



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE EARLY LEARNING CENTER
GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICA & RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT THE ELC
2005 – 2006

Welcome to the University of Delaware Early Learning Center (ELC). The ELC is a full-day child care center serving children ages six weeks to twelve years of age and their families. It is also an integrated research, clinical, and service facility with the mission to provide best practices to the community, train new professionals to serve children and families, and to develop – through research and program evaluation – knowledge that can be used to better serve the general community and those preparing to serve families and children.

Below is information about working and learning in the ELC. We hope that your time here is beneficial to your clinical and/or research activities. We also hope that you have the opportunity to contribute to the children, families, and professionals working at the Early Learning Center.

If you have questions about any of the items below or have questions as you work here, please contact the Director, Karen L Rucker, or the Early Learning Center administrative team at 302 831-6205 or by email to ud-elc@udel.edu.

OVERVIEW of the ELC and Its OPERATIONS

- The ELC is a living, breathing early care and education facility that provides students and researchers with the opportunity to learn and research in the setting of a functioning, full-day child care setting that serves children and families from very diverse backgrounds.
- Part of the ELC mission is to link disciplines and areas of knowledge, so we hope that you will take advantage of interacting with researchers, professionals and students from other departments in this trans-disciplinary setting. Some of the disciplines conducting work at the ELC include nursing, education, child development, psychology, physical therapy, health sciences, nutrition, music, foreign languages, exercise sciences, education, agriculture, cooperative extension, and restaurant management. The multi-disciplinary nature of the ELC is critical to its operations and to the continued learning and development of those who work here.
- All program spaces in ELC have video and audio recording capabilities. Any time you are with children or ELC personnel may be a time when you are observed or recorded. This capability is for both clinical and research purposes.
- The educational philosophy of the ELC is developmental in nature and focuses on the individual development of each child and the individual needs of each family. The curriculum ensures that there is a strong emotional security for each and every child, and then uses children's natural curiosity and play as

the foundation from which to support their cognitive, language, social, physical and emotional skill development in order to best prepare them for success in school and life. Our approach is designed to allow children to explore materials and activities so that they construct and discover knowledge, and develop skills through high quality, purposeful activities.

- We believe firmly in providing children with strong, positive social models that allow for the development of skills necessary to develop self-regulatory behaviors, negotiation, and conflict resolution. The ELC employs positive guidance as a method of behavior management, with a strong emphasis on preventative measures. We recognize that it is important to work together with families to encourage the child's positive behaviors. Strategies are appropriate to the child's age, developmental stage and individual needs.
- As a reflection of our philosophy, some of the things you will most likely not see

in the ELC include whole group activities for large portions of the day, ditto sheets, workbooks, stickers or token economy systems of behavior management, and time out.

- Some of our requirements may feel different to you than in a school or laboratory setting. Many of the safety and security guidelines are reflective of requirements in the Delaware child care regulations, public health requirements, and federal food program regulations. If you are unsure of a requirement, please ask.
- Because the ELC's primary service is caring for children, access to the building and security within the building is critical. The ELC has approximately 100 doors – for the safety of the children, all of these doors can not remain unlocked the entire day. If you need access to a room, please let someone at the front desk know and we will be glad to help you.
- For the same security reasons, people can not be loaned keys or roam the building freely outside of the area in which you are scheduled to work.

INTERACTING WITH FAMILIES AT THE ELC

- Please ***always*** be respectful of children and their families.
- The well-being and development of children and their families are foremost in the activities at the Early Learning Center; therefore, in classrooms, at the front desk and in all areas of the building, children and families will be attended to before others. Please be patient if you need something from ELC staff.
- In all areas of the building and on the grounds of the ELC, you are a role model to children and families. We ask that your dress, behavior, and interactions reflect professional behavior, respect, and kindness.
- Parents picking-up and dropping-off children at the ELC have busy schedules. If you see ELC staff interacting with a parent or their child, please wait until the interaction is finished. Your question/need will be addressed when the parent/child has finished talking.
- All information about children, parents, and their families is strictly confidential information. Do not discuss children and their families in the halls, with persons other than ELC staff or your site supervisors.
- Do not use the names and/or identifying information of children and families outside the ELC. For any research or course work you are involved with, it is

expected that you will not use the children's names or other identifying information in your discussions or in written materials

- The ELC's ethical conduct is guided by the ethical guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. A copy is available online at www.naeyc.org or upon request to the ELC.
- Please do not talk with other students, researchers or staff about children or their families in their presence. Even infants and toddlers, with their limited expressive language skills, are able to understand many words and non-verbal interactions.
- **No photos, videotapes, digital recordings, audio recordings or other methods of capturing children's images or voices is permitted unless specific ELC approval has been granted.**
- Unless authorized for your project, access to confidential information, including children's files, full names of children, birth dates, home addresses or telephone numbers, information on parents, medical records, diagnoses, IEPs/IFSPs, family history, and other specific information will not be permitted. Likewise, access to confidential information about the staff or operations of the ELC is not permitted unless specifically authorized for the project upon which you are working.
- All interactions at the ELC should be professional. If your clinical/research experience involves direct access with children, parents, or other professionals, please work to act as a corresponding professional. Your actions represent the ELC and the University of Delaware.
- To reduce the likelihood of spreading mis-information, if a parent or other professional asks a question, please refer them to an ELC staff member.
- Because the ELC is a child care solution for families, they drop-off and pick-up their children as meets their daily needs. It is not possible to determine when a given child will arrive or depart on a given date.
- Due to illness, family schedules and other reasons, children may not be in attendance on the day you wish to interact with a given child. You might want to call ahead to see if a child you are scheduled to work with is in attendance that day.
- **No one other than ELC staff may be alone with a child at any time, unless specifically authorized by the director of the ELC.** In order to be alone with a child, you must meet the Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing requirements and have a completed file with criminal background checks, references, annual training requirements, health status reports and other information.
- All printed information to be distributed to ELC families and staff must be approved by the ELC director.

INTERACTING WITH STAFF AT THE ELC

- Each semester there are hundreds of students and researchers who work in the ELC. On any given day there may be 50 or more additional adults working in the ELC from different university departments and centers. Please be patient if we don't recognize your face or remember your name. We will also ask you your name, the course/project you are working on, and require you to sign-in each time you visit, for security reasons and to keep a record of the level at which the ELC is being used by the University.

- Please be respectful of all ELC staff and remember that their first obligation is to the children and families being served by the ELC.
- We will work to accommodate the needs of your project, but it will not be possible to make accommodations that interrupt the care of children. Most importantly, children's mealtimes and rest times can not be changed for research or clinical activities.
- The ELC administrative staff has many roles and responsibilities and cannot always stop what they are doing to meet with you. If you need to discuss a concern or activity, please make an appointment so that we can give you our undivided attention.
- If you need to speak with one of the administrators and our office door is closed – whether we are alone or with other people – please do not interrupt. We close our door when conducting a confidential or complex business transaction. You are welcome to ask the staff at the front desk to give us a message when we are available.
- If you personally do not have a clinical or research proposal with the ELC, understand that the holder of the proposal is directly responsible for all activity related to that project and it may be necessary for you to go through that person in order to make requests or changes to your activity. Conversely, there may be times when the ELC communicates directly with the proposal holder versus the students or research assistants working on that proposal, and as a student or research assistant you will not necessarily be a partner in that conversation.
- When entering a classroom for the first time or when there are new or different staff in the classroom, please introduce yourself to the teachers and state why you are there. Also, please respect that many young children have stranger anxiety and/or need you to respect their personal space. Likewise, do not ignore staff/children.
- If your project requires you to meet with teachers, we need to know well in advance – unlike an office where people can leave their desk to talk, teachers can not leave children. Arrangements can be made through the director of the ELC.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES - LOGISTICS

- If an activity is not listed in a clinical or research proposal that has been approved by the ELC Program Council, it may not be possible to accommodate your needs. ALL clinical and research activities conducted at the ELC are approved through the Director of the ELC or persons she designates.
- Please schedule your activities in the ELC well in advance of when you wish to start. A written request for use of the ELC resources is best done by email to ud-elc@udel.edu. This way research rooms, observation spaces, meeting spaces, and other resources can be scheduled for your use. While the ELC has been designed to accommodate the needs of many students and researchers, the resources are limited and need to be scheduled.
- E-mail communications must include in the subject line the name or nature of your activity in the ELC, e.g. research project name, course number, etc. We will make every effort to return your email within 24 hours.
- Although rare, there may be days during the semester when access to the ELC is not available. Occasional staff in-service days and university functions may close the ELC to non-staff.
- There may be times when access to particular classrooms will be restricted.

- We will do our best to complete forms, assessments, and the gathering of information for you but we request that

you give us a reasonable amount of time to complete these tasks.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES - BUILDING

- The ELC opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. If you arrive before 7:00 a.m., you will not be admitted to the building.
- For security reasons, you must enter and exit through the main lobby at the front of the building.
- The front entry is a secured door. You must ring the doorbell and wait to be admitted.
- You must sign-in and sign-out of the ELC. Please do not enter or leave the center without doing so. This is required for all staff, students, researchers and visitors. While in the building, you are expected to wear a student/researcher badge sticker so that families and visitors do not confuse you with ELC staff. Please be aware that during peak times of the morning, you may have to wait in line to sign-in.
- The observation deck equipment is for the use of clinical and research personnel. Please use the equipment carefully; many projects use the equipment. In order to keep the equipment operating efficiently, the following guidelines should be followed in the decks:
 - no food or beverages in observation booths;
 - no sitting on the counters;
 - clean up booths when you leave;
 - if equipment is not operating correctly, contact the front desk
 - if there is no sound in your booth, it may mean that the classroom "quiet" switch has been turned off in the classroom to allow for a private conversation with families; contact the front desk for assistance.
- University of Delaware Parking Services has designated the ELC parking lot as a gold lot. You must have a gold sticker to park in the lot, otherwise you will be ticketed or towed by Parking Services. Access to the ELC is available by University shuttle buses, the Newark UniCity buses and the Dart bus system.
- Students/researchers may not park in the guest spaces or the area designated as parent parking. University of Delaware Parking Services will ticket or tow your car if it is parked in these spaces, even if you have a gold parking sticker.
- Please do not park, stop, or idle in the fire lane in front of the ELC; elementary school buses and emergency vehicles use the lane for access.
- There is a bike rack located in front of IEC – the building neighboring the Early Learning Center. Please do not attach bikes to our entry pavilion.
- Unfortunately we can not allow access to the ELC refrigerators or microwave.
- Please do not bring any beverages in classrooms.
- Please do not sit in the hallways of the Early Learning Center.
- Please do not put backpacks, briefcases or purses in hallways or on the floor within reach of children. Many over the counter medicines and cosmetics are poisonous to young children.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Due to allergies and medical conditions of children enrolled in the ELC, we are a nut-free environment. Please do not bring any product containing nuts into the center (this includes such things as candy bars and certain cooking oils).
- Many of the children at the ELC have food allergies. Please never offer food to children. If your group would like to have a celebration with the children, please see an ELC Associate Director regarding the kinds of foods permitted in the center.
- Please do not wear strong perfumes or colognes while at the ELC; many children have respiratory problems that can be affected by such products.
- For your own safety and the safety of the children, we recommend that you do not wear dangling earrings when working in the classrooms.
- No smoking anywhere on the ELC grounds, including the parking lot.
- To protect the health of the children attending the ELC when working in group settings you are expected to wash your hands upon entering the classroom. If you are entering multiple classrooms, you will need to wash your hands in each room.
- If you are sick, please schedule a time to visit us when you are well.
- As a general rule, do not pick up children.
- Friends and colleagues who do not have a clinical or research role in the ELC can not accompany you in your work here.
- You may not bring your own children to the ELC, unless they are currently enrolled.
- If you need materials, copies or other resources for your work at the ELC, you must make arrangements for securing those resources. The ELC can not provide materials, copies or other resources because it is an operating center with a restricted budget. If you would like to make arrangements for purchasing materials or copies, please talk with the director.
- The ELC has periodic fire and safety drills. During these drills all individuals in the building need to evacuate. These drills are conducted monthly at various times of the day, and are unannounced.
- Like your mom said... if you drop it/pick it up, if you dirty it/clean it, if you open it/close it, if you take it/put it back, if you break it/fix it (or at least tell someone about it). The ELC is a shared environment with over 20 university departments and the hundreds of children and families that attend here. We are all responsible for its upkeep and appearance.
- Likewise, if you observe or overhear something that you feel the ELC staff should be aware of please tell an Associate Director immediately.

REQUIRED BY YOU

- Please bring the best YOU that is available to our center
- Please present yourself in a professional manner. Clothing not permitted in the ELC includes, but is

not limited to clothing that is excessively dirty or in ill repair; blue jeans; shoes that could lead to injury; clothing that depicts images or text that is not appropriate for young children; clothing that reveals one's stomach or private areas – either standing or kneeling/bending over. Shorts and skirts must be of an appropriate length, no more than 3" above the knee.

- **If you raise your voice, are disrespectful to children or staff, touch children inappropriately, display aggressive or careless behavior, dress inappropriately, use inappropriate language, or do not respect the building, you will be asked to leave immediately. You also be asked to leave immediately if it is suspected you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.**
- If you will be in the center more than seven hours in any one week, or a total of 40 hours or more in one calendar year – whether it be as an employee, a student, a researcher, or a volunteer – Delaware law requires that you be fingerprinted so that they may conduct a criminal history investigation and child abuse registry check. In addition, you will be required to have a health examination, including a TB test, as this is required by the Office of Child Care Licensing, as well as specific file documents. Your professor or the researcher you are working with, will gather and submit this information before your first day of attendance in the ELC.

- Human subjects training is required of all persons conducting or assisting with research. Unless approved by the ELC Program Council, on-line forms of human subjects training will not be accepted. You must attend a UD human subjects training provided by OVPR.
- For information on access to universal data, please contact Dr. Mary Dozier, the Director of Research.

► A signed acknowledgement of receipt of this information must be on file. (See form on last page of this document.)



RETURN THIS PAGE, WITH ORIGINAL SIGNATURE, TO THE ELC

2005 – 2006

I, _____, have received and read the University of Delaware Early Learning Center *Guidelines for Practica & Research Activities at the ELC*, and understand my responsibilities.

Name (print neatly) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Course Name & Number or title of Research Project _____

Witness _____

Date _____