

# Handbook for Families of Tacoma Community College Early Learning Center



**Tacoma Community College  
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# Welcome

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*Dear Families,*

*The staff of TCC Early Learning Center would like to extend a heartfelt welcome!*

*At the Annette B. Weyerhaeuser Early Learning Center we have a strong and ongoing commitment to the future. Our goal is to provide a safe and pleasant environment for each child's well-being and we continually strive to use developmentally appropriate goals for young children as a framework for planning. We offer every opportunity for children to be successful and to develop a love for learning and a positive self-image. Our hope is to work diligently alongside parents to provide educational support, yet recognizing that families are the first and foremost primary educators of their children.*

*You will find that the members of the ELC staff are early childhood professionals who provide a carefully planned and developmentally appropriate program that is a combination of nurturing care, physical development, and education. We look for every opportunity to foster children's natural ability to discover, create, explore and relate positively to one another.*

*Our arms and hearts are open to children and families; we look forward to building strong relationships and celebrating each person as a unique individual. Our doors are always open and you are invited and welcomed to stop by to share ideas or concerns, or just to say "hi". We hope the time spent with us at Tacoma Community College is fulfilling and successful.*

*With warmest regards,*

*Olga Webstad*

*Early Childhood Program Director*

## ***Mission, Purpose, and Philosophy***

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### ***Mission:***

The mission of the Early Learning Center is to provide a safe and nurturing early learning experience in an environment where best practice is paramount for young children of students and staff of Tacoma Community College and the community.

### ***Purpose:***

The purpose of the Early Learning Center is to provide a quality early childhood program that meets the needs of children and families while parents pursue an education. We believe developmental, cultural, and age appropriate practices are the foundation for early childhood and children's programming within relationship-based settings.

The Early Learning Center is licensed by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to care for 92 children. Children must be at least 4 weeks old to enroll and may continue until they are kindergarten eligible. During the summer quarter we have an additional program for school-age children (6-8 year olds). The center is open 7:30 am – 5:30 pm. The Center is closed on Fridays during the summer quarter.

There are six classes staffed by teachers with experience and education in Early Childhood Education. Children are placed in a class based upon their age and developmental stage. The ELC operates an Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (E.C.E.A.P.) for eligible four year-olds, and an Early Head Start program for pregnant mothers and children up to 2 years old who qualify. The Center is subsidized by the Associated Student Body of the college. Because of the ASB support, Student Parents of children in the Center pay on a sliding fee scale. This tuition fee is based on the number of hours needed for child care each quarter as determined by the Student Parent's class schedule, with a minimum of 25 hours per week.

The Early Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

### ***Philosophy:***

The TCC Early Learning Center is staffed by Early Childhood professionals who value children's sense of curiosity, and recognizes that play enhances development and learning. We believe developmental, cultural, and age appropriate practices are the foundation for early childhood education within relationship-based settings. Equally, building trusting and reciprocal partnerships with families is a value that we hold as essential.

Activities are planned to provide opportunities for success and to encourage a feeling of competency. In addition to developing a positive attitude, the children learn to value the feelings and rights of others. They are shown how to work out conflicts with others in ways that develop problem solving skills for dealing with realistic situations. It is our hope that every child will feel valued and capable. We recognize that all children pass through developmental stages. We respect their individual differences and rates of

growth. It is our intent that the curriculum, the equipment, and most importantly, our expectations be developmentally appropriate.

*“For the child, the time is always now; the place, here, the action, me. He has no capacity to entertain adult notions of fantasy world and real world. He knows only one world, and that is the very real one in which and with which he plays. He is not playing at life. Play is life.”*

*-Joseph Chilton Pearce*



## *Program Goals*

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*To provide a safe and healthful environment for the children of Tacoma Community College students, staff, and faculty.*

*To implement Developmentally Appropriate Practices as a standard for curriculum planning, and our interaction with children and parents.*

*To help children be academically and developmentally ready for kindergarten.*

*To develop a program that encourages self respect and positive self image by creating an atmosphere where children can form their own ideas and values, begin to understand their own limits and potential, and learn to make responsible decisions.*

*To provide a program that is concerned with total growth and development of the child; intellectual, social, emotional, and physical.*

*To provide an environment and experiences which allow a child to become an active learner; encouraged to discover and create at his/her own pace.*

*To serve nutritious foods, fulfill USDA minimum daily requirements, and to facilitate a pleasant mealtime experience.*

*To model appropriate behavior and early childhood techniques to the students and parents. To be a role model to the children in the Center.*

*To encourage an atmosphere that values diversity and respects the development of personal identity.*

*To provide curriculum that incorporates children's natural curiosity about their world.*

*To be a resource and a support to the parents as they pursue their career training while caring for and providing for a family.*

*To comply with the Washington Administrative Code Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers.*



*"In all the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed, there has never been a child like you."*

*-Pablo Casals*

## *Early Learning Center Hours*

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### *Hours:*

During the regular school year from September to June, the Early Learning Center will be open from Monday – Friday 7:30 to 5:30. Summer hours are Monday – Thursday (closed Fridays) 7:00am to 5:30pm. The center will be closed the last full week of August, the last full week of December, and on Professional Development Day in April/May, for deep cleaning and staff trainings. You will be informed on the exact date in the beginning of each school year as the calendar changes each year.

## *Emergency Closures*

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Please call the College at 253-566-5000 for information on school closures relating to snow, flood, earthquake, and volcanic explosion. If the college closes, the Early Learning Center will be closed. Another source for information update is the TCC website.

For clarification on any other closures specific to the Early Learning Center please call 253-566-5180.

Please sign up for E2Campus through your student/staff portal. You will get text/email updates regarding important college information.

## *Program Procedures*

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### *Curriculum:*

The curriculum developed by the teaching team has many influences. As a staff, we look to the latest research and information to guide us in the development of curriculum. Based on the children’s interests and development, which are gathered from observation and assessment, teaching teams consult with one another to create “webs” of ideas. From there, teachers consult state guidelines, bring in resources and develop activities that are relevant to the current children.

Activities include those that are necessary to a child’s physical well being (health, toileting, washing, resting, and meals), those that are teacher-directed, and those that are child-directed. Children learn quickest through play, and when the situation is relatively consistent. The classroom is the child’s workshop. The child develops skills in making



decisions acquiring knowledge of the world, making friends, and learning to cooperate in a group. The child exercises curiosity, initiative, and creativity.

Language and literacy experiences are infused throughout our program. Children learn about math and science through hands on activities that let them explore and discover how the world works. We hope to start them on the road to being lifelong learners.

In addition, there are four curriculums especially designed for enhancing our curriculum:

1. “*Talking about Touching*” is a curriculum that focuses on teaching children basic skills that will help them keep safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Adults work together to provide the rules, information, encouragement and practice that children need to help protect themselves. (4-5 year-olds)
2. “*Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum*” teaches social-emotional skills. Skills such as empathy, emotion management, and social problem solving contribute to children’s success in school and later, to their success in the workplace. It is designed to reduce aggressive behavior and increase social competence in children. (3-5 year-olds)
3. “*GOLD Strategies*” is a curriculum, assessment, professional development, and family connection resources for the program.
4. “*Creative Curriculum*” is a curriculum offered by Teaching Strategies to enhance of the quality of early childhood programs by offering the highest quality curriculum.

Our center also adheres to the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines for Birth – 8 (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)*. These are designed to:

- Provide a tool about children’s development that includes practical strategies for children at different stages of growth;
- Provide suggestions for where to go and who to ask for additional information on growth and development of young children;
- Promote a whole-child approach that affirms that learning and development are interrelated and build on previous learning;
- Acknowledge, honor and embrace the tremendous diversity and variation that exists for children and families;
- Align with the State Early Learning Plan, and reflect federal, state, and Tribal learning standards.

The *Guidelines*:

- Celebrate Washington's increasingly diverse population.
- Support ECEAP and Head Start standards.
- Extend the guidelines through third grade and align with the K-3 learning expectations, including Common Core Standards.
- Reflect what we've learned about child development since 2005.
- Provide an easy-to-read format to better support parents as their child's first and most important teachers with information about what children can do and learn at different stages of development.

For more information on the *Guidelines* please see the Department of Early Learning website at <http://www.del.wa.gov/development/guidelines/>, or ask your child's teacher to see the book.

## *Daily Routine*

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### *Coat Lockers:*

Children are expected to remove their coats/jackets and backpacks and hang them up in their lockers. Assistance is only given when the child is unable to help herself – by showing her how, by reminding her that she can do it, and by encouraging her to be self-reliant. Adults see that children are appropriately dressed before going outdoors-with coats/jackets fastened, and hats and boots on, if needed.

### *Diapering:*

Children wearing disposable diapers will be checked at least every two hours. Children in cloth diapers will be checked at least every hour. If you bring cloth diapers you will need to take the soiled diapers home on a daily basis. Everyone with children who are wearing diapers or toilet training will need to bring wipes to share.

### *Toileting and Hand Washing:*

Adults must be prepared for toilet accidents and treat these matter-of-factly. The child changes to dry clothing and the wet articles are placed in a plastic bag to take home daily. In this routine, the child should help himself as much as possible. The child is reminded to wipe, flush the toilet, wash hands, and dry them well. Children are encouraged to utilize only one or two paper towels. Teachers work closely with parents to individualize potty training for each child. We incorporate the techniques that parents are using at home into our school routine. Brochures on toilet training are also available.

***Meal/Snack Time (USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program):***

All children and adults wash their hands before and after a meal or snack. Children remain in their seats until they are through eating. At the ELC the children ages 2-5 are encouraged to serve themselves as much as possible we do family style serving so the children can learn to serve themselves. All containers and utensils are child-size for easier handling. Children clean up after themselves, clearing their space and wiping up any spills. Breast feeding mothers are welcomed and encouraged to spend as much time at the center as possible feeding their children. If you need to pump, we are happy to serve your child your breast milk as long as it is in a bottle labeled with name and date.

***Group Time:***

Group times are planned to introduce young children and youth to peer experiences and familiarize them with teacher-directed activities. Songs, games, stories, and finger-plays are used to provide pleasant proactive group interactions, and allow children a time to talk about home experiences, ideas, or articles they have brought.

***Clean-up:***

Throughout the day children help put away play materials. Adults help to ensure that equipment is placed on shelves in attractive, useable order.

***Rest/Nap Time:***

Rest/Nap Time is provided in the daily schedule, immediately following lunch. Children needing naps or rest periods are provided an individual mat, and can bring special blankets and/or stuffed toys to make this time more comfortable and secure. Soft music is played in the background for relaxation. Children are not forced to sleep, but are asked to rest their bodies to ensure active engagement later. By state law, we must give the children 30-45 minutes of quiet time to allow them the opportunity to fall asleep. If they are awake after this, they may read quietly or do a quiet activity away from the sleeping children. Children 29 months old and younger will follow their own individual sleep schedule.

## ***Play Procedures***

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***Outdoor Environment:***

Outdoor activities are not a “recess” but an important part of the child’s development and the program’s curriculum, in addition to providing opportunities for loud and active play. All children go outdoors during the specified times. If a child is considered too ill to participate outdoors, it is recommended that the child remain at home until able to fully participate at school. *During the rainy season children should come prepared wearing a jacket with a hood, and bring waterproof boots.*

### ***Indoor Environment:***

Children select from among the various interest/learning centers during free choice time. Materials and supplies are available for children to participate in. Children are encouraged to share materials, but may not take equipment from another child without that child's permission. Children are encouraged to solve their own problems, with an adult present to guide the problem-solving process and prevent episodes of physical aggression.

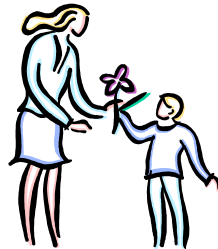
## ***Typical Daily Schedule***

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The following is a sample of a typical full day at the Early Learning Center. It may vary slightly depending on the classroom/age group:

7:30 – 9:30	Greetings/breakfast/free choice
9:30 – 10:00	Outdoor time
10:00 – 11:15	Group time/music, planned activities, free choice
11:15 – 11:45	Planned activities/outdoors
11:45 – 12:00	Story
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 2:30	Rest/Nap Time
2:30 – 3:00	PM snack
3:00 – 5:30	Outdoor time/free choice

Free choice time is the heart of our curriculum. This provides children with an opportunity to explore learning centers designed to enhance all domains of development. Activities are carefully planned based on observations of interests and skill levels of the children. The environment is prepared so that children can work alone or in groups. We also recognize the differing needs that children might have throughout the day. The needs children display in the morning may be very different than those from the afternoon.



“The best preparation for being a happy man or woman is to live fully as a child.”

-The Plowden Report, 1967

# Parents

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## ***Parent Education Requirement:***

TCC offers “Child and Family Studies” classes in the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. These are one credit online courses. Parents with a child enrolled in the TCC Early Learning Center are required to complete these classes. These are designed to accomplish the following goals:

- To support parents in the challenging task of caring for a family while pursuing an education by providing resources, information, and consultation;
- To provide a forum for Student Parents to explore contemporary parenting issues, such as: Protecting children from sexual assault and “stranger danger”; guiding children through the stress of divorce, death in the family, and/or domestic violence; also, child development that includes health and nutrition activities with children;
- To strengthen the role of parent involvement in maintaining high quality learning for children in all settings.

These classes are non-sequential and can be taken in any order.

1. Fall quarter is *HFL 140: Health, Safety and Nutrition.*
2. Winter quarter is *HFL 141: Child guidance and discipline.*
3. Spring quarter is *HFL 142: Learning Development.* (*HFL 141 Learning Development can be waived IF documentation of another 10 hour parenting class is turned in to the office before the first class meeting. Please see Olga Webstad to verify your standing.*)

## ***Parent Co-op:***

Parent Co-op is for parents who wish to work in the center for a reduction in their child care fees. In order to co-op, a parent must commit to 5 hours of work in the Center per week. Parents who enroll in this program will have \$1.00 taken off each hour of their child’s care.

As a Co-op Parent, there are opportunities to learn more about child development and guidance techniques. Parents are able to observe their own child and others in the class and to share the experience with their child. Co-op Parents must comply with the same DEL requirements as staff by providing the following:

- Record of current TB test,
- Valid Food Handler’s Permit,
- Documentation of HIV/AIDS training,
- Successful passing of a criminal background check,
- Documentation of Orientation,
- Photo ID.

### ***Parent-Teacher Communication:***

A child learns by observation and by interacting with people and the environment. Parents are very important teachers of their children. We value the special relationship that you can share that will aid the teacher in understanding and planning for your child. We are here to help when a child is experiencing a difficult time or a crisis at home, or is just going through a stage of growing up.

It is our belief that parents as well as the children should benefit from being enrolled in the center. The staff has many parenting resources that may be of assistance to you. We will always try to let you know of community resources that are available to you.

Parents are welcome to visit the Center at any time. You may choose to come for an observation visit, share a talent, hobby, or go on a field trip. Please feel free to express any concerns you may have with the Lead Teacher or the Program Manager. Concerns about your child are best discussed in private, usually in a pre-arranged conference.

### ***Developmental Screenings and Assessments***

Early identification of potential developmental delays is critical to help ensure that children get the resources they need to support positive development. Developmental screening is conducted with 90 days of enrollment and results are shared with parents within 90 days of completion. An assessment on each child occurs three times a year. Parents are informed of the results through conferences.

### ***Parent Conferences:***

Parents are encouraged to request a conference any time they have questions about their child, the Center, parenting, or child development. Teachers and the Program Manager are always willing to schedule an appointment to discuss at length any of your concerns.

The teacher will schedule a conference with each parent quarterly. In the event there is an immediate concern about behavior or development, the teacher will request a parent conference. The staff relies on you, the parent, to provide insight, and to decide the most helpful way to work with your child.

### ***Arrivals, Departures, and Late Pick-Up Fees:***

***Always*** accompany your child to the classroom or to the playground so that you are sure the teacher knows your child has arrived. This also helps children to say goodbye to you and feel more secure. Please put their personal belongings and coats in their coat locker. Children are not admitted before 7:30 AM. The staff needs the time prior to opening to prepare for the day. It would benefit children to arrive no later than 10:30 AM so they have time in the Center before lunch and Rest/Nap Time. Children enrolled in the ECEAP program are required to arrive no later than 9:00.

Please adhere to the Early Learning Center hours of operation and notify the office of any changes in your child's time of arrival and/or departure. If it is necessary to leave your child later than usual on a particular day, please notify the teacher and front desk staff. An additional charge for extra hours will be added each month.

**Late fees for pick-up after 5:30 PM closing are as follows:**

**First occurrence**

**\$1 per minute.**

**Second occurrence**

**\$2 per minute.**

**Third occurrence**

**\$3 per minute.**

***If this is a re-occurring problem we will need to assess whether your child is placed in a center that meets your childcare needs.***

Always be sure that the teacher is aware that you have picked up your child.

It is a DSHS requirement (WAC-388-150-460) that you sign in when your child arrives and sign out when picking up your child. **Your full signature is required.** This ensures the safety and security of your child. During fire drills and emergencies we rely on the sign-in sheets to verify the attendance of the children. If your child is not signed into the Center, staff may call Campus Security and ask you to return to the Center. Each night roll sheets will be turned in to the office. If your child was not signed in or out with your full signature and time, you will be assessed a fine of **\$25.00** per offense. In addition you are reminded to utilize the time clock by the front door of the Center upon arrival and departure, each day.

Remember, your child cannot be released to anyone not listed on your enrollment form. After 5:30 PM, the appropriate authorities will be contacted to provide transportation if a parent or other authorized person cannot be reached. It is a good idea to have an adequate number of people listed on your forms in the event that circumstances prevent your arrival at the Center by the 5:30 PM closing time. Three contacts is the minimum. They must all have different addresses from each other. For example: Grandma and Grandpa live together. They count as one contact.

The Early Learning Center staff will attempt to deter any adult from removing a child from the Center if that adult seems to be intoxicated or influenced by a behavior-altering drug. Your child's safety is important to us! If we have concerns about the safety of a child, we will call the proper authorities.

***Persons Authorized to Pick Up:***

Many Student Parents find that there are times when other responsibilities make it difficult to pick up their child/children. You may list on the enrollment form those persons who are authorized to remove your child from the Center. These may or may not be the same people called in an emergency. Each person who brings or picks up your child will need to provide us with a copy of their driver's license to keep in your child's file. Parents please provide a copy of your license with your enrollment documents.

We cannot release your child to anyone other than those you have signed for on the enrollment forms. *Today Only* forms are for those times when one of those listed people will be picking up our child, or when you cannot be contacted in the usual location.

***Absence:***

Please notify the Center when your child must be absent. Contagious illnesses should always be reported so the other children are protected. Please call us at 253-566-5180 and leave a message letting us know why your child is absent. Children who have been absent for more than two weeks may be dropped from enrollment if the Program Manager has not been informed as to the reason for the extended absence. If your child has been out sick for 5 days or more, please bring a doctor's note with you when you return.

***What to Bring From Home:***

**Infants (*Caterpillar class*)**

- Pre-made Bottles (labeled with child's name and date)
- Several changes of clothes (labeled)
- Diapers (labeled)
- Blanket (optional, labeled)
- Wipes

**Young Toddlers (*Busy Bees class*)**

- Several change of clothes (labeled)
- Blanket (optional, labeled)
- Diaper (labeled)
- Wipes

**Toddlers (*Butterflies class*)**

- Naptime toy or security item, if necessary (labeled)
- Blanket (optional, we supply sheets and blankets)
- Wipes
- Diapers (labeled)
- 2 changes of clothes, including socks, training pants (if needed) sweater or jacket with hood and extra shoes (labeled)
- Comb, pick, or brush (labeled)
- Photo of family

**Preschool (*Friendly Frogs and Owls classes*)**

- Blanket and pillow (optional, we supply sheets and blankets)
- 2 changes of clothes, including socks and underwear (labeled)
- Comb, pick or brush (labeled)
- Photo of family



**All Families**

- Family recipes
- Family stories
- Special talents

**What not to bring from home:**

- Toys of violence or any personal toys
- Food, candy and gum
- Soda
- Money

## *Emergencies*

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***Emergency Drills:***

Emergency drills are held at varying times and documented for review by DEL. It is important that families sign their child's classroom attendance book so that all children can be accounted for in case of an emergency. It is also important that emergency contact information is updated and that your TCC class schedule and telephone number is current.

***When Your Child Becomes Ill or Injured at School:***

In the event that your child becomes ill or is injured at the Early Learning Center, the Program Manager will refer to your TCC class schedule on file to locate you. If you cannot be reached, and your child is sick, the Program Manager, Assistant Program Manager, or the Program Assistant will contact the emergency people listed on your child's enrollment form. If the child is injured and needs emergent care, the Program Manager will ask paramedics to transport your child. It is imperative that your current TCC class schedule, on file in the ELC office, be up-to-date and that the emergency people listed are aware that you are placing their names on your emergency list.

***Emergency Procedures:***

The Emergency Procedures Manual can be located in the front office and the Manager's office. Please take a moment to become familiar with the Emergency Manual and its location. When we have an emergency in our building and we need to evacuate we will go to building 2 (auditorium). We will discuss additional emergency procedures during orientation.

## *Health*

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The Early Learning Center is a program licensed by the Department of Early Learning. In order to keep our license in effect, the Center must maintain a clean healthy environment. DEL health inspectors visit the site to make sure that all health requirements are met.

The staff makes every effort to maintain this safe and healthy environment for the children so that a minimum of absences occur due to illness. Healthy habits taught at home are reinforced at the Center, including frequent hand washing (especially before meals and after toileting), proper use of tissues for wiping noses, wearing appropriate clothing for weather conditions, and rotating active and quiet activities with opportunities for the children to rest. Upon arrival, children will be assessed as to how they are feeling. If they are not well enough to stay, we will ask that they go home.

### ***Health:***

A physical examination and current immunization status are required for enrollment at the Center. You must provide an updated physical exam each year, and update us any time your child receives immunizations.

Children should never be brought to the Early Learning Center when they are ill. To do so would put other children and all staff at risk. Additionally, the active environment at the Center can be very stressful for a child who is not feeling well. Alternate arrangements for care should be made in the event that your child has:

- An elevated temperature in the last 24 hours, over 100.4°,
- A persistent, hard cough or severe congestion,
- 3 or more bouts of diarrhea in the past 24 hours,
- An unexplained rash (The Program Manager may ask for a doctor's written verification that the condition is not contagious.),
- Vomited in the last 24 hours,
- Red, "weepy", or irritated eyes,
- Untreated head lice, nits, or scabies (If your child had any of these please see the front desk to look over your child before they return to class.),
- Shown they are not feeling well enough to participate with the class or go outside with other children.

Children cannot be kept inside when they are not feeling well. If they are not feeling well, they should not be in child care.

If your child gets a scrape or bump at school, the teachers will treat it by washing and applying a band aid and an ice pack, if necessary. If the injury occurred to the head or if

it needs more assistance than we can give, we will call you out of your TCC class, and call the paramedics. If any of these occurrences happen to your child, you will receive an *Injury Report* in your parent box to sign that you acknowledge the injury. We will always send children in need of emergent care to Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, unless you state otherwise.

### ***Medications:***

Per WAC 170-295-2080, Medication can be administered only if:



- Medication is not expired,
- It is a prescription (in the original container),
- The parent completes a *Medication Form* every day that the medicine is to be administered,
- The dosage can be given as prescribed on the label.

***\*\*Sunscreen and diaper ointment will need a medication form.\*\****

### ***Hand Washing Policy:***

All children, staff, students, and parents must wash their hands:



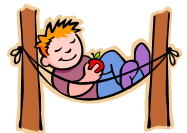
- Immediately upon entering the classrooms,
- After toileting,
- After helping children with toileting,
- After diapering a child,
- After helping a child with nose blowing, coughing or any signs of illness,
- Before getting trays from kitchen or handling any food,
- Between activities e.g., wash before and after using play dough.

## ***Children***

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### ***Rest/Nap Time:***

After a busy morning, children are ready for a rest time. Licensing regulations require that a rest/nap time be provided for children in child care. Rest/Nap Time begins after lunch. Children are not required to sleep, but are asked to lie quietly for at least 30-45 minutes, per DEL requirements.



Children may bring a blanket and/or stuffed animal to sleep with. It is a good idea to label them with a permanent marker. We request that parents picking up their children during nap time enter and leave the classroom quietly so that those who are resting are not disturbed.

### ***Toys from Home:***



Personal toys from home are discouraged in the Center. Toys are easily lost or broken when handled by many children. Similarly, gum, candy, and other food should be left at home or in your car. As with personal toys, they can generate unnecessary conflict and disappointment.

## *Holiday Celebrations*

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### *Holiday Celebrations:*

In our efforts to promote and support anti-bias attitudes and education; minimize stress in children's lives; and respect the cultural diversity represented by families of all children enrolled at the ELC, we have chosen not to celebrate traditional holidays. We ask that you do not send your children in a costume on Halloween or with Valentines on February 14<sup>th</sup>. The staff has agreed that holidays are family celebrations and vary with particular family values. It is difficult to include all children with respect to cultural diversity, and it is difficult to give holidays a meaning that is developmentally appropriate for your child. We recognize that holidays may be a part of children's lives and we talk about the ways families are celebrating or not celebrating. Holiday times are often stressful for children and we would rather remain as a warm, nurturing, stress free haven for the children to play and learn - pressure free. We do celebrate life, milestones of growth and development, personal accomplishments, individual successes, people, natural wonder, special days and the changing of seasons. We hope you will join us in these celebrations.

We are happy to acknowledge your child's birthday. Due to many food allergies we are unable to serve cake or cookies to children to celebrate birthdays.

## *Meals*

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### *Breakfast, Lunch, PM Snack:*

TCC Early Learning Center participates in the USDA food re-imbusement program offered through the Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction. We are required to serve nutritious, well balanced foods in specific quantities. Breakfast, lunch, and PM snack are served to all children enrolled in our program. The Center has a policy of low sugar, low salt, and low fat. Children regularly participate in cooking activities. These fun lessons introduce new foods and helps them understand measuring and cooking concepts in addition to experiencing the fun of creating something to eat. Every effort is made by the child care staff to honor cultural and/or religious preferences. Additionally,

in an attempt to encourage healthy eating habits, please refrain from sending candy and soda with your child. Infants eat on their own individual schedule and 1-2 year olds have an extra morning snack. All children who are in the Center in the late afternoon between 4:30-5:00 will have a second afternoon snack.

Children must eat at home if they are going to arrive after their class has eaten. Weekly menus are available at the front desk.

Children who are allergic or require temporary exclusion of milk or a particular food from their diet must have a note from a physician and complete a food substitution plan. In addition, food allergies are posted in each room so that anyone presenting meals or food-related projects is aware of them.

***Breakfast:***

- Young Toddlers (1-2 years old) = 8:30 AM
- Toddlers and Preschoolers (2-4 years old) = 8:30 AM
- Preschoolers (4-5 years old) = 9:00 AM

***Lunch:***

- Young Toddlers (1-2 years old) = 11:45 AM
- Toddlers (2-3 years old) = 12:00 PM
- Preschoolers (3-4 years old) = 12:00 PM
- Preschoolers (4-5 years old) = 12:15 PM

***PM Snack:***

- Young Toddlers (1-2 years old) = 2:00 PM
- Toddlers (2-3 years old) = 2:00 PM
- Preschoolers (3-5 years old) = 2:30 PM

***Late PM Snack***

All rooms 4:30-5:00 PM

**SAMPLE MENU**

<b>Ages</b>		<b>Meals</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<i>Ages 1-2</i>	<i>Ages 3-5</i>	<b><u>Breakfast</u></b>					
½ cup	½ cup	Vegetable or fruit juice	Applesauce	Strawberries	Orange Slices	Mandarin Oranges	Fruit Cocktail
½ slice	½ slice	Bread		Waffles		Bagels w/ cream cheese	Boiled Egg Muffin
or	or	or					
⅓ cup	⅓ cup	Cereal	Cold Cereal		Oatmeal		
½ cup	¾ cup	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk
<b>Ages</b>		<b>Meal</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<i>Ages 1-2</i>	<i>Ages 3-5</i>	<b><u>Lunch</u></b>					
1 oz	1½ oz.	Meat or alternative	Chicken Nuggets	Lasagna w/ Hamburger, Tomato Sauce and Cheese	Ham & Cheese Sandwich	Spam & Fried Rice	Chili w/ macaroni noodles
3 Tbs	3 Tbs	Peanut butter				Cheese sticks	
½ cup	½ cup	Vegetable and/or fruit	Peas and Carrots, Oranges	Green Beans, Peaches	Tomato Soup, Carrots & Cucumber, Apricots	Sweet Potato wedges, Apples	Carrots, Pears
½ slice	½ slice	Bread/pasta /grain	Rolls				Corn Bread
½ cup	¾ cup	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk
<b>Ages</b>		<b>Meal</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<i>Ages 1-2</i>	<i>Ages 3-5</i>	<b><u>PM Snack</u></b>					
		Choose 1 item from 2 different groups:					
		Meat or milk	Milk	Milk	Yogurt & Graham Crackers	Milk	Milk
		and	and	and	and	and	and
		Bread/fruit/vegetable	Blueberry Muffins	Ritz Crackers w/ Peanut Butter	Orange Juice	Goldfish Crackers	Chex Mix

## *Field Trips*

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### *Field Trips:*



The preschool (2-5 years) classrooms occasionally schedule a walking field trip on campus. Children 4 weeks through 2 years will take stroller walks around campus.

You will be notified in advance of these plans. Permission slips for on-campus field trips are included in your enrollment forms. Only the 4 and 5 year-old children will be doing off campus field trips. You will be notified in advance and required to sign a permission slip for your child to participate in off-campus trips. Children are transported in TCC vans and each child will be placed in a car seat purchased by the Center. Parents are encouraged to participate, however we do not allow children to be transported by private vehicles.

To ensure the safety of the children teachers will prepare them before each field trip, discussing safety rules. The pink emergency cards for each child will be a part of the travel bag along with the sign-in-and-out log for child accountability and a first aid kit. First aid kits are also located on each TCC van. In an emergency, 9-1-1 will be contacted and medical emergency procedures will begin.

## *Children's Clothing*

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### *Clothing:*

Children should come to the Center dressed in play clothes that are comfortable and suitable for active, sometimes messy, play. Please keep an extra change of clothes in the Center for those times when juice gets spilled, the playground is wet, or the trip to the restroom takes too long. A parent may be called out of class if their child has no spare clothing when needed.



### *Outdoors ~ Rain or Shine*

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### *Rain or Shine:*

Plan for an outdoor activity every day. We try to get out for fresh air even on rainy or snowy days. Children who dress warmly can enjoy their play so much more. Mittens, coats, hats and leg coverings should be sent routinely. For those very wet days don't forget an extra pair of shoes or boots.

## *Hellos and Goodbyes*

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Every day you and your child say “goodbye” and “hello” to one another at school. These “hellos” and “goodbyes” are the children’s first steps on a lifelong journey of learning how to separate from and reunite with important people in their lives.

Learning to say “hello” and “goodbye” to people we love is a process, not a goal to be achieved in the first week, month, or sometimes even a year of child care. Indeed, after many years of experience, we adults find it difficult to separate and reunite.

We focus on “hellos” and “goodbyes” in our program because they are such a major part of your child’s life, today and always. Being able to separate is necessary if children are going to develop as independent, competent people. Being able to reunite is necessary in building and maintaining caring, and long-term relationships.



### *How we can work together:*

- **Try to spend some time with your child as you are leaving or picking them up.** Your presence in the environment will help make the transition between home and school easier for your child.
- **Remember to say “goodbye”.** By saying “goodbye”, you strengthen your child’s trust in you. Your child can count on the fact that you will not disappear without warning. When you let us know you are about to leave, we can help your child say “goodbye”.
- **We can work together to create a “hello and goodbye ritual”.** This may be as simple as walking to the door with your child or giving your child a hug before you leave. Having a ritual offers you both the comfort of knowing what to do.
- **Be aware that some “goodbyes” and “hellos” will be “bumpier” than others.** As we all know, “goodbyes” and “hellos” can stir up many deep feelings. These feelings, combined with your child’s stage of development and other factors (such as being hungry or tired), can make saying “goodbye” and “hello” difficult at times.
- **Bring in family photos and other reminders of home that you want to share.** Seeing these special objects will help your child feel connected to you throughout the day.



## *Discipline and Guidance*

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Our objective is to encourage the development of self-control. Limits are set for everyone's safety and the preservation of equipment. Children are reminded in a positive manner what those limits are. Consistently and gradually, the teacher helps the child to take responsibility for his or her own actions. Teachers model for the children ways to express their feelings and to work out their differences with others. Each child is listened to and encouraged to communicate his or her needs. Teachers respect children, in turn this will teach the child to respect others.

Discipline methods in the Center may include positive reinforcement, redirection, substitution of an acceptable alternative, denial of a privilege, and occasionally separation from the group. Physical punishment is not allowed under licensing regulations and is never used in the Center. ***Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used or tolerated by anyone on site.***

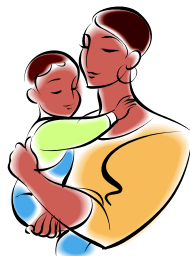
Verbal abuse will not be allowed. This means no yelling, no obscene language, and no put downs between adults or between adults and children. Spanking, threatening, and withholding food cannot be used to discipline.

All children go through stages as they learn appropriate social behavior. There can be many reasons for a child's mistaken behavior. Sometimes a child is just "acting his age". Often they are responding to unrealistic expectations placed on them or to stressful situations in their life. Children can be confused if there are conflicting sets of rules for them. Sometimes they are just tired, frustrated, or disappointed.

Parents are included when a persistent behavior is becoming a concern in the Center. The staff will address every situation and each child as an individual. If the teacher and the Program Manager feel that it is in the child's best interest to seek the assistance of a counselor or behavior specialist, the Program Manager will meet with the parent to discuss that option. As always, your input regarding changes or stressful circumstances at home are valuable in understanding behavior changes at school.

Since physical punishment is not allowed in the Center, please refrain from spanking your child while on the premises. We would be happy to talk with you about alternatives to spanking or to suggest books on the subject of behavior management.

Many books are available to checkout from our Parent Library. Please see Angela Wheeler, Christine Caro, Elizabeth Golen-Johnson or Olga Webstad.



## ***Child Protection Reporting Laws***

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If your child has sustained any physical injuries (bruises, cuts, burns, etc.) please bring this to the attention of the teacher and/or Program Manager. The Center is required by Washington State Law to report any incidence of physical or emotional injury or neglect that appears to have been inflicted by persons responsible for the care of a child. The law, Revised Code of Washington - Chapter 26.44, states that those required to report must do so, and those who knowingly fail to make a report or cause a report to be made, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. As professional school personnel, the Early Learning Center staff and the Program Manager fall under this mandatory requirement.

We are required to report to the hotline of Child Protective Services when it appears that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been “non-accidentally physically or mentally injured, negligently treated or maltreated, or sexually abused by the person who is responsible for the child’s welfare.”

The law also states that any person who in good faith makes a report or gives testimony in regard to possible non-accidental injury or neglect is immune to possible civil or criminal suit. Since each case is unique, the action that could be taken by Child Protective Services will vary according to their caseworker’s interpretation of the situation. Actions taken by Child Protective Services might include: simply talking with the parent/guardian, having a law enforcement officer verify an injury, taking a child into protective custody, and/or having a child checked at Mary Bridge by a pediatrician.

In the event that Child Protective Services is contacted regarding a child’s physical or emotional condition, we will inform the parent after the caseworker has had an opportunity to observe the child. If the parent is in a TCC class at that time, Campus Security will ask the parent to contact the Center.

If the parent is unable to be reached, we will request that the caseworker wait until the parent comes in to pick up the child. If, in the judgment of the caseworker, the child needs immediate medical attention, the child will be placed in protective custody and taken to the hospital. We will make every effort to contact the parent before this occurs.

Please feel free to talk with the Program Manager or the teachers about this law and your responsibility under it. We appreciate the open communication we have always enjoyed with each parent and we want that to continue.

## ***Other Services***

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### ***ECEAP& Early Head Start:***

The TCC Early Learning Center has been designated by the Puget Sound Educational Services District (PESD) as an Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) site and an Early Head Start site. The Center’s contract with the ESD provides the following for income eligible families:

- ❖ Free preschool from 9:00-3:30 daily,
- ❖ A Family Support Specialist to assist in community resources and referrals,
- ❖ Vision and hearing screening,
- ❖ Developmental screening,
- ❖ Field trips,
- ❖ Opportunities to participate in the Parent Policy Council of Pierce County ECEAP.

Children must be 4 years old as of August 31<sup>st</sup> of the current school year to participate. Federal Income Guidelines are used to determine enrollment eligibility in ECEAP. Children need to be between 1 month and 2.5 years old to enroll in Early Head Start and there are income guidelines to be considered.

***Kindergarten Transitions:***

In the beginning of each school year the teaching staff of the pre-kindergarten classrooms pre-set dates for kindergarten transition meetings.

During the fall quarter the Family Support, Director, and Assistant Director begin gathering information on the children who will be entering kindergarten in the following fall. Based on children’s address, information from the different school districts that children will be attending is gathered.

In the winter quarter, letters and announcements go out to parents inviting them to be a part of a planning committee. The staff tries to encourage parents to be a part of the planning of the Kindergarten transition meetings. During the meetings parents are given kindergarten readiness packets and additional information about the school their child will be attending, such as enrollment dates. Visitors from the school district, such as teachers, are invited to speak at the meetings.

***Transitions for Children Moving Up to Next Classroom:***

As space becomes available in a classroom the teachers assess the children and based on developmental readiness and age some children may be ready to move to the next level.

For children who are transitioning from one classroom to the next level up, the teachers meet with the parent and share the progress of the child. Transition forms are completed by all teachers involved. This is shared with parents in a meeting asking them for feedback on their child’s transition. Suggestions are offered to parents to help them prepare their child for the move to the new classroom. To help child or children transition to the new classroom gradually, they spend time in the classroom during story time or free play time; this helps to ease the transition. Forms are signed by parent, teachers, and director and are kept in the child’s file located in the teachers file box in the teacher area.

***Foster Grandparent Program***

The Early Learning Center staff has added an inter-generational component to the children’s experience. Through Catholic Community Services, a state funded program, Foster Grandparents are placed in the child care facilities to provide an extra-special one-

on-one interaction with young children. “Grandparents” typically work 20 hours per week under the supervision of the child care staff. The older adults receive the satisfaction that comes from being needed and helping others. The children experience the joy of a relationship with a “Grandparent”.

## ***Requirements for Enrollment***

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1. Children must be between the ages of 1 month and when they are kindergarten eligible.
2. Parents must complete the registration process at the Center prior to the child’s first day of child care. The enrollment process is as follows:
  - Pay the \$100.00 registration fee, or have DSHS or tribal verification;
  - Read this *Handbook for Families* and ask questions about any policies or procedures that are unclear or that may affect your enrollment decision;
  - Complete all of the forms included in your child’s enrollment packet: immunization, emergency form, and class schedule. Your child may not begin care until these completed forms are on file;
  - The “Health History” form must be completed by a physician within two weeks of beginning child care, and updated annually;
  - Verification of parent enrollment in ten or more TCC credits is required each quarter to be eligible for reduced rates. To verify your 10 credits please bring a copy of your class schedule printed from the TCC’s website each quarter.
  - Attend required pre-enrollment orientation to ensure that all paperwork is correctly completed, and that you are familiar with the facility and the Center’s routine.
3. Student Parents must enroll in the 1 credit “Child and Family Studies” class offered each quarter, until the completion of 3 credits (summer quarter excluded). The third quarter may be waived upon submission of documentation of 10 hours participation in an equivalent parenting program. “Child and Family Studies” can be found under “Home and Family Life Education” in the TCC course schedule.

## ***Fees and Payment of Tuition***

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### ***Payment of Tuition for Child Care:***

The Early Learning Center is subsidized by Student Activity fees, but relies very much on parent fees to meet operation expenses. Please make all payments at the Cashier’s Office in building 14 or by phone at 253-566-6084. It is essential that the following policies be understood and adhered to:

1. Student Parents must be enrolled for 10 or more TCC credits per quarter to qualify for reduced rates on the sliding fee scale. Enrollment in 9 credits or less will cost the standard rate for child care.

2. Tuition billing is based on the projected number of child care hours during the quarter. Additional changes will be added if you arrive before your scheduled time and/or if your child stays longer than your scheduled departure time. If you are a Student Parent, please notify the Center office in writing when your class schedule changes or you are changing the number of hours of child care needed. Changes affecting your billing will be reflected on the next statement issued.
3. Bills will be emailed to your email address on file. Please make sure the front office has the best address for us to reach you. After paying your tuition, please remember to put the receipt in the drop box at the front desk.
4. The minimum 25 hours of child care will be charged, per week. There is the possibility of sharing a split space if we can find someone to share the space with you in the same classroom. See the Program Assistant for more information. We do ask you to pre-pay for services. Please make a payment on the first day of the quarter in the amount of \$350.00.
5. The quarterly child care bill will consist of 3 payments. The 1<sup>st</sup> payment is due on the first day of the quarter. The remainder of the balance will be made on the first day of the next two months. Make arrangements with the Early Learning Center Manager when you cannot pay for your child care by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your child care payment will be paid by the due date.
6. Payments for the remainder of your child care bill are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month. Payments not received within 10 business days after the due date will be assessed a **\$10.00** late fee each week until the full payment is made. Any unpaid fees will be sent to the Business Office at the end of the quarter. Grades, transcripts, and financial aid will be withheld until your payment is made. Tacoma Community College reserves the right to submit these overdue bills to a collection agency at which time collection fees will be added.
7. No adjustment will be made for absences due to illnesses for less than 6 consecutive days. By the 6<sup>th</sup> day it is the parent's responsibility to contact the offices to arrange for billing credit for the 6<sup>th</sup> day and beyond. Staff members are hired and materials are purchased based on each quarter's enrollment.
8. All fees from the previous quarter must be paid in order to enroll for the next quarter's child care.
9. Fees are calculated for the child's first scheduled day of attendance.
10. In order for an outside agency (i.e. - DSHS) to be billed for child care fees, you must bring in the appropriate paperwork prior to the first day of attendance and it must be approved by your caseworker in writing or email. If an agency ceases to pay the fees, for any reason, you will be billed and will be personally responsible for payment. If you have a co-pay with your agency that must be paid by the first of each month. Please make your payment at the TCC Cashier's office and bring the receipt to the ELC office.

11. A 2 week notice of intent to withdraw is necessary. Child care tuition will be charged for 2 weeks after the notice to withdraw, regardless of the child's attendance.
12. Registration fees or over payment of tuition will not be refunded.
13. Staff/faculty spaces may have up to 10 vacation days a year. Please see someone at the Center office to set those up.

***Fees:***

1. The child care fees are based on family income and the number of people in the family.
2. The fees are determined by the number of days per quarter and hours per day (25 hours per week, minimum).
3. Fees are calculated from the child's first scheduled day of attendance.
4. If you pay on your own, the fee for a 3<sup>rd</sup> child is reduced by 20%.
5. Parents in the "Parent Co-op" program pay \$1.00 per hour less.
6. Upon first enrollment, a non-refundable \$100.00 registration fee is required for enrollment. This is also renewed each year.
7. Fees are due the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and delinquent on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Child care will be suspended on the 11<sup>th</sup> for non-payment, unless arrangements are made in advance with the Center's Program Manager.
8. Fees will be reassessed each year.
9. Late fees for pick-up after 5:30 closing are as follows:

***First occurrence: \$1 per minute.***

***Second occurrence: \$2 per minute.***

***Third occurrence: \$3 per minute.***

***You may receive a recommendation to withdraw from child care if late pick-up is a frequent problem.***

## ***Termination Policy***

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Child care may be terminated by the Center for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of tuition and/or too many late charges,
- Non-enrollment in the "Child and Family Studies" classes,
- Inconsistent attendance in the Center,
- Incomplete enrollment forms,
- Non-adherence to Center policies.

## Early Learning Center Staff

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### *Administration:*

- ✚ *Olga Webstad ~ Program Manager/Director* 566-6020  
[owebstad@tacomacc.edu](mailto:owebstad@tacomacc.edu)
- ✚ *Elizabeth Golen-Johnson ~ Asst. Program Manager/Director* 460-4475  
[egolen-johnson@tacomacc.edu](mailto:egolen-johnson@tacomacc.edu)
- ✚ *Angela Wheeler ~ Program Assistant* 566-5180  
[awheeler@tacomacc.edu](mailto:awheeler@tacomacc.edu)
- ✚ *Christine Caro ~ Family Support Specialist (EHS/ECEAP)* 566-5317  
[ccaro@tacomacc.edu](mailto:ccaro@tacomacc.edu)

### *Infants ~ Early Head Start ~ "Caterpillars" (4weeks-1 yr)*

- ✚ *Kristen Pleasant ~ Lead Teacher* 566-5286  
[kpleasant@tacomacc.edu](mailto:kpleasant@tacomacc.edu)
- ✚ *Tamara Tyrsina ~ Assistant Teacher* 566-5286

### *Young Toddler ~ Early Head Start ~ "Busy Bees" (1-2 yrs)*

- ✚ *Kaisha VonNagel ~ Lead Teacher* 566-5286  
[kyonnagel@tacomacc.edu](mailto:kyonnagel@tacomacc.edu)
- ✚ *Cindy Miller ~ Assistant Teacher* 566-5286

### *Toddlers ~ Early Head Start ~ "Butterflies" (2-3 yrs)*

- ✚ *Kathryn Malgren ~ Lead Teacher* 566-5180
- ✚ *Tahani Farrah ~ Asst. Teacher* 566-5180

### *Preschool ~ "Friendly Frogs" (3-4 yrs)*


- ✚ *Caryn Nelson ~ Lead Teacher* 566-5180  
[crnelson@tacomacc.edu](mailto:crnelson@tacomacc.edu)

 *Zahra Soumei ~ Asst. Teacher* 566-5180

 *Tatiana Moraru ~ Asst. Teacher* 566-5180

 *Nicole Strickland ~ Asst. Teacher* 566-5180

*Preschool ~ ECEAP ~ "Dragonflies" (4-5 yrs)*

 *Tammy Dorman ~ Lead Teacher* 566-5180  
[tdorman@tacomacc.edu](mailto:tdorman@tacomacc.edu)

 *Shana Harvey ~ Asst. Teacher* 566-5180

 *Matt Redman ~ Asst. Teacher* 566-5180

*Preschool ~ ECEAP ~ "Owls" (4-5 yrs)*

 *Tabitha Curtis ~ Lead Teacher* 566-5180  
[tcurtis@tacomacc.edu](mailto:tcurtis@tacomacc.edu)

*Allison Hood ~ Asst. Teacher* 566-5180



## *History of Tacoma Community College Early Learning Center*

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The Early Learning Center, known as the Children’s Center prior to 2008, has been a part of Tacoma Community College since the fall quarter of 1974. At that time TCC entered into an agreement with Fircrest Methodist Church, which enabled the College to utilize part of the church for a child care center. Although the church facility had adequate physical space to accommodate enrollments, sharing this facility and its geographic separation from the campus presented obstacles to providing a comprehensive child care program that benefits children, students/parents and the college. Because of these concerns, the support expressed by the ASTCC Senate, and the important service provided by the Early Learning Center to many TCC students, an on-campus child care center was built and opened in the spring of 1982. As the college’s student enrollments increased, child care on campus became high in demand. The college recognized this and with the efforts of the Student Body, TCC Foundation, and many private donors, the Tacoma Community College Early Learning Center was built. In September of 2008 the doors were opened to children ages 1 month through 5 years old. The Early Learning Center prides itself in being a center of high quality that uses best practices and is known statewide and nationally for the quality of care and early childhood education that they provide. The ELC is a “Level 3 Early Achievers Facility” and has completed and been awarded accreditation from the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC).



“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots; the other, wings.”

Hodding Carter, American Journalist  
(1907-72)

Revised 1/2016