



WINSTON PROUTY

Center for Child and Family Development

# Early Learning Center

# Family Handbook

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# WE VALUE....

## Inclusion

We believe children, families and staff benefit from participating in an environment where everyone feels they belong, where every effort is made to accommodate differences and individual needs, and where everyone's uniqueness is celebrated.

## Learning

We believe in fostering a culture of learning. We support children learning how to be fully themselves. We support families learning how to provide the support, love, and education their children need. We support our staff learning diverse methodologies, and experimenting in the classroom and in the community, in an effort to get the best possible result with each child. We never want to assume we have the answers. We want to be in the practice of learning in every moment.

## Collaboration

We believe in the power of groups to find solutions individuals cannot. We are committed to investing the time and resources necessary to work with our community partners and our kids' families to ensure that every child has access to the tools they need to thrive.

## Persistence

We believe that there is hope for every child and for every family. We are committed to continuously searching for solutions to the most stubborn challenges, to empower families.

## Winston Prouty Center Mission and Programs

The mission of the Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development is to provide inclusive education and family support to promote the success of children and families. The Center is a non-profit agency governed by a Board of Directors and operated by an Executive Director with multiple programs, including the Early Learning Center (ELC) and Community Based Services (CBS), which includes Children's Integrated Services (CIS), Child Care Support Services, and Family Supportive Housing (FSH).

**The Early Learning Center (ELC)** was established as a childcare program in 1986. The ELC is an inclusive early education program serving infants to preschool-aged children. We use the Roots Approach, which is influenced by the work of Magda Gerber/Emmi Pickler/RIE®, Early MTSS, CSEFEL Pyramid Model, and Brazelton Touchpoints. The Roots Approach is Responsive, Respectful, Relationship-based, Reflective Early Care and Education.

- **Responsive:** We believe that careful observation and attention in all our interactions leads to authentic and intentional responses.
- **Respectful:** We believe that all people—children, families, caregivers, colleagues—deserve respect. We recognize and value our unique perspectives, differences, and commonalities. In our interactions, we strive to try to understand each other, to build on strengths, and assume competence no matter the age.
- **Relationship-based:** We believe that healthy relationships are integral to healthy development, at every age and stage. Healthy relationships are reciprocal and respectful.
- **Reflective:** We believe that reflection begins with curiosity. Reflective practitioners try to understand, ask questions, and remain open to feedback and change. Reflection may happen in the moment, before, or after an interaction, offering an opportunity to be more intentional in future interactions and help to build relationship and competence.

**Children's Integrated Services (CIS)** is the name given to Vermont's approach to providing coordinated child development and family support services. These services include:

- CIS Nursing, which provides prenatal & postpartum support to women and families with children birth to age 6 with focus on: health promotion, prevention, and well-being; support and education during pregnancy, childbirth, parenting and role transitions; nutritional and breastfeeding support; child growth and development; safe and healthy environments; and assisting families to connect with high quality health care and support services in their community.
- CIS Family Support, which provides prenatal & postpartum support to women and families with children birth to age 6 with focus on: identification of family strengths and needs; role modeling and mentoring aimed at successful development of life skills to help achieve health, education, economic, personal and parenting goals; anticipatory guidance and healthy child development; and assistance with access to community supports and services.
- Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), which is a nationally recognized home visiting program focused on partnering with first time mothers, ideally by the 16th week of pregnancy (no later than 28 weeks). In collaboration with the Visiting Nurse Association of Vermont and New Hampshire, the NFP provides supports to mothers with a focus on preventative health & prenatal practices, life coaching, health and development education and care for both mother and child up to child's second birthday.

- Early Childhood and Family Mental Health, CIS-ECFMH In collaboration with Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), ECFMH provides education to families with children ages birth to six to support their children's social-emotional development. Consultation and case management services are provided to families with children who have challenging behaviors. Services are also available to support childcare providers and early education programs.
- Early Intervention, CIS-EI, which provides a collaborative system of early Intervention services for children from birth to three years of age who have a developmental delay or a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay, and their families. It is a family support and child development program with services that take place in inclusive, natural settings including home and early care and education environments. In addition to developmental education, a variety of services including speech and language therapy, physical therapy, and nutrition services, etc. can be available as determined by a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and family-centered evaluation process.
- Specialized Child Care Services (SCC), which provides a continuum of services and supports to children and families with identified specialized needs, as well as early childhood/childcare providers who provide services to these children and families. SCC is intended to increase access to and enhance children's success in high-quality child-development programs. SCC may be provided directly to families, childcare providers, or through consultation with service providers.
- Family Supportive Housing (FSH), which provides services and supports to families to help them identify what they need, make goals towards getting those needs met, and access resources towards achieving those goals with the outcome of stable housing as a primary objective. The Winston Prouty Center has two case managers for FSH and works closely with community partners such as Brattleboro Housing Authority, Windham and Windsor Housing Trust, Groundworks Collaborative, and the Brattleboro Area Housing Review Team to implement this program.

## **IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

Main Office: 802-257-7852 To dial a direct extension, call 802-257-2101 and enter the extension

Ann Linge, ELC Inclusion Facilitator, Ext. 313 or [ann@winstonprouty.org](mailto:ann@winstonprouty.org)

Honor Woodrow, ELC Director, Ext. 218 or [honor@winstonprouty.org](mailto:honor@winstonprouty.org)

Kim Simeon, ELC Administrative Coordinator, [kim@winstonprouty.org](mailto:kim@winstonprouty.org)

For questions regarding tuition, payment plans, or other financial matters, contact Willie Gussin, Ext. 303 or [willie@winstonprouty.org](mailto:willie@winstonprouty.org)

### Classroom Direct Extensions

Acorn Room- Ext. 212

Elm Room- Ext. 207

Willow Room- Ext. 205

Cedar Room- Ext. 217

All enrolled families are invited to use the Procure app to communicate with ELC teachers and administration. The app is also used to share photos, videos, and information about their child's day with families.

## Licensing, Accreditation and Program Affiliations

The Early Learning Center is licensed by the Child Development Division of the Vermont Department of Children and Families. Families can access Vermont Licensing Regulations and information by visiting their website at <http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd>. These regulations can also be found posted on the parent bulletin board in the ELC hallway.

The Vermont Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) for Child Care Education and School Age Programs has awarded the Early Learning Center its highest rating of 5 stars. For more information, please visit their website at [www.STARSstepahead.org](http://www.STARSstepahead.org).

The Early Learning Center has been participating in the Vermont Public Pre-k program for years. We follow the guidelines of Act 166, which mandates funding for 10 hours of universal pre-K for all 3 to 5-year-olds in Vermont in a prequalified program for 35 weeks in a school year. In addition, children ages 3-5 that are found eligible for special education services are welcome to enroll in our program and may be able to receive special education services through their local supervisory union while in attendance at the Early Learning Center. Likewise, children who are enrolled in our program and receive services through either Early Intervention or Early Childhood Family Mental Health are typically able to receive some services while in attendance at the ELC with permission from the family.

The Early Learning Center offers a Visiting Child Program to children ages 1-3 who receive Early Intervention Services through the Children's Integrated Services Program at Prouty and to children ages 3-5 who receive Special Education Services through the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union. This program allows children who are not enrolled in an early childhood program, but whose learning goals are dependent on opportunities for socialization with peers, to participate in the life of the classroom while in the care of their service provider.

## Educational Program

### Philosophy

We regard children as capable, strong, and autonomous. We believe that they are observers who approach the world with curiosity and a desire to learn. We believe in their capacity to be problem-solvers who can think creatively and work collaboratively. We believe that children, like all of us, are seeking to find ways to belong, and need time and space to express their emotions. We strive to create a joyful, predictable, caring, and authentic environment, in which they can explore, learn, and grow fully into the unique, important, valuable individuals that they are.

- Statement Created by the ELC Teachers in December of 2021

It is our goal that each child will:

- Feel secure and important in our community
- Develop skills in relationships with both adults and children, recognize and regulate emotions, and take pride in their accomplishments
- Develop large and small motor skills, self-care skills and expressive and receptive language skills

- Develop cognitive skills including the abilities to make logical connections, make purposeful decisions, sustain, and shift attention, make predictions, and solve problems flexibly
- Explore and create freely in an environment that accepts and integrates individual and cultural differences in learning styles, interests, and values

It is our goal that each family will:

- Feel confident that their child's developmental needs are being consistently met at school
- Be aware of how to best support their children's development at home
- Grow in their capacity to recognize and advocate for their child's best interests
- Participate fully in the life of the Prouty community

## Curriculum

Lead Teachers have primary responsibility for implementing a curriculum in keeping with the program's educational philosophy and the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS). As of the fall of 2022, the teachers are beginning to plan using an "emergent curriculum" model. In this model, as Susan Stacey explains in her book *Emergent Curriculum in Early Childhood Settings from Theory to Practice*, "...learning standards are met through relationships with materials, people, and environments [and] learning is embedded in meaningful, engaging play. ... A play-based program is not without rules or structure. Rather its structure respects the rhythms of the children as well as their interests, ideas, and theories and it fosters a sense of both order and flexibility."

When it comes to learning, we strive for "depth" rather than "breadth" as we encourage children to revisit and reflect upon their experiences as they build relationships- with each other, with themselves, with materials, and with the world around them-that form the basis of learning about what it means to be human. In contrast with more traditional curriculum models which change frequently and try to touch on a broad range of potentially disconnected topics, this model of curriculum allows the teachers to focus more deeply on what is emerging in the study of one topic. This means that you may see a curriculum that reflects a single topic for weeks, months or even an entire year.

Art is a central component of our program. In the Early Learning Center, we approach art as a language- a way for children to express themselves. Instead of having children participate in "one and done" product-oriented art activities (or "craft projects"), teachers focus on the *process* of creating art. As Ann Pelo explains in her book *The Language of Art*, "we [must] introduce children to an art medium, as we would introduce two of our dear friends to each other, launching a relationship that will be built over time with many encounters." Children in our program have opportunities to explore a variety of mediums like tape and glue, watercolors, colored pencils, different types of paper, scissors, and clay. A whole toddler curriculum could be designed around "things that stick."

Because we approach art in this way, families should not expect to receive art products coming home every day, or even every week. Often the teachers will keep the children's work here at school to allow the children to reflect further on their work, and to showcase the learning over time. Over time the children build a portfolio of work that can be shared with the family, and families are always welcome to come into the classroom to see how the work is on display, and what children are saying about the process.

Because we believe learning happens through play, it may not be obvious at first glance how the essential domains of learning are being “taught”. It is more likely that a child would report that they “made bread” than that they learned the mathematical concepts of measuring, or the foundational literacy concept that print carries meaning (from reading a recipe), or the essential social emotional skills of patience and taking turns (as they passed the scoop around so each child could have a chance to add an ingredient) or the scientific concepts associated with how things change when you add heat (from baking the bread) or that they practiced their fine motor skills (as they pinched and poked and rolled the dough) or that they engaged in gross motor work (as they carried the heavy pan of dough to the kitchen) or learned about health and safety concepts (being careful around the oven, and learning about the ingredients that go into the bread and what they do for your body).

As professionals in the field of early childhood education our teachers understand each of the domains of learning and are familiar with the required learning standards. They use this knowledge alongside their observations of the children and their interests to collaborate with their colleagues in finding ways to incorporate each of the domains into the learning and play experiences that they develop for the children each week. As Susan Stacey explains, “A child centered classroom will have teachers who are busy. They will be busy not with housekeeping tasks—although some are necessary, and hopefully they will include the children—but with assisting children in finding props, chatting with children about what they're doing, quietly writing observations or taking photographs, scaffolding children's ability to work together, and problem solving with children.”

While our lead teachers generally have more experience and hold overall responsibility for the classroom, our schedule provides opportunities for both teachers to meet together to reflect on their observations of the children, their learning and their interests, and to plan together for next steps, and we expect all of our teachers to work together as a team to provide care and education to the children in our center.

Weekly curriculum plans are posted outside of each classroom and incorporate technology only when indicated in an educational plan for a specific child or when enhancing children’s understanding of a topic as in the example of children who make a video of their classroom caterpillar turning into a butterfly and then use the video to share the news of this event with others. We do not use battery-operated toys and avoid commercial images in the classroom.

We provide consistent routines, set developmentally appropriate expectations, and work to form secure relationships rooted in acceptance and mutual affection. Caregiving routines are a central part of our curriculum, as we know that these things are the building blocks of social, emotional, and behavioral competence in young children. We try to provide a predictable, joyful environment that minimizes transitions and provides responsive caregiving by each of the teachers. Children in our care experience caring and cooperation, practice mastery of roles through pretend play, gain self-worth as they participate in the work and activities of the classroom, learn to balance their needs with those of others, express a broad range of emotions, can assert their independence, and are able to turn toward others for support.

Mutual respect and trust between teachers and families, is essential to our work. Our program maintains an open-door policy, meaning that families always have access to the classrooms.



Additional opportunities to practice and reinforce social, emotional, and behavioral skills can be helpful for some children, and our program provides this through small group activities aimed at further facilitating skill development. Teachers collaborate with families and specialists to support the needs of children who require individualized instructional support and accommodations in this area.

At no time does the program shame, demean, isolate, inflict physical punishment, deny basic needs (such as food, rest, toileting, or comfort), bribe, or negatively compare children. Adult responses to children's behavior include positive affirmation, developmentally appropriate instruction, modeling appropriate behavior, and supporting other children in learning how to effectively negotiate interactions with peers.

### Staff

The Early Learning Center program is overseen by the ELC Program Director, Honor Woodrow. Honor holds a Level IVB (Teacher) credential, a degree in Early Childhood Education, and a Vermont AOE teaching license. The Director provides leadership, supervision, and coaching to the teaching staff and the ELC Administrative Coordinator, Kim Simeon and the Inclusion Facilitator, Ann Linge. The Administrative Coordinator ensures the smooth daily operation of the program by managing program documents, maintaining licensing and accreditation, and managing the waiting list and enrollment. The Inclusion Facilitator works with teachers to provide support and professional development to ensure the full inclusion of all students in the ELC, Ann also works with families and other organizations to support children who are on specific support plans.

Each classroom has a Lead Teacher, a full-time Assistant Teacher, and an Afternoon Teacher. The Lead Teacher is qualified as a Teacher Associate or Teacher by Vermont Northern Lights. The primary role of the Lead Teacher is to meet the developmental needs of the children in the classroom by designing and implementing curriculum as part of a team, providing mentorship and supervision to assistant teaching staff, and establishing meaningful, collaborative relationships with families.

Assistant Teachers in the program have diverse educational backgrounds ranging from college coursework in early childhood education to undergraduate degrees. The primary role of the Assistant Teacher is to support the classroom team through active participation in curriculum, implementation and building relationships with children and families.

The Afternoon Teachers are generally newer to the field, and are qualified as Aides or Assistants by Vermont Northern Lights. The Afternoon Teachers provide consistency for the children during the afternoon while the Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher are out of the room for their planning time, documentation, and supervision times. The Afternoon Teachers also provide care during our aftercare program. All teachers are at times asked to cover other classrooms, as a way to support a center-wide sense of community, and build a culture of cross-classroom collaboration.

All staff have individual performance reviews to set goals for advancing the program and the individual, address any problems in performance, and plan the completion of at least fifteen annual hours of professional development activities. They also have regularly scheduled supervision meetings with the ELC Program Director. Progress is formally assessed through a written performance review at the end of the program year.

### Program Hours

Our program hours are 8:00-3:30, Monday-Friday. We offer After Care from 3:30-4:30 (until 4:00 for infants) for an additional fee. The After Care spots are limited due to staffing and ratios and are not guaranteed. We make every effort to accommodate family schedules. We close at noon on the second Friday of each month for staff in-service and professional development.

### Daily Schedule

The daily schedule for each classroom is posted in each class and families can request copies from the classroom teacher. Schedules are consistent and predictable, and designed to meet the developmental needs of the children.

### Child Assessments

The ELC conducts formal assessments of each child's progress three times annually and informal assessments on an ongoing basis. The information obtained through these assessments is used for a wide variety of purposes related to individual children, including monitoring child progress, developing goals for individual children, communicating with families and current service providers, determining whether a referral for specialized services is appropriate, and guiding curriculum planning during weekly teaching team meetings.

All children in the program are assessed at the time of enrollment each year using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social Emotional (ASQ-SE). The ASQ-SE is a norm-referenced screening questionnaire designed to identify children in need of further assessment for social and/or emotional delays. Children are assessed in the fall and again in the spring using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3). The ASQ-3 is a norm-referenced screening questionnaire designed to identify children in need of further assessment for developmental delays. It is also used to confirm that children whose development was typical on past screenings are continuing to make appropriate developmental progress in the following areas: Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving and Personal-Social. Families are asked to participate in the assessment by completing a questionnaire. Teachers also complete this same questionnaire.

Children whose ASQ-3 results indicate a need for further evaluation are referred to appropriate providers with the permission of their family. Children whose ASQ-3 or ASQ-SE results indicate a possible delay that does not require an immediate referral are provided with targeted learning opportunities in the classroom and suggestions for activities for families to engage in at home. These children are rescreened at the next available screening interval.

Children who are ages three and four on September 1st of the program year are assessed in the fall and again in the spring using the secure online version of Teaching Strategies GOLD. Teaching Strategies GOLD is an observation-based assessment system that combines documentation of development in the Social-Emotional, Physical, Oral Language and Cognitive domains with performance tasks that assess selected predictors of school success in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy. The assessment program can generate a list of suggested activities for each child designed to support his or her individual development, which we are happy to make available to families. The English Language Acquisition component of Teaching Strategies GOLD is completed for any child in the program who meets the following three criteria: acquiring English as a second or dual language,

scored below age range in the relevant section of the ASQ/GOLD, does not already have a current, more comprehensive evaluation of language development by a qualified specialist. In addition, any child who enters the program more than three months in advance of the next upcoming assessment period is screened using the ASQ.

Both the ASQ and Teaching Strategies GOLD are completed by the Lead Teacher in consultation with the Assistant Teacher and the ELC Inclusion Facilitator, all of whom have received any training relevant to the use of a specific assessment. Each assessment is primarily completed in the classroom during regular activities (for example recording that a child can recognize an AB pattern while stringing beads with a friend). There are rare occasions when children are assessed apart from the group in an area outside the classroom, if doing so supports the goal of obtaining the most accurate information. Children are used to teachers recording observations and engaging with them in sustained activities, so most assessments have a very informal feel for them. That said, we welcome input from families as to how we can best obtain information while meeting their child's needs. We are happy to offer blank assessment forms for any family who would like to look them over in the ELC Office or at home.

#### Communication of Child Progress

Twice annually, families review each of their child's completed ASQ and are provided with a summary of their child's progress in each of the Teaching Strategy GOLD domains (for 3-5 year olds) as part of a written narrative report completed by the Lead Teacher in consultation with the Assistant Teacher and the ELC Program Director. In addition to including information obtained through these formal assessment measures, reports also serve to keep families informed about how their child is adjusting to the program in the fall, supports that are in place to facilitate their child's transition to a new classroom or to kindergarten at the end of the year, any concerns about the child's progress, and general information concerning the child's strengths and interests and the classroom curriculum.

Family-Teacher Conferences are held twice each year. Families have the option of scheduling the first of these conferences as a home visit, which provides teachers and families with an opportunity to get to know one another better in the child's primary environment. Often, this allows teachers to learn about the child's home culture and experiences, which can be later integrated in classroom activities. Each of these conferences provides an opportunity to discuss in-person the child's progress, answer questions that parents might have about what they can expect in the next stage of their child's development and discuss any relevant concerns. A primary purpose of these conferences is to allow teachers and families to collaborate on setting individual goals for children that will inform teaching and assessment.

Families are always welcomed and encouraged to discuss questions and concerns as they arise with either the classroom teaching team or the ELC Program Director. In turn, families can expect that the program will keep them informed of their child's progress, day-to-day needs and major concerns on an ongoing basis through daily or weekly classroom notes, in-person conversation at drop-off and pick-up, the Procure app, and phone calls and e-mail as needed.

## Referrals

If either an assessment measure indicates that a child is at risk of delay in an area of development or the Lead Teacher has concerns regarding the overall trajectory of a child's developmental progress, the family's permission will be sought to refer the child to the appropriate outside agency for further evaluation and possible support services. In addition, families may be asked to consult with their child's primary care provider about an ongoing or acute problem that may be adversely affecting the child's development (for example chronic diarrhea). In many instances, it is possible for the child to receive support services (speech and language, occupational therapy, etc.) while in attendance at the ELC if the family so chooses. We welcome the consultation of the various professionals who provide young children with educational and mental health services and are committed to working collaboratively to support children's optimal development in our program.

If a family chooses not to access outside evaluations and support services or these services do not include consultation to the program, an internal Support Plan may be put into place by the ELC Inclusion Facilitator in collaboration with the Program Director, the Lead Teacher and the family. This plan will identify any accommodations or individualized instruction required to support the child in the classroom. Consultation from a relevant professional may be a condition of continued enrollment in the event that the program cannot meet the needs of a child without outside expertise.

## Program Assessment and Improvement

The quality of care and early learning opportunities provided at the program are self-assessed annually in an effort to ensure that children's needs are being continuously met by the program. The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) for preschool classrooms is used to measure the preschool classrooms implementation of the 3 tiers of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. This evaluation is completed by a trained administrator and the results shared with the teaching teams. For the infants and toddlers, The Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) is a similar tool but for children two and under.

Families are strongly encouraged to share any thoughts they have as to how the program could better meet their needs throughout the program year. Staff are also asked for feedback in both formal and informal ways and encouraged to put forth any suggestions they might have.

# Health & Safety

## Medical Conditions

The ELC asks that families disclose any medical condition a child has been diagnosed with as part of its enrollment process. If an enrolled child is newly diagnosed with a medical condition, we ask that you bring this information to the attention of the ELC Administrative Coordinator so that your child's file can be updated, and any necessary information can be obtained from the child's primary care or specialty provider. Written information from the child's health care provider is required for any child diagnosed with asthma and/or allergies. In particular, the written information received from the child's health care provider must include a list of asthma triggers and/or allergens to be avoided and detailed instructions to follow if the child shows

symptoms of an asthma attack or comes into contact with an allergen. In addition, any medications listed within these instructions (for example, EpiPen Jr.) must be provided to the ELC Office and kept current for the child to be in attendance in the program.

### Medication

Medications are only administered by staff who have taken medication administration training. We request that families administer the first dose of a new medication while the child is at home to minimize the risk of an adverse reaction while in attendance in the program. For ELC staff to administer over the counter or prescription medication, the parent or legal guardian must complete a current ELC Medication Administration Form, explaining the specific reason for use of the medication, and an end date for the use of the medication. For teething or injury-specific pain relief, a Medication Administration Form will be valid for two weeks, after which the medication should be brought home, or another form completed. With the exception of teething, or a specific injury that requires pain relief, we do not administer medication for a fever, or generalized pain. We do not store any medication past the end date listed on the Medication Administration form.

All medications provided to the ELC must be in its original packaging. Prescription medication must have written instructions from the child's medical provider, including the child's name, name of the medication, appropriate dosage, time of administration, and method of administration. Medications for certain conditions (e.g., asthma, severe allergies, epilepsy) need an emergency medication plan on file.

All medication is stored in either a locked cabinet in the ELC Office or a lockbox in the refrigerator. Medication is not allowed in children's cubbies or mailboxes. If the person picking up your child needs to also pick up medication, please ask a classroom teacher to get the medication in the ELC office in locked storage.

### Routine Health Services, including Immunizations and Well Child Visits

The ELC requires documentation of routine health services including either immunizations or immunization exemption within six weeks of a child's entry into the program and as age-appropriate thereafter according to the published schedules of the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Academy of Family Practice. If a child is overdue for routine health services or immunizations, the parent or legal guardian must provide the ELC with documentation that an appointment has been scheduled to receive these services before the child will be allowed re-entry into the program. The Vermont Licensing division now also requires that we have a well child visit summary for every child in attendance and that this form is updated yearly as well.

### Severe Allergies

When a child with a severe allergy is enrolled at the ELC, precautions will be taken in accordance with the written instructions provided by the child's health care provider. The classroom staff will be notified that there is an enrolled child with a severe allergy and each classroom will have a list with the child's initials, the classroom they are in and the allergy they have. Families and staff will be given explicit information as to how to comply with any necessary precautions. The same procedures will apply to an adult with a severe allergy.

## Illness

When a child is diagnosed by a healthcare provider with a communicable disease, families should notify the ELC Program Director who will provide relevant information to all other families in the program. Written information will include signs and symptoms, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the ELC or that are advised at home. In the event of a confirmed case of a vaccine-preventable disease at the Early Learning Center, any child who has not received the relevant vaccine due to exemption will be excluded from the program until such time as the program's health care consultant authorizes re-entry.

A health check of each child is performed daily by the classroom teaching team who observe children for signs of obvious illness. Children with minor cold symptoms will be taught to cough and sneeze into their elbows and all adults members of the community are asked to do the same. Families will be asked to keep their child home if the child exhibits any symptom listed below. If these symptoms develop during the school day, families will be asked to pick-up their child.

- Fever (100°F axillary—armpit or forehead; 101°F orally; 102°F rectally) or greater
- Flu-like symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, aches, headache, fatigue)
- Symptoms of a possible severe illness (severe coughing, skin discoloration, labored breathing)
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Vomiting
- Two or more loose stools above normal for that child
- Diarrhea
- Any behavior change; if the child looks or acts visibly ill; if the child is unable to participate in typical activities; or if care would compromise the staff's ability to care for other children

Children who are ill will be made comfortable on a rest mat in the ELC Office in the care of the ELC Program Director or Administrative Coordinator until a caregiver arrives for pick-up. Families are encouraged to seek consultation from a healthcare professional early in the course of an illness and to develop an emergency care plan for their child in the event of illness. Children should remain home until they have been free of fever (without the aid of fever reducing medications), vomiting, diarrhea and loose stools for 24 hours and are able to resume normal activity levels or until such time as a healthcare professional confirms the child is free of communicable disease. A child may not attend the ELC with the following contagious diseases until the requirements listed with each disease are met. Proof of treatment is required.

- Tuberculosis: until health care provider states that the child can attend
- Impetigo: until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Chicken Pox: until 6 days after onset of rash or until all sores have crusted and dried
- Pertussis: until completion of 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment
- Strep Throat: until 24 hours after treatment is initiated and fever free
- Mumps: until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling
- Measles: until 6 days after onset of rash
- Rubella: until 6 days after onset of rash

In the case of infestation, the ELC strongly recommends that families consult their child's healthcare provider and follow recommendations for treatment. The child can be re-admitted to the program as soon as the ELC office confirms that there is no evidence of live infestation upon examination of the child in a private area. All children in the program will be checked for evidence of live infestation in a private area on a day when any child is found to have a live infestation and all carpets in the classroom will be vacuumed, surfaces sanitized, and all bedding and fabrics washed and dried.

### Accidents

If a child should accidentally suffer a minor or major injury while in attendance at the ELC, the teacher present will treat the injury using appropriate first aid if necessary and complete an accident report. This report is to be provided to the family, the Executive Director and the ELC Program Director the same day and parents are asked to sign that they have received their copy. Families, the Executive Director and the ELC Program Director will be immediately notified if a child requires emergency medical care. There is always a teacher with current CPR and First Aid training present with each group of children and staff are to wear gloves whenever contamination with blood may occur. Each classroom has a First Aid kit which is taken on all walks and field trips.

### Incidents

Families and staff are asked to relay any unusual or concerning incidents to the ELC Program Director at the time they occur (for example a broken window or unusual adult behavior).

### Hand Washing

Families are asked to assist their children in washing their hands upon entering the classroom. All staff members, volunteers and service providers must wash their hands upon entering any classroom. Children and adults must also wash their hands when it would reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases, after diapering or toileting, after handling bodily fluids, before eating, before handling, preparing or serving food, after playing in shared water, handling animals or material that may be contaminated by contact with animals, and before and after visiting with another group of children. In addition, adults must also wash their hands before and after feeding a child, before and after administering medication, before diapering, after handling trash or cleaning and after assisting a child with toileting.

Teachers assist children with hand washing as is developmentally appropriate and both children and adults must use liquid soap and running water while rubbing hands vigorously (including between fingers, back of hands, wrists and under jewelry and fingernails) for at least 10 seconds and dry hands with a single use paper towel, which should in turn be used to turn off the faucet before disposal.

Alcohol based hand rubs are only used if running water is unavailable. Hand washing sinks are never used to prepare food, bathe children, or remove fecal material.

### Sanitation

Sprays, deodorizers, and air freshening chemicals are not used to control odors in any area of the building. Trash bins are emptied daily; surfaces that could potentially come into contact with bodily fluids are disposable or sanitizable; water tables are emptied, sanitized and refilled daily and children may not drink the water or

participate if they have open sores on their hands; spills of bodily fluids are cleaned immediately with detergent and water rinsing using barriers to minimize the risk of contact by staff wearing latex or vinyl gloves; rugs are cleaned by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant and scheduled shampoo and steam cleanings; objects placed in a child's mouth are washed either in the sanitizer or by hand using soapy water and sanitized and air dried before being used by another child; staff wear gloves when preparing and serving food; and diapers are enclosed in plastic and disposed of in a closed, hands-free designated trash bin. The center follows an Integrated Pest Management Plan to ensure that the program is free from pests.

### Meals

Families are expected to provide lunch. In addition, families are asked to pre-cut food for children under the age of three into pieces no larger than ½ inch square and the following foods are not permitted for children under the age of four: hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels and peanut butter that has not been spread. It is a licensing requirement that items to be kept cold be packed with a two cold packs in the child's lunch box. Breast milk will be gently mixed, not shaken, first.

All children in the toddler and preschool classrooms drink from either sippy cups or open cups. Children may drink and eat only when seated at the table where adults support them to eat and drink independently.

The ELC provides a breakfast daily for toddlers and preschoolers around 9am and a snack following rest-time. A written menu can be found posted on the program refrigerator and copies are available for families in the ELC office upon request. On special occasions, 100% juice may be served and water is made available with every snack and at any time throughout the day. Snacks consist of at least two food groups and are prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the US Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.

Families with children enrolled in the infant program are asked to provide written feeding instructions specifying the child's primary source of nutrition (breast milk, infant formula, or both) and feeding schedule. The instructions should be updated as the child's diet changes. Infants will be fed according to their individual feeding schedule and needs. Introductions to all new foods shall be done by the family.

Families are asked to provide written information regarding any dietary restrictions a child may have to the ELC Program Director, so that the program may ensure that the child is not offered an inappropriate food item. Likewise, written information must be provided from a health care professional if a child needs to be fed at different intervals than scheduled by the program due to a medical condition.

Mothers are welcome to breast feed while at the ELC in a space that is comfortable for the family.

### Tooth Brushing

Children in toddler and preschool classrooms may brush their teeth and gums daily. Families are asked to provide their child with a labeled toothbrush that is replaced as recommended and after a period of illness. Families are welcome to provide toothpaste for their children if they choose. Teachers will assist children in dispensing toothpaste in appropriate amounts (size of a grain of rice for toddlers and the size of a pea for preschool age children). Toothbrushes are stored so that they can air dry and do not touch any other toothbrush, soap, towels or drinking cups.



### Diapering and Toileting

Children's diapers are checked at least every two hours and upon waking up and are changed promptly when wet or soiled. Families are expected to provide disposable diapers and wipes. Families may also provide non-prescription diaper cream with written permission to apply it as requested and/or as the teaching team determines it is needed. Cloth diapers are allowed and need to be accompanied by a securely fastening waterproof cover to be changed with every liner. If used, cloth diapers will not be rinsed, but instead placed immediately in a plastic bag, tied, and sent home with the child the same day.

Teachers always wash their hands with soap before and after changing diapers, wear gloves during diaper changes, disinfect the changing table following a diaper change, and always have a hand on the child. Children may choose to be changed while standing. Each classroom has a designated diaper changing station that is used exclusively by the children in that group, is located at least three feet from activity areas, and is never used to prepare food, store objects, or for any other purposes. There is a designated hands-free diaper trash can in each classroom, which is kept closed and inaccessible to children. Staff that have food preparation responsibilities do not change diapers until they have finished preparing food for the day.

Children's diapers are only ever changed by a trusted caregiver. Volunteers are never allowed to change diapers and substitute teachers are only allowed to change diapers once they have developed rapport with an individual child. Families may only change their own child.

Children are allowed to use the bathroom at any time and are encouraged to use the bathroom at predictable times each day, including before going outside and before and after rest-time. The toddler and preschool classrooms all have bathrooms within the classroom. Potty chairs are not used in the program. The ELC does not require children to be using the toilet independently before transitioning to or enrolling in a preschool classroom.

Teachers support children in using the bathroom independently by providing verbal instruction whenever possible. If necessary, teachers will assist children with wiping or changing clothes, but only with the permission of the child. Teachers do not scold or reprimand children who have had accidents in any way and instead reassure the child that accidents are a part of learning to use the toilet and assist the child in changing into a fresh set of clothes. In addition, teachers will not either bribe children to use the toilet or provide rewards when children successfully use the toilet, though we are sure to congratulate them!

### Napping & Resting

There is a daily rest-time period in each classroom. During this time, children rest on their mats while adults rotate among them offering any assistance (back rubbing, singing, etc.) they need to be comfortable and either fall asleep or rest quietly. Children who do not fall asleep will be provided with alternate, quiet activities. In keeping with our responsive approach, we do not force children to sleep or deny them the opportunity to sleep when they are tired. The center washes all bedding once weekly and as needed.

Children under twelve months of age shall use cribs and will be allowed to nap when tired. Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep. No positioning devices will be used unless required by the child's health care

provider. Instructions for the use of any such device will be kept in the child's file in writing from the child's health care provider.

### Outdoor Play

Families are expected to provide weather appropriate clothing for their child. The ELC provides sunscreen and insect repellent. Children must have warm socks, boots, hat, gloves, snow pants and coat in the winter, raincoat and boots on drizzly days and a pair of sneakers (or other closed-toe shoes) in the summer. Children will be allowed to play in snow, rain and mud and changed promptly if they are becoming cold, wet, or uncomfortable. Children are expected to keep appropriate outerwear on while playing outdoors. Shade and drinking water are available to children when outdoors during warm weather months.

Children under the age of three will not be permitted to play outdoors when either the actual temperature or the wind chill temperature is 20 degrees or below. Children three and up will be permitted to play outdoors at these temperatures at the discretion of the program. Children of any age will not be permitted to play outdoors when public health officials advise against outdoor play due to poor air quality or other forms of potentially dangerous weather. While the program does not have indoor play equipment, children are provided with indoor opportunities for gross motor activity (ride-on, jump-roping, movement activities, etc.) anytime outdoor play is suspended.

With written permission from the parent or legal guardian, the center will apply sunscreen and insect-repellant provided by families. Teachers will apply sunscreen (UVA/UVB protection of 15 or higher) before playing outdoors in the spring and summer months. Insect repellent, which must contain DEET, will be applied no more than once a day when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellent due to high risk of insect-borne disease. Teachers wear gloves and follow the directions on the bottle when applying sunscreen and insect repellent.

Staff are assigned to closely monitor and "spot" children when injury could occur from falls or potentially unsafe conditions such as walking on a stretch of road where the sidewalk is temporarily closed.

### Supervision

Children are always supervised by sight, with the exception of children ages three and up who may use the bathroom independently for up to several minutes. The program does not use mirrors, videos, or sound monitors. Children are not permitted to leave the classrooms unaccompanied. Children are never allowed to open outside doors while in the care of either the program or their families. All items in classrooms for children under the age of three have been checked for safety using a choke tube.

The supervision ratios and group sizes for each age group are as follows: one adult for every four children under the age of two and no more than eight children per group, one adult for every five children between the ages of two and three and no more than ten per group, one adult for every ten children between the ages of three and five and no more than twenty per group. These ratios are in effect for all indoor and outdoor activities at the ELC. The staff to child supervision ratio is reduced to 1:4 for children of any age when on a field trip where children will be swimming. There may be no more than four children for every one chaperone on a field trip.

Volunteers and observers are never responsible for supervision or cleaning blood or vomit, and families are only ever responsible for the supervision of their own child while present at the ELC. In addition, new substitute teachers are at least 18 years old, not left alone with children and not allowed to transport children on field trips or allowed to change diapers or apply sunscreen or insect repellent until they have developed rapport with individual children. All subs and volunteers are made aware of known food allergies and sign a confidentiality statement.

### Animal Safety

The ELC makes every effort to ensure that animals at the center shall not present a danger or health hazard to the children. If an animal will be visiting the classroom, families are first asked permission for their child to interact with the animal and an alternate activity is offered to children whose families are not comfortable granting permission to participate. The ELC must have evidence on file indicating appropriate rabies shots and immunizations have been given to a dog, cat or ferret scheduled to visit. Any incident where a child is bitten during the program is immediately reported to the Vermont state licensing division and the State Public Health Veterinarian by the ELC Program Director.

### Protection from Environmental Hazards

The physical building and grounds are kept as free as possible from tripping hazards including unsecured floor coverings; the hot water heater is set to less than 120 degrees to prevent burning or scalding; all classroom outlets are grounded and all outlets in non-classroom spaces are either grounded or have outlet covers to prevent electrical shock, the building has passed an EMP inspection ensuring that it is lead safe, pull cords are kept secured, all art materials are non-toxic, pressure treated wood containing creosote or pentachlorophenol is not present, all plumbing complies with plumbing codes and the drinking water has been tested according to licensing regulations and found to be lead safe, the building is kept in good repair, the grounds are routinely inspected by a contracted maintenance worker who ensures that the ground are free of harmful animals, pests and poisonous plants, pesticides and herbicides are applied in a manner that conforms with manufacturer instructions and prevents risk of exposure to children including inhalation and skin contact by a commercial applicator certified by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food & Markets and families are notified in advance, children are not permitted near the kitchen stove, and all areas renovated with new materials such as tile, carpet, varnish and paint are properly ventilated before exposure to children.

### Child Safety Seats

Families are advised that Vermont State Law requires children under the age of sixteen be properly restrained when riding in a vehicle. Children shall not be placed in a seat that has a functioning airbag. All other passengers must use a seatbelt. Families must provide the ELC with an appropriate car seat or booster seat if a child is to be transported as part of a field trip.

### Pedestrian Safety

All children in the program learn pedestrian safety skills through participation in walking field trips around the campus. In particular, staff both model and require children to walk on the sidewalk, stop at all street corners and stop signs, look both ways and back again before crossing the street, remain with a designated partner, and

remain next to/ behind the first teacher and next to/ in front of the second teacher. Accommodations are made to ensure that all children in the classroom can participate during walks around the campus.

### Child Guidance and Restraint

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Children are provided with consistent routines and behavioral guidance, including clear expectations and intentional opportunities to learn and practice social and emotional-regulation skills. Communicating consistent clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions. Each student at the Winston Prouty Center has a right to learn in a safe and friendly place, be treated with respect, and receive the help and support of caring adults. If a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to model how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When guidance is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. If, despite these proactive measures, a preschool age child is behaving in a way that poses an immediate threat to anyone's personal safety, a trained staff member will step in. Uninvolved children will be brought out of harm's way and the trained staff member will follow appropriate procedures to verbally de-escalate the child as quickly as possible. If this is unsuccessful and an individual is in immediate and significant physical danger, the trained staff member will physically restrain the child following appropriate procedures. The family will be contacted immediately if there has been caused to restrain their child and will receive written notification of the restraint upon arrival. The Prouty Center adheres to both Vermont state regulations pertaining to the use of restraint in schools and the U.S. Department of Education Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document. In accordance with Vermont Rule 4500, the superintendent of the appropriate supervisory union will be notified in writing on the same day as the event if a child enrolled in the Public Pre-K program were to be restrained.

Families should be assured that the use of restraint is extremely rare and that all staff are well trained to handle challenging behaviors without physical intervention whenever possible. A written safety plan must be developed when a child has needed restraint while in attendance at the ELC before returning to the program.

Guidance Description for Age Groups: Positive guidance is looking at each situation through the lens of child development and guiding children's behavior, considering the child's developmental needs and responding in a way to teach children how to modify and control their own behavior as they grow and mature. Instead of expecting an immediate change in a child's behavior, we think about behavior as a developmental process that takes time to master. Below are some examples of how the program approaches this:

#### *Young Infant*

- Monitor the physical surrounding in which infants play and interact to ensure safety of the environment.
- Engage in one-on-one play or conversation that takes the infant's lead and follow her or his interests.
- Introduce turn-taking games like rolling a ball back and forth or peekaboo.
- Use simple words and signs to help express young infants' needs.
- Maintain a consistent, predictable schedule involving responsive routines.

### *Older Infant*

- Model empathy.
- Use a calm tone and make statements when talking with infants about the ways you are keeping them safe.
- Use simple words and signs to help them express their needs.
- Maintain a consistent, predictable schedule involving responsive routines.
- Offer two choices to infants, such as choosing between two activities or walking or being carried to the diaper changing table.

### *Toddler*

- Provide acceptable alternatives to behaviors.
- Teach feeling words to help toddlers express strong emotions.
- Use simple words and demonstrate to explain limits.
- Use positive wording and language with toddlers, for example, “Please walk,” as opposed to “Don’t run.”
- Begin to offer supports for negotiating materials and ideas, e.g., “I would like to use the truck in 5 minutes” or “Can I be next?”

### *Preschooler*

- Respond with logical consequences and support to handle these consequences, such as helping them mop up a spill. This technique allows children the freedom they need and allows children to learn from the unintentional consequences of their choices.
- Model and support problem-solving skills.

### Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect or Molestation

All forms of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse are strictly prohibited by Prouty employees. Touch is allowed only when it is respectful and appropriate as in the case of a child who needs comfort or assistance. If any member of the Prouty community has any concerns about the treatment of a child by program staff, please bring these concerns to the immediate attention of the ELC Program Director.

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child’s needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Childcare programs are mandated reporters under Vermont state law and are not responsible for determining whether an incident constitutes abuse or neglect. Staff are immune from disciplinary action and protected from retaliation solely for making a report of suspected child abuse and neglect unless an internal investigation proves the report was malicious.

The ELC reserves the right to remove an individual with a history of mistreatment of either children or adults in the program from a child's authorized pick-up list after notifying the family.

### Background Checks

All prospective employees must be at least eighteen years old and have at least a high school degree or the equivalent. Criminal background checks are performed for all prospective staff and volunteers before they commence work with children. The ELC will not employ an individual with a history of substantiated child abuse or neglect or criminal activity including persons convicted of fraud, a felony or an offense involving violence or unlawful sexual activity or other bodily injury to another person, including but not limited to abuse, neglect or mistreatment of a child, elderly person, disabled person or animal. Criminal background checks are repeated every five years for all Prouty employees. Parents with a known history of any of the above offenses are to be visually supervised at all times by program staff when present to drop-off or pick-up a child and may be restricted from areas of the building and grounds.

### Prohibited Items

Smoking, illegal drugs, and weapons of any kind are prohibited on Prouty property at all times.

### School Closings

The center makes every effort to remain open on days of inclement weather, however, there may be days when the center is closed, opening is delayed, or closing is early. Families are asked to check radio stations WKVT and WTSA after 6am on mornings when hazardous driving situations may exist. Announcements will also be posted on our Facebook page and shared via the Procure app. Families will be notified by phone if a decision is made to close the program early. Staff will receive a phone tree call or text after 6am.

### Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures have been established for each type of possible anticipated emergency. Families are required to keep all emergency contact and insurance information up to date with the ELC Office and are asked to keep directions to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and off-site evacuation locations immediately accessible. Classrooms and the ELC Office keep emergency contact information for each child securely stored by the classroom phone which displays contact information for all emergency responders. Children's health insurance information and consent forms are accessible in the ELC office.

### Medical Emergency

If a child needs emergency medical attention, Rescue, Inc. (911) and then the child's parent or legal guardian are to be notified, in that order. A severely injured child will be moved only at the instruction of medical personnel unless immediate movement is necessitated by an emergency. Depending on timing, families may want to go directly to the emergency room at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital to meet their child. If a child needs to be transported by ambulance and a parent or legal guardian is not present at the time of transport, the child will be accompanied by the ELC Program Director who will remain with the child until the family is present. The same protocol is to be followed for any adult needing emergency medical services. A CPR and First Aid trained staff member is always present with each group of children.

### Shelter in Place

The ELC will conduct a Shelter in Place emergency response in the event that an emergency event requires people to stay in their current location as in the examples of a tornado or severe weather. All individuals present will remain in the building and each group of children and adults has been assigned a secure location. Every reasonable attempt has been made to ensure the safety of our community.

### Evacuation

If an emergency event causes it to be unsafe to remain at the Prouty Center, the building will be immediately evacuated. In all instances, the ELC will evacuate the building to stand in front of the maintenance garage. This is also the same procedure for fire drills which are conducted once a month. If necessary, all children and adults present will relocate to the gym in Croker Hall. We will remain there until emergency responders have cleared the building for occupancy. If the building is unfit to return to, parents will be promptly notified and asked to immediately pick their children up.

## Enrollment

### Process

The Winston Prouty Early Learning Center is committed to enrolling groups of children who represent the full range of diversity in our community. The program does not discriminate in its practices based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, disability status, family composition or child or family history. It does prioritize the enrollment of children of past or current Prouty families and employees. In addition, the program strives to maintain an equal number of girls and boys in each classroom and to achieve a balanced group of children who are both typically developing and who have developmental or other delays. The program maintains a wait pool and openings are offered to families in accordance with that list. Families are welcome to contact the ELC Administrative Coordinator to place a child on the wait list or with any questions.

Enrollment occurs twice per year. The fall Program Year enrollment process occurs mid-summer. Enrollment for the Summer Program (July-August) occurs in late spring. Families may choose to suspend enrollment for the summer program and pay a hold fee to keep their spot for the following program year.

The program requires a non-refundable deposit of one month's tuition, which is applied to the first month's attendance and is due when the family accepts the slot. All enrollment paperwork must be complete for the child to begin attending the program and, unless alternate arrangements have been made with the ELC Program Director, the child must have completed a minimum of three visits to the classroom. These visits provide the child with a chance to adjust to the classroom in the presence of a familiar caregiver and give the family and teachers time to get to know one another through informal conversation and an orientation for new families. Additional visits may be required beyond the child's scheduled start date if the child has not made enough progress adjusting to the classroom to attend independently. Tuition is due as of the originally agreed upon start date.

### Belongings

Families are expected to provide the following items for their children while at school, though we are happy to aid families for whom this is a hardship:

- A toothbrush
- Full set of spare clothing appropriate for the weather
- Crib sheet and blanket
- Lunch daily
- Outerwear appropriate for the weather (boots, snow pants, coat, gloves, hat, raincoat, rain boots, closed-toe shoes in the summer)
- Diapers and wipes
- Photos of family members so that children can visit and share their families throughout the day
- Families may also provide a beloved stuffed animal, sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream and toothpaste if they choose

Our teachers work hard to set up the classroom environment using the materials we have available here at our center. **We ask that families leave toys and costumes at home** so the children can participate fully in the life of the classroom.

Teachers will show children and families where children's belongings can be stored when they enter the program. Families will also be provided with a family mailbox and asked to check it daily for notices, artwork, and other items. Paperwork and tuition can be given to the ELC Administrative Coordinator or left in the Main Office. If the office is closed, items can be left in the locked ELC Office Box found in the ELC hallway.

If an item does not return home, families are asked to first check the Lost and Found in the ELC hallway and then check with the classroom teachers. Personal items should be clearly labeled with the child's name whenever possible. Families are asked to please send children to school in play clothes that are comfortable and that can get messy with a lot of fun materials, glue, paint, mud, markers, sand, etc.

### Family Participation

We encourage families to be involved with the program. We will inform parents of opportunities such as work parties, sharing a talent or tradition with a classroom, helping to plan curriculum projects, organizing family events, donating requested items and either planning or attending special programs that offer support and education for families. Families can speak with a classroom teacher or the ELC Program Director to offer suggestions.

### Celebrations

If your family is hosting a party and inviting other children and families from the ELC, we ask that you only use the ELC mailboxes to distribute invitations if all children in the class are being invited.

Children, families, and staff at the ELC celebrate many different occasions throughout the year. In addition, the ELC welcomes families to come teach children about the holidays and traditions they celebrate at home. The



program recognizes the birthdays of those children whose families celebrate them, and we are happy to have families provide a special treat for the occasion.

### Field Trips

There are times when teachers want to take children off-site for activities related to the curriculum (for example apple picking at local orchards or to the Retreat Farm) that are not accessible by walking. Teachers must complete a Field Trip Form and submit it to the ELC Office and provide permission slips for each family to sign. Families and regular staff may use their personal vehicles to transport children to and from the field trip if the child has a signed permission slip, the child is appropriately secured in a child safety seat or booster seat, and the ELC office has documentation that the vehicle is properly insured. We also need a copy of a valid driver's license on file and have a form to be filled out by any staff or parent who will be driving children other than their own. Staff are prohibited from transporting children at all other times.

### Lateness and Absences

The program day begins at 8:00am. Children are ideally able to arrive and settle into the classroom by 8:30am. Children entering late may not be ready to participate with the group as they are often hoping for a chance to do the activities they have missed. We do understand that there are any number of things that make families late on occasion (appointments, traffic, visiting grandparents, etc.)!

Families are asked to notify their child's classroom teacher when they know their child will be late or absent either in advance (appointments or vacations) or by 9am on the day of the absence. Families receiving child care financial assistance should be aware that they are required to provide a doctor's note if their child has been absent for five or more days. Tuition is due, and refunds will not be provided, regardless of whether a child is present at the program.

### Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Families are asked to provide a list of individuals who have permission to pick-up their child from the program as part of the enrollment process. Each person on this list who will be regularly picking up the child is issued a separate PIN number that can be used to enter the building and is required to keep this information confidential. Individuals who will be picking up a child only rarely or in case of emergency are asked to ring the doorbell upon arrival and will be required to present a valid driver's license before picking up the child. Families may add individuals to their child's authorized pick-up list by filling out the Authorized Pick-Up form and returning it to the ELC Office. In an emergency, families may add an individual to the pick-up list by speaking to the ELC Office or a teacher if the office is closed.

Drop off is at 8:00. Every child should arrive by 8:30 at the latest. Families are responsible for signing their child in and out of the classroom each day using the Procure app.

### Payment

Families sign a financial contract as part of the enrollment process, which occurs when the child first joins the program and each summer and fall thereafter. Families should reference this document with any questions they may have and are welcome to contact the Human Resources Coordinator for clarification.

The Prouty Center does awards scholarship funds to families for the purpose of reducing the amount of tuition a family is required to pay to send their child to the ELC and families are invited to apply for these funds. Families whose financial situations change part way through the program year are always welcome to inquire as to whether there are remaining funds. The ELC accepts Vermont Child Care Financial Assistance Subsidy. Families are encouraged to inquire about this program by contacting one of the Financial Assistant Eligibility Specialists.

Winston Prouty Center is a prequalified Pre-K Program and accepts tuition payments from participating towns.

### Classroom Placement

Children are enrolled in classrooms according to age, as follows: Acorn Room (6 weeks-12 months), Willow Room (1-2 years old), Elm Room (2-3 years old), Cedar Room (3-5 years old).

Exceptions are made on occasion considering several factors including individual needs, the date the child will enter kindergarten, and availability.

Children may transition from one classroom to the next depending on the needs of the child and program. Families are notified in advance of their child's transition so that they have time to get acquainted with a new teaching team and collaborate with program staff as to how to best transition their child. The ELC Program Director and the child's current Lead Teacher will meet with the upcoming Lead Teacher in advance of the child's transition to share any important information and formally plan any supports needed to ensure a smooth transition. Families can generally expect that their child will transition from one classroom to the next with a group of current classmates or at least one other classmate from their current class.

The majority of children in the program participate in only one regular classroom. Children in the After Care program (between 3:30-4:30) may not be with a primary teacher or classroom peers.

### Withdrawal from the Program

Families are required to provide the ELC Office with two weeks written notice to withdraw a child from the program. The family may choose whether to have the child attend during this period, though tuition is due regardless of attendance. The ELC reserves the right to withdraw a child at any time and will refund any tuition funds paid in advance for days the child has not already attended.

### Program Calendar

Families receive a program calendar upon enrollment each year. Additional copies are available at any time from the ELC Office. The calendar can also be found on our website [www.winstonprouty.org](http://www.winstonprouty.org). The program reserves the right to schedule up to three in-service days in addition to those listed on the calendar with one month's notice to families. Families are reminded that the center closes at 12:00pm (noon) on the second Friday of every month for Prouty staff meetings and in-service trainings.

### Confidentiality of Child-Specific Information

Child specific information including ASQ assessments, evaluations received from professionals outside our program, background information and health information are kept locked in the child's file in the ELC office. Access to this file is limited to the Executive Director, ELC Program Director, Administrative Coordinator, the Inclusion Facilitator and the classroom teaching teams.

These same staff members are also able to access Teaching Strategies GOLD assessments, which are stored electronically on the program's secure online database. As this assessment is a required component of a child's participation in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union's Public Pre-K Partnership program, the assessment information for children enrolled in this program can also be accessed by the Vermont Department of Education and the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union.

Unless required by licensing regulations, Vermont state law or federal law, we will only make child specific information available to outside agencies or individuals with a written release from the family or guardian. Files are maintained for one year after a child is withdrawn from the program at which time it is destroyed. Files are available to families upon request.