St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center

Parent Handbook

Revised 2014
St. John Fisher College
Early Learning Center Mission Statement

The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center serves children from 18 months through 8 years of age by engaging them in developmentally appropriate programs, in a safe, nurturing, educational and child-friendly environment. The Early Learning Center meets and exceeds the licensing requirements of the Office of Children and Family Services of New York State.

The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center provides care for the children of students and employees of the college as well as the community. The Center also functions as an educational resource and learning tool for St. John Fisher College by providing a unique opportunity for students and faculty to observe and learn from the children attending the Center.

Philosophy and Beliefs

The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center is dedicated to creating a safe and stable environment in which children can grow and achieve their full potential. We believe that families, teachers and staff should work as partners to build a positive learning community that enhances each child’s development. The Center’s programs are guided by developmentally appropriate practices and staff experience. Teachers and staff are committed to fostering the optimal social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth of each child, with respect for individual and cultural differences.
Goals and Practices

In order to realize the philosophy and beliefs of the St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center in its daily practices, a set of core goals and strategies to attain these goals are highlighted below.

1. The SJFC Early Learning Center will provide a safe, nurturing and stable environment by:
   - Promoting cooperation, respect, and collaboration between children as well as adults.
   - Teaching, modeling, and supporting peaceful conflict resolution.
   - Employing and retaining qualified and caring staff in a supportive work environment with attractive compensation (salary and benefits).

2. At the SJFC Early Learning Center, families, teachers and staff work as partners by:
   - Utilizing a variety of avenues of communication between Center teachers, staff and families to exchange information about the needs and progress of each child as they work in concert for each child’s optimal development.
   - Supporting the education of student workers and modeling the appropriate attitudes, skills and behaviors to promote their professional development.
   - Maintaining rates that are accessible to the families it serves.

3. The SJFC Early Learning Center promotes development of the whole child (social, emotional, linguistic, cognitive, and physical growth) by:
   - Providing an exemplary child care environment that exceeds all relevant licensing standards.
   - Keeping teachers and staff abreast of current best practices in child care to meet the needs of each child and each developmental stage.
   - Social growth will be fostered by encouraging social competence and independence coupled with sensitivity to the needs of others, respect for and celebration of diversity, non-violence and cooperation.
   - Emotional growth will be fostered by respecting each child’s emotional needs, promoting emotional security and positive self-esteem, and encouraging the identification and articulation of emotions.
   - Linguistic growth will be promoted through modeling and developmentally appropriate activities that enhance speech, vocabulary growth and language comprehension.
   - Cognitive growth will be encouraged by providing opportunities for the development of curiosity, and creativity, as well as age-appropriate learning experiences in science, math, literacy and the arts.
   - Physical growth will be fostered by providing opportunities for both fine and large motor skill development, as well as health and nutrition related learning activities.
INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that more adults would pursue studies in higher education if adequate childcare services were available for their children. The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center was established to meet this need. The Center is open to children of students, faculty, staff and administrators of St. John Fisher College, as well as members of the local community.

The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center is a licensed childcare facility that accepts children from age 18 months to 8 years of age on either a full- or part-time basis. In caring for your child, the Early Learning Center focuses on all aspects of a child’s growth and development; providing a caring environment where a child can grow through play, learning activities, and social interaction with others. Teachers provide nurturing and guidance. A pre-school program is offered each morning. Our school age children attend the Center full time when they have vacations and during the summer months. A summer enrichment program is available for children who will be entering Kindergarten through entering Fourth Grade.

FACILITIES

The Early Learning Center is equipped for a variety of developmentally appropriate activities making your child’s experience one of satisfaction and enrichment. Our multi-faceted environment makes it possible for us to offer a wide variety of activities within the Center:

- Each classroom offers an enriching environment where children can explore and create. Within the home-like facilities, children learn by doing, under the careful supervision of caring adults who nurture self-confidence, problem solving and emerging competencies.

- Our learning environment extends into the outdoor play areas situated on the beautiful grounds of the St. John Fisher College campus, behind Murphy Hall. We use this area for riding toys, sand play, ball games, nature study and winter sledding. The highlight of this area is our outdoor playground and picnic area, designed to specifically meet the needs of our children.

- In addition to the Early Learning Center facilities, we make use of the facilities on Campus that would provide your child with enriching experiences. Our campus visits include the following locations: the gym, health office, dining halls, mailroom and library.
STAFFING

The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center is a licensed childcare facility. A full-time director, an educational coordinator, certified teachers and several full-time teaching assistants, and college students staff the Center.

St. John Fisher College students who are enrolled in Education, Psychology, Nursing or other related fields may use our center for observation of young children and for special projects related to their course work. All such observations and projects must go through the approval of the professor of the class and through the center’s director.

The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center Advisory Committee provides a support group for the Early Learning Center staff and clients. The Committee’s membership consists of the director of the Early Learning Center, college faculty, staff, administrators, parents and outside members with an expertise and specific interest in early childhood.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

You may reserve a place for your child by contacting the director of the Early Learning Center. Three documents must be on file before the child’s first day at the Center:

a. A general information form.
b. An emergency information card listing those authorized for contact in case of emergency, and any other pertinent information needed for daily use.
c. A physical examination form from the child’s physician stating that he/she is in good health and has completed the normal immunizations for his/her age.

In order to comply with the state licensing regulations for enrolled children less than three years of age, the Center requires physician statements verifying periodic complete medical examinations at 18 months and two years of age, including the appropriate immunizations and appraisals of your child’s development. Also, we require a written statement of the physician’s recommendations when your child has been seen because of illness.

The tuition policy for the Center outlines payment procedures and weekly rates. Please be sure you have a recent copy as fees are subject to change.

The St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center accepts children without regard to race, creed, gender, nationality, ethnic origin, or handicap.
TUITION POLICY

**Academic Year Attendance Policy:**
Weekly rates are based on your child’s enrollment status, as agreed to in the Parent/Guardian Contract.

Half days are defined as:
- 5 ½ hours or less in the morning per day
- 5 hours or less in the afternoon per day
The half day schedule must fit within either the 7:30AM to 1:00PM or 1:00PM to 6:00PM time blocks.

Weekly tuition fees do not change during weeks when the Center is closed for individual Pittsford School holidays (ex: Labor Day, 3 days at Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, Good Friday), or for snow days.

**Family Discount:**
There is a rate deduction of $20 per week when more than one child is enrolled full-time in the Toddler/Preschool Program and/or Kindergarten Program. This discount applies to the second child enrolled in the above mention programs. It does not apply to full time in the School Age Program.

**Absences:**
Each child is permitted one full week of absence per year (September through June) for vacation or illness at no charge. This week must be taken in a full week block and your child must not be in attendance. At least two weeks advance notice is required when taken as a vacation block

**Drop-In Rate:**
A rate of $12.00 per hour or $80 per day will be charged for child care on a space available basis. The rate is only available by the hour and not fractions of an hour. Director approval is required.

Late Pick Up Charges After 6:00 PM (Per Child)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Charge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 – 6:15</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:16 – 6:30</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:31 – 6:45</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:46 – 7:00</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Child Protective Services will be contacted if a child is not picked up one hour after closing.

**Payments:**
Accounts are to be paid no later than Friday for the upcoming week(s) on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis. Payment should be made by personal check,
money order or cash to St. John Fisher College. If a check is returned or not negotiable for any reason, your account will be charged a fee of $25. Any extra charges are due with your next scheduled payment.

**Late Payment Charges:**
*Accounts that are not paid by noon on Monday of the current week will be assessed a $10 late fee per child.* Accounts delinquent by seven calendar days may result in your child(ren) not being permitted to attend the Center until your account is current.

**Payment Difficulties:**
Payment problems should be brought to the Director’s attention promptly. These problems will be handled in strict confidence and on a one-to-one basis. If you have questions pertaining to our rates please ask the Director.

**Default:**
Should your account fall into default, you are required to pay all costs of collection, including reasonable attorney fees.

**Withdrawal:**
*One month’s notice* is required if you must withdraw your child(ren). Parents must pay the balance of a full month’s tuition if inadequate notice is given.

**Center Closings**

At least Christmas Eve Day through at least New Year’s Day (*one tuition free week and one full tuition payment due*); Good Friday (*full tuition payment due*); Memorial Day (*full tuition payment due*); Labor Day (*full tuition payment due*); The day before Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving (*full tuition payment due*).

Other possible closings:

Weather related closings for the College would be broadcast over local radio stations. *Full tuition payments will be due.*

Changes in Holiday closings as announced by the College – advanced notice would be given.

**NOTICES AND INFORMATION**

Please take time to look at our bulletin boards inside the main entrance to the Early Learning Center in addition to the main bulletin board in each room. Important information and notices will be posted, as well as a copy of your child’s class calendar. Please read all Early Learning Center information carefully. A parent folder mailbox is located inside the main entrance door. Please check this daily.
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

We ask parents to park at the side of the building and bring your child into the Center from that direction. Escort your child into the Center, sign your child in on the clipboard, and supervise or help with the removal of outer-garments. Before your departure, make sure that the teacher is aware of your child’s presence. Please arrive and depart according to your child’s registered schedule. A phone call is required if you are going to be any longer that 15 minutes late or absent that day. A late charge will be imposed when you are later than the pre-arranged pick-up schedule. Sign your child out on the clipboard, and escort your child out of the building and to your car.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

We practice evacuation drills on a monthly basis. An EVACUATION DRILL procedure is followed when the fire evacuation horn sounds. The building is evacuated according to the plans posted for rooms 165, 167, 171, 131, and 132. All evacuees move outside the building to the playground area and wait for instructions from an officer. When it is all-clear we return to the building.

In the event that there is an emergency and we cannot return to the building we will escort the children from the playground area to the lounge in DORSEY HALL (nearest residence hall on the other side of RTE. 31F, just on the other side of the cross walk).

This evacuation will be made by foot unless inclement weather dictates the use of vehicles.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In caring for your child, the St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center staff values your involvement in our program. We encourage you to come for a short visit with your child prior to his/her entrance into the Center and acquaint him/her with the new environment. Call the Director to arrange a convenient time for this first visit. When you arrive with your child, bring him/her in to the Center and supervise the removal of over-garments. Please make sure the teacher is aware that your child is there. Tell your child when you are leaving, what you will be doing while you are gone (going to school, going to work, etc.) and that you will be back.

As a parent, your participation in parent meetings and specially planned program events is vital. Parent meetings are designed for your information and for valuable communication
with other parents and members of the Early Learning Center staff. Some of our special events include family picnics, holiday parties, dinners, etc.

You are invited to speak to your child’s teacher about any special interest project you may want to share with the group. In addition, feel free to arrange a parent/teacher conference if you feel it is necessary.

Birthdays are very important occasions and a time when parents may want to get involved. You and your child may want to bring a store bought treat for all to enjoy on this special day. Please let the teacher know of your plans ahead of time. You are welcome to visit the Center to observe your child in the program. Please call the director ahead of time to make arrangements.
Health Care Policy

All children enrolled in the Center must have a doctor’s health form, with updated immunizations, on file. This form needs to be completed every year or when your child has an exam with new immunizations. This form can be obtained from the Director.

It is the policy of the Center that you keep your child home with a fresh cold, fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting or at the first sign of a communicable disease. **We reserve the right not to accept a child who appears ill or has a contagious condition.** Please notify the Center if your child is sick and keep him/her home until he/she is well enough to resume full activities (including outdoor play).

If your child needs to be on medication please notify the Director. All medication must be in the original container, accompanied by written instructions signed by the physician. Be sure the appropriate labeling and dosage information is included. The Center requires written permission from your child’s physician to administer prescription and non-prescription medication. A medication administration form must be completed by your child’s physician, yourself and a medication administration trained staff member before your child receives medication at the Center. Any medical problems should be recorded on the child’s emergency BLUE card as well as discussed with the Director and child’s teacher.

The following is information on common illnesses with young children. Please refer to this information if your child becomes ill at home or is sent home from the Center:

**FEVER**
If a child has a temperature of 100°F or above, the parents will be called to pick up their child. We use an ear thermometer and/or a temporal thermometer to take temperatures. Do not return your child to the Center until he/she has been fever free, without medication, for at least one day (24 hours).

**VOMITING**
If your child is sent home because of vomiting, he/she may not return the next day.

**DIARRHEAL DISEASE**
If your child develops severe diarrhea, diarrhea with fever or vomiting, or diarrhea with blood or mucus, do not send your child to the Center. Your child can return to the Center when free of symptoms for 24 hours. If your child develops mild diarrhea, please call us to discuss whether attendance is recommended.

**STREP THROAT**
Your child can return after taking medicine for at least 24 hours and fever free for 24 hours.
CHICKEN POX
Your child can return to the Center when all blisters are dried up and crusted over.

CONJUNCTIVITIS
Do not send your child to the Center until 24 hours after you start giving the medication. If your pediatrician decides not to prescribe an eye medicine, ask for a note to send in with your child.

HEAD LICE
Your child may return to the Center as soon as the special medicated shampoo has been used, you have removed all the nits (eggs) from the hair, and you have cleaned or stored the child’s personal items. Remember you must keep checking your child’s hair for new nits for at least 2 weeks. The Director will also check your child’s head when he/she returns to the Center. If more nits are found, your child cannot stay at the Center.

RASHES
If your child develops a rash, and is being treated for this rash by a pediatrician, please inform the Director and the child’s teacher.

If your child develops other illnesses, please call the Director to see if your child should attend.

The following are health procedures followed by the Center’s Staff:

- Maintain a clean, safe, risk controlled, and healthful environment
- Observe children for signs of illness or potential health problems and report any concerns to the appropriate person
- Administer medications according to center policy and local health regulations
- Assure appropriate care is given to mildly ill children who remain in the program
- Provide health education to children, including daily health routines
- Supervise children to insure safety
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate agency

St. John Fisher College Early Learning Center is licensed through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

The Center follows health guidelines set forth by the Department of Social Services, the Monroe County Department of Health, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The Center uses the following NAEYC manual as a guideline for establishing its health policy. It reflects the most current recommendations from health care professionals for keeping children healthy in early childhood programs.

Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs
By Kendrick, Kaufmann, and Messenger
SUPPLIES AND CLOTHING

Each child should bring his/her own book bag or knapsack (labeled with his/her name) each day. It should be large enough to hold artwork, daily papers, notices, etc. Each child should bring a shoebox with 2 complete changes of clothes that will remain at the Center. It should contain Labeled pants, underpants, shirts, undershirts, and socks. For those children who are being potty trained, they should wear elasticized pants (they should NOT wear overalls!). All children are required to wear sneakers or rubber soled and closed shoes for their own protection against injury. No open shoes are allowed (Crocs, flip flops, etc). All clothing must be labeled! Please dress your child appropriately for play and please try to pick clothing that is easy for your child to handle. For your child’s safety, we request that children under three years DO NOT wear barrettes or jewelry of any kind. An adequate supply of diapers, wipes, etc., should also remain at the Center. Please send boots, mittens, snow pants and hats labeled with your child’s name.

For children bringing lunch, all containers should be labeled. Juice or milk must be included in the lunch. Please limit microwavable food to those that need only re-heating. It is difficult to cook an 8-10 minute lunch during a 30 minute lunch period. We ask that you pack an ice pack to keep your child’s lunch safe, as refrigerator space is limited.

TOY POLICY

St. John Fisher College’s Early Learning Center provides toys that are developmentally appropriate for each age group. Therefore, we prefer that toys from home stay at home. We do realize that some children need comfort items in order to make it through the day. These comfort items will be allowed. An item from home would certainly be welcome on Share Day, special occasions, or when it is theme related. Please discuss any items brought from home with the child’s teacher. The teacher will determine a toy or item's appropriateness. The item will be shared with the rest of the class and then put away.

All toys, books, or items must be nonviolent and non-aggressive.

St. John Fisher College is not responsible for broken or misplaced toys.
**GENERAL SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-9:00</td>
<td>Arrival-Children are offered a choice of various activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-12:00</td>
<td>Pre-school program begins. All children at the Center are involved in the program. Diversified thematic activities in art, science, pre-reading and pre-math skills are offered. The children are encouraged to utilize their interest in each area. The children are separated according to their developmental level: toddler group, pre-schoolers, and pre-kindergarteners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45-10:00</td>
<td>Snack. A nutritious snack and beverage are offered to children. We sit together and enjoy being with each other while we practice our good table manners and engage in conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:30</td>
<td>Lunch. Children brown bag their lunch daily. Any special luncheon or pizza days will be noted on the class monthly calendar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-3:00</td>
<td>Quiet time. All children at the Center rest or engage in quiet activities. Cots are provided and a blanket or a soft toy may be brought from home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>A wide variety of activities are offered to various age groups remaining at or coming to the Center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Final pick-up time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This schedule is modified for kindergarten and school age children when they attend the Center for full or part days, summer and school holidays.