



Florida Southern College
Early Childhood Learning Lab
Handbook
2024-2025 School Year

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Welcome to the Florida Southern College Early Childhood Learning Lab!

The mission of the Florida Southern College Early Childhood Learning Lab is to provide a safe, nurturing and engaging early learning environment that supports all learners and creates a foundation for children to be able to enter Kindergarten as life-long learners and critically thinking citizens.

The program provides a lab-based program for children ages three to five years old. A lab-based program provides the college students whose degrees will be child-centered, an opportunity to work directly with the children.

Children learn naturally through play. Children are natural explorers who investigate the world around them through play and high-quality interactive experiences. Our curriculum is child-centered and supports the needs of all learners socially/emotionally, cognitively, and physically. Each classroom is designed to provide the students with opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them, while providing a solid foundation to enable them to be “Kindergarten Ready.”



Background

The Early Childhood Learning Lab at Florida Southern College was originally located in Edge Hall, the former School of Education Building for over 50 years. It relocated to the Carol Jenkins Barnett Center for Early Childhood Learning and Health in the summer of 2020. The primary focus of the Lab School was to provide an **interactive** learning approach for college students to apply and achieve hands-on experiences to help them develop professionally. Over the years, the program has served children and families from the community and college while creating an onsite interdisciplinary model for work-study students.

Work-Study Students are part-time assistant teachers who are pursuing degrees in child-related fields at Florida Southern College. They are an essential asset to our program and work side-by-side with our lead teachers.

State Licensing

The program is licensed by the State of Florida through the Department of Children and Families. Unannounced inspections of the Center are conducted by the Department of Children and Families to ensure all state standards, policies and procedures are met. A copy of the current license is on display in the lobby area of the early learning center.

Attendance Policy

The program begins at 9AM. To ensure that your child does not miss any activities or instruction, regular on-time attendance is needed. Please drop your child off by 9AM. This allows us time to check your child in and prepare him/her for the day. Regular daily attendance will help make sure that your child has the skills he/she needs to be successful when starting kindergarten. We understand that emergencies happen and on occasion children are late or need to miss school. Please notify your child's teacher if he/she needs to miss school.

Program Operating Hours

The center is open from **7:30 am to 5:15 pm**. A late fee will occur for any child picked up **after 5:15pm**.

Morning Drop-Off

Our policy/procedures are in place to ensure that your child arrives and leaves school safely and that we maintain compliance with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for the state of Florida. **If you arrive outside of the standard drop-off time, please ring the doorbell to the right of the main door and a staff member will assist you.**

1. Please sign your child in using the log and note the time. Your child has a page that is updated monthly.
2. Please pull into the driveway in front of the education building. During the hours of **8:45am-9:05am** a staff member will greet you and have you sign your child in.
3. Per DCF, the adult with the child must help the child out of the car. A staff member will then take the child into the building and to his/her room to start the day.

4. To support your child's growth please plan to arrive on time to help your child settle into a consistent routine.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Our policy/procedures are in place to ensure that your child arrives and leaves school safely and that we maintain compliance with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for the state of Florida. **If you arrive outside of the standard pick-up time, please ring the doorbell to the right of the main door and a staff member will assist you.**

1. Please sign your child in using the log and note the time. Your child has a page that is updated monthly.
2. **Half day pick-up is at 12pm.** Please pull into the driveway in front of the education building. **During the hours of 12pm-12:15pm** a staff member will bring your child to the car so you can sign your child out for the day.
3. **Full day pick-up is at 3:30pm.** Please pull into the driveway in front of the education building and a staff member will bring your child to the car so you can sign your child out for the day.
4. Per DCF, the adult with the child must help the child into the car.

Parking

Because we are located on a college campus, parking can be a challenge at times. Parking at the center can be limited, but additional parking is available at Robert's Academy.

Late Pick Up Policy

Families are expected to pick up their child **before** closing time. A charge will be assessed **beginning the minute the center closes at 5:15 pm.** Charges are applied to the family's account. Families are responsible for all late fees for the entire period that staff must stay with the child.

Transportation

The program does not provide transportation to and from the center nor are staff members permitted to provide transportation for children to and from the center.



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Billing

OPTION 1 (3 DAYS A WEEK) Prices are per week

Half days: 9 am – 12 pm \$65.00

Full days: 9 am – 3:30 pm \$95.00

Before Care: 7:30 am – 9:00 am \$30.00

After Care: 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm \$30.00

Before & After Care: \$50.00

OPTION 2 (5 DAYS A WEEK) Prices are per week

Half days: 9 am – 12 pm \$85.00

Full days: 9 am – 3:30 pm \$150.00

Before Care: 7:30 am – 9:00 am \$40.00

After Care: 3:30 pm – 5:15 pm \$40.00

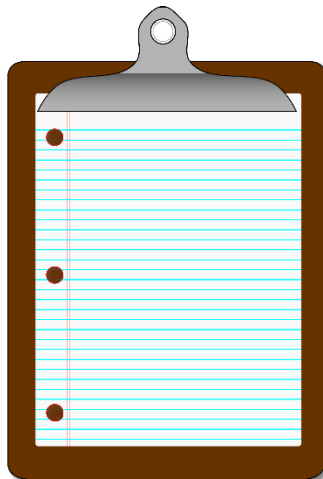
Before & After Care: \$70.00

***** There is a one-time registration fee of \$50.00*****

Charges are billed monthly based on your child's schedule. Any schedule changes must be approved by the Director and made in advance. Payments will be made via the Florida Southern College portal system. The student will be issued an ID number, and the parent will be provided directions on how to use/access the portal system. If you have questions concerning your child's billing statement, please contact the director first, and then the Business Office.

Business Office: 863-680-4154

Florida Southern College Tax ID: 59-0624401



Communication and Partnerships

Partnerships

Quality early learning environments require a partnership between the center, teacher, student, and family. You are your child's first teacher and know your child best. Families are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher and to contribute to decisions about their child's goals and plans. Good communication between families and the program is essential.

Ways to Communicate

- One-on-one conversation with your child's teacher (schedule in advance)
- One-on-one conversation with the director (schedule in advance)
- Telephone conversations
- Emails
- Messaging through the Class Dojo

Celebrations

We are happy to celebrate birthdays. Please remember that the items must be store bought. Some simple items for us to distribute in class are donut holes, cupcakes, and cookies. If you plan to send in invitations for a party outside of school, please speak with our child's teacher for a class list.

Resources

- Florida Health Early Steps
<https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/early-steps/index.html>
- Child Find
<https://www.fdlrs.org/child-find>
- United Way of Central Florida
<https://uwcf.org/success-by-6/>
- National Association for Young Children
<https://www.naeyc.org/>
- FSC Theatre and Dance ticketing
<https://fsc.universitytickets.com/>
- Lakeland Mom
<https://lakelandmom.com/calendar/>
- Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)
<https://www.pbis.org>

Curriculum

Our program follows research-based best practices that are developmentally appropriate and provide the foundation for NAEYC standards for accreditation. Research says that children learn best through experiences and play. by "doing" or through play. Our staff strive to create a

learning environment that is safe, predictable, and supportive where the limits and expectations are clear and consistent.

Curriculum and assessments go hand in hand. Teachers set curriculum goals and objectives that can be used in the ongoing assessment of each child's progress. Assessments are used in developing curriculum goals and objectives that encourage the continued learning and development of the whole child.

Schedule

The daily schedule consists of large and small group activities, outside play, learning centers, family style meals and snacks, and rest/quiet time. Each day provides enriching opportunities, in and out of the classroom, for social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development in a safe and nurturing environment.

Health and Safety

Immunizations and Physical Record

Children may not attend without a current immunization record and a physical record within two years. These are available from your child's pediatrician or the local Health Department. Exceptions are accepted for immunizations on a case-by-case basis and must be properly documented by the Health Department.

Medications and Allergies

Our program only administers life-threatening medications, such as an Epi-pen, Nebulizer, or inhaler. If a child has a life-threatening allergy, an Allergy Action Plan and all Authorization Medication forms must be signed by the health care physician. These procedures are reviewed with staff annually. Due to DCF (Department of Children and Families) regulations, the center cannot administer non-prescribed medication of any form, including sunscreens and ointments.

Allergies

For children with special health care needs, food allergies or other special nutritional needs, the child's health care provider must provide the center with a written individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with the family and any other specialists involved in the child's health care.

Sick Child/Illness Policy

Please keep you child home if:

- There is a temperature of 100.4 or higher.
- According to DCF/State Licensing, a child **must be fever free for 24 hours without medicine** before returning to school.
- They have a congested/runny nose, not due to allergies. Allergies will require a doctor's note.
- Oral signs of possible severe illness, including unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent cough, crying or trouble breathing.

- Diarrhea or vomiting. Must be clear for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Communicable diseases: mouth sores, rashes, scabies, lice, ringworm, pinworm, etc. Must be cleared by the doctor.
- Chicken Pox, until 6 days after onset of rash or until all lesions have dried and crusted. Must have a doctor's note to return.
- Rubella, until 7 days after the rash appears. Must have a doctor's note to return.

Please notify the center immediately if your child has a communicable disease. If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will notify you at once. Your child will be isolated in the Director's office while waiting for you to pick up your child in a timely manner (within 1 hour of notification). The parents/legal guardians will be contacted to pick up the child as soon as possible. A child must remain out of the Center until they are free from symptoms for 24 hours unless a doctor's note is provided.

Accident/Incident Notification

- All accidents and incidents or unusual occurrences that are threatening to the health, safety, or welfare of a child that occur while the child is in care must be documented on the same day they occur.
- This documentation must be shared with the custodial parent or legal guardian on the date of occurrence.
- Documentation must include the name of the affected party, date and time of the occurrence, description of the occurrence, actions taken and by whom, and appropriate signatures of program childcare personnel and the custodial parent or legal guardian. Program childcare personnel signatures may include the director/childcare personnel that witnessed the incident, who were involved in the incident, and/or responded to the child's needs.
- The documentation must be maintained for 12 months. If the parent or legal guardian does not pick up the child on the date of occurrence of the accident or incident, the individual authorized to pick up the child must sign and be provided a copy of the accident/incident form.

Clothing

Please send your child in closed-toed shoes. Comfortable clothing that can get dirty is best. The children participate in many activities throughout the day and some of them may be messy. Children should always have clothing appropriate for the weather. All children should have an extra set of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear. All clothing should be marked with your child's name.

Bathroom

Children must be able to go to the bathroom independently. Teachers can:

- Assist the child in the bathroom.
- Instruct the child verbally to assist in self-clean up.

- Assist the child to clean up any mishaps.
- Ensure children wash their hands.
- Assist fastening clothes and changing, if needed.

Food Safety

- Please send two snacks and a lunch for full day students.
- Half-day students need one morning snack.
- Pack in a heated thermos or with an ice pack, as needed.
- Water bottle with your child's first and last name on it.
- **Due to the high risk of choking, please avoid sending in the following foods: whole grapes, popcorn, hot dogs, and whole blueberries.**

What to Bring for Rest:

We provide a cot that is cleaned daily for every child that stays full day. Please send a small blanket/crib sheet or a nap mat for your child for rest time. Please send them every Monday in your child's backpack. They will be sent home every Friday for cleaning, unless there was an accident, and they need immediate washing.

Emergency Procedures and Severe Weather

In Florida we do have weather that can change often and quickly. We are susceptible to hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe thunderstorms. Procedures based on the guidelines of Florida Southern College and DCF are closely followed. We regularly practice procedures for fire and weather-related emergencies. Emergency procedures are posted in every classroom and by center doors. If there is a school closure OR early release due to an emergency, you will be notified via phone, email, and/or Class Dojo. Emergency closure information will also be available on the college website. In case of an emergency that demands evacuation during the operating day, we will evacuate children to the Roberts Academy.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

An essential part of a child's early education is learning to self-regulate and follow the rules. This is most effective when rules follow consistent consequences. The consequences for behavior must make sense to the child.

Since the purpose of discipline is to teach, our program uses the term guidance to provide learning opportunities for all children through verbal communication that encourages them to talk to their peers when conflict arises. This helps children empathize with one another's feelings and see the results of their actions.

Limiting a child's choices of activities due to inappropriate behavior is an effective way to teach children to respect property and one another.

Separation of children may become necessary when two or more children have extreme difficulty playing together. The teacher then needs to assign appropriate play areas for the children, with the message that they may try playing together again later.

Our program provides a calming space *if needed*, allowing the opportunity for reflection and renewal. This area fosters a safe and secure space with soft materials for children to self-regulate their emotions.

Guidance takes several forms:

1. Environment – A place designed for children. The furniture is child-sized, with lots of hands-on experiences.
2. Curriculum – Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children's interests and level of pre-academic readiness.
3. Logical Rules (I CARE RULES) – These rules are discussed with the children, as well as why such rules are needed.
 - a. (1) We listen to each other.
 - b. (2) Hands are for helping, not hurting.
 - c. (3) We use I-Care Language
 - d. (4) We care about each other's feelings.
 - e. (5) We are responsible for what we say and do.
4. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) – We reinforce positive behaviors in our daily practices.
5. Redirection – Periodically, a child may need to be redirected to an activity or area.
6. Renewal Time – Occasionally, a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time, allowing them to consider alternate behavior.

NOTE: Any ongoing situations will be discussed with the parents/legal guardians to ensure a cooperative approach. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns.

CHRONIC DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

We are here to serve and protect all of our children. We will make every effort to work with the parents/legal guardians of children having difficulties in the FSC – Early Childhood Learning Lab (ECLL). However, children displaying chronic disruptive behavior, which has been determined to be upsetting to another child or a teacher's physical or emotional well-being, may require the following actions.

1. Initial Consultation
 - The Director may require the parents/legal guardians of any child who attends the FSC - Early Childhood Learning Lab to meet for a conference.
 - The problem will be defined on paper. Goals will be established, and the parent/legal guardian will be involved in creating approaches toward solving the problem behavior.
2. Second Consultation
 - If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parents/legal guardians will again be required to meet with the Director.
 - A second attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem behavior, and discuss consequences if progress is not apparent.
3. Program Exit/Withdrawal
 - When the previous attempts have been followed, and no progress has been made towards solving the problem behavior from occurring, the child may be withdrawn from the FSC – Early Childhood Learning Lab indefinitely.

- The Director may immediately withdraw a child at any time they exhibit a behavior that is harmful to themselves or others. A parent/legal guardian may be called from work at any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the staff. The parent/legal guardian may be asked to take the child home immediately. Withdrawal from the FSC – Early Childhood Learning Lab may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period. (*NAEYC Standard 1E.1*) If exclusionary measures must be taken, FSC – Early Childhood Learning Lab will assist families in accessing services and alternative placement.

