

Heart Centered Early Learning

Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

About Us

Our Vision

Our Mission

Our Approach to Learning

Program Details

Days and Hours of Operation

Enrollment, Registration and Tuition

Late Fees

School Closures and Holidays

Emergency Closures/Increment Weather

Illnesses, Absences, and Vacations

Medication Policy & Procedures

Emergency Plan

Staff

Withdraws, Termination of Care and Refunds

Classroom Details

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Toilet Training

Meals and Allergies

Curriculum

Communication & Conferences

Rest and Quiet Time

Field Trips and Enrichments

Community Resources

Parent Involvement

Behavior Management

A Program for the Whole Community

Handbook/Policy Agreement

Lunch guidelines

Our Vision

To positively impact our community by creating a learning center that promotes a sense of community by focusing on building a strong sense of self and relationships.

Our Mission

To help foster a love of learning in preschoolers, to provide opportunities for them to experience the world around them and to understand how it relates to them. Preschoolers will leave with a developing foundation of social and emotional intelligence and Kindergarten readiness skills. We support whole families by offering support and services to the surrounding communities.

Our Approach to Learning

We are a play and discovery-based learning community that believes in the whole-child approach. As a child's perception of the world grows, they begin to work on cooperation, problem-solving, creating, and nurturing friendships. When children feel a sense of belonging, they move through the classroom confidently and are willing to try new things. Our classroom is a safe place where both teachers and children initiate learning opportunities. The classroom setup and materials help spark engaging, meaningful, socially interactive, and joyful learning experiences. Respecting a child's learning preference requires us to use various tools. We find inspiration from pedagogies such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf.

"Learning through play is supported by science experts, parents, and children; when children are playing, they are learning. Play expands intelligence, stimulates imagination, and encourages creative problem-solving. Play helps children develop confidence, self-esteem, and an overall positive attitude toward learning." The Council for Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC)

"If each person has natural gifts and innate talents, then the true nature of education must involve the awakening, inviting, and blessing of each young person's inner genius and unique life spirit. Michael Meade

PROGRAM DETAILS

Days and Hours of Operation

Heart Centered Early Learning (HCEL) is a year-round program. The classroom is open Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. Our yearly calendar will feature holidays and school closures.

Enrollment, Registration and Tuition

We are committed to maintaining an environment and policies that prohibit discriminatory behavior and provide equal opportunity for all persons. HCEL will not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.

Qualified children will be three to five years of age and can use the bathroom independently. Children must be three years old by August 31st to enroll.

Families must submit a *complete* enrollment packet and registration fee to hold a spot for their child.

The enrollment packet contains these forms:

1. Registration Form
2. Emergency Contact Form
3. Completed Immunization Record
4. Parent Survey – “Getting to Know You”

Registration Fee: \$175 (non-refundable)

Monthly Tuition: \$1,275

Enrolled families will have seventy-five dollars of the registration fee applied toward the first month's tuition. Tuition is calculated over the year and divided into 12 monthly payments. Tuition does not increase for months with more school days or decrease for months with fewer. *It is a flat fee due each month.* Payments are due on the 15th of each month and cover the next month's care.

Payment on the 15th ensures your child's spot the next month. Please come to us if you are experiencing a financial emergency. You are forfeiting your child's spot if we do not receive payment.

Summer

Our program runs all year, including summer. Running summer camp enrollment campaigns for just two months is challenging for our small business. We provide our preschoolers and their families with consistent care all year long. However, some families may want to disenroll for the summer (July and August), and we do understand. Here are the two options:

Give us notice by February 1st to disenroll for July and August. Your child may return to the program in September; payment will be due August 15 for September's tuition. Late payments without communication will mean your child's spot may go to the next family on the waitlist.

If you give us notice after February 1st, your child will be put on the waitlist for a spot in September. We cannot guarantee an available spot, but we will do our best to keep your family in our community and call you when a spot is available.

Late Fees

All late tuition payments will incur a late fee of \$40 and be included on the following month's bill.

Late pick-ups may also result in a late fee of \$20. Please see the section on Arrival and Dismissal Procedures for more details.

School Closures/Holidays

We observe the following holidays and breaks:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King, Jr Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Veteran's Day

Thanksgiving & the Friday after

Winter Break is the last two weeks of December

The week of July 4th

Please see the most current preschool calendar for specific dates of closure. If the owner needs to close for personal reasons, families will be given at least two months' notice when possible. We will always make an effort to find a suitable substitute before closing the preschool.

Emergency Closures/Increment Weather

HCEL may close when the Everett School District closes due to inclement weather. Messages will be sent via text about closures as early as 6:00 am to inform you of a closure. There may be instances where we choose not to close when the Everett school district closes. Our road does not get plowed when it snows. The road gets slick and dangerous. Our goal will be to remain open, but we want to be thoughtful about everyone's safety.

If we close due to weather conditions or any other conditions outside our control, families are responsible for finding alternative care for the day. Refunds will not be issued for closures of this kind.

Illness, Absences, and Vacations

Please do not send your child to school when they are noticeably sick; this will help prevent the spread of illness. It is typical for children to have colds throughout the Fall and Winter months, but if preschoolers cannot actively participate in class and outdoor activities, they are not well enough to be at preschool. We will call parents or guardians to pick up ill children. If your child has a fever, ensure they are fever-free for 24 hours before returning to class. Call or email the center to let us know if a child will be absent. There will be no refunds due to illness.

Medication Policy & Procedure

When a preschooler needs medication at school, a permission slip must be filled out before staff can administer medication. Prescription medication will require a parent's and doctor's signature. Parents can fill out a medication form for over-the-counter medications. The state considers lip balm, lotion, and sunscreen medication. It does not allow homemade products at licensed schools. Medications will be administered and documented by a staff member on the back of the permission form. Medication forms will be kept on-site; you can request to see

them anytime. Medications must be administered as directed on the label unless otherwise noted by a doctor. Medications will be safely stored and inaccessible to preschoolers.

Safety Policies and Precautions

A safe space

Parents may visit the center during school hours, and we ask that you make prior arrangements with staff. We want to prepare preschoolers for classroom visitors and any change in routine. The public will not be allowed to stop by during regular class time. Tours and prospective families will tour the facility when class is not in session.

Weapons and smoking are prohibited in the classroom or any other licensed space on the property during operating hours.

Confidentiality

Your child's file will be kept securely; parents or guardians may access them upon request. HCEL will not share private information about your family or child unless legally required to. It is part of our confidentiality policy to take the privacy of other students seriously. In cases where multiple preschoolers are involved in an accident or incident, only your child's name will appear on the report to protect everyone's right to privacy.

Social Media

We are a preschool community, and we ask that everyone refrain from sharing information about HCEL, preschoolers, and their families on social media that is not kind or thoughtful. We take our confidentiality policy seriously, and we expect that our families will respect each other in this way as well.

Emergency Plan

Facility Basic Information

| |
|---|
| Heart Centered Early Learning |
| 13 East McGill Ave Everett, Washington 98208 |
| 360-595-3296 |
| Leann Brown |
| Emergency Kit Locations – By Basement Exit |
| Number of Children - twelve |

Emergency Contacts:

| | Contact Name | Phone |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Fire/Rescue (911) | | 911 |
| Police (911) | Non-Emergency | 425-407-3999 |
| Swedish Hospital | | 425-357-3900 |
| Poison Control | | 800-222-1222 |
| Electric Company | | 425-783-1000 |
| Gas Company | | 888-225-5773 |
| Water Company-- | | 425-257-8999 |
| Insurance Provider | Markel Insurance | 844-654-7272 |
| Leann's Husband | Shane Brown | 206-379-4048 |

Evacuation: In case of the need to evacuate our site, the following procedures will be followed:

| | |
|--|--|
| Evacuation Routes/Exits | Licensed areas of the property are the basement, the backyard, and the upstairs kitchen and dining area. Exits: Basement – back door and egress window in the classroom Kitchen/Dining Space – front or back door of the upstairs space Outside Play Area – Gate on the east side of the property & gate between our garages |
| Evacuating Preschoolers | If we exit the school through a door, we will do so with the children lined up. If we must use an egress window, the staff will help each child through the window opening. Children will stay together outside the building until the teacher has supported the last child out of the school. |
| Notification | Once the children have all been safely evacuated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 • Parents will be notified of the evacuation and status of the situation |
| Emergency Kids/Info | Emergency kits will be taken with the children. We will have paper copies of all the families' contact information and emergency supplies inside the kits. |
| Evacuation Sites: | Neighborhood (for fire) 10 East McGill Ave Everett, WA 98208 Out of Neighborhood (for explosion or flooding) East of 18W Intercity Ave Everett, WA 98208 |
| Transportation To Evacuation Location: | Children will walk to appropriate evacuation sites. |

Shelter-In-Place: In case of the need to stay put due to an extreme emergency, the following procedure will be followed:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Location: | Children will stay in the classroom in the basement. |
| Emergency Supplies: | Located in the basement: Emergency kits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • First Aid Kit • Battery-powered radio/walkie-talkie • Cell phone • Family Contact information |
| Notification: | Parents/guardians will be notified once the immediate threat has passed. |

Parent Reunification: In case of the need to evacuate or when parents/guardians cannot get children, the following procedures will be followed to reunite children with parents/guardians (or other contacts designated by parent/guardian) as soon as it is safe.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Notification: | Parents/guardians are provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on each evacuation site • Contact information Parent/Guardian contact numbers are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stored in Leann's cell phone • Kept in emergency kits inside and outside |
| Release: | Children will only be released to contacts listed on the child's form with proper identification. |

Withdraws, Termination of Care and Refunds

If you are withdrawing from care, we require 30 days' notice. There will be no refunds due to an early withdrawal or termination of care.

We reserve the right to withdraw families from care for nonpayment or excessive verbal or physical aggressive behavior from the child or family members.

Please see the section Behavior Management and Expulsion Policy for more details regarding termination of care.

Staff

All teachers and substitutes will have passed a Washington State background check. The state-mandated ratio of staff to students is one teacher to ten students for this age group. Our classroom can have up to 12 students at a time and would be staffed with two qualified staff members if eleven or more students are present.

CLASSROOM DETAILS

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The classroom will open at 7:50 am and close promptly at 3:30 pm Monday through Thursday. It is essential that we create and maintain a morning routine; ideally, all preschoolers arrive by 9:00 am. Upon arrival, children will put their bags in their cubby and lunches in the refrigerator. We ask that families not linger to help preschoolers transition smoothly into the preschool classroom. Some preschoolers are shy, especially around new people, so this will be helpful at the beginning of the year as we all work towards a smooth morning transition from home to preschool. Please let us know if you will be coming after 9:00 am.

Parents will need to sign children in and out daily, and there will be a form on the desk for you to sign. We may only accept and release a child from someone on the emergency contact form. In the case of an emergency where you need someone else to pick up your child, not on the emergency form, you need to email and call us with the person's name. Anyone who picks up your preschooler must show state ID, with no exceptions. We will go over this again during our enrollment walkthrough.

Toilet Trained

To be enrolled, a child must be toilet trained; this means your child is aware of when to use the restroom and can wipe and flush without assistance. To maintain the supervision and safety of preschoolers in the classroom, staff can only be in the bathroom with one student for a short period. Staff encourage "potty breaks" throughout the day and understand that accidents are a normal part of development. We will never single out or punish a child for an accident. Children are not allowed to wear diapers at HCEL per state regulations. Please understand that these rules and guidelines are for everyone's safety. If a child has multiple daily accidents, we may need to reevaluate their readiness for the preschool environment. We will do our best to work with preschoolers as they learn this new life skill.

Meals and Allergies

HCEL will provide two nutritious snacks a day. Families will be required to pack a lunch for their preschoolers daily. Children at this age can be picky eaters; parents know best what their kids will eat. This policy will cut down on food waste and ensure children eat the nutritious lunch they like. Since we are a licensed preschool, all meals must follow USDA Child and Adult Care Food guidelines. At the end of this handbook, I've created an easy breakdown of how to pack

a suitable lunch. We may have food allergies that limit certain foods from being allowed in our classroom. Many preschools are nut-free due to the number of children allergic to different nuts. We intend to keep everyone safe; some allergies can be life-threatening. Please adhere to any policies set in place. Keep an eye out for any notices regarding this matter. Due to allergies and sensitivities, we do not allow students to share items from their lunch.

Families can find a monthly snack menu on the Family Board in the office. We will make accommodations for those with food preferences or sensitivities. Do not send candy in lunches; it is not within the healthy meal guidelines and is not helpful to preschoolers in the classroom environment. Save sweet treats or candy for planned celebrations and special occasions.

Dental Hygiene

Washington state requires early learning centers to allow children to brush their teeth after meals to learn about and practice good dental hygiene. Parents will need to provide the toothbrush and container. Dental care will be part of our curriculum and discussions during meal times. Students will learn how to brush, why it's essential, and practice with a model. Parents can opt out of having their child brush their teeth at preschool.

Curriculum

Our curriculum contains discussions, lessons, and activities in literacy, math, science, art, physical education, music, and social/emotional well-being. We will work with each child to help them prepare for kindergarten. Our environment is an intentionally designed learning space and is a large part of our curriculum. The environment will change to reflect new topics throughout the year, including changing seasons. Concepts such as math will build on each other to help provide a foundation for learning. Preschoolers will experience growing their food and hands-on experiences caring for garden spaces. Working on our social and emotional well-being includes problem-solving, empathy, cooperation, impulse control, assertiveness, helpfulness, and anger management. We have large blocks of outside time planned in our schedule, and if the students need more, we will take our learning outside when we can, especially during the warmer months.

Culture

We are a diverse group of community builders at HCEL, and all our early learner friends are welcome. We will celebrate the different traditions and cultures of the families and staff in our classroom. Students are encouraged to bring books to share part of their family's storytelling culture. Sometimes, we share our cultures through food, activities, and dress. We will learn about the different holidays celebrated throughout the world.

Upon request, we will hold birthday celebrations for preschoolers. Families may bring store-bought treats or food items to share with the classroom community. Celebrations and treats must be discussed with the teachers beforehand to ensure they are safe for all preschoolers. A birthday celebration does not have to include food items. Other fun activities, games, or non-food treats are welcome.

Communication & Parent Partnership

Parents are a child's first teachers. Communication between families, staff, and preschoolers is essential to a good relationship. We want to maintain a partnership with each family. Families will receive monthly newsletters about upcoming events, activities, and reminders. You will receive pictures throughout the week of your child's time in our program, providing snapshots of those precious moments we know parents enjoy being a part of.

Communication at drop-off and pick-up times need to be short. It is often a busy time of transition. The teacher or family may schedule parent meetings throughout the year. Please limit texting teachers throughout the day so that their focus can be on classroom happenings. Please text us anything that needs our immediate attention and email us with any questions.

Many times throughout the year, we will invite parents or families to our class! Some ways we involve parents would be to have you come in, read a story to the group, or share a short language lesson. We will have optional opportunities for parents to be a part of our preschool program throughout the year.

Conferences

Conferences are on the last Friday in January. Conferences are a time for parents and staff to discuss developmental milestones, look at future goals, and answer parents' questions. Staff can connect you to local resources and discuss early intervention if necessary. We will discuss any concerns before conferences. Conferences are optional.

Early intervention can open new doors for a child and positively impact their development. Some early intervention services may include specialized instruction, speech therapy, other preschool experiences, and occupational or physical therapy. We do not determine what services a preschooler may need or make diagnoses. We wish to support preschoolers' development and can help connect you to specialized experts who may better support your child.

Rest/Quiet Time

The Learning Center will quiet down for two hours each afternoon. Sleep plays a significant role in how preschoolers function throughout the day. After hours of intentional, exploratory play, it is normal for growing kids to need rest time. If a child does not sleep, they must stay quiet for those who nap. After some downtime, Preschoolers can engage in quiet activities while others sleep. All children must participate in quiet time each day. We hope that, as needed, children can fall asleep and wake up according to their sleep patterns during rest time. This rest schedule may fluctuate as I determine the needs of each group. Parents will be notified of any changes.

We provide each child with a cot and sheet for rest time. Families will provide their child with a small blanket and an optional stuffed animal. No pillows are needed. Items will go home with students on Thursdays to be laundered and returned to school the following Monday.

Field trips

We will plan at least three field trips in 12 months. These trips will be optional and planned well in advance. A parent or responsible guardian must provide transportation to the destination and be present during the activities. The trip will be a community-building experience and an excellent way for parents to get to know each other and to meet their child's friends.

Enrichment

We hope to add enrichment to our program as it grows. Enrichments would look like another instructor coming into the classroom or outdoor play space to teach something like art, yoga, or a sports program. Outside instructors would never be left alone with students, and parents would be given appropriate information about the instructor and enrichment.

Behavior Management & Expulsion Policy

It is our priority to maintain a safe classroom. With boundaries, time, and consistency, children can often learn to manage their behavior. Children can thrive with nurturing teachers, positive guidance, and a secure environment. We recognize that behavior like grabbing and pushing can be age-appropriate when students are learning to communicate their needs. We will help preschoolers learn healthy ways to express themselves and share their wants and needs while staff model how to play safely with peers. It takes some time for a classroom of preschoolers to learn how to work together. Staff will use patience, conscious discipline, and "love and logic" philosophies to manage behaviors.

When a student displays continued excessive aggressive, defiant, and/or disruptive behaviors that impact the safety of anyone in the community, it may result in a teacher and parent-created Action Plan. The Action Plan intends to set up a structure and consistency as the teacher and families partner to provide the preschoolers extra support while transitioning into our learning community.

In rare, extreme cases, staff may need to restrain a child. It will be done appropriately according to the children's developmental level, abilities, and language skills. This would only be done in extreme situations where a child's safety is in danger. This will always be a last resort.

An Action Plan will note concerning behavior, list strategies or tools to be implemented in class and at home, and the consequences. A second meeting must be scheduled if the behavior continues with little to no progress. The Action Plan will be adjusted as needed. Building community and maintaining relationships is integral to our heart-centered early learning work. We must ensure student safety and wish to help all students get the support they need. Suppose a third meeting is necessary because the accommodations are not working. In that case, we will discuss how and if we can move forward together.

Each Action Plan will include a time frame tailored to fit the situation. We may need to ask local experts to observe staff and students for extra support. We will do our best to accommodate all preschool learners. We reserve the right to terminate care when we have exhausted all resources, and the situation remains unsafe.

A Program for the Whole Community

Preschoolers will build relationships with each other in the classroom, and we want to extend the invitation to you. Throughout the year, parents may join us for classroom celebrations, work on projects, or join the preschool fun! We will provide services for families in our community by holding various parent classes, connecting families to local resources, and being part of community-building events at our preschool and the larger community. We wish this program reach beyond our classroom walls and be of service to the larger community.



Heart Centered Early Learning Handbook Acknowledgement

Please complete the form below after reading the handbook and include this form with your enrollment packet.

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and agree to the policies in the Parent Handbook.

_____ I agree to all policies regarding tuition, due dates and late fees.

_____ I understand I must provide a healthy lunch for my preschooler each day.

_____ I acknowledge my child will not participate in daily dental hygiene practices at preschool.

Photo Release Options – sign your initials next to *the photo release of your choice*

_____ I permit HCE Learning to take photos of my child and share them with other families in the same learning community.

_____ I permit HCE Learning to use photos of my child for marketing purposes.

_____ I DO NOT permit HCE Learning to take photos of my child. I understand they will not be in classroom group photos, nor will our family receive a classroom yearbook.

_____ I DO NOT permit HCE Learning to use photos of my child for marketing purposes.

We carry liability insurance and will notify you of any changes.

Parent/Guardian Name


Signature & Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature & Date

Date Collected by Staff:

Food Guidelines Cheat Sheet

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| AM Snack Choose 2 Items | Milk | 1/2 Cup | <p>These are minimum serving requirements.</p> <p>Milk needs to be 1 percent or skim, unflavored.</p> <p>Children must have one whole grain item each day.</p> <p>At lunch, you may double the vegetable serving and serve no fruit</p>  |
| | Fruit | 1/2 Cup | |
| | Vegetable | 1/2 Cup | |
| | Grain | 1/2 oz, slice or serving | |
| | Meat or Meat Alt | 1/2 oz | |
| Lunch Choose 5 Items | Milk | 3/4 Cup | |
| | Fruit | 1/4 Cup | |
| | Vegetable | 1/4 Cup | |
| | Grain | 1/2 oz, slice or serving | |
| | Meat or Meat Alt | 1 1/2 oz | |
| PM Snack Choose 2 Items | Milk | 1/2 Cup | |
| | Fruit | 1/2 Cup | |
| | Vegetable | 1/2 Cup | |
| | Grain | 1/2 oz, slice or serving | |
| | Meat or Meat Alt | 1/2 oz | |