

E&C Academy, LLC

FAMILY HANDBOOK

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

“E&C, LLC. does not discriminate against any person seeking entrance into our program on basis of race, religion, gender, national, or ethnic origin.”

E&C Academy, LLC

Dear Parents,

Welcome to E&C Academy Family!

We are aware that looking for and choosing a childcare for your child is one of the biggest and most important tasks for a parent. We are thrilled and privileged to partner with you in nurturing, educating, and guiding your child during these formative years. Thank you for the opportunity for E&C Academy to become a part of your family's life.

Our professionally trained staff are ready and eager to love and teach your child in a safe, loving, and respectful environment, where they will have the greatest opportunity to grow and develop.

Our mission is that your experience at E&C Academy will be memorable and positive for you and your family. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns throughout your time with us.

Sincerely,

Eva Waller
Director, E&C Academy

Carine Ndinda
CFO, E&C Academy

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Philosophy Statement

E&C Academy's mission is to provide a developmentally appropriate environment in which children can flourish.

Our focus is to deliver an educational program that engages children's social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

We believe that through a safe, loving, and strong program; children have the potential to become leaders in our community.

We provide quality child care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. Our staff are highly trained in early childhood education and child development. Keeping in mind that each child develops at his or her own pace and possesses different interests, we aim to provide teaching methods and development activities that enhance their skills and instill a strong love for learning. Our goal is to provide each child with a fun experience while staying grounded in our dedication to education.

Curriculum

At E&C Academy we use Learning Beyond Paper. This curriculum aligns with the Texas Early Learning Guidelines. Learning Beyond's research-based, classroom-tested curriculum follows a social-constructivist approach, designed to create learning opportunities for children through peer-based activities and intentional interactions with their teachers.

Licensing

E&C Academy, LLC is a state-licensed facility. We operate under the standards of the Texas Department of Child and Family Protective Services, and we are inspected yearly by the local licensing agency.

Contacting the Local Licensing Authority

Texas Department of Child and Family Protective Services
Address: 2221 W Loop S, Houston, TX 77027
Telephone Number: 713-287-3238

Calendar

E&C will operate year-round. Monday-Friday from 6:00am-6:30pm.

The following holidays are the scheduled center closing days. If the holiday falls on a Saturday we will be closed on that Friday, if the holiday falls on a Sunday we will be closed on Monday. On some holidays the center will

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remain open, and on some holidays the center will close early. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the classrooms, if there are not enough children attending on certain holidays, we may close.

- **New Year's Eve – Half day**
- **New Year's Day**
- **Martin Luther King Day**
- **Good Friday**
- **Memorial Day**
- **Juneteenth**
- **Independence Day**
- **Labor Day**
- **Thanksgiving Day**
- **Day after Thanksgiving**
- **Christmas Eve – Half day**
- **Christmas Day**
- **Day after Christmas**

If a holiday falls on a weekend, the center will close on an adjacent weekday. **Full weekly tuition is due during these holidays.**

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, E&C Academy will use our discretion for school closure decisions. E&C Academy will also follow the Spring ISD weather policy as a guide for our decision. Parents will be notified via the Procure App with a mass message.

Health and Nutrition Practices

E&C Academy, LLC. will offer the following:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Afternoon Snack
- Evening Snack
- Snack and meal times vary between classrooms.

Children will be served what is on the daily menu unless they have food allergies. You must inform the center if your child has any food allergies. Due to children who have food allergies, no outside food or drinks may be brought into the center except for prearranged celebrations, approved special dietary needs, and food for infants. Please talk to your child's teachers at least two days in advance for the number of children in the classroom and special dietary restrictions if any.

The menu will be posted on the parent board at the main entry.

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Additional Health and Safety Resources

Oral Health Resources

Meal Planning Resources

Farm Fresh Resources

Health Benefits Resources

Infant Feeding

Infants: You will be responsible for bringing in all bottles for your child. Please clearly label each bottle, formula can, and jars of food with your child's name. Once your child is ready to start eating food, please let us know and the center will provide fruit/ Veggie baby jar food, rice cereal, juice and snack.

All bottles must have a cap to completely cover the nipple when the bottle is not in use. Please make sure that your child is supplied with enough bottles to last the entire day. We will not warm and/or offer a bottle more than once, and any remaining formula or breast milk will be discarded 1 hour after use. You are welcome to keep a can of ready-to-use formula in your child's room, along with one or two sterilized bottles in case of an emergency. Parents who are breastfeeding are welcome to do so in the designated area of the center.

Dress Code

Please dress your child appropriately for the weather and daily activities. Children will get messy and dirty from time to time so make sure that they wear washable, comfortable play clothes. We will also go outside, weather permitting, so the children need to have secure-fitting shoes. Simple clothing with uncomplicated fasteners tends to work best, allowing the children freedom of movement and ease of operation when using the bathroom or being diapered.

Please send at least one extra change of clothes with your child. This should include underwear and socks. These items need to be labeled and placed in your child's cubby.

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Lost and Found

Lost and found items will be kept in the office and available to search through upon request.

In-House Field Trips

E&C Academy DOES NOT transport children to or from our facility for field trips or other activities. We normally host a few in-house field trips each year such as the fire department, petting zoo, etc.

ENROLLMENT

E&C Academy accepts children from 6 weeks through 5 years of age. Enrollment is year- round and admission is based on a first-come first-served and available class space as determined by the director.

Program

Our daily program offers a well-balanced curriculum geared to the specific needs of each age group. The daily routines for infants through the school age program are flexible enough to accommodate special events and prolonged interests in a given activity, but still provide the children with a sense of security by knowing generally what comes next in their day. There will be a balance of planned activities and free exploration, quiet and active experiences, individual, small group, and large group activities. Each age group plays outside daily, weather permitting.

Absences

If your child will be absent, please call our center or send a message on our Procare app used for parent communication. After five consecutive absences without communication from parents to the program director, your child will be automatically withdrawn.

Class Assignment

To ensure your child has the most successful experience at E&C Academy, he/she will be placed in a classroom according to his/her age while taking into consideration the social and emotional development of the child. If you have questions concerning your child's placement, please make an appointment to speak with the director.

Accommodating Families and Children

The program supports families and children who may need additional accommodations such as a designated space for therapy sessions when needed. Please communicate with the program director for further assistance.

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The Infant room (6 weeks to 15 months)

Our infant classroom offers individualized attention to maximize learning opportunities and develop through:

- Developmentally Appropriate curriculum
- Small group activities
- Tummy time and sensory play

Infants at E&C will thrive in a safe, loving and nurturing environment. We value each developmental mile stone as our staff monitor each infant's progress with consistency, patience and love.

The Toddler room (18 to 24 months)

Our toddler classroom offers ample space for exploration as they are becoming autonomous. In each learning centers, toddlers will participate in activities that develop:

- Social and Emotional skill
- Fine and Gross Motor skills
- Physical development

Toddlers are energetic, E&C experienced staff along with our curriculum will help the children focus that energy. Daily hands-on activities such as and small group play will provide opportunities for independence.

Pre-School room (3 to 5years)

Our Pre-School classroom offers tools to prepare children for upcoming formal education. The developmentally and age-appropriate curriculum along with our weekly homework folder will allow the student to develop:

- Pre literacy and Pre-writing skills
- Fine and Gross Motor Skills
- Social and Emotional development
- Creative Arts, Science and Discovery
- Language and Math

Pre-Schooler at E&C will be in preparation for a successful kindergarten experience. Our goal is to equip the students with knowledge, confidence and a love for learning to last a lifetime.

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Physical Activity

E&C Academy offers multiple indoor and outdoor opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills. Students participate in outdoor activities; weather permitting; indoor activities are also offered such as dancing, yoga, and bowling among other activities to encourage body movement. Students in our program enjoy recess twice a day for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour daily.

Screen Time

Students at E&C Academy are allowed screen time up to two hours a day. Children under two years old do not participate in screen time. Screen time is used for educational purposes only.

Non-Discrimination Policy

E&C Academy's admission policy does not discriminate based on a student's race, religion, gender, or national, or ethnic origin. E&C Academy accepts students based on the availability and willingness of the parent and child to abide by the policies and procedures of the school.

Withdrawal

A written two-week notice must be given when your child is leaving the center. Failure to give notice in writing will result in weekly charges to your account. All accounts must be paid in full before the child's last day of attendance; an account with a remaining balance will be billed to your home for payment. If full payment of the outstanding balance is not received, it will be forwarded to collections. The additional fee will include Attorney fees, fees to process letters to collections, court and clerk fees. No refunds will be made for tuition.

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Dismissal of a Child

E&C Academy reserves the right to dismiss a child, after entering, he/she is unable to participate in:

- Group experiences
- Group/individual activities; or
- If tuition and/or fees have not been paid in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this handbook
- See biting policy and Discipline and Guidance for further dismissal of child policy.

Student Evaluation

Your child will be evaluated throughout the school year by his/her teacher according to a developmental checklist appropriate for their age. As students grow with us and advance to another class, this checklist will be passed to the next teacher. This is NOT a grade for your child as all children can and should be allowed to develop at their own pace. It is simply meant to create an awareness of where they are developmentally and what areas need continued reinforcement both at home and in the classroom. We are NOT diagnosticians and are only recording what we observe as trained educators of young children. A conference can be scheduled with the teacher at any time during the year to discuss their growth and development in the classroom.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Registration Fee

Registration fees are collected at the time of application and are not refundable:

\$50

Discounts

There is a \$10 off the total weekly tuition for families with more than one child enrolled.

Tuition and Late Payment

Payment is due every Friday by 6:30 pm. If your payment is not made by Monday at 6:30 pm, your child will not be admitted to the center on Tuesday until payment is made. Full weekly tuition is due even if your child is sick or

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absent. A late fee of \$25.00 will be charged to every account that is not paid at the end of business day on Monday. If payment and late fee is not paid by end of day Tuesday, and \$5/day fee will apply. A \$30.00 fee will be applied to your account if your check is returned.

Payments can be made directly through the Procare App. For your convenience we accept checks and zelle payments. We do not accept cash. Please make check payable to *E&C Academy, LLC*.

Payments are automatically logged into your procare portal and a tax statement is available there for download yearly.

Late Pick-up Fees

The center closes at 6:30pm. If a child is still in attendance after 6:30pm, a \$2.00 per minute charge will be applied to your account. If a parent is more than 15 minutes late without notifying the center, we will attempt to contact the designated emergency contact on the enrollment form.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival Procedures

Upon arrival at E&C Academy you must walk your child to the front door and sign them in. A staff will then take the child(ren) and escort them to their classroom.

We request that you only enter and exit the facility through the main entrance, even if your child is on the playground when you arrive. This is a very important safety rule that will be enforced. Children, no matter what age, will not be allowed to enter the building, walk to their classroom, or exit the building without an adult present.

We appreciate your caution when walking or driving through the parking lot in order to ensure the safety of our children and their families.

DO NOT LEAVE YOUNG CHILDREN IN YOUR VEHICLE UNATTENDED DURING DROP OFF & PICK-UP TIMES **Violation will result in reporting to the Department of Family & Protective Services as required by Texas Child care Licensing Minimum Standards. **

Sign-in/Sign-Out

Adults who drop off the child as well as pick up the child are required to sign the child in/out at the front desk. Adults who are not the parent/guardian will have to show some type of photo identification to the staff to ensure that only the adult designated by the parent is picking up the child.

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Pets at dismissal

Please do not bring family pets to the preschool for drop off or pick up.

Release of Children

Each Child MUST have a **written Authorization for Release Form** in their file with the names and identification/driver's license number for those authorized to pick your child from school other than parents. **We WILL NOT** release your child to someone who is not on that form. **We WILL NOT** accept phone calls, only written authorization with the proper identification. Upon departure, we will verify identification before we release your child. This is for your child's safety.

Custodial/Non-Custodial Parent Rights

E&C Academy cannot legally prevent a parent from picking-up a child unless there is a court ordered restriction which has been submitted to the center's director. If parents are separated and have not finalized divorce, they must submit a signed statement of their agreement regarding their child(ren). The parent or parents that have signed the admittance contract is/are responsible for all obligations to the school including financial obligations on the contract.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Hygiene

Children will learn and be encouraged to use good hygiene habits. Children will be guided by teachers to wash hands with soap and water before and after meals and snacks, after using the toilet/being changed, and playing outside.

Illness

Being sick is miserable. PLEASE do not bring your child to school if the illness prevents your child from participating comfortably and/or if they have an oral temperature of 100.4 or 99.4 arm pit temperature. **Children must be fever free (without the use of fever-reducing drugs) for 24 hours before they are back with other children.**

Children with any of the following symptoms may be contagious and SHOULD NOT be left at E&C Academy:

- Heavy, frequent or productive cough
- Pink eyes or discharge from eyes
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Green, runny nose
- Any contagious skin conditions

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Illness/Injury in our care

If a child becomes ill or injured while at school, we will tend to the child's needs and contact their parents (or emergency contact indicated on your registration paperwork) to come and pick up the child.

In addition, teachers and staff are required by Texas Child Care Licensing to complete incident report for illness, injuries, and concerning incidences that take place in our care. Parents will be asked to sign a notice outlining the incident on Procare.

Doctor's Notes for Return to School

If your child is ill or injured (whether in our care or not) and visited a doctor as a result, we need a note from the doctor allowing them to return to our care. (i.e. Katy had a fever but may return to school on 3/17/20 once he is fever free for 24 hours.)

Annual Physicals

We are required by the State of Texas to have on file a Physician's Statement/Medical Release for each student before they are permitted to attend class. This is provided in the enrollment packet. If need a new one, please speak to the director.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Children age 4 and older are required to be screened for vision and hearing. This can be completed at the annual physical and indicated on the required Physician's Statement/Medical Release.

Immunizations

Each child enrolled at E&C Academy is required to and must meet applicable immunizations requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services. All immunization required for the child's age must be completed before the child may attend class. A current copy of your child's immunization record must be on file at E&C Academy. If you need to view the vaccines required, please check with the Director or visit:

<http://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/child-care-requirements.aspx>

if you are choosing a delayed vaccination schedule or exemption for any vaccines for your child, you must apply for an exemption affidavit from the state of Texas. The application can be found at <http://corequest.dshs.texas.gov>. A completed, notarized exemption affidavit must be on file at E&C Academy before your child may attend class.

E&C Academy does not require a record of vaccinations of their staff at this time.

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Medication

E&C Academy WILL NOT dispense any medications. If your child has an Epi-pen or inhaled steroid for medical emergencies, please notify the director. In these cases, special paper work must be completed for the child's file.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, we will contact the parents. If parents cannot be reached, an emergency contact will be notified. If necessary, your child will be transported to the hospital specified on the Medical Release Form in your child's file.

Contagious Diseases

In the event of a contagious disease outbreak, parents will be notified in writing. We will take necessary precautions in accordance with the Harris County Health Department, the Center for Disease Control and the Texas Department of Child and Family Protective Services regarding any school closure. This is in accordance with the Texas Department of Child and Family Protective Services requirements.

Diapers & Toilet Training

1. If a child requires diapers or disposable training pants, the parent must provide an adequate supply. E&C will provide baby wipes.
2. Please note that we will encourage and support a child's independent use of the potty, however, we do not believe in pressuring a child during toilet training. Therefore, we must insist that parents provide adequate supply of diapers or training pants until the child is **accident free at school for at least two full weeks**. A potty-training agreement must be signed prior to starting the process. Please communicate your child's progress and challenges in this area to their teachers.

Nursing Mothers

E&C Academy will offer a comfortable area for nursing mothers who wish to breastfeed their child(ren) during school hours. Please see director for access to these accommodations.

Child Safety & Abuse

Every staff member at E&C Academy will be trained to recognize and report abuse. Any professional who interacts directly with children has a responsibility to report any child abuse or neglect. Due to the nature of abusive or neglectful situations, our staff members are not required to discuss their suspicions with the parent or legal guardian prior to filing a report. While this is the least enjoyable aspect of our job, please understand that is a responsibility we take very seriously.

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To report child abuse, you may call the abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or visit the Department of Family and Protective Services website at <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us>

Consumer Product Safety

E&C Academy will access, on a regular basis the recall listing via the consumer Product Safety Commission any and all toys relating to our facility. This information will be posted in publicly accessible and prominent place so parents may learn how to access information about unsafe children's products.

Emergency Preparedness

Fire Drills will be conducted on a monthly basis. Severe Weather Drills, Shelter in Place and lockdown Drills will be conducted every three months. Children will be instructed in age-appropriate terms why we have these drills and what is expected of them.

If an emergency requires that children be picked up before the school day is over, the director will use the parent and emergency contact information on file to contact parents. A complete copy of the E&C Emergency Preparedness Plan is available at the front desk for parents to view upon request.

GANG FREE ZONE

In accordance with the 81st Legislative Regular Session concluded on June 1, 2009; E&C Academy will adapt the following laws:

- A. E&C Academy is a gang-free zone. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where certain gang related activity is prohibited and is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. Specific locations where certain gang related criminal activity is now prohibited include, but are not limited to public schools, playgrounds, video arcade facilities, and day care centers.

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. For example, certain gang-related criminal activity that occurs within 300 feet of a video arcade facility is a violation of the new law, whereas certain gang-related criminal activity that occurs within 1000 feet of a school or day care center is a violation of the law.

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Parent Notifications

Parents will be notified of school activities, policy changes, and other important information regarding E&C Academy through the Procure app, and posted notices in the building.

Procedure to Update Contact Information

Parents are required to keep updated contact information in their children's files. Please use the Procure app to update contact information at all times without staff assistance.

****Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.**

Open Door Policy

E&C Academy has an open-door policy meaning parents are welcome at ANY time. We do however limit the visits to no more than 10 minutes, as we wouldn't want any distractions to the class routine. Feel free to make and arrangements with your child's teacher as to when the best time would be to visit the class.

****Covid-19 Amendment:** Parents may still visit; however, we do ask that the visits be limited. This helps us ensure the safety of our students and staff.

Class Parties/Parent Involvement

The success of E&C Academy and its activities greatly depends on parent involvement. We are excited to share our yearly activities with you. Class parties take place throughout the year for occasions such as Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas Party, Valentine's Day, Easter Party, etc. Each classroom teacher determines how they will celebrate these occasions.

Specific information and invites will be provided in the days leading up to each event. Any food products provided must be **prepackaged and store-bought. No homemade goods are permitted.**

Birthday parties

We want to celebrate your child's birthday with him/her. A parent may bring a prepackaged, store-purchased treat for their class. For health reasons, if you choose to bring in a treat, please have it packaged and unopened. **No homemade baked goods are permitted.**

Donations

E&C Academy welcomes the opportunity to repurpose gently used toys and books. If we cannot use them, they will be passed on to programs that are in need.

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STUDENT MATTERS

Discipline and Guidance/ Challenging Behavior

In order for our children to grow socially, mentally, and emotionally, it's important for our teachers to maintain a positive, orderly, and safe classroom environment at all times. At E&C academy, we praise the positive, re-direct the inappropriate, and use "Thinking Time" or a "Calm-Down Center" (placing the child away from the group in age-appropriate time increments to give them time to think about their behavior and decide to make better choices). Inappropriate behavior such as biting, hitting, scratching, kicking, throwing, pinching, spitting and profanity will not be tolerated. If inappropriate behavior continues, it will be documented on a behavior chart and discussed with the parents to determine the best course of action to attempt to alter the disruptive behavior. If the child's behavior does not improve after exhausting our attempts to work with and redirect the child, and or they continue to disrupt the daily routine of the classroom, E&C Academy reserves the right to suspend and/or withdraw the child from the school.

Biting Policy

We want to ensure that every child is safe while in our care. Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem-solving between children. Biting is a NORMAL stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- A) The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling and bruising. The biter is spoken to on a level that he/she can understand, the redirected and/or offered a teething cloth if teething is apparent.
- B) A written incident report is given to the parent of the bitten child and parent of the biting child, when he/she is picked up that day. The name of the biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and make and already difficult situation more difficult;
- C) We look carefully at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior;
- D) We work with each biting child to empathize and apologize to any child they have harmed and coach them on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner;

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- E) We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce and child stress;

- F) We make special efforts to protect potential bites.

We make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families in the class. Only after we feel we have made every effort to make the program work for the biting child do we consider asking a family to withdraw the child. Under no circumstance will a refund be given for any part of tuition or registration fees paid on behalf of the biting child.

Parental concerns and conflict resolution

Parents can make an appointment with the Director to discuss any concerns, questions, or comments regarding these policies and or procedures or State Minimum Standards for a Licensed Facility (available in the directors office or online at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>.)

Items to be left at home

Toys, cell phones, electronic equipment, etc. need to be left at home unless requested by the teacher. Your child's teacher will let you know when it is appropriate to bring items from home for special activities for their classroom.

Please carefully read this document and sign before your child's first day at our center. Your child will NOT be admitted without the signed Handbook Signature Form.

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Please scan QR code to read policy



HANDBOOK SIGNATURE FORM

Please detach and return this form to the director of E&C Academy, LLC.

I, _____, parent of _____, have read and fully understand the policies and procedures outlined in the Parents' Handbook. I have discussed any policy or procedure I do not understand with the childcare center's director. I agree to the policies and procedures that are set forth in this handbook. I will be given an updated copy via e-mail and copies will be available at the center if any changes are made by E&C Academy or by the State of Texas Child and Family Services.

Child or children's names

Parent's Printed Name

Parent's Printed Name

Signature & Date

Signature & Date