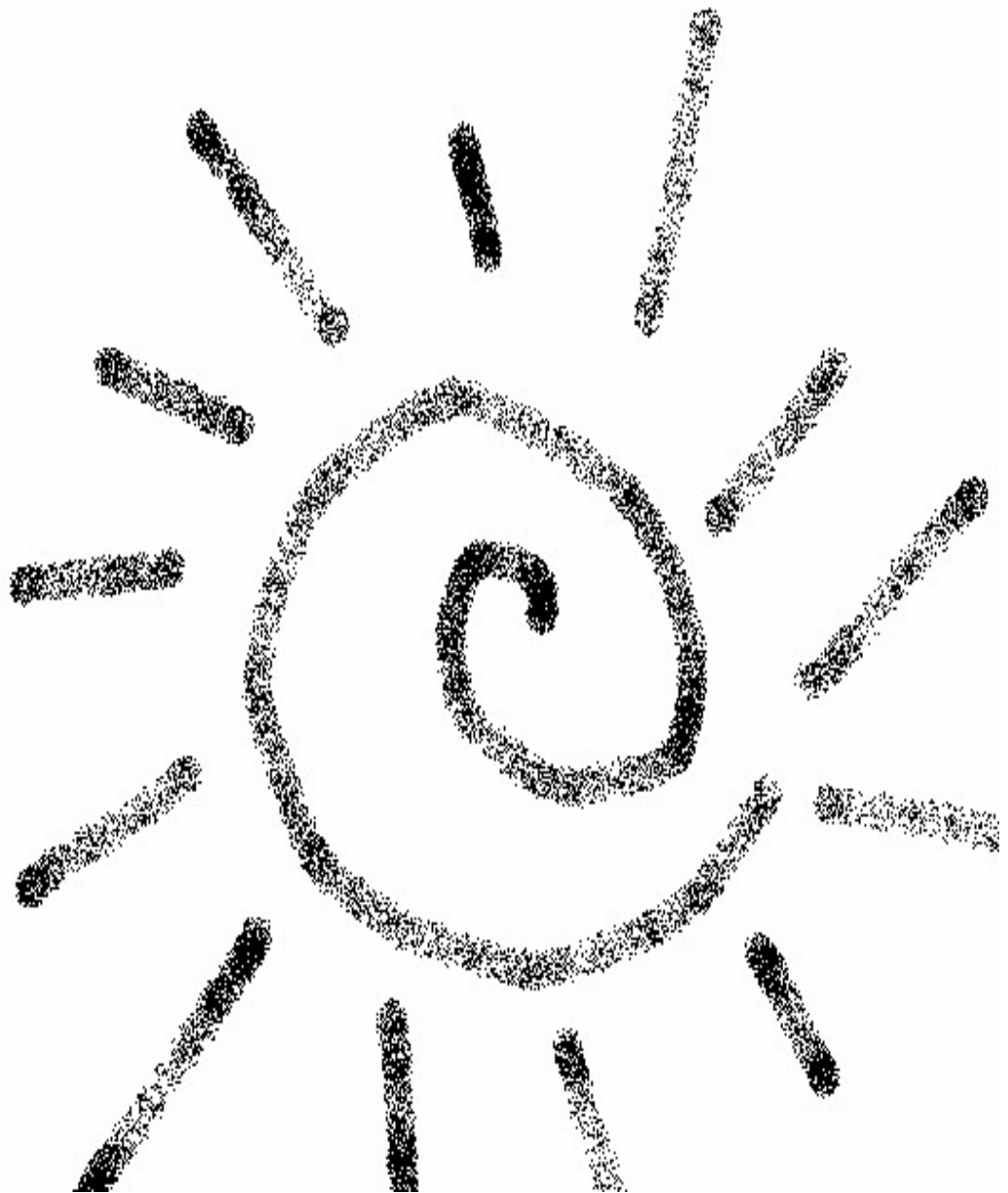


La Luz Early Childhood Center

Enrich the day, brighten the future.™

2025 – 2026 FAMILY HANDBOOK



2025 - 2026 FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome to the La Luz Early Childhood Center (La Luz ECC), an ECECD (formerly CYFD) 5-Star Accredited early learning center, license #FP4001496. We are located at 1301 Britt Street SE, off Eubank and Blue Halo Blvd (formally Gibson) SE. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with this handbook as it should answer many of your questions. This handbook will give you more detailed information about La Luz ECC's policies and procedures along with many **important dates**, so please keep this in a handy place. We suggest that you place, in your personal or work calendar, all **CLOSURE DATES**, as soon as possible so that you are not taken off-guard. All families will be asked to sign a form stating they have received, read, and understood the information contained within these pages so we can be sure all are up to date.

In August of 2002, in response to the lack of high-quality childcare in the area, La Luz ECC opened its doors. La Luz ECC was originally formed, and continues to be overseen, by a board of directors affiliated with Sandia National Laboratory (SNL) and Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union. La Luz ECC is a state licensed, independently owned and operated 501(c)(3) school receiving all of its support from tuition income and fundraising efforts.

La Luz ECC's **mission** is to offer a child-centered learning environment providing developmentally appropriate care and education in a nurturing atmosphere designed to foster your child's, aged 6 weeks through 5 years, social, physical and cognitive growth within the framework of the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines. **La Luz ECC does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, disability, national origin or any other factor protected by law.** You can visit our website at: <http://www.laluzecc.org> for more information on us and www.earlylearningnm.org for more information about the NM Early Learning Guidelines and the FOCUS program.

Our Program Co-Directors are Carol Piskorski and Arlene Maestas. Our Executive Director is Lisa Opperman. Please feel free to contact one of us should you have any concerns, comments, or questions. Our door is always open, or you can call us at (505) 237-7237.

Items highlighted in green have been revised in the past year **and items highlighted in yellow** pertain to our mission, philosophies and/or our motto.

Table of Contents

<i>La Luz ECC Goals and Educational Philosophy</i>	4
<i>Child to Teacher Ratios</i>	5
<i>Faculty</i>	5
<i>Emails</i>	5
<i>Open Door Policy</i>	6
<i>Inclusive Facility</i>	6
<i>Screening and Monitoring Program</i>	6
<i>Dual Language Learner Policy</i>	7
<i>Concerns and Compliments</i>	7
<i>Hours of Operation</i>	7
<i>Calling the School</i>	8
<i>Available Schedules</i>	8
<i>Snow Day or Cancellation</i>	8
<i>Holiday/Closures</i>	8
<i>Babysitting</i>	9
<i>Daily Schedule</i>	9
<i>Drop in Procedure</i>	9
<i>Tuition</i>	10
<i>Force Majeure</i>	10
<i>Fees</i>	10
<i>Admissions Policies</i>	11
<i>Tuition Credits</i>	12
<i>Disenrollment Procedure</i>	12
<i>Dismissal Policy</i>	13
<i>Donations and Fundraising</i>	13
<i>Daily Routines for Families</i>	13
<i>Appropriate Dress</i>	15
<i>Diaper Policy</i>	15
<i>Saying Goodbye</i>	15
<i>Discipline Statement</i>	15
<i>Confidentiality Policy</i>	16
<i>Electronic Devices Policy</i>	16
<i>Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting</i>	16
<i>Family Involvement Opportunities</i>	17
<i>Snacks and Meals</i>	18
<i>Infant Feeding</i>	18
<i>Food Allergies</i>	19
<i>Birthdays</i>	19
<i>Toys from Home</i>	19
<i>Holiday Celebrations</i>	20

<i>Field Trips/Auto Safety</i>	20
<i>Parent (Guardian)-Teacher Conferences</i>	20
<i>Health and Safety</i>	21
<i>a. Sick Children</i>	21
<i>b. Health and Immunization Record</i>	22
<i>c. Hand Washing</i>	23
<i>d. Coughing/Sneezing</i>	23
<i>f. Medications</i>	23
<i>g. Emergencies</i>	23
<i>h. First Aid</i>	24
<i>i. In the Event of Fire</i>	25
<i>j. In Case of a Missing Child</i>	25
<i>Aggression, Incidents and Accidents</i>	25
<i>Grievance Procedure</i>	27
<i>Resources for Immunizations and Wellness Checks</i>	27
<i>Resources for Financial Tuition Assistance</i>	28
<i>Thank You</i>	28
<i>Form A (Emergency Information and Pickup Authorization Form)</i>	29
<i>Form B (Accident/Incident Report)</i>	31
<i>Form C (Request for Administration of Medications)</i>	32
<i>Form D (Sick Child Form)</i>	33
<i>Form E (Sample of Ages & Stages Questionnaire)</i>	34
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	39

La Luz Early Childhood Center

Goals and Educational Philosophy

La Luz ECC is a 501(c)(3) not for profit program that:

- Is licensed by the State of New Mexico. We are currently a 5-Star Center.
- Follows all guidelines as established by the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines and through FOCUS (On Young Children's Learning).
- Practices relationship-based care.
- Welcomes children from ages 6 weeks to 5 years and their families.
- Is responsive to individual differences.
- **Does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, disability, national origin or any other factor protected by law.**
- Encourages healthy peer relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Develops each child's self worth and confidence.
- Employs an anti-bias, multi-cultural curriculum.
- Is safe, clean, and healthy.
- Promotes emotional growth.
- Is developmentally appropriate.
- Has a professional staff that has been chosen based upon their education, experience, enthusiasm, love of children, commitment to early childhood education and to La Luz ECC's philosophies.

Children learn most thoroughly and joyfully through play. Our motto is "Enrich the day, brighten the future." **Our philosophy** is grounded in the developmental sequence of childhood and tempered by our close observation and delight in individual differences. All areas of a young child's growth (physical, motor, social, language and literacy, emotional, and cognitive) are interrelated and contribute synergistically to help the child reach his or her potential. A strong emotional foundation is the key to acquiring the building blocks of lifelong learning - curiosity, confidence, cooperativeness, the ability to express oneself and listen, the desire to become involved, and self control. **Our program provides a loving, attentive environment in order to give each child this emotional base, while providing a varied, flexible curriculum with opportunities for large muscle development, open-ended art exploration, science, puzzles, blocks, dancing and music, pretend play, and lots of books. Children will be able to make choices, solve problems and learn to be responsible for their actions.** Field trips for all children enrich the children's understanding of the world around them. Family participation allows children and their families to learn the power of play together and to preserve the role of families as the child's primary teachers. Continuity of care in our infant/toddler program is a unique feature of La Luz ECC. Children stay with the same team of teachers and mostly the same group of children from babyhood until they are ready for the preschool class. The children change rooms, but not teachers, once each year. Once they graduate from the infant/toddler program, the children will enter our preschool for one year then a pre-kindergarten program for another year.

Child to Teacher Ratios

<u>Child's Room</u>	<u>Max. La Luz Child to Teacher Ratio:</u>	<u>Max. State Legal Ratio</u>	<u>Max. La Luz Class/Group Size</u>	<u>Max. State Group Size</u>
Infant/Wee Toddlers	3.5 to 1	6 to 1	7	12
Young Toddlers (ages 12-24 months)	4.5 to 1	6 to 1	9	12
Young Toddlers (ages 24+ months)	4.5 to 1	10 to 1	9	20
Older Toddlers (ages 24 – 36months)	6 to 1	10 to 1	12	20
Older Toddlers (ages 3+)	6 to 1	12 to 1	12	24
Preschool	7 to 1	12 to 1	14	24
Pre-K (less than 5 years old)	8 to 1	12 to 1	17	24
Pre-K (5 years+)	8 to 1	15 to 1	17	30

Faculty

Our teachers are required to have college level training in early childhood education. Lead teachers must have, as a minimum, a CDC or CDA credential. Some of our teachers have more advanced degrees such as Master's, bachelor's and/or associate degrees. All were chosen for their ability to relate well with children and for their ability to apply their education in a warm, nurturing manner. They are professionals who are here to be of service to anyone in the lives of their charges. Assistant teachers must have, as a minimum, 45 hours of early childhood education. In addition, all teachers working more than 20 hours per week must complete 24 hours of continuing education per year while those working less than 20 hours per week must complete 12 hours per year. Every La Luz ECC employee is CPR, First Aid and Blood Borne Pathogen certified. **We promote a Drug Free Environment including pre-screening of applicants as well as monthly, random and consistent tests to all employees by an outside agency to ensure a safe environment for your child.**

Emails

Please note that it is **your responsibility** to provide the most **up to date email address** as a way of communicating updates to important policies, procedures, and protocols AND to **read each week's emails for important information** which can include menus and notices.

Open Door Policy

The relationship between teachers and family members is one of mutual respect and equality. Families are invited to observe and participate at any time. The relationship between directors and family is open door as well. Any questions, concerns or comments are always welcome and encouraged.

Inclusive Facility

La Luz ECC is an inclusive facility. What this means is that all children, regardless of ability, are welcome at La Luz ECC. We have a wide network of specialists that we continually work with to develop and implement curriculum that not only benefits children with specialized needs, but all the children enrolled. With written parental or custodial guardian consent, we will actively participate in the development and implementation of children's support plans/strategies. We strongly feel that children with disabilities have the same access to quality childcare and preschool as do normally developed children to allow them to see and fulfill their full potential. Further, by participating in class and school activities, they become an integral part of the community and reinforce positive social behaviors for all the children at La Luz ECC.

Screening and Monitoring Program

La Luz ECC participates in a screening and monitoring program, with families' consent. The program, called Ages & Stages, keeps track of children's developmental progress as they age. According to the Ages & Stages website, the purpose is to "gauge development progress and determine meaningful next steps – at a time when action can have its greatest impact: during the first years of life." (<http://agesandstages.com/research-results/why-screening-matters/>)

"Because social – emotional and developmental delays in children can be subtle and can occur in children who appear to be developing typically, most children who would benefit from early intervention are not identified until after they start school. In fact – this happens 70% of the time when busy pediatricians and specialists rely on clinical judgment alone." (*Glascoe, F.P. (2000). Early detection of developmental and behavioral problems. Pediatrics in Review, 21(8), 272–280*)

A welcome letter and consent form will be handed out to all parents upon enrollment. A sample of a 16-month-old Questionnaire form can be found on page 31. If a child is found to need further assessments, we have resources to work with you and your child such as Project Jericho for children under the age of 2, Child Find (through Albuquerque Public Schools) and UNM Continuing Education for children over the age of 2.

Dual Language Learner Policy

At La Luz ECC, we understand that children learn about their family's values, cultures, and identity through their home language – whether spoken or signed. Many of our children use a variety of languages, including American Sign Language (ASL). It is our responsibility to support and honor each child's home language while also helping them acquire English.

We can do this by labeling classroom objects in all classroom languages including ASL, learning and using your child's home language or ASL for basic commands and offering songs, books, and other materials in your child's home language or ASL to create an inclusive and validating environment.

We also understand that some families prefer English immersion. This can be done while still incorporating the child's home language or ASL to ensure they feel understood, respected, and valued.

Concerns and Compliments

Families are urged to be candid when they have concerns or compliments. We are committed to providing the **BEST** school experience for each child. If you feel this is not being accomplished, we want this feedback. There are several ways in which to address your feelings. 1) There is an anonymous Comment Box on top of the Family Mailboxes that is checked frequently. 2) You may approach one of your children's teachers for a discussion and if you feel you have been unable to resolve your concerns with the teacher, please contact the Director or Assistant Director. (Of course, you can always go straight to administration as our door is always open.) 3) Finally, we will provide you with a survey towards the end of our school year to see how you feel that we've done. This will give us insight as to what is working and where we need to work harder.

Hours of Operation

La Luz ECC's hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Please note that La Luz ECC does not open until 7:00 a.m. even though teachers may be arriving to set up their rooms before this time. Because we cannot give your child the attention that they deserve while setting up the classrooms, we will not accept a child before opening.) While we are open from 7:00am to 6:00pm, please try to drop off your child by breakfast or no later than 9:00am, whenever possible. Late arrivals can disrupt classroom activities and make transitions harder for all students.

Calling the School

Anyone calling the school should anticipate that the voice mail system might take the message. Our priority is to attend to the children so please **DO** leave a message. We will endeavor to call you back as soon as we check our messages.

If you are worried about a child who was upset when you left, call and should you get our recording, leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible. But rest assured, we won't let a seriously upset child cry and cry. If we are unable to comfort a child in a reasonable amount of time, we will call you.

Available Schedules

We offer full and part-time schedules. Our part-time program consists of either 2 or 3 full days per week. Please contact us if you need a different schedule and we will try to accommodate you. Although we try to be flexible about our schedules, there are times (when the classes are becoming full) when only certain schedules are offered. Please give us as much notice as possible if you are interested in changing your schedule. If the room is full, this might not always be possible, but we will do our best to accommodate your request.

Snow Day or Cancellation

La Luz ECC will close if travel becomes hazardous due to weather conditions. On days when our schedule coincides with the Albuquerque Public School's (APS) system (i.e., both La Luz and APS are in session), we will delay our opening until 10:00am if APS calls for a delay and will close in the event APS calls for a synchronous learning day due to weather. If APS cancels school outright due to snow/weather, we will also close. In the event of cancellation, we will announce it on KOAT-TV, KOB-TV and on KRQE. **Please check for it on their websites as they do not always run daycares, churches or businesses on their news ticker.** We will also have teachers call you at home and will update the message on the phone of our main number to reflect our status (i.e., delayed, closed, etc). If APS closes early, we will move up our closing time to 4:00pm. During APS vacation breaks (while La Luz is open for business), if SNL or Kirtland Air Force Base are closed or delayed, we will be delayed (again, opening at 10:00 am) or you can check the stations listed above or our voicemail message for closure/delay details.

Holidays/Closures

La Luz ECC's staff development, support and retention are extremely important. Our staff is eligible for paid holidays and are required to attend several In-Service days throughout the year. Please understand that **you are responsible** for providing care for your children during these

times. Because we do pay our staff even though we are closed, **full tuition is due for the months in which these holidays/closures occur and also during any vacation that your family may take during the year.**

****Please note that Fall Planning Days may change in accordance with the APS calendar.**

HOLIDAYS/CLOSURES FOR 2025-2026	
Labor Day	September 1, 2025
Thanksgiving Break	November 26 – 28, 2025
Winter Break	December 24, 2025 – January 2, 2026
Staff In-Service Day	March 20, 2026
Memorial Day	May 25, 2026
Independence Day (Observed)	July 3, 2026
Fall Planning/In-Service Days**	August 5 – 7, 2026

Babysitting

La Luz ECC understands that certain teachers are asked from time to time to babysit children. Please understand that if one of our staff members agrees to care for your child (ren), **they are acting on their own behalf and not as an employee of La Luz ECC.** Further, La Luz ECC will not be liable for any independent services provided by employees of La Luz ECC when those employees are not acting in the direction of or on behalf of La Luz ECC. Due to the above, La Luz ECC will not facilitate nor recommend staff for such purposes.

Daily Schedule

Because children feel more comfortable with a routine, activities will follow a predictable sequence. The younger the child is, the more flexible the schedule needs to be. Babies' individual rhythms will be respected and accommodated.

Our classroom schedules are set up to allow a balance of active and quieter times, with blocks of time for exploration and for both individual and group activities. **A complete daily schedule is posted in each room** but will vary from time to time as teachers are sensitive to the needs of the children. Additionally, daily activities (as well as staffing schedules) are posted on the whiteboards outside of each classroom. All schedules will include time for free play, time for meals, nap time and circle time.

Drop In Procedure

Children enrolled on a part time schedule may attend on their days off, **IF the program is not full, and only with prior permission from the front office.** Please **do not** arrange drop-in days with the teachers directly as they may not be aware of what is happening in the other classes

throughout the school (i.e., if the ratio is extremely low in one class, we may use one of the three teachers in that room to substitute in a class where a teacher is absent). **The fee is \$100 per day for all ages.** Please note that because of the complexity of our enrollment, switching days is not always possible for part-time families. If you need a change in your schedule, again, please contact the front desk ahead of time where they maintain a notebook with drop-ins and vacations.

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first day of the month **and is considered late after the 5th of the month.** Please refer to the current fee schedule (**also available on our website**) or to your contract for payment amounts. If your child(ren) cannot attend scheduled days for any reason (including vacations, illnesses, COVID, etc.), tuition is still due. Additionally, tuition is still due for the last 30 days of enrollment regardless of whether your child attends those days or not. **A late fee of \$25 will be assessed after the 5th of the month** if tuition is not paid.

Force Majeure

Should La Luz ECC temporarily close due to unforeseen circumstances, including but not limited to: acts of God, regulations or orders of governmental authorities, fire, flood or explosion, war, disaster, civil disorder, strikes, epidemic or pandemic as declared by Bernalillo County, the New Mexico Department of Health, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, or other relevant federal, state, or local public health authority, national or regional emergency, or other similar contingencies beyond the reasonable control of La Luz ECC making it inadvisable, commercially impracticable, illegal, and/or impossible to provide the facilities or the services or otherwise perform its obligations, **tuition is still due as we still pay staff and vendors to maintain our high quality of care.**

Fees

At the time of enrollment, there is a **non-refundable** application fee of \$500.00, a supply/materials fee of \$400.00 for any enrollment beyond 3 days per week or \$300.00 for 2 – 3 day per week enrollees, **which is also non-refundable**, plus a \$250.00 deposit (which is applied towards your child's last month of tuition **with** a 30-day written notification) due **per** child. These will secure your child's space in a classroom. Every year thereafter, a non-refundable renewal fee of \$300.00 plus the non-refundable supply/materials fee will be due.

If you are **late** picking up your child(ren), **a fee of \$10.00 will be assessed for each minute late beginning at 6:01** and will be added to your monthly bill. Emergencies will be considered. **Please be courteous and call the school if you are going to be late.** Should a check be returned to our account, an NSF charge of \$35.00 will be assessed.

Admissions Policies

Requirements

The principal criteria for admission are (i) that the child would benefit from joining the school, and (ii) that family members feel compatible with the school's mission, philosophy and style. A visit to the school and discussions with the teacher, Director and those currently affiliated with La Luz ECC would be useful in making this decision.

To begin the program, a child must be at least 6 weeks old and (usually) no older than 4 years old as of September of the current year. Potty training is not a requirement for the preschool class (or any class at La Luz ECC), **however**, all children entering pre-school must show some progress towards this endeavor. Please begin training at home when your child (ren) shows readiness to avoid the "trauma" of having multiple accidents at school. Once success is shown at home, we will work with your child here to help create a non-pressured transition into potty training.

For families wanting to secure space for a future date for their children, all fees must be paid in full at the time the enrollment forms are turned in and tuition will be charged at the full monthly rate each month until the child is in attendance beginning September 1st of each school year. This also applies to families wanting to hold a full-time space for their child or children but wanting to start them off at less than full-time. **No child will be allowed to attend La Luz ECC until all health forms are completed and returned to the school; this includes Immunization Records.**

Immunizations must be kept up to date and a current copy must be given to the front office each time a new immunization is received. A conscientious objection form **must** be received prior to admission and must be renewed annually, according to state requirements.

Oftentimes we receive Personal Health Information (PHI) in the form of Vaccination Records, via email. Please note that there is some risk involved when sending personal information using this method. While we will accept this PHI over email, we do need you to acknowledge your/the risk associated with it. If you do not want to assume this risk, as is your choice, please make sure that you personally deliver a copy of this information to us as required per current ECECD regulations, stating: "a copy of the child's up-to-date immunization record or a public health division approved exemption from the requirement" in order to attend **any** school in the state of New Mexico. Any time your child receives a vaccination, it is your responsibility to forward us an updated Vaccination Record. **Should your child's vaccinations become out-of-date, your child will not be allowed to attend class until such time as current records are provided and may further be subject to withdrawal.**

Applications for Admission

Applications will be accepted at any time for current classes.

All fees, health records and application forms must be submitted with each application, which includes each child from the same family.

In-house registration begins in spring for children currently enrolled at the school and their siblings who wish to enroll for the following year. The system for priority of acceptance, provided application is made prior to the closing date for in-house registration, is:

1. Children currently enrolled whose tuition payments are up to date.
2. Siblings of children currently at La Luz ECC.
3. Children whose family members were previously enrolled.
4. Applicants who have been on the waiting list for more than 6 months.

After in-house registration, all applications will be considered in the order in which they are received. Once enrollment is full a waiting list will be started.

Tuition Credits

No credits will be given for vacations or missed days. Our budget is based on the monthly tuition of children who are permanently scheduled for their classes. If you are looking to dis-enroll your child for an extended period, i.e., more than a month, you must pay the full tuition to hold your child's space, otherwise your child will be dis-enrolled and placed on the bottom of the waiting list subject to the above priorities.

Disenrollment Procedure

A 30-day written notice is required when you disenroll your child, even if the child has not yet begun. Once a space is secured, we turn away other families for your child's space. When a 30-day notice is given, your tuition deposit will be applied towards your last month's tuition; otherwise, it will be forfeited to La Luz ECC **and** in addition, you will be responsible for tuition due for the 30-day period following your child's last day or as of the date that notice is given. For example, if written notice is given on May 19 (and assuming tuition is paid up through the end of May), you will be billed additionally for June 1 – June 18 less the deposit. If you decide to withdraw your child with no notice on May 19, tuition will be charged from May 20 – June 19 and your deposit will **NOT** be applied. Please note that we will make every legal effort to collect money due to La Luz ECC.

Dismissal Policy

La Luz ECC may request the withdrawal of any member of the school who does not meet his or her obligations, financial or otherwise. A parent or guardian may be asked to withdraw any child from the school for reasons benefiting the school or the child, at the discretion of the Directors.

Severe problems between children and teachers or between families and teachers that do not improve after the staff, families, administration and outside professionals have worked together to resolve the problems, may result in dismissal. In the event of a dismissal, tuition will be considered due to the child's last day of physical enrollment.

Donations and Fundraising

La Luz ECC's ability to provide the highest quality of care and education for your young children is dependent upon the financial support and in-kind donations of current and previously enrolled families, grandparents, and local businesses, among others. All donations are tax deductible and are essential to our success. Additionally, we do receive funding from donors through the United Way. Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) pays all administrative fees so 100% of any donation made through SNL's United Way drive goes directly to us.

A percentage of La Luz ECC's budget relies upon family participation in fundraising opportunities such as personal and business giving. **United Way** is one program we participate in. **SSTPS, Inc or SSTPS, Inc dba La Luz Early Childhood Center** is the designation for this campaign. You will be asked to support these programs, and we thank you in advance for your support. Our target goal raised per child enrolled per year is \$400 and helps us provide benefits for staff as well as equipment for the children. This can be money directly contributed to us or through United Way. If you have any questions or concerns about La Luz ECC's fundraising needs, opportunities or volunteering your time for any of them, please contact one of our directors.

Daily Routines for Families

1. Please have your child dropped off by 9:00am to avoid disruptions in classroom activities as well as creating hardships for the other students.
2. **Call to inform us of absences, late arrivals or early/late pick-ups.** This will allow your child's teachers to plan for the day.
3. Please use only designated parking spaces. Children **MUST** be escorted into and out of the classroom by 1 parent with the teacher aware of their attendance. **Never leave other children unattended in your cars.** This may result in a call placed to 911. Only use the front door on the west side of the building to enter/leave La Luz ECC. (Please see **FORM F-Heatstroke Fact Sheet.**)

4. **Please drive slowly in the parking lot** and hold your child's hand when walking into school. **Not all drivers adhere to slow speeds nor are they looking for children.**
5. **Please do not allow your children to push the handicap buttons for access into or out of the building**. While we understand that these buttons are fun to use, they are for the use of our families or members of the Credit Union that truly need them. When the buttons break due to excessive or forced use, some of our patrons are unable to gain access to the building and the Credit Union may be forced to ask you for a replacement.
6. Our front door is always locked, and you must use the doorbell to enter our school. Please wait until you hear the high-pitched beep **BEFORE** pulling on the door and the light flashes **orange**. Failure to wait could result in breaking the lock on the door.
7. Children must be signed in and out of school at **two** places each day. Per the State of NM Licensing Regulations, when you come into the center, please list the time checked in and out along with your initials in the Daily Sign-In Book at the front desk. Additionally, in each classroom there is a notebook near the doorway with a page for each child. Again, initial each morning and afternoon with the date and time. Also, move your child's marker to the appropriate area of each class's In/Out Board. **If someone other than your child's guardian(s) is picking up your child, you must inform the front desk** as well as your child's teacher. Please notify us even if the person picking up your child is on your list and authorized to pick them up. We must have the names of anyone authorized to pick up your child on file (located on the Emergency Contacts and Authorized Pick-Up form-see **FORM A** at the end of this handbook). If someone is unknown to us, we will check and make a copy of their photo I.D. **We will not release a child without your authorization.**
8. **Check any notices, such as 'SICK CHILDREN' on the coded entrance door. These are important, are relevant to you and your child and are your responsibility. The ones on the door are generic and pertaining to the entire school. Notices pertaining to your child's specific class will be located inside the front cover of the sign-in book inside of your child's classroom.**
9. Family mailboxes are located inside the entrance to the kitchen/multipurpose room. Please check them **daily**.
10. Call or email to inquire whether space is available for a drop-in at the front desk. It is very important that the office knows who will be coming as they may be aware of other drop-ins that the teacher may not know about.
11. In the event you find an Accident/Incident Report (see **FORM B**) in your mailbox please sign the top copy and return it to the front desk then keep the bottom copy for your records. Same for Medication Form.
12. Books in the Family Library can be checked out for a week at a time. The Family Library is located next to the family mailboxes.

Appropriate Dress

Sometimes we get a little messy when we play...quite often actually. We'll be painting, gluing, playing with water and sand and many other messy mediums. **Please dress your child in clothes that can get dirty, and dress for floor time on the days you come to stay.** If you're afraid that the clothes may get ruined or stained, do not put your child in them. **Please do not send your child (ren) dressed in dress-up clothes unless it is a special dress day in your child's class.** Also, please make sure your child comes in shoes (closed toe preferably) with back straps. **Please no flip flops or crocs.** This just helps prevent injuries, especially on the playgrounds. Additionally, make sure your child has a labeled change of clothing, including underwear and socks, outdoor items such as a coat, gloves, and hat in cooler months and a swimsuit and sun hat during warmer months. They will be kept in his/her cubby. We do have a few extra items of clothing for emergencies. If your child wears diapers, please bring disposable diapers/pull-ups and wipes labeled with the child's name.

Diaper Policy

Due to sanitary reasons in the classrooms, we kindly ask all families to use disposable diapers. These can be contained and discarded throughout the day, keeping waste out of the rooms. Disposable diapers also *seem* to contain their contents much better, preventing leaks of human waste (**biohazardous waste**) in the classroom. If your child has an allergy or sensitivity to disposable diapers, please see the administrators to make other arrangements.

Saying Goodbye

Please don't slip away without saying goodbye. It's important that your child has a chance to say goodbye so that his or her sense of trust stays intact. Some helpful pointers are establishing satisfying arrival and departure routines with your child, being consistent in following your routines, always saying goodbye and preparing your child (ren) for any changes in your daily routine ahead of time. Soon thereafter, being separated along with the excitement of being together again will become part of you and your child's day.

Discipline Statement

Our discipline policy follows the principles of positive discipline. We will not humiliate, berate, or belittle a child. We will never strike a child nor withhold food. We use redirection, substitution, active listening, and mediation techniques to resolve problems, according to the age and capabilities of the child. Occasionally an older child is removed from the group to regain control. This is not used punitively, but as a chance for the child to have a quiet atmosphere in which to calm down. An empathetic adult will be close by. Further, we will not tolerate the following disciplinary practices in accordance with ECECD licensing regulation: "A center will not use the following disciplinary practices: a) physical punishment of any type, including shaking, biting, hitting, pinching or putting anything in the child's mouth; b)

withdrawal of food, rest, bathroom access or outdoor activities; c) abusive or profane language, including yelling; d) any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment, and/or e) unsupervised separation.”

Confidentiality Policy

While employed, La Luz ECC employees will have access to certain types of information, including, without limitation to, personal and family information regarding the children enrolled here at the school, as well as internal policies, procedures, and reprimands of staff. We take all confidential information very seriously. Our employees have all signed a Confidentiality Agreement as a condition of their employment and therefore shall not share this information with other employees **or families**. For example, in the case of a child showing aggression towards another child, it is our policy never to divulge the child who was the aggressor. As your child grows, they may be able to tell you who may have hurt them but please do not ask our teachers. If a family member makes such an inquiry, our staff have been instructed to refer them to the front office.

Electronic Devices Policy

The usage of employee electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, tablets, and laptops, in the classroom, is confined to contacting and connecting with families, and to developing curriculum or for other professional and necessary tasks. Employees may **NOT** take photographs of children on their personal devices except for posting pictures on Class Dojo. If directed, in writing, to do so by a child’s parent or legal guardian for a specific purpose, or to show/share with a child’s parent or legal guardian something about their child, they should consult with an administrator. It is **NEVER** appropriate for staff to post photographs on their personal social media, including but **not limited** to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, Snap Chat, YouTube, Pinterest, etc. Any photos or videos posted to the La Luz Early Childhood Center website or Facebook page, showing children whereby they are identifiable, must be approved by the child’s parent or legal guardian before being placed on any of the school’s sites.

Further, use of electronic devices should not be used as a teaching device/tool for children unless it is part of their **preapproved**, written curriculum plan. For example, the videos supplied by Scholastic Books can be used as part of the approved curriculum and streamed over an electronic device.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Policy

According to NM Children, Youth and Families (CYFD), “**Child Abuse**” is defined as (i) physical or sexual injury that is not accidental and (ii) the use of controlled substances or illegal drugs during pregnancy. “**Child Neglect**” is defined as the abandonment and the lack of proper care or basic necessities of life (such as food, shelter, medical care or education) through some

fault of the parent or guardian, (ii) the failure to protect a child if a parent is aware that the child is being harmed by someone else and (iii) is also behavior that creates severe emotional harm. As teachers and caregivers, it is our responsibility, as **Mandated Reporters**, to report suspected child abuse and neglect to **the Statewide Central Intake and the local authorities**.

It is always our priority to make sure that all children and employees are protected and are safe in our care and/or at work. La Luz ECC has a ZERO TOLERANCE for abuse and/or neglect and are committed to providing a safe environment.

In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying. Bullying is defined by La Luz ECC as repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more people by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct that includes but is not limited to threatening, humiliating or intimidating behaviors. As work sabotage/interference that prevents work from getting done and or verbal abuse. To the extent that such actions are disruptive, the organization will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior. Some examples are:

- **Verbal bullying.** Slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his or her family; persistent name-calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as the butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks.
- **Physical bullying.** Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault or threat of physical assault, damage to a person's work area or property.
- **Gesture bullying.** Nonverbal gestures that can convey threatening messages.
- **Exclusion.** Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities.

It is always our priority to make sure that all children and our staff are protected and are safe in our care.

Family Involvement Opportunities

Below are just a couple of examples of family involvement. We encourage mothers, fathers, older siblings, grandparents, and/or any special family member to participate in their children's early childhood learning experience. We believe that it promotes positive relationships between the children we serve, the families that love them, and our staff.

1. VISIT YOUR CHILD'S ROOM

La Luz Early Childhood Center is a place for children and the people who love them. We welcome family members at any time and invite you to spend the morning or afternoon in your child's classroom on a regular basis. We also encourage families to share a special talent, share their cultural backgrounds through stories, clothing, food, songs, language and more. Please see your teacher about scheduling a day for you to come in.

2. TAKE ON A TASK

La Luz ECC needs to tap the talent of all its members so we can function well. Just as in any family, not all the tasks are glamorous, but all are greatly needed and very much appreciated. Below are just some of the ways to help:

Classroom Manager: Organizes field trips, classroom functions and/or classroom newsletters.

Classroom Volunteer: This includes organizing art projects, story time, and/or science projects. (Your knowledge is our knowledge!)

Organizer: Help keep shed, First Aid Cabinet or storage shelves organized. (This is a BIG job for more than one family member!!)

Snacks and Meals

La Luz ECC serves breakfast, juice, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Breakfast is served from 8:30 – 9:00am. At 9:00am, all food and dishes will be returned to the kitchen. **If you will be dropping off your child at or after 9:00am, please provide them with breakfast at home.** A 4:30 p.m. snack is set out in the kitchen for the children and is optional for families to take with them as they leave in the evening. Weekly menus are emailed to families, are posted on the **Family Board** and our website and copies are left next to the front desk's sign in book. We encourage variety so that the children are introduced to many kinds of food. Good nutrition is vital to a child's development and to a lifelong healthy habit. **We kindly ask that you not bring food for your child if they are a finicky eater.** Often it takes dozens of times to see a food before a child will even try it. Additionally, we have many children and staff throughout the school with food allergies, some of them severe. Further, it prevents jealousy among the children which often leads to disagreements. If you have a favorite recipe, we're open to suggestions. We adhere to USDA recommendations and any New Mexico state regulations. **Drinks must be 100% fruit juice, or 2% or whole milk (no powdered milk). Children aged 2 and under must drink whole milk.**

Infant Feeding

Families are to provide fresh bottles each day (NOTE: if formula is powdered, it must be pre-mixed in the bottles by the families) labeled with the child's name, date it was made and the amount of liquid in the bottle per state licensing rules. This allows us to accurately record the amount taken in by your child.

Infants will never be fed food at school without first trying it at home. Families of infants will be asked to circle food items they are allowed to have on a copy of the menu to be left in your child's classroom. Certain foods will not be fed to infants, such as egg whites and citrus fruits, until permission is given by the child's parent or guardian.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, **the front desk MUST be notified** so that these can be posted (it is also a good idea to notify your child's teacher). Along with our kitchen manager, we will work with you to make sure your child stays safe. Please keep us informed, as soon as possible, of any changes to your child's allergy list so that we can make sure we are not withholding or serving a food item inadvertently to your child.

WE ARE A NUT-FREE facility, so do not bring nut-related products into the school, i.e. peanut butter, sweet breads containing nuts, muffins containing nuts, cereals and granolas containing nuts, nut milks, etc.

If you'd like to bring special treats for your child's class, please check with teachers and/or administrators first to make sure that each child in the class can enjoy them.

Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating each child's birthday and welcome you and other family members to join in the fun. Please let your child's teacher know at least a week in advance if you are planning a school party and please, **no balloons**. Balloons cause a lot of disruption when they pop, but mainly because they pose a severe choking hazard. Because we have so many children in the classrooms with allergies (some of them very severe), we ask that you **DO NOT BRING: nuts, candy (including chocolate candy), fruit drinks containing less than 100% juice or artificially flavored drinks, i.e., sodas.** You can check with your child's teacher to determine exactly what allergies are specific to your child's room.

Please **do** bring healthy snacks and treats such as Jell-O, muffins, fruit, yogurt including yogurt pops, 100% fruit juice, (and of course cupcakes) etc. Healthy eating habits start at a young age so please encourage good nutrition even during celebrations.

If your child is having a birthday party away from the Center and wishes to invite class members, **please use the family mailboxes to distribute invitations (or the US Postal Service) rather than the children's cubbies.** We don't want to hurt feelings if all classmates are not invited.

Toys from home

Since bringing in toys from home often creates friction between your child and others in their class, we ask that you not allow your child to bring toys (other than transitional/nap toys), candy, or food of any kind into the classroom unless it is for a class subject such as the sharing box, letter box, etc.

Holiday Celebrations

Our goal is to have class observance of holidays reflect different cultures and traditions, particularly as they apply to the families of the students in attendance. During the holiday season, we will celebrate and expose the children to a variety of ways in which different cultures celebrate. If you have a tradition that you'd like to share with your child's class, please discuss the particulars with your child's teacher.

Field Trips/Auto Safety

Field trips will be announced in your child's Class Dojo and on the family, bulletin boards within the classrooms. We require 100% family participation for children to attend as we do not transport children. If you decide for another family to transport your child, a field trip permission form must be signed. Children will be transported in family members' vehicles and **never** with the teachers. If you are transporting other children, we must have a copy of your current insurance and driver's license on file before you can drive. Please make sure children are properly strapped in and please lock the doors. Children should ride in a car seat or booster seat according to state law, which at the present time states: *that children under 1 must ride in a rear facing car seat in the back seat if the vehicle has one or in a seat not in front of an airbag; children 6 and under as well as those that weigh less than 60 pounds, regardless of age, must ride in a car or booster seat; and children aged 7 to 12 must be secured by a seat belt or booster seat that fits their height and weight.* You should leave a labeled car seat or booster on the days of field trips if you are unable to drive. Children may not ride in the front seat. Any adult transporting five or more children under age five **must** have a second adult riding with them. You must also have working air conditioning and heat. If you are not **SURE** your car is safe, please do not volunteer to drive. Smoking is **never** allowed in cars if you are transporting other children. Each car transporting other children must have an emergency kit containing a fire extinguisher, first aid kit and manual, water and a blanket when transporting children (other than your own).

Parent (Guardian)/Teacher Conferences

Formal parent (guardian)/teacher conferences will be conducted at least three times per year. See the current school calendar for dates. Conference time is used to discuss your child's interests and developmental progress and any concerns you, or your child's teachers may have. Of course, we are happy to discuss concerns at any time. **For extensive conversations, please make an appointment with your child's teacher as their first concern is the safety and well-being of the children within the classroom.**

Health and Safety

SICK CHILDREN

If you know your child is ill, she or he should not come to school. Parents or guardians must inform administrators immediately of any child who contracts an infectious disease so that other families can be notified as required by New Mexico law. There are some diseases which must be reported to the State of New Mexico, and you can refer to the notice labeled “Notifiable Diseases and Conditions in New Mexico” on the bulletin board by the main entrance door. **We continue to notify ECECD of positive COVID cases, so please do notify us.** A sick child might feel unhappy at school; she or he should remain at home until able to resume normal activities, including outdoor play. **If your child is too sick to play outside, your child is too sick to come to school.** Children should also stay home if caring for them keeps our teachers from caring for the other children in their class or if it affects the health and safety of the other children around them. Even a cold can cause a child to tire easily, and the busyness of school can exacerbate this. For example, the onset of the flu can often cause children to get tired very easily and need bed rest. Occasionally symptoms worsen after the child arrives at school. If a child has any of the following conditions or does not appear to be tolerating school for health reasons, the child will be sent home for the day along with a Sick Child Form (see **Form D**). **You must pick your child up within 30 MINUTES of notification.** If your child is sent home for illness, please understand that it is a decision aimed only at keeping everyone else healthy. **It’s important to remember that healthy, young children get sick an average of ten times per year.** Please try to set up at least two contingency plans for when your child must stay home.

We are not physicians or qualified health practitioners capable of making diagnosis, but we will act on the following as is conventional practice in schools:

1. **Respiratory Illnesses.** If your child develops symptoms of a respiratory illness, which could be COVID, RSV, Flu and others, they should stay home until they are down to 1 or no symptoms for 48 hours without the aid of medication. Should the 1 symptom be fever, vomiting, diarrhea, see #2. If coughing is still interrupting sleep, eating, playing outside, etc., they should remain home until they can participate.
2. **Diarrhea or vomiting.** The child may return when free from symptoms for 48 hours without the aid of medication. Children will be sent home if they have a watery stool that cannot be contained in diaper or underpants or 3 or more, soft, loose stools in a 4-hour period. **Infants who are breast fed or who otherwise routinely have soft stools will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.** If a child vomits once, they will be sent home.
3. **Impetigo.** The child may return to school after antibiotics have been administered for 24 hours, or when the sores are very dry with no yellow crust, and no longer oozing (about 7-10 days), with a doctor’s note and the absence of other symptoms. Sores should also be covered.

4. **Fever.** A fever is measured by a temperature **above 100.4F (thermal) or 99.4F (axillary or under arm)**. Your child may return when free from fever for **48 hours without** fever reducing medication and in the absence of any other symptoms.
5. **General Malaise.** A child who does not eat or has the energy to participate in activities does not belong at school. **If we must give children 1 on 1 attention because they are not feeling up to participating due to illness or malaise, we will send them home.**
6. **Earache.** The child should be seen by a physician and in the case of an ear infection, may return to school following a minimum of 24 hours of treatment and without other symptoms.
7. **Pediculosis (head lice).** The child may return to school following a minimum of two days of treatment and no nits (eggs) are observed by staff.
8. **Cold.** The child may **NOT** attend school due to a cold if two or more symptoms are present (this may be a runny nose and a cough, etc.). Child may return when down to 1 or no symptoms, so long as that 1 symptom is not fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea. Then see #2.
9. **Ringworm or Athlete's Foot.** The child may attend if the infected area is being treated and is covered. If it cannot be covered, then the child will have to remain out until it is scabbed.
10. **Strep Throat.** The child may return to school after 24 hours of treatment (as long as no fever) with prescription medication and with a doctor's note. Restrictions concerning no fever for **48** hours will also apply and must be down to 1 or no symptoms before return.
11. **Conjunctivitis (pinkeye).** The child may return to school following 24 hours of treatment with **prescription medication**.
12. **Rash.** Out of care until a doctor determines that the rash is not contagious and has a diagnosis. **In cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**, children may not return until they are fever free for at least 48 hours, they have no active sores/ulcers in the mouth, they are not excessively drooling, and they are 3 full days out from the start of their rash/blister phase (with day 0 as the start of a rash). For example, if a child begins with bumps/blister/mouth sores on a Monday, then the earliest they could return is Friday assuming they have met the above criteria. **All other exclusions are still in play, such as the fever exclusion.**

It is important that children who have been ill are not sent back to school when they are still at risk. Low resistance jeopardizes your child's health and may open them up to other infections. **Children with chronic illnesses (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.) should submit a signed doctor's plan of health care at the time of enrollment.**

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION RECORD

No child will be allowed to attend class until all required health forms are completed and returned to the school. We must have a record of up-to-date immunizations or a religious/conscientious objection exemption letter from the State Department of Health on file before school begins. The conscientious objection exemption **must** be renewed every school year or according to state law.

HAND WASHING

Washing our hands is our first line of defense against illness. Please have your child wash their hands immediately upon entering a class. In addition, the children and staff will wash their hands routinely after blowing noses, toileting, before and after food preparation and eating and after handling pets. The time needed to wash hands properly (20 seconds) is equivalent to singing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.

COUGHING/SNEEZING

Please help us prevent the spread of germs by helping us teach your child to cough and sneeze **inside** of their elbow in lieu of using their hands. This will prevent them from spreading germs (including flu germs and unknown viruses) into their hands and consequently on everything else before they are able to wash them. This has been recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

MEDICATIONS

We will give medication only with written permission from a parent or guardian, to be administered according to directions from the prescribing physicians, or in the case of non-prescription or homeopathic medication, written instructions from the parent or guardian. **Medications must be labeled with the child’s name and the date it was brought to the school.** A Medication Permission Form (see **FORM C**) must be filled out each time your child needs to take medication. Written instructions on the form must include the name of the medication, the dosage, and the hours and dates the child should receive the medication and must be signed and dated. **All medication, prescription and non-prescription must be in its original container/packaging.** Medications are kept in the front office or in the refrigerator in the Director’s Office, if needed. We will keep a record of all medications administered (all medications are administered by the delegated staff members, usually the director and/or assistant director, then administrative assistant in that order) and ask that you sign or initial this record to acknowledge receipt of this information. Medication Permission Forms are kept at the front desk. Remember to take the medicine home each night, if applicable. Some children are taking prescription medication on a long-term basis. Authorizations for long term medications must be filled out monthly. We reserve the right to require additional information on medications, including prescriptions for over the counter and homeopathic drugs.

****IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU DO NOT PUT MEDICINE IN YOUR CHILD’S BACKPACK OR CUBBY WHERE EITHER YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN MAY ACCESS IT!****

EMERGENCIES

Emergency information sheets for each child in the Center are kept in a notebook at the front desk as well as the Director’s Office. Parents or guardian’s names and phone numbers, emergency contacts and physician’s name and numbers are recorded. In the event of an emergency, illness, or accident, first aid will be administered as needed and the family will be

notified. With parental or guardian permission on file, the child may be taken to an emergency center. Other emergency numbers (police, fire, poison control) are posted by the telephones.

La Luz ECC has a complete Emergency Preparedness Plan located in the Family Library for review at any time. Other copies are in the front office.

In the event of an evacuation, the following procedures are put in place:

1. Each class will take attendance and compile an accurate, up to date list.
2. All necessary medications or medical devices will be transported to the host facility.
3. All actions will be coordinated with the SS&TP Incident Command Center and/or community public safety or emergency management officials.
4. The host facility will be contacted regarding evacuation and the estimated time of our arrival. Unless otherwise notified, the host facility will be the Manzano Mesa Multigenerational facility.
5. We will arrange transportation to the Manzano Mesa Multigenerational facility.
6. All children and staff members will assemble at the designated meeting place (along Development at the South end of the building).
7. Children and teachers will be loaded together, by class, if transportation to the host facility is necessary.
8. Parents or guardians will be notified of evacuation, as soon as children are accounted for and are safe, with directions as to how to contact the proper points of contact with La Luz ECC, where the evacuation facility is located and procedures for proper check-out. If someone other than the custodial parent is picking up, they will need to bring valid identification.

Children with special needs are each assigned to a specific teacher/staff member, who will be responsible for that child until the parents, guardian or authorized pick-up sign them out. This includes transporting any necessary medications or equipment that the child needs during the duration of the evacuation. A list of affected children and their assigned adults will be posted by other posted emergency information in the child's classroom.

If the need arises to shelter in place (due to a tornado, severe storms or airborne hazardous chemical incident arising outside of La Luz ECC), all children and staff members will report to the Young Toddler room (the room closest to the administrative offices).

FIRST AID

A first aid kit and manual are in each classroom, in the kitchen, and in the front reception area. All the teachers have first aid and CPR training. Administering first aid may include, but is not limited to, washing wounds with antibacterial soap and applying hydrogen peroxide, calamine lotion, using eye wash, triple antibiotic ointment or Bactine spray as appropriate. If you do not want your child to have one of these treatments, please let us know so we can make a record of it. Once first aid has been applied, you will receive an Incident/Accident Report (see **FORM B**) with a description of what happened and what remedies were taken.

IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

STAY CALM.

DIAL 911.

PROCEED TO DESIGNATED MEETING PLACE (ALONG GIBSON AT THE NORTH END OF THE BUILDING).

KNOW WHERE THE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ARE LOCATED: IN THE KITCHEN AREA, NEXT TO THE DOOR TO THE INFANT/YOUNG TODDLER PLAYGROUND, DOWN THE HALLWAY FROM THE INFANT ROOM, IN THE RECEPTION AREA AND DOWN THE HALLWAY TO THE SHARED BUILDING RESTROOMS.

Three outdoor water faucets are outside the north door of the building (one is on the PS/PK playground and the other on the Older Toddler playground), and one is on the east side of the building in the baby/ young toddler playground. La Luz ECC is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system. A fire evacuation diagram is posted on the wall of each room.

WE PRACTICE FIRE DRILLS ONCE PER MONTH and EVACUATION DRILLS ONCE PER QUARTER.

IN CASE OF A MISSING CHILD

After the entire Center has been searched for the missing child (both inside and outside, including the playgrounds), Center personnel will immediately call 911 and then the parents or guardians.

Aggression, Incidents and Accidents

Aggression, or what we may initially consider aggression, takes on many forms. Children sometimes discover undesirable yet effective ways to show anger, get attention, or possess another child's belongings such as hitting, kicking, grabbing, shouting, scratching, and biting. They often do not have self-control or social awareness to control this behavior. A young child is still limited in his or her ability to express him or herself through language. They are verbally unable, socially unsophisticated, and emotionally are not well attuned to the feelings of their peers and to the finer points of social interaction. As they become four years old and gain some skills and language, they can send a former friend to tears with a choice name as quickly as they can with an act of aggression. A five-year-old can look like they are playing happily when closer examination reveals a group that has been organized by a child who gets loyalty by bullying.

Biting, as a behavior, causes more upset feelings than any other in early childhood programs. Because it seems so primitive, we, as parents and guardians, tend to react differently to biting than we do to hitting, scratching, grabbing or other "aggressive" acts. Our program recognizes that, unfortunately, biting is not unexpected when children are in group care, especially among toddlers (most often in our Young Toddler room and can even start in the Infant Room). It is important to know that there are other reasons, besides aggression, as to why a child bites. It may relieve pressure and pain from teething. It may happen (especially in infants/wee toddlers) due to cause and effect. What happens if I bite? It may be due to sensory issues (what does it

feel like, does it satisfy an oral need for stimulation). Are they imitating others (both children and adults-which is why it is NEVER recommended to play bite to show affection)? It may be to get attention or for self-defense. But it also may be a primitive way to communicate that they need something such as food, sleep, frustration and anger, confusion or fear. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting it is for their families. Note that during the ages of one to three about half of all children will get bitten by another child while in group care.

Our program, then, does not focus on punishment for biting or other unwanted behaviors, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the behavior. When undesired behavior occurs, we have three main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was the victim.
2. Help the child who committed the act learn other, more appropriate behavior.
3. Examine our program for triggers to stop repeat behavior.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of aggression. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who was the aggressor towards others to learn different, more appropriate outlets for the cause of the behavior. When there are episodes of ongoing issues, we develop a plan and will not use any response that harms a child or that is known to be ineffective.

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to the hurt child. If the skin is broken, we will clean the wound with antibacterial soap and water and apply antibacterial ointment. If children are injured on the top of the hand and the skin is broken by an act of “aggressive” behavior, we recommend that they be seen by their health care provider.

Whether children are the aggressors or are the victims, the parents or guardians of each will be informed personally and privately that same day and are given a copy of our Accident/Incident form (see **FORM B**). When we experience ongoing problematic behaviors in a classroom, we will develop a plan with specific strategies, techniques and timelines to work on the problem. If needed and with parent/custodial guardian consent, we will collaborate and consult with the proper early intervention team to integrate goals and strategies into the classroom.

Aggressive behavior is always documented on our standard incident report form. It is completed and signed by a teacher and is reviewed by an administrator. It must be signed by the parent or guardian after their review. One copy is given to the families; one copy is kept in the child’s file and an unsigned copy is kept in an Incident/Accident report book in the office. We always keep the name of the offender to ourselves. Besides the obvious confidentiality reasons, this is to avoid labeling and to give our teachers the opportunity to use their time and energy to work on changing the behavior.

Each year, our teachers attend training sessions on various types of behaviors. In addition, we have current resources available for staff and families. We encourage families to bring their concerns and frustrations directly to the teachers and director(s).

Grievance Procedure

La Luz ECC's grievance process is a formal, structured outlet that is used to resolve any issue that has not been agreeably resolved by all parties. Any permanent employee, group of employees, or family or group of parents or guardians with a child presently enrolled in the school may file a grievance. The grievance must be submitted in writing and signed and dated by all who are filing the grievance. It must be specific and include any necessary documentation as well as the steps already taken to resolve the problem. **If a grievance is verbally relayed, an administrator will request that it be submitted in written form.**

After the written grievance is presented to the Director, a reasonable time for resolution must be agreed upon by the Director and complainants. A reasonable timeframe for a written proposal for resolution would be no longer than 15 business days. If no resolution is forthcoming, grievances may be taken to the Board of Directors to assist in the process.

Resources for Immunizations and Wellness Checks

The following is a list of organizations that provide required immunizations as well as Wellness, vision and dental checks should you not have a primary provider:

- ❖ New Mexico Public Health Offices
 - ◆ Midtown – 2400 Wellesley Dr NE; 505-841-4100
 - Family Planning
 - Immunizations for all children through age 18; limited for adults
 - Women, Infants, and Children nutritional program office
 - ◆ Northeast Heights – 7200 Montgomery Blvd.; Suite E1; 505-332-4850
 - Children's Medical Services
 - Family Planning
 - Immunizations for all children through age 18; limited for adults
 - Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Nutritional Program office
 - ◆ Northwest Valley – 7704 2nd Street NW; 505-222-6500
 - Children's Medical Services (children and youth with special health care needs only)
 - Family Planning
 - Immunization for all children through age 18; limited for adults
 - Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutritional Program office
 - ◆ South Broadway – 1401 William St SE; 505-841-2950
 - Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutritional Program office
 - ◆ Southwest Valley – 2001 N. Centro Familiar SW; 505-873-7477
 - Children's Medical Services (children and youth with special health care needs only)
 - Family Planning
 - Immunization for all children through age 18; limited for adults

- ◆ Southeast Heights – 7525 Zuni SE; 505-841-8928
 - Family Planning
 - Immunization for all children through age 18; limited for adults
 - Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutritional Program office
- ◆ Taylor Ranch Westside – 6911 Taylor Ranch Rd. NW, Suite C-12; 505-899-8574
 - Women, Infants, and Children nutritional program office
- ❖ First Choice Community Healthcare
 - Financial assistance available based on income
 - Enrollment Specialists to help find coverage
- ◆ South Valley Center – 2100 N. Centro Familiar SW
 - Medical appointments call 505-873-7400
 - Dental appointments call 505-873-7423
- ◆ South Broadway Center – 1400 William Street SE; 505-768-5450
- ◆ Alamosa Center – 6900 Gonzales Road SW; 505-831-2534
- ◆ Alameda Center – 7704-A 2nd Street NW; 505-890-1458
- ◆ Edgewood Health Center – 7 Municipal Way
 - Medical appointments call 505-281-3406
 - Dental appointments call 505-224-8718
- ◆ Los Lunas Health Center – 145 Don Pasqual NW
 - Medical appointments call 505-865-4618
 - Dental appointments call 505-224-8740

Medicaid Applications can be found online at: www.yes.state.nm.us

Healthcare coverage assistance can be found at: <https://bewellnm.com>

Resources for Financial Tuition Assistance

You can go to <https://eligibility.ececd.nm.gov/eligibility/public/home.page?dswid=-4253> to see if you are eligible and to find out more about New Mexico's childcare assistance program. As of July 28, 2022, the program "subsidizes the cost of care for families at or below 400% of the federal poverty level that are working, in school, or searching for employment." As of July 30, 2024, family co-pays were still being waived and the ECECD will need to give three months' notice if it is decided to reinstate co-payments.

Thank You

Thank you for entrusting La Luz ECC to care for and to educate your young child(ren). It is our privilege to serve each one of you.

La Luz Early Childhood Center
Emergency Information and Pickup Authorization Form
1301 Britt Street S.E. • Albuquerque, NM 87123 • 505 237-7237 • laluzecc.org

For: _____ **DOB:** _____

Medical Information (*please print*)

Doctor's name Telephone

Preferred Medical Facility Telephone

Dentist's name Telephone

List any allergies including food allergies

List any medical or behavioral concerns of which the school should be aware (can continue on back of form)

Please list if your child has had and date of first febrile seizure as well as course of action if child has fever

List any medications

List any dietary restrictions

FORM A

Emergency Information (*please print*) **THESE SHOULD BE LOCAL CONTACTS**

Name of 1st emergency contact (other than parent/guardian) Telephone

Address City State Zip

Name of 2nd emergency contact (other than parent/guardian) Telephone

Address City State Zip

Pick Up Authorization (*please print*)

1st person with whom my child may be released 2nd person with whom my child may be released

3rd person with whom my child may be released 4th person with whom my child may be released



Releases

I hereby assume all responsibility for any and all costs involved in taking _____
(Child's name)
to the hospital, clinic, or physician in case of an emergency. I hereby grant permission for any emergency first aid
treatment in the event of sickness or injury. Furthermore, I understand that it is my responsibility to keep all of the
information on this card current.

Parent or Guardian's signature

Date

FORM A

LA LUZ ECC ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT

Child's Full Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location where the accident/incident occurred: _____

Describe in detail what happened: _____

Describe in detail any actions taken/first aid given and by whom: _____

FORM B

List of all who witnessed accident/incident: _____

Parent/Guardian(s) Notified: (*Circle Who Spoke to or Left Message To*) _____

Time Notified: _____ **Doctor Notified?:** _____

Person making report: _____ **Admin Initial** _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Comments: _____

*******FAMILIES – PLEASE RETURN SIGNED COPY TO THE FRONT DESK*******

(Teachers: Make 3 copies; Original + 1 Copy in Family Mailbox; 1 Copy for Front Office; 1 Copy for Class Records)

LA LUZ ECC REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

NAME OF CHILD: _____ DOB: _____

CHECK TYPE OF MEDICATION: PRESCRIPTION _____ NON-PRESCRIPTION _____

NAME OF MEDICATION: _____

DOSAGE TO BE ADMINISTERED: _____

MEDICATION EXPIRATION DATE: _____

TIME MEDICATION IS TO BE ADMINISTERED: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

TIME OF LAST DOSE GIVEN: _____

DATES MEDICATION IS TO BE ADMINISTERED: BEGIN: _____ END: _____

IS CHILD TAKING ANY OTHER MEDICATION AT THIS TIME: YES: _____ NO: _____

IF YES, NAME OF MEDICATION(S): _____

I REQUEST THE STAFF OF LA LUZ ECC TO ADMINISTER THE ABOVE MEDICATION ACCORDING
TO THE PRESCRIBED INFORMATION.

FORM C

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

MEDICATION LOG

NAME OF MEDICATION	DOSAGE GIVEN	DATE	TIME	ADMINISTERED BY	PARENT/GUARDIAN INITIAL

***ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS**

LA LUZ ECC SICK CHILD FORM updated 8-11-25

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

Today, your child showed the following symptoms that suggest they might be unwell: _____

Child's Temperature _____

Time: _____

Person Making Report: _____

Admin Initial _____

A check mark next to a symptom means that the responsible parent/guardian needs to follow instructions:

- ☐ **Diarrhea or vomiting.** The child may return when free from symptoms for 48 hours. Child will be sent home if they have a watery stool that cannot be contained in diaper or underpants or 3 or more soft, loose stools in a 4-hour period or 1 time vomiting.
- ☐ **Impetigo.** The child may return to school after antibiotics have been administered for 24 hours, or when sores are very dry with no yellow crust, and no longer oozing (about 7-10 days), **with a doctor's note and absence of other symptoms.**
- ☐ **Fever.** Temperatures **above 100.4°F or 99.4°F (axillary) under the arm.** Child may return when free from fever for **48 hours** without the aid of fever reducing medicine.
- ☐ **General Malaise.** A child who does not eat or have the energy and requires 1:1 attention does not belong at school until fully able to participate.
- ☐ **Earache.** The child should be seen by a physician and return to school following a **minimum of 24 hours** of treatment and absence of other symptoms.
- ☐ **Flu.** If a child is diagnosed with the Flu, they should remain out of school for 48 hours after symptoms (such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) subside without the aid of fever reducing or anti-nausea medication and they are feeling well enough to fully participate in the day's activities.
- ☐ **Pediculosis (head lice).** The child may return to school following a minimum of two days of treatment and no nits are observed by staff upon return.
- ☐ **Cold.** The child may attend school if he or she is free from fever and general malaise for 48 hours. If a child has a lingering cough (a signal of an upper respiratory infection), he or she should be seen by a physician. If positive for **COVID**, child should remain out of school until they are 48 hours symptom free (not including a lingering cough – if cough hinders sleep, eating, running, etc. they should remain out until it no longer affects their normal activities) without the aid of medication.
- ☐ **Ringworm or Athlete's Foot.** The child may attend if the infected area is being treated for 24 hours **and** is covered.
- ☐ **Sore Throat.** The child may return to school **after 24 hours of treatment** with medication **and** child has no fever for 48 hours.
- ☐ **Conjunctivitis (pinkeye).** The child may return to school following 24 hours of treatment with prescribed medication.
- ☐ **Rash.** Out of care if child has fever or until a doctor determines that it is not contagious (**must have a note from the doctor**). In some cases, such as Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (or other illnesses which cause blisters filled with fluid), children may not return for a minimum of 3 days (without fever for at least 48 hours), **no** fluid filled blister, **no** active mouth sores and **no** excessive drooling, regardless of doctor's note.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Grateful acknowledgment for their contribution to the Parent Handbook:

1. *Helayne Abrams and the Board of Directors at Albuquerque Preschool Cooperative*
2. *Bonnie Evnetsky and Leah Schaer of Congregation Albert Early Childhood Center*
3. *Elena Aguirre of University of New Mexico Childcare for providing information helpful in the preparation of this handbook.*
4. *“So Many Goodbyes” by Janet Brown McCracken and published by the NAEYC.*
5. *Janet Stewart, former Director of La Luz ECC.*
6. *Lisa R. Opperman, Executive Director at La Luz ECC.*
7. *Carol Piskorski, Program Director at La Luz ECC.*