

# **Cate Early Learning Center**

## **Parent Handbook**

Welcome to the Cate Early Learning Center! We are excited to have your family join our community of care and collaboration. As a small non-profit center serving children three months old through their fifth year, we value our parents as integral participants in our day-to-day operations, whether it is having you drop in for a visit, or taking part in the ELC Parent Organization. Our hope is to be a significant source of support for each family while providing a caring learning environment for every child. The goals and daily happenings of the program strongly reflect our abiding sense of respect for children, their unique home cultures, and individual development. With your support, we will strive to at all times provide high-quality early education and care for the children of the faculty and staff of Cate School, as well as to the families of our neighboring communities.

Please familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook and do not hesitate to ask questions and share your ideas. Your input is valuable to us and our door is always open!

Servons,

Diamond Gray-Diaz and Jessica Knapp  
(Co-Directors)

1960 Cate Mesa Road  
Carpinteria, CA 93013  
(805) 684-4127 ext. 305  
LIC # 426212736 Infant  
LIC# 426212737 Toddler and Preschool

**The ELC welcomes students and staff without regard to race, creed, color, disability, sex, gender identity or expression, or national origin.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Infant and Toddler Program.....	3
Preschool Program.....	3-4
Behavior Management, Biting and Conflict Resolution.....	5-6
Communication and Follow-Up.....	7
Assessments.....	7
ELC Hours.....	8
Admission.....	8-9
Enrollment Priority.....	9-10
Community Families.....	10
Annual Contracts and Staffing.....	10-11
Drop-In Rates.....	11
Enrollment Requirements.....	11
Tuition and Fees.....	12
Enrollment Reservation Fees for Infants.....	12-13
Arrivals and Departures.....	13-14
Late Pick-Up Fees.....	14
Nutrition.....	14-15
Infant Meals.....	15
Toddler and Preschool Meals.....	16
Personal Belongings.....	16
Clothing.....	16-17
Earthquake and Emergency Evacuation Procedures.....	17
Toilet Learning.....	17-18
Nap and Rest.....	19
Health and Wellness.....	19-20
Signs of illness.....	20-21
Medication.....	21-22
Fundraising.....	22
Termination Policy.....	22-23
ELC Code of Conduct.....	23
Sharing the Mesa.....	23-24
Modification Policy.....	24
Licensing.....	24
Toddler Option Admission Agreement.....	25-26
Parent Handbook and Policies Acknowledgement.....	27

## **Infant-Toddler Program**

The Infant-Toddler program serves children from three months to three years, grouped by developmental age. Infants (0-24 months) are eligible to transition to the Toddler classroom when they are 18 months old and walking comfortably. The Infant-Toddler program is influenced by the RIE philosophy (Resources for Infant Educators). Each interaction with the child is an opportunity to practice respectful, patient, and considerate caregiving. In the toddler classroom, children are given consistent opportunities to receive individual attention from the caregivers in a positive and nurturing manner. Infants and toddlers enjoy daily indoor and outdoor activities that include independent exploration, sensory play, art activities, music, open-ended manipulatives, gross motor movement with climbing structures, and various other natural and individualized materials.

We work to provide an environment for safe and genuine experiences—clean, thoughtful, cozy spaces, decorated with photos of family, and their evolving art. In their classrooms, infants develop intimate relationships with a stable caregiver (this also includes their assigned Support Teacher). Caregiving activities such as feeding and diapering are respectful, warm, consistent, and individualized. These routines are viewed as opportunities for children to receive undivided adult attention and to promote language, self-awareness, and social skills. An infant's pre-existing patterns for feeding and sleeping are respected and incorporated into the child's routine at the ELC. They are informed by the [Infant/Toddler Needs, Services, and Safe Sleep Plan](#), which is updated at least quarterly (every three months) and reviewed by the child's family, the primary caregiver, and the Director. Consistency in routines and schedules allows children to anticipate what is coming next, thus transitions are predictable and an enjoyable part of the child's rhythm and routines.

## **Preschool Program**

The ELC provides both full-day and half-day options for children two to five years. Children can remain in the Toddler program through 36 months but may transition to the Preschool program as early as 30 months if they are developmentally ready. This program provides a well-balanced play-based practice with an emphasis on children's social-emotional skills and their developing sense of autonomy. The multi-age group dynamic encourages pro-social behavior and an enriched cognitive environment. Routine

opportunities for independent and teacher-facilitated exploration ensures that children's needs (intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and creative) are appropriately met at a variety of developmental levels. When children are ready and our classroom ratios permit it, they are eligible to transition to the outdoor classroom that is adjacent to the ELC.

To support emerging interests and creative exploration, our teachers plan and set up their environments to support the project approach to learning. When we are in harmony with the children's developing interests, we can tailor their exposure to experiences in their individual environments as they explore:

**art**  
**science and nature activities**  
**whole body sensory exploration**  
**gross-motor and big body play**  
**language arts and early literacy activities**  
**music and movement**  
**early math awareness**  
**self-directed social emotional experiences**  
**teacher-facilitated use of technology**

There is a special focus on self-awareness and the appreciation of diversity within the classroom. Daily group times provide opportunities for sharing, music, movement, and communication with peers and teachers. All Preschool children take part in weekly excursions throughout the Cate School campus, exploring the different nature paths and experiencing campus life with faculty, staff, and residents on the Mesa.

All of the ELC classroom environments offer a rich variety of spaces, materials, and activities organized to promote children's active exploration and mastery. They are the result of careful planning and structuring to ensure that the needs of each child are met in a supportive and nurturing way. Our teachers encourage curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, promote cooperative social interactions, support individual creativity and diversity, and provide opportunities for children to use their growing bodies to develop a sense of autonomy and self-worth. They are also designed to encourage age-appropriate risk-taking and physical exploration.

## Behavior Management and Conflict Resolution

**It is the expectation that all adults and children at the Cate Early Learning Center will demonstrate behavior that is SAFE, FRIENDLY, and RESPECTFUL. You may hear us use these keywords in our conversations with the children.**

An important goal of behavior management is to help children learn socially responsible habits. Teachers use interactions with children as opportunities to help them express their feelings and resolve problems in developmentally appropriate ways. When children are exhibiting a behavior that is undesirable or unsafe to the whole group, we use this as an opportunity to begin individual and group discussions about desirable behaviors and Center expectations. At no time will any child be punitively reprimanded at the ELC. We believe in having respectful conversations with individual children and including them in the problem-solving process.

Safety is always our top priority. Behavior that threatens to harm the child or others is prohibited. **If a child has three (3) or more incidents of harm toward themselves or another child in one day (biting, hair pulling, kicking, pinching, or excessive hitting, etc.), the child's parent/guardian may be contacted to pick up their child for the day.** Any behavior that is deemed unhealthy or unsafe will be immediately discussed with the child's family. We know situations of behavior management may be difficult for all individuals involved, and all parties commit to participating in respectful dialogue.

When a change in behavior is noticed, parents will be notified in person. If necessary, we like to follow up with a problem-solving meeting involving parents, the child's teacher, and the Directors, Diamond and Jessica. Different techniques will be tried and another follow-up meeting planned. A variety of outside resource information is available for parents at the ELC. If we have exhausted all of our resources, on a case by case basis we may need to reassess what support can ultimately be provided by the ELC.

### Biting

Biting and pushing is an expected behavior for toddler aged children. Some children use this as a form of communication while they are learning to express themselves in other ways. However, we know biting can be harmful to other

children and to staff. Our policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. Our goal is to identify what is causing the biting and use our training and experience to partner with the child's parents to resolve the issue. We will handle each situation on a case by case basis. Even so, if there are (2) bites in one day we will ask for a pick up. We will record every bite through our incident reports and collaborate with staff and the parents on an action plan to support the health and well being of all children. Both Families will be notified and names of the child(ren) will not be shared with either parent out of confidentiality and we ask that you do not contact the other family with your grievance. Please direct all inquiries and concerns to either director; Jessica or Diamond.

In Preschool biting can still occur but is an unexpected behavior. We will continue to adhere to the policy above.

If a child is bit/pushed:

1. The teacher will focus their attention on the child who was involved and ask how to comfort them.
2. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite will be covered with a bandaid.
3. Parents are notified.
4. The incident report form is filled out documenting the incident.

For the child that bit/pushed:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child, "Biting hurts, teeth are not for biting." "Pushing hurts, hands are not for pushing." And ask them to check in with the child who was hurt and sit with them if possible, to hold an ice pack.
2. The child will discuss with a teacher how the other child may feel and what other ways there are to deal with their frustration.
3. The parents are notified. The incident report is filled out to document the incident.

## **Communication and Follow-Up**

We take pride in our family connections, and we are happy to welcome parents into our classrooms. Our focus while in the classroom is with the children. In lieu of having confidential conversations at drop off or pick-up, we ask that parents schedule a time to meet with their child's primary teacher and/or the Director to discuss any concerns or personal questions regarding their child. Email is the best way to communicate with all staff; all ELC email addresses are available on our [website](#) and shared in the parent emails as well. We ask that parents refrain from calling or texting a teacher's personal phone. Teachers will respond to email inquiries and messages when time permits during business hours. For more urgent matters, be sure to copy the Director in the email, and please always leave a voice message when calling.

**ELC DIRECT PHONE NUMBER**  
**(805) 684-4127 ext. 305**

## **Assessments**

Each school year in December and May the ELC staff administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE2). Parents are highly encouraged to participate in the assessment process and are invited to take part in conferences. Assessments are helpful to determine a child's developmental level and aid staff and families in identifying areas of concern that may require additional services or intervention. Parents wishing to participate in conferences are asked to complete their own ASQ's to be used alongside those completed by their child's primary teacher. If further support and/or assessments are needed, the ELC staff will partner with families to connect them with local agencies.

### **Tri Counties Regional Center**

520 East Montecito Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3274 USA  
Phone (805) 962-7881  
Fax (805) 884-7229  
[www.tri-counties.org/](http://www.tri-counties.org/)

### **Santa Barbara Office of Education**

4400 Cathedral Oaks Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
Phone (805) 964-4711  
Fax (805) 964-4712  
<https://www.sbceo.org/>

## **ELC Hours**

The ELC is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:45 pm. Every child's drop off routine will look different and we encourage parents to plan their morning to give each child time to transition. A calendar showing administrative days, special celebrations, and closures at the ELC for the current academic school year is posted at the center, provided to all families at the beginning of the school year, and updated on our website as well. Arrival times are below in order to allow children to integrate into the morning routines.

**8:00 am - 8:30 am for Preschoolers**  
**8:00 am - 9:00 am for Infants and Toddlers**

- **Please notify the ELC by phone or email if you anticipate a late arrival beyond the times above (due to traffic or medical appointments), or if your child will be out for the day.**
- **You may call the ELC, or email the Director or your child's primary teacher directly.**
- **If planning to arrive late, we ask that children arrive no later than 10:30 am, or be back by 11:15 if returning after an appointment.**
- **For all late arrivals, please give yourself time to check in with your child's teacher and visit the bathroom with your child before they step into the classroom.**

## **Admission**

Parents/guardians must complete the following forms when being considered for enrollment. All new incoming families are also required to schedule at least two 45-minute visits with their child's primary group prior to finalizing enrollment.

1. [LIC 701 Physician's Report](#)
  - a. Must be reviewed and approved prior to the child's first day of attendance.
  - b. Updated records must be submitted when a child undergoes their annual well-child exam or with any significant changes in health needs.
2. Current Immunization Record



- a. Can be completed on LIC 701 or submitted as an attachment for verification.
  - b. Updated each time a child receives a new immunization.
- 3. [LIC 702 Child's Preadmission Health History - Parent Report](#)
- 4. [LIC 700 Identification and Emergency Information](#)
- 5. [LIC 627 Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment](#)
- 6. [LIC 613A Personal Rights Acknowledgement](#)
- 7. [LIC 995 Notification of Parents' Rights Acknowledgement](#)
- 8. Emergency Contact Information (ELC Form)
- 9. Annual Contract and Admission Agreement (ELC Form)
- 10. Special Permissions for Field Trips and Photography (ELC Form)
- 11. All About Us Family Questionnaire (ELC Form)
- 12. Parent Policies and Procedures Acknowledgement (ELC Form)
- 13. Infant Toddler Needs, Services, and Safe Sleep Plan (Infants/Toddlers only)
  - a. Submitted **every three months** or with any significant changes to the child's needs or routines.
- 14. Permission for Non-Prescription Diaper Cream, Sunscreen, and/or Topical Creams and Ointments (ELC Form)
  - a. A new form is required each school year and with new products
  - b. Aerosol containers will not be stored at the ELC

## Enrollment Priority Guidelines

We have an enrollment priority system that helps keep spots open and available for Cate employees. Our priority enrollment system is as follows:

Cate School Faculty or Staff (full time, residential duty included)*
Cate School Faculty (full time, no residential duty)*
Cate School Staff (full time, no residential duty)*
Cate School Faculty (part time)*
Cate School Staff (part time)*
Cate School Faculty or Staff Immediate Family (ex: grandchildren of a staff member if that staff member is part of that child's care program)
Community with Sibling Enrolled

Community (New Enrollee) - Priority may be given to community members who desire the most consistent hours

**\*Cate School needs and tenure of employees will be taken into consideration when making final enrollment decisions.**

## **Community Families**

In October 2014, the ELC opened its doors to the public. Community children are accepted as spaces become available with a maximum of eight family enrollment slots available each year. **Community children will be placed one school year at a time.** In addition, because Cate School employees are generally hired in April/May for the following school year if a Cate School employee requires a spot already filled by a community child, the most recently enrolled community family may be asked to forfeit their spot or modify their requested contract days during the next enrollment period. In this case, the family would be given ample notice to find alternate childcare. We work very hard to retain spaces so this does not occur; however, it is a possibility when enrolling at the ELC.

## **Annual Contracts and Staffing**

Each spring, enrollment contracts are renewed to determine the needs of all faculty and staff who desire space for the upcoming school year. During the year, children are accepted as spaces become available. Annual Enrollment Contracts will be due the first Monday of May. Internal modifications to contract requests will be made as needed by May 31st. Any modifications or enrollments thereafter will be made based on availability.

Staffing and budget commitments must be made on an annual basis for each fiscal year and contracts constitute a yearly financial obligation. All contracts run for the full 11-month period of August through June. The ELC is closed in July and families do not pay tuition this month.

The monthly payment for contracted hours is due regardless of whether the hours contracted for are used during the full calendar year. The only exception is for new enrollees, where tuition payments are prorated to reflect the first day enrolled in school.

Additional drop-in hours outside of the contract may be requested in advance

and are subject to space availability and approval from the Director. These hours will be billed as an addition to the regular monthly payment at the end of the month. **Parents must contact the Director at least five (5) business days with their request for additional hours and hours needed must be specified to ensure staff and child ratios are met at all times.**

We understand there may be circumstances when your annual contracted schedule may need to be adjusted. To ensure adequate staffing, any changes to your annual contract must be submitted in writing at least **two weeks** in advance and are subject to space availability and approval by the Director. Changes in contracts, if approved, will become effective the first day of the following month.

### Drop-In Rates

Extending your day	12:30 pm to 4:45 pm	<b>\$65</b>
Adding a half day	8:00 am to 12:30 pm	<b>\$65</b>
Adding a full day	8:00 am to 4:45 pm	<b>\$90</b>

### Enrollment Requirements

Children 12 months and older must enroll for a **minimum of two (2) full days per week for Cate School faculty and staff, and for three (3) full days for community members.**

Children in the Infant program who begin the school year before the age of 8 months must enroll for a **minimum of four (4) full days** for the school year, or for a **minimum of three (3) full days** if starting after between 8 months and 12 months old. This requirement applies to all families. Please see the Director with any questions.

### Part-Time Enrollment Requirements

While priority is given to children who require full time enrollment, when available, a child may be enrolled on a part time basis for non-infant age groups. In support of the child's full engagement in the program, part time enrollment must be a minimum of three consecutive days, 8:00 am-12:30 pm, with additional days being added as available.

## Tuition and Fees

Please see your annual contract for current rates.

For families with multiple children enrolled there will be a 10% reduction in tuition for the oldest child.. To receive a discount, each child must be enrolled a minimum of three days per week. There are no discounts for hours outside of the annual contract.

Tuition statements are provided to parents via email (unless otherwise requested) and are **due by the 15th of each month**. If the 15th falls on a weekend, then the tuition payment is due the following Monday. Tuition payments can be made online or deposited in the lockbox at the ELC's entryway.

**PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE TUITION WITH ELC STAFF  
OR IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCHBOX/BACKPACK.**

If you require a different tuition payment schedule, please arrange this with the Director. **Late tuition payments will incur a \$50 fee, which will be added to the following month's tuition.** Checks returned from the bank are subject to bank service charges. If your check is returned, you will be notified and expected to make payment, including service charges within five (5) days. Please make all checks payable to **Cate School** or **Cate**.

In addition to the monthly tuition rate, families are required to pay an annual non-refundable **Materials Fee of \$275** per enrolled child, and there is also an annual non-refundable **Registration Fee of \$200** per child for all community families. These fees will be due upon your child's first week of school.

**There is no reduction of tuition for absences,  
vacations, withdrawals, or closure dates.**

## Enrollment Reservation Fees for Infants

In the event that an incoming family would like to delay their infant's enrollment, there will be a monthly non-refundable reservation fee of \$500 for Cate Faculty/Staff, or full tuition fees for community families, pending enrollment availability for that school year. These fees will be applicable for incoming infants once they are age-eligible to enroll at 3 months old. The enrollment fee will be available for a period no more than three months from the time the opening is available, after which full tuition will be due. Other requests to delay

enrollment will still require the family to pay full tuition fee from either the start of the school year or a new family's start date.

## **Arrivals and Departures**

Parents/Guardians are asked to follow the guidelines below:

- Arrive and depart at your contracted times, and contact the ELC when their child will be absent for the day.
- Ensure your child is signed in and out every day with a full legal signature and exact time. This is a California State Licensing requirement under code 101329.1 and 101326.1. **Parents/guardians who do not sign in will be called and asked to return to the ELC immediately to sign in/out.**
- **No child shall be signed in without contact between center staff and the person bringing the child to the center.**
- Ensure gates and doors are closed and secured as you enter or leave the building.
- No Cell Phone policy when dropping off/picking-up your child. This can be distracting; please give your child your undivided attention.
- Hold your child's hand in the road and parking lot.
- Encourage children to follow all safety rules.
- Report safety and supervision concerns to staff immediately.
- Never leave children or babies unattended in a parked car. This is a health and safety violation. Parents may ask another known and trusted adult to supervise siblings in the car while they pick up their children.
- If you are picking up your child for an appointment off-campus, please sign them out as you would at the end of the day. If/when you return from the appointment, please write their name at the bottom of their class list and sign them in once more. The ELC is required to keep an accurate count of teacher-to-child ratios during all operating hours.
- Morning arrival times are between **8:00 am - 8:30 am for Preschoolers, and 8:00 am - 9:00 am for Infants and Toddlers**. The half-day pick-up time is 12:30 pm and full-day pick-up time is 4:45 pm. There is a 15-minute grace period during the midday pick-up time for Cate School teachers who have classes that end at 12:30 pm and who have made the late pick-up arrangements with the Director as a part of their annual contract.

Children will be released only to those persons (at least 16 years old) designated

on the child's Emergency Contact Information form. You must notify the Director and staff whenever someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up the child (verbal, email, or written in the sign-in sheet). If the teacher is not familiar with the person picking up, the person will be asked to provide a photo ID in order to release that child. You may also notify the Director if you wish to make changes to the Emergency Contact Information form. If you are picking up your child early, please notify the staff in advance when possible.

**\*\*Please review these procedures with any new person who will be picking up your child.\*\***

### **Late Pick-Up Fees**

All ELC teachers have designated routines and schedules to keep throughout the day and we appreciate your timely arrival at pick-up. Late fees, which are intended to compensate teachers for supervising children after program hours, are assessed for both end of the day pick up times as well as half-day pick up times. In the event of anticipated lateness in pick-up times, we ask that parents please contact the center by phone or email before the expected time to let the staff know to ensure child to teacher ratios are met.

- If you pick up between 4:45-4:50 PM a \$15 charge will be added to your monthly tuition. If you pick up past 4:50 PM there will be a \$30 charge on your next tuition. If you have a Cate commitment that interferes with pick up time please talk to the Directors.
- If late care is being offered, 4:45 - 5:45 pm, and you would like to utilize it, you must give a **48 hour notice** for staffing purposes. Late pick up charges will be the same as stated above.

### **Nutrition**

Meals at the ELC are served family-style whenever possible. This time together helps nurture and encourage respectful social interactions and healthy eating and hygiene habits. The children are very active during their time at the ELC and sometimes require more food than at home, so please pack a sufficient amount each day. We ask that all families follow any **\*ALLERGY GUIDELINES\*** when they apply.

**Please do not send sweets (cookies, candies, cakes, sugar cereals, chocolate,**

etc.) or choking hazards (popcorn, whole large nuts, whole hot dogs, whole carrots, whole apples, etc.) in your child's lunch box.

The ELC provides water and serves morning and afternoon snacks to preschool children consisting of at least two food groups. As part of family participation, all preschool families are required to purchase up to three weeks of snacks per child enrolled from the rotating schedule. Some snack items will need additional preparation (hard-boiled eggs, pre-slicing veggies, etc.). The range for our snack purchase is generally between \$90-\$110 depending on seasonal offerings.

**All snacks should be brought in either the Friday afternoon prior to their assigned week, or by 8:00 am on the Monday of their assigned week. Please**

*\*\*If you are in a bind and are unable to fulfill your commitment as planned, reach out to another family to switch weeks.*

Families who enroll after snack assignments are set will be asked to contribute a price-equivalent resource to the ELC that will go towards snack preparation, food experiences with the children, or healthy and safety items. This will be **\$120 per assigned day.**

### **Infant Meals:**

Families are responsible for providing daily portioned meals for their children.

**Meals must be labeled with the date and contents.** Infant families place their meals in a designated refrigerator. Required foods may include breast milk, formula, solids, and whole/plant/nut milk as needed. Foods should be prepared and cut into small bite-sized pieces (consistency will vary based on the child's current eating stage). Once opened formula cans have a shelf life of 30 days. We adhere to the manufacturer's label.

For infants beginning their [transition to solid food](#), it is recommended that they are given one single-ingredient food at a time, with new foods being introduced three to five days apart. This should help you rule out any allergies or food sensitivities. **Foods should always be tried at home for the first time (we recommend 3-5 times) before being brought to the ELC as part of their meals.**

**[American Academy of Pediatrics Tips for Introducing Solid Foods](#)**

### **Toddler Meals:**

Provide enough food each day for a designated AM and PM snack in addition to lunch. Please send fully cooked, prepared, pre-sliced foods that are ready to serve and eat. If you have a preference for which foods are served for AM snack, please label appropriately. **Food containers must be labeled with your child's name/initials.** We recommend [bento style containers](#). Be sure to include ice packs in your child's lunchbox and/or use a thermos for heated food. Consider packing larger portions, just in case there are any spills during the school day. If you would like to have additional dry snacks on site they can be kept in a gallon baggie in your child's cubby.

### **Preschool Meals:**

Provide food for the day based on your child's needs. Send fully cooked, prepared foods that are ready to serve and eat. In order to encourage autonomy, we recommend [bento style containers](#) so that your child can master independent meal skills. Be sure to include ice packs in your child's lunchbox and/or use a thermos for heated food. You might also consider packing larger portions in their lunches, just in case there are any spills during the school day.

### **Personal Belongings**

We ask that families refrain from bringing personal toys and other objects to the Center (except on share days) because of the potential for loss or breakage, and the potential hazard to our Infants and Toddlers.

- Please label all of your child's personal belongings
- For sleep and napping, please provide a nap mat. **Nap Mats and belongings will be taken home at the end of the week to be laundered.**
- Infants and Toddlers are provided with a separate list of items to bring upon enrollment.
- Please provide a labeled wet bag for soiled clothes. It is each parent's responsibility to check their child's cubby and replenish as needed.

### **Clothing**

Please send your child in clothing that is **labeled**, comfortable, and allows them



to fully participate in all activities. Part of learning is exploring, which can often become quite messy and we encourage you to dress your child in clothes that are appropriate for messy and active play. We ask that you provide at least two full changes of clothes, replacing any clothes as soon as they are sent home. If their sun hat has a chin strap, it must include a breakaway component. Shoes should be safe and fit properly to avoid accidents, and should always encourage self-help skills.

Children at the ELC may be barefoot indoors and outdoors as they explore throughout the day. We only require children to wear shoes on the following occasions:

- During times of inclement weather and the days following
- During off-campus walks and trips
- When visiting the Older Preschool outdoor space (Islanders' Yard)
- To avoid hazardous materials (something accidentally breaks, recently cleaned areas, etc.)

If your family has different preferences for clothing options, please be sure to specify this in your "All About Us" intake questionnaire so that we can support your home culture as much as possible.

## **Earthquake and Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

We have emergency evacuation plans posted at the center in case of emergencies. When safe, children will be directed to exit by the teachers and escorted to the primary evacuation site (the parking area outside of the ELC). In case of a campus-wide emergency, Cate School has designated various familiar representatives to help guide ELC children and personnel to various safe locations.

We encourage you to review safety practices and emergency plans with your child at home. Throughout the year, we will have emergency drills so the children will become comfortable with our emergency routines.

## **Toilet Learning**

We support the toilet learning process at the ELC and will work with families to assist their children *when they are developmentally ready*. Before beginning the transition to toilet learning at the ELC, we ask that parents work with their child at home and begin to note when they are actively and consistently able to do the

following:

Children can show they are developmentally ready with the following signs:

- Active and independent interest in using the toilet.
- Verbally expressing their toilet needs for urine and BM.
- Able to consistently stay dry for 2-4 hours at a time.
- Able to pull off their pants and underwear without assistance. This is an important part of their self-help skills and also helps to prevent toilet accidents. Parents can help by practicing at home and dressing children in clothes that are easy to pull up and down.
- Able to sit on the toilet independently and safely using a step stool if needed.
- Beginning to have more bowel control overnight.

As one or more children begin to display more interest in toilet learning along with the above signs of readiness, the toddler group will begin to integrate bathroom visits into their daily routine (preschoolers have on-demand access to the bathroom in their classroom). This transition activity will include all children in the toddler group when possible.

- Parents and primary teachers will have ongoing communication to determine when a transition to underwear is appropriate.
- Once the child has made the transition away from diapers, parents should bring about 3-5 additional changes of clothes (easily pulled on underwear, socks, shirts, and an extra pair of shoes) for any accidents throughout the day. For sanitary purposes, we require underwear and will discard solid BM's in the toilet, but undies with runny/sticky BM's may have to be thrown out.
- We want to be able to celebrate children's accomplishments while at the same time valuing their intrinsic motivation. We do not provide physical rewards (stickers, prizes), but we will always acknowledge them in verbal and physical ways ("Wow! You made poop in the toilet!"/ singing and dancing to celebrate), and make sure to communicate these things to the family so that you can also celebrate this at pick-up and at home.
- We will never force a child to sit on the potty.

## Nap and Rest

All children are required by law (Title 22 101230) to be offered a resting period during the day (Infants sleep on their own schedule). If your Preschool or Toddler child does not fall asleep after a 45-minute period of rest on their cot or mat, they can be provided with alternative quiet activities. Under no circumstances will we force a child to stay awake during this time. If you do not want your child to nap at the ELC, please consider modifying your contracted schedule to better fit your child's needs.

Our transition out of nap begins at 3:00 pm, at which time we will open the blinds and turn off our ambient noise machines so children can gradually wake on their own, and we will gently help any remaining children to transition from nap once their primary group is beginning to transition to their afternoon snack routine.

## Health and Wellness

All children must be healthy enough to safely participate in all program activities at the time of drop-off. The center's health policies and procedures will be strictly enforced for the benefit and well-being of each child and staff member in the program. **Please help the ELC thrive by following our health practices and by keeping your child home when they are unwell!**

The primary reasons for exclusion from child care or school are that the condition:

- Prevents the child from participating *comfortably* in activities
- Results in a need for care that is greater than staff members can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- Poses a risk of spread of harmful disease to others (*see list of these conditions below*)

Teachers will perform a visual health check of each child every day upon arrival. Each child's health will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as no two children react to any illness in the exact same way. If your child demonstrates signs of illness at drop-off, you may be asked to return home for the day.

If a child develops symptoms **after** drop off, they may be isolated from their class. Parents will be notified of the new symptoms and the child may be observed to determine if they need to be picked up. If the staff determines they

need to be picked up, a parent or authorized person will be notified and expected to ***pick the child up within one hour.***

Children should arrive at the ELC unmedicated. If you have medicated your child before their arrival for allergies or continuing antibiotics you must inform the Center staff. Do not use fever reducing medication such as tylenol or ibuprofen prior to dropping your child off unless you have communicated with the ELC first.

Parents are asked to notify the ELC via phone or email when their child is ill and will not be attending school. The ELC will always notify families when children have been exposed to a communicable disease.

Some illnesses may require a doctor's note to return to care.

If this is the case, your child's primary doctor must include the symptoms for which they were treated, medication that has been recommended, plan of care, and if any specific symptoms may still be present when returning to care. In order to return to school, clearance from one of the Director's Jessica or Diamond is necessary prior to bringing your child in for that day. Please note that if clearance is not given you will have to wait with your child outside of the ELC.

## Signs of Illness

If your child has any signs or symptoms as noted below, we ask that you keep them home until symptoms are improving or resolved.

1. Fever of 100.4°F
  - a. Children with fevers must be excluded from the ELC for at least 24 hours after their temperature returns to normal without the use of fever-reducing medication.
2. Mucous, redness, swelling, and/or swelling of eyes
  - a. Children can return to the ELC with medical clearance if they have a bacterial infection only after being on antibiotics for more than 24 hours without any severe reactions.
  - b. Any mucous in the eye that is wiped and returns will require a doctor's visit and note to return to school.
3. Diarrhea (two or more uncontained within a 24-hour period)
  - a. Diarrhea is defined as stool that is occurring more frequently and/or

is less formed in consistency than usual in the child, and not associated with changes of diet.

- b. If this has occurred at home, we ask that parents wait 24 hours from the last incidence of diarrhea.
4. Vomiting
  - a. Children who vomit at school are required to be picked up immediately. The child may not return to school until 24 hours after the child has last vomited without any other additional symptoms.
5. Congestion or coughing that interferes with eating or sleeping, or with the child's ability to safely and comfortably participate in activities.
  - a. Children diagnosed with streptococcal infections must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school. They must be able to participate in the activities of the day.
  - b. Congestion or coughing associated with seasonal allergies must have clearance from each child's primary care physician if interfering with daily routine and if it persists.
6. Any undiagnosed rash
  - a. A child with an undiagnosed rash must be picked up immediately. If the rash persists or spreads, medical clearance will be required.
7. Children with the presence of Head Lice or their eggs (nits) will not be permitted to attend until all symptoms are clear.

## **Medication**

The Center staff will dispense only medication prescribed by a physician and/or for a short-term illness (teething, seasonal allergies, etc.). We reserve the right to refuse responsibility for medication after proper notification to the parent/guardian. All medication policies are subject to state regulations and require that the appropriate paperwork be kept up to date.

The following steps must be taken before ELC staff can administer medication:

1. Parents/guardians must complete the medication release form and review with their child's primary teacher before releasing any medication to the ELC.
  - a. [LIC 9221 PARENT CONSENT FOR ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS](#)
  - b. Must submit/request new forms with any changes in medication, dosage, or frequency.
2. All medications must be given to staff upon arrival at the ELC and must never be left in a child's cubby or within reach of children.

3. Medication must be current and in its original container.
4. The prescription must be labeled with the child's name, physician's name (when applicable), name of the medication, dosage, and frequency.
5. All medication will be stored in a locked container and out of reach of children in the Director's office.
6. The staff will not perform invasive procedures.

## **Fundraising**

As a small, non-profit, tuition-based school, we hold various fundraising events during the school year. We ask that all families please participate in these events, as they benefit all children in the program. All fundraising proceeds are used to enhance the center, and provide for larger purchases outside of our normal budget.

In addition to fundraising events, **we encourage all families to join the ELC Parent Organization (ELC-PO)**. Elana Stone is our liaison this school year. The ELC-PO helps with various tasks associated with the operation of the center, which includes the celebration of special events, our bi-annual ELC Beautification Days, spirit wear and more. Some families may choose to take on leadership roles as part of their EL-PO duties.

Because we wish the ELC to be an extension of a child's family life, we offer a variety of ways for parents to become involved in their child's classroom experience and in Center matters. Parents are invited to share in their child's daily activities, to volunteer for field trips, and special events, or to just come in for a visit.

## **Termination Policy**

The annual contract and enrollment agreement may be terminated by a parent/guardian by providing the ELC with written notice at least fifteen business days (15) days or three (3) weeks before the last day of attendance in order to not be billed for the following month's tuition.

We want the best environmental fit for all the children and families in our care. We reserve the right to terminate this agreement with fifteen (15) days notice for either of the following reasons:

- It is determined that the school does not meet the needs of the child.
- The financially responsible party is delinquent for thirty (30) or more days

in payment of the agreed-upon fee.

- If a family is unwilling to follow ELC policies and procedures, they may be given a two-week notice to withdraw from the program. Prior to a notice to withdrawal there would be a parent meeting to try to resolve the issue. If, after trying to find a different resolution, withdrawal appears to be the path forward, this would be determined on a case-by-case basis and decided by the Director as well as two Cate School Administrators.

## **Code of Conduct**

The ELC is committed to maintaining a positive, courteous, and respectful environment that is conducive to learning, as well as ensuring the safety and well-being of children, parents, visitors, and staff. We are grateful for the friendly and meaningful (and often hilarious) discussions we enjoy daily with the adults in our community. We encourage all adults to have respectful dialogue while at the ELC.

- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family in the program, and will not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition.
- Under no circumstances may any adult member of the ELC community (parents, teachers, visitors, volunteers) mistreat, belittle, yell at, or otherwise act in a disrespectful manner to any staff member, child, or parent at the ELC.
- Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and staff members. No photos or video without permission.
- Maintain courteous and respectful relationships with program staff, as well as other parents, guardians, volunteers, children, and other participants.

Cate ELC will not tolerate behavior by parents/guardians, visitors, or anyone else involved with the program that violates the Code of Conduct. If a parent/guardian or visitor violates the Code of Conduct, Cate ELC reserves the right to restrict parent/guardian or visitor access to program children, classrooms, and/or facilities and/or terminate the family's enrollment contract.

## **Sharing the Mesa**

As members of the wider Cate School community, we are continuously working

to ensure that we are respectful participants both while on ELC grounds and while exploring the Mesa and using Cate School facilities. We ask that all people remember to be safe and courteous while representing the ELC, and that all adults strive to model positive behaviors for our young learners.

### **Modification Policy**

We reserve the right to modify any of the conditions of this agreement upon thirty (30) days written notice to the parent or guardian.

### **Licensing**

The Cate Early Learning Center is licensed by the State Department of Social Services. The licensing authority has the right to interview children and staff and to inspect student records without prior consent. The licensing authority has the right to observe the physical condition of the child.



## **Cate Early Learning Center Toddler Option Admission Agreement**

As the parent/ guardian of \_\_\_\_\_,  
I understand that my child will be placed in the Toddler Room at the ELC. The ELC has been issued a Toddler Option component to their preschool license. This is a separate component from preschool with different ratios and requirements. The ages of children in a Toddler Option classroom are 18-36 months. Children will remain as part of the Toddler classroom until they reach 36 months. Exceptions may be granted on an individual basis depending on the child's development and readiness, The teacher to child ratio in the Toddler Option classroom is 1:6.

Children benefit most when the program and home have a similar philosophy of teaching and discipline. Should a time arise when either the Cate Early Learning Center (ELC) or the parent feels that the child is not benefiting from the program or must move on for other reasons, either party may request withdrawal without prejudice with a two-week written notice.

### **Rights of the Licensing Agency:**

This section should be taken from Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1: Regulation 101200.

The Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division according to Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1 Regulation 101 200, states "The department has the authority to interview children or staff and to inspect and audit child or child care center records, without prior consent. The school shall make provisions for private interviews with any child(ren) or staff member; and for the examination of all records relating to the operation of the child care center. The department has the authority to observe the physical condition of the child(ren), including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement."

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTOR SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Cate Early Learning Center**  
**Parent Handbook and Policies Acknowledgement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent/guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_, have read, understand, and  
accept the policies and procedures of the Cate Early Learning Center. By  
signing this document and initialing below, I am agreeing to follow all policies  
and procedures set forth in the ELC Parent Handbook. Failure to follow the  
policies and procedures set forth by the ELC may be cause for termination of  
contract and services.

I have reviewed and understand the following areas:

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTOR SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE