



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

Table of Contents

Welcome to Countryside Early Learning Center (CELC).....	3
School Hours / Program Hours.....	3
Philosophy.....	3
Mission.....	4
Goals and Objectives.....	4
Curriculum and Enrichment.....	4
The History of Countryside Early Learning Center.....	5
Parent Involvement.....	5
Non-Discrimination Policy.....	5
Attendance.....	6
Emergency Contact and Authorized Pickup.....	6
Privacy Policy.....	6
Safety and Security.....	6
Registration Fee.....	7
Late Pick-Up Fee.....	7
Tuition Discounts.....	8
Returned Check Fee.....	8
Tuition Payment and Late Fees.....	8
Agency Reimbursement.....	9
Tuition Payment Methods.....	9
Drop Off and Dismissal.....	9
Withdrawals and Transfers.....	9
Sick.....	9
Injury.....	10
Medication.....	10
Personal Hygiene.....	10
Immunization and Physical Forms.....	11
Accident / Incident.....	11
Home Toys / Valuable Items / Personal Items.....	11
Lunch / Snacks / Food Program.....	11
Napping.....	12
Uniforms.....	13
Playground Play.....	13
Holidays / School Closings.....	13
Field Trips.....	14
School Parties / Birthday Celebrations / Etc.....	14
Photo Release.....	14
Inclement Weather.....	14
Disciplinary Practice.....	14
Guidance Policy.....	15
Renewal Forms.....	16
Enrollment Packet and Agreement.....	16
New Student / Parent Orientation.....	16
Transitioning Procedures.....	17
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements.....	17
Philosophy / Practice of TV and Video.....	18
Parent Signing In/Out Responsibilities.....	18
Toxic Products.....	18
Unusual Behavior / Conflict Resolution.....	18
Child Observations.....	19
Lending Library.....	19
Parent Communication.....	19
Parent / Staff Interaction (Conferences / Student Evaluations).....	19
Special Needs Enrollment.....	20
Therapeutic Services.....	20
Assessments.....	21
VPK Parent Guide.....	23

Welcome to Countryside Early Learning Center (CELC)

Thank you for trusting us with your child's early years. Preschool is the stepping stone and foundation for every child's academic success, and nothing is more rewarding than watching each child grow and make progress.

We set high standards for our students and our staff, and we know that meeting them takes partnership with the families we serve. Build a strong rapport with each of your child's teachers while at CELC. We believe teamwork is a fundamental tool for success. If at any time we are not meeting your standards, tell us. We hold our families accountable for meeting all expectations daily for their child, and we welcome your comments, suggestions, and concerns.

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, look online or request a hard copy at the office.

Arrival Time	6:30-9:00 am
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

Arrival times may vary for specific programs such as VPK and School Readiness. Review the Tuition Information Form for details. All parents must walk their child to class.

Times vary for all programs funded by the Early Learning Coalition (ELC). The ELC will give you the details for your program. If you are unsure of your program details, contact the office to avoid late fees and additional tuition charges.

Late pick-up costs \$30.00 from the first minute through 30 minutes after closing. After 30 minutes, an additional \$15.00 is charged 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 for non-payment of tuition and/or late fees. If a student is withdrawn, the registration fee must be paid again.

Philosophy

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

CELC's curriculum is The Creative Curriculum, a play-based approach for young learners and the people who teach them. It looks at the whole child and strengthens each child's growth in social-emotional,

physical, language, and cognitive development, along with the foundations of literacy, math, science, social studies, and the arts.

Mission

CELC works diligently to provide a quality education for every enrolled student. We run a holistic, child-centered program that nurtures each child, using the best tools and resources to reach the educational goals we set for our students. The early years are the most influential years for language development. Together with our qualified teachers, staff, parents, and community authorities, we will supply the valuable educational skills our children need for their future.

Goals and Objectives

Higher learning for each student takes many roles working together. Our goal is to motivate every student and build a strong self-image. CELC provides quality education through the resources needed for cognitive development, personal interactions, and the motivation to learn. We prepare our educators through continuing education, so we keep delivering on our purpose for the children of our community.

Curriculum and Enrichment

Teachers work from a core of written themes that inspire their planning. They watch and listen to the children and use their observation notes to stay in tune with the children's interests when planning curriculum and activities. Planned activities are integrated: the theme or topic carries through pre-math (counting, etc.), manipulatives, dramatic play, science, language arts, cooking, and field trips. Staff may receive suggestions for activities, but each room is encouraged to be creative and flexible.

Topics may extend depending on the children's interests and may vary from classroom to classroom. Toddlers have a more basic conceptual structure than threes and fours.

When planning, remember: the teacher is the facilitator and the child is the active learner. The teacher may help a child by talking through an activity and asking questions, but does not do the activity for the child. The process of doing, not the product, is what helps a child learn about his or her world.

Curriculum: The Creative Curriculum

Our curriculum, The Creative Curriculum, is based on developmentally appropriate practices. It is a research-based, play-centered framework that builds on what children already know and can do. Learning activities fit the varied skill levels and interests of all children, and the day balances active and quiet experiences, with small and large groups for learning.

Children learn through play. This "doing" approach requires thinking and experimenting to find out how things work. Children first explore materials and toys, manipulate them, and then play with them in a more organized and purposeful way. By playing out real experiences, children organize and begin to understand their world. Classroom activities encourage exploration with 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, not the finished product. Children make their own projects. We do not use teacher-made cut-outs and dittos. This approach rests 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 occasional learning-to-write activities.)

The Creative Curriculum addresses the whole child. Classrooms are organized into purposeful learning areas, such as blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, and outdoors. Through play in these areas, children build skills in language and early literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and physical development. Teachers plan around the children's interests, observe how each child is growing, and adjust activities to move every child forward. Families are partners in the process, and we share each child's progress with you. Together, these practices 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.

Enrichment programs are available throughout the year and are subject to change. Implementation of enrichment varies annually.

The History of Countryside Early Learning Center

Diane Oakman and Vicki Piotrowski established CELC in 1981. They built a positive reputation in the Homestead community by making the school a well-organized, exciting place of learning. Their success came from their philosophy on early childhood education.

Since 2007, Elisabet Ferreyra and Marilyn Lopez, two sisters with education majors, have been the owners and Directors. They share a vision of a quality educational facility for the children of Homestead and the surrounding communities. Our goal for CELC students is to teach academic skills, develop creativity, and build a healthy self-concept. Through a holistic, child-centered program that nurtures each child, success within our program will continue.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement matters at CELC. Any parent who wants to volunteer or get involved at our school must be background checked and cleared. We encourage you to take part in all the monthly activities listed in the monthly newsletter.

Non-Discrimination Policy

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

Attendance

Attendance matters. CELC is a learning center, and all academic activities are completed between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm. We expect every student to attend daily and on time. Early arrival is especially important for students in the two-year-old class, Preschool, and the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program (VPK). Bring your child to school within instructional time to ensure full participation in the daily lessons.

Late arrivals hurt your child's academic progress and disrupt the learning environment for all students. Children must arrive before 9:00 am. If your child will be late, notify the school. A doctor's note is required for late arrivals, and no child may be dropped off after 11:00 am, even with a doctor's note. CELC reserves the right to withdraw any student for excessive tardiness.

Call the school at 305-246-5315 if your child will be absent. If the school does not receive a call after three (3) absences, your child will be withdrawn. If withdrawn, the registration fee must be paid again, and a Withdrawal Form is required. No refund, credit, or allowance is given for days absent.

VPK parents: the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) has issued new attendance policies for VPK. During the school year, no more than 20% of a child's absences will be paid. For programs offering three (3) hours daily, this means only 36 days of absence will be paid for the entire year (two days per month). Understand this: your child needs to attend school every day and on time.

Emergency Contact and Authorized Pickup

For your child's safety, provide detailed information in the enrollment packet about authorized release persons. Every person authorized to pick up a child, whether by written consent or through the enrollment packet, must show government-issued photo identification at pick-up. All persons authorized to pick up must be 18 or older. Parents must give written consent for anyone picking up who is not listed in the child's enrollment packet. No child will be released to an unrecognized person without appropriate photo identification. No child will be released to any person who is intoxicated and/or impaired, even if that person is an authorized pickup contact. CELC holds the right to determine, at its own discretion, whether a person is intoxicated and/or impaired.

Privacy Policy

Information collected at enrollment is used only to provide optimal service to our students and their families, for the security and safety of the child, and/or for health-related issues.

Safety and Security

Emergency Preparedness

CELC has a strict commitment to a secure and safe educational facility. Our Emergency Preparedness Program is in place now, and all teachers, staff, and students practice it monthly. The program includes procedures for inclement weather, fire emergencies, code red circumstances, and relocating if necessary. Emergency routes are posted in every classroom alongside written procedures for managing

any type of emergency. Monthly school drills ensure every classroom reacts correctly and within the appropriate time.

Visitors

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

Any parent who wants to interact with their child in the classroom or take part in school field trips **MUST** have a level 2 background screening. For school activities such as the Easter Egg Hunt and School Shows, parents and family members are welcome to participate for the duration of the event.

Physical Environment

A bi-monthly inspection covers, but is not limited to, heating and air conditioner vents, air vents, filters, exhaust fans, ceiling fans, and dryer vents (if applicable), to ensure these areas are clean, free from dust or lint build-up, and working properly. It also covers outdoor playground equipment, such as connectors, moving parts, and fall zones. All classroom equipment is inspected to make sure it is in good working condition. We clean our facility every late afternoon to keep the premises as free of bacteria as possible. Toys that have been in children's mouths are removed for sanitizing. Nap mats, cots, and cribs are sanitized once a week.

We protect children from exposure to toxins by securely storing all hazardous or potentially dangerous items. No toxic product, or any item bearing the notice "keep out of reach of children," is allowed at the center.

Registration Fee

The registration fee is due before enrollment and at the beginning of each school year. It guarantees your child's place in our program. Registration fees are subject to change at the school's discretion. The registration fee is non-refundable, due in advance when you enroll your child, and payable in cash only. A yearly registration fee guarantees your child's enrollment for the fall of the following school year.

Late Pick-Up Fee

CELC is open from 6:30 am to 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 closing time, a \$30.00 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. For a detailed explanation of how late pick-up fees are administered, read the SCHOOL HOURS/PROGRAM HOURS section of this handbook.

Tuition Discounts

There are two options for tuition discounts. Each family may use one option.

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

Option 2: A 15% Hero's Discount is granted to parents/guardians who work in one of these professions:

- Police Officer
- Firefighter
- Military

Each family may use one discount option. Proof of the parent/guardian's employment license is required to approve the employment discount. Proof of license is required yearly, or at CELC's discretion.

Returned Check Fee

If a tuition payment is returned by your bank for any reason, a \$30.00 returned check fee will be applied to your account. Checks returned for insufficient funds will not be re-deposited. You must make a cash payment, including the returned check fee, on the same day you are notified of the returned check.

Tuition Payment and Late Fees

Payment plans are set at the time of enrollment. The available plans are bi-weekly and every four week payments ONLY.

Bi-weekly plans are due on Monday of the first week of service and must include the second week of service. A \$30.00 late fee applies after Tuesday of the first week if payment is not received, and for the second week if payment is not received.

Every four week plans are due by the 1st of the month and must include payment for all weeks in the month. To determine how many weeks are in a month, count the Mondays. A \$30.00 late fee applies after the 1st of the month. If the 1st falls on a weekend, payment must be made on the working day before the 1st.

Late fees accrue weekly until payment is made. CELC holds the right to suspend services for unpaid tuition.

Tuition is due according to the payment plan 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, or your family is on vacation. CELC reserves the right to withdraw any student from their program for non-payment. If withdrawn, the registration fee must be paid again. No tuition refund, credit, or allowance is given for days absent. See the Tuition Information Sheet for further details.

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

Agency Reimbursement

Parents/Guardians are solely responsible for any tuition payment and late fees owed by any agency or third-party reimbursement, in accordance with their contract. Parents/Guardians under contract are solely responsible for communicating to the agency or third party any status changes that may affect reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are solely responsible for all tuition and/or late fees that accrue because they failed to communicate status changes to an agency or third party. Any reimbursement not provided due to absences is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to pay.

Tuition Payment Methods

CELC accepts checks, cash, money orders, cashier's checks, Visa, Mastercard, and Discover. An administration fee is charged for all credit/debit card payments. The administration fee is mentioned in the Tuition Information Sheet.

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 from either your bank account or credit card. Contact the office for details on Tuition Express.

Automatic withdrawals (ACH) are offered at CELC. There is no fee for ACH payments made from a bank account, and a voided check is required. ACH withdrawals can also be made with a credit/debit card, with an administration fee.

Drop Off and Dismissal

Parents, guardians, and authorized persons must walk their child into the building and directly into the classroom at drop-off. At pick-up, they must collect their child directly from the classroom.

Withdrawals and Transfers

Written notification is required to withdraw or transfer your child. Notify the office (305-246-5315) at least 10 (ten) business days in advance. A withdrawal form is required for 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 or legal action regarding collection of funds owed, you (parent/guardian/sponsor) agree to pay all costs incurred, including reasonable attorney's fees, appellate attorney's fees, and all costs of investigation.

Sick

Fevers are common in young children. CELC checks temperature by axillary thermometry. It is extremely easy to measure, but the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) have found it to be the worst estimate of core temperature in children. CELC adds one degree to every axillary temperature recorded. Our fever policies:

- If your child has a fever of 101 F or higher, keep him/her home. Your child must be free of fever for over 24 hours before returning to school.

- If your child develops a fever of 101 F or higher at the center, we will call you to pick him/her up. Your child must be free of fever for over 24 hours before returning to school.
- If your child has a fever below 101 F, we will notify you, and you may state your wishes at that 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.**

Diarrhea can be highly contagious when caused by illness. If your child has diarrhea, do not bring him/her to school. If your child has 2 or more diarrhea episodes at school, we will call you to pick him/her up. If your child vomits at school, we will call you to pick him/her up. Your child must be free of vomiting for a minimum of 24 hours.

A rash can mean many things, and some rashes caused by illness are highly contagious. Do not send your child to school with a rash unless a doctor has provided written consent. If a rash develops at the center, we will call you to pick up your child.

Common colds are monitored. A child with a common cold and clear mucus may return to school. A child with green mucus needs a doctor's note to return. Any child showing concerning symptoms of a common cold will be sent home.

Pick up your child promptly when notified that he/she is sick. Notify the school if your child contracts a contagious disease. A physician's notice of clearance is required for your child to return to school, and the dates on the notice must align with current dates. CELC reserves the right to deny a child's return, even with a doctor's note, if the child's overall condition seems abnormal and/or uncomfortable.

Injury

Any student who suffers an injury of any level and needs time off from school must have a physician's notice to return. We will adhere to any limitations or restrictions the physician deems necessary. CELC reserves the right to refuse entry to an injured student if the environment could 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.

Parents must provide written authorization for diapering ointments and must supply the ointment. We apply it according to the directions on the bottle. CELC reserves the right to refuse to administer diapering ointment for any reason deemed necessary.

Sunblock, mosquito repellents, and similar ointments 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 its rules and regulations. CELC complies with Apple guidelines. We ask parents to cooperate with the policies and procedures in place during 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. Provide both forms at registration and keep them continuously updated throughout the year. A current physical examination (Form 3040) and immunization record (Form 680 or 681) are required within 30 days of enrollment. Copies of medical records are accepted. Health exemptions are accepted in place of the immunization form. If any medical record is expired or not valid, your child can be withdrawn. The center is not responsible for expired or invalid forms. Note the expiration dates on your child's medical forms to avoid losing your services. If withdrawn, the registration fee must be paid again.

Accident / Incident

We notify parents whenever a child has an accident or incident at the center. If an accident or incident results in a severe injury, we will contact 911, notify parents immediately by phone, and fully complete an Accident/Incident Report Form. If an accident or incident is not severe, we will fully complete an Accident/Incident Report Form and notify parents at arrival. We hold the right to write an Accident/Incident Report Form for any child with a pre-existing injury or 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 lost or broken toys.

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

Lunch / Snacks / Food Program

CELC provides 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. The application is necessary for every student. The application is not a qualifying application, but it must be kept in your child's file.

It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to notify the school, in the enrollment packet, of any food allergies. 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 a child's eating habits and/or conditions, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the office and update the enrollment form. If your child is a picky eater, we encourage home foods to make sure he/she eats sufficiently throughout the day. School lunch is served together with home lunch to expose students to new foods.

Lunch menus rotate weekly. Provide a home lunch on days when the facility is serving a meal your child cannot eat due to allergies and/or religious purposes. All home lunches must be easy to serve, cooked,

and well balanced. We will warm food if necessary. No storing of food is allowed. Breakfast is served at 8:30 am.

Fruit juices are not allowed. CELC promotes water intake throughout the day, and we encourage parents/guardians to provide an 8-12 oz bottle of water daily.

A snack is provided daily in the afternoon. One home snack is welcome daily if your child is allergic to, or cannot eat for religious reasons, an item being served. Write your child's name on every snack. CELC does not store home snacks.

CELC provides infant meals in compliance with the Health Department's Child Care Food Program (CCFP). Food provided is fruits, vegetables, and cereal. We provide a regular and a soy formula. Parents/guardians may use 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 before solids are introduced. 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:

- 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 for special events such as parties and birthdays MUST be store-bought. No homemade goods are allowed. No storage of food is allowed.

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

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

Napping

Naps are between 12:00 pm and 2:30 pm, depending on the age group. Naps are strictly respected.

Students must sleep on a 2-inch mat provided by the parent/guardian. Mats are stored at CELC until the end of the school year and sanitized weekly. Mats that tear or have worn edges must be replaced. If the parent/legal guardian does not provide a mat, the center holds the right to provide one and charge a purchase price of \$40.00.

CELC requires two blankets (one for the child and one for the cot/mat). Label blankets clearly with your child's full name and send them inside an extra-large Ziploc bag. A small pillow is optional. Large pillows are not accepted. Blankets remain at school until the end of the week unless they become soiled, and are sent home at the end of each week for laundering. If the parent/legal guardian does not provide two blankets, 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 for non-compliance with our napping policy. If assessed fees are not paid, CELC holds the right to withdraw your child from our program. If withdrawn, the registration fee must be paid again.

CELC requires a pack-n-play fitted sheet for infant cribs, provided inside an extra-large Ziploc bag. Infants are placed flat on their backs to sleep, unless the parent provides a written note from a licensed medical practitioner to the contrary. Once infants are laid down, they may take 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 cribs.

Tell your child's teacher about early pick-ups during nap time so personal items can be gathered before dismissal.

Uniforms

Uniforms are mandatory! CELC requires all students, beginning with our Toddler group, to wear the uniform daily. New students must have the uniform before starting. If your child arrives in an inappropriate uniform, we will notify you to pick up your child. All extra clothing for soiling accidents (ages 3 and up) must be uniform clothing. Children in the Infant to Two Year Old Class may bring non-uniform extra clothing.

Required uniform attire is polo shirts with CELC embroidery. Uniform bottoms must be uniform material. No cargo, denim, or cotton allowed! In cold temperatures, thermals, long sleeves, and/or leggings may be worn underneath the uniform. Any layering under the uniform is allowed. Sweaters and jackets do not need to be uniform. For vendors that provide CELC uniforms, contact the office.

Playground Play

Parents must provide clothing suitable for daily outdoor play throughout the year, to protect against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne disease, as appropriate.

All playground equipment and the playground area are 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 or in the playground area before drop-off and after dismissal.

Holidays / School Closings

Tuition is due according to the payment plan 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. Refer to the school calendar online. Recess days are posted on the school calendar, and CELC is closed on those days. There is no refund, credit, or allowance for school closings, recess days, and/or holidays. If a holiday falls on a weekend, it will be observed on the preceding Friday or the following Monday.

Field Trips

Field trips are fun out-of-school activities throughout the year. Students ages 3 and up can participate. Not all field trips are available for all ages. We send further information home as each trip approaches. Payment must be received with the permission form to register your child. No permission forms will be accepted without payment. All field trip payments are non-refundable. Every child must wear a Countryside white T-shirt (not a polo) with CELC embroidery to attend a field trip.

School Parties / Birthday Celebrations / Etc.

CELC celebrates many holidays and other special events. If you do not want your child to participate in our celebrations, give notice 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, sent through our monthly newsletter.

Photo Release

By enrolling, you give Countryside Early Learning Center permission to use your child's photograph or photographic image in official CELC business, including the school website, newsletters, and graduation slideshows. Photographs or video may also be used by news organizations and for promotional purposes. You waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product, including any advertising copy or other material used with it.

Inclement Weather

Countryside follows the Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) schedule for inclement weather. It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to track local weather channels for any changes MDCPS makes to its schedule. 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 a power outage occurs at any time for any reason, Countryside will follow these 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 the outage.
3. Contact parents by email, text, or any other means necessary.

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

Disciplinary Practice

Our program ensures age-appropriate, constructive discipline that gives children alternatives to improper behavior. To keep our program safe and successful, 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 the situation.
3. Children will be placed in "Time in" in 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 support strategies for challenging behaviors. We encourage parents to share concerns about 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 socially acceptable and appropriate behavior as they grow to maturity.

Countryside Early Learning Center believes in making the most of classroom interactions. Child-teacher interactions help children develop proper socialization, self-control, confidence, and compassion in their dealings with others. Proper interactions are used to ensure proper conduct, prevent injury, and promote higher-order learning.

Teachers must model positive behavior and create an atmosphere that gives students opportunities for desirable behavior. Our staff provides healthy direction through these steps:

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

These strategies help 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 irrationally.
3. Reminding children of rules.
4. Diverting the child.
5. Verbal and/or physical assistance, including help with problem solving if a child is discouraged or frustrated.
6. Offering children choices to help them meet expectations or to reinforce limits.
7. Clarifying the inevitable or unavoidable outcome of the behavior to the child.
8. On the rare occasion when a child loses control and could injure him/herself or others, embracing the child to soothe them until self-control is regained may be required.
9. Giving the child an opportunity to make amends.

Practices that are unacceptable

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

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

Renewal Forms

Several forms must be renewed every year. It is the parents' responsibility to meet all renewal dates and requirements for processing renewal forms.

Enrollment Packet and Agreement

Return the completed enrollment packet to the office 24 hours before your child's first day of school, together with the registration fee (cash only). Your child's medical records and birth certificate are also required. Each family receives the child care facility brochure, "Know Your Child Care Facility" (CF/PI 175-24), and written notice of our disciplinary practices.

No terms of the enrollment agreement may be changed in any way. If changes of any sort are made to the agreement, it is null.

New Student / Parent Orientation

We encourage parents to visit our facility with their child. Visits are by appointment only; call the office at 305-246-5315 to schedule. Meet the teachers, tour the classrooms, and learn about our program.

Beginning a new routine can be exciting and challenging for children. Countryside ELC works diligently with parents and children to make the transition into school 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 a new routine.

Transitioning Procedures

Our staff follows a transition procedure for each child. We understand this is a sensitive time for the child and for the Parent/Guardian, and we will make the transition as smooth as possible.

Class by class transitions

1. The child will visit the classroom he/she will be attending, during circle time or work time, 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 the current and future classrooms will meet with the parent(s) to share information about the child's needs, schedule, learning activities, and goals for the new classroom.
3. Once the child has transitioned into the new class, all of his/her personal belongings will be placed in the new classroom.

School to school transitions

Assistance with transitions from Countryside ELC is available. We are here to support you and work together as a team.

Child Abuse and 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 the 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.

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. We use learning materials and other educational resources to build cognitive development.

Parent Signing In/Out Responsibilities

Sign your child in and out every day. Recording the specific date and time is essential to accurate attendance at the school. Electronic sign in/out is mandatory. If your child is enrolled in a funded program (School Readiness and/or Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program/VPK), you are responsible for following the sign in/out 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 under lock and key or out of reach. A toxic product is any product whose label states "Keep out of reach of children" or a similar phrase. Toxic products are not allowed around students or in students' possession. Countryside ELC holds the right to consider any product toxic in accordance with licensing entities.

Unusual Behavior / Conflict Resolution

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

If a child has a particularly difficult time following the rules of the school, the teacher will request a conference with the parents and the Director to find a solution. If that approach is unsuccessful, further assistance may be recommended to observe the child and discuss with the parents, teachers, and the Director the best approach to a resolution.

- 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 support strategies for challenging behaviors. We encourage parents to share concerns about their child's development and/or behavior.

Child Observations

Countryside conducts quarterly observations on all enrolled students. 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) have coordinated a Screening and Assessment Program. This important project brings everyone together to help your child enter elementary school ready to succeed.

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

Lending Library

Every classroom has a Lending Library for students and their families. A sign-in sheet is provided so parents and children can borrow a book at any time. Return borrowed books within a week of the date borrowed. Teachers rotate the books 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 the child possesses unique academic potential and behavior.

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

Teachers must log parent-teacher conferences on their parent-teacher log and specify whether the contact was in person, by telephone, or through written correspondence. When required parent contact is not achieved, evidence of attempts to contact parents must 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 about a child's behavior or progress must be held with only the child's parents present, not in front of classmates or other parents. Conversations about a child's behavior should not take place in front of the child, unless needed. Maintain a professional attitude. Simply ask the parent if he/she could wait a minute until the children leave and you can give 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 problems concerning enrolled children with any parent. Forward all complaints and concerns to the Director.

Special Needs Enrollment

Countryside prohibits discrimination against special needs children within our program. We take pride in giving all students the resources they need to succeed in our program. Readily achievable accommodations will be provided as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Therapeutic Services

Countryside allows pre-registered, scheduled therapists to provide services on our campus during school hours. Parents/Guardians contract their child's therapist or therapy company directly. The therapist is an independent third-party provider, and the school assumes no liability for the content, outcomes, or professional conduct of therapy sessions.

Before services begin, the following must be on file with the office. Missing paperwork places services on hold.

- Therapeutic Services Authorization Agreement, signed by the parent/guardian. It permits your child to leave the classroom for sessions, scheduled with administration to keep disruption to a minimum, and stays in effect until the parent/guardian or the school revokes it in writing.
- A letter from the parent/guardian authorizing both the therapy company and the individual therapist.
- The child's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) with the therapist's days and times of service.
- The therapist's level two background screening, organization license, state license, and professional liability insurance. Therapists employed by a company provide a certificate of insurance naming the school as additionally insured.
- The therapist's signed Therapist Guidance Protocol Agreement and Therapist Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability.
- The parent's signed Parent Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability.

The therapist emails these documents to info@countrysidelearningcenter.com with the subject line "Therapist Docs for (child's name)" and the date and time of the first session. The school sends an authorization email once everything is approved.

Therapists follow our protocol on campus:

- Services are scheduled in advance on a first come, first served basis, and time slots are strictly enforced. Only two therapists may be in the facility at one time.

- Therapy is never held in the classroom. Sessions take place only in the designated areas of the property.
- Therapists sign in on arrival and out at the end of the session, pick up the child from the classroom, sign the therapist log, and walk the child to and from the therapy area.
- Sessions may not interrupt nap time or lunch. Waiving those times requires authorization from the parent, school administration, and/or a medical professional, as applicable.
- Therapists sanitize and clean the area after each session, take children to the restroom when needed, ask the child's teacher for help with potty incidents or clothing changes, and complete an Accident/Incident Report for any incident during a session.

The Parent Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability confirms that you voluntarily accept the risks of your child's attendance at Countryside and participation in therapist services, and that you release the school, its employees, and its representatives from related claims. Therapists sign a matching waiver. Countryside may amend the therapist protocol when necessary. All forms are provided at registration or on request from the office at 305-246-5315.

Assessments

Child Observation and Assessment

Child assessment serves multiple purposes. It looks at meaningful educational outcomes, gathers information in ways that are natural and comfortable for children and adults, and provides accurate data for individual child planning. Educators assess young children to see how they are developing and to measure how the program contributes to each child's growth.

Traditional testing (for example, a series of multiple-choice questions) is one way to measure, but 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 give teachers 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.

Observations are completed throughout the year, informally, during everyday classroom activities. The parent is informed through a family report and discussed through a parent-teacher conference.

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 refers 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 accurately identify infants or young children who need 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 written in simple, straightforward 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 help parents understand 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, 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 cutoff points. The provider and/or teacher discuss the results of the screening with the parents.

©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 developed the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment in collaboration with the Department of Education. Its purpose is to give teachers valid and reliable feedback on children's progress in attaining the skills in the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds, so teachers can 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, 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 field test was meant to determine the viability of the materials and to collect data to establish a sample that represented the state. Public and non-public school VPK teachers administered the VPK Assessment measures and gave feedback about the materials. The information gathered from the teachers was incorporated into 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 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 (print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics, oral language/vocabulary) can benefit from targeted instruction during the preschool year.

The Department of Education developed the VPK Assessment Online Reporting System to give teachers a user-friendly tool to track children's progress in attaining the skills in the Standards for Four-Year-Olds, so teachers can use this information to guide instructional decisions in the VPK classroom. The system is available to all registered providers free of charge. It allows VPK teachers to enter each child's assessment results and then analyze the data to plan lessons that meet the individual needs of all children.

The VPK Assessment Online Reporting System can:

- Create individual, classroom, and center level reports to track progress
- Link the assessment data to instructional strategies and resources 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.

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. Written notification will be provided when policies are changed.

Visit us online: www.countrysidelearningcenter.com