

Easton Learning Adventures Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK



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Our Commitment to Excellence

We at Easton Learning Adventures Preschool (ELAP) make a commitment each day to approach our responsibilities as early childhood educators with professionalism and through principled decisions and actions. We strive to develop and maintain strong relationships with our students, their families, our colleagues and our greater community.

ELAP believes in the core values set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children; we will

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and a valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society
- Respect the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

We at ELAP believe that it is an honor and responsibility for our families to entrust us and partner with us in the education and development of their young children. We support the NAEYC's ethical principles and will

- Ensure that our program for young children is based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children
- Respect our colleagues, work cooperatively and support one another in our goals
- Serve as advocates for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society
- Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct
- Engage in an on-going process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases and beliefs have an impact on children and families
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others
- Continue to learn, grow and contribute as professionals
- Never harm a child in any way

We at Easton Learning Adventures believe in our purpose, our philosophy and our goals as set forth in our handbook. We are committed to structuring and providing a preschool environment that meets the needs of our children, families, colleagues and community to the best of our ability.

Welcome to Easton Learning Adventures Preschool!

Philosophy & Purpose

Our preschool is founded on the philosophy that children, their families and society as a whole benefit from high quality early childhood programs. We believe that what children learn through early experiences will carry on to later successes in life. We know that children need time to be children and experience their childhoods'. Children in our program will have the opportunity to interact with their environment and their peers and make choices.

As educators, we believe that children learn best in a multi-sensory, child-centered environment that encourages creativity and individuality. We emphasize a positive approach to learning where teachers serve as guides and facilitators. Activities are designed and executed to provide for growth and development of the whole child. Daily projects are planned yet responsive to individual needs. Our program encourages a positive self-image. This is essential if children are to feel good about themselves and thus feel competent to succeed. Children will be given opportunities to develop both social and self-help skills in a safe and nurturing environment. At our center, learning takes place naturally on a daily basis through exploration and experimentation of toys and materials within the child's environment. Children will be provided the opportunity for both group and individual activities, thus fostering self-discipline and socialization skills. We strive to meet each child's individual needs, interests, ability levels, and cultural diversity. At Easton Learning Adventures Preschool, we embrace individual differences and encourage students to respect and embrace differences as well.

Learning centers are designed throughout the classrooms to give children vast opportunities to explore and create. These interest areas are intended to offer an array of problem-solving and learning activities. Our curriculum emphasizes language, literacy, science, math, cooking, music, creativity, and motor development. Library visits, community resources, and field trips are used throughout the school year to complement the curriculum.

Young children require clear limits to be set within their environment. Therefore, communication skills are emphasized and children are encouraged to verbalize their needs and desires. We believe children will thrive in an atmosphere of warmth, support and encouragement. Our program provides children with life experiences shared by staff and family reflecting social, religious, and ethnic diversity.

Our ultimate goal is to provide quality education to all children served in a warm and nurturing environment. We aim to help each child reach his/her full potential and succeed.

History and Administrative Organization

History

Easton Learning Adventures Preschool first opened its doors at 101 Main Street in 1993 with an enrollment of just 30 children. The preschool has continually operated under the directorship of Sheryl Silkes, who has extensive knowledge and experience in the field of early education. During the summer of 2005, the school moved into a larger, more modern facility with state of the art furniture and equipment. The center currently enrolls over

130 students each fall and is now under the directorship of Sheryl's daughter Samantha Kelly and Shannon Fraser. We have always prided ourselves on our commitment to providing quality care in a nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment. The program is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Administrative Organization

The management of the preschool begins with the Directors, Samantha Kelly and Shannon Fraser. The Directors' responsibilities include program and curriculum development, hiring orientation and ongoing teacher training, supervision and evaluation of teachers, facilitating staff meetings and communication, enrollment and registration, documentation of staff and child files, addressing parent, teacher and facility issues, and addressing any major issues or concerns. Teachers report to the Directors. In the absence of the Directors, the lead preschool teacher, Marsha Rosenberg, is in charge. The preschool meets all guidelines and requirements of their licensing authority, The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

Program Overview

Our Teachers

Easton Learning Adventures believes that our teachers are one of our features that make us so special. Our staff offers a range of ages and backgrounds, which blend to create an exciting and innovative curriculum. Teachers always take into consideration individual children and their interests. They try to be open to what the children are doing and thinking about and are mindful of this when planning. In addition to the professional staff, the Preschool also provides student teaching and student observation opportunities. Staff orientation is provided to each staff member prior to the start of the school year. With staff handbooks distributed, all policies and procedures are reviewed. Staff training is also provided during the school year to accumulate required EEC credit hours. Each March our program will be closed for one day so our staff may attend an all day training conference. Parents will be notified of this date well in advance. Throughout the year we also welcome volunteers to assist with program events including parties, fundraisers and field trips. It is required that all staff, student teachers and volunteers complete a CORI form each year before working with students enrolled in our program.

Our Classes

Toddlers: 15 mos. to 2 yrs. 10 mos.; Tu/Th, M/W/F, M-F options

3s: Must be 3 years old by October 31st; Tu/Th, M/W/F, M-F options

4s: Must be 4 years old by October 31st; Tu/Th, M/W/F, M-F options

Pre-K: Must be turning 5 before April 1st; This is a mandatory 5 day/week program

Extended Day: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Children should bring rest materials from home along with any comfort items they may choose to rest with. Enrichments will run during afternoon hours.

Accreditation

Our preschool is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The National Association for the Education of Young Children is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. As a NAEYC-accredited program, we have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high quality program for young children and their families. While the NAEYC accreditation process examines the total program, greatest emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions among staff and children and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum--what really happens to the children. Health and safety, staffing, staff qualifications, physical environment, and administration are all reviewed during accreditation, but primary consideration is given to the nature of the child's experience.

Enrollment

To be admitted to the school, parents must complete forms that are required by the licensing agency EEC. These forms help to assure the health and safety of the children. Forms include the Face Sheet, Developmental History and Background Information, First Aid and Emergency Medical Consent Form, Allergy Information Form and Medical & Immunization Forms.

Fees

- **Registration:** A non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 is required with the registration form. This fee is per child and thus families with more than one child will be required to pay a registration fee for each child.
- **Deposit:** A non-refundable first installment must be paid at time of registration to hold your child's spot.
- **Tuition:** Tuition is billed in 10 equal installments throughout the school year. Camp fees are separate from the school year and are billed at the beginning of the summer program.

The following procedures are necessary for any child to be enrolled in one of our programs:

- A brochure, tuition rates, and other pertinent school information will be sent to families.
- After receiving information about our school, it will be necessary to make an appointment with the director to tour our facilities with your child prior to admissions. Parents are encouraged to voice their children's individual needs at this time.
- We also provide the opportunity for parents and children to visit the classroom prior to enrollment.
- Enrollment is opened to currently enrolled students and their siblings before opening to the public at large.

- All accounts with the school must be in good standing for a child to maintain enrollment or re-register.
- A non-refundable registration fee and non-refundable first tuition payment is required in order to secure a spot for your child.

Tuition/Refunds

- All account balances from the previous school year must be paid in full prior to the start of the next school year.
- Attendance may be temporarily suspended for overdue balances.
- All tuitions are calculated on a yearly basis and are billed in 10 payments; excluding any bills such as field trips, special visitors etc.
- During the school year, the statements are distributed via the child's cubby.
- The 1st Installment is non-refundable and due at the time of registration or upon request of the business office.
- Each installment thereafter will be sent out during the middle of the month, and must be paid by the 1st of the following month in order for your child to attend; and not have any interruption in his/her attending our program.
- Early drop-off, lunch and extended day are also divided into 10 equal installments and billed at the same time. If a parent chooses to withdraw from enrollment, the request must be sent in writing one month prior to the child's last expected day of attendance. Once a new month begins and written notice of withdrawal has not been received by the Business Office, no tuition refund will be given for that month.

Parent Orientation

A special meeting is held in October for all parents and staff. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss ELAP policies and curriculum, meet the staff, discuss fundraising and community projects, and provide opportunities for involvement. Several guest speakers will be present to speak on a variety of topics. Establishing a trusting relationship with parents and staff is important to us.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Easton Learning Adventures does not discriminate when admitting or providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, national or ethnic origins, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or disability. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance Policy

Parents are asked to notify the school office prior to the start of the school day if their child will be absent. The school phone number is 508-230-7445. Messages may be left on mailbox 200.

Late Pick-Up Policy

In instances where a child is not picked up by 7:00pm and attempts to reach the parents and the emergency contacts have failed, the Easton Police Department and the Department

of Children and Families will be contacted. Persistent or chronic tardiness will result in a meeting with one of the Directors and may lead to her recommendation to withdraw the child from enrollment. The school policy for late pick up is a fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes late from scheduled pick up time. If an emergency arises and a parent is late to pick up his child, it is important that the school is notified promptly of the situation.

Policy on School Closings

When Easton Public Schools are closed due to severe weather conditions, ELAP will be closed as well. When Easton Public Schools are delayed 2 hours or less, ELAP will open at 9.00 a.m. and we will not have early drop. If Easton Public Schools are delayed more than 2 hours, ELAP will be closed all day. ELAP does not give tuition credit for snow days.

Termination Policy

The following circumstances are reasons a child may be terminated from enrollment at ELAP:

- The health and safety of the child cannot be assured
- The child is a danger to himself or the well-being of other children
- The child's developmental needs are not being met at this school
- Non-payment of tuition fees as stated in our handbook and registration contract
- Parental verbal abuse toward ELAP staff (see statement below on verbal abuse by a parent towards a staff member)
- Policies and procedures are not being followed
- If the accommodations needed to serve the child would cause undue burden to the center

Parents will be notified in writing that a meeting is required if the director is considering termination. The meeting is held with at least one parent and one classroom teacher present in order to seek an alternative method of alleviating the conflict. The child's Teacher will present documented concrete examples of the behaviors in question (anecdotal records, incident reports) that will clarify the issues for the family. The situation is explained to the parents and a commitment from them is requested so that a team effort is employed to resolve the issue. Following the meeting, the child, consistent with his ability to understand the issue, may be informed of the results of the discussion. Professional referrals may be made at this time.

Before termination, a suspension warning is given to parents to let them know that the behavioral problem still persists beyond a reasonable amount of time. If no improvement is made, a written suspension notice is given to the family. This suspension will be for no less than 3 days after which the child may return to the program with the chance to improve. After this suspension, if problems continue with no resolution to the situation, the parent must withdraw his/her child from the program.

If at any time the director or any staff member believes that the presence of a child creates an immediate and serious risk to the safety of any person in the program, the parents will be informed and required to remove their child promptly from the school.

A written record of the termination will be kept on file at the school and in the child's record. The directors will provide information and referrals pertaining to the child's needs.

Schedule Change Fee

A \$25 schedule change fee is incurred for every schedule change. To appropriately change a child's schedule, a form from the office must be completed and authorized by the director.

Credit for Sick Days/Family Vacations

ELAP does not give credit or offer make up for occasional sick days or family vacations. If your child is absent for an excessive period of time due to illness requiring medical treatment, the director may use their discretion to allow for credit or make up.

Nutrition Policy

We try to provide a healthy attitude toward food. We teach children about good food choices. We take care in our selection, preparation and presentation of food. We balance the snack menu from the various food groups. We encourage children to explore new tastes and often involve them in the selection and preparation process. Snack is provided daily to all children in our program. Water is served daily with your child's snack and throughout the day. The school maintains a "nut-free" status. Parents should provide lunch from home. Please label your child's lunchbox. We recommend providing children with lunches that include foods from the major food groups such as fruits, vegetables, breads, and protein. The school keeps on hand nonperishable lunch items such as crackers, bread, jelly and cheese that can be used when necessary. Parents are asked not to send peanut or nut products in with their child's lunch as the preschool is "nut free." Parents are encouraged not to send in dessert items such as cookies and snack foods such as potato chips; additionally, candy or soda is not allowed in school. It is the school's experience that children quickly become accustomed to lunches that do not include these foods. The preschool staff is dedicated to encouraging healthy meals! We regularly meeting with our healthcare consultant to discuss healthy food choices. Visit MyPyramid.gov for more information about healthy meals and snacks. We ask parents to join us in our efforts to promote good eating habits and good food choices. This includes foods brought in for lunch, birthdays and holidays.

Peanut/Tree Nut Free Policy

Peanuts, peanut products, or products containing traces of peanuts or tree nuts may not be brought to Easton Learning Adventures for snack, lunch or special treats. Please read labels carefully when packing your child's lunch and be careful to check that your child does not have peanut butter or other nut related food on their clothing or hands when they enter school. Even though children with allergies will only be eating food brought from home, children with nut allergies can have severe reactions requiring immediate care from just casual contact with clothing, hands, surfaces or toys which have food residues on them. It is **very** important that we follow this rule and avoid bringing any snacks to preschool that have even a trace amount of nuts. To some children with a nut allergy, even the smell of peanuts can cause life-threatening symptoms.

Clothing

Your child will be going outside to play daily unless inclement weather inhibits this. Please make sure to dress your child each day appropriate to forecasted weather conditions (boots, hats, mittens, etc.). For safety reasons, we ask that children not be sent to school in clothing (jackets, sweatshirts, mittens, etc.) that has drawstring or toggle closures. We recommend sneakers or rubber-soled shoes over sandals. We require you supply an extra change of clothing for your child in the event he/she has a bathroom accident, participates in a messy art project, or accidentally has a spill during snack. This change of clothes should include socks and shoes with all items labeled clearly and placed in a shoe box with your child's name on the outside. If an item from the box is used, please be sure to replace it.

Toilet Training/Diapering

Toilet training is always done in accordance with the parent's wishes. Teachers take into consideration the child's physical and emotional readiness and we never attempt to train a child without parental consent. Toilet training does not "officially" begin until the child's teacher and the parents confer and both parties agree that the child is ready. Staff members and parents must work as a team on this effort, providing consistency with methods used at home and at school.

- Diapers changes occur whenever a child has soiled or is wet and also on a regular schedule for each child in the Toddler classroom
- ELAP uses a disposable paper top on its changing table (located next to the sink in the toddler classroom) solely for the purpose of diaper changes; staff members ensure this paper covering is used each and every time a child is changed and when replacing it between uses, that the paper top completely covers the surface of the changing table for the next child
- After each diaper change, the disposable paper covering is discarded and the changing table is thoroughly washed with a bleach solution
- Staff and children wash their hands after toileting, diapering, and coming in contact with bodily fluids
- Staff members wear gloves when performing diaper changes or assisting a child who may have had a toileting accident; the staff member always washes her hands and uses clean gloves when changing or assisting the next child
- All soiled clothing is double-bagged, sealed in plastic, and stored in the bottom of the child's cubby; parents are informed the clothing is there so they can take it home immediately to be laundered.
- If a child, for any reason, is without a change of clothing, ELAP will provide clean clothing on loan

Tooth brushing Policy

Teachers will assist children in brushing their teeth whenever they are in care for more than four hours or whenever they consume a meal while in care. Brushing will take place down at the bathrooms after lunch bunch. Children will have individual, labeled toothbrushes

which are stored in a safe and sanitary manner open to air without touching each other. Parents who choose to opt out of this policy may do so by signing a form at the office.

Separation Anxiety

It is not the new environment that causes your child to become anxious when you leave. Children are quite perceptive and look to their parents in new situations to gauge their own sense of safety. When a parent shows confidence in the teachers and a positive view of the classroom environment, then leaves immediately after informing his/her child, the message he/she is giving the child is that "the classroom is a safe place and the teachers are there to help." Our teachers will help your child with separation difficulties. You may feel free to call the school during the day to see how your child is doing. You may want to leave an article of yours like an old set of keys or an eyeglass case to help them feel more secure about your return. Parents frequently have more anxiety about changes and new experiences than their children do. When the adults remember to approach the transition calmly and with confidence, providing an enthusiastic and positive outlook, their children are more accepting of the change and make an excellent adjustment. You can help by exiting promptly after kissing your child and letting him know that you are leaving. Preparing him for your departure creates expectation and allows him to adjust more easily. Sneaking out or disappearing without letting your child know that you are leaving creates a situation where they may become anxious, feel abandoned and mistrustful, and do not know when to expect your return. Lingering or saying goodbye several times confuses your child as to when your true departure will take place.

Holidays

ELAP believes in a very low-key approach to the holidays. It is our experience that there is enough excitement and celebration provided at home, in the media, and in the community; we like to think of our school as a calm, safe, predictable environment for children during these exciting times. We recognize the holidays through discussions during the school day and through thematic activities that correspond with the "meaning" of a particular holiday. We give the children opportunities to create gifts for their families during certain holidays, and we always encourage them to share plans, traditions, and special moments during circle time, snack, and when otherwise appropriate. We welcome families to share holiday-related traditions, books, music, or food with their child's class; please speak with your child's teacher if you wish to do so.

Field Trips

Planning

The school's enrollment forms included a blanket permission statement for field trips in the event a parent forgets to return a permission slip on time. This blanket permission statement is for trips within the Town of Easton only. If the school is attending a field trip outside of the Town of Easton and a parent has not returned the required permission slip, efforts will be made to contact the child's parents before the trip. If unsuccessful in our attempts, the child will not attend the field trip, and will remain at the school in one of our classes with staff members. Each field trip is planned in advance, and notice of these upcoming activities is distributed via the child's cubby. Please remember to leave your

child's car seat with the classroom teacher on the morning of the field trip unless you are driving.

Parent Participation

Parents wishing to attend field trips with their children's class are welcome to do so. Please notify your children's teachers in advance so that they may plan accordingly, and have adequate time to organize the group on the morning of the trip.

Any parent wishing to drive his child on a field trip may do so; however, if a parent will be chaperoning the trip which includes driving any other child in the class, the following restrictions apply.

In advance of the day of the field trip, the parent must furnish the ELAP Business Office with:

- A copy of the current, valid car registration of the vehicle he is planning to use to transport children from ELAP
- A copy of his current, valid driver's license
- Proof that the vehicle used to transport ELAP students is insured
- Have a current CORI with the office which you can obtain from the director or office manager

Chaperoning a Field Trip

Parent chaperones are required to notify the Lead Teacher when leaving the school with children and are responsible for finding out the meeting place determined by the teacher. ELAP school policy requires chaperones to drive directly to and from the trip location without stopping along the way for such items as gasoline or beverages. They are to keep the children with them at all times until the return to ELAP. First Aid supplies, emergency cards, and required medications including Epi-pens are brought with the teachers during the field trip.

In the event that a child becomes ill a teacher will remain with the ill child. The child will be made as comfortable as possible while the rest of the group continues on with the field trip. The teacher remaining with the ill child will continually assess the situation to determine if further action is required.

Transportation Plan

Easton Learning Adventures Preschool does NOT provide any transportation for children.

Behavior Management Policy

It is our goal to assure the physical and emotional well-being of all the children in our program. Our discipline procedures are based on respect for each child. During the preschool years, children are learning self-control, self-help, ways to get along with others, and how to follow rules outside of their home environment. At our preschool, we strive to minimize the occurrence of problematic behaviors by maintaining appropriate staff/child ratios, ensuring that children understand what is expected of them, and preparing the

environment so that it is conducive to a sense of peace and belonging for each child in the program. We are firm about our limitations when they are appropriate to the situation and the child's ability to understand and comply. We are consistent and staff members treat all children equally. We provide activities that are appropriate to the children's interests and developmental levels. The ultimate goal is to help enhance each child's self-esteem and self-worth.

Guidelines for Setting Limits and Redirecting Problematic Behaviors

- Each child is made aware of the school rules and limits.
- Children are included in the development of the policies and rules.
- Staff model behaviors that they want to see.
- Routines are set to help children know what is expected of them.
- Rules are reviewed regularly as a group.
- Staff members are always willing to adjust the environment to meet the needs of the children enrolled.
- Problem solving is done both individually and in groups.
- Children are encouraged to develop their problem solving skills and work out own conflict when appropriate.
- Children are provided with choices to help them self regulate. "You may sit on the floor or you may sit in the chair, which would be best for you?"
- All children are given a great deal of respect.
- Each child is addressed individually by name, in close proximity, and at eye level.
- A soft but firm voice is used when disciplining a child.
- Lectures are avoided and problem solving discussions are encouraged.
- Children will be praised for positive behavior when appropriate and given positive suggestions.
- High fives will be given out frequently to encourage positive behaviors.
- Deep breathing will be used as a calming technique.
- If staffing permits, children will have the opportunity to take a short walk outside of the classroom to regroup.
- Children will be provided with a book to look at in a quiet area.
- Children are provided with an area of the classroom designed for one child to have some independent time.
- Children may be directed to a different interest area within the classroom.
- Judgmental words, such as "good" and "bad" will be avoided. Supportive words such as "helpful" and "cooperative" will be encouraged.
- Children will be encouraged to talk out their frustrations and voice their opinions and concerns.
- Children may be provided with a small puzzle or activity to complete in a specified area of the classroom.
- Children may be asked to draw a picture to describe what has happened and how they are feeling.
- Staff will never judge a child or take sides in any child/child conflict.

As is stated in the EEC's regulation 102 CMR 7.00, ELAP prohibits:

- Spanking or other corporal punishment of children

- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment
- Depriving children of meals or snacks
- Depriving children of outdoor time
- Excessive time-out
- Force feeding children
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting

In the event that excessive, aggressive behavior is focused toward harming a teacher or another child by hitting, biting, etc. the Director may call the parent and ask that the child be picked up from school. An Incident Report Form would be filled out, shared with the parents, signed by the parents, and put in the child's file.

Biting Policy

Biting is not an unexpected behavior when groups of toddler-aged children are together; the behavior can be emotionally charged. There are many reasons why toddlers may bite. Sometimes it is related to teething and other times it may be to express their feelings which cannot be articulated through words. We have seen children bite when they are frustrated and we've seen them bite in the excitement of a happy moment. No one can predict which children may bite, but we are ready to help toddlers who do bite learn other, more positive behaviors. We are also ready to give treatment, sympathy, and advice to the child who may have been bitten.

The following are the ways we work to prevent biting and how we respond when it does happen:

- The school program is designed to limit frustration levels by providing a calm and cheerful atmosphere with stimulating and soothing activities with multiples of favorite toys.
- We work to model acceptable and appropriate behavior
- If a bite does occur, we help the child who is bitten by reassuring him and caring for the bite
- If the skin is not broken, we use a cold pack; if the skin is broken, we follow medical advice and clean the bite with soap and water
- If it is likely that the bite may get dirty, we will cover it to keep it clean
- If bitten, we will call the child's parents to inform them of the incident; an accident report will be filled out and must be signed by the teacher and the parent; a copy of the completed report is maintained at the school, in the child's file, and given to the parents
- The child who did the biting is shown strong disapproval of the action with specific responses varying based on the circumstances; the basic message being that biting is an unacceptable behavior
- The child who bit will also be helped to learn different, more appropriate behaviors

- If necessary, the teachers and directors observe the child to try to identify a consistent pattern for this behavior and work to develop and implement a plan to which will eliminate this behavior for those children stuck in biting patterns
- Any plan developed for a specific child is shared with the parents so they are informed of how the behavior is addressed
- Parents of children who bite are notified of the behavior and we encourage parents to share information with us regarding this behavior if it occurs at home; if biting occurs both at school and at home, it is important for both the teachers and the parents to work together to maintain consistency in the messages the child receives; communication plays a key role in the success of the effort
- Parents of the child who is bitten are not given the name of the child responsible. Likewise, other parents in the classroom will not learn the identities of either child from ELAP staff members; this confidentiality is important so that children are not labeled on the basis of one of their actions

We wish we could guarantee that no biting would ever occur at our school but we know that such a guarantee does not exist. ELAP is confident that parents can count on the school for handling biting occurrences appropriately and in a timely manner. ELAP supports both children involved in the incident. Any questions regarding this policy or any other may be obtained by speaking with the school's director.

Sample Daily Schedule

Time	Activity
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Open: Free Activities in Early Drop
9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	Welcome; Open Time; Enrichments
9:30 - 9:40 a.m.	Clean-Up/Hand Washing/Bathroom
9:40 - 10:00 a.m.	Circle Time
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Project; Thematic Centers
10:30 - 10:40 a.m.	Hand Washing
10:40 - 11:00 a.m.	Snack/Quiet Book Time
11:00 - 11:10 a.m.	Bathroom/Hand washing
11:10 - 11:30 a.m.	Themed Story
11:30 - 12:00 p.m.	Gross Motor Time
12:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 - 12:45 p.m.	Bathroom/Hand Washing
12:45 - 1:00 p.m.	Afternoon Circle/Review
1:00 - 1:45 p.m.	Rest/Quiet Time
1:45 - 2:30 p.m.	Gross Motor
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Bathroom/Hand Washing
2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Snack
3:00 - 3:45 p.m.	Enrichment
3:45 - 4:00 p.m.	Cleanup/Dismissal

Health Policies

A detailed Healthcare Policy is available in the office upon request

Medical Forms

Every child must have an annual, physical exam, lead screening, and immunizations (appropriate for the age and in accordance with the schedule of immunizations required by the State of Massachusetts) before starting school. The Medical History Form (a physician's health form is also acceptable) with this information must be in the school office before the first day of school.

Exceptions to this policy are:

- Parents object to immunizations based on religious beliefs.
- A child's physician states that immunization therapy is contraindicated.

*In either case, written documentation is required.

Illness Policy

In all cases, we appreciate your good judgment and cooperation when determining whether or not to keep your child home from school due to an illness. We ask that children be kept home from school if they have a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or a "fresh" cold. A cold with persistent coughing, an earache, or a sore throat should be checked with your pediatrician. A child must be fever free or free from vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child has been prescribed antibiotics by a physician, the child may return to school 24 hours after starting medication. If a child becomes ill during the school day and needs to be picked up, the school will attempt to contact the parent(s) first and then the emergency contact numbers provided if necessary. For a mildly ill child, a teacher will provide a quiet rest area apart from the other children; the teacher will take the child's temperature and take note of the symptoms and use her judgment about contacting the parents.

Communicable Diseases

Parents should notify the school immediately if their child is exposed to or contracts a contagious illness such as strep throat, conjunctivitis, head lice, etc. The Director will notify parents of communicable diseases or illnesses by posting information by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health by each classroom's door. ELAP follows the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in dealing with communicable diseases. In some cases the school may ask parents for a note from the physician before their child is allowed to return to school.

Medication Policy

Before any medication can be administered to a child, parents must first complete, sign, and return to the Director a Medication Consent Form. Permission by the physician is required for over the counter medication. Parents must bring in their child's medication in the original container with the drug dosage and expiration date. Prescription medication will be administered as directed on the original container's label. Forms are available in the school office upon request.

Non-Prescription Medications:

*We will need parental authorization and a signed statement authorizing the center to administer non-prescription medication in accordance with the written order of the physician.

This statement will be good for one year from the date it was signed. If this is a regular medication to be given through the year as needed by the child, an attempt will be made to contact the parent before the medication is administered, unless a child needs medication urgently or when contacting the parent will delay appropriate care unreasonably.

Topical Non-prescription Medications:

*Under the Department of Early Education and Care, parent written authorization for specific non-prescription topical medications may be accepted and will be good for one year from the date it was signed.

*Topical medications such as petroleum jelly, diaper rash ointments, and anti-bacterial ointments which are applied to wounds, rashes, or broken skin must be stored in the original container, labeled with the child's name.

Topical medications such as sunscreen, bug spray, and other ointments which are not applied to open wounds, rashes, or broken skin may be generally administered to the child with parental authorization.

Allergies

Parents are asked to speak with the Director if their child has allergies to food, insects, or animals. Sharing information about the severity of reactions, what is to be avoided, and what to do if a child is exposed is encouraged. Proper forms must be filled out if medication is kept in the school. All parents are asked to comply with the school's "nut-free" policy when bringing in snacks, lunches, and projects. Pets are not allowed in the preschool areas for allergy and safety reasons.

Medical Conditions

If a child has a known medical condition (asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, etc.), parents must notify the Director about what to do if a problem should occur during school hours. Parents must make sure that any required medication is provided to the Director and the appropriate forms for its use have been completed. Please see the "Medication Policy".

Accident or Injury Policy

Each staff member is certified in First Aid and CPR. A First Aid kit, band aids, and ice packs are available in all classrooms, playgrounds and the kitchen and used as needed for typical falls, bumps, or bruises. If your child experiences an accident or injury at school that is more serious, a teacher will inform you in person or by phone if necessary. An Illness/Injury report Form will be provided to you for review and signature, and will then be placed in your child's student file. A copy will also be sent home.

General Safety

When entering the building each morning, our staff members perform a number of facility-wide inspections to ensure the school is a safe environment for children.

Illness at School

Plan for Meeting the Needs of the Mildly Ill Child

When a child becomes ill at school, he/she will be put in a quiet area of the classroom or brought to the office away from the other children, and his/her parents or alternate persons will be notified to come and take him/her home. A staff person will remain with the child and monitor him/her for any changes to assure the child's safety and comfort are met until pick-up.

We suggest any child not feeling well prior to school or showing any of the following should be encouraged to stay home.

- Has the child been sick recently and has he fully recovered?
- Is there any possibility of exposure to an illness recently?
- Is the child acting differently than usual? Is he quieter, less active; had a loss of appetite, or mild stomach discomfort?
- Is the child running a low-grade fever?
- The child should be free from diarrhea, heavy cold symptoms, vomiting, fever, and nausea for a minimum of 24 hours.
- The child should be physically able to participate in classroom activities before a return to school is considered.
- In some circumstances, a letter from the child's pediatrician will be required, indicating the child is no longer contagious and may resume school activities.

Management & Notification of Infectious Diseases

If a child develops a contagious illness or symptoms that warrant exclusion, parents are notified to pick up the child immediately. In the event the parent is unable to pick up the child immediately, he must state this and inform us of which emergency contact listed on the enrollment forms will be picking up the child. If a parent cannot be reached, staff members will call emergency contacts until someone is found to pick up the child.

Children with contagious illness (measles, strep, chicken pox, etc.) will need a doctor's note; which will be placed in the child's folder.

Identification of Contagious Illness

Parents are expected to notify ELAP immediately if their child contracts a contagious illness so that staff members can begin the process of informing others in the same class.

When a contagious illness (conjunctivitis, strep throat, pediculosis, etc.) is identified in a particular classroom, a notice is posted outside the classroom identifying the illness and notes will be sent home with children in the class. This detailed notice includes the signs and symptoms to look for at the onset of the illness so that parents may make an informed choice and exclude his/her child at the first indication of illness. The classroom and toys are disinfected.

Plan for Managing Infectious Diseases

- Staff observe children at drop off and watch for signs of illness
- Sick children are sent home
- A notice is put out by the classroom of a communicable disease in the preschool.
- Latex or other gloves are used in dealing with bodily fluids.
- Staff members monitor children to ensure proper hand washing techniques
- All staff members demonstrate meticulousness regarding their own hand washing frequency and techniques
- Each staff member washes her hands upon entering the building, before eating, after using the bathroom, and after each diaper change and assist children with the same
- Bleach to water ratios as outlined by the DECC are followed and solutions are freshly mixed each morning
- All toys, equipment, and materials used by children are cleaned on a regular basis
- All tables and surfaces are washed with bleach solution before food is served on them
- All mats are disinfected after each use
- Toys are disinfected after a child who has become ill has handled them
- Tables, chairs, and other contact items are bleached regularly
- Any child showing signs of a contagious illness is evaluated, comforted and secluded until sent home

Plan for Infection Control

- Hand washing directions for staff and children are posted by all sinks
- Staff will use commercial disinfectant or bleach solution; all will be placed out of the reach of children
- A janitorial staff cleans and disinfects the building 3 days a week
- All cleaning supplies are stored out of the reach of children
- Director/Lead Teacher supervises table washing for proper cleaning

All staff is trained in infectious control procedures

Emergency Procedures

All Emergency and Evacuation Procedures are posted in the classrooms and in the office. Easton Learning Adventures follows all emergency procedures as set forth by the Town of Easton and the state of Massachusetts.

Emergency Procedures for Illness/Accident

Each emergency situation will be evaluated and acted upon by what is in the best interest of the child involved in the situation. Staff will always try to reach a child's parent if transportation is necessary due to an emergency. If that is not possible, then those persons listed under Emergency Contacts will be contacted for emergency pick-up from the site. In cases of medical emergencies, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest hospital for medical treatment. A teacher will accompany the child in the ambulance and will bring the child's records with all medical information and contact information. In such a case, documentation will be completed on an Illness/Injury Report Form.

Evacuation Plan

Easton Learning Adventures Preschool has an established evacuation procedure and diagrammed routes are posted at the exit in every classroom. In the event immediate evacuation is required, teachers will carry out the following protocol:

- Evacuation plans are posted at every exit.
- Teachers will gather attendance records, emergency cards, and required medications including Epi-pens.
- A head count of children will be performed before leaving the classroom.
- Lead teacher will lead the children from the building.
- Lead teacher and director arrange fire drills every other month at different times of the day.
- Teachers and staff members will guide children to the nearest exit.
- Children will be brought to a facility for cover if needed (Main Street Café)
- If shelter is not needed, we will go over to the church parking lot on Main Street
- Children will otherwise be brought to the Main Street Cafe, located at 122 Main Street across from the school
- Head counts will be performed, and attendance records taken.
- All emergency contact information and medical needs will be carried at all times by teachers
- An appointed person will check the building to be sure no child is left behind.
- If and when emergency personnel (fire department, police, etc.) authorize re-entry into the building, staff will lead the children directly back to the classroom.
- A head count will be performed and attendance records verified.
- In the event we are unable to return to the building, parents will be notified via telephone to pick up their child at the café
- We have stored drinks, snacks, game and crafts over at the cafe in the event we are there for an extended period of time.
- The café's phone number is (508) 238-6788

Practice evacuation drills are done every month to hone the skills of staff members and to provide children an opportunity to practice their ability to follow directions quickly. The director will plan, oversee, and document the date, time, and effectiveness of each drill. Drills will take place on varying days at varying times to ensure all staff and children have practice.

Contingency Plan for Emergency Situation

In the event of unforeseen situations, a natural disaster or major environmental hazard which requires the immediate evacuation of the facility, the officials from the Town of Easton, Department of Public Works, Fire Department, or Police Department will provide ELAP with instructions to follow.

Upon notification of evacuation, teachers are required to gather emergency cards, attendance records, and required medications, including Epi-pens; then to lead children to safety as quickly and orderly as possible following the guidelines of the Emergency Evacuation Plan stated above. Parents will be notified as soon as the directors are confident

the children are in a safe environment. If time allows, a message will be left on ELAP's answering system.

In the event of a power outage, loss of heat, or water, the Directors may decide to continue the school day provided the situation does not impact the regular routine. Early dismissal will be at the discretion of the director and the decision will be based on the individual circumstances of the situation and how it affects ELAP. If early dismissal is warranted, the teachers will be instructed to contact the parents of each child in his/her care relaying the general reason for the facility's shut down.

Missing Child

Teacher(s) will inform the Director immediately if a child is missing. The Director or designee will make an initial search of the building and grounds. Attempts will be made to contact parents to confirm if the child was picked-up. If not, the Director or designee will call the police (911) so a perimeter can be established for search. The Director will make all other required notifications.

Lockdown Procedure

Easton Learning Adventures will follow a lockdown procedure in the event of an emergency where it is necessary to prevent the easy movement of persons in a school building. ELAP will be notified by emergency personnel and will follow procedures and instructions by the Town of Easton. The Director will be the liaison with the police or Town of Easton officials and follow all guidelines. The outer door to the building, the door by the main office, the door by the play space and the doors by Room 2 and Room 5 would be locked, making the preschool space confined within the building. All windows in the classrooms will be closed, locked, and covered. All electronics need to be turned off. The Lead Teacher of each particular classroom is responsible for his/her attendance binder, implementing the Director's instructions, taking attendance, and establishing a calm atmosphere. The children will be directed in quiet activities and kept away from doors and windows. Easton Learning Adventures Preschool will remain in lockdown until notified by officials, at which point the school will notify all parents that they can pick up their child/children.

Parent Participation

Visits

ELAP has an open door policy. Parents are welcome to visit the preschool at any time when their child is in attendance. Parents are welcome to speak with their child's teachers to plan a time to participate in a classroom activity, a project, read a story, etc. Having a parent participate in the classroom is a special experience for the individual child and the group as a whole. Children are encouraged to invite their families and friends to special events during the year to celebrate their accomplishments and to share what they are learning and doing in the program.

The ELAP Parent Committee

The Parent Committee mission is to build a sense of community and tradition that extends beyond the classroom. The group arranges social gatherings throughout the year for the

families, and it supports the school in its goals and fundraising. Any level of involvement and commitment is welcome; the group evolves and changes as the ELAP families do. The group will determine scheduling, coordinating, establishing committees, etc., as is necessary dependent upon the goals and needs of the year. The Parent Committee welcomes your participation!

Parent to Staff Communication

Parents are encouraged to communicate briefly with teachers on a daily basis when they drop off or pick-up their child. Parents are encouraged to call and talk to teachers about scheduling an appointment to discuss any questions or concerns they may have regarding their child and/or the program. You can use e-mail to correspond with the Director and/or teachers, and you can always call our office (508-230-7445); in either case, it is our goal to respond to you as quickly as possible. Parents are strongly encouraged to communicate with the Director and classroom teachers any extenuating circumstances that may be affecting your child so we can best understand and assist behavior and moods. This can range from a difficult night's sleep to an illness or death in the family. The more informed we are, the better we are able to anticipate an issue and assist your child through the day. The ELAP staff takes its commitment to our students and parents very seriously; as part of that commitment, parents are encouraged to share questions, concerns, and comments. We want to address any questions our parents may have, and we want to hear about anything that is important to our parents and families. Additionally, we try to be responsive to comments about our program and curriculum, and we are pleased to discuss our goals and philosophies with you.

Staff to Parent Communication

Newsletters

A school-wide newsletter is distributed via the child's cubby and website to inform you on what activities the child participated in over the course of the month. This newsletter will also outline some upcoming activities or events. We encourage you to ask your child about the activities he participated in. This encourages communication and gives your child the chance to elaborate on a special activity he may have enjoyed.

Memos & Other Correspondence

Memos about fundraising activities, upcoming events, requests for parent participation, field trip notification, policy changes, or meeting schedules are also usually distributed via each child's cubby and school website. It is important that parents review all information sent home whether via the child's cubby, mail, or hand-delivered and respond appropriately in a timely manner.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences to discuss a child's progress are scheduled twice each year. The first conference is held in the fall shortly after the beginning of the school year. This is a brief meeting between the parents and the teachers to discuss the child's adjustment to the school environment. The second conference is held during the spring and is a more comprehensive review of the child's performance. It includes a written evaluation and any recommendations from the teachers.

At any other time during the school year, parents are welcome to request a conference with their child's teachers. Our staff is open to discuss the child's progress with his/her parents.

Parent Complaint

If a parent concern is raised to an ELAP teacher, the teacher must immediately refer the parent to the Director for discussion regarding the concern. All communications will be documented and filed. The Director will then place a call to parents to follow-up regarding the concern and the resolution.

School Evaluation

The Director of Easton Learning Adventures will ask our current parents to participate in a school evaluation in late winter and again at the end of the school year. It is an opportunity for our parents to comment upon aspects of the program that they value; it is also an opportunity to offer suggestions for change. The evaluations will be tallied and a report made available to all parents and staff. The Director will use the evaluations when thinking about goals for the following year.

Statement of Confidentiality

Any written information on children attending Easton Learning Adventures is privileged and confidential. None of this information will be given to anyone without the parent's written permission, unless compelled by law. Parents will be notified if records are subpoenaed. Staff has access to children's records as well as regulatory authorities, on request. Parents are always free to read any written material regarding their child. The school will consider any parent's wish to add or delete any information in the child's record and will discuss this with the parent. Any information that needs to be copied will be done so at the school's expense. Children's records will be transferred at the written request of the parents within 2 business days after the request. The preschool will keep a permanent written log indicating to whom the information was released.

Social, Emotional & Educational Referrals

ELAP uses the following procedures when referring a family for appropriate social, mental health, educational, and medical services for their child if the directors believes that an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child.

Referrals are based on:

- Staff members bringing their findings to the director
- The director or teacher observing the child to make an initial evaluation and provide an observation report
- Providing a written statement which includes reasons for recommending a referral, observations related to the referral, and stating the efforts made by ELAP to accommodate for the child's needs

With written parental consent, ELAP will assist in making referrals. A list of possible providers can be found in the Appendix of this handbook. Upon agreeing to seek

professional assistance, the parents must sign a consent form that permits outside individuals to observe the child and receive any personal information about the child and family. The school remains in contact with all individuals responsible for the welfare of the child as long as required and always responds to and implements helpful suggestions. If it is determined by the referral agency evaluating the child that services are not needed at this time, ELAP will review the child's progress in a period of 3 months to decide if another referral is necessary.

A written record of referrals including parent conferences and results will be kept in the child's folder. Any correspondence between ELAP and outside agencies is also kept in the child's record. A parent may also request human services referral with the same procedure followed.

Parent Resources

Home Health & Child Care; Brockton, MA	508-588-6070
EEC	508-828-5025
NAEYC	www.naeyc.org
Project Early, Easton	508-230-3208
Brockton Early Childhood Intervention	508-586-9855
South Bay Early Intervention	508-559-0473
North Easton Psychological Associates	508-238-7766
Children's Dental Health Center	781-341-0030
Pediatric Assoc of Brockton	508-584-1210
Tri-County Pediatrics	781-341-0030
Dedham Medical	781-329-1400

Policy on Child Abuse and Neglect

First and foremost in protecting children, DEEC requires CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) checks for all preschool staff. Upon hiring, each staff member or volunteer consents to this criminal background check and will not be allowed to work with children if it is determined the results are unsatisfactory to DEEC. This is one method of providing a sense of safety to the children in our care. Reference checks are also made on all our staff members. ELAP will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the school. ELAP will provide consent for disclosure to DEEC of information from, and allowing DEEC to, disclose information to any person and or agency DEEC may specify as necessary to the prompt investigation of allegations and the protection of children.

ELAP has developed and maintains written procedures for handling any suspected incident of child abuse or neglect, which includes but is not limited to ensuring that an allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member does not work directly with children until the Department of Children and Families investigation is completed, and for such further time DEEC requires. If a staff member is suspected of child abuse the DEEC and the Department of Children and Families will immediately be notified.

If a complaint is made against one of our staff members, they will be investigated by the Department of Children and Families and DEEC. Any staff member suspected of child abuse

or neglect will be immediately suspended without pay pending the outcome of the investigation. All findings will be documented. The decision on if the staff member will return depends on the outcome of the investigation and its findings reported to the proper authorities.

ELAP has implemented the following procedure for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

- ELAP will maintain a file labeled "child abuse & neglect" that will contain the signs of abuse and the necessary forms to report it
- ELAP staff will maintain familiarity with the signs of abuse & neglect
 - physical: unusual multiple bruising, burns, trauma to skin, trauma to the bones or skull that cannot be easily explained
 - emotional: exaggerated excitability, fear, withdrawal, apprehension, passiveness, and resistance to separate from a person, place, or thing, tendency to protect a parent, alteration in behavior pattern
 - neglect: routine needs are ignored or prevented by a parent, deprivation of food, excess of non-nutritional diet, improper seasonal attire, infrequent bathing, shampooing, changing of clothes, frequent display of fatigue interfering with participation in class
- ELAP staff will maintain communication and support to parents both formally and informally; through conferences initiated by either parents or staff
- A comfortable, safe environment will be established so that children will be able to speak about their concerns

All staff members at Easton Learning Adventures are mandated reporters. As mandated reporters, they must notify the school's director who will file a formal complaint to the local office of the Department of Children and Families. Reports are filed within 24 hours of the incident or discovery.

The contact number for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families is 508-894-3700