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**Committed to Touching Lives**

**ECFE**



*A caring fun growing  
Place for families*

**NEW ULM**

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

Revised: 8/13

# **Early Childhood Family Education**

Office:

Annex

400 S Payne St

New Ulm 56073

507.359.8417

Office Hours 7:30-4:00

ECFE Classroom:

Washington School

910 14th N

Classroom #'s 230, 233, 234

Learning Together:

Classroom-Jefferson School-Kindergarten Wing

Creative Kids:

Classroom-Annex

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## **WELCOME TO NEW ULM'S ECFE PROGRAM**

Early Childhood Family Education is a Community Education Program of Independent School District 88. ECFE is funded with a combined local levy/state aid formula and is supplemented with registration fees. Classes are held at Washington Elementary School - 910 14th North.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The underlying philosophy of the ECFE program is parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Therefore, the primary focus of the program is parent education, believing that it is important for parents to feel good about themselves and about the role they play in raising each child as a unique individual. The program provides a place where parents and children can come together and feel the joy of learning and being together.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Early Childhood Family Education is to strengthen families through the education and support of all parents in providing the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children.

### **GOALS**

The goals of New Ulm's ECFE program are to help:

1. Parent-child relationships support the child's development in:
  - physical well being and motor development
  - social and emotional development
  - approaches to learning (e.g., curiosity, persistence, attentiveness, reflection, interpretation, imagination, invention)
  - language development and communication skills
  - cognition and general knowledge
2. Parents\* understand the importance of what they do with their children and how it changes over time.
3. Parents have the knowledge and realistic expectations to anticipate and meet the developmental needs of their children.
4. Parents demonstrate sensitive and responsive care and interaction with their children.
5. Parents and children experience a smooth transition from early childhood programs and services into kindergarten and the larger school system.
6. Parents are involved in their children's learning and education in the school-age years.
7. Families participate in formal and informal social networks in their communities that support effective parenting.
8. Families are knowledgeable about and appropriately use community resources.



\* The word "parents" includes all individuals who function in a primary parenting role.

## PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION TIME

A licensed Early Childhood Teacher plans activities for parents and children focusing on all developmental areas.

Parent-child interaction time is planned so parents may understand and enjoy their children more fully. Use eye contact, low posture, touching, smiling, and communication through touch or words. Parents spend all the interaction time with their children. Discussion with others takes the focus away from their children.



Follow children's cues. Visit the activity areas he/she is interested in. Parents share the activity. When group activity begins, encourage children to model the activity. If the children are not ready to participate, relax and observe the activity. Children are learning as they observe others.

## PARENT DISCUSSION TIME

A licensed Parent Educator leads the discussion group which focuses on topics suggested by parent participants. Toward the end of the discussion time the children's teacher may come in to talk to the parents about what the children have been doing during teacher-child time.

### ***The purpose is to help parents:***

- enjoy the role of a parent by learning alternative methods of child rearing, more effective communication models, and developmental aspects of child behavior.
- experience a sense of belonging and comradeship with other parents.
- get support in their efforts in raising children.
- enjoy learning and being together with their children.
- build on their successes in order to encourage positive self-esteem for their child and themselves.
- learn to trust themselves!
- enjoy their children and realize parenting is a learning and growing process for everyone.

Everything discussed in this group is considered confidential. Parents need to feel free to share feelings, experiences and emotions without worrying that it will be discussed outside the group. You may repeat ideas and experiences mentioned in class, but please do not use the person's name and you will be given the same respect.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Parent Advisory Committee

Parents are given the opportunity to have input in the Early Childhood Family Education program by attending meetings throughout the year. All parents are asked if they would like to participate and all volunteers are placed on the committee. If parents have questions, concerns, or ideas for new classes or events they are asked to contact one of the committee members or the ECFE Director. Names of the committee members and Meeting dates will be posted in the Parent Ed Room and on the ECFE Website.

### Health Policy

State law requires that an immunization record for each child enrolled in the program or in sibling care is on file in the office. These forms must be completed before children may participate in the program.

Please keep your children home if they have any of the following symptoms: a fever within the last 24 hours; diarrhea, severe nasal congestion, vomiting, enlarged glands, earache, sore throat, harsh cough, chills, any undiagnosed rash (other than mild diaper or heat rash), or the contagious stage of any communicable disease.

Parents should notify the ECFE Office at 359-8417 if their children contract a communicable disease and have exposed children at the center. We will then notify the parents of those children.

If children become ill while at the center they will be made comfortable until the parent comes into the room to pick them up. It is expected the children will be taken home immediately.

### Dress



We suggest that children wear comfortable clothing at the center so that they will feel free to participate fully in all activities. We do take precautions, but some activities may be messy. Children learn best when they are free to discover, touch, feel and experience the world around them. Shoes with slippery soles are discouraged. Tennis shoes are best. Parents are also encouraged to dress for play activities.

### Emergency Closings

If District 88 is closed due to severe weather or if there is a utility emergency at Washington Elementary School, KNUJ/KXLP will carry the announcement. There will be no ECFE classes if District 88 schools are closed. When school is two hours late there will be no **daytime** classes. If **evening** ECFE classes are to be cancelled an announcement will be made on the radio stations. Cancelled classes will be made up at a later date if at all possible. No more than one week of classes will be made up each session.

## **Emergency Codes**

Managing a crisis effectively can mean the difference between anxiety and security. Each building in the district has a "crisis plan" in the event of an emergency. Fire drills and lock-down drills are practiced regularly, according to state law. ECFE participants are required to participate in all drills

- ***Lock Down With Warning***- Students/staff are being harassed by a threatening individual. Students and teachers should remain in rooms until further notified (e.g. demonstrations, disturbances). All exterior doors and classroom doors will be locked. Teaching can continue.
- ***Lock Down With Intruder***- Emergency situation has taken place, students and teachers should remain in rooms until notified (e.g. assault, intruder, weapon). All exterior doors and classroom doors will be locked. Teachers should take attendance.
- ***Lock Down With Evacuation***- Immediate evacuation to another location required (e.g. fire, bomb, heat failure). Teachers should take attendance if possible.

There is a phone located in the child care room for emergency use: Dial 9-911

## **Attendance**

Try to attend each class. Parents and children are a special part of the group and will be missed if they are absent. If parents know they will not be attending a specific session, they should call the ECFE Office at 359-8417 so the staff can be notified.

Parents should try to arrive on time. The teachers allow themselves 15-30 minutes to set up before classes begin. If the door to the classroom is closed, teachers have not finished setting up. Teachers will let them know when class is ready to begin.

## **Emergency Number**

If an emergency would arise at home while parents are attending class, a person (ex. babysitter, family member, etc.) may reach parents by calling the Washington School ECFE Child Care room at **359-8517**.

## **Restrooms**

Restrooms are located in the Child Care Room #230 and at the far end of the cafeteria. When the need arises, parents are encouraged to use the diaper changing facilities located in the ECFE Child Care Room. If the ECFE program furnishes a diaper for children, we would appreciate it if parents would bring one to replenish our supply.

## **Sibling Care**

Sibling care is provided for a nominal fee for all of the classes. This enables parents to attend class with one child and have the other children taken care of by caring staff in a special room designed for child care.

- All children must be preregistered.
- Call the ECFE Office (359-8417) if the child you have registered for child care will not be attending.

## **Lending Library**

The ECFE library has a variety of children's books, videos, activity packets, and toys. Please keep the following in mind when using the library:

- A limit of one book and/or activity packet and one toy or video each week may be checked out by children who are enrolled in class. We do not have enough for children in sibling care to sign out items. We ask that parents do not check out any additional toys or books until the previous choices are returned. Please return toys and books each week as there may be other children waiting for that item.
- If parents should miss a class, please return the toy or book at the next class meeting.
- Check out of materials will begin the first week of class. ***The last week for toy check out is two weeks before the end of the session.*** This way there are two weeks to make sure that all toys and books are returned.
- If children should lose an item or break it beyond repair, the ECFE Advisory Board recommends replacement with a similar item or a cash donation. Our library is run on a very limited budget. We really appreciate parents' help.
- Parent books are located in the Parent Ed Room. Parents are encouraged to select books or packets for information or pleasure reading. Staff members will help parents find materials on a particular topic.
- Parents are asked to wash the toy lending item before returning it. The ECFE Advisory Board also asks parents to wash the toy bags when needed.

## **Check Out Procedure**

- Toys: Each toy has a card in the file box. Ask the staff member for the card which corresponds with the number on the toy. Fill in today's date, parent name, if any pieces are missing, and the class section number.
- Books/Videos/Activity Packets: Parents should find the card and sign the parent's name and the date. Give the card to the staff member helping with check-out.

## **Separation Suggestions**

Separation may be difficult for children. We hope to ease the separation anxiety by offering parents the following suggestions:

- Parents should make a point of showing their children that they are hanging up their coats by the children's and that they will return to get the coats after class.
  - Children may bring a favorite object, such as a blanket or a stuffed toy to class at least the first few weeks. Parents should show their children where his/her object is. Please label all items.
  - When it is time for parents to leave, they should make their good-byes brief and cheerful.
  - Parents may be assured that if their children are distressed and the teacher can't comfort them, she will come and get parents.
  - Parents should show their children where they will be going for their meeting while the children get to stay and play.
- 
- Drop-in child care is provided on a space available basis. All instances of drop-in child care must be approved by the ECFE Office in advance.
  - The fee for drop-in child care is \$5.00 per class per family. Please pay the fee to the child care staff.
  - Please have your child's personal items (bottles, pacifiers, blankets, toys, diaper bags, etc.) marked with their names.
  - Place a name tag on your child.
  - Inform the child care staff of any special needs of your child.

## **Snacks**

Parents are asked to provide a snack for the classroom once each semester. Early Childhood Family Education wishes to encourage an awareness of a healthy diet by providing you with a guideline of recommended, healthy snacks. Please remember, homemade treats may not be brought to ECFE due to health factors and State Health Department directives. Treats must be purchased and brought to the room in an unopened commercial package.

Peanut allergies for some young children are potentially life threatening. We ask all parents bringing snack to **AVOID PEANUT BUTTER OR PEANUT PRODUCTS**. Parents of children with peanut or other allergies are asked to communicate clearly to staff and other parents about their child's needs in order to ensure their safety. Please inform your teachers about any medical conditions of which we should be aware.

## **Pets**

Because our classrooms are used by so many children during the week, allergies to pets can pose problems in another class. To keep all children safe, we ask families not to bring pets into the building for show and tell or any other reason.

## **Directory Information**

District 88 obtains and uses certain information about each student to plan the best educational programs. However, access to such information by third parties is limited and controlled in accordance with legal rights of data privacy.

Directory information includes the following: student's name, address, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, pictures for school approved publications or newspapers.

Directory information may be released to the public without prior consent unless the parent or student, age 18 or older, has objected in writing to the release of any or all categories of information. Written objections for the school year must be received by the ECFE Office.

## **Photos**

Photos are sometimes taken by staff for use in district newsletters, brochures, and other promotional materials. No names of children or parents will be published with photos.

**If you do not want your child's photos used, please notify us in writing. If possible, please include a photo of your child to use as a reference.**

While parents may take photos of their own children while attending class. Please be respectful of other families and do not photograph other's children or place on social networking sites (such as Facebook) without permission from parent of the other child.

## **Cell Phones**

Please turn your cell phones off when you are at school. This is a special time to spend focusing only on your child.

## **Change Your Mind?**

Please let us know as soon as possible if you decide not to attend a class or Family Event that you have registered for so that we can accommodate other families.

## **South Country Health Alliance Participants**

South Country Health Alliance participants may attend class free of charge. When registering, write South Country Health Alliance and your Member ID number on the enrollment form. If you have any questions please call the ECFE Office.

## **Visitor Passes**

Parents attending daytime classes are required to stop in the Washington School Office to sign-in and receive a visitor's pass.

## **Parking**

Parents are encouraged to park in the Bus Loading Zone in front of the school. Parents attending ECFE in the daytime enter the building using Door #1 and parents attending in the evenings enter using Door #2.

## **ECFE Rooms at Washington Elementary School**

- Early Childhood Classroom is in Room 233.
- Parent Education is in Room 234.
- Child Care/Toy Lending is in Room 230.

See Attachment A for a map of Washington School.

## **Keepsake Albums**

Each child enrolled in a parent-child class will receive one Keepsake Album. The staff will fill the album with the session's art projects. The family will receive the album on the last class of the session. Albums are provided free of charge thanks to a donation from a past participant. Albums can be returned to the program during future sessions for staff to fill. If parents choose not to return the album, the projects will be sent home. Filler pages can be purchased from the ECFE program.

## **Mandated Reporting Law**

Minnesota State Law requires all school employees to report suspected child abuse and neglect. If any parent is concerned about abuse or neglect, please talk to a teacher who will assist you in finding help.

## **Smoking**

Please remember District 88 school grounds and buildings are "no smoking" areas. This includes parking lots.

# Check out our website!

We have a fun website with lots of information about all our programs.

ECFE: <[www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New\\_Ulm\\_Public\\_Schools/ecfe](http://www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New_Ulm_Public_Schools/ecfe)>

Learning Together <[www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New\\_Ulm\\_Public\\_Schools/learningtogether](http://www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New_Ulm_Public_Schools/learningtogether)>

Creative Kids <[www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New\\_Ulm\\_Public\\_Schools/creativekids](http://www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New_Ulm_Public_Schools/creativekids)>

Early Childhood Screening <[www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New\\_Ulm\\_Public\\_Schools/ecs](http://www.newulm.k12.mn.us/New_Ulm_Public_Schools/ecs)>