

Edna C. Stevens
Early Learning Program
Family Handbook

2019-2020 School Year

“NURTURING CURIOSITY AND BUILDING INDEPENDENCE”



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Dear Parents/Guardians,

We would like to welcome you and your child to the Early Learning Program at ECS. We are very fortunate that the Early Learning Program team includes assistant teachers and related service providers. They are enthusiastic, caring members of the team who are quite knowledgeable about all aspects of the classroom routine, materials, and children. The Early Learning Program team also includes teachers who are dual certified in Special Education/Early Childhood Education or Early Childhood Education.

This family handbook is provided to help you and your child have a successful school year. With your help, your child will build his/her skills and develop an educational foundation as he/she becomes a life-long learner.

Cromwell Public Schools Early Learning Program

Statement of Philosophy and Goals

1.0 MISSION STATEMENT AND VISION

The Cromwell Public Schools Early Learning Program is committed to providing a high quality preschool experience for all children. We are sensitive to the social, emotional, language, cognitive, self-care and motor needs of each child. At Edna C. Stevens School, our Early Learning Program is one that serves all children and provides support for diverse learners. We believe in a caring and safe facility that honors all ethnic groups, religions, genders, abilities and the important role parents/guardians play in their children's preschool experience.

Our vision is to educate and inspire all students to apply the essential skills needed to become productive and responsible citizens in the 21st century. In pursuing this Mission, the Cromwell Public School community believes that:

- All students are valued and deserve an education that meets their academic, physical, and social/emotional needs.
- All members of the community have a right to a safe, supporting, engaging, and culturally inclusive learning environment.
- All members of the community value effective communication, involvement and collaboration among all partners in the education process.
- All members of the community must uphold high expectations, be accountable, and demonstrate a commitment to excellence.
- Through the total preschool experience, our children will become familiar with the routine and structured experiences of school and will thus become prepared for learning environments beyond preschool.

- Staff and administrators develop meaningful and supportive relationships with parents for the purpose of facilitating children’s growth and learning at home and school.

2.0 PHILOSOPHY

The Early Learning Program believes that children learn best through play-based, hands-on experiences, using a discovery approach to foster curiosity and build independence. Small group activities and carefully planned, structured learning centers are facilitated each day, providing opportunities for both child-directed, free-choice and whole group activities.

We believe that play is important! As Mr. Rogers stated so well, “*PLAY IS OFTEN TALKED ABOUT AS IF IT WERE A RELIEF FROM SERIOUS LEARNING. BUT FOR CHILDREN PLAY IS SERIOUS LEARNING. PLAY IS REALLY THE WORK OF CHILDHOOD.*”

Children must learn to use their bodies in play before they can do more complex learning such as reading and writing. Play is a crucial aspect of our Early Learning Program which nurtures curiosity and builds independence. Children learn and develop a variety of skills through this important play.

We believe that family-school communication is integral to helping students learn and develop. By knowing what is occurring at school and home, families and teachers can better understand children’s strengths and needs and lead children to independence.

We also believe that knowing about each family’s culture, race, religion, home language and family structure is important in making sure families are a part of the program. We welcome family suggestions and ideas for school events and improving the school environment and climate. If at any time difficulties or differences arise between families and staff, the program staff and administration will work to resolve them. Most issues or concerns that may occur can be resolved by:

1. Discussing the problem with the classroom teacher.
2. Discussing the problem with the coordinator.
3. Discussing the problem with the administrative team.
4. Holding a team meeting.

3.0 CURRICULUM

The ECS Early Learning Program curriculum aligns with the **Connecticut Early Learning & Development Standards (ELDS)**.

Teaching Strategies’ Creative Curriculum is utilized in addition to teacher-created curriculum resources.

The curriculum emphasizes important developmental concepts in the following specific learning domains (as quoted from the website www.ct.gov/oec/elds).



Cognition: Making sense of the world, staying with something and working hard to solve problems.

Social and Emotional Development: Understanding yourself, your feelings and how to play with other people.

Physical Health and Development: Learning to take care of yourself and to do things with your body and hands so that you grow strong and healthy.

Language & Literacy: Communicating using your body, language, signs and written communication.

Creative Arts: Enjoying music, dance and art and expressing yourself in these ways.

Mathematics: Understanding numbers and how to use them, counting, patterns, measuring and shapes.

Science: Understanding the world around us, including living things, the earth and space and energy.

Social Studies: Understanding the world and knowing about the people in it. This starts with knowing about your family, then the community and world.

The Early Learning Program Teaching staff is knowledgeable on the CT Early Learning and Development Standards as well as effective teaching strategies to teach these skills. Teachers provide thoughtfully planned, play-based, interactive learning activities to teach the skills in each of these domains. To achieve the highest quality early care and education, we follow the research-based best practices that inform NAEYC standards for accreditation. We teach according to what is developmentally appropriate. For young children this means, as the research tells us, through play. Young children learn best by “doing”.

Teachers plan the month’s theme with specific learning goals in mind. Creative Curriculum is the base curriculum structure that we use, supplemented by teacher created resources as well as “Second Steps” Social Emotional curriculum. Flexibility is encouraged in order to capitalize on spontaneous events that provide opportunities to maximize each child’s learning. Children are taught by providing them with a wide variety of “hands on” experiences that encourage them to actively learn, to lead, to follow, to solve their conflicts, to listen, to appreciate differences, to count, to reason, to create, and to use their muscles. Teachers teach by close observation of each child’s unique abilities so that the planning for optimal learning opportunities is maximized for each child. Emphasis is placed on the process (the doing) rather than the product. The purpose is, as much as possible, to help all children reach their highest potentials and foster a genuine life-long love of learning.

Teachers create a learning environment that is safe, predictable, and supportive, where the limits and expectations are clear and consistent. Understanding that children learn from the adults in their environment, teachers model the behavior they teach, responding respectfully and kindly through words. Teachers express feeling and needs through words. Teachers model cooperation and compassion. Each day is planned for opportunities for active involvement as well as quiet reflection. Children are encouraged to make choices throughout the day’s activities. Among the many choices are science exploration, math activities, fine motor and cognitive manipulatives (i.e. blocks, legos, puzzles), art, receptive and expressive language skills, and literacy. When the children gather together as a group, teachers provide opportunities for singing, dance, discussions of the weather, discussions of letters in the alphabet etc. Teachers encourage active engagement in the outdoor learning environment as well.

4.0 HOURS OF OPERATION & CALENDAR

Early Learning Program students attend school 9:00-3:00 Mondays through Fridays. The Early Learning Program follows the Cromwell Public Schools district calendar. Before and after school care is available on site (for an additional fee) through the Cromwell Parks and Rec office in collaboration with the YMCA Kids Corner Staff. On "single session" days dismissal is at 11:30.

5.0 BUILDING SECURITY AND ACCESS

All doors including the main entrance will be locked during school hours. Visitors must ring the bell at the main entrance in order to gain admittance into Edna C. Stevens School. All visitors or volunteers should report to the office before going to any part of the building. After signing in you will be given a sticker/badge to wear. Please have it visible at all times. When you leave the building you are asked to stop in the office and sign out. Parents/Guardians are asked to drop off forgotten items in the office. Please help us avoid interruptions by not going to classrooms to drop off these items.

6.0 ARRIVAL PROCEDURES & SIGN IN PROCEDURE

Early Learning Program students attend school 9:00-3:00. For those students who will be dropped off at school, students will be escorted by an adult to the main entrance, being sure to hold the child's hand, at 9:00am. Students should arrive on time to school. Staff will be available to open the outside door and greet your child at 9:00 am. The adult dropping the student off will sign his/her name on the sign-in clipboard next to their child's name each morning. Parents do not need enter the arrival/dismissal room as the teaching staff is there to supervise your child at that time. A staff member will be designated to check off students as they arrive off of the bus or dropped off by an adult. The classes will leave for the classroom promptly at 9:05 am.

If you arrive after that time, you will need to bring your child to the office for tardiness and office staff will contact your child's teacher. Classroom staff will then come get your child when they are able. Late arrivals to school creates challenges within the classroom which impacts classroom scheduled activities. If you are running late we would appreciate a phone call so the office can inform your child's teacher.

Arrival is a busy time of morning, but we understand that the need to speak with your child's teaching staff sometimes arises. Please know you are always welcome to speak to your child's teacher to deliver a brief message. However, if you require more than a couple of minutes to speak with your child's teacher, please schedule a time with the teacher.

7.0 PARKING

All parents/guardians are asked to park in designated parking spaces only. An area in the west lot has been assigned for student drop off only. We ask that you park in the drop off parking lot for the safety of our students. Please do not drive in the front entrance during arrival or departure of school hours. Parents/Guardians are asked not to park in the front entrance parking lot. For the safety of everyone, we ask that you do not walk in between parked buses. Please use the sidewalk. Cars (and buses) should not be left running in the parking lot and please make sure any child under the age of 12 is not left in the car unattended.

8.0 BUS ARRIVAL

Identified special needs students who require bus transportation will be met by a designated staff member who will unbuckle each student and escort the students into the building/arrival

room. The staff member will communicate with the bus driver regarding the number of students present that day and check to ensure all students have been safely accounted for while getting off the bus. A staff member will be designated to keep a written bus log of students who arrived by bus. No child will be allowed to exit a bus without staff present.

If your child will be absent and will not need bus that day, please contact DATTCO bus company and school. Please be sure to have your child ready when the bus arrives at your house, it is best to wait 10 minutes prior to pick up and drop off. An adult must be home to meet your child at the bus. Your child will be returned to school if no adult is presented during drop off times. It will then be the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up at school.

9.0 DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Early Learning Program dismissal is promptly at 3:00pm. At 3:00 children being picked up will be escorted to the dismissal room by classroom staff. Parents (or approved pick-up person) should wait outside the office entrance and a staff member will open the door to begin the dismissal routine. Before your child is released to you, please sign your name on the Early Learning Program sign-in/sign-out form on the clipboard in that room. We will do our best to be on time each day, but please understand that sometimes unforeseen events occur at the end of the day, causing the class to be delayed in getting to the dismissal room.

Parents must provide a list of authorized individuals that can remove their child from the school by submitting names on the registration form and emergency contact list. If staff does not recognize the person picking up your child, the individual will be required to present a photo ID. If this information is not available, the child will not be permitted to leave with the individual. In the event of an emergency, if someone not on the approved list will be picking up the student, the parent must speak with the office staff and provide identifying information regarding who will be picking up the student and that person must present a photo ID at pick up.

9.1 BUS DISMISSAL

Identified special needs students who require bus transportation will be escorted by a designated staff member to the bus at the end of the day. A staff member will be designated to keep a written bus log of students as they arrive at the bus exit doors and are escorted by staff to the bus. Staff will buckle each child on the bus ensuring safety. Staff member will communicate with the bus driver regarding the number of students placed on the bus that day and check that all students have been safely buckled on the bus ride home. No child will be allowed to board a bus without staff present.

9.2 EARLY DISMISSALS

In the event of a single session day as indicated on the school calendar or an "emergency closing" (i.e. weather, power outage)-

- All Early Learning Program classes will dismiss at 11:30.
- Lunch will still be served.

10.0 DELAYED OPENINGS

On a 2 hour delay due to inclement weather-

- Full-day Early Learning Program students will arrive at school 2 hours later at 11:00 am.
- Partial-day students do not attend on delayed opening days

11.0 CLOTHING

Since many of the activities we do in the classroom can be messy and accidents do happen, please send in a spare set of clothes to be kept at school for your child. This should include: pants, a shirt, underpants and socks. We also recommend that you send your child to school in "play clothes" which you don't mind getting messy or stained. Please send your child to school with foot wear appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. Rain boots and snow boots can be worn to school but please send a pair of sneakers to change into once in the room. Flip flops are unsafe for play on the playscape; closed toed shoes are preferred for preschool activities. Remember to **LABEL** all of your child's clothing, coat, backpack, mittens, hats, lunch box, water bottles, ice packs, etc. as items can get mixed up as children learn to take care of and put away their belongings.

12.0 FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS

School-home communication is very important. The teaching staff wants to know about your child's night, morning, health, or other routines in order to establish rapport and to better know the child and family. Please write notes in the communication notebook which will be provided and place them in the backpack. You can also call if you have any questions or concerns. During school hours, your call will be forwarded to the voicemail system, which is checked periodically. Email is a good way to communicate, though not always reliable due to network outages or when a substitute is teaching the class and doesn't have access to the email. Therefore, please call the school with any immediate messages such as changes in pick up, your child being out sick, etc.

Informing families about their child's day is important to us. Teachers will provide information regarding whole-group and individual happenings each day. While families need to be informed of their child's behavior, it is not helpful to report every incident unless it is harmful, aggressive, destructive, or unsafe. We strive to build rapport with families by sharing positive information. When challenging behaviors have been documented and support or intervention is needed, staff will inform the administration, and a meeting will be scheduled with the family.

13.0 FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & VISITS

The Early Learning Program encourages families to be involved in their child's early childhood experience. Throughout the school year we provide a variety of opportunities for families to participate in activities, both in the classroom and through the Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) events. Families of enrolled students are welcome to contribute to classrooms activities if pre arranged with the classroom teacher. We encourage all of our families to share interest and talents with their child's teachers so we can enhance our programs with diverse, cultural, talents, and family traditions that will help us develop stronger home-school relationships.

14.0 VOLUNTEERING

Families of enrolled students can volunteer time to help with classroom prep, reading to the class, assist teachers, help with special events. Please talk with your child's classroom teacher if you would like to volunteer your time.

15.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

Within the Early Learning Program at Edna C. Stevens, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Edna C. Stevens who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty,

other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents without written permission, as ECS/ELP strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, special needs information, or health related information of anyone associated with ECS/ELP. Regulatory authorities with legal rights may review children's files upon request.

You may observe children at our center who have special needs or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of ECS/ELP are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

16.0 COMMITMENT TO SERVE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The ELP serves children with special needs and disabilities. These students, ages 3 to 5 with IEPs, are first and foremost, children who may need support for learning and participating in our program. The term special needs includes a wide range of developmental delays, physical, emotional or cognitive disabilities. It also includes children with serious, persistent challenging behaviors that place them at risk for later problems. Students with special needs are included in all of our Early Learning Program classes and we make every effort to accommodate and adapt the environment to meet each child's special needs in the classroom.

17.0 KEEPING THE SCHOOL INFORMED

It is important that the school is able to contact you at all times. If any of the information on your child's emergency card changes, please contact your child's classroom teacher or the office immediately. This includes any changes in your home phone number, address, medical concerns, work contact information, etc. The school must have an active phone number to contact parents at all times, as well as active emergency person phone numbers in case we are unable to reach you.

17.1 PAPERWORK

At the start of your child's school year, we will be sending a communication folder with essential paperwork. Please fill out this paperwork and get it back to us by the dates indicated. It is very important to have a complete file of information on your child at the start of the school year.

18.0 CLASSROOM NEWS

A newsletter will be sent home in the communication folder periodically. This will let you know what we've been doing in the classroom, and what upcoming events are planned. Email and/or a classroom communication App may also be utilized to keep you informed. Please be sure to provide the school with an up-to-date email address.

18.1 WEBSITE

Program events may be posted on the Early Learning Program website, along with other important and interesting information. Photos of your child may be taken throughout the class day. These photos may be uploaded to the website. A photo permission form will be sent home with the essential paperwork at the start of the school year. Please sign and return this form as soon as possible.

19.0 BIRTHDAYS

We welcome birthday celebrations in the classroom, with the following guidelines in mind: If you wish to send in a non-edible treat, please follow the school's guidelines regarding approved

treats. NO FOOD is allowed to be sent in to be eaten during the class day OR sent home in a goody bag. If you wish to invite children from the class to a party, we can distribute the invitations at school ONLY if you are inviting the ENTIRE class. If you are not, you will need to mail the invitations to those children.

20.0 BACKPACKS

Please send your child to school with a backpack every day. This backpack MUST BE large enough to hold a 9x12 folder, lunch box, and other essential items which will be going back and forth frequently. Please keep the communication folder in your child's backpack. This will make it easier for us to communicate. Please check the folder and backpack each day, and we will do the same when your child arrives at school each day.

21.0 MEAL TIMES/NUTRITION

The Cromwell Public Schools Early Learning Program follow the Child Nutrition Program National School Lunch Program guidelines established for preschool meals. Complete Nutritional Standards are available through the Cromwell Public Schools Food Service Department. Meals are offered through our school cafeteria or can be brought from home. Please note: staff are not allowed to warm/cook any foods sent in from a child's home.

Healthy food is encouraged and staff are not allowed to offer children younger than four years old the following foods: hot dogs, whole or sectioned into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrots, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Please send in **healthy, nutritious snack(s)** to school with your child each day, including a 100% natural fruit juice box or other healthy drink. For half days, there will be one snack time, for full-day there will be two snack times offered daily. We encourage healthy food choices by eating fruits, vegetables, dairy products, fortified cereals and crackers during snack times. Please keep in mind that the children are encouraged to be as independent as possible during snack time. Please send your child's snack/lunch in kid-friendly containers (**NOT GLASS**) and be aware there is no refrigerator available so an ice pack in an insulated lunch box is required to ensure your child's lunch remains cold throughout the day.

Also, the teaching staff works hard throughout the year educating students on "eco-healthy" practices including reducing waste and recycling. Please help support this initiative by sending your child's food items in non-toxic, reusable containers, not Ziploc bags. You will also have the option of purchasing hot lunch (please refer to the packet you will receive regarding "Meal Pay Plus"). As we start the year, please be aware of **food allergy notices** sent home, and follow these guidelines closely, as these allergies can be life-threatening. Please let us know if your child has food allergies or dietary needs/restrictions.

22.0 POSITIVE BEHAVIOR/CHILD BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE PROCEDURE

The goal of discipline is to help children to develop self-control; therefore, it is necessary for children to understand rules and the reasons for them, and to understand the consequences of their own actions. Preventing problems is essential to good discipline. The goal of a positive behavior plan is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures.

Edna C. Stevens Early Learning Program implements a Positive Behavior Intervention System which focuses on preventing problem behavior by using the following guidelines (cited from PBIS.ORG):

- Removing antecedent or preceding factors that prompt, trigger, or occasion problem behavior & undesirable intervention practices.
- Adding antecedent or preceding factors that prompt, trigger, or occasion appropriate behavior & desirable intervention practices.
- Arranging environments so opportunities are maximized to teach & practice appropriate behavior & desirable intervention practices.
- Teaching social skills and adopting intervention strategies that are more effective, efficient, & relevant than problem behaviors & undesirable intervention practices.

The following techniques are used to establish discipline:

- Distracting Children from potential problems
- Reminding children of the rules
- Helping children to solve problems and to make choices
- Allowing children to take time away from the group to regain control
- Ignoring inappropriate behavior
- Noticing and reinforcing appropriate behavior
- Helping children to articulate their feelings
- Helping children to understand the consequences of their actions.

We do not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, coercive or frightening punishment under any circumstances. Educators do not force children to apologize but help children recognize another child's feelings and guide the children to help rectify the situation. Educators abstain from corporal punishment or humiliating or frightening discipline techniques. Food or beverage is never withheld as a discipline strategy. Children are not physically restrained in any manner, unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or others. We may remove a child from a situation and redirect them to more appropriate behavior. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted, including meeting with the family to plan meaningful intervention strategies for the child, consulting with school specialists, including the school psychologist and/or BCBA.

If exclusionary measures must be taken, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement. Cromwell Public Schools ensures its child behavior guidance procedure complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

23.0 ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS/SICK CHILD PROCEDURE

Edna C. Stevens Early Learning Program staff is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for children. Most of our Early Learning Program staff are certified in First Aid and CPR for both children and infants.

Whenever young people are hurt or taken ill, the school provides immediate first aid. If children sustain injuries, they are referred to the nurse. In case of possible serious injury or illness the nurse will notify the parents/guardians. Accident insurance coverage is available to each student. Information regarding this coverage will be sent home during the first week of school. The school nurse, Principal or Assistant Principal are the only persons authorized to dismiss a child.

Children need to be in good health in order to get the most out of their school day and to protect others from illness. Children who have symptoms of illness and cannot fully participate in both indoor and outdoor activities will not be allowed to attend school. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms listed below while at home, we ask that you keep them home and call the school to report their absence. The following symptoms will exclude the child from participation.

- Fever of 100 degrees or above: The child will be sent home and may not return to school for 24 hours after the fever has broken and without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Green or yellow nasal discharge with or without a fever or cough: Any discharge other than clear may be a sign of infection. The child may return to school when symptom-free or if a physician has seen the child and verifies in writing that the child is not contagious and may fully participate in the program.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea: The child will be sent home if they have had three episodes of diarrhea or have vomited once. They may return when symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- Conjunctivitis/pink eye: A child who exhibits redness, itching, or discharge from the eye will be sent home. The child may return 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment.
- Chicken pox: Symptoms of chickenpox are fever accompanied by a rash or blisters. The blisters take several days to appear and to scab over. The child may return to the school once ALL scabs have dried over. All cases of chickenpox must be reported to the school nurse.
- Head lice: Children may return to school once the child has been treated with a specific shampoo designated for lice and all the eggs are removed from the child's hair. The school nurse will recheck the child's hair upon return to school.
- Skin rashes and cold sores: A physician must see any rashes that are in question. The child may return to school with either a physician's note stating that the condition is non-contagious, or when symptom-free.
- Children with open sores on their hands will not be permitted to participate in water play.
- Students with stitches, splints, casts, etc. will NOT be allowed to participate in gross motor play or active recess. A doctor's note is needed with instructions on length of exclusion as well as prior to resuming activities.

When it has been determined that a child is too ill, uncomfortable, or contagious to remain in school the parent/guardian or person designated on the medical emergency card will be notified. This person must sign the child out in the office.

Please note the following information which will help to keep our students and staff healthy throughout the school year:

- If your child is feeling ill, please keep him/her at home. If they seem better as time progresses, you can always bring them in tardy (as long as they have been symptom free from fever, vomiting, diarrhea for 24 hours).
- If your child has a symptom that you plan on having evaluated by the doctor (rash, sore throat, increased cough, etc.), please do so **before** sending your child in, so we have clearance from the doctor and decrease the risk of transmission.
- If your child is diagnosed with a condition (pink eye, strep throat, impetigo, etc.), they need to have 3 doses of antibiotics before returning to school. If the symptoms continue to make your child uncomfortable however, he/she may need to rest at home longer.
- If your child is diagnosed with something with more severe symptoms (pneumonia, flu, mono, etc.), please don't hesitate to keep him/her at home for an extra day of rest once symptoms have subsided.
- Please remember we don't have areas to allow your child to sleep longer than the grade appropriate rest times or stay indoors during recess times.
- And finally, please remember the 24 hour policy for children returning after symptoms of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. He/she must be symptom free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning.

23.1 ABSENCES

Please let the school nurse know of any illnesses, medications or absences by phone call. If your child is sick, please keep her/him home until she/he has been symptom-free (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, etc.) for 24 hours without the use of medications.

23.2 STORAGE AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

All medications will be stored in the health office. All medication must be stored in its original labeled container in a locked cabinet, with the exception of emergency medication. Emergency medication will be stored in an area that is safe, inaccessible to children, and will allow quick access in an emergency. Medications may be dispensed by the school nurse or the Principal or in the absence of either of these two persons, by the Principal's designee. All medications, (including over the counter medication) must be accompanied by the State Department of Health Administration of Medication form with written permission from the parent/guardian. No medication will be given without these required authorizations. Medication should be brought to school by someone 18 years of age or older. Bus drivers cannot accept medications. Please do not send them to school with your child.

23.3 SUNSCREEN APPLICATION PROCEDURE

With parent permission, the staff may apply sunblock or sunscreen. Parents must provide the sunscreen and sign a Sunscreen Permission Form. Sunscreen with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher is required.

23.4 REQUIRED HEALTH ASSESSMENTS / IMMUNIZATIONS

Tuberculosis screening guidelines for Connecticut schools recommend that students who have traveled to a high risk country (please contact school nurse for list) and stayed for at least a week with substantial contact with the indigenous population since the previously required examination, be tested prior to the return to school after their travels. Please notify your school nurse prior to traveling outside of the country in order to receive instructions on any Tuberculosis testing which may be needed upon your return. In accordance with Connecticut State Law

(Section 10-206), the Cromwell Board of Education requires that each student undergo a health assessment prior to entrance into Preschool, Kindergarten, in grade 6, and in grade 10.

Health assessments for Pre-K (and Kindergarten) must be completed within one year prior to entrance. Current immunization requirements as well as other mandatory information, are marked with an (*) on the Connecticut Health Assessment Record (yellow form). ALL documentation MUST be completed PRIOR to entrance into Preschool and Kindergarten, and during the Grade 6 and Grade 10 health assessment.

23.5 FLU SHOT

The state of Connecticut requires all preschool students, up to age 5, to have a flu shot. Families must show written proof of the shot or flu mist from a health care provider. If missing, your child will be excluded from school. Every child must have a 1 dose administered each year between August 1-December 31. Two doses separated by at least 28 days are required for those receiving the flu vaccine for the first time. Please see the school nurse if an exemption is needed. For additional Health Services procedures refer to BOE Policies 5141 and 5141.21.

24.0 SUSPECTED ABUSE/NEGLECT PROCEDURES

The Cromwell Board of Education recognizes that student's mental and physical health will have an effect on the student's ability to obtain the most benefit from attending school. In order to increase the students' ability to learn while in school, the Board of Education realizes the importance and legal responsibility of mandated reporters in identifying students who may be suffering from abuse. Connecticut General Statutes 17a-101, as amended by PA 96-246, has defined various school employees as mandated reporters. Therefore, the staff and administrators of the Early Learning Program are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are required to report if they suspect or believe that a child has been abused (CGS 17a-101) or may be abused (CGS 17a-102). The district shall not discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against any mandated school employee who in good faith makes a report pursuant to CGS 17a-101 or is involved in any proceedings pertaining to the alleged child abuse or neglect. Furthermore, this procedure explains the process when an accusation is made against a teacher. Please refer to BOE Policy p5141.4, found on the Cromwell Public Schools website.

25.0 EMERGENCY PLANS AND PROCEDURES: FIRE, SECURITY, AND SAFETY DRILLS

It is Cromwell Public School's priority to keep all children safe throughout their school day. Our school practices fire, security (stay in the building), and evacuation (leave the building) drills throughout the school year. The drill procedures have been created by the district and school administrators, Board of Education and Cromwell Police Department. Our staff is trained on what to do during these drills, and your child will learn where to be and what to do during these emergency situations. Students in Preschool are informed that these drills are important because they teach us how to help keep our bodies safe at school- both inside and outside of our school.

26.0 ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROGRESS PLAN AND TIMELINE

We will be observing your child throughout the year to assess his/her development physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively and creatively and utilize the following to continually track student progress:

- Early Learning Program Curriculum Progress Checklist

- Child Observations
- Collections of children's work samples (portfolios)
- Input from families at conferences, meetings, etc.

All teaching staff attend professional development and have opportunities to discuss the appropriate ways to collect data that will inform ongoing curricular decisions. Teachers participate in a range of professional development to ensure assessment data is accurate and meaningful for reporting to families and for planning meaningful experiences for children.

We use the Early Learning Program's Curriculum Checklist to assess developmental domains previously listed and conduct these 4 times a year: as part of the intake assessment within the first month of school, and at the end of each marking period (December, March, and June). Observations will be conducted by teaching staff familiar with the child in whole-group, small-group, and individual situations and will be documented through notes, photographs and work samples that are shared with parents and displayed in the classroom. Assessing each child's current skills is essential to planning rich, meaningful lessons utilizing a variety of strategies to address each student's individual learning styles. These assessments will be shared with families in the form of a written progress report each term, and discussed during parent teacher conferences which are held in December and March.

We also utilize the "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" (ASQ-3) which is a screening and monitoring system used to help keep track of each child's development. A link to the digital questionnaire is provided to parents at the start of the school year and again five months later at the March parent/teacher conference time. This questionnaire includes questions about each child's communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving and personal-social skills. If the questionnaire shows any possible concerns, the teaching staff will contact the family regarding the need of a more indepth assessment for that child. Referrals for special services will be made as deemed necessary.

Input from families is also an important tool used in the assessment of each child's progress. Family input is welcome and encouraged, particularly during parent/teacher conferences and other meetings.

27.0 PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are offered to all families twice yearly, they are held in December and March. However, if you have concerns about your child's progress in school at any time, an individual meeting can be scheduled by contacting us.

28.0 PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program evaluations are filled out by all staff and families on an annual basis. The information obtained from the annual evaluation is used to develop a plan of action for program improvement.

29.0 NAEYC ACCREDITATION

We support the values and philosophy underlying The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high quality program for young children and their families. While the accreditation

process examines the total program, the greatest emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions between staff and children, and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum. Health and safety, staffing, staff qualifications, physical environment, and administration are all reviewed during accreditation; but primary consideration is given to the nature of the child's experience. As an early childhood program currently undergoing the accreditation process, we have reviewed and updated some policies and procedures and anticipate a site visit this fall or winter. The accreditation process includes a self-study, observation by an early childhood professional, and evaluation by national commissioners.

30.0 HAND WASHING PROCEDURE

This procedure applies to all teaching staff, children, volunteers and families. This procedure will be included in the teaching staff and family handbooks and reminders about hand washing procedures will be posted at all hand washing locations.

Proper and consistent hand washing is essential for maintaining a healthy environment and minimizing disease transmission. The hand washing procedure is a guideline for teachers, children and families to promote proper hygiene in the Early Learning Program and to decrease the transmission of illnesses. Staff are expected to supervise and assist children when washing their hands. Staff and children should wash their hands: upon entering the classroom, after using the bathroom, before and after diaper changing, before eating, when preparing food, after wiping nose, when hands are soiled from activities like sand, water, and other sensory play, and before and after first aid needs.

30.1 HAND WASHING PROCEDURES

Staff will supervise and assist hand washing tasks using the following procedure, with prompting and hand washing song as needed:

1. Signs will be posted at each sink with the times when hand-washing is required and the steps to follow.
2. Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are instructed in hand-washing and are periodically monitored. All staff, volunteers and children in situations which require hand washing where hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others. Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Children wash independently or with staff assistance.
3. Children and adults will wash their hands:
 - Upon arrival to the classroom
 - After using the toilet or having a diaper changed
 - After handling bodily fluids (e.g. blowing/wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, any touching of mucus, blood, or vomit)
 - Before snacks and meals, before preparing or serving food, or before handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g. meat, eggs, poultry).
 - After playing in water that is shared by two or more people
 - After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals
 - When moving from one group to another (e.g. visiting another classroom) that involves contact with infants and toddlers.

Adults also wash their hands:

- Before and after feeding a child
- Before and after administering medication
- After assisting a child with toileting
- After any cleaning or handling garbage.

Proper hand washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include:

- Moisten hands with water and apply soap. Rub hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Include between fingers, under and around nail beds, backs of hands and on/under any jewelry.
- Rinse hands well under running water with fingers down so the water flows from the wrist to the fingertips. Leave the water running.
- Dry hands with a paper towel or approved drying device. Drying devices will not be used unless there is a faucet that does not require the user to touch the faucet after the hands are washed.
- Use a towel to turn off the faucet. If inside the toilet room with a closed door, use the towel to open the door. Discard the towel in an appropriate receptacle.

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement but not a substitute for hand washing in any situation listed above as requiring hand hygiene.

Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.

Staff clean and sanitize sinks used both for food preparation and other purposes before using these sinks to prepare food.

31.0 TOILETING PROCEDURES

All classrooms have toileting facilities attached to the room which ensures that proper supervision of children is always maintained and teaching staff can assist a child when he/she needs assistance using the bathroom. If a child is not developmentally ready to be toilet trained or a special need is identified by a pediatrician, a plan will be developed to ensure proper care when the child enrolls in the program.

If your child wears diapers/pull-ups, please be sure to send in an ample supply of diapers/pull-ups and wipes to be kept in the bathroom labeled with your child's name. Staff will let you know when the supply is running low and it needs to be replenished. For students who are toilet training, send your child to school in clothing that promotes independence in the bathroom- elastic waistbands, shirts without buttons, minimal fasteners, etc.

31.1 DIAPER CHANGING ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

Teaching staff will check diapers to determine if the diaper is wet/soiled every two hours during the school day and immediately after waking up from a nap.

When changing diapers, we follow these procedures:

1. Collect all supplies, but keep everything off the diapering surface except the items you will completely use during the diapering process.
2. Prepare a piece of nonabsorbent paper to cover the diapering surface from the child's chest to the child's feet.
3. Always keep a hand on the child.
4. Avoid contact with soiled items. Anything that comes into contact with stool or urine is a source of germs. These items will have to be cleaned and sanitized after each diaper change.

5. Bring the child to the changing table, keeping soiled clothing from touching the caregiver's clothing. Bag soiled clothing and later tie the plastic bag to send the clothing home.
6. Unfasten the diaper, but leave the soiled diaper under the child. Hold the child's feet to raise the child out of the soiled diaper and use the disposable wipes to clean the child's diaper area. Remove stool and urine from front to back and use a fresh wipe each time. Put the soiled wipes into the soiled diaper.
7. Remove the soiled diaper, clean soiled surfaces, and then remove gloves, disposing of everything in a covered container.
8. Put on a clean diaper.
9. Clean the child's hands using soap and water.
10. Take the child back to the classroom.
11. Clean and disinfect the diapering area. Dispose of the cover in the covered container. Clean any visible soil from the changing table. Disinfect the table per surface sanitizing procedure.
12. Wash hands thoroughly.

32.0 REST TIME

Students attending the full-day Early Learning Program will be provided with an appropriate rest time each afternoon. Please provide your child with a crib-size fitted sheet and a small blanket to be used on a nap mat the school will provide. Each child is assigned a nap mat which will be labeled with his/her name. The sheet and blanket will be sent home at the end of the week (Fridays) to be washed and returned the next school day (Mondays). Your child may also want to bring a special soft cuddle item such as a stuffed animal. Lights are dimmed and calming music is played while students rest on their mats. Books or other quiet time activities will be offered to those who do not sleep.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns. We look forward to a fun, exciting, and productive year at the ELP!

Sincerely,

The Early Learning Program Teaching Staff

33.0 The Early Learning Program Teaching Staff

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Edna C. Stevens School Early Learning Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK CONTRACT

It is important that you and your child read and review the contents of this handbook. It contains the PROCEDURES and policies of the Edna C. Stevens Early Learning Program.

Student Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please return this signed letter to your child's teacher as soon as possible. Thank you!