College of DuPage

Louise M. Beem Early Childhood Center

Toddler Program Parent Handbook

2014-15
College of DuPage Welcomes You to 
The Louise M. Beem Early Childhood Center

Mission Statement
The Louise M. Beem Early Childhood Center (ECC) is a high quality early childhood education and care center that benefits both the young children enrolled and the college students who observe and participate as a part of their academic coursework.

Purpose
The Early Childhood Center is committed to providing quality care and education for young children while working in partnership with their families. The center is a part of the Continuing Education/Extended Learning department at College of DuPage and is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

All classes are taught by lead teachers with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree and teachers with a minimum of an associate degree in early childhood education or child care and development. College students who are pursuing their education in the early childhood education field may also participate in the classrooms; those enrolled in education, psychology, speech language pathology or other approved classes may observe the children’s program from observation pods.

Goals and Program Description
By planning a developmentally appropriate environment, the Early Childhood Center provides a place for children to feel significant and successful. Our program emphasizes the value of play in the development of young children. Through guided play, children learn knowledge, skills and attitudes that will support their development. The program is designed to meet and enhance the development of the whole child; physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively and creatively. The curriculum includes music, science, art, math, literacy, cooking, large and small muscle activities, games, outdoor play and campus field trips. Children have the opportunity to make decisions and solve problems with the guidance of teachers.
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Fees and Services

Part-Time Preschool
Classes are available for 3- and 4-year-old children. Group size is 20 children with two teachers.

3-Year-Old Class
Monday and Tuesday, 8:45 to 11:15 a.m.
Tuition: $143 monthly (nine monthly payments)

Mixed-Age Class
Wednesday to Friday, 8:45 to 11:15 a.m.
Tuition: $214 monthly (nine monthly payments)

4-Year-Old Class
Tuesday to Friday, 1:15 to 3:45 p.m.
Tuition: $285 monthly (nine monthly payments)

Full-Time Classes
Full-time classes are available for children from 15 months through 6 years old.

Toddler Classroom
Ages 15 months to 30 months
Group size: 10, one teacher for every five toddlers
Tuition: $340 per week

Younger Preschool Classroom
Ages 2 ½ to 3 ½ years
Group size: 16, one teacher for every eight young preschoolers
Tuition: $314 per week

Older Preschool Classroom
Ages 3 ½ to 5 years (prekindergarten)
Group size: 20, one teacher for every 10 older preschoolers
Tuition: $314 per week

Kindergarten
Age 5 years old by Sept. 1
Group size: 15, one teacher for 15 children
Tuition: $314 per week
Academic curriculum, 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
Eligibility

Part-Time Preschool
Open to children between the ages of 3 and 5 (prekindergarten) by Sept. 1 of the school year.

Full-Time Classes
Open to children between the ages of 15 months and 5 years (prekindergarten).

Full-Time Kindergarten
Open to children who are 5 years old by Sept. 1 of the school year.

The Early Childhood Center
Open to all children regardless of race, religion, disability or cultural background.

Priority in enrollment is given to currently enrolled children and their siblings and to children of College of DuPage employees and students.

Important Telephone Numbers
The Early Childhood Center is a part of College of DuPage Continuing Education. Erin Cetera is the manager of the Early Childhood Center and can be reached by phone at (630) 942-4223 or (630) 942-3909 and by email at cetera@cod.edu.

Parent Telephone Line
The center has a phone number especially for the parents of enrolled children: (630) 942-3909. This line, also answered from the playground, is available between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Parents may use this line to contact the center any time they wish to speak to a teacher and to report a child’s absence.

General Information Phone Line
The center also has a main information line, which is available for all families and the community: (630) 942-4223. Parents may use this line to leave messages at any time of the day or night, and may give this number to referrals to the center.

Classroom Telephone Numbers
Part-Time Classroom (630) 942-4098
Kindergarten Classroom (630) 942-2407
Older Full-Time Classroom (630) 942-4099
Younger Full-Time Classroom (630) 942-4095
Toddler Classroom (630) 942-4297
Enrollment and Withdrawal Procedures

Enrollment Records
Enrollment information will be emailed to you after you have been offered and accepted admission to a specific classroom. This email will direct you to forms (below) that must be filled out and returned to the center manager at the time of your orientation or registration visit.

Your Child's File
Your child's file is kept confidential. Only Early Childhood Center staff, DuPage County Health Department staff or Illinois Department of Children and Family Services licensing representatives (during a licensing inspection) have access to your child’s file. The following forms must be in your child’s file on or before the first day of attendance:

- Emergency Information Form
- Signed Parent Agreement Form
- Signed Holiday Schedule
- Medical Form (with exam results and immunization record)
- Pest Management Form
- Personal History
- DCFS Verification of Receipt
- Birth Certificate
- Signed Guidance and Discipline Policy Form
- IEP or IFSP (if your child has a diagnosed developmental disability)

A new Emergency Form and Personal History must be completed each August. A current Holiday Schedule must be signed and copy returned to the office at the beginning of the fiscal year. A medical exam is required every two years and the immunization record must be updated as new immunizations are received.

Emergency Information and Authorization for Pick-Up
Your child’s safety is of utmost concern to the center staff. In the event of an emergency, you will be contacted immediately. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the three other people listed on your Emergency Form able to act in your place in the event of an emergency involving your child.

We also require that your Emergency Form includes the people authorized to pick up your child regularly and on a contingency basis. Please list all carpool drivers here.

The people listed on your Emergency Form will be the only people, other than you, authorized to pick up your child from the center. Please notify your child’s teacher if an emergency contact will be picking up your child on a particular day. If the classroom teachers do not know your emergency contacts, they will be asked for a picture ID before being allowed to sign your child out of the center.
**Home Visit**
A half-hour visit to your home by one or more of your child’s classroom teachers will be scheduled before or close to your child’s first full day of attendance in the center. This visit begins a personal relationship between the teachers and your family within the safe environment of your own home.

The teachers may bring classroom information. They will also take a picture of your child with their family that will be displayed in the classroom.

**Withdrawal**
If you find that you need to withdraw your child from the center, **four weeks’ written notice is required.**

If the center staff determines that the needs of a child cannot be met within the classroom, a child may be disenrolled. If college students' safety or children's safety are in jeopardy, a child may be disenrolled. Before any disenrollment takes place, teachers and administrators, in cooperation with parents, make every effort to meet the needs of the child.

The center also reserves the right to disenroll any child if parental responsibilities to the center are not met.

**Orientation Visit**
An orientation visit will be scheduled prior to your child’s first full day of attendance. This visit is the time for you and your child to familiarize yourselves with the classroom, the teachers and the other children. You are required to stay with your child. Spend as much time on your visit and visit as many times as you wish until you and your child feel comfortable with the center.

The center manager will meet with you during the orientation visit to collect your child’s enrollment forms and answer any questions you might have regarding the center policies. Your child’s teachers will be available during your visit to answer any questions about the classroom.

On your child’s first full day of attendance, allow extra time in the morning to help your child get settled before you leave.

**Arrival and Departure**
You may park in the short-term parking area in front of the center when you arrive to drop off or pick up your child. **Be aware that these are 15-minute parking spaces.** During your child’s beginning weeks of school, if you need to stay longer than 15 minutes, there is a large parking lot to the south of the center that can be used until you and your child are ready for a short "goodbye" in the morning.

For safety reasons, we ask you teach your child to stay with you as you enter and exit the building. Your child should **never** enter or leave the secure center area unless accompanied by an adult.

You will be issued a PROX card that will allow you to enter the secure double doors to the center. Please notify us immediately if you lose your card so it can be deactivated. There is a $10 charge to replace a PROX card.

Your child might find the large motor area very inviting as you walk down the hall to and from your classroom. Please teach your child that the area is closed unless a teacher is present and supervising the area. Assure your child that they will have time to use the area with their teacher.
Once inside the center, take your child into the classroom, help your child hang up his or her coat and sign in. In addition, please complete the parent section on your child’s daily report to convey information the teachers will need to help your child's day go smoothly. Your child's teacher will do a brief health screening and ask your child to wash his/her hands as part of the arrival routine.

Prior to going home be sure to see your child's teacher for feedback about the day. You will receive written daily reports from your child’s teacher. Check your child's mailbox for art work and messages before signing your child out.

If your child will be absent, please notify us by calling (630) 942-3909.

**Late Pick-Up**
Your child must be picked up by 6 p.m. (or by 2:15 p.m. if enrolled in the academic-day-only option.) A late fee of $15 for every quarter hour or portion thereof will be charged in the event of late pick up. If you find yourself in an emergency situation that prevents you from arriving by the end of your child’s session, please contact us immediately at (630) 942-3909 to let us know when you will be arriving (or who will be arriving to pick up your child). If you are late, we need to be able to reassure your child and tell him where you are and when you will be coming.

If we have not heard from you within 10 minutes of the end of session, we will attempt to contact you. If we are unable to reach you, we will begin trying to contact persons on your emergency contact list. If we have not been able to contact anyone to arrange for your child’s pick up from the center within one hour of end of session, we will contact the police and DCFS and may release your child to them.

**Daily Program**
A typical day’s schedule will be provided in your enrollment packet. Each day when you enter the classroom, you will find that day’s schedule posted near the sign-in sheet. The daily schedule provides plenty of time for child-initiated activities in the areas of art, dramatic play, manipulatives, blocks, sciences, sensory experimentation, music, books, cooking and large motor activities. Large motor activity is provided daily on the playground and/or in the motor room. Children are served snacks midmorning and midafternoon and the program includes time for a family-style lunch followed by rest time.

**Clothing**
Please send your child in comfortable play clothes that are easily managed. Gym shoes are preferred. Assume that we will be going outdoors daily and dress your child for the weather. Be sure to mark all outer clothing with your child’s name.

**What to Bring to Child Care**

**Clothes from Home**
Please bring at least one change of shirt, pants/shorts, socks and underwear, if applicable. These clothes will need to be replaced periodically as the weather changes. These clothes will be left at the center. Label all clothing brought or worn to the center with your child's name.

**Diapers**
Please supply your child with diapers to be kept at the center. The classroom teachers will inform you when your supply is low. The center will supply wipes.
**Toys from Home**
Your child may bring a toy or security item (blanket, stuffed animal, etc.) to help ease the transition between home and school. All toys must be clearly labeled with your child’s name. Check with your child’s teacher concerning classroom rules regarding toys. **Do not bring** any toy guns or weapons of any kind, electronics or any kind of toy that is particularly fragile or valuable to your child. **The center will not be held responsible for lost or damaged toys.** You will receive more information on toys from home from your teacher before school starts.

**Resting Time**
Each child is provided with a cot labeled with his/her name. You may bring a washable cot-sized blanket and small pillow with washable pillowcase to stay at the center for naptime use. The center provides sheets. Sheets will be laundered and cots cleaned and sanitized twice each week. Blankets and pillowcases will be sent home each week for laundering. Feel free to bring any special stuffed animal, blanket or pacifier that your child uses at naptime.

**Food Service**
The goal of food service at the center is to provide for the nutritional and social needs of the children. Children are exposed to many different foods and are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods but will not be required to eat. Seconds are available. Teachers model healthy eating habits by joining children at the tables.

Weekly snack and lunch menus will be posted in each classroom and will be sent home by email each Friday for the coming week.

**Breakfast Supplement**
Milk and cereal are available to children who arrive before 8 a.m. These are offered to supplement the early meals that children have at home.

**Snack**
Healthful snacks are served midmorning and midafternoon to all children in attendance. Snacks include either juice, milk or water and a food item. Snack items include such things as crackers, cheese, cereal, yogurt or fruit. The menu is varied and includes foods from all food groups. No child is required to eat snacks. Snacks are offered as part of the many choices of activities and children choose to eat when they are hungry.

**Lunch**
Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. to children in the full-time classes. Lunch includes a protein, vegetable, fruit and bread item as well as milk. Lunch is cooked in our kitchen and is served family style in the classrooms with children sitting in social groups at tables, each with a teacher. We foster responsibility by encouraging children to serve themselves, pass food to their table mates and clean up their eating area following the meal.
Allergies and Special Diets
Be sure to fill out a Food Allergy Action Plan if your child has food allergies that would prevent him or her from eating from the regular menu. Ask to fill out a Menu Change Form as well. We will serve your child from the posted menu if you have not indicated otherwise. If your child is not able to eat a food item found on the menu, please provide a replacement food from home in a container labeled with the date, your child’s name, food and food preparation needed. The replacement should be a similar type of food so that a nutritionally complete menu is served. It should be simple for the kitchen staff to heat up if needed. Please do not bring any food containing peanuts or peanut products into the classroom.

Guidance and Discipline
All guidance by the teachers will support the child’s growth and development. The goal is for each child to begin to develop self-control. The guidance system has a number of components:

Affirmations
Teachers will use affirming statements to help children learn acceptable behaviors and feel important. Affirming statements build self-esteem and help children develop confidence in their own abilities, including their ability to solve problems.

Redirection
We will help each child by redirecting negative actions to positive actions. When a child mistakenly chooses a behavior that hurts another child physically, socially or emotionally or damages equipment, the child will be told what positive behavior to choose instead. In this way, the child learns the expected behaviors. Often the teacher will discuss the reasons the positive behavior is a better choice.

Conflict Resolution and Negotiation
The children will be taught problem-solving skills when disagreements between children occur. Each child will learn to state problems, brainstorm solutions, compromise and implement solutions. Children also learn to negotiate their own rules for certain activities and to follow those rules. The child’s sense of autonomy (independence) will be supported by the teachers. Whenever possible, children will be offered choices. In this way, children learn to stand up for their own ideas.

Prosocial Skills
Children will also learn prosocial skills. Children will be taught to observe each other and to interpret each other’s feelings. They will be encouraged to choose kindness, generosity and helpfulness within the limits of their own developmental level.

Limits
The teachers maintain limits and rules in each classroom. These limits are determined by the child’s age, stage of development and the curriculum. When limits are broken, children are told what behavior is acceptable. If children cannot find ways to follow the limits, parents will be consulted to assist in determining the best way for the team (parents and teachers) to address the issue. Sometimes if a behavior cannot be corrected, children will be required to spend some time near the teacher until they are ready to resume positive behavior.

All children in the program need to feel safe and secure. Our guidance techniques help the children find trust in the teachers and learn appropriate behavior with their peer group and in a classroom.
Parent Involvement

Daily Communication
The most important form of communication between teachers and parents is daily conversation. Each day when your child is dropped off at school, you will be greeted by a classroom teacher. This is an opportunity to ask questions or mention important information about your child. We also ask parents to complete a daily form to share information with the teachers regarding the child’s previous evening and morning routines. The classroom teacher will also inform you of any important activities or notes especially for your child. Sometimes children may need extra support as they develop confidence in the separation process. The teacher will work with parents individually to meet each child’s needs.

At the end of the day, teachers will provide you with verbal and written communication about your child’s day in the classroom. Be sure to check your child's mailbox daily. It may contain communication from the teachers and the center manager as well as your child's work. Newsletters and notices from the ECC may be emailed to you.

You may wish to talk to your child's teacher privately or at length. Toddler teachers can be reached on the phone between 1 to 3 p.m. daily. You may call to schedule an in-person conference if you prefer.

Visiting
Parents are encouraged to observe their child's day whenever they wish. If you wish to observe your child's class without being seen, one-way windows in the observation rooms allow you to view your child in his/her classroom. Headphones are available for listening into the classrooms. We want you to feel comfortable and to know what is happening in your child's classroom.

Conferences
Conferences provide the opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss each child's accomplishments, interests and developmental progress. They are generally held three and nine months after your child’s enrollment. Parents may request a conference with the classroom teachers or the center manager at any time.

Newsletters
Each classroom provides a monthly newsletter to update parents on the happenings within their child’s classroom. In addition, an email is sent each Friday that includes information regarding center happenings as well as the coming week’s menu.

Family Events
Throughout the year, the center hosts events for children and their families. All special events are announced in the monthly newsletters, email and notices posted within the center.
Special Events

Holidays
Holidays are recognized in a very relaxed manner at the center. Young children can be easily fatigued by the excitement generated by celebrations and often are not able to understand the meaning behind them. Therefore, the classrooms do not celebrate with parties, dress-ups and exchanging of gifts or cards. Instead, the children are encouraged to explore their perceptions of the holidays. Children's interest stems from interactions and observations at home. Children learn the meaning of holiday traditions from their individual families. We encourage children to explore, through their play, their knowledge of family celebrations on the day of the holiday and the days following the holiday. The teachers plan activities to enhance each child's understanding of their family's holiday celebrations. You may see children exploring pumpkins in the fall, creating "cookies" with play dough or paper in the winter, and planting seeds in the spring.

Since the observance of holidays varies greatly from family to family, we encourage you to share your family traditions with the teachers and children. We encourage activities that develop awareness and respect for diversity.

Birthdays
The celebration of a child's birthday is a meaningful way to affirm his or her significance as a person. The center celebrations are usually simple, but special. The teachers will acknowledge the birthday child with a song and a "birthday cake" flannel board for the children to explore. "Lighting" candles may also be a part of the celebration with all of the children helping to count the years. A picture is taken to commemorate the special day. Please do not bring a birthday treat from home.
Health and Safety

Physical Examination and Immunization Record
You will receive a Child Health Examination Form with your enrollment materials. Prior to attendance, your child is required (by DCFS guidelines) to have a physical examination dated within the past six months and be up to date on all immunizations. Physical examinations must be updated every two years. Immunization records are to be updated as new immunizations are received.

Illness
The following are indications of illness that require your child stay home from school or that require us to send your child home if symptoms occur during the day. These exclusion policies are mandated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for the protection of all children. If you have any question about whether your child is well enough to come to school, please call us for clarification before leaving home.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating comfortably in typical daily program activities
- Illness that calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- Fever with behavior change or symptoms of illness
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other signs of possible severe illness
- Diarrhea (symptom free for 24 hours before return to school)
- Vomiting (symptom free for 24 hours before return to school)
- Mouth sores associated with the child’s inability to control his or her saliva, until the child’s physician states that the child is noninfectious
- Rash with fever or behavior change, unless a physician has determined the illness to be non-communicable
- Purulent conjunctivitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and until the child has been without fever for 24 hours
- Head lice, until the morning after the first treatment
- Scabies, until the morning after the first treatment
- Chicken pox, until at least six days after onset of rash. Blisters must be crusted

If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be notified immediately so that you may take your child home. A Symptom/Illness Record will be completed whenever a child is sent home ill or exhibits symptoms of an illness. It will be necessary for you to make alternative arrangements for your child’s care during periods of illness when your child is unable to be at the center.

A medical release from your child’s doctor to return to the center will be required in the following cases:
- Hospital or emergency room treatment
- Surgery or injury that requires a doctor’s care
- Five consecutive days’ absence due to illness
- A doctor’s permission letter may, in addition, be required after any illness at the center’s request
Medication Policy

The teachers will administer medication only if the parent provides written consent, the medication is in the original container, properly labeled (child’s full name, doctor’s name, medication name and dosage) and the facility has on file the written instructions to administer the medicine. Medications are kept in a locked container at the temperature recommended for that type of medication. Refrigerated medicine will be stored in the refrigerator in the teacher break room.

For Prescription Medications
Parents/guardians must provide the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child’s name, the name of the medication, the date the prescription was filled, the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription, the medication’s expiration date and administration, disposal and storage instructions.

For Over-the-Counter Medications
Parents/guardians must provide the medication in the original, child-resistant container. The medication should be labeled with the child’s first and last name, specific instructions supplied by the manufacturer, and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child. Teachers will follow the label directions or those given in writing by a licensed physician.

- Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond the time indicated by the physician.
- An Authorization to Administer Prescription Medication Form is maintained by the teachers recording the instructions for giving the medicine, parent consent, dosage and the time of administration. Spills, reactions and refusal to take the medicine will be noted on this form. A separate Authorization to Administer Over-the-Counter Medication Form is maintained for any over-the-counter medicine given to the child. It also records the instructions for giving the medicine, parent consent, dosage and the time of administration. Any side effects of the medication will also be included on this form.
- The teacher who administers the medication to the child will sign the Authorization to Administer Medication Form and indicate the exact time and dosage that was given.
- An Authorization to Administer Medication Form must be completed for each medication.
- Sunscreen, lip balm, lotion, etc. will be applied only after the parent has completed a Special Products Permission Form.

In Case of Accident
If first aid is needed for your child, it will be administered by Early Childhood Center staff or Campus Police staff. An Accident Report Form will be completed for your review. In case of an extreme emergency, the COD Police will contact the local ambulance service to transport your child to the nearest hospital. A parent or guardian will be contacted immediately. The teachers of the Early Childhood Center are all certified in infant/child CPR and first-aid procedures.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse
The state of Illinois mandates that the staff of the Early Childhood Center report all cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services.
Safety Practices
Each month the center conducts safety drills to practice evacuating the building in case of an emergency (i.e., fire). Severe weather drills are conducted in the spring and the fall.

School Closings
When the decision has been made that the entire College will be closed due to severe weather or other emergency, the Early Childhood Center will also be closed. Notices will be posted on the College website www.cod.edu and will be broadcast on WDCB-FM (90.9), the College’s public radio station. The College Campus Alert system will send text messages to all parents who have provided cell phone numbers. The center will also send an email to all families who have provided us with an email address. If the College is open, but the center closes in an emergency, you will be notified by email, followed by a phone call. Please be sure that we have your current email address and telephone numbers.

Financial Arrangements

Registration Fee
A non-refundable registration fee of $75 is collected when we offer and you accept a spot in the Center for your child. A registration fee is due again if your child is withdrawn and then re-enrolled in the Center.

Tuition
An initial payment equal to two weeks’ tuition is due when you accept a position in the program. This payment is held as a security deposit and may be used toward your child’s last two weeks of enrollment in the Center, providing you give four weeks’ notice of your child’s withdrawal.

Weekly tuition is due on Monday for the coming week. If tuition is not paid by Wednesday at noon, a $5 late fee will apply. If tuition is two weeks’ past due, your child may not attend the center.

Tuition can be paid by check or credit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express. Stop in the office to make the initial payment and set up a recurring charge.

Tuition is due regardless of days closed, days off or sick days.

Late Pick-up Fee
If your child is picked up late from school (as indicated by the time of the COD telephone screen), a late fee of $15 per every quarter hour or portion thereof will be charged.

Vacation Vouchers
Families with children enrolled in full-time child care for the full fiscal year only (July 1 to June 30) may request two vacation weeks per year at half tuition. Vouchers for vacation weeks are found next to the tuition box. Please turn in the vouchers at least two weeks prior to your vacation. Tuition for the vacation week (half of regular tuition) is due prior to that week.