child engaging in the behavior.
- Non-payment for preschool services and/or lack of adherence to our tuition payment policies.

#### **Classroom Placement**

Classroom placement at the ELC is determined more by developmental maturity and social-emotional "fit" than by chronological age. While it is true that most of the children in each classroom are approximately the same age, the range can be wide. Therefore, it is important to understand that children do not automatically move to another classroom after each birthday. ELC teachers assess the skills each child demonstrates as well as the skills they are learning on an ongoing basis. Once a teacher believes it would be beneficial to the child to move classrooms, they will

discuss it with the Director and contact the parents for their feedback and consideration. Any move to another classroom will include a transition plan for the child to assist them in feeling safe and successful.

### **Parent Visits**

Parents are ALWAYS welcome to visit at any time during the ELC hours of operation without prior notice! We know that some children may find a visit from mom or dad distracting or upsetting. You know your child best, so if you feel it is too upsetting for them to see you, please speak with the ELC Director regarding other ways to observe or receive reports on how your child is doing in their classroom.

### **Parent Communication**

We have several ways of sharing information with our ELC families that include:

- E-mail updates
- Front entrance bulletin boards
- Procure system tuition balances, reminders and information updates
- Classroom sign in and sign out logs
- Easily accessed telephones
- Daily Child Reports
- Classroom information boards

The ELC will ensure that all information is accessible. It will be the parents' responsibility to check e-mail messages, phone messages, mailboxes and information boards to regularly stay up-to-date on ELC information.

### **Parent Participation**

We want the Early Learning Center to be an important and welcoming place for you, your child and your family! We desire our parents and caregivers to be our partners in creating a positive learning experience not just for their child, but for all the children at the ELC. Research confirms that the more involved you are in your child's learning experience, the more successful your child will be. To do this, we **require** participation from our ELC parents/caregivers in the following areas:

- **Home Visits:** All families **must** agree to a minimum of one home visit each year. This will give us time to get to know and understand your child better and what his/her "whole world" looks like. It also builds a bridge between home and school, promoting better communication, learning, and consistent guidance.
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences:** We believe in a team approach to helping your child succeed. That is why we encourage frequent communication between ELC teachers, staff, administration and parents. Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice a year. The first conference is typically in the fall and will outline the goals and objectives for the upcoming year as well as any information you would like to share such as interests, strengths, and concerns. The second conference will take place in the spring and include the accomplishments your child has made and areas of development we are focusing on. There will always be opportunities to conference with teachers in between scheduled conference times. To do so, you can contact your child's teacher or speak with the ELC Director.
- **Conscious Discipline Training:** In order to have the greatest impact possible on your child's social emotional development, we **require** parents to attend Conscious Discipline training prior to their child entering a preschool classroom or within 6 months of a preschool aged child being enrolled. These classes will be offered quarterly during the evenings and/or on Saturdays. Child care will be provided.

**Optional** activities for ELC families include:

- **Volunteering:** There will be plenty of opportunities throughout the year to plug-in to the ELC including becoming a room mom/dad, engaging in family activities, attending special events and celebrations, sharing special talents and interests with the children and participating in fund raising efforts.

- **Training/Counseling:** Lena Pope has many services offered through our Counseling Department that include parent training and counseling services geared to strengthening families and promoting resilient children. If you would like to access these services, please contact the ELC Director.

### **Rest Time**

There will be a two (2) hour rest period each day following lunch for all children in toddler and preschool classrooms. Children may sleep or chose to rest quietly during this time. After an hour, those children who remain awake may participate in a quiet activity for the remainder of the nap period. Each child will have their own designated mat that will be used during the duration of their enrollment at the ELC. Your child is required to bring a sheet and blanket and/or a mat roll that covers the nap mat to keep it clean until the end of the week at which time it should be taken home for laundering.

### **Infant Sleep Practices**

Each infant will have supervised naps according to his/her individual sleep schedule. A written guide to safe infant sleep practices, approved by state child care licensing, is posted in each infant classroom and includes the following:

- Designating a crib for each baby that is only used by that child while they are in the infant room
- Placing every baby on their back to sleep until the baby is 12 months old in order to reduce the risk of SIDS
- Ensuring that pacifiers have no strings, ribbons, stuffed animals, or anything attached to it in order to reduce risk of strangulation
- Placing every baby on a firm mattress, covered by a tightly fitted sheet that meets all safety standards
- Ensuring no soft objects, stuffed animals, blankets, wedges or bumper pads are placed in the crib while the baby is sleeping
- Placing each baby in sleep clothing such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets to keep them comfortable while sleeping
- Keeping the room at a comfortable temperature
- Ensuring that the environment is smoke free
- Providing plenty of “tummy time” while the baby is awake to strengthen muscles
- Ensuring that all staff working with infants have reviewed infant sleep safe practices

### **Clothing**

Children who are worried about “getting dirty” often refuse to engage in valuable learning experiences. There are many sensory and creative art activities that may result in children’s clothes getting soiled. Therefore, it is recommended to dress your child in clothing that can be easily laundered.

We play outside every day (except in inclement weather). Therefore, it is important that children are dressed appropriately for the day’s activities and weather conditions. Please ensure that your child has the necessary items (jacket, coat, mittens, hats, etc.) to keep them comfortable during outside playtime. Also, children are required to wear well fitting, close toed shoes at all times.

In cases where your child’s clothing gets dirty or soiled, parents must keep an extra set of clothing at the ELC at all times. This includes shirt, pants/shorts, socks and underpants. Since children grow quickly, please ensure that the extra set of clothes fits your child and is appropriate for the season. All items brought from home (clothing, napping blankets, sheets, pillows, etc) should be labeled with the child’s first initial and last name. The center will not be responsible for lost clothing that is not labeled.

## **Meals and Snacks**

### **Meals**

The ELC will provide breakfast, lunch and a snack each day. Parents will not be allowed to bring food for any individual child unless a special diet is required and accompanied by a statement by the child's physician or nutritionist. Weekly menus will be posted each week as well as e-mailed to parents at the beginning of each month. Breakfast is served from 8:00 to 8:30 each day. Please note that we clean up promptly at 8:30, so if your child takes time to eat, it will be important to have them there in enough time to do so.

### **Nut Free School**

The ELC is a nut-free school. No products that contain peanuts, nuts of any kind or any nut by-products are allowed at the ELC. Any products or items that contain the label "may contain traces of nuts" are not to be brought into the school. If you are sending a birthday snack to school or bringing a snack for another occasion, please check the label carefully.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

We want your child's day to be a special one. We welcome parents to bring in special birthday snacks to share with the class. The birthday celebration and birthday snack will take place during the afternoon snack time. Suggestions include muffins, unfrosted cupcakes, unfrosted cookies, fruit and special sandwiches. In keeping with Health Department regulations, any food brought to share with children must be store bought. We are unable to allow homemade items to be shared with the children. Also, because of choking hazard we are unable to allow any balloons other than Mylar balloons.

If you are scheduling a birthday party for your child away from the center and wish to invite classmates, you may distribute invitations at school ONLY if you intend to invite every child in the classroom. If your intention is to invite only certain children, then we request you send the invitations by mail rather than placing them in the children's cubbies.

## **Classroom Pets**

Occasionally, our classrooms/center may have pets. In accordance with state licensing standards, parents will be notified in advance of any animal on the premises. All animals will be evaluated by a veterinarian to ensure good health. The center will ensure that animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions. Children may not have contact with chickens, ducks, reptiles, exotic animals and/or any animal that is unfamiliar to center staff. Children will be closely monitored when interacting with animals and practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming into contact with any animal.

## **Parent Notification in Emergency or Medical Situations**

Parents will be notified immediately after the following situations occur:

- Your child has an injury that requires medical attention by a health care professional
- Your child has signs and/or symptoms of illness
- Your child has been involved in any situation that placed them at serious risk.
- Any situation that renders the center facility unsafe (flood, fire, damage)
- Your child has been exposed to a communicable disease (notification within 48 hours)
- There is an outbreak of lice or infestation within a group of children

### **Accidental Injury/Medical Emergencies**

Keeping your child safe while in care is the first-priority of the ELC staff. Careful monitoring and supervision will be consistently provided to all children. In the event a child receives an injury requiring immediate medical attention, the following procedure will be followed to ensure the safety of the child:

1. Contact emergency services (911) if the injury/illness requires immediate medical attention.
2. Inform Center Director or Assistant Director
3. Contact the child's parent or guardian. When the parents are unavailable, the individual/s listed as the emergency contacts on your child's health form will be contacted. If no one can be reached, the child's physician will be called to determine what actions should be taken.
4. Complete a Critical Incident Report noting the type of injury received, first aid procedures administered, and the name of the person who administered the aid. This report will be signed by the parent, teacher and center Director and placed in the child's personal file.

### **Illness**

We are unable to care for children who are ill. Children cannot remain at school under the following conditions:

- fever above 100 degrees (armpit /ear) or 101 degrees (oral)
- pink eye
- impetigo
- infectious mouth sores
- strep throat
- chicken pox
- head lice
- scabies
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- other contagious symptoms or communicable diseases or illnesses.

Other reasons for exclusion from care include any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities such as outdoor play or activity centers or, if the illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.

**A child must be symptom/fever free for at least 24 hours.** Fever free is defined as having a normal temperature reading without the use of fever reducing medications.

If any of these symptoms develop while at school, the child will be isolated from the other children to reduce the spreading of germs and viruses. Every effort will be made to contact parents or individuals designated by the parents. *The child must be picked up within an hour.* For extended illness lasting more than three days, a health care professional must provide documentation that states the child is well enough to participate in daily ELC activities. If your child is ill and will not be coming into the center that day, please notify the ELC at 817-255-2562 by 9:00am with your child's symptoms and your intention to keep them at home. This enables us to keep other staff and parents on alert for symptoms in other children.

### **Medication**

- **Prescription/Over-the Counter:**  
**Medication will be dispensed at 11:00 and 3:00 each day.** Parents must give written authorization on the Authorization for Medication form that includes the name, dosage, frequency and date medicine is to be given.

Medications will be administered and logged by management staff only. Medications will not be administered contrary to the instructions on the label (for over the counter medications) or the prescription (physician). If an over the counter medication has weight or age stipulations that require consultation with a physician, the medication will not be administered without a physician's statement saying it is safe to do so. All medications (prescription or over-the-counter) must be in the original container, be current and not expired, have the full name of the child for which it is prescribed and must be placed in the designated first aid cabinet or refrigerator container. The ELC will not administer the initial dose of any medication, except with a physician's written permission for life-threatening situations.

- **Medications Delivered by a Device:**

Parents/guardians or a health care professional must provide written instructions on indications for use that includes signs and symptoms that the medication is needed. It will be the parent's responsibility to demonstrate the use of the device and any special care instructions needed for staff who will be administering the medication. Medication will **ONLY** be administered by staff who have been trained in the use of the device. Medication administration logs will be kept by each staff administering any form of medication.

- **Lotions/Balms/Sunscreen/Bug Spray:** All lip balm, sunscreen, bug spray, diaper ointments, or other lotions may not be stored in a child's cubby or school bag (except in the case of infants and toddlers who cannot access it). Children may not self-administer any form of "medication". Parents/caregivers must complete a permission form for administration of such items which will be kept in your child's file. All items must be marked with your child's first and last name in permanent ink. Staff will only apply/administer in accordance with the directions marked on the container unless otherwise directed by a physician in writing.

### **Fees**

**Registration:** Each family will be charged a \$100 registration fee that is non-refundable. This fee may be paid upon enrollment or in advance in order to reserve a spot for your child.

**Supplies:** Each family will be charged \$75 annually for student supplies. This fee will be paid upon admission into the ELC and then annually based on the date of admission.

### **Tuition and Payments**

The weekly tuition rate is determined by the age of your child and your family income. Tuition is due by 6:00pm the Monday of the week of care. In order for your child to be cared for in the center, payment must be received by this time. If payment is not received when due, you will be charged a late fee of \$20. If your family's account is delinquent for more than one week, you may be asked to withdraw your child from care until fees are paid in full and may be allowed to re-enroll provided there is still available space for your child.

Weekly tuition rates for families receiving child care subsidy will be determined by the local CCMS office. If you receive CCMS benefits and your child is absent, you are responsible for calling in the absence into the CCMS office. If you do not call in your child's absence, you will be responsible for paying the ELC the daily rate that is usually billed to CCMS.

Tuition payments can be made by check or cash. Checks should be made payable to Lena Pope Early Learning Center. There will be a \$20 fee for any returned check. After having two returned checks, you may be required to make future payments using cash only. There will be no refunds on tuition payments.

### **Vacation Credit**

After 3 consecutive months of enrollment, your family will receive 5 consecutive days a school year (September 1 through August 31) during which your child can be absent from the Center and not be charged tuition. In order to receive this benefit, your child cannot be in care at the ELC Center during the 5 day period. You will not be reimbursed if you do not choose to use the 5 days. There will be no automatic reduction of fees when your child is absent from the ELC for any other reason or period of time.

### **Holidays and School Closures**

Lena Pope Early Learning Center will be closed on all holidays determined by Lena Pope Home administration. This will include all major holidays in addition to other days determined by the agency's executives and Board of Directors. The ELC will also be closed for a minimum of two professional training days a year (Fall and Spring). All attempts will be made to ensure these days correspond with teacher in-service days set forth by the local school districts. A schedule of all holidays and training days in which the ELC will be closed will be made available to parents by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year.

### **Fire/Emergency Drills/ Emergency Preparedness**

The Early Learning Center has an Emergency Preparedness Plan on file and accessible to all ELC staff and visitors. The center has an approved sprinkler and smoke detection system that is inspected and tested by the fire department annually. Fire and weather drills will be routinely practiced and documented at different times during the year. Emergency shelter will be provided to the children in the event of any damage or safety issues in the center. Should an emergency occur, the ELC Director will notify parents and/or post notice at the center. Please review evacuation plans located in each classroom and at the entrance and exits of the center.

### **Emergency Closures**

It is Lena Pope Home's intention to be open and provide child care services every weekday of the year, excluding holidays and teacher training days. However, situations including severe weather conditions, natural or national disaster or a major building issue may disrupt service from time to time. In those cases, the ELC will do everything in its power to notify parents of the closure including sending e-mails and making phone calls to families. However, it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to contact the ELC to ensure that the center is open in cases of inclement weather or natural disaster. Parents will continue to be responsible for the tuition of their child in such circumstances.

### **Breastfeeding**

All mothers have the right to breastfeed their child and/or provide breast milk while their child is in care. If you wish to breastfeed your baby at the ELC, we will provide a comfortable place for you to do so.

### **Licensing**

The Early Learning Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and meets all state mandated requirements for child care centers. Regular inspections of the center are conducted throughout the year by a representative of Texas Child Care Licensing. The findings from these inspections are posted in the ELC for all families to review at will. A copy of the State Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers is available in the administrative office for you to review at any time. If you wish to contact the local Child Care Licensing office, you can do so by calling 817-321-8604 or going to their website: [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/About\\_Child\\_Care\\_Licensing/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/About_Child_Care_Licensing/).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the ELC policies and procedures, you are encouraged to speak with the Center Director.

### **Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Prevention**

All ELC staff are legally obligated to report any suspicion of abuse and/or neglect of children. Likewise, **any individual** that suspects abuse of a child or senior citizen is obligated by law to report the suspicion to the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services (TDFPS). Calls are anonymous. You can report suspected abuse using the TDFPS 24 hour abuse hotline at: 800-252-5400 or by going to their secured website at: [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).

In order to prevent child abuse and neglect, the following will be included:

1. Annual abuse risk management and reporting training.
2. Methods for increasing employee and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim

3. Methods for increasing employee and parent awareness of prevention techniques for child abuse or neglect.
4. Strategies for coordination between the ELC and appropriate community organizations.
5. Actions that the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention.

### **Gang Free Zone**

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. This information may be posted at your child care operation or copies may be provided to parents. The ELC is considered a gang-free zone. This means that according to the Texas State Penal Code, any offenses related to organized criminal activity that occur within 1000 feet of the center, are subject to harsher penalties.

### **Weapons/Substances**

Possession of firearms or other weapons on the agency's premises or in any building owned or leased by Lena Pope Home is strictly prohibited. This includes individuals who possess a license to carry a concealed weapon. Only law enforcement officials are allowed to keep their firearms on their person while on agency property. In addition, no illegal substances, alcohol, tobacco products, or any illicit drugs are permitted on any Lena Pope Home property. Furthermore, parents should be aware that any individual suspected of using prohibited substances or who appears compromised in a way that renders them a risk to transporting a child, will not be allowed to do so.

### **Confidentiality & Liability**

Lena Pope Early Learning Center is committed to protecting the confidentiality of the children and families we serve. Therefore, sharing of any personal or proprietary information is only done so on a need-to-know basis between ELC staff and with the parent's written permission in cases where an outside professional or organization is serving your child. However, all information is subject to review by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Service or other state or federal entity under whose authority ELC is able to operate and/or provide service. Lena Pope Home is not responsible or liable for any arrangements made outside of the ELC between staff members and families.

### **Grievance or Complaint Procedure**

Occasionally, a concern may arise regarding your child. In those instances, parents should bring their concerns to their child's teacher first. In promoting open communication and swift resolution, we encourage parents to do this as soon as the incident occurs or the concern arises. If, once addressing your child's teacher, the problem has not been resolved, parents should discuss their concerns with the ELC Director. Complaints or concerns that are not able to be resolved at the ELC may be brought to the attention of the Lena Pope Home Executive Director. The complaint must be in writing with specific details regarding the incident and suggested or attempted resolutions. Any parent complaints received by the Lena Pope Home Executive Director will be responded to within 10 days of receipt.

## Permission to Apply Protective Ointments/Sprays

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) of \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) give my permission to allow Early Learning Center staff to apply the following as directed:      Sunscreen

- Bug Spray
- Diaper Ointment
- Lip Balm
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

All lip balm, sunscreen, bug spray, diaper ointments, and/or other ointments and lotions may not be stored in a child's cubby or school bag (except in the case of infants and toddlers who cannot access it). Children may not self-administer any form of "medication". All items must be marked with your child's first and last name in permanent ink. Staff will only apply/administer in accordance with the directions marked on the original container unless otherwise directed by a physician in writing.

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**Parent/Guardian Signature**

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**Date**