



Parent Handbook

"To lead, serve and guide the children of our community"

"If a child cannot learn in the way that you teach, teach in the way the child learns."

"The best learning I had came from teaching." Corrie Ten Boom

"Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate."

"Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best." Bob Talbert

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

Welcome to Countryside Early Learning Center (CELC)! We thank you for allowing us to impact your child's early years. Preschool is the stepping stone and foundation for every child's academic success and there is nothing more rewarding than witnessing progress and growth in each individual child's development.

We set high standards for our students and staff and we understand the importance of working together with the families of the children that are enrolled. It is important to build a rapport with each of your child's teacher while at CELC. We believe that teamwork is a fundamental tool for success. If at any time we are not meeting your standards in any way, please let us know. We hold our families accountable to make sure that all expectations are met daily for their child. Your comments, suggestions and concerns are always appreciated. We appreciate hearing from our families.

SCHOOL HOURS/PROGRAM HOURS

Hours of Operation.	Monday– Friday	6:30am-6:00pm
Office Hours	Monday-Friday	8:30am-5:00pm

For a calendar of school closings please look online or request a hard copy at the office.

Arrival Time	6:30-9:00 am
<i>(Please note arrival times may vary for specific programs such as VPK and School Readiness. Please review the Tuition Information Form for further information. All parents must walk their child to their class.)</i>	
Class Activities begin at	9:00 am
Half Day dismissal is at	12:30 pm
Full Day dismissal is between	12:31 - 6:00 pm

Times vary for all programs funded from the Early Learning Coalition (ELC). The ELC will provide you details regarding your program. Contact the office if you are not aware of your program details to avoid late fees and additional tuition charges.

A late pick-up fee of \$25.00 will be charged for the first minute up until 30 minutes after. Over 30 minute pick-ups will be charged an additional \$15.00 for every 15 minute period. Per state licensing regulations, we may be required to contact local authorities after a certain amount of time. Countryside reserves the right to withdraw any student from their program due to lack of payment of tuition and/or late fees. If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again.

PHILOSOPHY

CELC's goal is to lead, serve and guide the children of our community and surrounding communities by providing quality education through strong teacher commitment, qualifications, and experience in a safe and nurturing learning environment that celebrates the diversity of all of our families.

CELC's curriculum is High Scope. High Scope is a balanced approach for young learners and the people who teach them. The High Scope Curriculum integrates all aspects of child and youth development. Using research-validated strategies, this approach enhances each young person's growth in the foundations of academics as well as in social-emotional, physical, and creative areas.

MISSION

CELC works diligently to provide a quality education for all students enrolled. We implement a holistic, child centered program that nurtures every child by using the best tools and resources to achieve the educational goals set in place for our students. The early years of a child are the most influential years for language development. Together with the assistance of our qualified teachers, staff members, parents and community authorities we will supply valuable educational skills that are essential for our children's future.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

As educators there are many roles that need to be present in order to achieve higher learning for each individual student. Our goal and objective is to motivate and create strong self-image in each of our students. CELC provides quality education through resources necessary to achieve cognitive development, personal interactions and the motivation to learn. In preparing our qualified educators through continual education our purpose and aim for the children of our community will continue to be achieved.

CURRICULUM AND ENRICHMENT

Teachers have a core of written themes that can be used as ideas to help inspire them. The teachers are to watch and listen to the children and utilize their observation notes so they are in-tune with children's interests for curriculum planning and providing the appropriate activities. The planned activities are integrated, i.e., the theme/topic carried through in the areas of pre-math, (counting, etc.), manipulative, dramatic play, science, language arts, cooking, and field trips. Suggestions may be given to the staff as to some activities, but each room is encouraged to be creative and flexible.

The topics may extend depending on the interest of the children. Toddlers have a more basic conceptual structure than that of the threes and fours. The topics of interest of the children may vary in the individual classrooms.

Remember when planning, the teacher is the facilitator and the child is the active learner. The teacher may assist the child by talking him through an activity and asking questions, but does not do the activity for the child. It is the process of doing an activity, not the product that helps the child learn about his/her world.

Curriculum

High Scope

Our school's curriculum, High Scope, is based on developmentally appropriate practices. The curriculum format provides sensory oriented, age appropriate learning activities that match the varied skill levels of all children. The children's day is divided so they have active and quiet experiences and participate in small and large groups for learning.

Children learn through the process known as **play**. This approach of "doing" requires thinking and experimenting to find out how things work. Children first explore the materials/toys, manipulate and then play with them in a more organized and purposeful way. By playing out real experiences, the children are organizing and beginning to understand their world. The activities in the classroom encourage exploration by using all the senses (touching, tasting smelling, listening, looking) and the discovery of concrete, relevant materials in a warm, supportive and stimulating learning environment. In a hands-on curriculum the focus is on the **process** and not the finished product. Child-made projects are produced by the children and not teacher-made cut-outs and dittos. This approach is based on the premise that children learn best through active experiences with materials, people, events and ideas, rather than through direct teaching or pre-written sequenced exercises. (The rare exception is for occasional learning to write activities).

For the Preschool, the High/Scope curriculum addresses the whole child and provides for activities in pre-math and spatial concepts, early literacy, science, music, movement, social science, role playing, cooking, small and gross motor development, art, and social skills to promote cognitive, creative, social, emotional and physical growth.

ENRICHMENT

All instructors are level two background screened and compliant with The Department of Children and Families.

Music Enrichment

This program is available for all students beginning with our Toddler group. Ms. Michelle, our Music Therapist, visits CELC once a week. She visits each classroom, individually, for 30 minutes during morning school hours. She targets motor skills, creates music awareness in children, promotes response to rhythm and increases their attention span. Music Enrichment is optional and no additional cost to our families.

Jungle Safari Bus

This is simply fitness on wheels. The Jungle Bus is a school bus that has been converted into a fitness/playhouse for kids. Children have fun while fostering their motor development (this is part of one of the domains in the VPK Program). They provide structured classes (fitness oriented) and obstacle courses. The bus remains parked on school grounds during their activity time

Wild About Sports

Wild About Sports uses creative games and activities focused on introducing children to the sport of Soccer, Tennis, Basketball, and Football. The programs goal is to cultivate skills such as passing, dribbling, offense v. defense, gameplay, proper techniques, discipline, etc. throughout the weekly sessions.

THE HISTORY OF COUNTRYSIDE EARLY LEARNING CENTER



Established in 1981 by Diane Oakman and Vicki Piotrowski, CELC has secured a positive reputation in the community of Homestead by making its environment a well-organized, exciting place of learning. Diane and Vicki's success in building such a reputable school was due to their philosophy on Early Childhood education.

Since 2007, **Elisabet Ferrreyra** and **Marilyn Lopez**, two sisters with education majors, with views in making a quality educational facility for the children in the Homestead community and encircling communities, are the present owners and Directors. The goal set for the students at CELC is to teach academic skills, develop creativity and build a healthy self-concept. By incorporating a holistic, child centered program that nurtures each child, success within our program will continue!

OPEN DOOR POLICY/PARENT INVOLVEMENT

COME ON IN! CELC has an open door policy for all our families. Families are welcomed to come visit their child at school at any time of the day. Parents keep in mind that we are a learning center and our academic program is only 3 hours. Parent involvement is very important at CELC. All parents that would like to volunteer and/or become involved at our school must be background checked and cleared. We encourage parents to take part of all our monthly activities listed on the monthly newsletter.

NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY

CELC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment to all members of our community and to ensure that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals, abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle, it is therefore the school's policy not to discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities or with respect to employment terms and conditions on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is very important! CELC is a learning center and all academic activities are completed between the hours of 9:00am-12:00 pm. We expect all of our students to attend school daily and timely. Early arrival is important to those students that are in the two (2) year old class, Preschool, and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program (VPK). We recommend and encourage you to bring your child to school within the instructional time to ensure full participation on the daily lessons.

Late arrivals affect your child's academic progress and disrupt the learning environment for all students. CELC does not allow drop off at school after 10:00am without parent notification and approval from the office. CELC holds the right to withdraw any student for excessive tardiness.

Parents are responsible to contact the school at 305-246-5315 if your child is going to be absent. If after three (3) absences the school does not receive a phone call, your child will be withdrawn. ***If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again. A Withdrawal Form is required. No refund, credit or allowance will be given for days absent.***

EMERGENCY CONTACT AND AUTHORIZED PICKUP

For the safety of your child please provide detail information in the enrollment packet regarding authorized release persons. All persons authorized to pick up, whether authorized by written consent or within the enrollment packet, **must** have government issued photo identification at the time of pick up. Parents must provide written consent for persons picking up that are not listed in the child's enrollment packet. No child will be released to any person unrecognized without appropriate photo identification. No child will be released to any person that is intoxicated and/or impaired regardless if they are an authorized pickup contact. CELC holds the right to determine, at our own discretion, if a person is intoxicated and/or impaired.

PRIVACY POLICY

All information collected at the time of enrollment will only be used to provide optimal service to our students and their families, for security and safety of the child, and/or health related issues.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

CELC has a strict commitment in providing a secure and safe educational facility. Currently in place is our Emergency Preparedness Program that all teachers and staff members, together with their students, practice on a monthly basis. Our Emergency Preparedness Program includes procedures in handling inclement weather, fire emergencies, code red circumstances, and relocating if necessary. All emergency routes are posted in each classroom alongside written procedures on managing any type of emergency. Monthly school drills are conducted to ensure that all classrooms react within appropriate time, and correctly, throughout the drill.

VISITORS

Persons that are not an identified family member or parent must have a valid government issued photo identification card to be inside the school premises. All maintenance, inspector, or other public workers must have a clipped photo identification card on their attire, stating their name and the company they work for. Any person picking up any child at our facility must have a government issued photo-identification and their name written on the Enrollment Form. Any person with a photo-identification available but whose name does not appear on the authorization section of the enrollment form will have to go through proper clearance before picking up any child. Written consent by the parent/guardian, authorizing an unlisted person in the authorized section of the enrollment packet, is required.

Any parent that would like to interact with their child in their classroom and/or participate in school field trips **MUST** have a level 2 background screening. For any school activities, for example, Easter Egg Hunt, School Shows, etc., parents and/or family members are welcomed to participate for the time of the event.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A bi-monthly inspection is conducted to include, but not limited to, the heating and air conditioner vents, air vents, filters, exhaust fans, ceiling fans and dryer vents, if applicable, to ensure areas are clean and free from dust or lint build-up and properly working, inspection of the outdoor playground equipment, such as connectors, moving parts and fall zones. All classroom equipment is inspected to insure that it is in good working condition. Our facility is cleaned every late afternoon to maintain, as much as possible, a bacteria free environment on our premises. All toys are removed for sanitation when placed in children's mouth. Nap mats, cots and cribs are sanitized once a week.

Guidelines are in place to protect children from exposure to toxins by storing all hazardous or potentially dangerous elements securely. No toxic product, any item, that bears the notion "keep out of reach of children" is allowed at the center.

REGISTRATION FEE

The registration fee is due **prior** to enrollment **and** the beginning of each school year. A registration fee is the guarantee that your child is enrolled in our program. Registration fees are subject to change at the school's discretion.

LATE PICK UP FEE

CELC is open from 6:30 am -6:00 pm, Monday-Friday, all year, except for holidays and school closings listed on the school calendar. I understand that if I fail to pick up my child at the closing time, a \$25.00 late pickup fee will apply. Administration of late fees is explained in your child's enrollment packet. If your child is enrolled in a half day program dismissal is scheduled for 12:30 pm. Please read page 1 of your parent handbook under the *SCHOOL HOURS/PROGRAM HOURS* section for a detailed explanation of how late pick up fees are administered.

TUITION DISCOUNTS

There are two options for tuition discounts. Each family can take advantage of **one** option per family.

Option 1: If families enroll more than one child within the immediate family (siblings), a ten (\$10.00) dollar a week discount is granted on the lesser tuition rate.

Option 2: A 15% Hero's Discount is granted to parents/guardians that work within the listed profession:

- Police Officer
- FireFighter
- Military

Each family can take advantage of one discount option. Proof of parent/guardian employment license is required in order to approve employment discount. Proof of license is required yearly or at CELC's discretion.

RETURNED CHECK FEE

If tuition payment is returned from your banking institution for any reason, a returned check fee of \$25.00 will be applied to your account. All checks that are returned for insufficient funds will not be re-deposited. A cash payment including the returned check fee must be made on the same day notification is given regarding the returned check.

TUITION PAYMENT AND LATE FEES

Payment plans will be determined at the time of enrollment. Payment plans available are bi-weekly and monthly payments **ONLY**. Bi-weekly payment plans are due on Monday of the first week of service and must include the second week of service. A late fee of \$25.00 will apply after Tuesday of the first week if payment is not received and the second week if payment is not received. Monthly payment plans are due before the 5th of the month and must include all payments for all weeks in the month. To determine how many weeks are in a month, Mondays should be counted. A late fee of \$25.00 will apply after the 5th of the month. If the 5th of the month falls on a weekend, payment must be made on the working day prior to the 5th. Please note that late fees will accrue on a weekly basis till payment is made. CELC holds the right to suspend services for unpaid tuition.

Tuition is due in accordance to the payment plan noted in your child's enrollment form **REGARDLESS** of your child's attendance. Within the school term (August-June) tuition is due whether your child is absent, school is closed, and/or family vacations are taken. ***CELC reserves the right to withdraw any student from their program due to lack of payment of tuition and late fees. If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again. No tuition refund, credit or allowance will be given for days absent. Please refer to the Tuition Information Sheet for further details that apply.***

CELC is not responsible for any fees accumulated due to non-payment of tuition. In connection with any claim, legal action regarding collection of funds owed, you (parent/guardian/sponsor) agree to pay all costs incurred, including reasonable attorney's fees, appellant attorney's fees and all costs of investigation.

AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT

Parents/Guardians are solely responsible for any tuition payment and late fees due by any agency or third-party reimbursement in accordance to their contract. Parents/Guardians under contract are solely responsible for communicating any changes regarding their status with the agency or third-party that may affect reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are solely responsible for all tuition and/or late fees that are accrued due to failure of communicating status changes with an agency or third-party.

TUITION PAYMENT METHODS

CELC accepts checks, cash, money order, cashier's check, Visa, Mastercard and Discover as a form of payment. If paid with a debit/credit card a 3% fee is charged. CELC works with Tuition Express. We are excited to offer the safety, convenience and ease of Tuition Express®—a payment processing system that allows secure, on-time tuition and fee payments to be made from either your bank account or credit card. Contact the office for detailed information on Tuition Express.

Automatic withdrawals (ACH) are offered at CELC. No fee related to ACH payments made with a bank account. A voided check is required. ACH withdrawals can be made with a credit/debit card. A 3% fee applies.

DROP OFF & DISMISSAL

All parents/guardians/authorized persons are responsible to walk their child into the building and directly into their classroom during drop off. For pick up, parents/guardians/authorized persons are responsible to pick up their child directly from their classroom.

ENTRY INTO THE SCHOOL

A door code is provided to parent/guardians at the time of enrollment. The door code will grant you access into the school at any time within business hours. We ask that you do not provide the door code to distant relatives or friends. We understand that family members and friends may need to pick up your child on a daily basis; therefore, the door code will change periodically in order to maintain control of the amount of persons with the school door code. All pins or changes will be sent via email. Please update your email when necessary.

WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS

Please notify the office (305-246-5315) at least 10 (ten) business days in advance to withdraw/transfer your child. A withdrawal form is required from each child. CELC holds the right to collect 50% of tuition due within a 10 day period. CELC is not responsible for any fees accumulated due to non-payment of tuition. In connection with any claim, legal action regarding collection of funds owed, you (parent/guardian/sponsor) agree to pay all costs incurred, including reasonable attorney's fees, appellant attorney's fees and all costs of investigation.

SICK

Fevers are common in young children. CELC's method for examining child temperature is axillary thermometry. Axillary temperature is extremely easy to measure but has been found, by the American Academy of Pediatrics and National Center for Biotechnology Institute (NCBI), to be the worst estimate of core temperature in children. **CELC adds one degree to all axillary temperatures recorded.** Policies are implemented as follows:

-If your child has a fever of 101 F or higher please keep him/her home. Please have your child free of fever for over 24 hours before bringing him/her back to school.

-If your child, at the center, develops a fever of 101 F or higher, you will be called to pick him/her up. Please have your child free of fever for over 24 hours before bringing him/her back to school.

-If your child has a fever less than 101 F you will be notified and you may state your wishes at this time. CELC reserves the right to request parent pick up for low temperatures if a child's overall condition seems abnormal.

*Fever controlling medication will not be administered unless there is an underlying problem or discomfort diagnosed by a doctor. CELC reserves the right to administer medication for any reason deemed necessary.

Diarrhea can be highly contagious if due to illness. If your child has diarrhea please do not bring him/her to school. If your child has 2 or more diarrhea episodes while at school, you will be called to pick him/her up. If your child vomits while at school, you will be called to pick him/her up. Please have your child free of vomiting for a minimum of 24 hours.

A rash on a child can mean many things. Some rashes caused by illnesses can be highly contagious. Please do not send your child to school with a rash unless their doctor has provided written consent. If your child develops a rash while at the center, you will be called to pick him/her up.

Parents are responsible to pick up their child promptly if notified that they are sick. Parents are also responsible to notify the school if their child contracts a contagious disease. A physician's notice for clearance is required in order for their child to return to school. Dates listed on the physician's notice must align with current dates.

CELC reserves the right to deny a child the ability to return to school, even when a doctor's note is provided, if the child's overall condition seems abnormal and/or uncomfortable.

INJURY

Any student that suffers any level of injury and is required time off of school must have a physician's notice to return to school. Limitations or restrictions deemed necessary by the physician will be adhered to. CELC reserves the right to refuse entry to an injured student if environment can pose a threat or hazard to the child's safety and well-being.

MEDICATION

CELC does not administer medication. Medication must be managed at home however the parent/guardian deems fit.

Authorization must be provided by the parent/guardian for diapering ointments. Diapering ointment must be provided by the parent. Ointment will be administered in conjunction with the directions detailed on the ointment bottle. CELC reserves the right to refuse administration of diapering ointment for any reason deemed necessary.

Sunblock, mosquito repellants and ointments similar to these, are not administered at CELC.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Hygiene practices followed by staff, children, and others who have access to the center play an important role in maintaining a healthy and safe environment. CELC is Apple Accredited and must maintain compliance with their rules and regulations. CELC complies with Apple guidelines. Parents are asked to cooperate with policies and procedures set in place throughout drop off and pick up.

IMMUNIZATION AND PHYSICAL FORMS

Dade County health laws require HRS form 680 (immunization record) and HRS form 3040 (physical form) for all children attending school or a child care facility. Both immunization and physical forms must be provided at the time of registration. Forms must be continuously updated throughout the year. If any medical records are expired or not valid your child can be withdrawn. The center is not responsible for expired/invalid forms. Please make a note of the expiration dates written on your child's medical forms to avoid having your services discontinued. *If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again.*

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT

Parents are notified when their child has an accident/incident at the center. If a severe injury is the outcome of an accident/incident we will contact 911, parents will be notified immediately by phone and an Accident/Incident Report Form will be completely filled out. If an accident/incident occurs at the center that is not severe, an Accident/Incident Report Form will be completely filled out and parents will be notified at the time of arrival. We hold the right to write an Accident/Incident Report Form for any child that has a pre-existing injury, visible wound regardless of its severity. Parents are required to sign all Accident/Incident Report Forms.

HOME TOYS/VALUABLE ITEMS/PERSONAL ITEMS

Home toys are not allowed in school. CELC is not responsible for any lost or broken toys.

Valuable, personal items such as watches, chains, etc. are not allowed in school. CELC is not responsible for any lost or broken valuable, personal items.

LUNCH/SNACKS/FOOD PROGRAM

CELC provides a breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack to all our students including infants and toddlers. CELC is part of the Miami Dade Health Department Food Program and a completed application must be submitted with the enrollment form. This application is necessary for every student. It is the parent/legal guardians' responsibility to notify the school, in the enrollment packet, of any allergies their child may have to any foods being served. If a child is allergic to any foods a Special Dietary Conditions Form must be completely filled out and signed by the child's physician. If anything changes in regards to any child's eating habits and/or conditions, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the office and make the appropriate changes to the enrollment form. If a child is a picky eater we encourage home foods to ensure the child is eating sufficient throughout the day. School lunch will be served together with home lunch to expose students to new foods.

Lunch menus rotate weekly. Home lunch should be provided on the days that the facility is serving a meal that your child cannot eat due to allergies and/or religious purposes. All home lunches should be easy to serve, cooked, and well balanced meals. We will warm food if necessary. No storing of foods is allowed. Breakfast is served at 8:30 am.

Fruit juices are not allowed. CELC does promote water in-take throughout the day and encourages parents/guardians to provide an 8-12 oz bottle of water daily. `

A snack is provided daily in the afternoon. One home snack is welcomed daily if your child is allergic or cannot eat an item being served due to allergies/religious reasons. Please write your child's name on all his/her snack. CELC does not store any home snacks.

CELC provides Infant meals. Infant meals are provided in compliance with The Health Department's Child Care Food Program (CCFP). Food provided is Gerber fruits, vegetables and cereal. Formula provided is Gerber Goodstart Gentle Plus and Soy. Parents/guardians have the option to take advantage of our infant foods or provide home meals. An Infant Feeding Form must be provided for all children under 12 months. The CCFP requires infants to reach specific milestones prior to introducing solids. CELC complies with all CCFP regulations. When exceptions are necessary, parents must provide a Special Dietary Conditions Form signed by a licensed practitioner. CELC infant guidelines are;

- Infants are fed on demand.
- No solid foods are permitted in bottles without medical instruction. Special Dietary Conditions Form required.
- No solid food is provided to infants younger than six months unless recommended in writing. Special Dietary Conditions Form required.

Any foods related to special events such as parties, birthdays, etc. MUST be store bought items. No home made goods are allowed. No storage of foods is allowed.

CELC has the right to refuse any meal provided by a parent if deemed necessary for any reason. Home meals provided must be in compliance with The Health Department's Child Care Food Program (CCFP).

Foods not allowed are hot dogs, grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, peanut butter, raw carrots or large chunks of meat. CELC has the right to refuse inappropriate foods brought from home that lack freshness, fail to meet nutritional and/or food safety guidelines with all licensing agencies, foods that are not age-appropriate and for any reason deemed necessary. For detailed information regarding the CCFP, contact the office.

NAPPING

Naps are between the hours of 12:00 pm and 2:30 pm depending the age group. Naps are strictly respected. Students must sleep in a 2inch mat provided by the parent/guardian. Mats are stored at CELC till the end of the school year. Mats are sanitized weekly. Mats that obtain tears or worn edges must be replaced. If mats are not provided by the parent/legal guardian, the center holds the right to provide them and charge a purchase price of \$40.00.

CELC requires two blankets (one for the child and one for the cot/mat). Blankets should be labeled clearly with your child's full name and provided inside an extra-large Ziploc bag. A small pillow is optional, large pillows are not accepted. All blankets will remain at school till the end of the week unless they become soiled/dirty. Blankets are sent home at the end of each week for laundering. If two blankets are not provided by the parent/legal guardian, the center holds the right to provide them and charge a purchase price of \$40.00. Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for any fees assessed due to non-compliance with our napping policy.

CELC requires a pack-n-play fitted sheet for infant cribs. Fitted sheets must be provided inside an extra-large Ziploc bag. Infants are placed flat on their back to sleep, unless the parent provides a written note from a licensed medical practitioner to the contrary. Once infants are laid down, they may assume any comfortable position once they can turn themselves over.

Infants cannot have pillows, toys, bumpers or any other items in the crib. Bottles are not allowed in the cribs.

If fees assessed are not paid, CELC holds the right to withdraw your child from our program. ***If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again.*** Please notify your child's teacher of early pick-ups during nap time so personal items may be gathered prior to dismissal.

Parents/Guardians are responsible to replace torn/ripped/broken mats. If mats are not provided by the parent/legal guardian, the center holds the right to provide a mat and charge a purchase price of \$40.00.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms are mandatory! CELC requires that all students beginning with our Toddler group and above wear uniform daily. New enrollment must have uniform prior to starting. If your child arrives to school wearing inappropriate uniform you will be notified to pick up your child. All extra clothing provided for your child (ages 3 and up) for soiling accidents, **must** be uniform clothing. Children in the Infant to Two Year Old Class are allowed to bring non-uniform extra clothing. Uniform attire required are polo's (with CELC embroidery). Uniform bottoms must be uniform material. No cargo, denim, or cotton allowed! For cold temperatures thermals, long sleeves, and/ or leggings can be worn **underneath** your child's uniform. Any layering **under** the uniform is allowed. Sweater and jackets do not need to be uniform. For information on vendors that provide the CELC uniforms contact the office.

PLAYGROUND PLAY

Parents are required to provide their children with clothing that is suitable for outside play, throughout the year, for daily outdoor play to protect against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect borne disease, as appropriate.

All playground equipment and area is for school use only. After dismissal students are not allowed on the playground equipment or area. CELC is not responsible for any injuries suffered on playground equipment and area before drop off and after dismissal.

HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Tuition is due in accordance to the payment plan noted on your child's enrollment form regardless of your child's attendance. Tuition is a monthly installment offered in two optional payment plans. CELC is closed a few times throughout the year. Please refer to the school calendar online. There is no refund, credit or allowance given for school closing and/or holidays. If a holiday falls on a weekend, it will be observed on either the preceding Friday or the following Monday.

FIELD TRIPS

Fieldtrips are fun out of school activities throughout the year. Students ages 3 and up can participate in school fieldtrips. Not all fieldtrips are available for all ages. Further information is sent home regarding fieldtrips as event approaches. Payment must be received with permission form in order for your child to be registered for the fieldtrip. No permission forms will be accepted without payment. All payments for fieldtrips are non-refundable. **All children must wear a Countryside white T-shirt (not polo) with CELC embroidery to attend fieldtrip.**

SCHOOL PARTIES/BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS/ETC.

CELC celebrates many Holidays and other special events. If you do not want your child to participate in any of our celebrations, notification should be provided in your child's enrollment packet. CELC holds the right to deny any celebration or Holiday event for whatever reason. All events will have ample notification. Notification will be sent via our monthly newsletter.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Countryside follows Miami Dade County Public School (MDCPS) schedule for inclement weather. It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to keep track of local weather channels for any changes MDCPS makes to their schedule due to inclement weather. I understand that Countryside holds the right to close the school at any time deemed necessary due to inclement weather in the Homestead area. There is no refund, credit, or allowance for days the facility is closed due to schedule changes.

Outages are managed very stringently. If there is a power outage at any time for any reason, Countryside will follow the below steps to ensure the safety and security of its students:

1. Do a walk through to ensure the safety and security of each student
2. Contact the electric company to report an outage
3. Contact parents via email, text, or any other means necessary

If outage extends longer than 30 minutes, parents will be asked to pick up their child. There is no refund, credit or allowance given for outages.

DISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

Our program insures that age-appropriate, constructive disciplinary practices are used for your child. alternatives to improper behavior. To insure a safe and successful program, discipline is a must.

Steps to behavior modification:

- 1 Children will be corrected and asked to change their behavior.
- 2 Children will be re-directed from situation.
- 3 Children will be placed in "Time in" with the use of the cozy area.
- 4 Children will reflect in the cozy area: self-soothe, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques with the help of the teacher.
- 5 Parents will be contacted if behavior is not corrected.
- 6 Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, or frightening.
- 7 Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest or toileting.
- 8 Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is strictly prohibited.
- 9 Children may not be denied active play as a consequence of misbehavior.

Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, or frightening. Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is strictly prohibited.

Behavioral plans are available to offer support through strategies in facilitating challenging behaviors. We encourage parents to communicate concerns in their child's development and/or behavior.

GUIDANCE POLICY

Children's behavior is influenced by their overall development, their environment, and their teachers. Each child differs in activity level, attention span, comprehension and receptiveness. Children must learn to develop socially acceptable and appropriate behavior as they grow to maturity.

Countryside Early Learning Center believes in making the most of classroom interactions. Child-tracher interactions assist children in developing proper socialization, self-control, confidence, and compassion in their

interactions with others. Proper interactions are adopted to ensure proper conduct, prevent injury, and obtain higher ordered learning.

It is important that the teacher models positive behavior, creating an atmosphere that provides students opportunities for desirable behavior. The steps below explain how our staff provides healthy direction:

1. Explaining to the children what behavior is acceptable.
2. Focusing on the child's abilities and positive behavior, rather than on poor behavior
3. Allowing the children time to respond to the expectations
4. Reinforcing appropriate behavior
5. Being willing to listen and respond in a fair, supportive manner.
6. Observing children in order to anticipate potential difficulties.

Intervention Strategies used assist create a positive climate and minimize problems in a supportive, non-punitive way:

1. Eye level contact and calling the child's name in a calm, controlled voice
2. Remaining near the child in situations where he/she may react irrational
3. Children will be reminded of rules.
4. Diverting the child.
5. Verbal and/or physical assistance. Assistance in problem solving if a child is discouraged or frustrated.
6. Children will be offered choices to assist them in meeting expectations or to reinforce limits.
7. We will clarify the inevitable or unavoidable outcome of the behavior to the child.
8. On a rare occasion where a child loses control and could possibly injure him/herself or others; embracing the child to soothe them until self-control is gained may be required.
11. Opportunity to make amends.

Practices that are Unacceptable

Countryside Early Learning Center considers the below practices unacceptable and will not tolerate their use:

- Corporal punishment (ie. shoving, hitting, shaking, spanking)
- Harsh, belittling, or degrading treatment.
- Confinement, unsupervised separation from others
- Depriving children of meals, snacks, rest or necessary use of the toilet as punishment

RENEWAL FORMS

There are several forms that need to be renewed on a yearly basis. It is the parents' responsibility to comply with all renewal dates and requirements for processing renewal forms.

NEW STUDENT/ PARENT ORIENTATION

At Countryside we encourage our parents to visit our facility, during our working days between the hours of 9:30 am-11:30 pm or 3:30-5:00 pm, no appointment necessary, with your child to meet the teachers, tour the classrooms, and learn about our program.

Beginning a new routine can be an exciting and challenging experience for children. Countryside ELC works diligently with parents and children to ensure that the transition into school is a happy and successful one. We do not offer a trial period. It may take 2-3 weeks for a child to fully adjust to his/her new routine.

TRANSITIONING PROCEDURES

Our staff carefully follows a transition procedure for each child, moving from one classroom to another. We understand that this is a sensitive time period for the child, as well as for the Parent/Guardian and we will make the transition as smooth as possible for all by following these steps:

1. The child will visit the classroom he/she will be attending, during circle time or during work time in order to get familiar with new friends and teachers. This transition can take up to two weeks depending on the child's adaptation to the new group.
2. Teachers from both current and future classroom will meet with the parent(s) to share information about the child's needs, schedule, learning activities and goals that will be used in the new classroom.
3. Once the child has transitioned into the new class, all his/her personal belongings will be placed in the new classroom.

We are here to support you and work together as a team.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All child care personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Florida Abuse Hotline in accordance with s. 39.201 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.).

Child care personnel must be alert to the physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect. "Child Abuse or Neglect" is defined in s. 39.201, F.S., as "harm or threatened harm" to a child's health (mental or physical) or welfare by the acts or omissions by a parent, adult household member, other person responsible for the child's welfare, or for purposes of reporting requirements by any person.

Categories include:

- Physical Abuse or Neglect (i.e. unexplained bruises, hunger, lack of supervision...)
- Emotional Abuse or Neglect (i.e. impairment in the ability to function, depression...)
- Sexual Abuse (i.e. withdrawal, excessive crying, physical symptoms...)

Reports must be made immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System by

- Telephone at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873), or
- Fax at 1-800-914-0004, or
- Online at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

Failure to perform duties of a mandatory reporter pursuant to s. 39.201, F.S. constitutes a violation of the standards in ss. 402.301-319, F.S. and is a first degree misdemeanor. Remember, it is each child care personnel's responsibility to report suspected abuse and/or neglect.

All reports are confidential. However, persons who are mandated reporters (child care personnel) are required to give their name when making a report.

It is important to give as much identifying and factual information as possible when making a report.

Any person, when acting in good faith, is immune from liability in accordance with s. 39.203(1)(a), F.S.

For more information about child abuse and neglect, visit the Department's website at www.myflorida.com/childcare and select "Training Requirements." The Department offers a 4-hour *Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* course for child care providers. This course is an overview of the various types of abuse and neglect, indicators that may be observed, the legal responsibility of mandatory reporters, and the proper procedure for reporting abuse and neglect, as required by ss. 402.305(2) and 402.313(1), F.S. The course is offered both online and instructor-based throughout Florida.

PHILOSOPHY/PRACTICE OF TV AND VIDEO

Countryside Early Learning Center does not use TV or Video during instructional time. Learning materials and other educational resources are utilized to create cognitive development.

PARENT SIGNING IN/OUT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are responsible to sign their child in and out on a daily basis. Providing specific date and time is very important to maintain accurate attendance within the school. It is mandatory that all sign in/out electronically.

If your child is enrolled in a funded program (School Readiness and/or Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program/VPK) it is your responsibility to maintain required sign in/out policies as per the rules and regulations of each program.

Electronic signatures are monitored daily and will be completed by office personnel if necessary. Consent forms for signatures are required in each child's file.

TOXIC PRODUCTS

All toxic products are stored with lock and key or in an out of reach area. A toxic product is any product that states on its label, "Keep out of reach of children" or any similar phrase. Toxic products are not allowed around the students or in the students possession. Countryside ELC holds the right to consider any product toxic in accordance to licensing entities.

UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR/ CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If a child's behavior is disruptive or inappropriate, the teacher will speak to the **child about the** inappropriate behavior. If the child does not respond appropriately, according to their age, he/she will be asked to sit on a chair away from the group, but within the classroom (one minute per each year of life). If the child continues to be disruptive the Director will be notified.

If a child is having a particularly difficult time following the rules of the school, the teacher will request a conference with the parents and the Director to obtain a solution. If this approach is unsuccessful further

assistance may be recommended to observe the child and discuss with the parents, teachers, and the Director what the best approach to a resolution will be.

- At no time will any form of corporal punishment be used.
- No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child will be denied food as a form of punishment.
- No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

Behavioral plans are available to offer support through strategies in facilitating challenging behaviors. We encourage parents to communicate concerns in their child's development and/or behavior.

CHILD OBSERVATIONS

Countryside does quarterly observations on all students enrolled. To improve the quality of services provided to your child, Miami-Dade County, Department of Human Services, Child Development Services and The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe (the agency that oversees policy development and funding for early care and education) has coordinated a Screening and Assessment Program. This important project involves the efforts of everyone working together to help your child enter elementary school ready to succeed.

The screening and assessment process will be based on activities your child is involved in on a daily basis. The results of the screenings and/or assessments will have no bearing on your child's receipt of services. All data gathered from this program will be kept confidential. Part of this process will involve, but is not limited to the collection of parent and teacher information. Researchers and your child's teachers will have access to the data in order to make informed decisions about how best to improve the quality of services provided to your child.

LENDING LIBRARY

All classrooms have a Lending Library available to its students and their families. A sign in sheet is provided so that parents/ children who would like to borrow a book can do so at any time. Books borrowed from the Lending Library should be returned within a week from the date the book was borrowed. Teachers will rotate books available in the Lending Library periodically.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Parent-teacher conferences should occur on a regular basis. Parents should be informed of a child's success when it is determined that they possess unique academic potential and behavior.

Teacher-parent conferences are required when a child displays a consistent pattern of disruption or demonstrate unacceptable academic achievement (e.g. not completing an assignment, etc.) as a result of not exerting sufficient effort. Parent conferences should deal with positive issues as well as those matters requiring extra attention and intervention.

Teachers must log parent-teacher conferences on their parent-teacher log and specify whether such contact was in person, by telephone, or through written correspondence. When required parent contact is not achieved, evidence of attempts to contact parents should be recorded in the log.

A Parent/Teacher Conference Form must be filled out for all parent/teacher conferences and signed by both teacher and parent.

PARENT/ STAFF INTERACTION (CONFERENCES/ STUDENT EVALUATIONS)

Teachers are expected to be available for parent conferences. On rare occasions, these meetings may need to be scheduled after parents have returned from work. The Director is available to attend parent/teacher conferences, when needed and scheduled appropriately. Discussions regarding a child's behavior/progress should be held with only the child's parents present – not in front of classmates or before other parents. Neither should conversations regarding a child's behavior take place in front of him/her, unless needed. Maintain a professional attitude and simply ask the parent if he/she could wait a minute until the children leave and he/she can have your full attention or whether you could call their home later. Parents appreciate privacy and confidentiality when their child's behavior or progress is being discussed.

Office employees are not permitted to discuss with any parent any problems concerning children enrolled. All complaints and concerns should be forwarded to the Director.

SPECIAL NEEDS ENROLLMENT

Countryside prohibits the discrimination of special needs children within our program. We take pride in providing all students the resources that they need in order to be successful within our program. Readily achievable accommodations will be provided as per the American with Disabilities Act.

ASSESSMENTS

High Scope Child Observation Record (COR)

High Scope's research-validated child assessment tools serve multiple purposes. It is designed to look at meaningful educational outcomes, gather information in ways that are natural and comfortable for children and adults, and provide accurate data that can be used for individual child planning and policy-level decision making. High Scope is an advocate for sound early childhood practices in general; the assessment tools are designed for use by non-High Scope programs as well as by those that do use the High Scope Curriculum.

Educators assess young children to see how they are developing and to measure how the programs children attend contribute to the children's growth.

Traditional testing (for example, a series of multiple-choice questions) is one way to measure; however, this type of test provides only limited information. It shows only how children do in the testing situation, not how they perform in real educational settings and everyday life.

Authentic assessments are more natural. They provide teachers with valuable and practical information to understand and plan for the developmental needs of their students. Because information on children's progress is gathered in the course of everyday classroom activities, the results can immediately be put to work to strengthen the classroom program.

The COR is completed throughout the course of the year. It is completed informally through observation. The parent is informed through a family report and discussed through a parent-teacher conference.

©2002 HighScope Educational Research Foundation-Child Observation Record COR Assessment

Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)

The Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3): A Parent Completed Child Monitoring System, Third Edition, meets these criteria for a first-level comprehensive screening and monitoring program. The ASQ-3 screening system is composed of 21 questionnaires designed to be completed by parents or other primary caregivers at any point for a child between 1 month and 5 ½ years of age. (In the ASQ system, the word parent is used to refer to individuals central to a child's life, including parents, grandparents, and other primary caregivers.) Questionnaire intervals include 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 42, 48, 54, and 60 months of age. These questionnaires can identify accurately infants or young children who are in need of further assessment to determine whether they are eligible for early intervention or early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) services.

Each questionnaire contains 30 developmental items that are written in simple, straight forward language. The items are organized into five areas: Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social. An Overall section addresses general parental concerns. The reading level of each questionnaire ranges from fourth to sixth grade. Illustrations are provided to assist parents in understanding the items. For the 30 developmental items on each questionnaire, parents mark yes to indicate that their child performs the behavior specified in the item, sometimes to indicate an occasional or emerging response for their child, or not yet to indicate that their child does not yet perform the behavior. Program personnel convert each response to a point value, total these values, and compare the total score with established screening cutoffs points. The provider and/or teacher discuss with the parents the results of the screening.

©2009 The Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3): A Parent Completed Child Monitoring System, Third Edition

Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Assessment (VPK)

The Florida Center for Reading Research has developed the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment, in collaboration with the Department of Education. The purpose of this assessment is to provide teachers with valid and reliable feedback regarding children's progress in attaining the skills in the *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds*, so that teachers may use this information to guide instructional decisions in the VPK classroom.

The VPK Assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, and Oral Language/Vocabulary that are aligned with the Standards for Four-Year-Olds.

During the 2009-10 school year, the VPK Assessment measures were field tested across the state of Florida. The purpose of the field test was to determine the viability of the materials and to collect data to establish a sample that represented the state. In this case, the public and non-public school VPK teachers administered the VPK Assessment measures and provided feedback about the materials. The information gathered from the teachers was incorporated into the development of the final assessment materials and related professional development opportunities.

VPK Assessment Measures

Print Knowledge Measure

Print Knowledge assesses the child's ability to recognize letters or words, and his/her knowledge of letter names (both upper and lower case) and the sounds they make. The Print Knowledge measure includes a total of 12 assessment items and two practice items.

Phonological Awareness Measure

Phonological Awareness is the awareness and manipulation of the different sounds in a word. The Phonological Awareness measure assesses the child's ability to:

- Blend (put together) a word if it is broken up into smaller sounds or syllables
- Blend a compound word
- Recognize the remaining word when part of the stimulus word is taken away.

The Phonological Awareness measure includes a total of 14 assessment items and two practice items.

Mathematics Measure

The Mathematics measure assesses early numeracy skills across three different areas: counting skills, numerical relations skills, and arithmetic reasoning skills. The Mathematics measure includes a total of 13 assessment items.

Oral Language/Vocabulary Measure

The Oral Language/Vocabulary measure:

- assesses a child's expressive language and receptive language
- targets the child's knowledge of adjectives, verbs, verb tenses, prepositions, and nouns.

The Oral Language/Vocabulary measure includes a total of 22 assessment items in Assessment Period 1 and 23 assessment items in Assessment Periods 2 and 3.

The content for the three early literacy measures was decided by identifying the best predictors of later reading success. Print knowledge, phonological awareness, and oral language/vocabulary are the best predictors for conventional early reading ability. The content for the early mathematics measure was decided by identifying the best predictors of later mathematics success. Number sense is one of the best known informal predictors of formal mathematics ability. In addition, research demonstrates that all four skill areas (e.g., print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics, oral language/vocabulary) can benefit from targeted instruction during the preschool year.

The Department of Education has developed the VPK Assessment Online Reporting System to provide teachers with a user friendly tool to track children's progress in attaining the skills in the Standards for Four-Year-Olds, so that teachers may use this information to guide instructional decisions in the VPK classroom.

The VPK Assessment Online Reporting System is available to all registered providers free of charge. This system allows VPK teachers to enter each child's assessment results and then analyze children's data in order to plan lessons that meet the individual needs of all children.

The VPK Assessment Online Reporting System has the capacity to:

- Create individual, classroom, and center level reports to track progress
- Link the assessment data to instructional strategies and resources that are aligned with the Standards for Four-Year-Olds
- Create a letter to parents about their child's performance on each assessment measure. Teachers/Providers discuss results with parents.

NEMOURS/NATIONAL EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION LEARNING COLLABORATIVES PROJECT

We participate with Nemours and its partner National Early Care and Education Learning Collaboratives (ECELC) Project. "Nemours developed the model to support child care provider's efforts to help young children grow up healthy and tested it with large early care and education programs in Delaware. Nemours is currently funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under a five-year Cooperative Agreement to support states in launching Early Childhood Education (ECE) learning collaboratives focused on obesity prevention." (*National Early Care & Education Learning Collaboratives: Taking Steps to Healthy Success*. 3rd Edition. Washington: Nemours Foundation, 2015. Print.)

Here at Countryside we want to follow and gradually assist our families with the ABC's of a Healthy Me. Our main focus at Countryside is to get our children to drink water. We want our children to have access to water inside and outside daily. We ask parents to send an eight ounce water bottle daily. Some children just like some adults do not like to drink water. The water bottle will be sent home daily, refilled at home, and brought back the following day. The water bottle will be kept in the classroom so the children will have access to water while indoors. If we provide our children with water to quench their thirst instead of juice, it will start a trend to ask for water when thirsty.

As child care providers, we want to work with our families and children to ensure that they start at a young age to drink water.

VPK PARENT GUIDE

*Please see State of Florida VPK Parent Guide Form

Countryside Early Learning Center reserves the right to amend and change the Parent Handbook when deemed necessary.