



# Capitol Park

Early Learning Center

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Capitol Park ELC is a non-profit center that is overseen by a Board of Director.

Executive Director: Whitney Fink

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Dear Parents,

We are pleased that you and your child are part of Capitol Park Early Learning Center. We are committed to making this a successful and rewarding time for you and your child.

The following Parent Handbook outlines all the important areas of our program. Please read it carefully and bring any questions you might have to the attention of the Center Director. The policies and procedures identified in this book were written to ensure that we have the tools we need to offer a quality child care environment for your child and a financially secure business operation.

Please keep this book handy so you can refer to it whenever you have a question. You will receive any changes, deletions, and additions to this handbook in writing.

Once you have read and understand this handbook please sign the "Adult Expectation Agreement" the "Parent Confidentiality Statement" and the "Parent Handbook Verification Statement" and return it to the Center Director.

Once again, WELCOME.

## **Section I. Overview**

### **CENTER GOALS**

- To provide a developmentally appropriate environment in which young children may grow to their fullest potential.
- To offer a curriculum that provides a balance of teacher-directed and child-directed activities, large group and small group learning opportunities, and quiet and active play times.
- To offer an environment that is safe, clean, and child-orientated.
- To foster the development of positive relationships among peers and adults.
- To provide families with the needed support to allow them to prosper.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide quality, affordable, child care services for working families.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Capitol Park Early Learning Center (CPELC) is dedicated to providing high quality child care to you and your child. We will provide children with a safe environment that encourages them to explore and grow at their own pace.

Parents play a key role in their child's success at Capitol Park. We gather information from you that will help us to provide a program to meet your child's individual needs. We encourage parents to be a part of their child's day. Parents are welcome to come and be a part of their child's day whenever convenient and possible for them to do so.

We believe our program provides your child with daily experiences which are in accordance with their ethnic and cultural background. It is our goal to provide each child the right to express himself/herself in a safe and secure environment and to be allowed the freedom to make choices.

Our teachers share our commitment to providing you and your child quality care. We hire only those that are dedicated to helping your child grow and learn. We facilitate employee growth with ongoing training, evaluation, and supervision. Our teachers need to have an understanding of how children grow and develop. We value the input of our teaching staff and treat them as professionals.

Our program is here to ensure that your child develops a positive self-image and a lifelong love of learning. We are committed to this goal and hope that you will join us in making your child's experience one that will last a lifetime.

### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Capitol Park Early Learning Center is a United Way supported agency and also receives support from Polk County Early Childhood Iowa and Women United. This support includes program and classroom consultation, facility improvements, equipment, and staff development. In addition to these three agencies, Capitol Park is also a community partner with the Des Moines Public Schools, Drake Early Head Start and EveryStep.

## Section II. Operational Policies

### ENROLLMENT

We accept children between the ages of 2 weeks and 6 years of age. The parents of these children embrace our developmental approach to learning. No child shall on the basis of race, color, religious belief, cultural heritage, national origin, gender, sexual preference, political beliefs, and disabilities, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any center program or activity.

Children with special needs will be considered on an individual basis and the center will accept children as long as we are assured that we can fully meet the child's needs and the needs of other children in the group with reasonable accommodations. In all cases, the child must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to themselves or to other children.

If the center has no immediate vacancies, a waiting list is maintained for future enrollment vacancies. Vacancies are filled on a first come, first serve basis with consideration given for group composition.

### HOURS OF OPERATION AND HOLIDAYS

#### Capitol Park Early Learning Center

The Center is open from 6:30am-5:30pm., five days a week, twelve months a year except for the following holidays.

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Day After Thanksgiving
Independence Day	3 o'clock Christmas Eve (if weekday)
Labor Day	Christmas Day

Staff Professional Development Days (2 per calendar year)

Should traditional holidays occur during a weekend or be rescheduled for a long weekend, we will observe the holiday in accordance with the National Holiday Bill. **When Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>, falls on a Tuesday, the center will be closed all day Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.**

### WEATHER CONDITIONS

#### Capitol Park Early Learning Center

Weather closings are announced on local television stations. Closing of local public school does not mean the center will be closed. We will do everything within our power to offer care to families and children. We will not put the health and safety of our staff and children in jeopardy.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

The goal of Capitol Park Early Learning Center is to provide a positive program for children and their families. We will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation. We will not use discipline methods that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs. At times, children may have difficulties getting along with others and expressing themselves. When this happens, they let us know in a variety of ways and sometimes they act out their frustration with undesirable behavior. Following is an outline of how we provide guidance.

To provide the best possible experiences for your child, we will communicate with you in a variety of ways. These include home visits, telephone contact during available hours and greeting you when picking up and dropping off your child. We will get to know you and your child. In this way, we can work together to build on the child's strengths. Parents are encouraged to ask questions about their child's behavior and the guidance being used in the classroom. Communication between staff and families is vital to forming a working partnership that benefits everyone.

We use positive reinforcement to build self-esteem in children and celebrate their successes. We praise, give "thumbs up", and handshakes, pats on the backs and "high fives" on a regular basis. When challenging behavior is mild, "planned ignoring" is used.

When all the above methods are used and staff decides that additional interventions are needed, you will be asked to participate in a parent teacher conference. At this time additional interventions will be decided and you will be asked to sign a referral for so that we may reach out to our community partners for additional support.

When children are engaged in behavior that is harmful to themselves, others, or the classroom you may be asked to pick your child up from the program. If the behaviors still continue and staff intervention is not effective you may be asked to withdrawal from the program.

## **PREVENTING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

The protection and safety of children is an important goal of Capitol Park Early Learning Center. All staff members receive training in the area of prevention and reporting. **CENTER STAFF ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS AND ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ANY SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE.** Suspected cases may include: unexplained (or vague history for) bruises, burns, or fractures, frequent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing for weather conditions; unmet physical, emotional or medical needs; unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual behavior; or history of abuse/neglect reported by the child. Reports are always confidential and made with the child's safety in mind. Please contact the center staff if you have questions or concerns.

As required by law, all staff working with young children are screened for any previous child abuse charges.

## **ADULT EXPECTATION AGREEMENT**

One of the most important ways that staff can reinforce positive behavior is to demonstrate positive behavior for children. Children learn how to behave and interact with others by watching how significant adults in their lives express themselves and perform daily tasks.

Because of this, it is important that adults provide a good example and are good role models for the children. Both parents and staff share this important responsibility. Therefore, a certain level of conduct is expected of adults in the classrooms, adjacent buildings, hallways and parking lots located close to the center.

These expectations include no profanity, threatening, shouting, or adult discussions of a highly personal nature. If a family member needs to discuss a personal matter with the staff, please call the center before the children arrive or after the children leave. Discussing personal issues in front of the children can be highly disruptive and unsettling.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Maintaining confidentiality is essential to the quality of services provided for families. Information that families share with center personnel and volunteers is used to provide the best experience for families and children. We are committed to respecting and safeguarding all information about the families we work with. To ensure this, each center employee/volunteer signs a statement of confidentiality. In addition, children's records are kept in locked files at all times.

Children's experiences, relationships, behaviors, development, challenges and successes are an important part of their center life. Because parents, volunteers, and consultants are members of the team they are expected to maintain confidentiality. This means that as a volunteer what you see and hear about children and families needs to be held in strict confidence. Also, any information you see or hear about staff must be kept confidential.

When everyone associated with the center maintains confidentiality then the integrity and reputation of families, staff, and the program is maintained.

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Parents and family members listed on the enrollment paperwork are welcome at the center at anytime. Prior notice to management or teachers is not necessary. Please be aware that there are certain times of the day when children are napping and visitors in the room can disturb their rest.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

If you have a grievance regarding any part of the center or its operations, you should take it to the center director. They will investigate your grievance to determine what action should be taken. Grievance decisions are subject to appeal in writing to the President and Treasurer of the Board of Directors.

Capitol Park Early Learning Center (CPELC) believes that parents should have an opportunity to express their concerns or disagreements with decisions affecting their enrollment. We believe that open communication and productive problem solving fosters better working relationships. Therefore, it is our policy to deal directly with our families in resolving any problems, differences, or disputes which may arise with respect to company policies, practices, or other matters affecting your enrollment. CPELC may refuse to accept a grievance that is not submitted on a timely basis.

To implement the policy described above, we have adopted the following two-step problem solving procedure:

Step 1. If you have an enrollment related complaint, you should promptly make an appointment with the Center Director or Assistant Director to discuss the matter. When you meet, please describe your problem or complaint as clearly as possible and use specific examples.

Step 2. If you are still dissatisfied after you receive the Center Director's response, you should promptly submit a written request for review to the Center's Board of Directors who will carefully consider the matter and issue a written determination (after a meeting if appropriate). Requests *should be made within thirty days of the incident or adverse action. Grievance filed past the 30 day measure may be denied. Your request should include a copy of your request to the Center Director and a brief description of his/her response.* The decision of the Board will be final.

All complaints regarding ethics or legality, including discrimination or harassment, will be handled and investigated in as confidential manner as circumstances permit. No employee or parent will be penalized or retaliated against in any way for making complaints in good faith.

## CELL PHONE USE

Communication with parents at pick up and drop off time is an important part of the day. For this reason we ask that cell phones be turned off while dropping off and picking up your child(ren). Failure to follow this policy could result in the suspension or loss of your child care slot.

## PARKING

### Capitol Park Early Learning Center

Handicap parking spaces are only to be used when a sticker is visible. The city does patrol the lots and may issue tickets.

Parking is available to the parents/guardians in the parking lots that are adjacent to the playground. **There is absolutely no parking allowed in the alley directly in front of the center entrance.** The alley is city property and your car will be ticketed and towed. Any parent found parking in the alley will be given a warning. Failure to follow this policy could result in the suspension or loss of your child care slot.

Please be extremely careful when driving through the Center's parking areas. There are small children walking through the lot. **DO NOT** leave your car running while you are inside either building.

## SMOKING

Capitol Park Early Learning Center are smoke free environments. We ask all adults to be positive role models for our children. There is no smoking allowed on the center's grounds, this includes the parking lot. **Please extinguish all smoking material PRIOR to leaving your automobile.**

## Section III. Enrollment Policies

Capitol Park Early Learning Center strives to provide families with a thorough preview of our agency and its requirements for enrollment.

### ENROLLMENT FORMS

- A tour of our facility (preferably with your child present)
- Allow time to observe and have your child interact within the potential classroom.
- A meeting with the Center Director to discuss your needs and concerns and to answer any questions.
- Tuition Contract
- Emergency Release and Pick-up Form
- Health Assessment
- Developmental Assessment
- A current physical exam (dated within the last 12 months)
- Immunization card completed and signed by your child's physician. **Waivers will not be accepted.**
- Completed enrollment packet (includes emergency telephone numbers, pick-up information, and parental agreement forms.)
- If state subsidized, a copy of Notice of Decision with worker's name and telephone number.
- Deposit and Registration.
- Vision Screening Form
- Dental Screening Form
- Mental Health Consultation Form

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

- Your child must be signed in upon arrival and signed out upon departure. For CPECL parents the computer located at the basement entrance is used for this purpose. Every family will have a code for the computer time clock.
- Children must be escorted by their parent/guardian into the Center and their classroom. Parents will assist their child with removing their coat and placing in their cubby/locker. Contact with the teacher is encouraged so that the teacher is aware of the child's arrival.
- All children at CPECL are expected to arrive at the center no later than **9:00am**. Arrival by 9:00am ensures that your child is receiving the full benefit of their classroom program. It also automatically includes your child in the lunch count.
- You will be asked to fill out an Emergency/Pick-up Authorization Form naming people that YOU will allow to pick-up your child if you cannot, due to an emergency.
- Any person authorized by you to pick up your child must be 18 years of age or older.
- **NO ONE** will be allowed to pick up your child from the Center at anytime unless the person is on the emergency release form and presents a photo I.D.
- If you send an individual to pick up your child who is not listed on the Authorization Form, you must send written permission for that individual to pick up their child and their name will need to be placed on the form, and they will need to present a photo I.D.

We understand that occasional conflicts may occur, (medical appointments, transportation difficulties, etc.) If this does occur, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call the Center by 9:00am to inform the staff of the child's late arrival.

### LATE PICK-UP

Your child needs to attend the full session each day. It is important for children to develop good habits for being on time.

- If your child is chronically tardy, a conference will be scheduled to discuss how the situation can be corrected.
- Your child needs to be picked up at the scheduled time each day. When children are left at the Center after closing time, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child is charged. This late fee must be paid prior to the child returning to the center. If a child remains at the Center for thirty (30) minutes after the closing

time and no one can be contacted by phone to pick-up the child, the staff will call the Des Moines Police Department.

- Continual late pick-ups may result in suspension of childcare services.

## **CUSTODIAL/NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT PICK-UP**

Capitol Park Early Learning Center respects the rights of both custodial and non-custodial parents. Both parents will be allowed to pick-up and designate pick-up persons for their child (ren) on their assigned days, unless the following are on file at the Center.

1. Court order contact limitation papers.
2. Guardianship papers.

If a parent who is NOT allowed to pick-up a child comes to the Center (and the above paperwork is on file) the parent will be asked to leave and told that the police will be called if they do not leave. If the parent tries to leave with the child, the staff will not attempt to physically restrain the parent or the child, or place themselves in danger to keep the child at the Center. The Center will notify the police immediately.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

If you find you no longer need our child care services, we ask that you provide a TWO WEEK NOTICE. In the event the notice is not provided, you will be financially responsible for the two weeks.

In the case of the following events, we reserve the right to ask a parent to withdraw a child from the Center on a temporary or permanent basis after other avenues of reconciling the difficulties have been exhausted. These circumstances will include, but are not limited to the following.

- Consistently picking up a child after closing.
- Failure to make timely payments of fees.
- Excessively disruptive or negative behavior by the child or parent.
- Excessive absenteeism

## **ITEMS YOUR CHILD MAY NEED AT THE CENTER**

There are a number of things you should bring with your child to the center. Every child at the Center needs a complete change of clothing. Infants and toddlers often need two or three changes. **BE SURE TO LABEL EACH ARTICLE OF CLOTHING THAT IS BROUGHT TO THE CENTER WITH PERMANENT MARKER.**

Parents of infants, toddlers, and older children when appropriate are asked to bring a daily supply of disposable diapers and wipes. We change children often, so plan on 8-10 diapers for an infant and at least 6 for toddlers and twos.

Parents may choose to bring in their own formula and bottles. The bottles must have a cap. If bottles are not brought in the infant staff will use the bottles we have on hand. Staff will prepare bottles as needed throughout the day. All bottles will be washed and sanitized at the end of the day. Children in the infant room are fed on demand/cue. We will do our best to follow the schedule you would like for your child. However, if your child is showing obvious signs of being hungry before the scheduled time we will feed him/her. It is for this reason that we need to have an adequate supply of either breast milk or formula on hand.

## **OUTDOOR POLICY**

Weather permitting, all children play outside each day. Fresh air is good for children and helps reduce the spread of illness. If children are too ill to play outdoors, children need to remain at home. For extenuating medical needs, a doctor's note is required for a child not to participate in outdoor play (to stay indoors). Two adults must be on the playground at all times. If there is not an extra adult available your child will be placed in another classroom while his or her class goes outside.

Outdoor activities will be canceled when the wind chill is 0 degrees or below or the heat index is 98 degrees or greater. Please send your child to the Center in comfortable, sturdy shoes, socks, and clothing that may get dirty. Outerwear (hats, mittens, scarves, boots, etc.) should be sent daily as appropriate for weather.

## **POTTY TRAINING POLICY**

When your child begins to show signs of being “ready” to begin potty training staff will discuss how you would like to proceed. This is an important milestone in a child’s growth and development and we want to approach it as we do all milestones, relaxed and prepared.

If both teachers and parents agree to start potty training, you will need to supply several pairs of training pants and several changes of clothing including socks.

We do not use all pull-ups as part of our training process. Past experience has shown that they are ineffective in training because children feel dry when they are wet. Also, they are less sanitary to change and more costly.

## **Section V. Tuition Policies**

Capitol Park Early Learning Center is a community service non-profit agency. The Center is funded in part by the United Way, State, Federal and private pay clients. Your child's fee is determined on a weekly basis. Tuition payments are the Center's main source of revenue. Each funding source has requirements for attendance that directly affect tuition payment. It is your responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to these requirements. Families are expected to pay their weekly tuition payment in full on the first day their child attends the Center. Tuition is based on a 52-week calendar. No credit will be given for any Holidays the Center is closed.

In situations where the center must close for the safety of the children (i.e., power outage, no water) tuition will be prorated.

Please make sure you sign the Tuition Contract found in your enrollment packet. A new Tuition Contract needs to be signed whenever there is a change in your funding source, co-payment and payment schedule.

Capitol Park Early Learning Center only offers full-time childcare.

Tuition is calculated based on a 10 hour day. Should you need additional hours please speak with the Center Director for the rate.

### **REGISTRATION FEE**

A \$50.00 non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of enrollment or to hold a slot.

### **DEPOSIT**

A deposit equal to one week's tuition shall be required upon acceptance for admission to the program. If you receive outside funding assistance your deposit is equal to your determined co-payment. This deposit secures the child's placement at the Center and will be applied to any unpaid fee when the child is withdrawn.

### **LATE PAYMENT**

Your tuition is considered late if it is not paid by noon Wednesday of any given week. A ten-dollar late fee will be added to your account. An account is considered delinquent if it is not paid by Friday of any given week. Your child can not return to the Center until you have met with the Center Director to make arrangements to satisfy your account.

### **RETURNED CHECK FEE**

If a parent pays tuition with a check and that check is returned to the Center as NSF, the parent will be charged a return check fee of \$30.00. The fee plus the amount of the check must be paid to the Center in a money order before the child can return to the Center. If this happens twice the parent will be required to make all tuition payments with a money order.

## **Section IV. Communication and Participation**

### **DAILY COMMUNICATION**

Parents of infants, toddlers, and two-year old children can expect written communication daily. Parents are expected to pick up this daily communication form from their child's clipboard. This communication includes important information about your child's physical bodily functions as well as his or her disposition.

The teachers in the preschool programs will give written feedback on a regular basis. Conferences will be held twice a year with parents. Talking with your child each day about experiences and feelings will bridge your child's day between the Center and home. Parents are welcome to request a conference at anytime with your child's teacher to discuss development or concerns.

Each classroom has a Parent Information Bulletin Board. Teachers prepare lesson plans that are posted on this board. These plans are usually based on the interests of the children. Books, activities, songs related to the interests will be outlined on this lesson plan. Take a minute each week to review this form and we look forward to your contributing any information on themes for which you hold a special interest. Also listed on the Parent Information Bulletin Board are a class schedule, a teacher schedule and articles of interest.

### **PARENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE**

Our center has a parent support committee with representatives from each age group. These parents work closely with the management and teachers to provide feedback on the services that meet family needs. They also provide a sounding board for new ideas and services, head teacher appreciation events, and act as references and mentors for parents interested in or new to the Center. If you wish to volunteer for the parent support committee, please notify the Director.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

A Board of Directors oversees Capitol Park Early Learning Center. Members on this board hold expertise in the areas of education, human resources, and finances. It is very important to have parent participation on this board. As an active parent you will often see and be part of what happens in the Center that other members of the board typically do not have the opportunity to witness. If you are interested in holding a seat on the Board of Directors please make your interests known to the Center Director. The Board meets quarterly over the lunch hour.

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Parents will be asked to complete an annual evaluation of the program at Capitol Park. The results of this evaluation will be shared with parents as well as any changes resulting from the evaluation.

## Section V. Health, Safety, and Nutrition Practices

Capitol Park Early Learning Center strives to offer families and children comprehensive quality child care services. This goal often requires us to exceed the minimum rules and regulations set forth by the State Department of Human Services. State regulations require that children at the Center have an annual physical exam and that their immunizations are up-to-date for the child's age. We will notify you a month prior to the expiration date for your child's physical. It is your responsibility to get the physical up-dated and returned to the center. NO child will be allowed to attend the Center without a current physical or immunization record.

### SCREENINGS

During the course of the year your child will participate in various screenings provided by our community partners. These screenings include vision, hearing, speech, language, developmental, and dental. Mental health professionals will be observing each classroom and working with center staff to ensure that the children are part of an environment conducive to learning and growing. As concerns are identified, parents/guardians receive a referral letter discussing results and recommendations if more testing or treatment is needed. The center will follow-up with families that receive a referral recommendation and that information will become part of your child's file.

### MEDICATION

Whenever possible we ask for you to arrange for medications to be given at home. Ask your child's physician to adjust the dosage so that you can administer the medications prior to attending the center and upon arrival home. If home administration is not possible the following guidelines must be followed:

- The Center must have written doctor's orders with administering instructions.
- The Center must have medication in the original container with a pharmacy label. This must be left at the center during the duration of time/days the medication is to be given. Most pharmacies will dispense medications in two containers, one for home and one for school, if requested.
- The Center must have written parent authorization requesting and authorizing staff to give medication as prescribed.
- If the medication is ongoing, the parent must sign a new form monthly allowing for continuous dispensing of the medication.
- "Over the Counter" medications are not permitted unless authorized by a physician. Tylenol or Motrin will not be given if the child is running a fever.

Staff specifically trained to administer medication will give the medication to your child. Staff will record when the medication was given and the dosage. Another staff member will witness administering of medications. Parents must keep staff up-to-date of any medication changes throughout the year.

### ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION

Keeping children well is hard work. To help keep all children as healthy as possible no child may come to or remain at school when they have the following.

Active Head Lice :( live lice in the hair)	must provide proof of treatment, (Box or bottle of product used) to return to the Center.
Cold, Sore Throat, Cough: (prevents the child from comfortable participation in program activities or demands a greater need for care than staff can provide.)	cough and drainage must be under moderate control and child must be well enough to participate in routine classroom activities as determined by Center staff.
Vomiting, Diarrhea (3), and Loose Stools (3):	must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning.
Temperature of 101 degrees or greater:	must be fever free for 24 hours

	without medication before returning.
Chicken Pox:	out of school for 7 days and all pox must be scabbed and dry.
Red or Draining Eyes:	symptom free, doctor's clearance
Skin Rash:	symptom free, doctor's clearance
Yellow Skin or Eyes Gray/White Stools:	doctor's clearance
Stiff Neck:	doctor's clearance
Serious Illness, Injury:	doctor's clearance
Hepatitis A:	out of school for 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice, under treatment, and approved by a physician for return to the classroom. doctor's clearance.

If a child becomes ill at school, the parent/guardian will be called to pick the child up as soon as possible. Before an unexpected illness occurs, it is important for parents/guardians to have a plan in place to pick up or have the child picked up, and alternative child care arrangements made, if needed. All persons that may pick up a sick child must be listed on the Pick-up Authorization form.

## INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS

If a child experiences an unusual occurrence or is injured during the Center hours, a written Incident Report is completed. Parents/guardians are asked to sign the report to verify they have been notified of the occurrence/injury. Parents will receive a copy of the report. In the case of a head injury, parents will be provided with a list of signs and symptoms to watch for in their child as head injury symptoms may develop several hours after the injury occurs.

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The following are plans that the Center will follow during specific emergency situations. Staff is trained regularly on these procedures.

**Blizzards:** In the event of a blizzard, parents will be contacted if a severe weather warning has been issued. Children will be kept warm, safe, and fed while in the building.

**Chemical Spills:** In the event that a chemical has been spilled, the Poison Control Center will be called immediately. We will evacuate children outside, if the spill is inside, or keep them inside if the spill is outside. We will wait for information and directions from the Poison Control and contact parents.

**Earthquakes:** In the event of an earthquake the Center Director will advise staff to take their children in the center classroom and to remain there until the earthquake subsides. Parents will be notified for pick-up.

**Fire:** The fire alarm will sound and/or verbal notice will be given by a designated staff person(s) for children to exit the building through a door closest to their classroom. Teachers will be responsible for bringing their classroom attendance list and for evacuating the building as quickly as possible. The Center Director will call 911 and check all classrooms, bathrooms, storage areas, etc. for any children who may be still inside.

**Flood:** In the event that flood warnings have been issued, all staff and children will be notified by the Center Director to move upstairs to the Fellowship Hall and/or Church Sanctuary. If evacuation is necessary, we will go across the street to East High School. Parents will be notified to pick up their children at East High School.

**Intruders:** In the event that an intruder is on the premises, 911 will be called immediately. The Center Director will move all children into rooms that have doors that can be closed: i.e. infant room, bathrooms, office, and

preschool II room. Doors will be closed and blocked. Children and staff will remain in these rooms until the police have demonstrated to us that it is safe to come out.

**Intoxicated Parents:** If a parent arrives to pick-up their child and is obviously intoxicated, we will ask that parent to remain in the office; while we call a person listed on the emergency contact sheet to come and pick-up the child and the parent. If the parent refuses and takes the child, we will contact the police department.

**Lost or Abducted Children:** If a child becomes lost or abducted, the parent will be notified immediately and 911 will be called.

**Power Failure:** If the Center should lose power for more than 1 ½ hours we will begin to contact the parents from cellular phones. Classrooms will be provided with flashlights. Without adequate heat, air conditioning, or cooking appliances, we would not be able to provide quality care to the children and every effort will be made to request parents to pick-up their child.

**Tornado:** The director will be responsible for keeping an eye on the skies, and an ear to the weather radio. If the weather should become severe, verbal notice will be given to main center staff. If Polk County issues a tornado warning and/or the sirens go off, the Director will notify the teachers to move the children into the inner rooms of the Centers. There may be times that we move the children prior to the sirens being sounded due to high winds and/or other potential danger. An emergency pack will be kept at the Center containing flashlights, a battery operated radio, bottled water and snacks. Children will return to their rooms when the warning has expired.

## NUTRITION PRACTICES

Children receive breakfast, lunch, and snack each day. Menus are posted on the classroom bulletin boards and sent home with the newsletters monthly. Be sure to look for nutrition information in the newsletter as well.

Children are encouraged to try new foods but are never forced to eat them. Food is never used as a reward or punishment. Meals will be served family style. Your child will learn to pass food, take the desired amount of each food, engage in conversation during mealtime, and clean up at the end of the meal.

Meal times:		
Infants:	On Demand	
Toddlers:	Breakfast	8:00 – 8:30
	Lunch	11:00 – 11:30
	Snack	2:30 – 3:00
Two-Year Olds:	Breakfast	8:00 – 8:30
	Lunch	11:00 – 11:30
	Snack	3:00 – 3:30
Preschool:	Breakfast	8:30 – 9:00
	Lunch	11:30 – 12:00
	Snack	3:00 – 3:20

## RELIGIOUS FOOD PREFERENCES

Religious preferences will be accommodated although the variety of food offered may be limited. Parents need to put religious requests in writing. Center staff will be happy to work with you to fill out the proper paperwork.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

If a child has a FOOD ALLERGY or intolerance Center Staff must have a note from the child's doctor explaining what foods the child may not have and what foods can be substituted. Please bring a small picture of your child so it can be posted on the food allergy list for easy identification. A food allergy form is posted in the office.

## **FOODS FROM HOME**

Due to the center being on the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP), we cannot allow outside food to be brought into the center. We provide meals based on the federal mandates, and have food that we can serve to children who arrive early to the center or leave late to cover until meal times. Families bringing food into the center will receive a warning, and continued breach of policy can result in termination of child care services.

## **Section IX. Curriculum and Assessment**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Capitol Park Early Learning Center reinforces the learning of healthy habits. Classroom activities include: outdoor and classroom safety, tooth brushing, hand washing, fire and poison safety, nutrition, automobile and personal safety, expressing feelings, and solving conflicts positively.

### **NUTRITION**

Good nutrition helps build healthy children. Nutrition education will be available to both parents and children. We encourage and promote healthy attitudes toward nutrition by exploring the “Chef Combo” and “We Made it Together” food activities. Cooking is a fun and educational activity that parents and children can share together.

### **CREATIVE CURRICULUM**

Capitol Park Early Learning Center uses The Creative Curriculum. This curriculum encourages teachers to learn about children through observation. Using the observations and information gathered during conversations with the children, teachers make changes to the classroom environment to help further learning.

### **Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment®**

The GOLD Assessment is completed three times throughout the year. Children are observed throughout the year and teachers use this information to determine where children are developmentally. The assessment is used to guide instruction for each child. This information is shared with parents at parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

### **INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAMS**

We focus on activities that teach the babies and toddlers about themselves, others, their surroundings, and the world outside. Caregivers work with infants and toddlers to develop a trusting relationship that fosters healthy social and emotional development, as well as language acquisition and motor control. Toddlers are encouraged to build on and move toward independence. Problem solving, understanding abstract concepts, toileting, and cooperation are introduced. The child’s language development is a key objective of this level.

### **TWO-YEAR OLD PROGRAM**

We focus on language in our two-year old classrooms. This program looks at the individual child, and strives to meet his or her needs rather than the child meeting the programs needs. We stimulate both language and cognitive development through the use of puppets and props that motivate and capture the interests of your child. All programs are implemented individually or in small groups.

### **PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

The learning program or curriculum in each of our classrooms is based on principles of child development, individualization for each child, and culturally relevant practices. Each classroom is arranged in a variety of learning centers to include blocks, table toys (manipulatives), dramatic play and housekeeping corner, art, science, math, literacy, sensory (sand and water), computer, music and movement, and outdoors. As experiences are planned for children in each of the learning centers, the teachers will take into account each child’s interests, strengths, needs, and family and cultural background.

Individualization of the program for each child is an important aspect of our program. Each child then has an Individual Child’s Plan that includes specific goals and strategies for accomplishing the goals. Individual goals for children are implemented within the daily learning program and supported by the family. Center staff and the parents on an on-going basis review this plan. In addition, the program uses a supplemental literacy curriculum. We understand the importance of early literacy skills and the relation to early school success. All four year old

children will receive a literacy and math screening at least twice a year to help determine individual needs for instruction.

The Second Step Program is used to support the social emotional development of the preschool children.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Children over the age of three will have the opportunity to participate in center planned field trips. Field trips give children the opportunity to learn about and explore the surrounding community. A field trip might be a short trip to the neighborhood grocery store or post office or a longer trip to a zoo, museum, or park. Parents are provided advance notice in writing about all center field trips. Specific information concerning the field trip such as destination, times, type of transportation, what to wear and bring along is included in the advance notice.

You will receive a permission form for your child for each field trip taken by the center. You must return the signed permission form to the center by the deadline date, indicating whether your child will participate on the field trip. If you do not want your child to participate on the field trip, then he/she will stay at the center and be placed in another classroom.

For most of our field trips we need parent volunteers to help supervise, which will help make the experience successful and safe for everyone. Two to three children are assigned to one adult during the field trip. Staff takes along a backpack that includes first aid materials and copies of the Emergency/Pick-up Authorization Form in case parents need to be contacted for an emergency.

**Section IIX. Parent Signatures**

**ADULT EXPECTATIONS**

Center staff and family members share the same goals for our children. We want them to learn, develop, and become independent and successful. One of the ways that the center works toward this goal is to provide a classroom that is a safe and loving environment for all children. The daily schedule, the child-size furniture, the way that all of us talk with the children, all contribute to their learning and helps them develop a positive feeling about themselves.

Because of this, it is important that adults provide a good example and are good role models for the children. Both parents and staff share this important responsibility. Therefore, a certain level of conduct is expected of adults in the classrooms, adjacent buildings, hallways, and parking lots located close to the centers.

These expectations include no profanity, threatening, shouting, or adult discussions of a highly personal nature. If a family member needs to discuss personal matter with the staff, please call the center before the children arrive or after the children leave. Discussing personal issues in front of the children can be highly disruptive and unsettling.

If all adults associated with the classrooms do not follow these expectations, consequences will need to be enforced so that the children can experience a positive learning environment. Families will receive one warning and continued violations of the policy will result in termination of child care services.

As a valued Center team member please read and sign the following statement to acknowledge your agreement.

I understand that adults are expected to provide a good example and be a good role model for children in the Center's classrooms. I also understand that consequences will be enforced, if these expectations are not met.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PARENT CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

It is important to keep all information shared with the Center staff strictly confidential and a release of information must be signed to release this information.

Parents must keep all information concerning other Center staff, volunteers, children and families confidential.

My signature at the bottom of this page indicates that I understand the above information and agree to the following confidentiality.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PARENT HANDBOOK VERIFICATION**

I have read and agree to all the information and expectations outlined in this handbook. I have asked any questions that I have and received answers to these questions that I might have. My signature signifies that I will follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in this handbook while in the center or classroom, on any field trips, at all parent meetings and gatherings, and other Center sponsored events or activities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature  
Revised 8/2013, 11/2018, 7/2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date