



2025-2026
Program
Year

Family Handbook

Celebrating 45 years of working hand-in-hand with children and their families to strengthen our communities.



 www.epicnet.org

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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ECEAP SITES

<p>EPIC PLACE 701 Superior Lane Yakima, WA 98902 Phone: (509)248-3950</p>	<p>East Valley-Northeast 408 E. Seattle Ave Moxee, WA 98936 Phone: 509-367-6481 *TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED</p>
<p>Mountainview 830 Stone Road Yakima, WA 98908 Phone: (509) 972-5530</p>	<p>East Valley-Northwest 316 E. Seattle Ave Moxee, WA 98936 Phone: 509-895-6468 *TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED</p>
<p>Fairview 110 S. Fair Ave. Yakima, WA 98901 Phone: 509-426-2762 *TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED</p>	<p>5th Avenue 315 N. 5th Ave Yakima WA 98902 Phone: 509-424-4655</p>
<p>Ahtanum 3006 E. Wiley Rd Yakima, WA 98903 Phone: 509-972-5505 Cell: 509-985-6836 *TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED</p>	<p>Naches 101 Shafer Ave Naches, WA 98937 Phone: 509-653-2524</p>
<p>East Wenatchee 1901 Rock Island Road East Wenatchee, WA 98802 Phone: 509-300-525 *TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED</p>	

HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START CENTERS

Castlevale 2902 Castlevale Rd. Suite B Yakima, WA 98902 509-594-4563 *TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED	Wide Hollow 1000 S. 72nd Ave Yakima, Wa 98908 509-406-2668 EXTENDED HOURS OFFERED
Jefferson 902 E. Viola Avenue Yakima, WA 98901 509-594-4564 *TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED	Ellensburg 220 E. Helena Ave Ellensburg, WA 98926 509-872-5132 EXTENDED HOURS OFFERED

Welcome to EPIC Early Learning!

Dear Families,

We are pleased to welcome you and your child to our EPIC Early Learning program.

Our staff are dedicated to working with you and your child to provide you the resources and information you need as well as providing a safe, fun, and developmentally appropriate learning experience for your child.

We have prepared our 2025-2026 Family Handbook to ensure you have our program information that you need to have a successful year.

If you ever have any questions about the program, please reach out to your child’s teacher or the Center Manager. Once again, welcome! Thank you for letting us be a part of your child's early learning journey.

We thank you for choosing our program to provide your child’s early learning experience.

Respectfully,

EPIC Staff

Who We Are

Who we are

EPIC, Enterprise for Progress in the Community, is a private, nonprofit organization, delivering early childhood educational services to families in Central Washington for more than 40 years. We are funded by state contracts and federal grants to provide free, comprehensive early childhood education services

to pregnant women and children from birth to age five. Our programs include ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) and Head Start for children ages 3-5, and Early Head Start for pregnant women, infants and toddlers.

EPIC Mission Statement

Working hand in hand with children and their families, EPIC provides services to strengthen communities.

We Believe In...

· The dignity and worth of the individual and respect for the diversity of cultures · Providing quality services for the whole person · The value of families · The involvement of families in decisions that affect their members · Promoting the individual growth and development of staff · Collaboration and cooperation within the community · Providing quality services to meet changing community needs.

Licensing, Plans and Policies

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Our program is equipped with a Disaster Preparedness plan. Our Disaster plans are posted on our classroom bulletin boards.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Information shall not be discussed about families, children, and/or staff, in the classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, or in the community where people gather. Information shall not be discussed with family members. EPIC staff must ensure the security and confidentiality of all child and family information.

ACTIVE SUPERVISION POLICY

The safety of children is our highest priority, and we ensure that children in our program are never left unsupervised or left alone. Staff are trained yearly in how to properly supervise children when they are in our care. The program utilizes practices to help maintain the safety of the children.

Practices include:

- Maintaining at least two staff members when children are present or meeting the licensing requirement on ratio.
- Counting of the children when entering and exiting a classroom or building.
 - Utilizing both a verbal and visual system that represents the number of children present in the classroom.
- Classrooms are monitored through the program year on active supervision practices.

CHILD GUIDANCE

The Child Guidance Policy is to ensure that all EPIC staff and volunteers promote healthy social - emotional development in children. Our policy clearly states practices that are appropriate to use with children and practices that will not be implemented in the program. Staff are trained yearly on:

- Utilize nurturing and responsive care practices.
- Provide positive strategies to help children manage their emotions, behaviors, and to solve problems.
- Offer children choices.
- Communicate with children at their level in a calm and warm voice.
- Learning about each child's needs and interests.
- Refraining from using any practices that belittle or shame a child.
- Avoiding the use of time out or isolating a child.
- Allow time for a child to try to de-escalate themselves if they have become overly upset.
- How to move or carry a child if the child needs to be moved to a safe place and the child will not move themselves.
- Physically restraining a child only when it is the last resort and to prevent a serious injury to persons, serious property damage, or to obtain possession of a dangerous object.

SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

EPIC is prohibited from expelling children from the program. EPIC's response to support the child to prevent expulsion includes, but is not limited to; meetings with families, developing and implementing a Child Focus Response Plan, consultation with an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant and/or outlining temporary services through an Alternative Attendance Plan if and when needed.

ELIGIBILITY & ENROLLMENT

EPIC provides free, comprehensive preschool services to eligible children and their families. Eligibility is determined following state requirements for ECEAP and federal guidelines for Head Start and Early Head Start. Eligibility is primarily determined by family income, special needs, and other risk factors.

Children are accepted into the program on a priority basis; not first come, first served. Children not accepted into the program at the beginning of the year will be placed on an active waiting list. As openings occur, parents/guardians will be notified in the same manner as original enrollees.

ATTENDANCE

Children are expected to arrive on time, stay for the complete session, and be picked up on time. Attending school daily is important for children to develop a routine and to build on their prior skills. We understand that children may become ill, or emergencies might happen. We ask that you please call your child's school within one hour of your child's class start time if he/she is going to be absent.

Our program is required to track absences of children, and we must document why a child did not attend school. If chronic absenteeism occurs, and efforts to support regular attendance are not successful, your child may be placed on a waitlist in order to offer the spot to another family.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)

All EPIC staff are Mandated Reporters. If staff has reasonable cause to suspect that a child may be in danger of abuse or neglect, we are required by state law to call CPS. If parents have concerns, they may call CPS directly or discuss it with their Center Manager or Program Director.

EDUCATION & PROGRAM SERVICES

We recognize that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children, we work side by side with parents/guardians to involve you in the process of assessment and planning for your child. We utilize curricula and practices that teach children self-help skills along with social-emotional skills to help our children develop relationships with peers, adults, and to become enthusiastic learners. We want children to become independent, self-confident, and curious hands-on learners.

OUR CLASSROOMS

- Our staff Builds positive relationships with every child and family.
- Focus on preparing children for kindergarten.
- Provide activities that are developmentally appropriate.
- Fully support your child's overall development.

DAILY SCHEDULE/ROUTINE

The classroom environment and schedule are set up to help teach children routine, sharing, independence, and responsibility. The children are free to explore the learning centers and materials and are learning how to engage with other children.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

EPIC focuses on supporting the following areas in order to prepare them for their educational trajectory.

- Focus on the six learning domains: Math, Social-emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, and Literacy.
- Utilize a developmental screening assessment tool with your child.
- Collaborate with local districts and agencies to support individual plans and meetings for children who are on Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Child Focus Plan.
- Utilize an ongoing assessment system to monitor your child's progress and develop activities and instruction that meet your child's individual needs and interests.
- Schedule parent-teacher conferences and visits.

STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

Our classrooms are staffed with the following adult to child ratios at a minimum. You will frequently see additional staff in your child's classrooms as we work to ensure quality learning environments:

- Infant classrooms: 1 adult to 4 children (EHS Sites)
- Toddler classrooms: 1 adult to 4 children (EHS Sites)
- Preschool classrooms: 1 adult to 10 children

SPECIAL SERVICES

- EPIC will support the local school districts by having collaborative meetings and supporting services to children who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP).
- The school district is responsible for evaluating children and identifying if an IEP/IFSP is needed. EPIC will provide additional information about the child if requested and there is permission to do so by the parent/guardian.
- The school district is responsible for providing the services needed to each child. There are times when the district can come to EPIC Early Learning classrooms and provide their services at our location; these types of on-site services will vary depending on the school district's policies and boundaries.
- If you have questions or need support in this area, please reach out to your child's teacher.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

EPIC values and respects each child as their own unique individual. We support the social-emotional development of all children. We help children learn about their self-identity, how to express their feelings, and how to get along with others while building on their self-confidence skills. We utilize adult and peer role modeling, positive guidance techniques, and our curricula to build skills in children on how to become independent, how to work with others, and how to manage their feelings and behaviors. We know that each child will develop these skills at their own pace and some children may need extra support with developing these skills. There may be incidents where a child may become frustrated, angry and may resort to harmful acts while at the center, in the classroom or on the bus. We will work with you and your child to help find solutions. Our program is also able to offer outside services to families if needed.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

EPIC values each child as their own individual. We develop language skills by supporting the native language of our children and families. Through individual instruction and support we can support the development of skills in reading, speaking, and print awareness. Our staff focus on modeling language to the children and will provide instruction in the English language as well incorporate instruction and support in the child's native language.

KINDER TRANSITION

EPIC is committed to ensure consistent practices in helping to prepare and plan activities to assist children and families in the transition from Preschool to kindergarten.

EPIC Staff will:

- Work with students to start kindergarten transitioning preparation.
- Teachers will work individually with those children who will be transitioning from our program to kindergarten.
- Teachers will discuss during parent-teacher conferences to help families understand their child's progress towards kindergarten readiness (using Teaching Strategies Gold checkpoint assessments).

- Coordinate (in collaboration with the Early Learning Specialist) with schools in their service areas to:
 - Plan joint family events, when possible.
 - Connect families to school kindergarten readiness events provided by schools.
 - Inform our EPIC Early Learning families of the kindergarten registration processes.
 - Build relationships with kindergarten teachers to promote a successful transition. e. Exchange child information, such as child assessments, with parent's permission.
 - Teachers: will work with families to gather documents required for kindergarten registration.

CELEBRATION POLICY

EPIC's classroom and center environments support and respect all family compositions, ethnicities, beliefs, and languages. The program does not endorse or promote the celebration of religious beliefs, holidays, or birthdays. The staff will utilize a theme approach to teach children about seasons versus holidays. We incorporate the Very Important Person (VIP) system as an alternative to acknowledging individual children and celebrating their uniqueness, as well as that of their families, in the classroom.

EPIC also has the following practices in place to ensure the health and safety of children during celebrations & maintain compliance to the USDA food program:

- No outside food (store-bought or homemade) is allowed in classrooms.
- Food experiences in the classroom are focused on teaching children about healthy foods and healthy habits.
- Recipes must contain minimal sugar ingredients. Food experiences must not replace a meal served at the center.
- Food items such as fruit snacks, cookies, cakes, soda, candy, etc. are not allowed to be brought into the centers, classrooms or on the bus.
- Balloons and flowers are not permitted at the centers, classrooms or on the bus.

END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION

EPIC recognizes the importance of acknowledging the success of children and families. The program will work with parents to plan an end-of-the-year celebration that is respectful of all families.

CREATIVE FUN WEEK

Twice during the program year, the centers & classrooms will have a week where children are able to express their creativity through participating in a fun dress up week. This is an option for children to participate in. Children do not have to dress up. For our parents/guardians these fun weeks should not require any additional purchases or expenses on your behalf. Your child's classroom staff will send out reminders and a letter that will inform you what each day will entail. The creative fun week does not interfere with classroom schedules or instruction.

REST TIME

Children who are enrolled in our school day program of 6.5 hours (or more) must be offered rest time. Rest time is an opportunity for children to relax and calm their bodies. Rest time does not require a child to go to sleep unless the child wants to. Children who do not need to sleep will be offered a calming

activity to do. Children who do need to sleep will be offered a mat or cot to rest on for up to sixty minutes.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Physical activity is necessary in a child's development as it helps teach a child balance, coordination, and large motor skills. Per the Washington Administrative Codes and our curricula, children must engage in outdoor play daily. When the weather is not safe for children to be outdoors, the children will engage in gross motor/ physical development play inside the center or classroom. Children will engage in various outdoor activities that include painting, water play, planting, etc. We strongly encourage families to please dress your child in clothing that they can move freely in and that is appropriate for the weather conditions. Children must wear shoes while in our program, slippers are not allowed, and we discourage shoes that have heels or slippery bottoms. Extra clothing may be brought to the classroom for your child, please place the clothing in a non-plastic bag with your child's name on it.

WATER ACTIVITIES

We will get permission from parents before we plan water activities. We carefully supervise children at all times and especially during any water play activities. During water activities, an early learning provider must meet all supervision requirements of this section and WAC 110-300-0345. An early learning provider must have written permission for water activities from each child's parent or guardian.

Infant/Toddler Services

EHS- Early Head Start locations: Ellensburg, Castlevale & Jefferson

CONTINUITY OF CARE

Early Head Start classrooms use a Primary Care Model that requires children be assigned to each full-time classroom staff person. The assigned teacher is the primary caregiver for the children in his/her group. All infant and toddler classrooms follow a Daily Staffing Plan to ensure appropriate and consistent care.

COMMUNICATION

It is important to let us know every day about your baby or toddler. Tell the teacher about any changes in food, bottles, sleep, emotions, and health. We welcome your ideas concerning family traditions and activity ideas.

EHS Mixed-Age Grouping: *Applies to: EHS Classrooms (Castlevale 2A & JF 1) (Ages 0–36 months)*

Ratios and Group Size-Mixed-Age Groups (0–36 months):

Programs must follow the stricter (lower) ratio and group size requirements based on the youngest child enrolled.

- Ratio: 1:4 (one adult for every four children when infants are present)
- Maximum group size: 8 children with 2 adults if infants are enrolled in the group.
- When only toddlers are present, group size and ratio may shift to toddler standards.

Supervision

Staff must ensure active supervision at all times, defined as:

- Positioning themselves to see and hear all children
- Scanning the environment and counting children frequently
- Anticipating children's behavior to ensure safety
- Ensuring no child is ever left alone or unsupervised
- Staff will document transitions (indoor/outdoor, diapering, feeding, nap) to ensure continuity of supervision.

Capacity

Classroom enrollment must not exceed the licensed capacity under WAC 110-300-0355.

When infants and toddlers are served together, capacity is capped by the lowest applicable group size requirement (maximum 8 children with 2 adults if infants are present).

INFANT FEEDING

- Infants are fed on-demand, using only iron-fortified formula or breast milk.
- Babies are always held during feedings, and bottles are never propped up.
- Staff keep track of what your baby eats and will introduce new foods slowly, with your input, to watch for allergies.
- Breast milk is carefully stored, and any leftover breast milk is sent home at the end of day.

TODDLER MEALS: We offer healthy, nutritionally balanced meals and snacks per USDA/CACFP guidelines. We serve these meals in a family style setting.

DIAPERING & TOILET TRAINING

We will keep a record of when your child is changed. We provide diapers and wipes while your child is in our care. We follow stringent sanitary procedures by wearing disposable gloves and using disposable changing table paper. Afterwards, hands are washed, and the changing area is cleaned with a sanitizing solution.

Toilet training is done at a pace that's right for your child, with a plan developed between staff and parents. Staff provide support and encouragement while teaching self-care skills.

SLEEPING

In keeping with state safe sleep guidelines, infants will be placed on their backs in their own crib. Staff do not use blankets, bumper pads, mobiles, or stuffed animals in the crib. No child over six weeks of age will be swaddled or restrained in any way. Infants and toddlers can be rocked to sleep or swaddled to rest but the blanket or swaddling will be removed before placing the child in the crib to rest. Our program will follow safe sleep standards per licensing. Toddler classrooms provide a consistent rest time as part of the daily classroom routine.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

EPIC sees our parents/guardians as valuable contributors to their families, to our program and to our communities. We treat each family as their own individual, bringing his or her set of values, needs, and concerns to the program. We aim to involve each family in the program to participate at a level where they are most comfortable.

HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EPIC supports families by helping to remind parents of their child's medical and health needs. The program focuses on making sure that children attend to a safe and healthy environment. We take precautions and follow all safety measures when there is a potential sick child or a health need.

WELL CHILD AND DENTAL EXAMS

EPIC requires all children in the program to have a current Well Child Exam and Dental Exam. Please ask your child's doctor and dentist to provide you with your child's exam results so they can be turned in. Our Performance Standards require us to show documentation of these exams within 90 days of your child's enrollment. It is very important that we receive these for our program.

EPIC staff will work with you to keep these exams up to date and turned in by 90 days, while also keeping them up to date throughout the school year. They can also assist you if you need to find a regular doctor or dentist, need a referral, or need insurance coverage.

If your child has, or develops, a life-threatening condition, a health plan must be in place before your child can attend class. Please notify your center.

When to keep a child home:

Children need to feel their best to fully participate in the day-to-day activities. If your child is not feeling well, please keep your child home and notify the center.. If your child has had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours, please do not send them to school.

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher
- Vomiting; two or more episodes within the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea; two or more episodes within the last 24 hours
- A rash, particularly a draining rash; or any draining abscess
- Eye discharge or suspected “pink eye”
- Severe cold symptoms such as watery eyes, slight fever, continuous cough, colored mucus
- Sore *throat*

MEDICATION

Medication prescribed by a medical provider will only be administered by center staff if the dose schedule time falls during center service hours. Otherwise, the parents are required to give medication at home.

Both the parent and the doctor must complete and sign the authorization form if prescription medication is administered during center service hours.

Necessary information before medication will be allowed in the center and administered to a child:

- Child’s first & last name
- Child’s date of birth
- Child’s parent/guardian and/or health provider signature
- Name of medication
- Reason for giving medication
- Amount of medication to be given
- How often do you give medication?
- How to give medication
- Start & stop dates of the medication
- Expected side effects.

Communicable Diseases/Illnesses

Communicable diseases and illnesses are highly contagious, especially in a child care setting. If your child has any communicable disease, please contact us immediately. All calls are kept confidential to ensure your child’s privacy. State law requires us to report certain communicable diseases to the local health district. General exposure notes may be sent out to all children in a classroom for certain communicable diseases to inform you that your child has been exposed to a disease, what the symptoms are and what steps parents should take. At no time will we ever disclose a child or family’s name in an exposure letter.

ORAL HEALTH

Oral health is important in a child's development. Children and parents will learn about the importance of oral health and children will develop healthy oral habits in the classroom. Toothbrushes and toothpaste will be provided for the children to brush their teeth daily after breakfast. Children will also swish and swallow after lunch and snacks.

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training is a developmental skill that children learn at their own pace. No child will be denied placement due to not being potty-trained, however a toileting plan must be developed before the child may begin services.

NUTRITIOUS MEALS & SNACKS

USDA/ CACFP Food Service Program

Food served to your child while in our care must meet USDA/CACFP standards. Menus are posted in each classroom and on the parent information boards at your child's center. Serving CACFP meals is important for a number of reasons, including:

Nutrition:

CACFP meals are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which provide recommendations for healthy eating. These meals are designed to provide children with the nutrients they need to grow and develop, and to help them maintain a healthy weight.

Development:

CACFP meals can help children learn about different foods and cultures. They can also help children develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.

Accessibility:

CACFP meals are available to all enrolled children. This helps to ensure that all children have access to healthy, nutritious food.

Socialization:

CACFP meals can provide children with an opportunity to socialize with other children. This can help children to develop social skills and make friends.

Safety:

CACFP meals are prepared by trained professionals who follow strict food safety guidelines. This helps to ensure that children are eating safe and healthy food.

In addition to the reasons listed above, CACFP meals can also help to:

- Reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.
- Improve children's academic performance.
- Increase children's energy levels.
- Help children to feel happy and healthy.

MEAL TIME

Mealtime is a socializing experience and is used as part of a learning experience. Children participate in nutritional education activities, which include tasting, touching, peeling, cooking, stirring, etc. Food is not used as a reward or punishment. Children will not be forced to eat, but are encouraged to try all foods.

Our program encourages healthy eating habits by serving meals in a family style setting, providing a variety of fruits and vegetables along with healthy choices of proteins and grains.

Special provisions will be made for children with special dietary needs provided we have documentation from the child's physician.

All food served in class must be commercially prepared and prepared for every class. Outside food is not allowed in our classrooms or centers.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY & CIVIL RIGHTS

In accordance with Federal law and the U.S. Department of Agriculture civil rights regulations and policies, EPIC is prohibited from discriminating against, any person who meets the eligibility criteria for ECEAP & Head Start on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/ parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. sEPIC must comply with the requirements of the Washington law against discrimination (chapter 49.60 RCW) and with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY).

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;or

email:

program.intake@usda.gov

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES:
(Bussing is not available at all centers)

We ask for your patience and cooperation for the first few weeks of school, while we are getting routes and times established. Our goal is to establish routes that will keep children on the bus for the shortest time possible.

Before your child receives transportation services (if offered at the site), the following forms must be complete/current:

- Emergency Information Form
- Transportation Procedures for Parents
- Healthcare Plan and Medication Chart (when applicable)

Stop and Go Signs

- If your child receives transportation services, adults will receive a stop/go sign.
- Place your stop/go sign in a window that is clearly visible by the bus from the street (daily). The red STOP and green GO signs can be used to let the driver know if the student is riding.



= Your child will ride



= Your child will NOT ride

Please make sure the sign is visible and correct as we will not be able to go back if your sign is incorrect.

Address Changes

If you are moving or have a new childcare which will require a new pick-up/drop off address, please notify your Family Advocate or Teacher of the change. Changes can take up to 48 hours to be in effect. Due to scheduling limitations, we may not be able to accommodate all requests. Address changes must be in place for a period of at least two (2) weeks.

- There is no guarantee that all addresses will qualify for transportation services.
- Buses will not enter apartment buildings/private roads unless deemed safe and economically feasible.
- Pick-up points may need to be assigned if a bus is not able to meet your exact location. The program has established pick-up points that will be suggested.

Bus Services

For the first two weeks of school the bus routes will vary for pick-up and drop-off times until the routes are fully established. Times may vary according to inclement weather, traffic, or number of children on the bus. We cannot call parents when buses are ahead or behind schedule, we ask parents to please be patient and understand we cannot provide exact times.

Adult Drop Off & Pick Up

- Adults may drop off children at site 10 minutes prior to class time.

- When dropping off your child, you must sign-in with your child. When picking up your child, you must sign out to your child.
- If your child's classroom is currently loading or unloading children from the bus, we ask that you please wait until the staff are done before dropping off or picking up your child.
- Adults must closely supervise their children while in the parking lot.

Emergency Contacts

For your child's safety, we will only release children to authorized adults who are listed on the Emergency Information Form. Adults must be at least 18 years old and show a photo ID when they pick up your child from the center or the bus.

- If you need to make changes to the Emergency Information Form, please contact your child's center.
- We cannot accept changes through handwritten notes or phone calls.
- The person receiving your child from the bus **MUST BE LISTED** on the Emergency information form and show a picture ID.
- Family members or guardians must be at least thirteen years of age to place your child on the bus.
- Please contact the Center Manager if you have questions regarding bus services.

Important things to teach your child about riding the bus

- Listen to the bus driver & transportation assistant.
- Use your quiet voice at all times when riding on the bus.
- Always stay seated and wear your seat belt.
- Be kind to your friends sitting next to you.

Items NOT allowed on the bus

- Food/drinks/candy/gum
- Toys or electronics
- Pets
- Backpacks
- Extra coats or sweaters that a child is not wearing

Important things for parents/guardians to know about using the bus services

- The bus will only pick up and drop off your child at their assigned area
- Parents/Guardian must not enter the bus
- Parents/guardians should not follow or try to contact the bus driver
- If a parent/guardian appears under the influence or the assigned location for the child to be dropped off or picked up appears unsafe, the bus will not stop.
- The bus will not honk to inform you they are at your assigned area.
- Questions or concerns about the transportation services must be shared with the Center Manager of your child's center or with the Transportation Manager.

Returned Child Policy

It is an EPIC policy to protect the safety and well-being of every child under its care. The EPIC staff will adhere to procedures that carefully maintain a chain-of-custody from the time a child is received from their parent(s)/guardian(s) until the child is returned to them. When no parent or guardian or

authorized individual is available to receive the child as designated by the on-board Emergency Information Form, the EPIC Early Learning staff will follow the Returned Child Procedure and return the child to the center.

Inclement Weather/School Closings

Our program will make every effort to post up-to-minute school closure information due to inclement weather or any circumstance that would delay the normal school schedule. Announcements are made online at the EPIC website at www.epicnet.org. You may also tune into your local television, radio stations, and flash alert for updates.

Aside from using the FLASH ALERT app, we will be using the Class Dojo app for announcements as well. •
Don't forget to check out our Facebook page as well for more information.



*** Early Head Start Home Visits:**

Inclement weather may cause the Home Educator to reschedule the Home Visit. If that is the case, the Home Visitor will contact you to reschedule. A may keep the appointment with you, even if the district has announced a closing/delay. Safety will determine if the Home Visit takes place or is rescheduled.

Field Trips

Field trips will be scheduled based upon the curriculum and learning experiences in the classroom. Parents/Guardians will be notified, and written permission will be gathered prior to any child attending a field trip. Children who do not have permission to attend the field will have accommodations made for them to still participate in the program.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Policy Council

Parents also choose a representative from their Center to join the Policy Council. This group helps shape the program by sharing feedback and approving major changes. Representatives get reimbursed for childcare and travel costs.

You might be asked to help with things like answering questions about the program, observing activities, or filling out checklists. Your experiences and ideas are very important to us, and your involvement helps make our program even better!

Get involved – Your Voice Matters!

You are the primary educator in your child's life and we encourage you to participate in all levels of their education. We welcome you to share ideas to improve our program, plan fun family activities and end-of-year celebrations.

Ways to be Involved

- Attend Family Nights
- Do take-home projects
- Attend field trips with your child
- Celebrate Very Important Person (VIP) in the classroom
- Keep your appointments for conferences
- Join Policy Council

Learn about helpful resources in the community, elect parent representatives to the Policy Council and meet other parents and build friendships.

Volunteer– Your Time Matters!

We'd love for you to be part of your child's classroom and center activities! If you're interested, just ask your Center Manager or child's Teacher for more details. Examples include volunteering in class or on field trips, helping with projects at home, and joining meetings or trainings.

If you plan to volunteer at your child's center or classroom on a regular basis, please contact your child's teacher or family advocate to complete the required volunteer packet.

FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

Annual Notification of Pesticide Use at Schools

EPIC is committed to providing the safest learning environment for your child. In accordance with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 17.21.415 notice is given to all parents and guardians of enrolled children of the occasional use of pesticides to control and suppress unwanted pests on school grounds and in buildings and buses.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Policy

For the safety and well-being of everyone, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and any illegal drugs are not allowed on our premises. This policy helps us create a healthy and safe environment for all children and families. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our center a positive place for everyone.

We recognize the harmful effects of alcohol, drugs, and all types of tobacco use, including the addictive nature of nicotine, are committed to establishing an alcohol, drug and tobacco free learning and working environment. In order that this commitment may be met, the possession, distribution or use of alcohol, tobacco products and illegal drugs is prohibited on all EPIC Early Learning premises. This prohibition extends to all people employed by the program either full or part time, and all other people who, for whatever reason at whatever time, enter or come onto our site premises.

Firearms and Weapons

We are a firearms and weapon free zone.

Emergency Lockdown/Intruder Alert Procedure

Our programs will conduct regular drills with your children. These drills will include Lock Downs and Fire Drills. We will work with children to teach them how to remain calm and stay safe during these drills.

Disaster Preparedness Plan

Our program is equipped with a Disaster Preparedness plan. Our Disaster plans are posted on our classroom bulletin boards.

Resolving Parent Complaints

We are committed to resolving concerns or complaints made by parents and community members. When complaints arise, staff will respond immediately, assuring that the issue is heard and resolved quickly. If a parent has a complaint or a concern about something regarding their child's experience, they are encouraged to speak with the assigned Center Manager or Program Director. Parents can view Program Governance Policy #101 – Resolving Community and Parent Complaints which is posted on the Family Bulletin Board at every site.

Culture of Safety

Our program embraces a Culture of Safety for all programs, all children, all families, and all staff. We work diligently to assure all who walk through our doors feel, see, hear, and fully experience positive and supportive environments and human interaction. We ask both staff and parents to report when you see something that does not seem right, it is your right and responsibility to report it. Each center or classroom will have posters titled "Speak Up and Speak Out" posted to remind our parents/guardians and staff that safety is our number one priority and together we can work to keep everyone safe.

EPIC EARLY LEARNING CODE OF CONDUCT



To ensure our program stays a safe place for children, staff, and all personnel. We have established the following:

No use of abusive, threatening, foul, or harassing language while in or around the premises.

No disruption to the daily function of the classrooms or programs.

No Entering the premises without authorization.

No Possession of any type of prohibited weapon.

No one is permitted to enter the building if they are or appear to be, under the influence of substances. Nor be in possession.

Violators will be asked to leave the premises.

My Rights as an EPIC Early Learning Parent/Guardian

- To take part in the decisions affecting the planning and the operation of the program through participation in the policy council.
- To help with my child's development by providing my input.
- 3. To be treated with respect and dignity by the program staff.
- 4. To be informed about community resources around health, education, and family goals. 5. To be informed regularly about my child's progress and behavior.
- 6. To be welcomed into my child's classroom through different classroom experiences.
- 7. To attend parent-teacher conferences, family nights, and other center activities.
- 8. To be provided with information regarding job vacancies in the program.
- 9. To have the opportunity to volunteer in the center or classroom and be provided with guidance on my role.
- 10. To choose whether I will participate in the program events without the fear of losing my child's placement in the program.

Parent's Pledge

- To learn about the program and to be part of my center program planning.
- To take part in the classroom as an observer, a volunteer, and to participate. 3. To participate in parent and child activities.
- To be open to allowing the staff into my home for visits/conferences and to talk about my child's development.
- To work with my child's teachers, other program staff and parents in a cooperative and respectful manner.
- To guide my child and utilize discipline that does not cause harm or endanger my child.
- To support my child's development by working with my child on goals and activities.
- To offer suggestions to improve the program, by offering feedback, participating in policy council, being a part of the programs self-assessment.
- To take advantage of classes/workshops designated to increase my knowledge about child development and increase my skills in areas that may lead to possible employment.
- To follow through on commitments, I make to the program.
- To treat staff with respect and dignity.
- To keep my child up to date on the Well Child Exam, Dental Exam, and Immunizations.
- To pick up my child from the center or transportation pick-up point on time.
- To request a copy of information that is kept in my child's file if there are no parenting/guardianship restrictions.

EPIC's Early Learning Role & Responsibility

- To provide high quality services to all children who are served in our program
- Invite parents/guardians to be a part of their child's education and preschool experience.
- To encourage adult participation in parent- teacher conferences, VIP days, family nights, policy council, field trips, and other center activities.
- To document all parent(s)/guardian(s) conversation on our contact log that is stored in a child's file.
- To remain a neutral party when there are custody battles, parenting/guarding conflicts, or other family situations.
- To obey all legal court order documents that are current and brought to our attention.
- To recognize both parties listed on the birth certificate as active participating parents unless there are current court order documents that restrict an adult from their child.
- To report to Child Protective Services if abuse is suspected.
- To call law enforcement if there is a potential threat or endangerment towards a child, parent/guardian, a staff member, or towards the center.
- To call law enforcement if a child is not picked up from the center within the program operating hours and the parent/guardian has not been able to be reached.
- To avoid dropping off a child or picking up a child from their bus stop if the environment does not appear safe.

FAMILY HANDBOOK PARENT SIGNATURE PAGE-Purpose of Handbook & Declaration of Understanding:

This Handbook explains the policies and procedures of the EPIC Early Learning Programs. Please reference this book for questions you may have about our programs. This handbook is available at www.epicnet.org. (Copy to be filed in child file under correspondence, when staff share with parents how to access the handbook and what the handbook consists of)

Parents will be signing for receipt of the following policies, and our procedures have been reviewed and discussed:

- **Licensing, Plans and Policies**
- **Disaster Preparedness Plan**
- **Education & Program Services**
 - **Dual language/English Language Acquisition**
 - **Transition to Kindergarten**
 - **Confidentiality**
 - **Pest Management**
 - **Celebration Policy**
 - **Very Important Person (VIP) Day**
 - **Family night**
 - **Active participation in parent-teacher conferences and family visits.**
 - **Volunteer opportunities**
- **Infant/Toddler Services (Early Head Start)**
- **Family Support Services**
- **Health Policies & Procedures**
- **Nutrition Services**
- **Non-Discrimination Policy**
- **Transportation Services**
- **Inclement Weather/School Closings**
- **Parent Involvement**
- **Facilities & Operations Policies and notifications**
- **Resolving Parent Complaints**
- **Culture of Safety**
- **Child Abuse & Neglect**
- **parent/ guardian permission for photography, videotaping, or video surveillance of his/her child. (Permission Consent Form in child file)**
- **Copy of the Code of Conduct**
- **My Rights as an EPIC Early Learning Parent/Guardian**
- **Parent's Pledge**
- **Early Learning Role & Responsibility**
- **Family Handbook**

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Center and Classroom Information

<i>My Center is:</i>	<i>My Classroom Number is:</i>
<i>My Teachers are:</i>	<i>My classroom hours are:</i>
<i>My First day of class is:</i>	
<i>My Center Manager is:</i>	<i>The center phone is:</i>

