

EMU Children's Institute
Great Start to Readiness
Hand Book

2023/2024

EMU Children's Institute
1055 Cornell, Fletcher Suite 101
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
734.487.2348

www.emich.edu/childrensinstitute/index.php



Contents

Topic Order

Philosophy
Eligibility/Admission Criteria
Non-discrimination Policy
Confidentiality
Child Custody Policy
Curriculum/Assessment
Parent/Guardian Involvement
Additional Parent Involvement Opportunities
Other ideals for Parent Involvement
Diversity in Learning Environment
Special Needs
Program Needs
Staff Information
Staff Contact Information
Withdrawal/Attendance policy
Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures
Licensing
Classroom Management/Discipline Procedures
Healthcare Procedures
Child Abuse/Neglect
Grievance

General Information

What to Wear
Nutrition
Physical Activity/Weather
Security of Building
No Pet Policy
No Smoking/Drug/Alcohol Policy
Emergency Procedure
Tornado & Fire Drills
Daily Routine/Schedule
Parent Notice of Program Evaluation
Hand Book Subject to Change Notice
Calendar

Philosophy

We would like to welcome you and your child to the EMU Children's Institute Great Start Readiness Program! A significant portion of a child's foundation for learning is developed from birth to age five. The educational experience a child has prior to entering kindergarten significantly impacts the child's ability to learn throughout life. So enrolling your child was a great choice!

The EMU Children's Institute Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) believes individual children develop best in nurturing classroom through active learning experiences. We provide a developmentally appropriate program in a safe and nurturing environment, which promotes social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth. Our teaching team works to build confidence in all children in order to establish a solid foundation at their own developmental level. We foster supportive relationships with families and community partners to enrich the child's emotional and social development. These beliefs guide our practice and provide the framework for program decisions.

Eligibility/Admission Criteria

The GSRP is Michigan's state-funded preschool program for four-year old children with factors which may place them at-risk for future educational difficulties. The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) at **no cost** (for 8:30-4:00) to families that qualify financially. Children must be 4 by September 1 and live in Washtenaw County to be considered. Procedures for selection are based on program eligibility and prioritization of children with the greatest need base on MDE guideline.

The eight factors that place children at educational risk are:

- Extremely Low Family Income (ELI)
- Low Family Income (LFI)
- Diagnosed Disability or Identified Developmental Delay
- Severe or Challenging Behavior
- Primary Home Language Other than English
- Parent(s) With Low Educational Attainment
- Abuse/Neglect of Child or Parent
- Environmental Risk
- Military Deployment

In order to be eligible to enroll, the following requirements must be met:

- Proof of Residency
- Up to Date Immunizations (or must have certified, non-medical waiver from the county health department)
- Birth Certificate
- Signed Health Appraisal
- Income Verification

The EMU Children's Institute Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a five full-day program (Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) per week for the duration of the grant period. The usual enrollment policies of the Children's Institute will be respected. If additional time is requested, beyond the 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. you will be responsible for the tuition cost. It is our expectations that you will bring your child five days a week (Monday – Friday) from 8:30 – 4:00.

The Children's Institute encourages you to participate in the following activities offered during the grant period.

- Two home visits by teachers
- Two parent/teacher conferences

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Children's Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in any of its programs, activities, or policies. We are committed to reaching out to people of different races, genders, ethnicity, and ability, and we strive to create an environment of inclusion that celebrates our differences and highlights our commonalities. The Children's Institute accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Children will not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional developmental, medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of information is a pillar of our program. Sometimes we encounter situations such as a parent/guardian who expresses a concern about another child's behavior. Although we understand your concern for the welfare of your child, we cannot discuss detailed information about other children and families with you. Please keep in mind that children develop at very different rates and it's not realistic to expect all children to "behave" the way you believe they should. Please know that we are working with individual children and families, but we cannot disclose this information to you. Be assured that we won't discuss your child's development or progress with others, unless we receive your consent.

Eastern Michigan University is committed to protecting the privacy of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) of its students, faculty, staff and other individuals associated with the University. All entities of the University will take appropriate measures, implement necessary technology and/or establish operating procedures to ensure data privacy is maintained.

Child Custody Policy

According to the Michigan Department of Child Day Care Licensing: “until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking the child up from our child care program. The child information card that the enrolling parent/guardian signs states “persons other than parent...” It is not within the Children’s Institute legal right to withhold a child from a parent; unless there has been court action which limits one parent’s right to the child.” In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (i.e., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) the Great Start Readiness Program must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed.

Curriculum/Assessment

The EMU Children’s Institute Great Start to Readiness Program (GSRP) provides a quality education program for a diverse population of children with widely varying levels of development and ability by following the HighScope Curriculum. Children construct their own knowledge of the world with the support of intentional teachers who shape and encourage their individual learning experiences. Teachers build on children’s learning by planning activities based on what they observe in the classroom, providing materials and opportunities that both support and challenge young children. Children make their own discoveries and build their own initiatives by creating plans, following through on their intentions, and reflecting on their learning.

This Plan-Do-Review process is a trademark of the HighScope approach and the strategic backbone for children and adults moving successfully through life. This unique dynamic of shared control between the child and adult lays the groundwork to actively engage young children in learning and helps children in learning and helps children build essential school readiness skills.

The 5 Ingredients of Active Learning include:

Materials-Children’s home, culture, and language are reflected in a variety of age appropriate, open-ended materials for them to explore

Manipulation-Children make discoveries when they are encouraged to handle, examine, combine, and transform materials and ideas.

Choice-Children chose materials and play partners, change and build on their play ideas, and plan activities according to their interests and needs.

Child language and thoughts-children communicate verbally and nonverbally-thinking about their actions, expressing their thoughts about what they understand, and modifying their thinking-as they learn and explore.

Adult scaffolding-children gain knowledge and develop creative problem-solving skills with the help of well-prepared adults who support a child's current level of thinking and challenge them to advance to the next stage, also known as "scaffolding."

Assessment is the ongoing process we use to find out what every child knows and can do. It helps us discover each child's strengths, skills, interests, and needs so we know how to help every child experience success. Our assessment system also enables us to exchange information with families so, together, we can ensure that your child is progressing.

The assessment system we use does not involve testing children. We learn about children by carefully observing what they do and say as they participate in everyday activities in the classroom. We know that each child is an individual, with different interests, skills, strengths, and needs. The more we learn about each child, the better we can plan experiences that are just right: sufficiently challenging and engaging.

When assessing children, we observe and nurture the skills and knowledge we want them to acquire in our program. Assessment, therefore, is closely linked to our curriculum. To teach effectively, we have to know what to teach, when to teach particular skills, and how to teach in ways that help each individual child develop and learn.

The Children's Institute uses COR Advantage as an observation-based child assessment. Teachers capture and record child development in the COR Advantage online tool and then use that valuable insight to create individualized lesson plans and detailed reports on child and classroom progress.

The COR Advantage 8 Categories include:

1. Approaches to Learning
2. Social and Emotional Development
3. Physical Development and Health
4. Language, Literacy, and Communication
5. Mathematics
6. Creative Arts
7. Science and Technology
8. Social Studies

The Children's Institute GSRP also utilizes the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, a developmental screening tool to assess children's skills in different developmental areas. Each child is screened in the fall. If concerns are noted, the questionnaire will be reviewed and a plan of action will be evaluated. This could include giving the parent/guardian handouts, coming up with an action plan, or contacting the Washtenaw Intermediate School District.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Children who are successful in school have many healthy interconnections between family, school, and community. Parent/Guardian involvement in the learning process strengthens learning at home and is directly linked back to positive child outcomes at school. Communication and strong relationships are the keys to successful parent/guardian involvement. Parent/Guardian involvement is a very important part of our program and parents/guardians are welcome visitors in the classroom at any time. You may come to observe any part of the day or eat lunch with your child

We encourage parents to become involved. We have implemented several ways that will help you to be a part of our program:

Parent group workshops with childcare provided

Parent-child special events

Classroom events and activities

Sharing special interests or talents (Please indicate this on the Child Information Record/Emergency Card)

If requested helping to prepare classroom materials.

Teachers communicate with newsletters and other information in your child's mail box in the classroom. Please be sure to check your child's mailbox regularly.

Home Visits

Twice during the year, we will schedule a home visit with your family. We try to schedule one prior to the start of school and one at the end of the school year, and visits will last approximately one hour. The goal of home visits is to better meet the needs of your child and family. In promoting a partnership between parents and teachers, home visits provide a time to share the interests of your child and family, information about the program, and how the program can best serve the needs of each family. For example, the home visit prior to the start of the school year is an excellent time to get acquainted with one another and the spring home visit helps to provide a smooth transition to kindergarten.

Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year (winter and spring) at the Children's Institute. During the conference, you will discuss your child's progress, have an opportunity to ask questions and give input as well.

Additional Parent Involvement Opportunities

The mission of the Washtenaw Great Start Parent Coalition is to engage and empower parents through education around early childhood development, community resources and advocacy opportunities on behalf of all families in Washtenaw County.

They do this in four key ways:

- Support each other in your journeys as parents/guardians
- Educate parents about growth and development from birth to school age
- Offer experiences and voices so that the leaders of our community know what parents truly need
- Talk with legislators about the programs and services parents and child need to be successful

For updates on new events and meetings, please visit their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WashtenawGSC>)

Other Ideals for Parent Involvement

- Share special interest with children such as fishing, photography or sewing
- Provide recyclables and help to make play materials
- Create displays of child initiated work
- Meet with teachers at parent/teacher conferences to set developmental goals and discuss child's progress
- Support child's learning at home

Diversity

Materials in the classroom are developmentally appropriate, clean, safe, foster learning and are to reflect the home and community cultures and special needs of children in the program. Materials depict a wide range of non-stereotyped role models and cultures. For those children identified as English as a second language we will work to obtain resources to offer support for the classroom and families.

Special Needs

If a parent/guardian has concerns about their child's development, they should begin by contacting the Professional Staff in the classroom. The Professional Staff will initiate the Response to Intervention process. If further interventions are needed a team will be formed to discuss how to best meet the child's needs. The team may include: parents, the teachers, the program director the WISD Early Childhood Specialist, school social worker or psychologist or other special education staff. If a child is already receiving services for a disability, the GSRP program staff will join the IEP team and continue services. For information about referring your child for a developmental evaluation you may contact the Professional Staff in the classroom or log onto: www.projectfindmichigan.org.

Program Evaluation

The GSRP program is evaluated by an Early Childhood Specialist using the Program Quality Assessment tool provided by the State of Michigan. The Early Childhood Specialist is employed through the Washtenaw Intermediate School District. The

results are used for program planning, staff training and revision of management practices. The staff are evaluated annually with classroom observations by the director. The Children's Institute also uses a self-assessment and receives a score from the Great Start to Quality Program. A star rating is awarded to the center and is available for viewing on the Great Start Connect website, www.greatstartforkids.org. In addition, we do send out a survey at the close of the year for all parents/guardians to provide feedback on our staff and program. We use the information from all evaluations to assist us in making program changes and improvements as well as to guide our daily instruction.

Staff

The Pre-Kindergarten GSRP teaching staff meets all of the educational requirements with a background in early childhood education. They have current certification in infant, child, and adult CPR and First Aid as well as complete training on blood-borne pathogens and the use of epi pens. The staff regularly attends training on a wide range of topics that may include child development, curriculum, child discipline, health/safety, and nutrition, working with parents, and licensing rules. There a rigorous screening and interview process which includes a criminal history check through Michigan State Police and FBI fingerprints and DHHS Central Registry Clearance. All results are kept on file at the Children's Institute Business Office.

Staff Contact Information

Laura Cornell, Teacher II, lothman@emich.edu
Danielle Mijnsbergen, Teacher I, dmijhsbe@emich.edu

Chris Finch, Director, cfinch4@emich.edu
Beth Kahl, Administrative Assistant, bkahl@emich.edu

All classes are held at the Fletcher Building, which is located at 1055 Cornell. If you need assistance, please call the main number-734-487-2348 and ask for your child's teacher.

Withdrawal/Attendance Policy

If you withdraw your child from the Children's Institute, please provide notice in writing two weeks prior to their last day. Children are expected to attend school on a regular basis. Excessive absences may result in termination from the program.

If a child must miss school, please notify the teacher with a reason for absence. There are times when it is appropriate for your child to miss school. If your child is sick, please do not send them to school. If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be called to come pick him/her up. If you cannot be reached, the person you named as your emergency contact or named as other persons to be released to on the Child Information Card/Emergency Card will be contacted.

A child may no longer be included in the program if:

- They have excessive absences
- They do not meet the health/licensing requirements by the required deadlines
- The parent/guardian fails to follow program policies
- The program is determined to be an inappropriate setting

Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures

Please use the Children's Institute main entrance. A parking permit is required for Drop-Off/Pick-Up. They can be ordered at the business office. We will need the make/model number, color and license plate of your car.

Please walk with your child to the classroom. Please do not allow your child to use the key card. The key card should be used by an adult. We require that you sign your child in and out every day. Please be prompt in bringing and picking up your child. If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up your child, please inform the teacher in writing. We will not release your child to anyone who is not listed on the Child Information Record/Emergency Card. We will however follow the Child Custody Policy of the Michigan Department of Child Day Care Licensing.

- Each family will be given two key cards to enter the building at the main door entrance. There will be a charge for any lost key cards, and extra cards needed.
- If a different person is picking up they will be required to either ring the doorbell or call to be let in. Their identification will be checked at the door. No tail gating is allowed.
- The preferred drop-off times will be between 7:30am-9:00am if you requested wrap around time, or 8:30am-9:30am for GSRP time. Only one family member should come into the building with the child/children.
- The preferred pick-up time will be between 4:00pm and 5:30pm if you requested wrap around time, or 3:00pm-4:00pm for GSRP time. Please clear earlier pickups with your child's teacher.

Licensing

The EMU Children's Institute is licensed by the State of Michigan, and we comply with all of the state's regulations for child care centers (safety, sanitation, supervision, equipment, etc.) As a parent/guardian, it is important that you be aware that we are required by law to:

Have on file for each child before he or she starts school:

- Child's Background Information Profile (annually)
- Emergency Card/Child Information Record (annually)
- Class Schedule Card (EMU Students Only (by semester)

- Immunization Form or, a completed, certified State of Michigan Nonmedical Immunization Waiver Form, which has the county health department stamp and signature of the authorizing agent completing parent/guardian immunization education or, a physician signed State of Michigan Medical Contraindication form.
- Green Health Form or electronically signed copy from your child's medical portal. (signed by a physician)
- Sunscreen/Insect Repellent/Toothpaste Authorization (annually)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Forms (annually)
- Acknowledgment of Parent/Guardian Handbook/Licensing Notebook Requirement

Per Michigan licensing rules the following are available for you to view: current license, the Children's Institute administrative rules, and the licensing inspection book.

Classroom Management/Discipline Procedures

One of our main goals of our program is to encourage children to respect themselves, other people and property. Getting along and sharing is a new experience for most children. We believe that each child needs to develop the skills to manage their own behavior and emotions. To achieve this, the staff will provide:

- Consistency
- Choices with safe boundaries
- Skills and language needed to verbalize and express feeling and needs
- Tools to express emotions in an acceptable and safe manner
- Encouragement to do things independently throughout the day

Staff will follow the six steps of conflict resolution which are:

- Approach child calmly and stop any hurtful actions
- Acknowledge children's feelings
- Involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from children
- Restate the problem
- Ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together
- Give follow up support when children act on their own decisions

The EMU Children's Institute adheres to the law as described in Michigan's revised School Code Section 380.1307b. Physical seclusion and/or restraint shall not be used with preschool aged children as defined by law. The following actions are prohibited in all situations: Corporal punishment, deprivation of basic needs, child abuse, intentional application of noxious substance or stimulus resulting in physical pain or extreme discomfort, mechanical restraint, chemical restraint, any restraint that negatively impacts breathing, prone restraint, physical restraint other than emergency physical restraint, and seclusion.

Healthcare Procedures

Health and safety of our children is one of the top priorities at the Children's Institute. Staff will do everything they can to maintain a healthy environment for the children.

1. Hand Washing

Children and staff must use hand washing soap on a regular basis to help reduce the spread of germs.

2. Bodily Fluids

All staff members have been trained in blood borne pathogens. Precautions presented in this training will be used when handling and cleaning up bodily fluids.

3. Cleaning Toys, Equipment, and Surfaces

Cleaning of equipment, toys, and surfaces will be done on a regular basis. Bleach solutions and other disinfectants will be used.

4. Mediations

In the event that we do need to administer medications, we will follow the proper procedures according to the Children's Institute policy and doctor's orders. In accordance with 1971 Michigan Public Act 157, medication administered to a child must be done on the basis of written permission by the parent or guardian, must be done in compliance with a physician's instructions. The medicine must be in its original bottle labeled with name, date, doctor's name and instruction for dosage and administration.

5. Extreme Medical Condition

Children with extreme medical conditions parents/guardians will fill out an Authorization to Administer Medication Form and submit it to the child's teacher. If a physician's orders require a medication to be readily available for use with a child (for example, and epi pen) it will be placed in a closed bag that will be carried by the staff when leaving the classroom.

An emergency procedure action plan should be provided by the parent/guardian for children with allergies. Allergies will be posted in the classroom and all staff involved will be notified.

6. Illness and Communicable Disease

With the help of the university cleaning staff, we follow NAEYC's frequency table for cleaning and sanitation throughout the school, including toys and water play areas. All staff members follow standard precautions to minimize the spread of infectious disease and store hazardous materials in locked cabinets.

We are in close environment in which contagious illness can be easily transmitted. We do our best to stop the spread of germs by frequent hand washing and sanitizing equipment. Toys, tables, etc. are sanitized daily using bleach water and/or a disinfectant sanitizer. You can help by keeping your child home when he/she is ill.

Children who have been ill during the night or in the morning and have active symptoms as listed below should not attend. A child will be sent home when exhibiting the following symptoms.

- Fever (auxiliary temperature of 100 degrees or more) accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (lethargy; uncontrolled coughing, persistent crying; difficulty breathing; wheezing)
- Diarrhea-defined by more watery stools, not associated with changes of diet or medicine that is not contained by the child's ability to use the toilet.
- Undiagnosed skin rash
- Vomiting
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Rash with fever or behavior change
- Head lice (from the end of the day until after the first treatment)
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chicken Pox, until all sores have dried and crusted
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Any communicable illness

It is not our intent to allow children who are sick to stay in the program but it is also not our intent to exclude children who are only mildly ill. We are relying on parents/guardians to make good decisions regarding their child's health. Please provide the staff with accurate information about your child's health so they can make the best decisions for the welfare of your child as well as the other children in the program.

We understand it can often be difficult to determine the seriousness of the situation when a child is not feeling well. Every situation is different, but we will use the following criteria to determine if a child needs to be excluded:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in our daily routine and activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. A fever is accompanied by any of the symptoms or conditions previously listed.

Please keep in mind that children should not be given fever-reducers, such as Tylenol, just prior to attending the program in an effort to disguise a fever. The medicine will wear off and if a child is sick he/she will relapse quickly and be sent home.

If a child becomes ill while in the program, the parents/guardians will be notified immediately. We will contact a parent/guardian by phone or try to find someone within your department of study at EMU to retrieve you from class. It is imperative for all parent/guardians to provide us with accurate contact and scheduling information so we can access you during the day. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will try to contact the emergency person listed on your Child Information Record/Emergency Card. If we determine your child is too ill to stay, parents/guardians are expected to pick up the child IMMEDIATELY. In the case of your child being sent home ill, a sick child policy form will be completed. Please initial the form when you pick up your child, keep the yellow copy and return the initialed original copy to classroom staff.

Notify us if your child has a communicable illness such as chicken pox, pink eye, strep throat, ringworm, COVID-19 etc. so we can post the Health Department Guidelines concerning symptoms and re-admittance, and so other families can be made aware of exposure.

A child may be subject to exclusion from the school or program, if the local and or state public health authority advises an exclusion as a disease control measure.

COVID-19 is an ongoing public health problem that will be monitored with sustainable data sources to guide prevention efforts.

COVID-19 Policy

- To enter the Children's Institute premises and participate in care and educational activities, your child must be free from COVID-19 symptoms. If during the day, if any of the following symptoms appear, your child will be separated from the rest of the people in the Children's Institute, except for a care giver. You will be contacted, and your child MUST IMMEDIATELY be picked-up from the Children's Institute as soon as possible. While waiting to be picked-up a sick child over the age of 2 years will be encouraged to wear a well-fitting face mask and be isolated from other children. The face covering will be provided by the Children's Institute if needed.

Symptoms include:

- Fever of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Dry cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Swollen hands or feet

- Congestion or runny nose
- Rash
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Other unusual symptoms

While we understand that many of these symptoms can also be related to non-COVID-19 related issues. These symptoms typically appear 2-7 days after being infected so please take them seriously. The Children's Institute follows the Eastern Michigan University criteria for reporting to Telehealth.

- You will immediately notify the Children's Institute Director and classroom teacher if you become aware of any person with whom your child or you have had contact that exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, and is subsequently advised to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- You will immediately notify the Children's Institute Director and classroom teacher if anyone from your place of employment is presumed positive or test positive for COVID-19, whether or not you have had direct contact with that person.
- Your child will be required to wash their hands using CDC recommended hand washing procedures throughout the day using warm running water and rubbing with soap for at least 20 seconds. Children will be teacher assisted if needed.
- That while present at the facility, each day your child will be in contact with children, families and other employees who are also at risk of community exposure. No list of restrictions, guidelines or practices will remove 100% of the risk of exposure to COVID-19 as the virus can be transmitted by persons who are asymptomatic and before some people show signs of infection. You play a crucial role in keeping everyone in the facility safe and reducing the risk of exposure by following the practices discussed below.

COVID-19 Infection-Who is Impacted: Any individual who tests positive for COVID-19 and/or displays COVID-19 symptoms (without an alternate diagnosis or negative COVID-19 test) regardless of vaccination status.

Public Health Recommendations:

- Isolate at home for 5 days (day "0" is day symptoms begin or day test was taken for those without symptoms); and
- If symptoms have improved or no symptom's developed, may leave isolation after day 5 and wears a well-fitting mask, for 5 more days (ending after day 10). *

COVID-19 Exposure-Who is Impacted: Close contact exposed to someone with COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status.

Public Health Recommendations:

- Monitor symptoms for 10 days.
- Test 5 days after exposure and if symptoms develop.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after exposure.
- Avoid unmasked activities or activities with higher risk of exposing vulnerable individuals. **

*You may remove your mask sooner than day 10 with two sequential negative antigen tests 48 hours apart. If a mask cannot be worn, 10 days of home isolation is recommended.

**Activities with immunocompromised or other high-risk individuals, social/recreational activities in congregate settings or when community levels are high.

Abuse & Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are against the law. It is the policy of the Institute that staff reports any actual or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Student staff reports any actual or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to a professional staff member. Professional staff reports any actual or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Director of the Children's Institute, as well as to the Michigan Child Protective Services.

All persons who are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect are presumed to be acting in good faith. Thus they are immune from legal liability as a result of a report. By law, information cannot be withheld on grounds of preserving patient or client confidentiality. The Child Protection Law is intended to make reporting simple and places responsibility for determining appropriate action with Children's Protective Services (CPS), a division of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

It is our intent to work with families even after we have made a child abuse report. We are primarily concerned with the welfare of the child but we also realize that the parents/guardians may not be the perpetrators of the abuse. We prefer to continue to work with the families and do whatever we can to help with the situation and to ensure a child's safety.

Grievances

The goal of the Children's Institute is to provide a high quality educational experience for your child. We believe that each child and family is entitled to a caring environment where all children can learn and develop as they are provided with a play-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

We welcome your comments and suggestions and will give prompt and serious attention to any concern or grievance concerning our program. We anticipate that most concerns and grievances will be resolved quickly and in the best interest of the child, family, and staff.

Professional staff members are here to assist you with any question or concern you might have about our program. The professional staff will offer professional judgments based on scientific knowledge of the child. They will consider the needs of all the children.

Please direct any classroom questions or concerns to the professional staff in the room. Direct any billing or other administrative questions to the business office. If your question or concern is not resolved, contact the Director.

General Information

What to Wear

Send your child to school in clothing that can be managed easily by young, inexperienced fingers. It is also important that your child wear clothing that launders easily. It is helpful if children wear shoes with soft soles. Gym shoes provide good traction for active play on climbing equipment.

The staff provides a variety of experiences for the children throughout the year. Some of these experiences are outdoors; some are messy; some require easy body movement. To help your child enjoy these experiences dress him/her appropriately. Loose fitting clothing appropriate to the season and shoes that fit properly is necessary. All sandals must have back straps. Playgrounds are treacherous for children wearing shoes that do not provide traction and grip. Outside shoes need to provide both traction and grip.

To provide for the occasional accident, send an extra change of all clothing, with the child's first name and last initial, including socks that can be kept in the child's clothing bin. Please be sure to change the clothes in the bin as the weather changes.

Nutrition

The Children's Institute follow the guidelines of the Michigan Department of Education Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP). Foods served reflect home and community cultures and are high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. A healthy breakfast and afternoon snack will be provided for your child each day. In addition, a family style lunch will be served every day. Please have a doctor's note for any allergies so that a replacement for what is being served can be made if you are requesting a special dietary need. **Families are required to fill out either the Vegetarian and Lifestyle Choices Form or the Request for Special Dietary Needs Accommodations Form.**

Physical Activity/Weather

Outdoor play and physical activity are an important part of a child's development and growth. We will provide the children with 60 minutes of outdoor play on a daily basis unless we are having severe weather conditions.

The Children's Institute uses the Child Care Weather Watch Chart to determine safe temperatures for outdoor play. We also subscribe to the air quality alert system that provides notices of hazards in our area.

We believe that regular outdoor play is a very important part of a child's growth, exploration and learning about their environment. We plan to follow the guidelines and accreditation criteria for outdoor play of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAYEC). All age groups play outdoors daily if conditions permit.

In cold weather, children will remain inside when the temperature is 10 degree Fahrenheit or below. The length of time outside will be limited and gauged by the comfort of the children and their ability to communicate this.

All children should come with appropriate outerwear (coats, hats, mittens/gloves) to protect them in these conditions. Snow pants and boots should be supplied by the parent/guardian on days when there is snow on the ground. Please try to avoid jackets and hoods with strings as they can become caught on playground equipment and may cause injury.

In warm weather children will remain inside when the heat index (air temperature and humidity) is 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above. When outdoors in warmer temperatures the children will be encouraged to get drinks of water often, to rest or lower their activity level as needed, and to play in the shade.

Security of Building

Our keyless entry system has two goals: (1) to keep all children safely inside the Institute and (2) to allow entry only for people who have Children's Institute business. Adult family members may enter and exit the building through the main corridor doors by using a key card. Each family will be given two key cards at the start of the semester. Extra cards can be purchased for \$10.00 each by submitting a Key Card Authorization Form to the Business Office.

In keeping with our first goal, please report all lost or stolen key cards to the Business Office so the card can be deactivated. The key card is the property of Eastern Michigan University Children's Institute and should be turned back to the Business Office at the end of your child's time here.

No Pet Policy

Please be aware that the Children's Institute does not allow pets on the premises without prior approval.

No Smoking/Vaping/Drug/Alcohol Policy

Due to the health risks related to smoking and second hand smoke, Eastern Michigan University has adopted a smoke free and vaping free campus. The University sought to reduce harm from tobacco use and second-hand smoke, while providing a campus environment that encourages and supports persons to be tobacco-free.

The EMU Children's Institute prohibits all smoking and the use of tobacco products in the Fletcher Building and on the grounds. This policy extends up to the perimeter sidewalks bordering the building.

Young children are particularly susceptible to the dangers of third hand exposures, as are adults with allergies, asthma, or respiratory problems or those who are susceptible to migraines. Please be sensitive to the smells of cigarette smoke, lotions or heavy perfumes on your person when entering the Children's Institute.

The EMU Children's Institute follows the University policy of Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, which prevent the illicit use of drugs and abuse of alcohol on campus property or at University events.

Smoking tobacco, consuming alcohol, and/or using/possessing illegal drugs are prohibited on any school property at all times.

Emergency Procedure

The Children's Institute Emergency Action Plan specifies four safety levels including normal operations, Hold & Secure, Shelter-In-Place (aka Lockdown), and Evacuation.

Hold & Secure: Staff are trained in the steps to take in the event of an emergency that requires Hold & Secure. This action may be necessary when there is danger near the Fletcher Building.

- Staff are notified via phone or other means to Hold & Secure.
- All staff and children participating in outside activities are moved in to the building.
- All outside doors and windows are closed and locked.
- Staff complete a face-name attendance check of the children.
- Access to and exit from the building is controlled. Regular activities and movement in the building continues as scheduled but no outside activities are allowed.

Shelter-In-Place (aka Lockdown): Staff are trained in the steps to take in the event of an emergency that requires Shelter-In-Place. This action may be necessary when there is a potentially harmful situation in or near the facility and it is safer to stay inside rather than evacuate. A lockdown may be required if violence is threatened. When information is received from the University or when a potentially harmful situation is recognized by program staff, the following steps are taken:

- Staff are notified via phone or other means to Shelter-In-Place

- Staff quickly move children to their classroom or closest safe space and choose the safest place within the room or area to gather. In the event of dangerous weather, groups move to their designated safe space.
- Staff complete a face-to name attendance check of children and adults.
- In the event of a lockdown, staff also close and lock doors, turns out lights and cover windows or doors if possible.
- Staff keep children as quiet and calm as possible until given further directions by an administrator or emergency personnel.

Evacuation Emergencies: Staff are trained in the steps to take in the event of an emergency that requires evacuation. This action may be necessary when there is a potentially harmful situation in or near the Fletcher Building and it is safer to evacuate. When information is received the University or when a potentially harmful situation is recognized by program staff, the following steps are taken:

- Staff are notified by alarm, phone or other means to evacuate the building.
- Staff gather children and prepare to leave the building with children's emergency medications and other emergency supplies.
- Staff complete a face-to-name attendance check of children and adults before leaving the building and after exiting the building.
- Staff move children to the predetermined Designated Meeting Area located at the SW corner of Cornell and Ainsley. If it becomes necessary to move farther away due to excessive heat, fire, department activities or any other reason, children will be moved to the Village Commons Community Room (located behind building E across the street). It will also serve as the Child/Parent reunification site should the Fletcher Building be unavailable.
- Staff will complete another face-to-name attendance check and keep children as quiet and calm as possible until given further directions by an administrator or emergency personnel.

Tornado & Fire Drills

Tornado Watch and Warning: A tornado watch is a forecast which means severe weather may develop over a large geographical area such as southern Michigan, and over an extended period of time. It does not mean that a tornado is expected to strike in our immediate area. Activities continue during a tornado watch. However, we continually monitor the situation to be aware of the possibility of a tornado warning.

A Tornado Warning means that tornado has been detected in the area and may be approaching. We will take immediate cover in designated areas of the building, and remain there until an "all clear" is sounded. Tornado drills are practiced April-October.

Fire Safety: In accordance with state law, fire drills are conducted a minimum of one a quarter so that all children will know where to go and what to do in case of a real fire. The Institute has specific fire safety escape routes posted in each room. Written procedures regarding the care of the students for emergencies is provided to all staff

and hanging in a visible location in the building. Our drills are a necessary precaution for safety and students are taught the procedures for each type of drill.

Daily Routine/Schedule

Teachers give preschoolers a sense of control over the day by planning a consistent daily routine that enables the children to anticipate what happens next. Central elements of the preschool daily routine include breakfast, the plan-to-do-review sequence, small and large group times, and free choice, clean up, lunch, snack, and outside time. Programs that operate 5 or more hours must have quiet/rest time. The length of rest time depends on the child's age and room assignment, lasting from 1 hour up to 2, while accommodating for the individual needs of children. Quiet activities will be provided for children after 20 minutes of resting and that do not sleep. Each child will be provided one cot to rest on a sheet and blanket. Children may bring their own blanket, pillow, and/or stuffed animal. Cots will be sanitized in accordance with licensing rules. Children will assist with setting up and cleaning up as their abilities allow. Soft music will be played, the lights will be turned off, and staff will provide a comforting, supervising presence while the children rest. The complete daily schedule is posted either inside or outside the classroom.

Parent Notice of Program Evaluation

The EMU Children's Institute GSRP program is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from the MDE might:

1. Ask parent/guardians questions about their child and family
2. Observe children in the classroom
3. Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers
4. Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. Questions? Contact: mde-gsrp@michigan.gov or 517-373-8483 or MDE, Office of Early Childhood Education and Family services, 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909.

Subject to Change Notice

Items in the GSRP Participant Handbook are subject to change due to state and federal policies/mandates. Written notification of changes will be provided to parents/guardians and will supersede this handbook.

Preschool Calendar 202-2024

September 5, 2023	Preschool Program starts for the GSRP
November 22, 23, 24	Thanksgiving Break, No School
December 18, 2023-January 1, 2024	Winter Break, No School
January 2, 2024	School Resumes
January 15, 2024	Staff Professional Development Day, No School
March 29, 2024	Spring Recess, No School
April 29, 2024	Summer 1 Semester Starts
May 29, 2024	Memorial Day, No School
June 7, 2024	Last Day for GSRP